UNDERSTANDING YEDIKULE URBAN GARDENS AS AN "INTERSTITIAL SPACE": THE POTENTIAL OF COMMONS TO TRANSFORM AN "UNDEFINED" URBAN SPACE

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ABSTRACT

UNDERSTANDING YEDIKULE URBAN GARDENS AS AN "INTERSTITIAL SPACE": THE POTENTIAL OF COMMONS TO TRANSFORM AN "UNDEFINED" URBAN SPACE

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This research presents a critical examination of traditional urban planning approaches, arguing that the rigid urban oppositions fall short in comprehensively capturing the intricate nature of urban (public) spaces today. To address this limitation, the study introduces and explains the concepts of "interstitial space" and "the commons" as alternative frameworks. Adopting a multiscalar approach, the exploration of interstitial space seeks to merge the diverse interpretations of "undefined spaces" prevalent in existing literature, aiming for an encompassing definition that integrates the social and spatial qualities of urban spaces that are usually associated with the "other" users.

The Yedikule Urban Gardens in Istanbul, situated within and along the historical Land Walls of the city, serves as a pertinent case study. This urban agricultural area has a complex, multi-layered structure and a historical narrative full of transformations. Despite its rich heritage, the site has been marginalized and rendered invisible in contemporary urban life. The research investigates the potential of Yedikule Urban Gardens as an interstitial space to undergo transformation through

commoning processes. By assessing the interplay of socio-spatial qualities and a diverse actor schema, the study aims to ascertain whether the site can be reintegrated into city life through communal efforts, thereby revitalizing its role as an active and dynamic space.

By exploring the theoretical concepts, the research explores Yedikule Urban Gardens from a multiscalar perspective: "Land Walls" at the macro scale, "Yedikule's immediate surroundings" at the meso scale and "Yedikule Urban Gardens" at the micro scale. Utilizing archival study, on-site observations and expert interviews, the study critically analyzes the findings to contribute to the discussions on the theory of undefined (public) spaces. The result offers insights into the revitalization of neglected urban areas and fosters a deeper understanding of the dynamics involved in such transformative processes as commons.

Keywords: Interstitial Space, Commons, Urban Oppositions, Yedikule Urban Gardens

ÖZ

YEDİKULE BOSTANLARI'NI BİR "ARAYER" OLARAK ANLAMAK: MÜŞTEREKLERİN "TANIMSIZ" BİR MEKANI DÖNÜŞTÜRME POTANSİYELİ

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Bu araştırma, geleneksel kent planlama yaklaşımlarının eleştirel bir incelemesini sunmakta ve keskin kentsel karşıtlıkların günümüz kentsel (kamusal) alanlarının karmaşık doğasını kapsamlı bir şekilde yakalamakta yetersiz kaldığını savunmaktadır. Bu kısıtlılığı ele almak için çalışma, alternatif kavramsal çerçeveler olarak "arayer" ve "müşterekler" kavramlarını tanıtmakta ve açıklamaktadır. Çok ölçekli bir yaklaşım benimseyen arayer incelemesi, mevcut literatürde var olan "tanımsız mekânlar "ın farklı yorumlarını birleştirmeyi amaçlamakta ve kentsel mekânların genellikle "öteki" kullanıcılarla ilişkilendirilmiş sosyal ve mekânsal niteliklerini bütünleştiren kapsamlı bir tanımı hedeflemektedir.

İstanbul'un tarihi Kara Surları içinde ve boyunca yer alan Yedikule Bostanları, uygun bir vaka çalışması olarak hizmet vermektedir. Var oluşu on altı yüzyıla yayılan bu kentsel tarım alanı, karmaşık, çok katmanlı bir yapıya ve dönüşümlerle dolu bir tarihsel anlatıya sahiptir. Zengin mirasına rağmen, alan çağdaş kent yaşamında marjinalleştirilmiş ve görünmez kılınmıştır. Araştırma, bir arayer olarak Yedikule Bostanları'nın müştereklik süreçleri yoluyla dönüşüme potansiyelini incelemektedir. Çalışma, sosyo-mekânsal niteliklerin ve çeşitli aktör şemalarının etkileşimini

değerlendirerek, alanın ortak çabalar yoluyla kent yaşamına yeniden entegre edilip edilemeyeceğini ve böylece aktif ve dinamik bir alan olarak yeniden canlandırılıp canlandırılamayacağını tespit etmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Araştırma, teorik kavramlar arasındaki bağlantıyı keşfederek, alanı üç farklı ölçekte incelemektedir. Bu ölçekler, makro ölçekte "Kara Surları", mezo ölçekte "Yedikule'nin yakın çevresi" ve mikro ölçekte "Yedikule Bostanları"dır. Arşiv çalışması, yerinde gözlem ve uzman görüşmelerinden faydalanan çalışma, tanımsız (kamusal) alanlar teorisine ilişkin tartışmalara katkıda bulunmak amacıyla bulguları eleştirel bir şekilde analiz etmektedir. Sonuç olarak çalışma, ihmal edilmiş kentsel alanların yeniden canlandırılmasına ilişkin içgörüler sunmakta ve müşterekler gibi dönüştürücü süreçlerde yer alan dinamiklerin daha derinlemesine anlaşılmasını teşvik etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Arayer, Müşterekler, Kentsel Karşıtlıklar, Yedikule Bostanları

To my beloved family and Sirius the best black cat ever,

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATIONS

ŞPO: İstanbul Şehir Plancıları Odası (Istanbul Chamber of City Planners)

IPA: İstanbul Planlama Ajansı (Istanbul Planning Agency)

TMMOB: Türk Mühendis ve Mimar Odaları Birliği (The Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects)

IBB: Istanbul Buyuksehir Belediyesi (Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality)

MSGSU: Mimar Sinan Guzel Sanatlar Universitesi (Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> "The commons – at once a paradigm, a discourse, an ethic, and a set of social practices – holds great promise."
>
> —David Bollier (2020)

The commons is an active and living process of producing, organizing, and allocating tangible and intangible shared resources in urban spaces. Today, the commons enable refuge from the visible and invisible enclosures and boundaries in cities where established binary oppositions such as "modern vs. traditional," "urban vs. rural," or "public vs private" limit the perception and experience of the complexity of urban space (Çalışkan et al., 2020). Furthermore, the spaces that are left relatively undefined due to their scale, use, or location in cities have the potential to elevate the discussion of commons in a way that shows the multiplicity of publicness, diversity of users, and evasive forms of common spaces in cities.

Therefore, this study explores the transformative dimension of the commons for undefined spaces in cities to integrate them into urban life. The context is to test the commoning processes and the dynamics such as encounters, web of relationships, reciprocal interactions, and value-making practices (Linebaugh, 2008; Fournier, 2013; Stavrides, 2015; Koçak, 2019; Bollier, 2020) behind these processes that catalyze the transformation of a space in the case of Turkey. In this way, the study claims that these spaces become urban spaces where improvised activities, unexpected encounters, and emancipated interactions take place as an alternative spatial conception to interpret the space beyond urban dichotomies. They lead people to explore diverse ways of living, socializing, and experiencing urban life in order to

escape the forms of "enclosure" that reduce the possibilities a city can offer (Harvey, 2011; Bresnihan & Byrne, 2015; Stavrides, 2016).

The literature conventionally recognizes commons as resources shared by a community of people who actively use and maintain them (Ostrom, 1990; Mehan et al., 2020). By approaching the term as a noun, this definition may put the concept of commons in a static position. However, commons, as a term, should be interpreted as a verb to capture its dynamic nature as it is an active and social process of production, organization, and allocation (Lefebvre, 1991; Linebaugh, 2008; Harvey, 2008; Stavrides, 2015; Bollier, 2020). Also, through commoning practices, people can produce and maintain material resources such as collectively growing food, holding community meetings, and creating public art. As for immaterial resources, people form solidarity networks, negotiate community rules, experience the collective ways of living, share knowledge and stories, and build a sense of community (Hardt and Negri, 2009). Active participation of the people in every stage of the process produces the transformative potential of the commons. Hence, this helps construct an alternative space, building a new society outside capital-driven markets.

Stavrides (2015), in the article "Common space as threshold space: Urban commoning in struggles to re-appropriate public space," considers common spaces as threshold spaces. This interpretation allows studying practices of space-commoning that transcend the enclosure and encourage the formation of new commoners; therefore, it becomes a milestone for this study to connect these concepts, the commons and threshold space, and investigate their interactions in a physical context. While this argument suggests recognizing commoning as a multidimensional process that produces spaces, it also positions threshold spaces as settings and images of commoning practices (Stavrides, 2015). Even though in the scope of Stavrides' article, these spaces are conceptualized as "threshold spaces," there is a range of terms, meanings, and scales regarding the undefined urban spaces in literature. Moreover, each related concept approaches the space from a different angle. Threshold space (Boettger, 2014; Stavrides, 2015) has a political approach to

the notion, linking the formation of these spaces to political conflicts. Loose space (Franck et al., 2006), approaching primarily with a socio-spatial perspective, highlights the direct effect of residents' social activities on the production of these spaces. Inter-fragmentary space (Vidal, 1999), approaching primarily with a morphological perspective, bases the occurrence of these spaces upon the fragmented structure of the urban space. These are some of the concepts and their unique approaches to the concept of undefined spaces in cities.

This study acknowledges the need to combine the morphological attributes and event-oriented formations of these so-called undefined spaces in cities. They are attained as undefined for several reasons, such as their locations, scales, recognitions, and historical continuities in cities and city plans. For this, the concept of interstitial space will provide a novel approach to comprehensively tackle these "un" definitions within the context of this research and help us to see these areas beyond physical spaces.

For the discussion of the so-called "undefined" spaces in cities, the term "interstitial" stands out in the literature both in terms of its potential and the need to be reinterpreted within the urbanization processes in Turkey. The concept has a variety of connotations in the fields of medicine, computing, architecture, sociology, and politics. In general, the term refers to "occurring in or being an interval or intervening space or segment: of, relating to, or forming an interstice" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). This definition can interpret the term "interstitial" as in-betweenness in morphological and social dimensions. The relative novelty, versatility, and meaning of this concept, in terms of covering a variety of scales and regarding the event-oriented point of view while identifying these spaces, helps this study to adopt a fresh perspective towards undefined spaces in cities.

Interstitial space is more inclusive than other related concepts in terms of the space's scale, form, position and social qualities. In other words, when defining "undefined space," some concepts focus on the morphological qualities of this space *(interfragmentary space)*, while others evaluate it in terms of its

social *(fourthplace, loose space)* and political *(gray space, threshold space)* qualities. Although there are concepts such as interstitial space that approach the space in terms of its socio-spatial qualities *(spaces by people, in-between space)*, these concepts do not address the scalar multiplicity, positional diversity, and formal variations of the "undefined space" examined in interstitial space. Therefore, interstitial space offers a more encompassing approach to undefined space, both spatially and socially, which makes this concept more relevant to the definition of contemporary urban space discussed in this study.

Moreover, in the context of Turkey, these concepts are elaborated as in-between space (Bolak Hisarlıgil, 2007 focusing on vernacular mid-Anatolian settlements), interface (Eren & Cengiz, 2020 focusing on Taksim Asmalımescit Neighborhood), intermediate space (Balaban Varol, 2020 focusing on housing in Ankara), threshold space (Aydın, 2022 focusing on Yalova), urban fissure (Bütüner, 2010 focusing on Land Walls in Istanbul) from scales such as housing, streets and neighborhoods to urban scales such as city walls. Yet, there seems to be no research focusing on and questioning the relationship between the concepts of interstitial space and the commons in the context of Turkey.

While examining interstitial space, mentioning "other space" concepts is also necessary. These concepts, which define spaces of "otherness" beyond conventional urban dichotomies such as "heterotopia," "thirdspace," and "triad of space," encompass urban fragments, contradicted domains, and opposing social groups and identities, as well as spatial conditions such as interstitial space, threshold space, in-between space, where these disparate worlds may encounter, interact and have the potential to form a commonality. In this way, as Stavrides (2015) discusses, common space can be considered as threshold space or, in the context of this study, as interstitial space (the similarities and differences between these concepts will be discussed in Chapter 3), where interstitial space can become a setting for processes of the commons. Therefore, in the scope of the study, these concepts of otherness will be the sources for interpreting the "interstitial space". The comprehension of interstitial space and related concepts will be built under these framing concepts.

Although several existing studies focus on the concept of undefined spaces and spaces of otherness, it is important to explore an overarching concept as interstitial spaces through an analytical perspective. Thus, the study aims to contribute to understanding the concept of undefined spaces by attempting to fill the gaps mentioned above through articulating and reinterpreting the concept of interstitial space by exploring its interconnectedness with the commons. By dwelling on Phelps and Silva's (2018) research and theoretical framework on the interstitial space, this study focuses on the multiscalar spatial and social qualities of the Yedikule Urban Gardens as an interstitial space where commoning practices unfold.

Yedikule Urban Gardens, a part of Istanbul's historical Land Walls, is both a historical landmark and a living urban garden located in the western part of the Old Peninsula of Istanbul, with a history of more than 1500 years. Apart from the site's historical value, the study will critically evaluate the potential of the site to be an interstitial space, both in social and spatial terms. It poses an inter-scalar example to show different urban scales with their physical and social dimensions, making it a unique case to explore the above-mentioned analytical research dwelling on Phelps and Silva's proposals. Morphologically, the site acts as an interface between the old fortress and the city. Moreover, it is a unique example of a still-in-use urban agricultural area within a densely populated location (Koçan and Balık, 2021).

These gardens are one of the few places in Istanbul where commoning practices can take place and where there is the potential to establish a degree of collective living through commoning practices. Within the scope of the thesis, the case study of Yedikule Urban Gardens is conducted to observe how the commons and an interstitial space interact and whether commoning practices can be adopted as a strategy for transforming the interstitial space.



Figure 1.1 The close relationship of Yedikule Gardens with the Historical Land Walls (personal archive)

1.1 Overview of the Study

> "The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources, it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights."
>
> —David Harvey (2010)

The urban dichotomies of "private and public," "formal and informal," "open and close," and "rural and urban" (Foucault, 1986; Sohn et al., 2015) in contemporary urban space urge the researcher to explore how urban space can be perceived beyond these oppositions. Starting from this ponder, the study aims to understand the undefined space, a space that is neither public nor private, and spatial strategies that

promote the integration of these spaces, which are typically overlooked or neglected. Through interpreting a space beyond binary oppositions and conveying the principles of commoning, the thesis seeks to offer an alternative way of looking at an urban sphere that values urban integration and collectivity via utilizing the term interstitial space within the processes of commoning.

The researcher's interest in commoning practices and interstitial spaces was born from the urban design master studio courses focusing on transient urbanism. The selected lectures provided concept-related documents for the researcher to understand the concepts further. The studio aimed to design a transient urban space in Ankara, Turkey. Working as a group consisting of Aysema Ülke, İbrahim Alpdemir, and the researcher, the project targets paper collectors (illegal recycle workers in Turkey) who, due to their illegal work status and low living standards, experience social exclusion. Through a group effort, the researcher designed a facility that reflected the nomadic lifestyle of paper collectors, emphasizing transiency and temporality as critical elements of the design's functions and social organizations.



Figure 1.2 The visual depicts "To Exist is to Resist" (prepared by the project group)



Figure 1.3 The paper collectors (prepared by the project group)

While developing the design, undefined spaces and the commons become crucial for building an inclusive community. For the undefined space, the potential of these spaces to acquire transitional and permeable attitudes enable them to serve as transitory zones, connecting the functions of the facility with each other and with the surrounding community. As for the commoning practice, the design offers utilization of the concept as a strategy to set out the unique attributes of the interstitial space and supports the commoning process via promoting the collective production, organisation and allocation of resources. Thus, undefined spaces can function as a main ground for commoning practices to thrive in the facility.

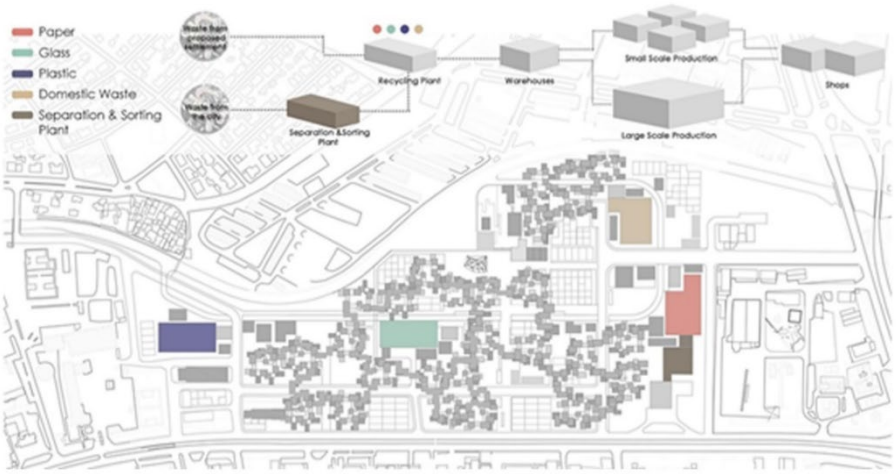


Figure 1.4 The site plan and recycling process on-site (prepared by the project group)

Figure 1.4 depicts the site plan to highlight how the same context can function as temporary shelter areas, small scaled recycling plants, storage places for recyclable materials, or communal gathering spots. The transitional, fluid and permeable attitude of these spaces enable them to serve as transitory zones, connecting the functions of the facility with each other and with the surrounding community.

Although the starting point of this thesis is the interest in undefined spaces and the commons that the researcher developed throughout this studio project, it is important to underline that the thesis and the project are differentiated in terms of the fundamental question they seek to answer. Whereas the design project seeks to answer the question of how a particular spatial configuration creates the infrastructure for commoning practices in the context of paper collectors, this thesis asks whether commoning practices can transform and produce urban spaces.

1.2 Problem Definition and Significance

In today's cities, the distinct separations are blurred due to interpreting the city through urban dichotomies such as public-private, urban-rural, and open-close. For example, due to the current modes of urbanization, the distinction between the countryside and the city is disappearing; the countryside does not begin where the city ends, and vice versa. Therefore, it is necessary to re-think and problematize the established binary oppositions such as "urban vs. rural," "open vs. close," and "public vs. private," as well as the activities typically connected with them (Sohn et al., 2015). Based on the Foucaldian perspective, the thesis embraces the notion that contemporary urban spaces are divergent sites. This perspective implies a shift beyond the traditional framework of binary oppositions, such as "open and closed, private and public, sacred and profane" (Foucault, 1986). By exploring this shift, the thesis discusses that the breakdown of the urban binaries in contemporary urban discourse leads to the revival of a "thirding" phenomenon (Sohn et al., 2015). This shift in the perception of space produces alternative definitions of space beyond urban binaries.

Many scholars have discussed and defined urban space beyond these binary oppositions by interpreting the concept of "other". In literature, these are undefined spaces and have dichotomous connotations. For some, they are boundaries, dangerous places that one must not go or wastelands, marginalized, abonded places that are left behind, or spaces that are thought unnecessary or even unrecognized (de Solà Morales, 2002; Edensor, 2005; Matos, 2009). However, for others, these spaces are "thirdspace" by Soja (1996), "heterotopia" by Foucault (1968), "non-place" by Augé (1995), "threshold space" by Stavrides (2010, 2015), "in-between space" by Alcaraz (2022), "interstitial space" by Brighenti (2013) and Phelps and Silva (2018), "loose spaces" by Franck and Stevens (2006), "spaces by people" by Cihanger (2018) and Tschumi (1996), focusing on the concept of "disjunction", explores the idea of disjunction as a way to challenge traditional architectural norms and conventions.

As has been noticed, many concepts in the literature correspond to the "undefined space," which leads to confusion in understanding and perceiving these spaces. Therefore, in this thesis, these spaces will be addressed with a thirding concept of "interstitial space" due to the variety of scales this concept covers (Phelps & Silva, 2018) and the concept's event-oriented point of view while identifying undefined spaces (Brighenti, 2013). These features of the "interstitial space" concept will contribute to examining the potential for transforming such spaces through commoning practices. Therefore, this study presents the concept of "interstitial space" as a notion that can go beyond the aforementioned urban dichotomies or as a means to discuss an urban space beyond these dichotomies and enables the researcher to test these global discussions in the locality of Turkey.

Stemming from Stavrides' (2015) assertion that if common spaces are considered threshold spaces, or in the context of this study, like interstitial spaces, alternative spaces can be produced beyond the enclosures and limitations caused by urban dualities in the city, this study interrogates the concepts of interstitial space and the commons, the potential of interstitial space becoming a site for the commoning processes, and intricate relationship between these concepts in the context of Turkey.

For this study, urban space is a result of the dynamic socio-spatial process, where the physical space and experiences of the users are intertwined, interacting, shaping, and producing the urban space. Lefebvre (1991) discusses that all human places are the product of social processes, shaping those processes. This argument is the foundation of the commons and collective experiences. Producing and sharing material and immaterial resources, building solidarity networks, and interacting with commoners are examples of commoning practices in urban space. Such practices enhance the resilience of the residents against challenges and inequalities. Ostrom (1990) and Bollier (2012) discuss the importance of commons for producing and sustaining a vibrant urban life.

The commons, a process that produces spaces beyond urban binaries, conventionally emerges in response to particular circumstances such as political disputes, economic crises, and socio-spatial concerns (Bresnihan & Byrne, 2015). The emergence of it can vary from a form of protest (Gezi Events) to a way of materializing an alternative urban setting (social centers established through the occupation of abandoned buildings). In the case of protests aiming to draw attention, public spaces in the limelight and accessible to everyone produce commons. Whereas, in the case of creating an alternative urban setting, due to the illegality of occupying urban space, abandoned, neglected, or disputed buildings under the radar become the places where the commons thrive. Commoning practices taking place in these settings, due to the transformative potential of the commons (Bollier, 2020), transform these spaces into common spaces that are neither public nor private (Stavrides, 2015).

Therefore, this study acknowledges the commons as a space transformation strategy. However, it questions whether the commons has the potential for transforming urban spaces that still have a defined publicness but are relatively undefined, marginalized spaces at the periphery of the city and in-between public and private spaces due to their morphological attributes, the events taking place and actors participating the formation of these spaces. Even these spaces generally are not situated in the middle of the city, recognized or accessed by everyone, as this study claims, undefined spaces can be the places where people form new relationships, engage in creative

activities such as public art, hold collective events, learn from each other, and interact across cultures (Arendt, 1958).

This thesis further questions the concept of "interstitial space" as a framework encompassing various concepts related to undefined space, mentioned earlier, and "the commons" as a strategy to transform and integrate these spaces into the urban fabric by exploring the relationship between these concepts in the context of Turkey. As this study claims, articulating the city as an urban continuum, interstitial spaces can hold the potential to reclaim the fragmented urban fabric, restore the urban balance, and trigger socio-spatial continuity and fluidity through collective commoning practices.

Therefore, this study is significant for investigating the commons as an active, lively process primarily about the social practices of commoning, actions involving cooperation, disagreement, compromise, communication, encounter, and experimentation (Bollier, 2020). Through these practices, the commons can create systems to produce, organize, and allocate shared resources, which are the foundations of the commons' transformative potential. Moreover, the concept of interstitial space will provide a framework for the study to explore the commons' ability to transform a space socially and spatially. Although these undefined spaces are perceived as underutilized, neglected, or remnants of urban planning processes by the mainstream, this research interprets the interstitial spaces as the essential sites in city articulation, spaces of emancipation, interaction, innovation, and creativity. Connecting two concepts, the study attempts to contribute to the restoration of the urban continuum by preventing the further social and spatial fragmentation of urban fabric.

1.3 Aim and Scope

As a result of the coexistence of social, cultural, and physical landscapes, Istanbul historically continues to be a multifaceted city with a multitude of conflicting urban and social fragments, contrasting domains, and diverse identities. Here, the rigid

urban oppositions in conventional planning and design theories seem inadequate, if not ineffective, in explaining, perceiving, and experiencing the complex and diverse nature of the city (Çalışkan et al., 2020). Istanbul is the largest metropolis in Turkey, experiencing rapid social, economic, cultural, and spatial transformations, further intensifying the densely built fabric of the city. This process results in a relentless expansion towards the “unbuilt” areas. It harms the balance of the urban space by limiting the interaction between people and urban space, deteriorating green open areas, and damaging agricultural production (Durusoy & Cihanger, 2016).



Figure 1.5 Gardener is preparing the soil for planting the onions in Yedikule Urban Gardens (personal archive)

In this respect, the research concentrates on the commons and the interstitial space. In order to further develop the argument and explore these concepts’ potential in a

physical space, a study on Yedikule Urban Gardens is conducted. Yedikule Urban Gardens is a historical garden (bostan in Turkish) that dates back to the "Theodosian Laws" in 438 A.D. (Ricci, 2008) located in, around, and along with the Istanbul Land Walls (historical Theodosius Fortress) that also built in 5th century A.D. by Theodosius II. Today, Yedikule Urban Gardens is also one of the places targeted by the rapid and uncontrolled urbanization of Istanbul, which is perceived as an unbuilt, neglected, and disordered urban fabric. The gardens act as an interface between the city and the periphery, a green interstice within the dense urban fabric, and thus an interstitial space within the multifaceted urban fragments of Istanbul. This study predicts that the gardens are in danger of disappearing unless necessary strategies are implemented to protect and preserve them along with the Land Walls. Therefore, the study aims to explore the potential of the commons as a strategy to transform interstitial spaces into actively engaged urban spaces within urban life.

Here this study evolves by keeping in mind the various discussions on the site for its being an urban fissure (Bütüner, 2010), a site for urban transformations (Durusoy & Cihanger, 2016), a place where tangible and intangible cultural heritages reside (Aykan & Başyurt, 2019), an area in which the world's oldest urban agricultural practices take place (Şahin & Kahraman, 2021). The main intention of conducting a case study is to observe how the commons and an interstitial space interact with each other and whether commoning practices can be adopted as a strategy for transforming the interstitial space, the Yedikule Urban Gardens in this case, into vibrant space and integrating it to the urban environment.

The analysis in this area will be conducted by adapting Phelps and Silva's (2018) theoretical framework for exploring interstitial space through multiscalar spatial scales to the Turkish locality and by analyzing in-depth interviews with experts who are academically researching this area, studying this area through design projects, members of conservation initiatives, and officials who work in planning institutions in Istanbul.

1.4 Structure of the Study

The main hypothesis of the study is that the commons, as an active and living process of production, organization and allocation of tangible and intangible shared resources in urban spaces, can be adopted as a strategy to transform interstitial spaces into vibrant and actively engaged spaces within built environment and urban life. Considering this, this thesis poses the following research question:

"How can the concept of commons be employed as a strategy for transforming and integrating interstitial spaces, conventionally undefined, neglected, or invaded, into urban life?"

Thus, before delving into the concept of commons, study builds an understanding related to the understanding of undefined spaces and introduces interstitial space as a comprehensive concept that embraces diverse perspectives on undefined spaces from several academic fields, emphasizing its morphological and social approach towards the urban space. As the research proceeds, socio-spatial qualities of interstitial spaces will be explored through the literature review, research design and case study. These qualities shed lights on the Yedikule Urban Garden case's relevance to these concepts. By investigating the socio-spatial qualities in the context, research will analyze whether these attributes, explored with the literature review and research design, overlap with the real life conditions of the physical space. At this point, the relationship between the commons and interstitial space and the potential of the commons and its processes to transform the space will also be evaluated through real life examples and the analyses to be conducted within the scope of the thesis in order to question the potential of the case study area to transform with the processes of the commons and integrate into the urban life.

Conducting in-depth interviews, on-site observations and map analysis, relevant data for the analyses is collected. Adapting Phelps and Silva's (2018) theoretical framework to the locality of Turkey, the research design unfolds the case in three scales: Istanbul Land Walls as the upper scale, the immediate surrounding of

Yedikule Urban Gardens as mid-scale and Yedikule Urban Gardens as the lower scale. For this the sub questions are posed as:

"How can intersitiality be studied in different urban scales (to defy the singular descriptions and binary oppositions regarding public vs. private space)?"

"What are the concepts to define the spatial and social qualities of interstitial spaces?"

"What is the role of commoning processes to support the vitality of interstitial spaces in cities?"

This research consists of four main chapters excluding the introduction and conclusion parts. It begins with a theoretical framework, then examines the case and concludes with a discussion on the commons and interstitial spaces. The introduction part mainly includes the problem definition, main objectives and overview of the study.

Chapter 2 *The Commons: Exploring the Dimensions of Commoning through "Other Space"* serves as a bridge between the main concerns of the study, the commons and the interstitial space. This study argues that existing urban binaries are dysfunctional and inadequate for understanding and producing the complexity of contemporary urban space. Therefore, it explores the spatial and social qualities of interstitial space and related concepts in search of a definition of space beyond these binaries. While researching interstitial space and related concepts in the literature, concepts of "other space" such as heterotopia, thirdspace, triad of space were encountered, and since these sets of concepts are closely related and intertwined, it is important to explore the concepts of "other space" and their relationship to interstitial space in order to approach the concept of interstitial space in a more holistic way and to question its spatial and social qualities. At this point, the commons will be discussed in terms of its potential to produce other spaces and transform existing spaces through examining real life examples from around the world and the locality of Turkey, and

at the end of the chapter, the relationality between the commons and interstitial space, the main concepts of the thesis, will be explored.

Chapter 3 *Understanding Interstitial Spaces* builds on the set of concepts from the previous section and examines the concept of interstitial space and the related concepts in the literature that attempt to define undefined spaces such as interstitial space, and the main characteristics that distinguish interstitial space from these concepts. The fact that interstitial space approaches space from both morphological and social dimensions will be explored through Phelps and Silva's (2018) theoretical framework and Brighenti's (2013) discussion of interstitial spaces being event-oriented. Thus, the reasons behind the selection of interstitial space as the main concept of this study will be illuminated and at the end of the chapter, the qualities of interstitial space existing in Yedikule Urban Gardens in the context of Turkey will be questioned to understand the link between the key concepts of the study and the case study.

Chapter 4 *Research Design* puts forward main and sub research questions, methodology and research approach of the case study. Applying Phelps and Silva's (2018) theoretical framework to the context of Turkey, the research design examines the case across three different scales: the Istanbul Land Walls as the upper scale, the immediate surroundings of Yedikule Urban Gardens as the mid-scale, and Yedikule Urban Gardens themselves as the lower scale. The multi-scale approach to this area will help to analyze the interstitial space quality of this space in three different scales by examining the spatial transformations that have taken place in the area throughout historical processes, the planning and intervention decisions behind these transformations, and the relationship between the effects of these transformations to the space and the possiblity for Yedikule Urban Gardens to become an interstitial space.

Chapter 5 *Case Study: Yedikule Urban Gardens* will analyze the Yedikule Urban Gardens, focusing on the commons role as a potential strategy for transforming an interstitial space. The evaluation will begin by exploring the spatial transformation

of Yedikule at three interrelated scales throughout the history, as well as the actors and dynamics that have contributed to this transformation. Drawing from the literature review on interstitial space and related concepts, the effects of these transformations on the formation of the qualities of interstitiality in the case study area will be investigated. The potential of the commons to transform space will then be investigated through the assessment of the multiscalar transformation processes of the area and the examination of in-depth interviews conducted with academics who have studied this space, activists who work to preserve and protect it, architects, and urban planners who propose design projects for the site, and officials who work at Istanbul's planning-related institutions.

CHAPTER 2

THE COMMONS: EXPLORING THE DIMENSIONS OF COMMONING THROUGH “OTHER SPACE”

This thesis aims to define the concept of interstitial space and explore the transformative potential of "the commons" within these spaces. In current literature, these concepts are often discussed in conjunction with "other space," as it is argued that the commons and interstitiality have the potential to create spaces that go beyond those enclosed by urban dualities and the concept of “other space” challenges these binary oppositions of urban space such as open vs close, private vs public, rural vs urban, modern vs traditional, formal vs informal. For the purpose of exploring the concept of interstitial space and its distinctive features, this section will examine the insights that can be gained from the “other space” concepts of 'heterotopia' (Foucault, 1986), 'thirdspace' (Soja, 1996), the 'triad of space' (Lefebvre, 1991).

These concepts are described in chapter 2.1 and visualized in figure 2.4, suggest a spatial configuration in which distinct, conflicting, and incompatible domains can coexist together within the same context whereas the ‘threshold’, “in-between” or “interstitial” are the spaces that have potential to facilitate the interaction between these diverse spatial domains. Thus, "heterotopia", "thirdspace"are the spaces of otherness that encompass not only the in-between/threshold/interstitial spaces, where transition, encounter and interaction of the different character areas take place, but also the fragments (contradicted worlds, identities, domains) or enclaves that establish threshold/in-between/interstitial spaces (Şevik, 2018). Through examining these concepts of “other space”, this study aims to investigate what can be learned from these concepts to discover the interstitial space further.

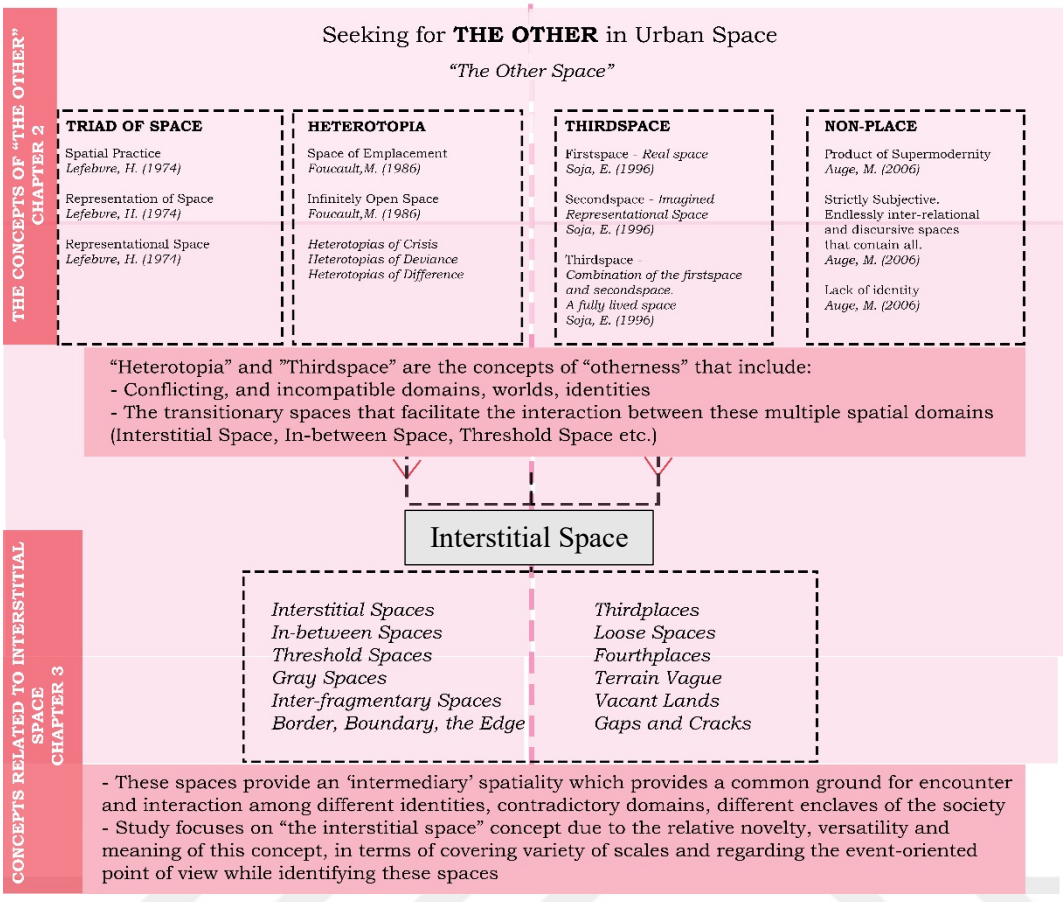


Figure 2.1 Diagram that explains the relationship between the concepts of "otherness" and concepts related to interstitial space (prepared by the author)

This chapter is built upon three sub-chapters. The first sub-chapter, "Exploring the Other Space", introduces concepts of other space (heterotopia, thirdspace, triad of space, non-place) that have similarities and differences with each other, interptreted by several academics with diverse academic perspectives. Since the concepts of "other space" are referred to as "heterotopia", "triad of space", "thirdspace" and "non-place" in the literature, these concepts are explored in this study while analyzing "spaces of otherness" in Chapter 2.1. However, "heterotopia" and "thirdspace" are the concepts of "otherness" that are directly related to the concept of "interstitial space", which is one of the concepts that the thesis focuses on, therefore, these concepts are analyzed in more detail in their own sub-chapters 2.1.1 and 2.1.2.

The second sub-chapter "Seeking for the Other Spaces: Commons as a Transformative Strategy" explores the potential of the commons as a process of producing and transforming the “other spaces” through collective practices of production, organization and allocation. Although the commons are widely discussed in the literature as socio-economic sharing and reproduction process and as a form of bottom-up organization, according to this study, it is necessary to explore the space-making and transforming potentials of the commons. Thus, this title examines the real life examples of commons that transform space and questions the dynamics behind these transformations.

The third sub-chapter “Connecting the Concepts: Other Space, the Commons and the Interstitial Space”, acting as a bridge between chapter 2 and 3, articulates the relation between the concepts of the commons and the interstitial space. By explaining the causal connections between these concepts and how they interrelate, the study aims to reveal their interconnectedness.

2.1 Exploring the Other Space

In city centers, people challenges meeting their needs and desires due to expensive rents, commodification of social and cultural activities and the lack of thoughtful organization in public spaces. Seeking for the “other space” is actually the coping mechanism of urban residents against these constraints in public spaces (Bresnihan et al., 2015). Through re-producing the other, the interstitial, people resist and escape the forms of enclosure, “city of enclaves” (Stavrides, 2016). In order to access a space for any form of activities and fullfill their needs and desires, people collectively investigate and discover new approaches to reclaim urban space for un-commodified ways of living. It therefore requires close attention to the daily practises in which people escape and resist new forms of enclosure. With these escapes, people quickly create and maintain communal and non-proprietary spaces (Blomley, 2008). It is important to comprehend that urban space is not just series of physical entities but a process, a collective experience of happenings, moments,

relations, expressions and encounters. That is to say, experience and social relations occur at a physical space leave traces and re-shape the physical space not only physically but also epistemologically, shifting our knowledge of space, thus inhabiting and experiencing a space have power of transformation and re-appropriation.

According to Michel Foucault (1986) the understanding of space has shifted by modernity, since an infinitely open space is now being imagined on the contrary of the structured space of emplacement of the Middle Ages (Foucault, 1986). Hence, this shift in terms of comprehending the space has eroded dialectical interconnectedness of spaces and contemporary urban space reconceptualize beyond urban dichotomies such as open and close, public and private. Here, the concept of heterotopia suggests an alternative way of perceiving the urban space. According to Foucault (1986), prisons, rest homes, boarding schools and mental institutions can be the examples of heterotopias, which are other spaces with contradictory meanings.

Heterotopias offer different possibilities encouraging the experience of alternative realities with transformative potentials. In this line of thought, spaces with both physical and conceptual features that manifest in various forms such as museums, cemeteries, gardens, theaters and prisons represent heterotopias. They challenge the existing order of society and play a role in shaping collective experiences. For example, museums provide an experience that is contrary to the linear and homogeneous system of time and space by enabling different historical periods, cultural representations and social interactions to come together.



Figure 2.2 Visiting Historical Mammals in Natural History Museum, LA (*Age of Mammals*, n.d.)

Henri Lefebvre's (1991) work also challenges this binary paradigm by proposing the term "other". Suggesting a conceptual triad of interrelated realms, Lefebvre aims to form a different understanding of space rather than the abstract one and to comprehend the space as a social entity. According to Lefebvre, space is an object of production. Space (like time) is not "more or less altered 'natural' phenomena" or "simple 'cultural' phenomena". It is the result of the influence of societies on nature, on sensible data such as matter and energies. He mentions the field of Spatial Practice, Representation of Space and Repsentational Space. The production of space does not mean seeing space as passive, empty, "any 'object' and 'thing' made by hand or machine". According to him, it carries the content of the term product to a relational ground. Spatial practice (1) represents conceived space, Repsentational Space (2) is for symbolic meanings and attributes and Representation of Space (3) is for lived/experienced space (Figure 2.3).

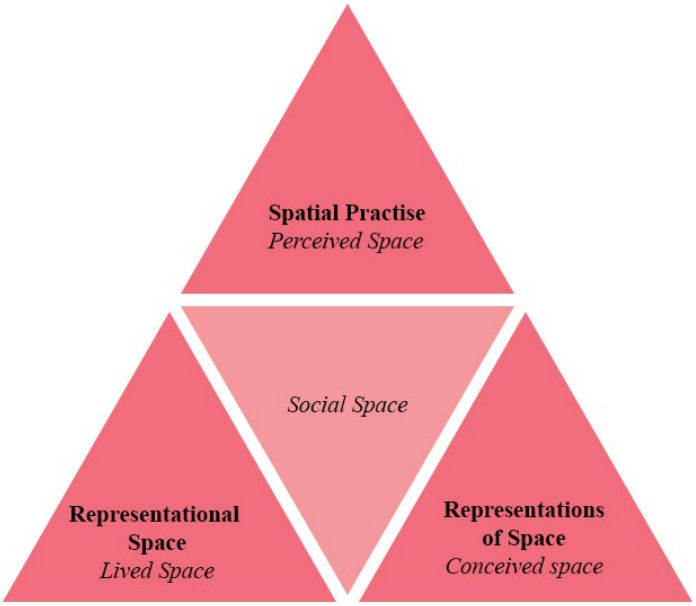


Figure 2.3 Lefebvre's Triad of Space (prepared by the author regarding to Lefebvre, 1991)

Several academics, like David Harvey and Edward Soja, have judiciously integrated Lefebvre's triad of space into their studies. David Harvey refers triad of space by Lefebvre (1991) to interpret and redefine the urban space. Hereupon, Harvey (2006) explains how human experience and produce space and time in three dimensions. These are "Absolute, Relative and Relational Space" (Harvey, 2006:272). Harvey, in accord with Lefebvre, suggests that human practices are the key generators of the space.

Edward Soja also benefits from Lefebvre's triad as a starting point and develops the idea with a spatial theory, "Thirdspace" (Soja, 1996). Soja revises the prevalent dialectic approach in spatial theory and suggests a third concept that does not stand between two opposites but rather a space in which, instead of "either/or" choice afforded by modernism, dichotomies and polarities can be merged to create distinctly postmodern 'both/ and also' analysis (Soja, 1996, as cited in Alcaraz,2022). Hence, in Soja's spatial theory, there are Firstspace, Secondspace and Thirdspace. First concept suggests the physical space in which buildings and material elements of the

urban sphere are located. Second concept is the abstract space which consist of theories and fantasies related to the urban space. The last concept, “thirdspace” corresponds to the exact space which Soja (1996) interprets as “a fully lived space, a simultaneously real-and-imagined, actual-and-virtual locus of structured individual and collective experience and agency” (Soja, 2000, p. 11; Soja, 1996, p. 53–82).

In this context, the dislocation of spaces can also be addressed. Dislocation means that an architectural product does not have a contextual relationship with the environment it belongs to and/or cannot be included in the context of the culture in which it was produced. Here, we can refer to the concept of "Non-place", another "other" concept of space (Auge, 2008). Non-places do not allow for individual identity or relationships, they only produce solitude, similarity and homogeneity (Augé, 2008:103).

The perspectives mentioned here shows the complexity of urban space and aims to overcome traditional binary oppositions (Figure 2.4). In the conceptual frameworks presented, the aim reveals the intricate relationships between space, society and experience. In this research, firstly, by introducing the concepts of heterotopia, space triad, third space and non-place, the multifaceted content of spatial concepts and the social dynamics that shape our understanding of space in the urban context is presented. In a more clear way, Figure 2.4 explains the interrelations between the main concepts of the “other space”. This analysis shows how the main concepts of “other space” build on and interact with each other, differing at some points and converging at others in terms of scale, concept, perspective and related academic fields.

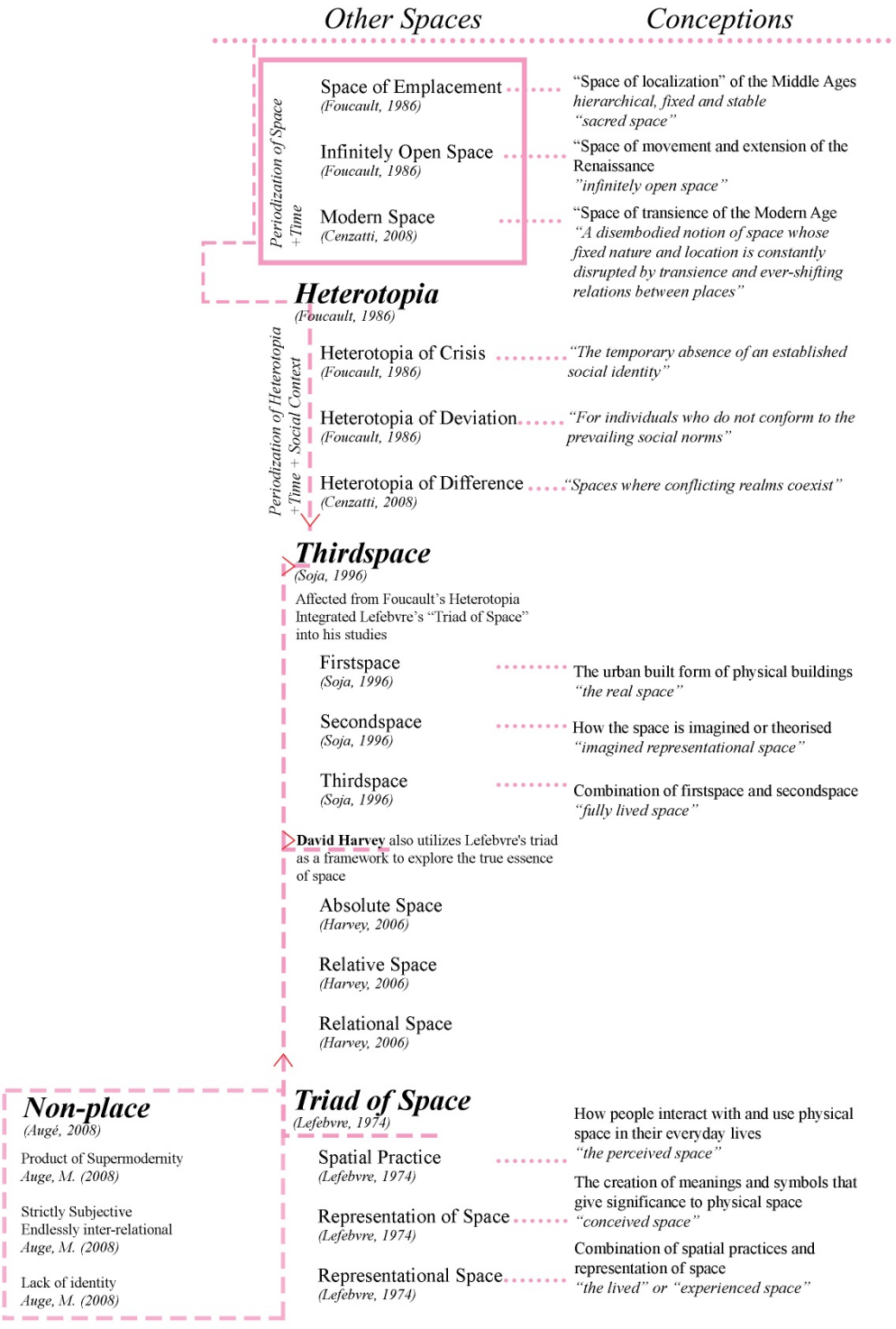


Figure 2.4 The complex relationships between the sub-concepts of the other space (prepard by the author)

Forthcoming section, the study focuses on the concepts of “heterotopia” and “thirdspace” and search for the key features of interstitial spaces by interpreting the literature review. Through exploring these attributes, thesis constructs an understanding of undefined spaces from a socio-spatial angle. Investigating these concepts with diverse academic perspectives helps developing the understanding of otherness regarding the space and gradually paves the way to the concept of “interstitial space”.

2.1.1 Heterotopia: Social and Spatial Attributes

The term "heterotopia" is coined by Foucault in the introduction “The Order of Things” (1966) to describe circumstances in which "fragments of a large number of possible orders glitter separately" in a single location and where it is difficult even to discuss these situations because it is impossible to give coherence to, or even fully identify these possible orders. Foucault maintains this conception in his lecture notes from 1968, although he concentrates on “space” rather than "words and things." The "possible orders", with this lecture, become fragments of different possible spatial orders. Yet, many theorists have struggled to determine if heterotopia is essentially material or primarily linguistic (Genocchio, 1995; Saldanha, 2008).

Some scholars discuss heterotopia related to language (Genocchio, 1995; Gonick and Hladki, 2005). They suggest that disrupting ordinary syntax and semantics lets alternative meanings to flourish and this way, heterotopias emerge. For others, heterotopias are actual physical spaces, geographic settings (Soja, 1996; Hetherington, 1997; Saldanha, 2008, Shane, 2005; Cenzatti, 2008; Stavrides, 2010, 2016; Çalışkan, Cihanger Ribeiro & Tümtürk, 2020).

Hetherington (1997) reflects on the concept of heterotopia as “places of hopeful anticipation” and he states that heterotopias are not static but rather dynamic places that are “full of heterogeneity, contradiction and uncertainity” (Hetherington, 1997, p. 7). Soja also presents an alternative and noteworthy perspective on heterotopia, focusing on its spatial implications rather than its sociological dimensions.

Shane (2005), in his book “Recombinant Urbanism”, translates Foucault's spatial perspective into city design theory through introducing the concept of 'heterotopia' as a third type of 'city element,' alongside enclaves and armatures (Çalışkan et al., 2020). Shane offers a redefinition of heterotopia as heterogeneous spaces, also refers to as "sites of exception." These spaces are characterized by their ability to accommodate multiple fluxes and functions that stand apart from their immediate surroundings. This reconception refers a space where incompatible spaces juxtapose, thus, different cultures coexist, represented and contested in tandem, as posited by Foucault (Çalışkan et al., 2019).

Cenzatti (2008) also interprets the concept of “heterotopia” on spatial context. He builds upon his understanding of heterotopia both Foucault’s conception and Lefebvre’s triad of space. In his article “Heterotopias of Difference”, Cenzatti argues that heterotopia as spaces where conflicting realms coexist. These heterotopias, with their fluidity between contradiction and acceptance, exhibit an equally dynamic physical manifestation, oscillating between obscurity and recognition. Furthermore, Cenzatti (2008) associates Henri Lefebvre’s work (1991) on the production of space with the definition of the concept by Foucault and relates Lefebvre’s third aspect of space “Spaces of Representation” to the production of heterotopias. As it is mentioned before, Henri Lefebvre, in his book “The Production of Space” (1991), introduces three interconnected concepts: spatial practice, representation of space, and representational space/spaces of representation. Spatial practice refers to how people interact with and use physical space in their everyday lives, influenced by social norms and cultural meanings. Representation of space involves the creation of meanings and symbols that give significance to physical space, found in maps, artworks, literature, and other cultural artifacts. Representational space combines spatial practices and representations, reflecting social meaning, power relations, and ideologies embedded in physical space. These concepts help analyze the social production of space and how it is shaped by lived experiences, symbolic constructions, and power dynamics. Thus, representation of space refers to “the space that is directly lived, occupied and transformed by inhabiting it” (Cenzatti,

2008). David Harvey describes spaces of representation as places where "popular spectacles, street demonstrations, and riots" take place (Harvey, 1988: 266).



Figure 2.5 Announcement on Alexandras Avenue Refugee Building Complex (*Prosfygika*, n.d.)

Elaborating on the concept of "threshold" in a spatial context, Stavrides (2010) presents a unique contribution to the conceptual and operational foundation of heterotopia (Çalışkan et al., 2020). Further, Stavrides (2016) contributes to the concept by exploring the relation between porosity and heterotopias in spatial context. In his article “Heterotopias and the Experience of Porous Urban Space” states that comprehensive networks of practice transform existing spaces into potential theaters of expressive acts of encounter. These practices, based on solidarity, ease the socially programmed expressions between functions that permeate and articulate the urban space and allow the public to improvise. He explores the case of “Alexandras Avenue Refugee Building Complex” which is a social housing built for refugees who come back to Greece because of the large-scaled population exchange between Turkey and Greece. Stating the fact that these complex was built to form a boundary between the citizens and refugees, not only physical seperation but also social one was aimed by the government via the project. Physical –rational free-floating boxes- and social –outsider resident profile-

otherness of the complex form alignment with Foucault's definition of Heterotopia, thus, Stavrides (2016) considers the area as a "modern heterotopia".

This case is a significant demonstration of how individuals' interaction with each other and with space transform a neglected complex into a common space. Even though, the initial aim of the design is to keep refugees outside of the city, with collective struggle and experience, these overlooked spaces are reclaimed by the residents of the complex and a dynamic communal life is cultivated.

The exterior spaces in the project have been transformed into a network of interconnected small courtyards, sidewalks, tree-shaded areas, playgrounds and meeting places, and these areas have become social activity nexus over time. It has turned into a place that allows participants to improvise. It offers opportunities such as meeting, gathering, playing games. As can be understood from here, in this transformation, it is aimed to be independent from planned solid construction and predetermined functions. The space is allowed to act flexibly in line with the wishes and needs of the users, and grow and connect organically when necessary. For this reason, the sense of belonging and ownership emerged more easily in this collectively shaped place (Stavrides, 2016).

This project mentioned by Stavrides (2016) directly related to the main research question of this thesis, as because it explores how these marginalized spaces can be reclaimed. In this example, users reclaim marginalized spaces through collective actions and solidarity-based initiatives. When the process is examined, it is seen that; community participation, social interaction and the emergence of a communal life outside the built environment are possible.

Soja (1989, 1995, 1996) employs Foucault's theoretical framework of "heterotopias" to investigate specific geographical sites, such as the Citadel LA, the "urban fortresses" situated within the central area of Los Angeles. Nevertheless, the primary utilization of Soja's work may be traced back to the term "heterotopology," as coined by Foucault, which refers to a method of interpreting specific spatial locations. This concept leads to the notion of "thirdspace," which represents a novel perspective for

perceiving and interpreting space. This concept is influenced by the works of Lefebvre, particularly his seminal publication, “The Production of Space” (Lefebvre 1991), as well as Foucault's concept of heterotopia.

In their article “Designing the heterotopia: from social ideology to spatial morphology” (Çalışkan et al.,2020) also studies on “heterotopology” introducing the term as an alternative way to think about social diversity, one that acknowledges different communities' capacity to shape their own culture and influence the urban landscape within the broader urban context. The paper explores the concept of 'heterotopia' as a theoretical framework for a fresh approach to creating an open urban fabric that integrates diverse socio-spatial settings.

Furthermore, building upon the idea that the rising level of social complexity in the contemporary city renders the rigid binary oppositions like modern vs. traditional, public vs. private, urban vs. rural, and global vs. local, which are often found in traditional planning and design theories, ineffective and even unacceptable. This statement aligns with what Foucault (1986) suggests in the article “Of Other Spaces”, that the understanding of space shifted over time and this shift in terms of comprehending the space has eroded dialectical interconnectedness of spaces and contemporary urban space reconceptualize beyond urban dichotomies such as open and close, public and private, urban and rural. Moreover, this reflection, which serves as the basis of this article, also aligns with the primary issue addressed in this study. Embracing heterotopia as an urban concept that offers a way of thinking about design that considers the diverse social realities of contemporary cities, throughout the article; Çalışkan et al., (2020) underline that Foucault's original concept of heterotopia has not been strongly resonated in urban design research.

Exploring the lack of reflection on the concept of heterotopia in urban design, Çalışkan et al., (2020) aim to strengthen the dimension of design thinking by critically examining the existing theory. The objective is to develop heterotopia as a concept that connects social diversity with spatial form generation.

Each composition reflects a specific life patterns based on a particular ideology and local fabrics imply diverse urban fabrics that co-exist in the same context. Yet, developing local fabrics did not entirely align with the fundamental capacity of a heterotopic organization as the desired level of integrity for the internally cohesive fragments could not be attained only based on the individual fabrics. This is due to the fact that heterotopias do not only consist of diverse fragments but also establishes simultaneous connections in an accumulative manner. To enhance the integration of characteristic fragments with other sites in a broader context, various spatial strategies, including "structural integrations between local networks, typological continuities in building setting, and spatial commonalities" can be employed (Çalışkan et al., 2020).

Spatial strategies serve as the foundation for the development of distinct local design operations that allow for the establishment of a heterotopian environment characterized by a fragmented yet interrelated and integrated spatial arrangement. Designated operations are "inter-penetration, spattering, linking and patching" (Çalışkan et al., 2020). This way, through employing basic typological codes, it is possible to translate spatial formations influenced by social and cultural structures and ideologies into architectural design elements according to Çalışkan et al.,(2020).

2.1.2 Thirdspace: Social and Spatial Atrributes

The concept of "thirdspace" is introduced by Edward Soja (1996) which is mostly a continuation of Henri Lefebvre's "triad of space". Soja adopts a trialectic approach to the understanding of space in which spatiality, sociality and historicality are all intertwined. In his book "Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places," the space is explored through the interactions between the physical space, people's individual and collective experiences and social bonds among people and with real places. By introducing the "third", he aims to transcend the conventional dialectic approach of spatial theories and conceptualize the thirdspace as "fully lived space" (Soja, 1996).

There are “first space”, “second space” and “thirdspace” according to the Soja’s theory. First space is the actual, tangible world. While it contains urban environments and architectural built forms that we encounter in everyday life, first space also points out the activities that take place at these actual, concrete spaces. Second space corresponds to the “imagined” representations of spatiality. It provides a space for creating perceptions, interpretations and understandings of physical reality through mental maps, diagrams, cultural narratives and imagined connections based on the past activities and experiences. Hence, second space comprises the social, cultural and psychological aspects that impact how we view and experience physical spaces. Thirdspace is, basically, the combination of first space and second space. Combining these spaces, Soja constructs the “thirdspace” that is “a fully lived space, a simultaneously real-and-imagined, actual-and-virtual locus of structured individual and collective experience and agency” (Soja, 1996). It is a social space that concurrently shifts its identity from real to imagined, tangible to intangible, material to metaphorical, and visa versa (Soja, 1996, p. 65). This dynamism underlines the essence of “thirdspace” as it suggests interpreters to transcend the urban binaries, furthermore, move beyond the third term as well (Soja, 1996, p.65). By transcending or moving beyond, the rejection of the dichotomies is not implied. Rather, these acts embrace existing binaries that are established in the interpretation of space, view them as inherently interrelated and construct alternative interpretations of space that emerge from the initial perceptions and aim to develop a perception of space that transpierces urban dichotomies. Thirdspace, then, is the experience of life in the Firstspace mediated through Secondspace expectations.

Homi Bhabha (1994) interprets the concept of “thirdspace” through the lenses of political discourses of interstitiality and hybridity related to the coloniality and postcoloniality. Through interweaving the elements of diverse cultures, this interpretation conveys a hybrid cultural identity and defines hybridity as a liminal or interstitial space in which “cutting edge of translation and negotitation” take place (Bhabha, 1996). In order to produce hybridity in culture, Bhabha suggests cultural negotiation between the colonizer and colonized people. He uses the term

“thirdspace” to describe the liminal spaces between colliding cultures which “gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation (Bhabha, 1990, p.211).

Thirdspaces can be encountered in daily life. Libraries can be the one of the examples of thirdspace. They are social spaces without paid entry and neither home nor workplace. These spaces encourage communal activities such as cross-disciplinary panels, community events and generate a common identity through these interactions. For the case of libraries, while the built-form is the first space, second space is defined by the experience of the first space through reading, sharing knowledge and interact with people from diverse backgrounds. Thirdspace sees the library as the combination of both spaces, a reciprocal process in which the everchanging and ongoing social events re-shape the physical space, whereas, the builtform and its physical conditions re-construct the ongoing social events.



Figure 2.6 The event held at a library as part of the Writing Festival in 2019 (Öztürk, 2019)

Slums can be a different scaled, relatively larger scale, example for the concept of thirdspace. The collection of handcrafted shacks clustered together, usually on the outskirts or in difficult-to-use urban space is interpreted as first space. As for the second space, the act of invading or making up of abandoned or forgotten urban portions by the urban poor, or migrants arriving from outside the city, primarily from rural areas, searching for a place to reşide, make slums a place for refugee. This way, through the experience alters the understanding of the physical reality and builds the second space. Considering the thirdspace, with the interactions of these people with

each other and with the physical space construct an alternative city within a city that lacks formal norms and access to formal services. In this informal city, residents are striving for their own spatial justice and creating their own spaces to dwell outside of the formal.



Figure 2.7 Slums located in Tarlabaşı, Istanbul (*Türkiye'nin Bir Gerçeği Olan Gecekondulaşmanın Tarihi*, 2020)

Throughout chapter 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 "heterotopia" and "thirdspace" are described from diverse point of views. These common and diverse characteristics provide a basis for the reinterpretation and contribution to interstitial spaces as a concept to understand and define spaces that are conventionally depicted as empty, underutilized and residual. In chapter 2.1.3 these characteristics derived from the content analysis of "heterotopia" and "thirdspace" will be discussed to question whether these qualities can also be the qualities of interstitial spaces.

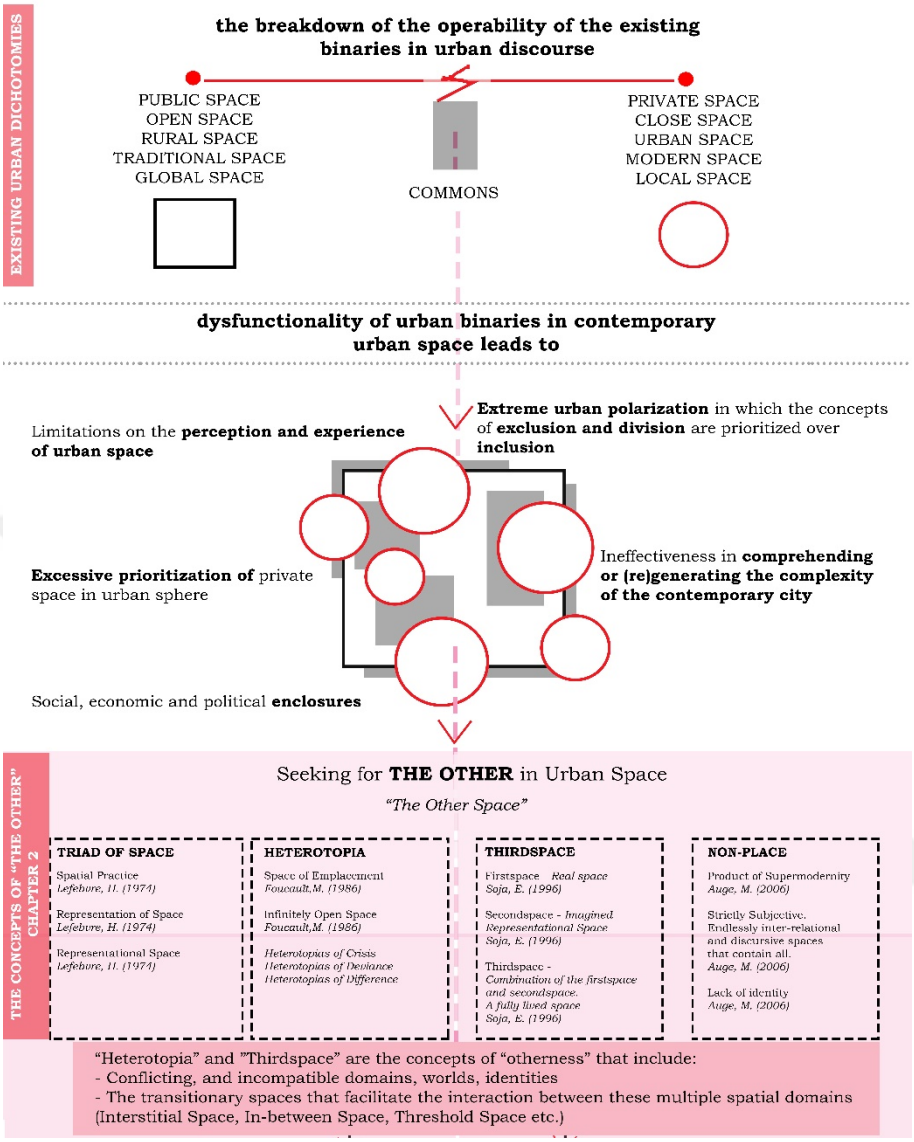


Figure 2.8 Flow diagram from the starting point of the study to the concept of "other space" (prepard by the author)

Figure 2.8 illustrates the continuous progression from the starting point of the study to the introduction and examination of the concept of "other space". The study challenges urban dichotomies as insufficient and dysfunctional for experiencing and producing the contemporary city, and explores the concept of "other space" in search of an alternative space that transcends these dichotomies. Diagram also summarizes

four main concepts of the "other space" by including the approaches of the academics who discusses these concepts priorly.

After exploring the concepts of "otherness" through introducing diverse and similar ideas, approaches and discussions from variety of academics, the following section is to evaluate the inherent spatial and social qualities of these concepts to question whether these qualities can be found in interstitial spaces.

2.1.3 Evaluation of the Concepts of Heterotopia and Thirdspace

From the abovementioned definitions and discussions, the common qualities that the study draw from the concepts of heterotopia and thirdspace can be ***multiplicity*** and ***heterogeneity*** as these areas contain different urban fragments, contradicted domains and diverse identities. ***Transitoriness, fluidity, temporality*** and ***porosity*** can be also derived as there are interfaces within these areas where these fragments encounter, interact and integrate without losing their identities, and at the same time diverge. Yet, these qualities obtained from these concepts through elaborating on the literature review are mere interpretations of the study to the diverse perspectives of academics on these concepts. In order to understand whether these qualities can be claimed as the spatial and social characteristics of the interstitial space, they need to be supported by the analysis of the case study area and the responses from the experts in the in-depth interview. Therefore, after conducting the analyses for the case study, these qualities will be compared to the ones that will be derived from the outcomes of the data analysis in Chapters 5 and 6.

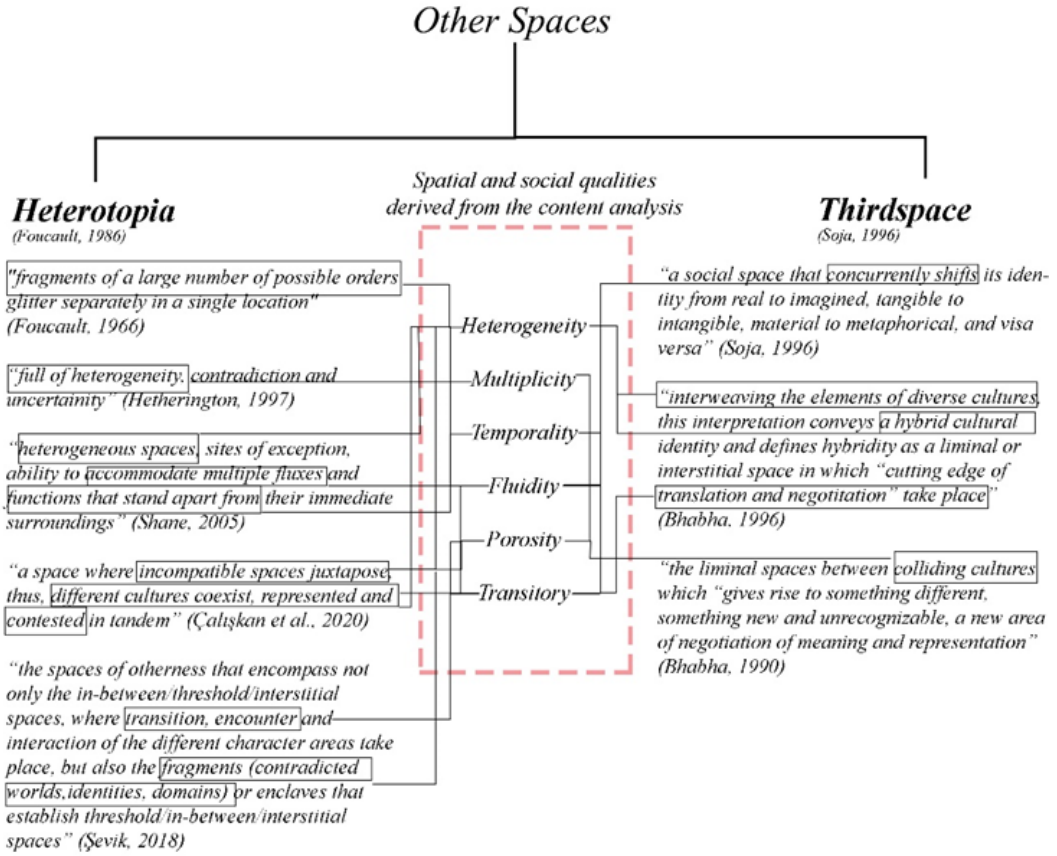


Figure 2.9 Thematic analysis from the descriptions of Heterotopia and Thirdspace in sub-chapters 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 (prepared by the author)

Next chapter, in search of "other space", will delve into the potential of the commons in producing alternative spaces and transforming existing urban spaces, questioning their efficacy as a tool and strategy.

2.2 Commons as a Transformative Strategy to Seek for the Other Spaces

The debate on commons has grown exponentially in the twenty-first century (De Angelis & Harvie, 2014). There are political, economic, social and spatial reasons to think on whether there is an alternative way of reading the city that transpierce the urban dichotomies. Beginning with Elinor Ostrom (1990), the commons, traditionally defined, as a collection of resources that encompasses "all creations of nature and society" that are learned jointly and freely and exist regarding the present

and future generations. Her definition refers commons as a sustainable management of the environmental pool resources (Ostrom, 1990). Similar to Ostrom (1990), Mehan and Mehan (2022) also define commons as resources shared by a community of actively using and maintaining them. Short-coming of these definitions are that they disregard the potential for production and social organisation of the commons. In contrast to these definitions, Linebaugh (2008) criticizes referring to the commons as if it were a mere natural resource which is, at best, inaccurate and, at worst, dangerous. He suggests considering commons as a verb emphasizing its dynamic nature as an ongoing activity which encompasses the relationships within society.

As Linebaugh stated, it could be more rational and beneficial to consider "commons" as a verb as opposed to a noun. Moreover, in “The Right to the City”, Lefebvre (1996) alludes to both the right to use and the right to produce urban space through collective means. Harvey (2008) also argues that the right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization. Interpreting the commons as social processes of production and organization, rather than merely as resources available for appropriation, captures its true essence. According to Fournier (2013), from this perspective, the commons emerges as a self-sufficient method of social organization that allows for the continuous (re)production and maintenance of shared resources. This expression also indicates the continuity of the interaction between the collective resources and the users.

The issue of the commons has been widely discussed and debated in the Turkish context in recent years. In fact, a compilation book consisting of 17 articles approaching this concept from different disciplinary perspectives was published in 2023. The book, compiled by Fırat and Genç (2023), Mülkiyet ve Müşterekler - Türkiye'de Mülkiyetin İnşası İcrası ve İhlali (Property and the Commons - The Construction, Execution and Violation of Property in Turkey) brings together the conceptual and empirical accumulation of different disciplines from anthropology to

economics around the issue of property. The studies they bring together in the book problematize ancient themes of social sciences such as state, class, identity or violence by focusing on property in the context of Turkey. Even though this compilation deals with the concept of the commons with a focus on property unlike this study, it is a significant source for the study as it contains definitions and examples aligned with this study at various points and its context is Turkey.

Fırat and Genç (2023) discuss that the commons refers to practices of production and social reproduction of the community based on non-market-oriented social relations that have the potential to protect communities and subaltern classes from the destruction of market relations that tend to privatize all spheres of social life. Supporting Linebaugh's (2008) idea that the commons is a verb rather than a noun, the book underlines that commoning should be understood as practices of place- and community-building, based on direct action and collective use, aimed at building autonomy in the face of market forces (Bloomley, 2008, Chatterton, 2010, Fırat & Genç, 2023). That is, rather than talking about the commons as a pool of resources that are needed to manage and allocate, it is more reflective of the essence of the concept to talk about it as a process that produces and transforms space and communities. Moreover, Fırat and Genç (2023) claim that although the studies in "Mülkiyet ve Müşterekler" (Property and the Commons) focus heavily on private property, the whole book is in an effort to construct a framework that does not reproduce the private-public dichotomy because when property relations are divided and fixed as private and public property, other multi-layered and collective property claims, and therefore commoning practices, will be rendered invisible. This study also claims that the commons is a space transformative strategy that is beyond the public-private confrontations.

As mentioned above, the compilation and this study support each other in terms of approach to key concepts and context. However, the way aforementioned book and this study approach the commons differs in one crucial matter. While the former tackles with the idea, the commons within the context of ownership, this study

evaluates the commons through its potential to produce and transform space through its practices and the dynamics that support this potential.

2.2.1 Distinction of Common Space from Public Space

When discussing the commons, it is inevitable not to mention key debates within this paradigm, including enclosures, property disputes, the dichotomy between capitalist and noncapitalist systems, and the positioning of social and ecological concerns within economic relationships. Kostakis and Buwens (2014) have discussed that the term 'commons' has been used to represent various concepts such as “shared resources,” “a discourse,” “a new/old property framework,” “social processes,” “ethic,” and “set of policies,” as well as “a paradigm of a pragmatic new social vision beyond the prevailing capitalist system”. Eventhough Ostrom’s definition of the commons mostly covers shared resource allocation, her work challenges well-known “Tragedy of the Commons” by Garret Hardin (1968). Hardin (1968) argues that, due to human nature, resource exploitation would be inevitable if everyone had unrestricted access to a shared resource pool. This framework suggest market-driven economies and capitalistic point of view as the only rational approach to the urban life and concedes people as naturally self-interested and always look for ways to increase their wealth while decreasing their expenditures as a fact. Yet, this framework overlooks the non-capitalist systems and most of the contemporary common spaces. Thus, Ostrom underlines these overlooked sides of the commons with her work. Bresnihan and Byrne (2015) also suggest commons as a strategy for escaping and resisting the forms of enclosures that are imposed by the contemporary neoliberalism. Furthermore, they discuss negative impacts of the neoliberalism by underlying the effects of urbanization and commodification on the urban space. They highlight how rapid urban development, encouraged by the contemporary neoliberal and post-neoliberal phases of capitalism, has accelerated the commodification of urban life and the destruction of urban areas over the past two decades.

Actually, this is not a Dublin-only case as the contemporary cities all around the world are subjected to this process of enclosure simultaneously because the same politico-economic phase occurs worldwide. Owing to economic and political crises, urban space, consequently urban life becomes trapped, enclosed and enclaved and therefore is oriented toward “city of enclaves”. These processes lead people to explore alternative ways for living, socializing; producing unique spaces in order to escape the forms of “enclosure” that reduce the possiblities a city can offer and do what they want. It thus demands close attention to the everyday ways in which people escape and resist new forms of enclosure. “Through these escapes people immediately produce and sustain common, non-proprietorial worlds” (Bloomley 2008). Thus, for commoning practices to emerge, there must be a trigger, a problem that fuel this social movement, an issue that urges to resist. In this case, it emerges to resist state-capitalist captivation of urban space to emancipate and re-appropriate it through collective struggle, but this does not necessarily mean that all spaces emerge through commoning practices must have a political identity. Eventhough, these resistive quality of commoning practices shape the urban space, thus create “the common space”, these spaces do not have to adopt any political features or go after a political agenda. They can be “independent spaces” that underline the importance of non-commercial, open participation in the production of spaces that can make possible the kinds of activities, events, dynamics and forms of social life excluded by high rents and over-regulation without being driven by political ideologies, as Bresnihan and Byrne (2015) suggest.

The independent space is defined by Bloomley (2008) as its distinguishable connection to the urban fabric, its existence outside the spaces of private property, and its particular encouragement of methods of collective belonging. A similar definition is made by Stavrides (2015). According to Stavrides, common spaces are separated from public and private spaces because these spaces are produced as an output of the collective efforts of users. While these circles represent society, they also nurture, transform and enable new possibilities. That's why it's quite different from public and private spaces. Public spaces are established by authorities

determined by official institutions. Privates, on the other hand, are owned and controlled by certain individuals. For the reasons mentioned here, common spaces are and should be differentiated from public and private spaces.

It is crucial for this study to underline the differentiation between public space and the common space, because the fact that both are practically "open to the public" can make it difficult to understand how they differ from each other. In the processes mentioned above by Breshnihan and Byrne (2015), the state-market duo shapes the urban landscape by dividing it into public and private spaces. This binary approach of the neoliberal system to the urban life limits the experience of the diversity and complexity a city can offer as this kind of approach accommodates only narrow sets of activities, interactions and behaviors. “Our so-called “public” spaces are there only for leisure and temporary pleasures permitted by proprietary governments” (Collis, 2011). Thus, this study portrays spaces produced through various relationships, practices, and uses as common spaces, distinct from public spaces, by realizing the enclosures implied on the public spaces of the contemporary urban settings. This interpretation of common space alligns with Harvey’s argument on the common space, it also highlights the significance of these spaces in terms of accumulating the ideas, people, practices and relationships. Through these accumulations, collective struggle can be formed as these spaces do not necessarily emerge from grand plans or revolutions, but from "what people do, feel, sense, and articulate as they seek meaning in their lives" (Harvey, 2012). Thus, the production of a common space, characterized by openness and active engagement, can be facilitated by the spontaneous convergence of different perspectives and the interaction of individuals from varied backgrounds.

This sub-chapter underlines the separation of common space from the private-public dichotomy that dominates the modern urban fabric. The following sub-chapter will discuss the commons as a way of producing common space and its potential to transform space through investigating real-world commons examples.

2.2.2 Commons as a Space-Transformative Process

The commons that take more diverse and intangible forms, such as social, intellectual, and cultural commons, have rather indirect relations with the space, but still, they affect and shape the space where they take place and vice versa. The environment where commoning practices occur is considered non-linear, dynamic, and productive (Sohn et al., 2015). That is why it is equally important to emphasize the productive and organizational potential of the commons, as well as its creative capacity. According to Stavrides (2016), commoning practices play an essential role in increasing the interaction of individuals and establishing new bonds. Commons facilitate the organization of various sharing arrangements, encouraging creative interactions. Thus, new bonds that do not exist can be established. It is possible to integrate people, physical space, producing and re-producing materials, and knowledge and convey alternative ways of social life through the commons and its processes.

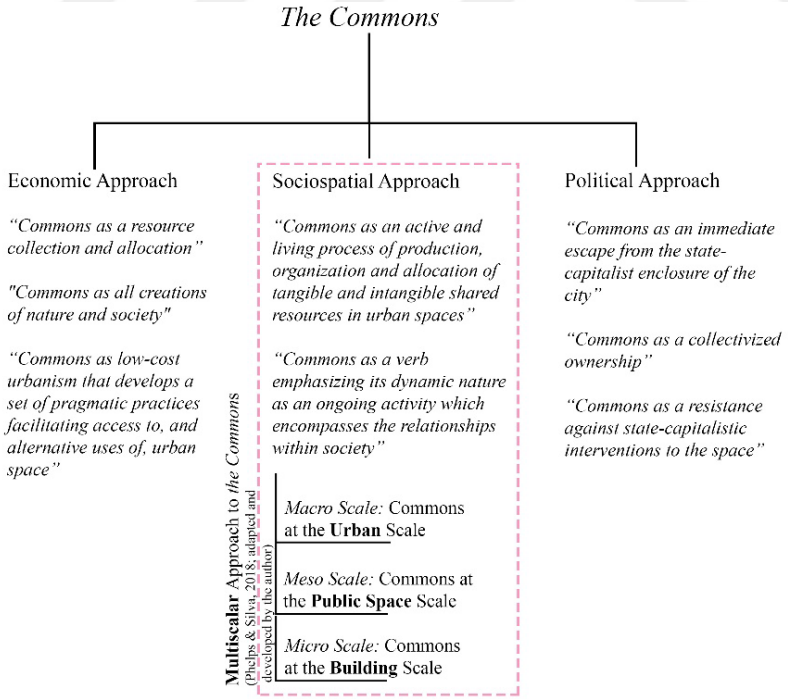


Figure 2.10 Diagram that indicates multiple approaches toward the concept of commons (prepared by the author)

100. Yıl Berkin Elvan Urban Gardens in Ankara can be a significant example to observe these dynamics catalized by “the commons” as transformation of a vacant lot into an urban common by group of people to collectively grow food, host events, share knowledges and stories can be a vivid example of how commoning practices transform and integrate an interstitial space into a lively common space (Koçak, 2019). Negotiation with authorities, collaboration among community members and production of social organizations and solidarity networks can be some of the steps of this transformation process. This case is living proof of how, along with the physical contribution of the commons and commoning practices to the space, the interactions, encounters, exchanges of information and emotions, and the network of reciprocal relations between people-people and people-space catalyzed by these practices are the key factors that transform the space (Koçak, 2019). This way, commons and commoning can hold the potential of transforming and re-connecting fragments of the city via transforming undefined spaces.

There are several examples from different urban scales around the world that indicate how new forms of social practices emerge with the transformative impact of the commons. Although the commons is widely discussed in academic literature as a means of socio-economic sharing and reproduction and as a bottom-up organizing method, this study focuses on its potential to transform and reproduce space.

As mentioned in the previous sections, this study analyzes urban spaces by adapting the theoretical framework created by Phelps and Silva (2018) in their study "Mind the gaps! A research agenda for urban interstices", that examines the concepts of interstice and interstitial space at multiple scales, to the Turkish locality (the framework will be explained in detail in Chapter 3). Therefore, by adhering to this theoretical framework and drawing upon existing literature on the commons, the study has discerned three distinct scales of the commons: the urban scale. public scale, and the building scale.

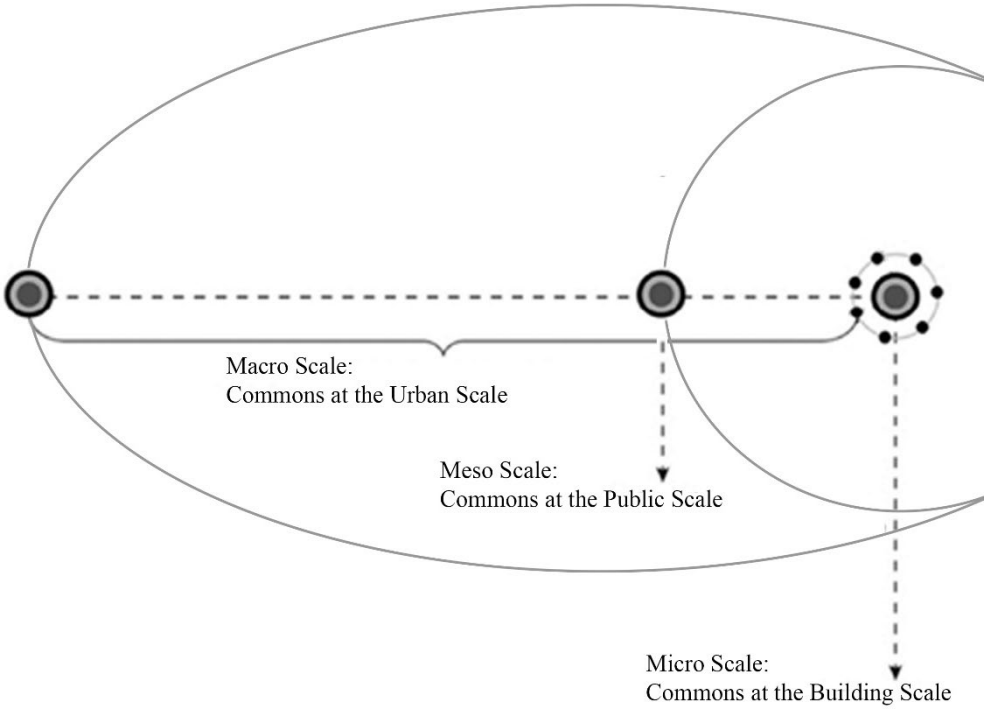


Figure 2.11 Adapting the theoretical framework of Phelps and Silva (2018) to the scales of the commons that are discerned from literature review and real life cases (Phelps et al., 2018 adapted by the author)

After reviewing the place of the commons in the literature and the interpretations of the terms associated with this concept, the study moves on to analyze the dynamics underlying the transformation of space through commoning practices by examining various examples from around the world, including Turkey, that have different scales and social dimensions.

Next sub-chapters 2.2.2.1, 2.2.2.2, 2.2.2.3 will explore these multiscalar approach towards commons and try to understand the transformative potential of the commons with real life examples from multiple scales.

2.2.2.1 Commons at the Urban Scale

According to Stavrides (2015) “a common space may take the form of a meeting ground, an area in which ‘expansive circuits of encounter’ intersect.” Through these

intersections, new and diverse forms of social practices, i.e. commoning practices, emerge. Urban gardens can be utilized to examine the commons and commoning practices at the urban scale as they have a great potential to establish new social networks to enable the exchange of information and experience among users, to encourage the interaction of different cultures and to form a community through negotiations that lead to the creation of integrated production (Fournier, 2013). In these areas, meaningful information and cultural exchanges occur between people of different ethnic origins. It enables collaboration between different age, occupation, income groups. This way, the diversity and richness of experience and knowledge transfers are ensured. While these gardens are promoting cooperation and sharing rather than private ownership and exclusion, they can form inclusive relationships and are important for fostering a sense of community belonging. Therefore, it is important to underline that, urban gardens as common spaces do not only refer to the natural resources, they are catalyzers for building new social relations, exchanging intangible values, sharing and collaborating, thus re-producing and reclaiming. It is this collaborative and diverse set of activities that make this space commons, this togetherness creates the common ground.

In the literature, urban gardening is evaluated and discussed in many different themes such as food security and food sovereignty, sustainable food production, spaces of interacting, exchanging knowledge and building community; a means for utilizing vacant areas, form of protest against neoliberal urbanism and battleground for urban justice. This study, on the other hand, approaches urban gardens as alternative spatial formations to escape from the existing urban dichotomies in the city, questioning the interstitial space qualities of these spaces and the processes of commoning in relation to these spaces within the locality of Turkey.

There are many examples of urban agriculture in the world and Turkey. Worldwide, from Tokyo to Milan, from Dijon to Mumbai, from Bamberg to New York, communities are fighting to open up space for and support urban agriculture and to bridge the urban-rural divide. In Bamberg, a city in Germany, since the 14th century, the city has practiced urban agriculture and has been included in the UNESCO World

Heritage List for its gardens. Additionally, The Gardener and Vintner Museum, an urban agriculture museum in the city, preserves and exhibits agricultural identity, local plants, and agricultural practices. Visitors can experience preservation firsthand, and these gardens are carefully maintained. Furthermore, individuals in the region have been authorized to cultivate and plant roadside areas without any permits (İstanbul Kent Bostanları Çalışma Grubu, 2021).



Figure 2.12 Historical Urban Gardens in Bamberg (*Urbaner Gartenbau*, n.d.)

In Milan, the capital of Italy, the Cascina Cuccagna farm, which is one of the oldest urban agricultural sites, was established in 1695 and features a garden that spans 1500 square meters. Over the past decade, a committee representing several organizations has slowly transformed this dilapidated farm into a communal cultural center. Cascina Cuccagna is a community gathering place that celebrates the city's agricultural past and the significance of modern farming to city life. The farm is also the site of cutting-edge cultural research initiatives that examine citywide initiatives by NGOs, groups, foundations, and institutions to promote sustainability (Cascina Cuccagna, 2019).



Figure 2.13 Farmhouse of Cascina Cuccagna (Cascina Cuccagna, 2023)

For the past ten years, people in Mumbai, one of the Indian cities with the highest population density, poverty, and income inequality, have started creating gardens on building terraces and rooftops. Mumbai residents rely on these gardens to supply part of their food needs in an area where access to clean water, food, and green space is extremely limited. Moreover, Mumbai Railways began leasing open spaces for agriculture surrounding the rails in 2012, with the tagline "Grow More Food". A few households have succeeded in producing enough veggies for the market, and a few have even begun raising chickens. The Railways Department in Mumbai keeps reclaiming areas once used for construction trash and rubbish in order to establish new urban gardens (İstanbul Kent Bostanları Çalışma Grubu, 2021).



Figure 2.14 Urban gardens surrounding the Mumbai railways (Reid, 2019)

While these examples are some of the urban gardens that exist around the world, there is still a need to discuss the potantial of commoning processes to transform an

undefined urban space. NeuLand, located in Cologne, Germany, can therefore be a significant example for understanding the space-transformative potential of the commons in an undefined urban space.

NeuLand has been an urban space frequently used by city dwellers as a local brewery and beer garden since the mid-1960s, but with the demolition of this industrial use in 2008, it became an undefined, unused industrial wasteland in the heart of the city (Follmann & Viehoff, 2015).

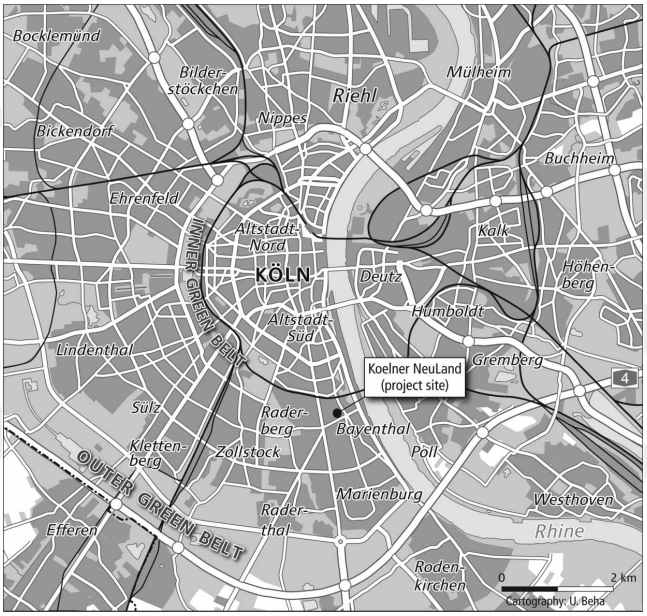


Figure 2.15 The location of NeuLand in Cologne, Germany (Follmann & Viehoff, 2015)

In the period that followed, various large-scale developments were proposed for the site by several administrative bodies, but these plans were not implemented. The inability to reach a common decision between the landowner, the federal state and the City of Cologne, which had a say in the future of the site, led to the site remaining a wasteland in the middle of the city until 2011. The NeuLand Urban Garden project, which started in 2011 as a "green flash mob" with 150 people spontaneously planting in this area, was organized and formalized by a registered charity organization, which was born out of the public's effort to claim this area (Follmann et al., 2015). As a

result of these actions, the federal state allowed the site to become a "temporary" urban garden, so in 2012 gardeners arrived on the site with transportable planting boxes. Within a year, the NeuLand project had built a community of 40-50 gardeners and organized workshops, presentations and garden festivals attended by hundreds of people. It is a space that is open to everyone, all the time, allowing gardeners to experiment with new ideas and shape the space according to their own wishes. Despite this inclusivity, NeuLand, the registered charitable organization that manages the area, is a relatively more formal entity. This organization aims to intervene in local politics and to participate in shaping planning decisions concerning their neighborhood, so the gardening activities that take place in this area also have a political dimension (Follmann et al., 2015).

The significance of this project for this study is that through collective practices such as plantings, beekeeping workshops, all access barbecues, food exchange stations and garden festivals, this area has been saved from being a wasteland in the middle of the city and transformed into an urban commons actively used by citizens.

In the case of Turkey, the country has a long history of agriculture in urban settlements. They are called as “bostan-s” locally where “bostancı” have utilized these spaces for urban agriculture (Durusoy & Cihanger, 2016). In Ankara, the capital city of Turkey, 100. Yıl Berkin Elvan Urban Garden is one of the significant example in terms of creating an urban agricultural space that sustains its urban commons characteristics through continuous practices and relationships building the commons there. Eventhough harvesting is open to everyone, this place is not only for producing food but formulating possibly different practices and relationships through open to everyone harvesting, collective breakfasts and dinners the 100. Yıl Initiative organizes in gardens, building 100. Yıl Food Community, short and long term workshops such as “do-it-yourself home cleaning products workshop, sewing and repairing courses, second-hand markets” taking place in the Neighborhood Atelier (Koçak, 2019). This way, by encouraging people to participate governing, cultivating, collecting and allocating processes of the bostan, produces the multilayered and diverse collective experiences. Koçak (2019) suggests that

“encounters, webs of relationships, and commoning practices” have developed through collective experiences and these dynamics transform the bostan into an urban common. Thus, this statement supports the space-transformative potential of the commons.



Figure 2.16 100.Yıl Berkin Elvan Bostan (Umutsen, 2017)

In Istanbul, the capital city of three great empires, Roman, Byzanine and Otoman, urban gardens and urban agriculture have dated back to the Byzantine period. At the end of the twentieth century, there were approximately 1200 urban gardens on the European side from Çekmece to Rumeli Feneri and on the Anatolian side from Tuzla to Anadolu Feneri (Günçıkan, 1990). Today, the limited number of gardens has shifted to the periphery of Istanbul, which is rapidly growing, concretizing and gentrifying under the influence of urban transformation policies (Aykan & Başyurt, 2019). Nevertheless, there are still urban agricultural areas in Istanbul that have survived as part of Istanbul's living history and cultural heritage, including the Kuzguncuk Bostanı, Piyalepaşa Bostanı and Yedikule Bostanları in the city center, the agricultural areas in Sarıyer Gümüşdere, the Yarımburgaz gardens on the shores of Küçükçekmece Lake, the gardens in Maltepe and the Beylikdüzü Municipality garden (İstanbul Kent Bostanları Çalışma Grubu, 2021).

Within the scope of the thesis, exploring urban gardens near to the city center of Istanbul meets the objective of the study which is to explore the interstitiality of an urban garden through exploring the potential of the commons in the locality of Turkey. The history of the Yedikule Urban Gardens dates back to the Istanbul Land Walls, the construction of which was completed in the 5th century during the reign of Theodosius II.. This makes Yedikule Gardens the oldest urban agricultural area and historical market gardens in the world, and therefore it has a unique and important place not only in Turkey but also in the common heritage of the world (Şahin & Kahraman, 2021). Until the mid 20th century, there were hundreds of market gardens in İstanbul. Today the Yedikule gardens are the only market-garden complex that remains in İstanbul, which is under the great pressure and threat of the rapid urban development. Despite Koçak's (2019) argument, Yedikule Gardens cannot be seen as places that emerge from practices of commoning in their current situation because of the failure of municipal interventions and the state-capitalist approach, this study claims that the collective practices and struggles of Yedikule Gardens Initiative to preserve the heritage of urban agriculture, old traditions and the living culture of the site, the workshops, ateliers and classes organized by volunteers, festivals that introduce “Yedikule Lettuce” to newcommers build a community that “weaves together a rich tapestry of different times, spaces and struggles” (Chatterton, 2010). This makes commoning practices what transforms the gardens into urban commons even if the place emerges from practice of commoning or not.



Figure 2.17 A- Visuals from Yedikule Urban Gardens (*Yedikule Bostanlarının tarihçesi,* 2018) B- Yedikule Urban Gardens located on the Land Walls (İstanbul Kent Bostanları Çalışma Grubu, 2021)

In addition to Yedikule, another of the historical gardens that still exists in Istanbul is the Great Piyalepaşa Mosque Garden, which was established in 1565-1574 on the edge of the Kozlu Stream bed, where Piyalepaşa Boulevard passes today. This garden, the boundaries of which are also specified in the endowments, should not be considered separate from the complex, whose mosque, mausoleum and hazira we can see (İstanbul Kent Bostanları Çalışma Grubu, 2021). In 2015, although the demolition of Piyalepaşa Garden was on the agenda due to the underground parking lot and landscaping project developed by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, the Archaeologists' Association Istanbul Branch and activists attempted to register the historic garden in order to protect it against the parking lot and landscaping project, and with the decision of the Istanbul Regional Board for the Protection of Cultural Assets No. II dated 07. 09.2015, this place was officially registered as it is the continuation of the original land use, has cultural and aesthetic value, and represents the remaining example of the camibostan association (Archaeologists' Association Istanbul Branch, 2017).



Figure 2.18 Piyalepaşa Mosque Garden (İldun, 2023)

Lastly, Kuzguncuk Community Gardens is another historical gardens which is located in one of the city centers of İstanbul. In the 1990s, first a hospital and then a school were planned to be built in this area, but a local struggle was formed with the support of the neighborhood and the Kuzguncuk People's Association against the threat of the destruction of the garden, and as a result of this struggle, the historical Kuzguncuk garden was saved from being opened for construction yet, municipality took control of the space and redesigned as a hobby garden open to the neighborhood (İstanbul Kent Bostanları Çalışma Grubu, 2021).



Figure 2.19 Kuzguncuk Community Gardens (*Bostan Hikayeleri Projesi,* 2017)

2.2.2.2 Commons at the Public Scale

The commons produced on a public scale is realized when people, who come together due to political, economic, social and spatial dissatisfaction, occupy public space and make use of commoning practices to pierce the publicness of space and the possibility of its privatization, gradually, build common space, a threshold that is neither public space nor private space. These commons are usually formed by resisting state sanctions or the privatization of public space, and, therefore, they transform public space and reproduce it as a common space during the resistance, in other words, because it is a reactive action, the commons built here are ephemeral. Yet, even though, with the end of the incidents, the physical space of the protests cannot be defined as "common space" anymore; the events have already transformed both the physical and perceived space. The Gezi Park events in Istanbul provide valuable insight into the practices of commons at this scale.

The Gezi Park Events dating 2013, is an important example for formation of the commons in Turkey that reveals how the occupied public space was reclaimed by the spirit of collective struggle and the identity of the space was jointly evolved from the public. "The struggle for Gezi Park and Taksim Square set a new definition of what public space means. It was the description of the collective experience of re-appropriating the metropolis by a group" (Stavrides, 2015). While the public spaces were claimed, interstitial spaces such as boulevards also transformed into common spaces through organizing creative events and forums, creating solidarity networks.

The protests began on May 28, 2013, as a small-scale environmental protest against the destruction of Istanbul's Taksim Gezi Park in order to build a shopping mall on that site. Despite the protests were triggered by the environmental consciousness, they turned into a widespread anti-government uprising by May 31, as the police overused tear gas and water cannons, this movement also expanded to the cities of Ankara and İzmir (Taştan, 2013). Thus the environmental protest transformed into one of the most significant mass civic movement in the history of the nation and a

worldwide campaign. “Everywhere Taksim!, Everywhere Resistance!” became the timeless motto of the protests.



Figure 2.20 1/1000 scale Beyoğlu District, Urban Protected Area (Yurdadön Aslan & Yavan, 2018)

Even though Gezi Park protests directly linked to the politics of the government, for this thesis, the focus is how privatization of public spaces – demolishing Gezi Park to build a shopping mall – urge people to resist and build common against the commodification of urban space. Eventually this process, building networks of solidarity in local communities to experience the commoning practices, organizing art and creative events and forums, constituting environmental social movements, transform and reclaim the physical and social space and create the “otherness”. According to Ozduzen (2019), these activities of resistance unite the public spaces, the parks in Istanbul during the Gezi and activists' collective struggle against privatization of urban space. They transformed these spaces into “political parks” and “spaces of hope”; the major gathering sites for protestors were Taksim square, Gazi, Küçük Armutlu, Okmeydanı and the squares of Beyoğlu, Kadıköy and Beşiktaş. Anti-capitalist Muslims, environmental and ecological activists, academic initiatives, feminists, urban chambers, unions and independent activists joined their forces to resist the limitations enforced by the government to the urban space via

variety of spatial strategies such as occupations, forums, political concerts, festivals and crowdfundings.

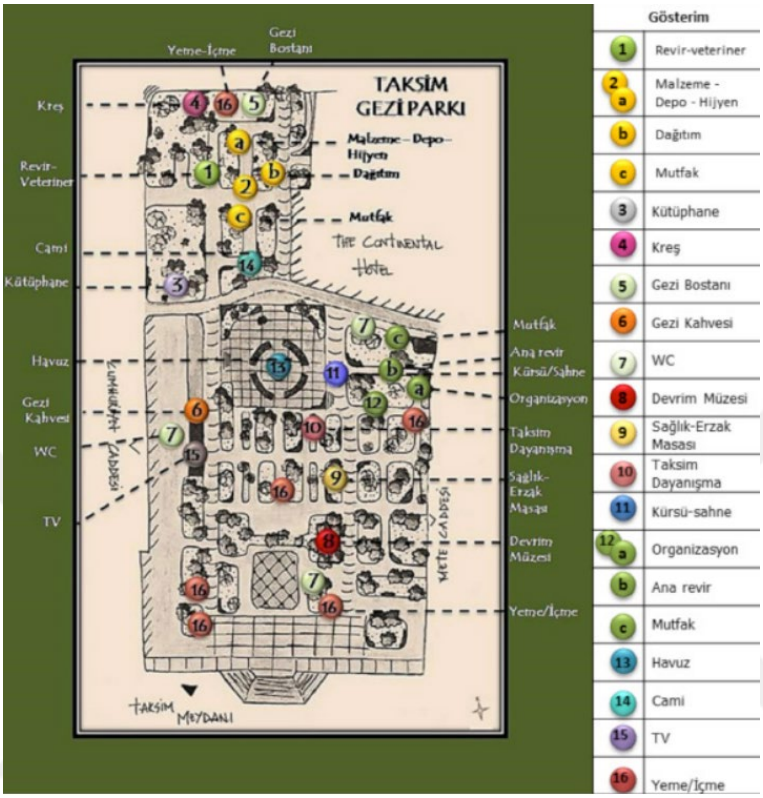


Figure 2.21 Use of the Park During the Gezi Park Events (Yurdadön Aslan & Yavan, 2018)

Through these activities and collective experience of the space via protestors coming from different groups and communities, Gezi Park transform from a mere public space to other space, a space which is neither public nor private (Figure 2.13). Thus, the acts of reclaiming public spaces where differences meet and intersect via resisting, protesting, creating art have created a collective behavior, the practice of the commons, and these practices have re-defined and re-appropriate public spaces (Gül et al, 2014).

During and after the protests, people from many different locations and ideologies formed various self identified organizations. Some of the most active role players were Yoğurtçu Women's Forum, Göztepe Solidarity, Kadıköy Cooperative,

Northern Forests Defense and Don Quixote Squat, as well as the Validebağ Validebağ Defense, Anti-capitalist Muslims and TMMOB (Ozduzen, 2019). Some of these neighborhood solidarities which were organizing forums, concerts, ateliers and many more needed indoor spaces when the summer has ended. This resulted in the emergence of squat/occupy house in the city. Don Quixote Social Center was the first of the many. It was soon followed by Caferağa Squat, Mr. Samsa Squat, Free Common Space Initiative. However, as because they were occupied houses, the state instititons evacuated them soon after their establishments.

In a similar vein, with the spirit of the Gezi Park Protests, community-powered organizations start to emerge rapidly in Istanbul. TAK Kadıköy (Design Atelier Kadıköy), Atölye (Atelier), Roof Co-living, Yel Değirmeni Art, Rasimpaşa Volunteer House, Postane Social Center, İSMEK are some of the organisations which also experience urban collectives and solidarity but they differ from the squats in terms of legality, affiliated institutions, functions, and lack of political incentives. These organizations, whose point of departure are in some way the Gezi and the spirit of commoning it has created, have direct relation with the subject of the thesis because they, similar to the Gezi events, re-define a physical space through commoning practices and their socio-spatial approach challenges the binary oppositions of the contemporary urban space. Through the implementation of various activities, such as dance and music workshops, forums, swap markets, libraries, communal tables, discussions, film screenings, and presentations, these communities have effectively reconfigured the physical space by repeatedly adapting it to host one or more events spontaneously. Furthermore, they have also reshaped the social dynamics by fostering the sharing of knowledge and ideas, as well as facilitating interactions among individuals from diverse educational, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, both with one another and with the physical environment.

2.2.2.3 Commons at the Building Scale

Commoning practices at the building scale are usually realized when buildings that have lost their function, have been neglected, or where there are disputes over property ownership are occupied by a collective of people driven by political, economic, social, or spatial considerations. By implementing diverse commoning practices, these spaces are repurposed and transformed, acquiring a new function and quality that transcends the conventional notions of private or public property. By means of these actions, the building undergoes a process of transformation and reproduction, encompassing both physical and social dimensions. In certain instances, these occupations may be of a transitory nature and subject to termination by the governing body. However, on occasion, the collective efforts of activists might transpierce legitimacy upon the premises, transforming them into social centers.

The Rote Flora (formerly known as the "Tivoli Theatre"), Altona Frappant Building, and Hafenstraße in Hamburg, Rauchhause in Berlin, Villagio Globale in Rome, Leoncavallo in Milan, De Blauwe Aanslag in The Hague, the ASCII Centre, The Overtoom301 squat, Vrankrijk, The Occii in Amsterdam, the Poortgebouw in Rotterdam, and Don Quixote Social Center in Istanbul are some of the squatted buildings worldwide that have been occupied as a result of collective struggles against excessive privatization and exclusion of urban space and subsequently transformed into social centers (Seyfert, 2016). Thus, they have become common spaces by transforming and changing their identity through the collective practices of urban dwellers who resist the commodification of abandoned buildings, in general, under the name of gentrification.

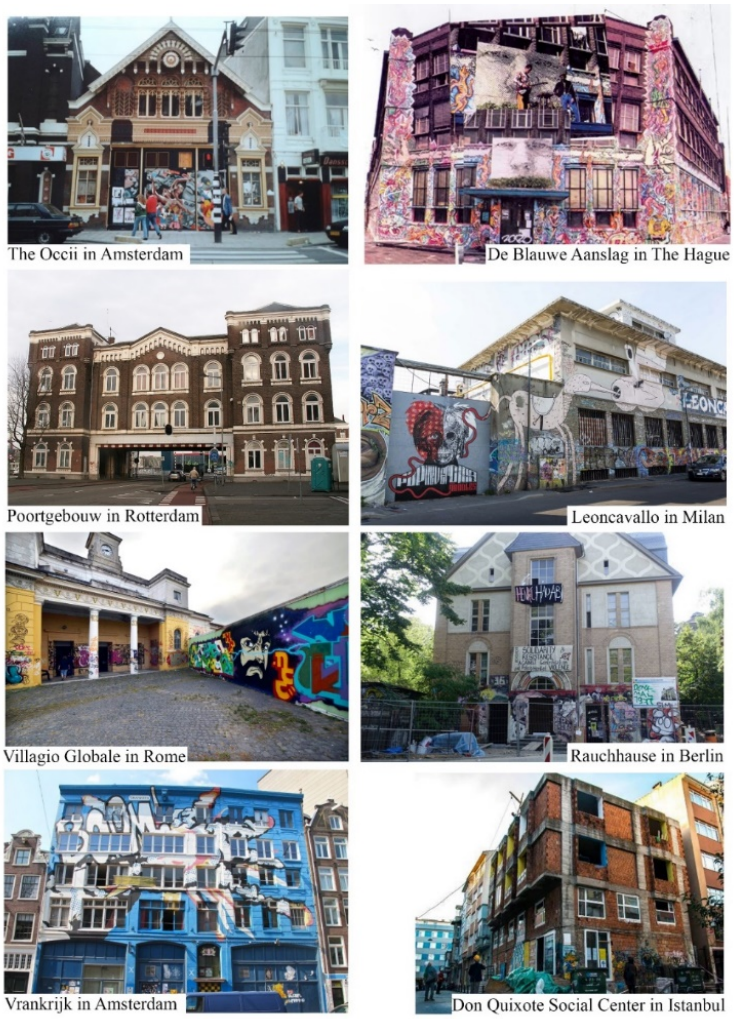


Figure 2.22 Social centers from all around the world (prepared by the author)

Located in a building that once housed Hamburg's famous Tivoli Theatre, the Rote Flora was occupied by demonstrators' denunciation after investors made plans to turn the building into a nightclub and theater for popular entertainment. Occupied by squatters, radical leftists and homeless people since 1989, this place serves as a self-managed social center (Figure 2.23). Rote Flora is known as the oldest squat of Germany. It hosts numerous concerts, parties, art exhibitions, political and social talks and conferences. As a result, the building, with its dilapidated appearance and graffiti-covered façade, has become a symbol of the radical left in Germany (Seyfert, 2016).

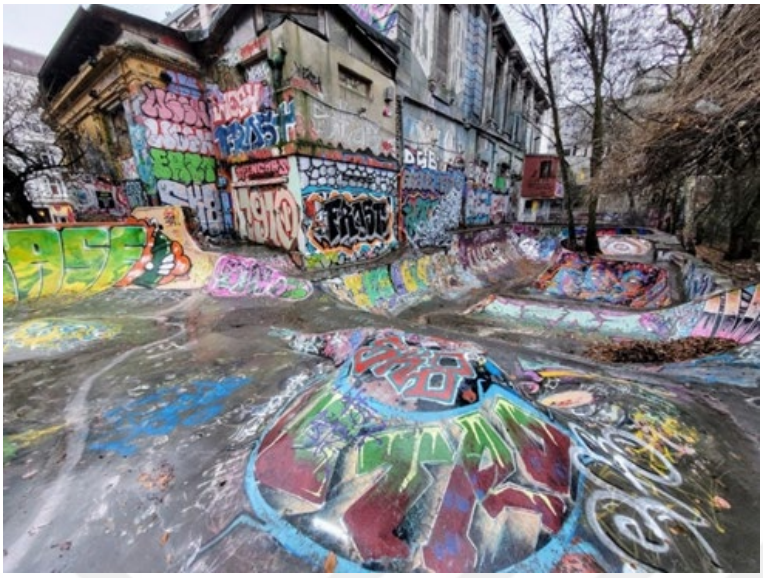


Figure 2.23 The Rote Flora and the skate park behind it (*Rote Flora,* 2014)

The Rote Flora is still well recognized as a cultural and political hub, nevertheless a contraversial one. Concerts, lectures, the Antifa-Café, Vokü (lit. "folks kitchen"), and political action are all held there for a suggested donation. The activists also set up a self-help group for people struggling with alcoholism and a repair shop for bicycles and motorcycles. Rote Flora also houses the public Monday-open Archiv der Sozialen Bewegungen, which documents the history of social movements. These collaborative activities, "what people do, feel, sense, and articulate as they seek meaning in their lives" (Harvey, 2012) impact both social and spatial characteristics of the building and transform it into a common space.

In section 2.2.2, the study delves into the transformative potential of the commons and sought to understand the underlying dynamics that drive its ability to bring about physical and social transformations. This was achieved by examining real-life spatial examples from various scales and contexts. Through careful examination of various examples and extensive research of relevant literature, it has been posited that the transformation of space by the commons is not solely dependent on the practices it encompasses. Rather, it is the result of the encounters, collective production, sharing, and negotiations that are catalyzed by these commoning practices, as well as the network of relations that are formed through these interactions.

2.3 Connecting the Concepts: Other Space, Commons and Interstitial Space

This section covers and discusses the concepts of "other space" and "the commons," as this study claims these concepts are interrelated and produce one another. The study problematizes the dysfunctionality of existing binary dichotomies in terms of comprehending or (re)generating the complexity of the contemporary city that leads people to encounter social, economic, and political enclosures in urban life. Thus, in contemporary urban discourse, the dissolution of urban binaries has led to the resurgence of a "thirding" phenomenon, the commons. In other words, the inadequacy of urban binaries for experiencing and comprehending the contemporary city has led this study to ask whether producing an "other space" beyond these binaries is possible. At this point, the commons have been included in the study as a strategy that can be applied to produce these alternative spaces and transform existing spaces into these alternative spaces. Therefore, for this study, the pursuit of "other space" has yielded the investigation of the commons, which in turn produces common space as "other space" and transforms an existing space into the "other".

In order to study practices of space-commoning that transcend the enclosures mentioned above in urban life, as Stavrides (2015) states, one should think of common space as threshold space. Furthermore, when the commoning practices are evaluated at three scales: urban scale, public scale, and building scale, it is realized that the commons at these scales generally produce intermediate, ephemeral spaces or situations. This may lead this study to take a closer look at undefined spaces and the concepts that focus on these spaces, hence the concept of interstitial space. This idea led the study to examine and interpret concepts such as threshold, in-between, and interstitial space. Among these and similar concepts that will be explored in Chapter 3, the concept of interstitial space was chosen as the main concept to be interpreted and analyzed as it is more appropriate to the content and orientation of the study in terms of its morphological and sociological characteristics (which will be examined in detail in Chapter 3).

In the existing literature, the concepts of interstices and interstitial spaces and other sub-concepts that exist within the concept of "other space", notwithstanding their distinctions in terms of scale, scope, and ideology, have been extensively discussed in the literature (Foucault, 1968 as “heterotopia”; Alcaraz, 2022 as “in-between spaces”; Soja, 1996 as “thirdspace”; Tschumi, 1996 as “liminal spaces”; Franck and Stevens, 2006 as “loose space”; Stavrides, 2010 as “threshold space”; Brighenti, 2013; Phelps & Silva, 2018 as “interstitial space”; Cihanger, 2018 as “spaces by people”). Yet, the issue is that the concept of interstices and interstitial spaces are not fully predicted or defined with a clear boundaries because of their inherent transitive nature (Brighenti, 2013). That is why, it is open to further interpretations and comprehensions. Researcher aims to reinterpret the concept of interstitial space by examining the concept detailly i.e. exploring similar notions and terms through the lenses of the “other” considering the space.

The figure 2.24 depicts the gradual construction of key concepts on each other from the starting point of this study to the process of exploring the concept of interstitial space. The commons, as one of the key concepts of this study, is considered as a process of spatial practices that have the potential to produce a space beyond urban binaries and transform existing undefined spaces, which will be interpreted as interstitial space in the scope of this study, to integrate these spaces to urban life. In the following chapters, the relationships and interactions between the key concepts of this study will be discussed in detail.

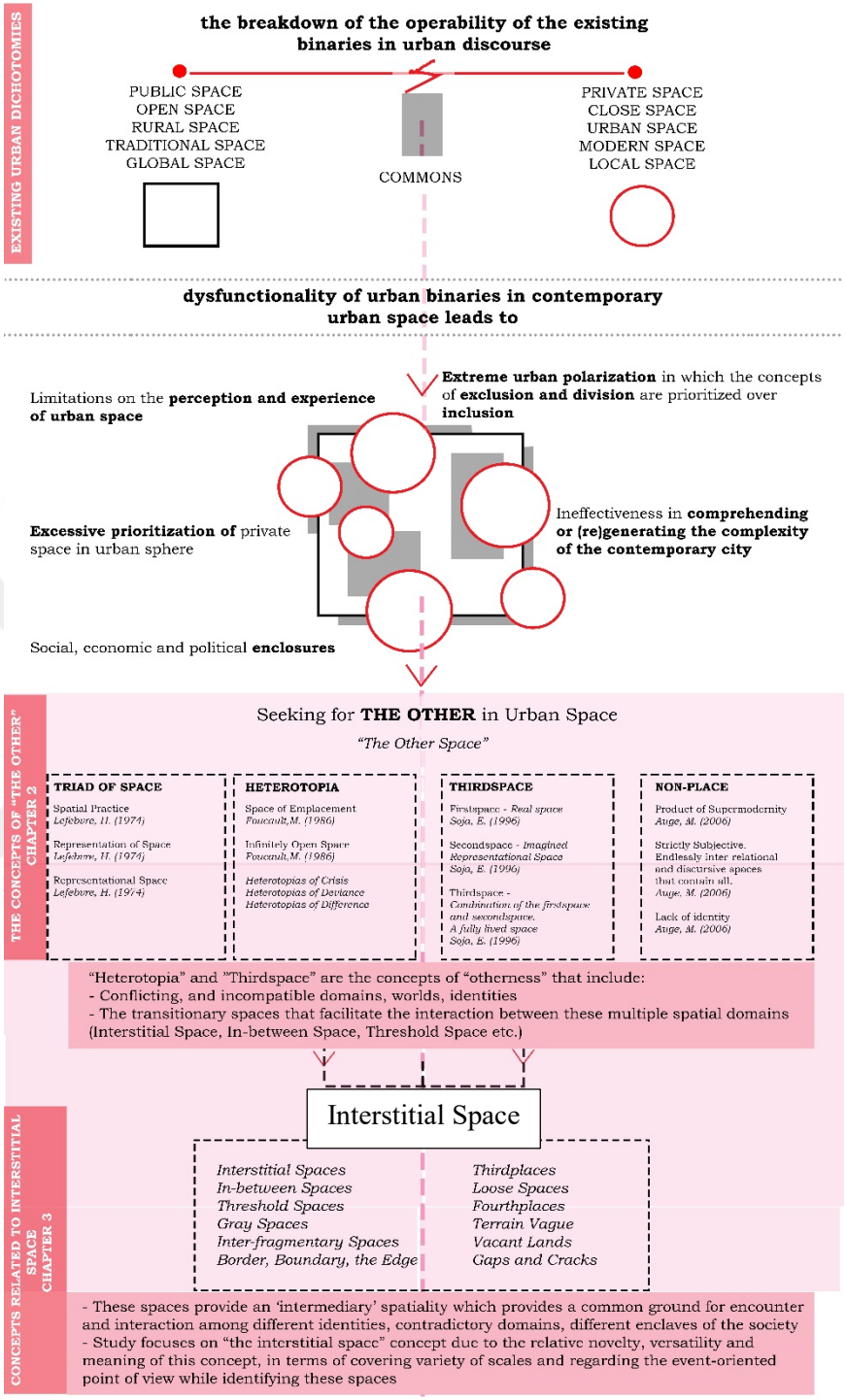


Figure 2.24 Concept diagram showing how this study builds gradual relationships and interactions between key concepts (prepared by the author)

Next chapter, building upon the key concepts of “other space” and “the commons” that have been discussed throughout the Chapter 2, explores interstices and interstitial spaces, not only through morphological perspectives but also socio-spatial, socio-political dimensions. Chapter 3 aims to highlight the similarities and differences between the concept of interstitial space and other similar concepts in terms of scope, scale and approach to space, and will establish the relationship of this concept and the case study that this study focuses on.

CHAPTER 3

UNDERSTANDING INTERSTITIAL SPACES

The word "interstice" originates from the Latin word "interstitium," which itself is composed of the prefix *inter-,* meaning "between," and the suffix *-stes,* meaning "standing" and as a noun, "interstices" is frequently used to refer to both literal and figurative gaps in the universe (Merriam-Webster, n.d.; Etymonline, n.d.). Interstices are the part of our everyday life. They can be in-between two buildings, a gap at the corner of the street, and even a brownfield located at the periphery of the city. In literature, interstices are generally interpreted as “wastelands” (Gemmell, 1977; Edensor, 2005), “terrain vagues” (Sola-Morales, 1995; Careri, 2002), “urban voids” (Borret, 1999), “leftover spaces” (Clement, 2011), “ruins”, “gaps” (Doron, 2007), “vacant land” (Northam, 1971). Being un- or underutilized spaces with unclear boundaries and without specific scales, interstices are the undefined spaces which is difficult for people to recognize their existence. That is why the terms that are associated with interstices mostly have negative connotations.

Emptiness of interstices, for instance, implies the condition of possibility. Matos (2009) states that after entering the system of interstitial spaces, one will realise that the empty contains a diverse range of activities. Similarly, this study claims that interstices can be read as transitory zones in which encounters, exchange, negotiation, sharing, diverse activities of the everyday life. This transitional condition of interstices denies the claims of their dysfunctionality presents a chance of providing various functions answering to the needs and desires of the diverse users of urban spaces. Moreover, interstices build a parallel city whose dynamics and structure systems have not fully explored yet (Careri, 2002) opening up the doors of relational thinking when it comes to the urban (public) spaces beyond the estabslihed dichotomies as presented in the previous chapters.



Figure 3.1 Interstices in different scales. Picture 1 – An interstice among the buildings (Jonas & Rahman, 2014). Picture 2 – An interstice on the street corner (Jonas & Rahman, 2014). Picture 3 – An interstice as a brownfield (CPRE, 2023). Picture 4 – Istanbul Land Walls as an interstice between dense urban tissue (Ntv, 2019)

As for the interstitial space, it is “a gap or break generally something that is continuous” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.) or “pertaining to, situated in, or forming interstices” (Dictionary.com, 2021) originated from the word “interstice”, the term is widely used in diverse disciplines such as medicine, architecture, law, urban design.

Before exploring the interstitial spaces in detail with the forthcoming chapters, there are several inferences obtained by this study related to the configuration of the interstitial space to grasp the spatiality of it. Scale, location and form of the interstitial spaces can alter as interstitial spaces can be in-between, between, within or diffused to the urban millleu. They can be in a form of a long narrow opening to large wide gaps. These spaces are occured where the surrounding fabric of the land drastically changes such as a green rupture within the dense urban tissue. There is no precise scale for interstitial spaces, their scale may vary depending on their position in relation to the city (Phelps and Silva, 2018).

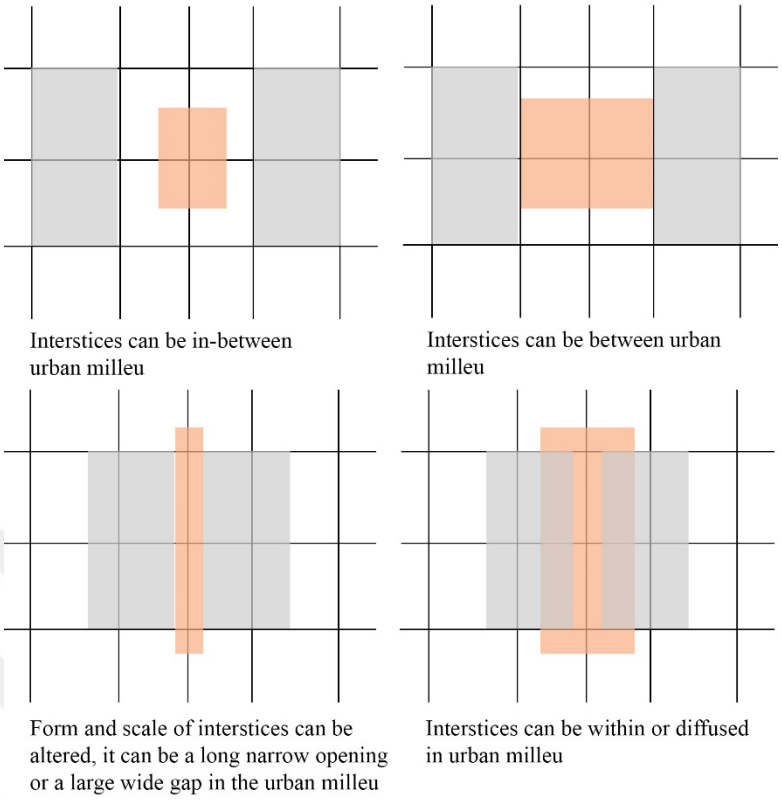


Figure 3.2 Altering forms, locations and scales of interstitial spaces (Şevik, 2018; adapted and developed by the author)

In the following chapters, how the concept of interstitial space is evaluated and interpreted within the scope of this study will be discussed in detail through its relationship with similar concept sets and the qualities that distinguish this concept from others in terms of scope, scale and approach to space.

3.1 What is Interstitial Space?

Within the broader literature of urban and social sciences, various important terms and concepts arise that try to describe "undefined spaces" such as interstitial space: wastelands (Gemmell, 1977; Edensor, 2005), terrain vagues (Sola-Morales, 1995; Careri, 2002), urban voids (Borret, 1999), leftover spaces (Clement, 2011), ruins, gaps (Doron, 2007), vacant land (Northam, 1971), threshold (Stavrides, 2015), in-between (Garcia Alcaraz, 2022), the edge, border, boundary, inter-fragmentary

(Vidal, 1999), loose (Franck & Stevens, 2006), fourthplace (Aelbrecht, 2016) and spaces by people (Cihanger Ribeiro, 2018).

This study aims to reinterpret the concept of "interstitial space" through the concepts of "other space" explored in Chapter 2 and by investigating both the morphological and social dimesions of the concept, going beyond the negatively connotative definitions such as "leftover space between buildings" or "residual space resulting from planning errors" or interpretations based solely on morphological considerations.

Chapter 2 claims that the interstitial space and its related concepts (threshold spaces, in-between spaces etc.) are the intermediary areas where encounters, interactions and transitions occur between the opposing, diverse and contradicted fragments of the concepts of “otherness” such as “heterotopias”. These are the places that diverse domains, worlds or identities can be experienced, compared and negotiated without reducing the difference and dictating homogeneity. Therefore, through these encounters and interactions, the binary oppositions can be transformed into a different form of hybridity with these spaces (Stavrides, 2010). This hybridity provides a chance for an inclusive community, referred to by Turner (1989) as 'communitas', which is considerably less structured compared to conventional societies (Şevik, 2018). Interpreting this concept in this way also underlines the link between interstitial space and common space, which is one of the objectives of this study. Stavrides (2015), interpreting common space as threshold space, suggests recognizing commoning as a multidimensional process that produces intermediary spaces and positions threshold/interstitial/in-between spaces as settings and images of commoning practices, thus, leads this study to connect these two concepts, the commons and threshold space, and investigate their interactions in a physical context.

There are two main reasons for this study's preference for the concept of interstitial space among such a variety of concepts with similar qualities in the literature. These are the morphological and event-oriented approach of interstitial space in defining

space that distinguish the concept from its peers (similarities and differences of these concepts will be discussed in chapter 3.2) and the interstitiality of the selected case study area, which will be discussed in chapters 3.3 briefly and in Chapter 5 with a multiscalar approach in detail.

In terms of the social and spatial dimensions of the “interstitial space” this study underlines the significance of multiscalar approach of the concept to the space as this quality differentiates the concept ftrom the similar concepts (loose space, in-between space, gray space, inter-fragmentary space etc.). To explain in more detail, Phelps and Silva (2018), conducting a morphological study to define interstitial space, has a theoretical framework based on spatial scales of interstices and its multiscalar approach to space will be adapted and reinterpreted for the Turkish locality in the later stages of the study (chapter 5). While similar concepts that elaborate on "undefined spaces" such as the concept (threshold, in-between, fourthplace, etc.) are not concerned with scale in defining these spaces, the fact that one of the methods of understanding and defining interstitial space is scale-related is one of the important qualities that distinguishes this concept from its counterparts.

As for the social dimension, the second most fundamental feature that distinguishes the concept of interstitial space from its counterparts is the event-oriented and temporal nature of the concept, discussed by Brighenti (2013). These qualities underline the inadequacy of defining interstitial space only in terms of its morphological characteristics and suggest that these spaces have transitory, fluid and ephemeral attributes in physical, social and cultural contexts. That is to say, multiple activities, different actors and identities can coexist simultaneously in these spaces, and from these coexistences; encounters, interactions, conflicts and compromises between these diverse domains, and the social and cultural richness they catalyze, can emerge. The hybridity in these spaces can support reading this space as a "thirdspace" by Soja (1996) at the upper scale. Although the concepts of loose space (Franck & Stevens, 2006), fourthplace (Aelbrecht, 2016), and spaces by people (Cihanger Ribeiro, 2018) have an approach to undefined space that focuses on its sociospatial dimensions, in most of the similar concepts (inter-fragmentary space,

in-between space etc.) examined, the social dimension does not seem to be the focus of defining the concept. This way, interstitial space differs from other similar concepts by focusing on the social dimensions of space, with Brighenti questioning the social dimension when defining it.

Therefore, investigating and highlighting the morphological and social attributes of the "interstitial space" is necessary to explain the reasons for the focus of this thesis on this concept within various similar concepts and to analyze this concept in terms of scale, scope and meaning that distinguish it from its counterparts.

Starting with exploring the *morphological attributes* of the interstitial spaces, the study investigates the analytical framework that is prepared by the scholars, Phelps and Silva (2018). According to this framework, there are three scales of interstitial spaces and these are "interstices of proximity", "interstices of transition" and "interstices of remoteness" (Phelps & Silva, 2018). "Interstices of proximity" (Phelps & Silva, 2018) corresponds to the interstices that have closer relation with the urban core or other existing urban fragments. These can be parks, squares and other void spaces relatively small-scaled and close to the city center. "Interstices of transition" (Phelps & Silva, 2018) is the intermediate scale of interstices which has looser relation with urban core. Zoos, industrial and research sites, metropolitan parks, military bases, brownfields can be given as examples. Lastly, "interstices of remoteness" (Phelps & Silva, 2018) is the largest and the furthest scale of interstices to the urban core. This scale includes national parks, preserved ecosystems and similar large-scaled interstices (Phelps & Silva, 2018).

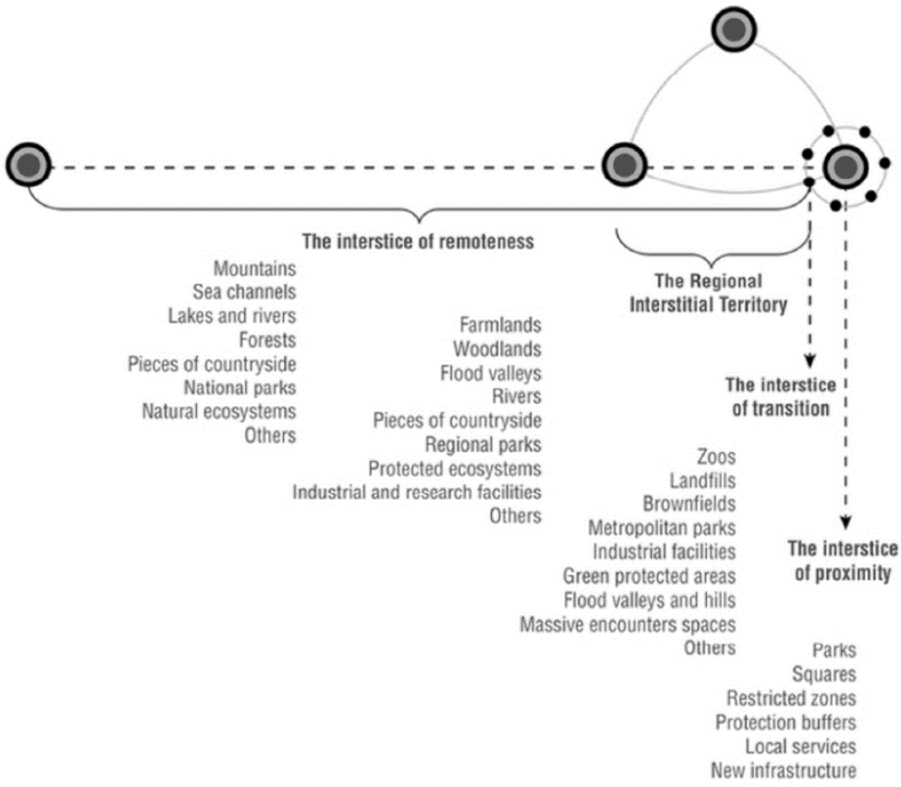


Figure 3.3 Diagram that explains "three scales of interstitial spaces" (Phelps & Silva, 2018)

Eventhough, this analysis has limitations since it mostly operates in monocentric city structures and a single interstitial space can be associated more than one of these scales, still, it introduces diverse scales of interstitial spaces and develop a better understanding related to the concept.

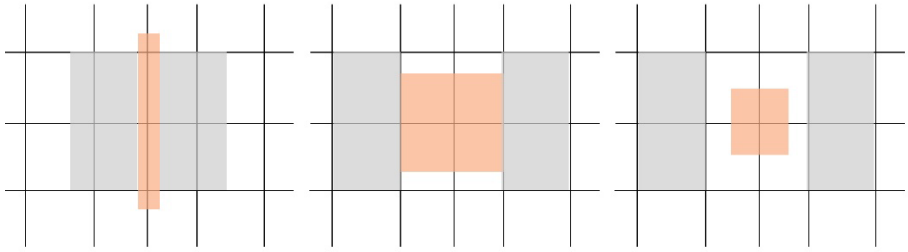


Figure 3.4 Interstitial spaces can be in diverse forms and multiple scales (Şevik, 2018; adapted and developed by the author)

Also, the analysis claims that the more one move away from the urban core, the scales of interstices become larger and their boundaries become blurred.

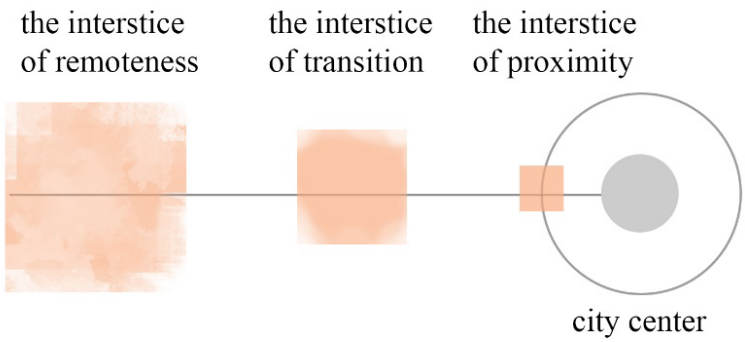


Figure 3.5 Moving away from the urban core, interstitial spaces become larger and their boundaries become blurred (Phelps et al., 2018; prepared by the author)

In this theoretical framework where Phelps and Silva evaluate interstitial spaces at multiple scales, the positionality of the interstice in relation to the urban core is also an important parameter for the framework (Figure 3.5). In this study, in chapter 5, Yedikule Urban Gardens will be examined at 3 different scales by adapting this theoretical framework to the Turkish locality, and in parallel to the framework, how the positional change of the area relative to the city center over the years impacts the definition and perception of the space will be discussed.

Although Phelps and Silva's theoretical framework improves comprehension of the concept of interstitial space in the context of spatial scale, *the social viewpoint* that this study finds vital in defining and interpreting these spaces is missing. Therefore, study moves on to the second perspective, *the social dimension* of the interstitial space, which is "temporality" or "event-oriented or evental" nature of the space as the concept of interstices cannot be completely reduced to its morphological characteristics (Brighenti, 2013). This approach defines interstices as "the outcome of a composition of interactions and affections among a multiplicity of actors that coexist within a given spatial situation" (Brighenti, 2013). That is, being an interstitial space does not depend only on its morphological features, because interstitial space does not only correspond to the physical space. The way people

interact with each other and with space can also produce the interstitial space or transform a space into an interstitial space. This approach highlights the possibility of temporality and simultaneity by multiple events, diverse actors and identities coming together through the interstitial space and furthermore, discusses how human interactions can shape and transform a space while physical space is shaping the activities of human.

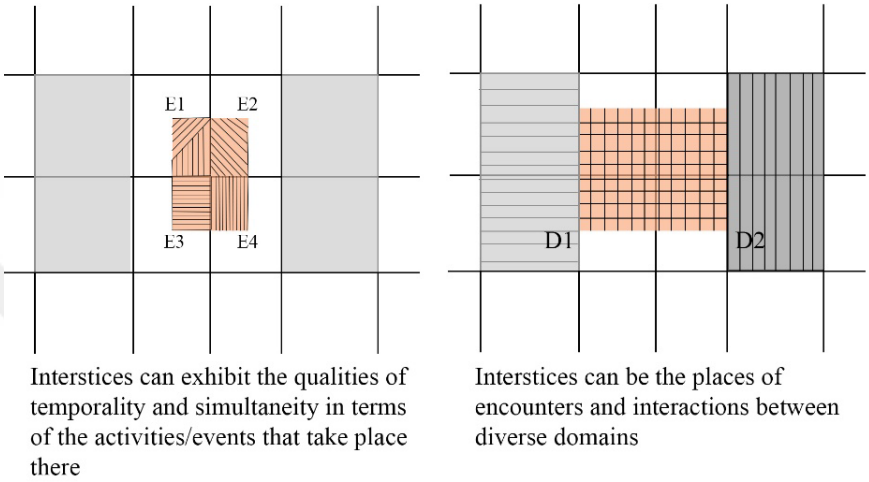


Figure 3.6 Interstitial spaces can exhibit the qualities of temporality and simultaneity in terms of the events taking place there (event-oriented) and they can be the places of encounters and interactions (prepared by the author)

Collective resistance such as Gezi Park Events, rebellion of Zapatistas, uprising of youth in Athens, Greece, Occupy movement are some of the examples how events, leading people to resist, transform the public spaces into interstitial spaces. Transformation occurs due to the encounter of diverse identities in a space and build a collective resistance through interactions and negotiations without forcing homogeneous integrations. In a similar vein, squat/occupy houses, because of the squatting and related activities taking place transform whatsoever building into an interstitial space regardless of the building's morphological qualities.

In the context of Turkey, Istanbul, the Gezi Park Events resulted in the transformation of spaces from diverse scale and moprhology (from parks to buildings) into "interstitial spaces" through multiple events (protests, workshops,

panel discussions, public art etc.) occuring transitionally and temporaly, participated by diverse actors (activists, academicians, actors and actresses, political party representatives, urban planners, architects). The emergence of squat/occupy houses in the city as an another event set off by the Gezi that indicates how the events and the encounters and interactions that are catalyzed by them have a space-transformative potential. Don Quixote Social Center was the first of the many. It was soon followed by Caferağa Squat, Mr. Samsa Squat, Free Common Space Initiative. However, as because they were occupied houses, the state instititons evacuated them soon after their establishments.

Moreover, community-powered organizations start to emerge rapidly in Istanbul, again, with the spirit of the Gezi Park Protests. TAK Kadıköy (Design Atelier Kadıköy), Atölye (Atelier), Roof Co-living, Yel Değirmeni Art, Rasimpaşa Volunteer House, Postane Social Center, DÜRTÜK, and İSMEK are some of the organisations which also experience urban collectives and solidarity but they differ from the squats in terms of legality, affiliated institutions, functions, and lack of political incentives. These organisations, with the activities they offer, involvement of diverse identities to the governance and the management of the organizations produce event-based interstitial spaces.

Figure 3.7 summarizes this chapter and provides an overview of the concepts related to interstitial space that will be explored in the next chapter. This figure underscores that the notion of interstitial space has a social and spatial focus and highlights similarities and differences with related concepts present in the literature that operate in comparable contexts.

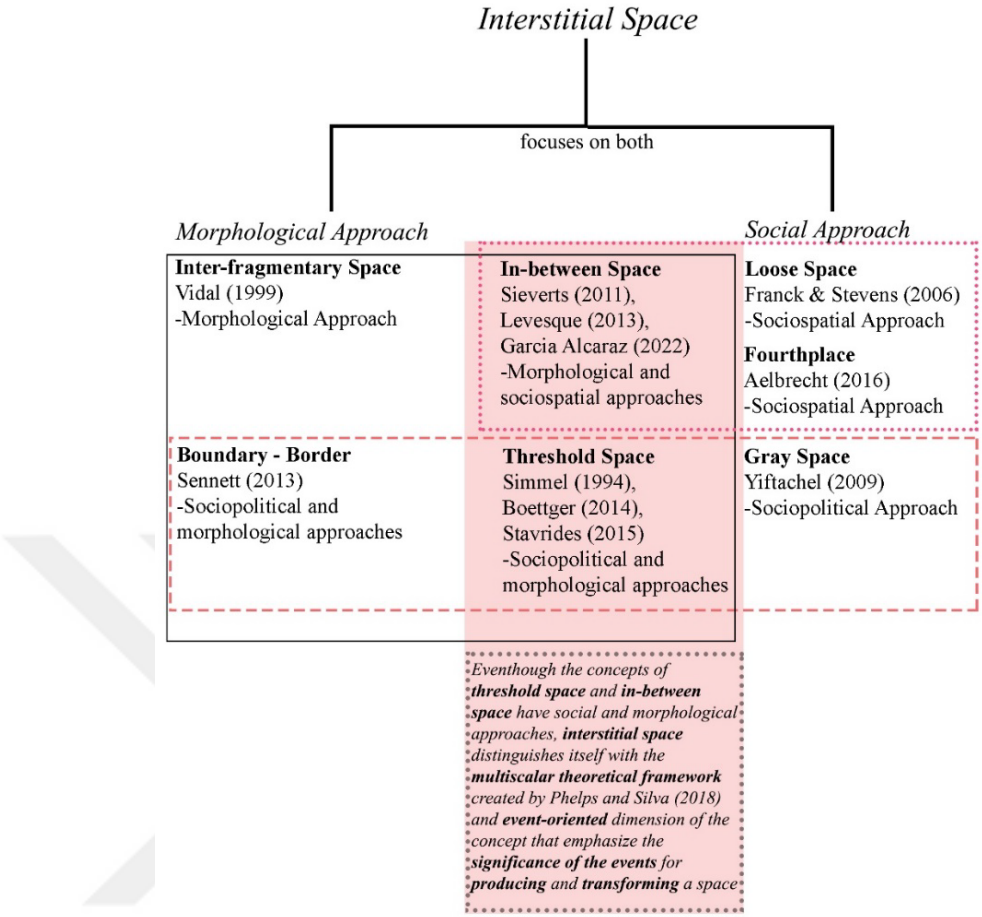


Figure 3.7 Diagram visualizing the similarities and differences in the approaches of interstitial space and related concepts to urban space (prepared by the author)

This chapter explore what the concept of interstitial space is through the concepts distinguishing spatial and social approaches towards the undefined spaces. Next chapter will elaborate this definition further by investigating the similarities and diversities between the interstitial space and related concepts that focus on understanding "undefined spaces" in the literature.

3.2 Why to Study Interstitial Space?

This chapter introduces the concepts with similar qualities in terms of taking undefined spaces as subject matter with the help of diverse disciplines and then, tries

to explore the similarities and differences between interstitial space and these concepts, the conceptual relationality between them and the disciplinary shifts in their approaches to space. Therefore, starting with introducing the relevant concepts such as threshold spaces, gray spaces, inter-fragmentary spaces, loose spaces, fourthplaces, boundary/borders, spaces by people and agglomerating their way of interpreting the space is essential to define and comprehend the concept of "interstitial space" further.

Firstly, *threshold spaces* are the prefaces, transitory zones that mitigate the passage from one architectural space to another. They are perceived as boundaries, barriers but their act of seperation simultaneously generate the act of connection (Simmel, 1994; Boettger, 2014; Stavrides, 2015). Threshold can act like a key, as it is between inside and outside, between one space and another, between one reality and another (Boettger, 2014). The threshold experience, crossing a threshold, has a transforming potential, while crossing, people, who have lost their previous social identity and have not received a new one, experience the commons (Stavrides, 2015). Considering common space as threshold space, Stavrides (2015) claims that through this connection, commoning practices can transcend enclosure. He suggests threshold spaces as a remedy for the "city of enclaves". Through threatening the conventional urban order, thresholds repeal prevalent taxonomies of spaces and ways of living (Stavrides, 2015). Capturing the spatial dynamics of emancipation; these areas mark changes, reveal comparisons, operate and interpret the act of passing as an act that cultivate change and formalize the social struggles and the movements (Stavrides, 2010).



Figure 3.8 Urban threshold in Havana, Cuba (Stavrides, 2010)

Gray spaces, a sort of permanent temporality, transcend the urban dichotomies of public and private, legal and illegal, planned and unplanned (Alcaraz, 2022). Rapid expansion of gray spaces has transformed the urban space and underline the importance of going beyond the conventional urban dichotomies (Avni & Yiftachel, 2014).

Inter-fragmentary spaces, introduced by Vidal (1999), is a site of interaction where urban fragments interact (Vidal, 2002). Altering from fairly small infrastructures, fence between two sites, to a vast variety of transport connections between towns, these spaces become interstices if they functions autonomously. Being a place of collision of identities and individual and collective expressiveness, interstices are dynamic and essential spaces, therefore; the terms “residue” and “remnant” cannot be associated with them (Vidal, 2002).

Loose spaces is elaborated by Karen A. Franck and Quentin Stevens (2006) in “Loose Space Possibility and Diversity in Urban Life”. Loose spaces are created through the actions of urban residents. It is about the reclaim of a space by people with creativity and determination, regardless of its intended function (Franck & Stevens, 2006). Thus, social activities of people produce the loose space and it can be along with the intended activities, such as on the sidewalk, in the street, park or square; or in the places that the intended use no longer exist as in the ruined factory;

or in the places which has no fixed function at all, next to a railroad track (Franck & Stevens, 2006). In all cases, with people's activities, sites transform into a loose spaces. In terms of reclaiming potential of the activities, it bears direct resemblence with the transformative potential of the commoning practices. Loose spaces also demonstrate how collective activities have transformative impact on the identity of the space.



Figure 3.9 Transforming the stairs to market booth (Franck et al., 2006)

Static and kinetic cities, introduced by Mehrotra (2003), suggest that there are actually two diverse cities in the same physical space. Static city is the conventional city which is built with permanent materials such as concrete, steel and brick, whereas the kinetic city is temporary settlements, building with recycle materials (Mehrotra, 2013). By comparison with the static city, the kinetic city presents motion with modifying and reinventing itself. Overlapping these two cities produce an *in-between space* which is fluid and ambiguous (Mehrotra, 2008).

Boundary and border, two interrelated concepts, contribute to the understanding of "interstitial spaces" as a concept by being transitory zones. Sassen (2006), focusing on a "borderland" rather than a "borderline", suggests that borderland has a potential to produce a thirdspace in which the visual and sensory experiences take place. For

the case of borderline, it crosses and divides and this term diminishes the potential of the border to a dividing line (Sassen, 2005). Sennet (2018) compare two concepts and argues that boundary, being an edge, implies an ending while border, again being an edge, provides a space for diverse groups of people to interact.

Fourthplace, studied by Aelbrecht (2016), promotes the importance of great sense of publicness and focuses on "in-betweenness" related to spaces, activities, experiences, time and management. This concept criticizes well-structured and fully designed urban spaces and suggests leaving certain spaces intentionally under-utilized, undefined and empty to cultivate in-betweenness in which spontaneous and informal uses can be employed according to the needs and desires of the users (Aelbrecht, 2016). It is an extension to the concept of "third place" (Oldenburg, 1989), which is a different concept from "thirdspace" (Soja, 1996). While third place suggests prioritizing social and mental health of the individuals, thirdspace advocates the significance of people to negotiate their cultural and social identities through experiencing and reshaping the space. Third place underlines the importance of informal interactions where people are not obliged to be anything other than themselves, a place which is independent from home (firstplace) and workplace (second place) (Oldenburg, 1989). Fourthplace closely relates to the "third place" in terms of social and behavioural attributes and separation from the routines of home and work places, yet, they differs from "third place" with its emphasis on "in-betweenness" and sense of publicness in its locations, activities and spatial conditions (Aelbrecht, 2016).

Spaces by People introduced by Cihanger (2018) highlights the significance of realizing and incorporating the contributions of everyday users in urban planning and design. This perspective challenges the conventional understanding of urban spaces as fixed and emphasizes embracing the ever-changing and vibrant nature of everyday life. Cihanger (2018) also suggests that each individual plays a crucial role in making decisions and shaping urban spaces. This concept acknowledges the significance of everyday interventions by individuals, such as an elderly man sitting on a street corner or children playing in front of a building, as essential components contributing

to urban spaces' liveliness and vibrancy. Study proposes a close-up view that blends the spatial and social aspects to understand better how individuals and small groups transform urban spaces. Capturing people's innovative, creative, and spontaneous interactions with their built environment is the purpose of humanizing urban design. The concept of spontaneity is offered as a key factor connecting designed and lived settings. It is argued that spontaneity is a fundamental human feature, typically considered the polar opposite of planning. The essay advocates for an assessment of spontaneity as a human quality reflected in the urban environment, as well as the incorporation of this concept into design studies.

As it is understood with this exploration of the diverse yet interrelated concepts, each associated idea approaches the topic from a distinct perspective. Threshold space (Boettger, 2014; Stavrides, 2015) is one of the conception of these spaces. It has a political approach to the notion, linking the formation of these spaces to the political conflicts. Loose space (Franck et al., 2006), on the other hand, approaches the topic from primarily a socio-spatial perspective and emphasizes the direct effect of people's social activities on the production of these spaces. Inter-fragmentary space, as approached primarily from a morphological perspective by Vidal (1999), attributes the presence of such spaces to the fragmented structure of the urban landscape. The reason for choosing interstitial space as a concept to interpret undefined spaces among these and many others is that unlike these concepts, interstitial space is inclusive in terms of spatial scale and in addition to this morphological contribution, it also questions the event-oriented aspect of the production of space, which is fully in line with the socio-spatial perspective from which this study aims to examine these spaces.

In terms of the aforementioned concepts such as "gap", "void", "leftover space", "terrain vauge", the concept of "interstitial space" distinguishes itself from these concepts in terms of morphological and social characteristics it encompasses. Firstly, unlike the aforementioned concepts, the concept of "interstitial space" encompasses a range of scales. While "gap" typically refers to micro-urban areas such as the space between two buildings, "interstitial space" includes these micro-scale areas within

the urban core as well as larger-scale areas as one moves away from the urban center. Phelps and Silva (2018) have mentioned the scalar comprehensiveness of this concept with their theoritical framework and this framework that is introduced in Chapter 3.1. This diversity in the scales covered by the concept is more relevant for the evaluation of the idea of spaces that are transformed and reconstituted by the commons that the study seeks to convey.

Secondly, the literature employs terms like leftover space, urban void, wasteland, and vacant land to analyze interstices regarding their morphological features whereas the concept of "interstitial space" does not only consider space in terms of its morphological characteristics, i.e. interstices are not just a space left over from inadequate or faulty planning, or between two heterogeneous and discontinuous plans. Interstitial space considers interstices the result of interactions and affections between a multitude of actors that coexist within a given spatial situation (Brighenti, 2013). This approach adds a realistic consideration of people-space interactions and realize the impacts of this relation on the space. Therefore, out of the many concepts that interpret “undefined space”, for this study, the concept of interstitial space is preferred to interpret this notion as it covers the social and morphological aspects of transforming and integrating urban spaces, that are often unused, inaccessible and unrecognized by the most of the city, relatively marginalized, and have publicness that have been claimed over a long period of time, through commoning practices.

In the context of Turkey, these concepts are elaborated as in-between space (Bolak Hisarlıgil, 2007 focusing on vernacular mid-Anatolian settlements), interface (Eren & Cengiz, 2020 focusing on Taksim Asmalımescit Neighborhood), intermediate space (Balaban Varol, 2020 focusing on housing in Ankara), threshold space (Aydın, 2022 focusing on Yalova), urban fissure (Bütüner, 2010 focusing on Land Walls in Istanbul) from scales such as housing, streets and neighborhoods to urban scales such as city walls. Yet, most of these concepts are discussed focusing on one urban scale whereas undefined spaces can be a building, a street, a neighborhood, or an urban component and have social dimensions. This study claims that exploring these spaces through focusing on a single scale and neglecting their social dimensions, makes it

difficult to grasp the physical and social richness of these spaces. Therefore, this context specific issue also underlines the gap in the literature which can be filled through interpreting these spaces with a multiscalar and event-oriented concept such as “interstitial space” that encompasses multiple scales and social dimensions of a space.

By introducing these concepts, the study exposes their similar and different qualities and helps interconnecting them with “interstitial spaces” and underlines differences between these concepts and interstitial space. Figure 3.11 depicts the complex relationship between the concepts of “other space” (heterotopia, thirdspace) and relate concepts of interstitial spaces such as threshold spaces, in-between spaces, interstitial spaces, loose spaces etc. Moreover, these concepts’ perspectives towards undefined spaces are explained brieflly to underline the similarities and differences between them.

Comprehending the broadness of the contents and perspectives, an analytical framework which dissect the diverse approaches and link them with the relevant concepts helps developing a better and holistic understanding regarding the concept. Following chapters 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 express these diverse concepts’ point of views according to the dominant approach of these concepts in interpreting space, emphasizing the socio-spatial perspective of the study.

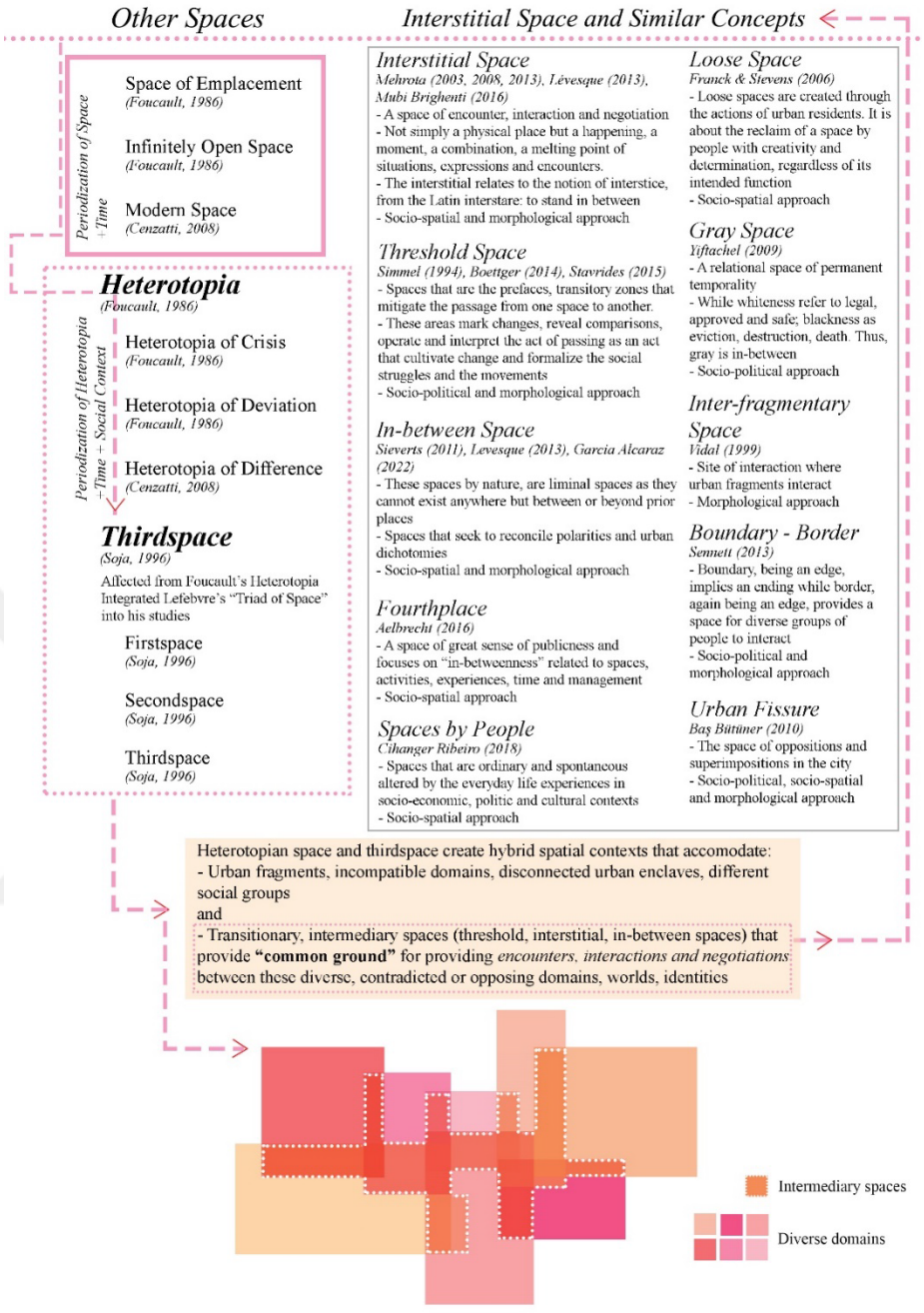


Figure 3.10 The complex relationships between the concepts of "other space" and related concepts of interstitial space (prepared by the author)

3.2.1 Social Perspective on Undefined Spaces

The study's one of the focus is on the socio-political dimensions of the the concepts of *threshold space*, *gray space* and *boundary and border* due to their connectedness to everyday life events beyond the sole physical reverberations. Stavrides (2010) discusses the concept of threshold through its linkage with the socio-political issues such as uprisings, rebellions and occupy movements. This perspective suggests a socio-political angle for approaching the concept. Gray space, with its direct implication of "informality", suggests a socio-political matter which can be discussed through the sociological and political lenses.

Another focus is on the socio-spatial dimensions which analyze how physical space and people interact. It brings sociological dimensions into the examination of urban space and urban life. Loose space, as a concept, directly relates to the socio-spatial concerns as its definition suggests that transforming a space through social activities of people is possible. Thus, loose space production directly relies on the interaction of people with each other and with space. Fourthplace can be an another concept which suggests a socio-spatial angle for exploring the space. Through encouraging informal and spontaneous interactions, this concept employs the formation of "in-betweenness" in social settings through the interactions of people with one another and experiencing the physical space via these interactions. In-between space is comprehended with the transitory relation between static and kinetic cities by Mehrotra (2003, 2008, 2013). The concept builds upon not only the spatial attributes of a space but also effects of performed social activities by people on the space. This attitude of the concept towards the comprehension of the space suggests sociological and spatial analysis of the concept.

3.2.2 Spatial Perspective on Undefined Spaces

This perspective underlines morphological attributes and investigates the qualities regarding the form or structure. *Inter-fragmentary space*, *boundary and border*,

threshold spaces, in-between spaces can be some of the related concepts. Vidal (1999) introduces the concept of inter-fragmentary space, linking the formation of these spaces to the fragmented structure of the urban space. Boettger (2014) explore the concept of threshold spaces with their form related attributes such as openness-closeness and spatial permeability. Borders and boundaries are directly related to the morphology, Sassen's borderland/borderline discussion can be read with a morphological approach. In-between spaces are investigated with their spatial features by Matos (2009). Author introduces the concept with other corresponding notions and relates its common implication to the multiple and complex forms with blurry spatial boundaries (Matos, 2009). Morphological approach is adopted to explore the concept's implications and possibilities.

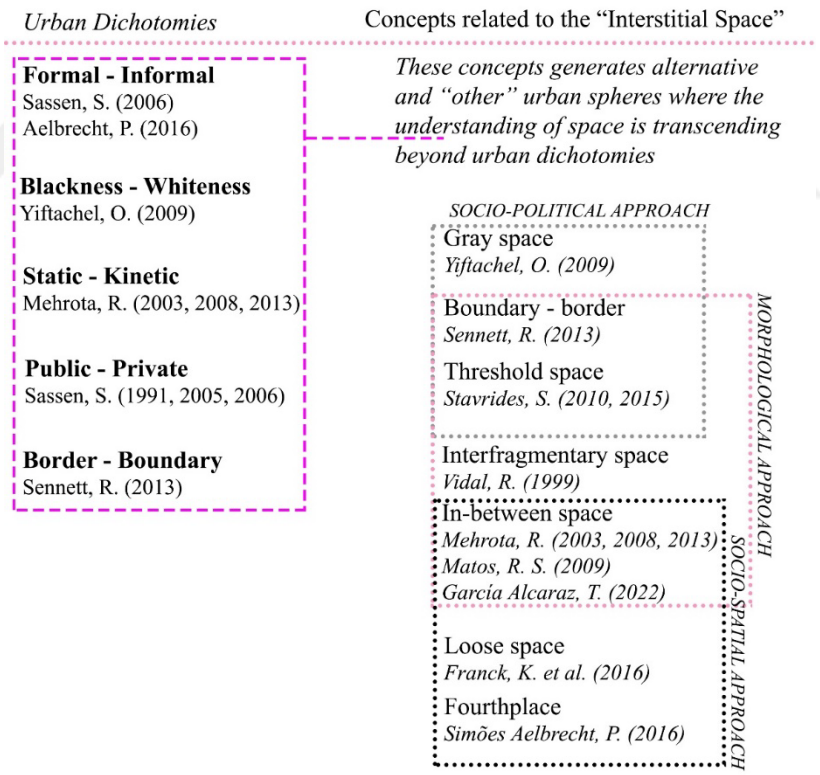


Figure 3.11 Urban dichotomies and concepts related to Interstitial spaces (prepard by the author)

In Figure 3.11, the diverse approaches of the several concepts and their interrelation are depicted. These concepts generate the “other” urban spheres where the understanding of space transcends beyond urban dichotomies.

After introducing the diverse perspectives in the literature on undefined spaces, the study moves on to explore how a real-life setting can be regarded as “interstitial”. Investigating the features of interstitiality, which are discussed in chapter 3.1, on Yedikule Urban Gardens, which is also the case study of this thesis, will help the comprehension of the concept of “interstitial space” through concretizing its theoretical attributes.

3.3 Interstitiality of Yedikule Urban Gardens

Yedikule Urban Gardens can be identified as one of the valuable and remainig example of the gardening tradition – bostancılık – in Istanbul which still protects its green fields and continues agricultural activities despite of spreading urbanization towards unbuilt areas in Istanbul make the historical peninsula densely built and populated (Durusoy et al., 2016).

This study claims that Yedikule Urban Gardens is interstitial space as it seems to convey socio-spatial qualities of interstices which are elaborated in the Chapter 3. In terms of morphological qualities, according to the existing literature, interstitial spaces can be in multiple scales, diverse forms and their positionality regarding the city center can alter. Interpreting Yedikule Urban Gardens in multiple scales, this study explores the spatial qualities of interstitiality and evaluate this urban space as an interstitial space. As for the social qualities, interstitial spaces can be temporal, event-oriented and simultaneous engaging by multiple actors from diverse backgrounds. While exploring these gardens in three scales, study also investigates the existence of these social qualities of the site through examining social transformation of this urban space from past to present.

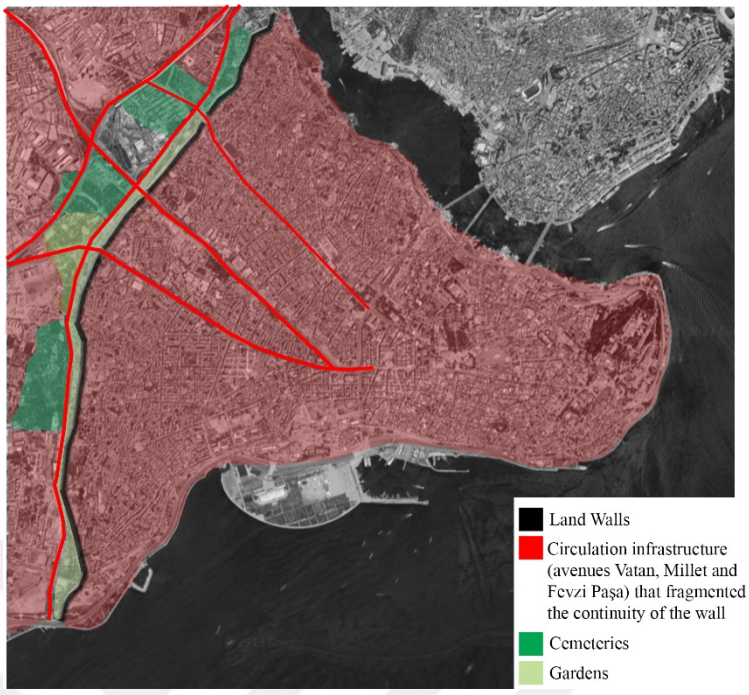


Figure 3.12 Traces of the Land Walls in the urban fabric (prepared by the author)

In terms of morphological attributes, Yedikule Urban Gardens acts as an interface between old fortresses and the city. The gardens are situated along the historical fortresses, whose position in relation to the city center transformed over time from a periphery into an urban fissure (Baş Bütüner, 2010). It is an example of "interstices of transition" which is one of the scale of interstices from the analytical framework, investigating interstitial spaces' scales and proximities to the urban core and categorizes them accordingly, by Phelps and Silva (2018).

Today, cemeteries and gardens constitute the green areas outside the Land Walls. There are almost no gardens left on the inner side of the city walls since most of the gardens have already been destroyed, however, as depicted in Figure 3.12, some of the gardens following the trace of the historical wall have survived to the present day due to their proximity to the wall. The destroyed gardens have been replaced by administrative buildings, educational facilities, residential units and small scale industries and factories. From this figure, it can be inferred that this area can be read as a green void, a fissure and an interstitial space squeezed within the urban fabrics.

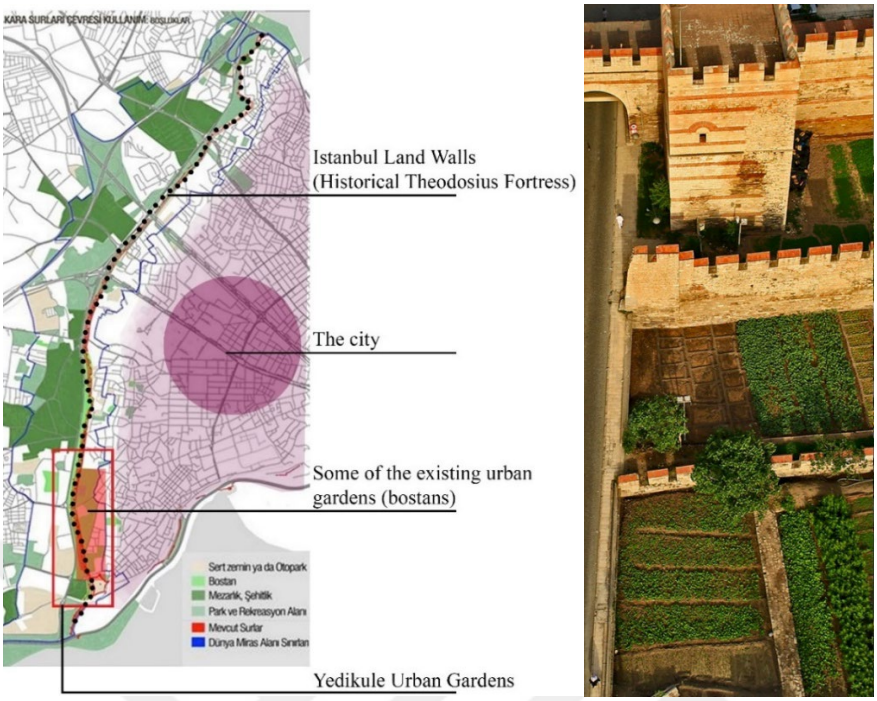


Figure 3.13 Interstitiality of Yedikule Urban Gardens and gardens relation with the city and historical fortress (prepared by the author)



Figure 3.14 Overview of the layered urban fabric: the city, the fortress and urban gardens (İstanbul Alan Yönetim Başkanlığı, n.d.)

As it is discussed in chapter 3, interstitiality can not be fully comprehended merely experiencing morphological attributes of urban spaces. Events, interactions of people

taking place in the physical space hold the potential of transforming a space into interstitial space. Commons, in chapter 2, identified with its transformative potential affecting urban spaces. Through the practices of commoning, the identity of a space can be altered and the transformed space distinguishes itself both from private and public spaces (Stavrides, 2010). A space becomes a common space in which the acts of creating new social bonds and building forms of collective struggle shape the urban space. These actions can be aggressive in nature and have political connotations such as protests, squatting and uprisings. Collective resistance such as Gezi Park Events, rebellion of Zapatistas, uprising of youth in Athens, Greece, Occupy movement can be some of the worldwide examples how events, leading people to resist, transform spaces into interstitial spaces. However, aggresiveness and political incentives are not a must for a practice to produce interstitiality. Collective actions and solidarity based initiatives are distinguishing themselves from the former ones in terms of legality, affiliated institutions, functions, and lack of political incentives, also have space-transformative power. Community-powered organizations such as TAK Kadıköy (Design Atelier Kadıköy), Atölye (Atelier), Roof Co-living, Yel Değirmeni Art, Rasimpaşa Volunteer House, Postane Social Center, İSMEK and DÜRTÜK are some of the Istanbul-based organizations that transforms a physical space through public events, art projects, all inclusive ateliers and pop-up meetings.



Figure 3.15 Protests aiming the conservation of Yedikule Urban Gardens (Durusoy et al., 2016)

Urban gardens, with their physical and social contributions to the reproduction of a space transform the identity of a space in physical and social dimensions. Although Yedikule Urban Gardens can be defined as "private gardens in public space" (Koçak, 2019) in terms of functioning and ownership, the collective struggle of aforementioned NGOs, Initiatives, activists and residents of the city by means of organizing protests, public lectures, workshops, open-air cinemas, picnics, to preserve this area from the sanctions of the municipality and private institutions underline that in this area, the traces of the commons are still present today. Hence, commoning practices may have a potential to transform and integrate this area into the city.

This place, which is utilized for growing plants and doing gardening, can also act as a meeting ground for people, an open-air cinema, a classroom for a site-related lecture of Yedikule Bostan School, a scarecrow atelier, a site for Lettuce Feast, a route for Archaeobotany walks and an area for historical Yedikule Gardens seminer.



Figure 3.16 A- News of the interview with the Initiative for the Protection of Yedikule Gardens (Tarihi Yedikule Bostanları, 2013) B- Open class in the gardens with Cemal Kafadar (Bianet, 2023)

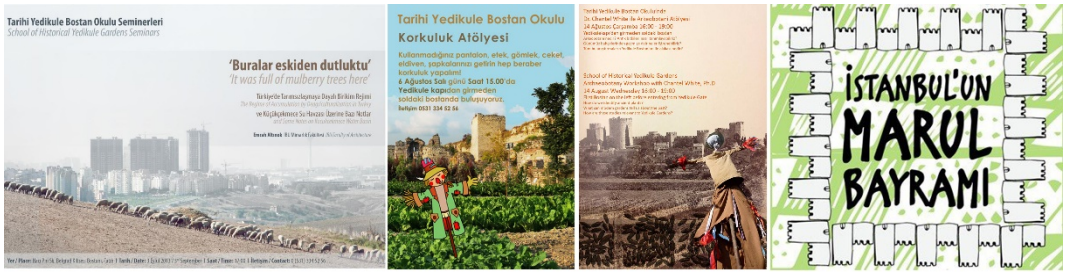


Figure 3.17 Some of the ateliers, seminars and festivals carried out voluntarily as public activities (Tarihi Yedikule Bostanları, n.d.)

Voluntary works and public activities can transform Yedikule Urban Gardens into a social gathering place, a meeting point in which new forms of public activities, social interactions, reciprocal relationships, and value making practices flourish with the collective efforts and willful initiatives. Encounters, interactions, networks of relationships can be formed through these practices, and apart from the tangible values such as vegetables, fruits, other crops, intangible values such as knowledge, memories, ideas can be shared. Through these exchanges, a collective environment of production, sharing and negotiation can be created. This can builds a common ground that bridges between different identities without reducing the difference.

Therefore, this study proposes that the commons and its processes have the potential to incorporate interstitial spaces into urban life by engaging people through various collective activities. These events can bring together people from diverse backgrounds, ages, financial statuses, and professions and encourage them to participate collectively in tangible or intangible productions within the space. This approach can help prevent such spaces from being excluded from the city and becoming invisible while also preserving the site's tangible and intangible cultural heritage from further destruction.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN

This research expresses the need for a spatial strategy that can transform undefined spaces into vital and actively engaged urban spaces and integrate them into urban life. It also embraces the notion that understanding of urban space has shifted from spaces of binary oppositions to spaces of heterogeneity (Foucault, 1986). Therefore, in this thesis, the concept of "other" is evaluated through space, aiming to interpret and contribute to the undefined space as "interstitial space", and then to free it from the constraints of existing urban dichotomies by using commoning practices as a transformative spatial strategy. Considering these, main and sub research questions have been constructed as: *"How can the concept of commons be employed as a strategy for transforming and integrating interstitial spaces, conventionally undefined, neglected, or invaded, into urban life?",* is the main research question, aiming to explore whether commoning practices can transform undefined spaces and integrate them to urban life.

In order to support the main research question and elaborate the main concepts of this study in detail, there are 3 sub-questions formulated. These are:

- *How can intersitiality be studied in different urban scales (to defy the singular descriptions and binary oppositions regarding public vs. private space)?*

- *What are the concepts to define the morphological and social qualities of interstitial spaces?*

- *What is the role of commoning processes to support the vitality of interstitial spaces in cities?*

The reason why a case study method has been selected for this research is that the importance of social and spatial context regarding the commons makes boundaries

between the notion and spatial context not clearly distinguishable. Yin (2009) suggests that a case study approach should be employed when the research question requires a comprehensive understanding of phenomena that embraces a complex relationship between the context and the concept being researched. As this statement suggests, the potential of commoning practices to transform an urban space can be explored through observing the socio-spatial qualities of a specific site and interacting with the users. Therefore, The Yedikule Urban Garden serves as a selected case study as because it represents a unique example of an interstitial space where commoning practices continue to thrive. By examining this case through semi structured in-depth interviews and on-site observations, the study aims to highlight the significance of interstitial spaces within the urban sphere and to redefine commons as dynamic processes of production and organization, rather than simply as resources awaiting appropriation.

The upcoming sections will outline the detailed research approach, including techniques for data collection and analysis. Following this, the study will present its findings and draw meaningful conclusions from the research conducted at Yedikule Urban Gardens.

4.1 Research Approach

In the existing literature, undefined spaces are evaluated from socio-spatial, socio-political, economic and morphological perspectives and with diverse notions (Foucault, 1968; Augé, 1995; Soja, 1996; de Solà Morales, 2002; Edensor, 2005; Franck and Stevens, 2006; Matos, 2009; Cihanger, 2018; Alcaraz, 2022). However, the different scales of this concept have not been examined both in socio-spatial and morphological contexts and in the field of urban design. The study aims to adopt and explore this perspective through interpreting the concept of “interstitial space” to contribute to the comprehension of undefined spaces.

As for the research on the commons, it is mostly in the political and economic fields (Baden et al., 1998; Ostrom et al., 1999; Ostrom et al., 2002, Armitage, 2008;

Caffentzis, 2010; Harvey, 2011). However, when we look at the recent studies, it is seen that there are also studies on the benefits of commoning at the urban scale (Stavrides, 2016; Madison et al., 2009; Foster et al., 2015). Still, there is a research gap on the potential of the commons, defined as an urban element, to play an active role in interstitial areas and to enable a transformation that can contribute to the city and its inhabitants.

Many studies examine the concepts of commoning and interstitial space independently of each other. This study, on the other hand, aims to associate these concepts with each other and interpret these spaces as "interstitial space" over the concept of "other". The commons is important because it is an experience and production process that transforms and transcends the traditional urban binaries. This study aims to explore the potential of the commons to transform and integrate an interstitial space, which is conventionally undefined, neglected, or invaded, into urban life.

Main question	*Type of Research*	*Data Collection*	*Data Analysis*
How can the concept of commons be employed as a strategy for transforming and integrating interstitial spaces, conventionally undefined, neglected, or invaded, into urban life?	Exploratory	**Macro Scale:** The Land Walls - Literature Review - Map Compilation - In-depth Interviews **Meso Scale:** Yedikule's Immediate Surroundings - Literature Review - News and Map Compilations - In-depth Interviews **Micro Scale:** Yedikule Urban Gardens - Literature Review - Map Compilation - In-depth Interviews - On-site Observations - Photographs	- Thematic Analysis - Content Analysis - Mappings and Drawings

Figure 4.1 Methodological approach to the case study (prepard by the author)

The methodological approach to the case study is determined in stages (Figure 4.1). An exploratory research approach has been adopted for this subject. The study questions whether the commons can be a strategy for transforming interstitial spaces that are typically undefined, neglected, or invaded and integrate into urban life. For this, first of all, the existing resources should be examined by making a literature review. In order to understand commoning practices and their effects in selected field research, which is an interstitial space, it is necessary to learn about subjective

experiences and practices. On-site observations should be made continuously, and subjective experience data should be collected by communicating with people who work in this area, who are members of initiatives established for protecting this area, and who work in a planning institutions in Istanbul in order to examine their relationships with each other and with the site and find the hints regarding the effects of the interstitiality of the site and commoning processes on participants.

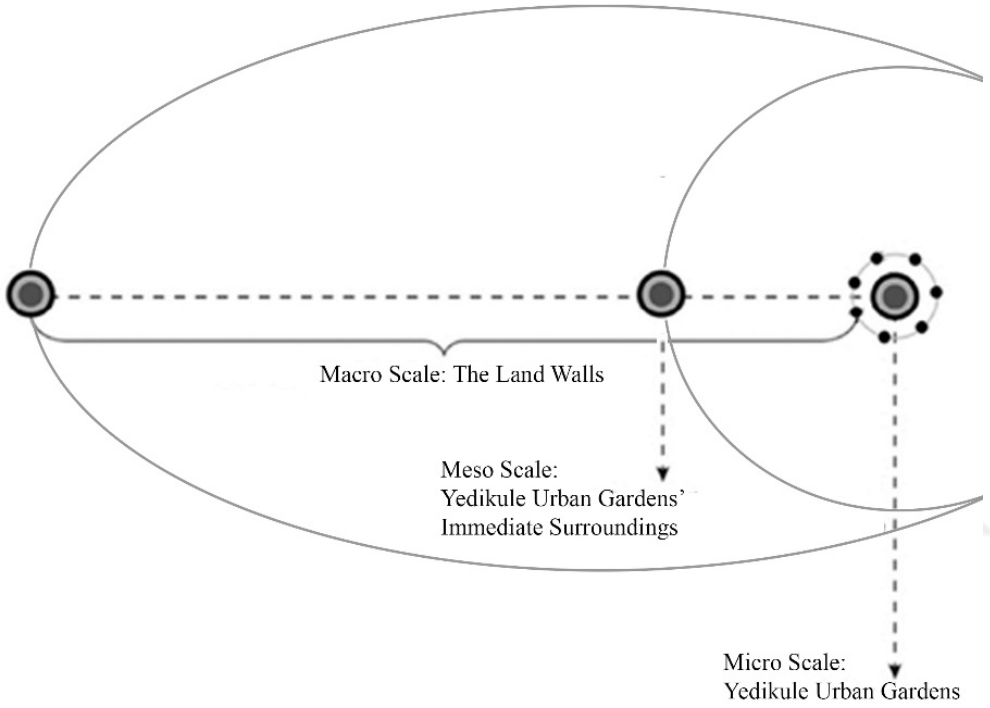


Figure 4.2 Examining the spatial transformation in Yedikule Urban Gardens at three different scales (adapted by the author from Phelps and Silva, 2018)

In order to analyze the relationship of the selected case study area with "interstitial space" and "the commons", which are the two main concepts researched throughout the thesis, this area will be analyzed by adapting the multiscalar approach of Phelps and Silva (2018) towards urban spaces to the locality of Turkey and supporting this analysis with the findings and quotations obtained from conducted in-depth interviews.

Yedikule Urban Gardens will be evaluated in three different scales in order to comprehend the spatial transformation of Yedikule Urban Gardens throughout history and how it gradually developed into an interstitial space as a result of these transformations. The three scales "Land Walls" at the macro scale, "Yedikule's immediate surroundings" at the meso scale and "Yedikule Urban Gardens" at the micro scale will be analyzed through the spatial conditions, actors and interventions that had an impact on this transformation via comparing and building linkages between these transformations and the previously discussed concepts of interstitial spaces and supporting and comparing them with the quotations and findings from in-depth interviews. For this purpose, the multiscalar approach of Phelps and Silva's (2018) theoretical framework based on the concept of interstitial space explained in Chapter 3 will be adapted to the analysis of the spatial transformation taking place in Yedikule Urban Garden. In this way, the cross-scale effect of the transformations and changes in this area, the fragmentations that took place in the process of transition from the scale of "Land Walls" to the scale of "Yedikule Urban Gardens" will be explored by adapting Phelps and Silva's theoretical framework, which already exists globally, to the local context of Turkey.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted with experts who have carried out academic studies on the area, proposed design projects, are members of the initiatives to protect this area and officials who work in a planning institutions in Istanbul, will be evaluated with the analysis of the Likert Scale and thematic groupings. The in-depth interview questions are designed to grasp the qualities of interstitial spaces in Yedikule Urban Gardens and question the traces of the commons in the site. The questions will try to explore the encounters, relationships, negotiations and conflicts between the space and the user and between the user and user by questioning the clues of commonality.

Analyzing the Yedikule Urban Gardens will lead the study to question the potential of the commons as a transformative strategy to preserve these gardens' existence and unique identity, which will be further discussed in Chapters 5.3 and 6.

4.2 Data Collection

This research utilizes extensive literature review, in-depth interviews, archival data and direct observations as main data collection techniques. Besides the verbal data that is gathered by the semi-structured in-depth interviews, non-verbal data also has been gathered via archival data and on-site observations to support the study. To achieve this, field trips have been organized, photographies have been taken and literature reviews have been done. In this context, researcher firstly investigates the spatial transformation of Yedikule Urban Gardens at three scales: Land Walls as macro scale, Yedikule Urban Gardens' Immediate Surrounding as meso scale and Yedikule Urban Garden as micro scale. Through this multiscalar approach, study recognizes the gradual fragmentation of the site from Land Walls to the urban gardens with the impacts of social and spatial transformation processes.

Secondly, study aims to understand the socio-spatial interstitiality qualities of the site and question the transformative potential of the commons in the case of an interstitial space as Yedikule Urban Gardens. Researcher conducts semi structured in-depth interviews with experts who have studies related to this site, initiative members who are actively parts of the preservation process of the area, designers who have designed projects for this site and officials who work in a planning institutions in Istanbul. After collecting the findings of the in-depth interviews, the study supports the multiscalar analysis of Yedikule Urban Gardens with the quotations and findings derived from these interviews.

4.3 In-depth Interview Questions

The interview questions were designed to answer the sub-questions posed by the study and thus the main question. In order to address the sub and main questions of this study, in addition to the literature review, archival data analysis and on-site observations, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with expert participants having diverse approaches to the area, such as academicians, members

of conservation initiatives, city planners, urban designers, archaeologists, historians and officials from Istanbul planning organizations, in line with the multilayered nature of Yedikule Urban Gardens.

The information obtained from these interviews will be evaluated in relation to the multiscalar analysis of the Yedikule Urban Gardens and will then provide data for the interpretation and evaluation of interstitial space qualities of Yedikule Gardens and the potential of commons to transform this setting and integrate into urban life.

Mainly, these questions are asked but since the interview is in a format of semi-structured informal conservations, expert participants were occasionally added and substracted comments and thoughts. Regarding this, there are **5** questions and each question addresses three sub-questions of this study:

1- *Could you briefly tell us about yourself? What is your interactions, interests or studies related to Yedikule Urban Gardens?*

2- *What do Yedikule Urban Gardens mean for the city of Istanbul as a whole and for your field of work or interest? Can you evaluate it spatially and socially?*

3- *Can you identify the users, actors and stakeholders who play a role, have a say, use and generally have an impact on the gardens?*

4- *What do you think Yedikule Urban Garden means for publicness, commonality, common life and production?*

5- *Which of the following concepts (threshold space, intermediate space, public space, common space) best describes Yedikule Urban Gardens for you? Please rate from 1 to 5, with the degree of definition increasing. Apart from these concepts, how would you define this space?* This question is formulated using Likert scale method. Some of the concepts claimed to define "undefined space" in the literature review of the study, namely threshold space, in-between space, boundary-border, undefined space, as well as public space and common space discussed in the thesis, were asked to the participants to evaluate Yedikule Urban Gardens according to the degree to

identify it. Participants were then asked to define this space from their own perspectives.

4.4 Participants

Since various theories and concepts were discussed in the fieldwork, there is no data to refer to a large number of participants or random users for conducting the interview. This area and its surroundings in Istanbul have a very complex and multi-layered structure, as will be analyzed in a multiscalar manner in the following sections. Moreover, both the content of the thesis and the concepts explored point to a more theoretical and technical set of questions. Therefore, **7** expert participants with background knowledge who are academically researching on this area, studying this area through design projects, members of conservation initiatives, and officials working in a planning institutions in Istanbul are selected.

The selected expert participants give permission for their names to be used in this study. These participants are as follows:

- Abdullah Inanç Kıran, a sociologist and geographer with a master's degree in urban and regional planning and member of the Initiative for the Protection of Yedikule Urban Gardens

- Gökçer Okumuş, city planner, architect and the coordinator of the Public Design Office at the Istanbul Planning Agency (IPA)

- Oktan Nalbantoğlu, a landscape architect, urban designer and lead designer of the "Agricultural park" proposal for Yedikule Urban Gardens

- Sedanur Gezer, a city planner and official of Istanbul Chamber of City Planners (ŞPO)

- N. Simla Uygaç, a city planner and official of Istanbul Chamber of City Planners (ŞPO)

- Suna Kafadar, a feminist author, historian and co-founder of the Initiative for the Protection of Yedikule Urban Gardens

- Yiğit Ozar, an archeologist and member of the Initiative for the Protection of Yedikule Urban Gardens

While identifying the expert participants for this study, an attempt was made to reach out to the local municipalities and the relevant branches of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IBB) in whose jurisdiction the Yedikule Urban Gardens are located. However, these local and metropolitan municipalities stated that they do not have any current plans or projects about the gardens, but rather they are focused on the preservation and renovation of the Land Walls. Therefore, they did not participate in the in-depth interview process, which consisted of questions regarding the Yedikule Urban Gardens.

4.5 Data Analysis

This study utilizes, first, the direct quotations from the semi-constructed in-depth interviews held with expert participants to support the multiscalar theoretical framework constructed by Phelps and Silva (2018). Then, content analysis and thematic analysis are used to analyze the data gathered through in-depth interviews, archival data, and direct observation during the field study. Content analysis is a methodical process of systematically coding and categorizing large volumes of textual information to explore trends and patterns. It involves examining word usage, frequency, relationships, and the structures of communication (Vaismoardi et al., 2013). This study seeks to quantitatively evaluate the frequency, perception, and relationship of the concepts identified by the study during the analysis of the fifth interview question, employing the Likert Scale method and analysis. As for the thematic analysis, it is a method used to identify, analyze, and report patterns or themes within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Vaismoardi et al., 2013). In Chapters 5.2 and 5.3, by examining words and word groups that refer to similar themes in direct

quotations, the study aims to categorize these quotes from interviews into various themes.

Thus, this study applies content analysis technique, thematic groupings to analyze the verbal data obtained through in-depth interviews of **7** expert participants who are academically researching this area, studying this area through designing projects, members of conservation initiatives, and officials who work in planning institutions in Istanbul, This way, this study aims to grasp the sociospatial qualities of the interstitial spaces in the context of Yedikule Urban Gardens and whether the commons can be employed as a space transformative strategy to integrate this place to urban life.

The data analysis process was designed to answer three sub-questions of the research. The first sub question "How can intersitiality be studied in different urban scales (to defy the singular descriptions and binary oppositions regardin public vs. private space)?" is discussed and evaluated in Chapter 5.1. The second sub-question "What are the concepts to define the morphological and social qualities of interstitial spaces?" is elaborated in Chapter 5.2. Finally, the 3rd subquestion "What is the role of commoning processes to support the vitality of interstitial spaces in cities?" is examined in Chapter 5.3 and conclusion.

Sub Research Questions	*Objective of the questions*	*Data collection*	*Data analysis*
S.Q. 1 *How can **intersitiality** be studied in **different urban scales** (to defy the singular descriptions and **binary oppositions** regardin public vs. private space)?*	Based on the theoretical framework of Phelps and Silva (2018), to develop a new research design and theoretical approach to Yedikule Urban Gardens in the context of Turkey. *This will be applied in chapter **5.1** by analyzing the site at 3 scales.*	- Literature Review - Archival Study - On-site observations	- Mappings/Drawings
S.Q. 2 *What are the concepts to define the **spatial** and **social qualities** of interstitial spaces?*	Understanding the sociospatial qualities of interstitial space. *This will be implemented in chapter **5.2** by investigating the meaning of interstitial space first in literature review, then, from on-site observations and direct quotations of experts*	- Literature Review - On-site observations - In-depth Interviews	- Content Analysis (Likert Scale) - Thematic Analysis
S.Q. 3 *What is the role of **commoning processes** to support the **vitality** of interstitial spaces in cities?*	Understanding the relationship between the concepts of the commons and interstitial space through Yedikule Urban Gardens. *This will be discussed in chapter **5.3***	- Literature Review - On-site Observations - In-depth Interviews	- Content Analysis (Likert Scale) - Thematic Analysis

Figure 4.3 Outline table of the data analysis (prepared by the author)

In the context of analyzing archival data, maps of the area from past to present are compared and analyzed, photographs of the area from different sources and time periods were collected to comprehend the spatial history of the area. The archival data compared and analyzed are also blended with the multiscalar conceptual framework obtained from the literature review to evaluate the social and spatial transformation of the area at 3 different scales.

The analysis of the research findings obtained from in-depth interviews, on-site observations, literature review and archival data will be elaborated in detail in chapters 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 and further discussed in the conclusion.

CHAPTER 5

CASE STUDY: YEDIKULE URBAN GARDENS

In this chapter, Yedikule's spatial transformation will be explored throughout the history at different scales, the actors and dynamics referring to the literature review of the interstitial space. Thus, this section investigate the effects of the spatial transformations on the formation of the qualities of interstitiality in the site. While constructing linkages between the social and spatial transformations and their impacts on the formation of the qualities related to interstitiality in the area, research findings and quotations obtained from in-depth interviews will be utilized to support this relationship. Then the potential of the commons to transform space will be explored through the evaluation of multiscalar transformation process of the area and the analysis of in-depth interviews that have conducted with academics who have studies related to this space, members of the initiative who try to protect and maintain this space, architects and urban planners who participate in the design competition for the reorganization of this space and officials working in planning-related institutions in Istanbul.

As it is explained in Research Design chapter, adapting Phelps and Silva (2018)'s theoretical framework with a multiscalar approach to interstitial space to the locality of Turkey, this study will examine the spatial transformation in Yedikule Urban Gardens at 3 different scales. These scales are *Land Walls at the macro scale*, *Yedikule's immediate surroundings at the meso scale* and *Yedikule Urban Gardens at the micro scale*. This study claims that multiscalar examination of the Yedikule Urban Gardens is neccessary to comprehend how this area is fragmented gradually, due to the "spatial condition, interventions and the administrative organization of the district" (Baş Bütüner, 2010), starting from the Land Walls, which are defined as the

macro scale in this study, to the close surrounding of the Yedikule Urban Gardens on a meso scale, and from this scale to the Yedikule Gardens on a micro scale.

Firstly, in order to question the interstitiality of Yedikule Urban Gardens and its historical spatial transformation process, it is important to examine what this place space means for the urban fabric of Istanbul without falling far from the discussion on intersititality. Then, as a following scale, the study moves on to examine the spatial transformation of the immediate surroundings (walled zone, named by Baş Bütüner, 2010) of the case study site on intermediate scale. This mid-scale will help grasping the social and spatial transformations have taken place close vicinity of Yedikule Urban Gardens again refering to the concepts of interstitiality. Lastly, the study closes up the spatial transformation of the Yedikule Urban Gardens that is the site itself on lower scale by exploring spatial condition, municipalities' decisions and plans and people's interventions to these processes by resisting and collaborating against these sanctions and their interaction with the concept of interstitial space.

In these interrelated scales, the effects of social and spatial transformation of Yedikule Urban Gardens on the physical and social qualities of the space are studied in relation to the concepts of interstitial spaces as derived from the literature review.

5.1 Multiscalar Approach to Yedikule Urban Gardens

In order to analyze the interstitial space qualities of Yedikule Urban Gardens and to question the transformative potential of the commons in Yedikule Urban Gardens in the following sections, the spatial and historical transformation caused by the various renovation and conservation plan proposals and the interventions of the local administration will be examined in a multiscalar approach. The impact of these transformations on the formation of the qualities of interstitial space and related concepts in the area will be explored as applicable, and at the end of each sub-section, concepts related to interstitial space and the potential of this area to be interpreted as an interstitial space due to the transformations this place has gone through will be explored.

The data obtained from the in-depth interviews will be quoted where necessary and relevant, and will be included in the analysis in relation to the social and spatial transformations in the historical process and the reflections of these transformations on the characteristics of the area as an interstitial space.

5.1.1 Spatial Transformation of the Macro Scale of Yedikule Urban Gardens: Istanbul Land Walls

Built by Theodosius II in the 5th century A.D. between the Marble Tower on the Marmara coast and the Golden Horn to define a three-tiered defense line, the approximately 6,670 meters in length "Land Walls", unlike the other city walls in Istanbul, defined the western border of the city and defined its periphery in a wide period of time extending from 413, when its construction was completed, until the second half of the 20th century. Following the Ottoman Conquest in 1453, the Land Walls ceased to serve as a primary defense mechanism and instead became integrated into civilian life and from that period until the mid-20th century, they served as a general marker of the city's western edge (Baş Bütüner, 2010). Therefore, the urban periphery formed by the land walls defined a qualified "urban void" that made the surrounding built environment meaningful until the recent past (Durusoy, 2021). Expert participant Yiğit Ozar, archaeologist and member of the Initiative for the Protection of Yedikule Urban Gardens, expressed this situation as follows:

> *"When we open the map of Istanbul in front of us and look at it, the line formed by the land walls gains an important feature as an area that both demarcates the historical core, which we call the historical peninsula or walled city today and actually provides a green infrastructure for it."*

However, in the second half of the 20th century, with significant urban expansion of the city after the 1980s, the relative position of the Land Walls in relation to the city has changed and the area turned into an industrial center due to (Baş Bütüner, 2010). Thus, the Land Walls have lost their western boundary marking quality and peripheral characteristic in the urban milleu and turned into unused and neglected

vacant spaces, with illegal workplaces occupying towers and spaces between the walls, located in the middle of the city (Baş Bütüner, 2010). Until the 1990s, this area provided a haven for illegal businesses and immigrants; it has turned into a symbol of Istanbul's shady past in the memories of locals (Perouse, 2011). Today, even though illegal activities in this area are relatively under control and the area is trying to get rid of the perceptions of "unsafe and uncanny", people's prejudice against the area continues due to these perceptions that have been persisting for years.

Expert participant Oktan Nalbantoğlu, landscape architect and designer of the "Agricultural park" proposal for Yedikule Urban Gardens, underlines this issue through emphasizing the importance of the presence of gardeners in this area as:

> *"This region has been an unsafe area from past to present. We know that it is a place where addicts are found and illegal businesses are conducted because we witnessed it during the field trip and analysis. When there is a continuous agricultural activity, agriculture and gardeners (bostancı) protect the area against various threats. They provide a spatial security."*

As for the expert participant Abdullah Inanç Kıran, sociologist and geographer with a master's degree in urban and regional planning and member of the Initiative for the Protection of Yedikule Urban Gardens, asesses the situation by associating gardens with this perception as:

> *"It seems to me that people have a prejudice against gardens and the area where they are located. You know, there is a general opinion that prevents them from going to the gardens. That is actually related to the Land Walls. It is also related to the perceptions that stem from the fact that the city walls and the area have always been criminalized, unsafe and uncanny in the recent past."*

Thus, even though it remains in the center, Istanbul's Land Walls have transformed into an urban component that still shows a peripheral character in terms of texture and use.

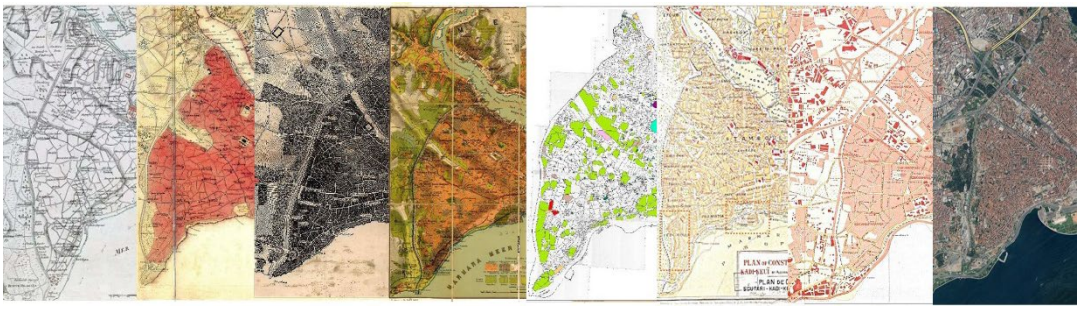


Figure 5.1 Maps of Istanbul showing Historical Land Walls prepared by Kauffer, 1776 (Kayra, 1990); Hellert, 1840 (Kayra, 1990); Moltke, 1852 (Kayra, 1990); Stolpe, 1863 (Kayra, 1990); Ayverdi, 1875-1882 (Kıran, 2019); 1908 Map of Istanbul (Kıran, 2019); 1978 Map of Istanbul (Kıran, 2019) and Google Earth, 2023 respectively.

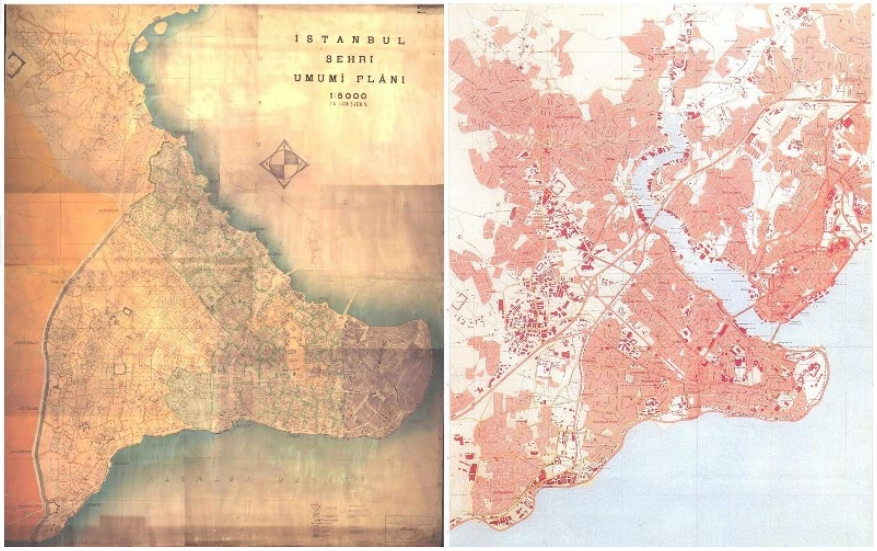


Figure 5.2 City map of İstanbul drawn by Bulend Tuvalo in 1954-1955 (Osmanlı Bankası Archive retrieved from Baş Bütüner, 2010) vs Map of İstanbul -1978 Harita Genel Müdürlüğü (Kayra 1990).

Figure 5.1 shows the transformation that the Land Walls and their surroundings have undergone from the 18th century to the present day. Figure 5.2 shows the transformation in the Land Walls and its surroundings, especially in the second half of the 20th century when Istanbul was rapidly urbanizing. In the first map (Istanbul in 1950s), only Eyüp (the northwestern side of the Land Walls) is represented as a

settlement area on the western side of the Land Walls, while in the second map (Istanbul in 1980s), it is observed that Istanbul has expanded considerably on the western side of the Land Walls.

Comparing these two maps and older maps, this study claims that, Land Walls has lost its boundary defining feature and has become an interstitial space in the middle of the urban fabric. With the westward expansion of the settlement and the spatial changes and transformations that took place in and around it (described in detail in 5.1.1, 5.1.2 and 5.1.3), the Land Walls have transformed from a boundary implying the end as defined by Sennet (2018) in the 19th century to a threshold space where diverse characters, groups and domains encounter and interact as defined by Stavrides (2015) today. In the existing conditions there are a few residual and neglected spaces in and around Land Walls and this unused, unplanned and neglected "emptiness" create the interstice, yet, as it is underlined in Chapter 3, this study approaches "interstices" and the "interstitial spaces" as potential zones in which encounters, exchange, negotiation, sharing, diverse activities of the everyday life are or can be executed, hence, this condition of the site implies possibilities.

Baş Bütüner (2010) re-defines the Land Walls with a new concept that is "urban fissure". She discusses that these kind of "obsolete or abandoned structures or sites that remain within the contemporary urban milieu" (Baş Bütüner, 2010) are conventionally identified as "residual, leftover or loose spaces" which only explain the existing condition of the site, yet, none of these terms cover the positionality of the site within the city. Land Walls should be acknowledged as an urban component and when talking about the Land Wall, not only the wall structure is mentioned, but also the edge spaces, namely "mural/walled zones" (Baş Bütüner, 2010), produced by and around this structure should be examined within the scope of this component. Expert participant Abdullah Inanç Kıran supports this way of defining the Land Walls as:

> *"...it is not possible to evaluate the gardens separately from the walls."*

Expert participant Yiğit Ozar also emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach to Land Walls that covers not only the fortresses but also the close surrounding of the walls as:

> *"...together with the city walls, the gardens, the neighborhood, the surrounding historical cemeteries and other examples of civil architecture and the settlement texture, gave me the impression that the issue has a multi-layeredness that requires a more comprehensive approach."*

Expert participant Oktan Nalbantoğlu:

> *"Because even though the walls of Theodosius are included in the UNESCO World Heritage List as a fortification, in fact, it is the spaces in its immediate surroundings and the social life these spaces provide that give the fortification its identity."*

Thus, Land Walls, not as a mere wall but forming spaces within the urban fabric, due to their positionality and their spatial transformation, are reconceptualized as "urban fissure" by Baş Bütüner (2010).

Bütüner's definition of "urban fissure" aligns with the definition of "interstitial space" in chapter 3 of this study. In Chapter 3, when talking about the interstitiality of a space, the position of this space in relation to the city and the transformations it undergoes through the activities that take place on it are discussed. The fact that Bütüner's definition of the concept of urban fissure based on positionality and space transformation supports this study's reliance on the theoretical framework of Phelps and Silva (2018), who define interstitial space morphologically with reference to the city, and underline the transformations that take place in the space for interstitiality to occur, determines the rationale behind this study's approach to Yedikule Urban Gardens as an "interstitial space".

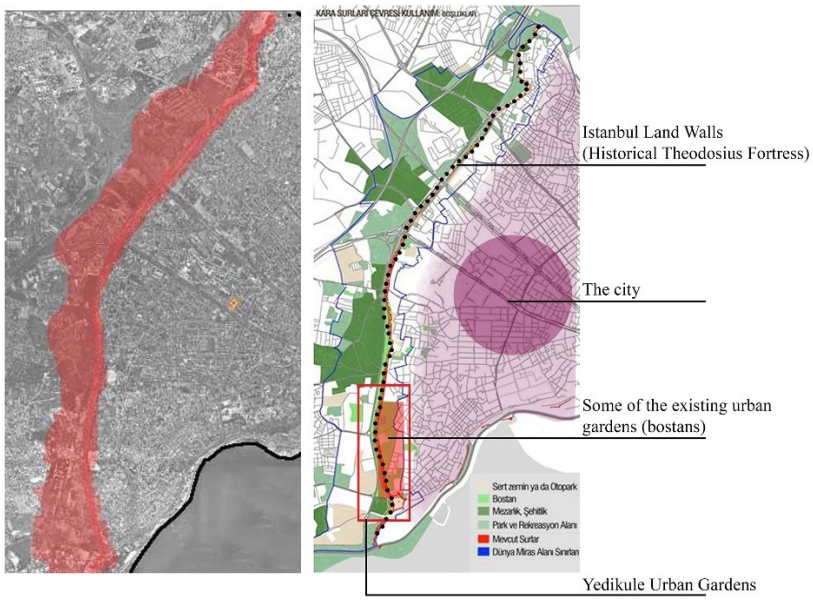


Figure 5.3 Land Walls as "Urban Fissure" (Baş Bütüner, 2010) and Yedikule Urban Gardens as "Interstitial Space" (prepared by the author)

There have been several historical milestones in the spatial transformation of the Land Walls. From the 19th to early 20th centuries, new urban standards were introduced in İstanbul, which essentially neglected the mural zone; between 1930 and 1950, a period of intense planning efforts; between 1950 and 1980, a period of Menderes operations and the emergence of squatter neighborhoods west of the land walls; and finally, post-1980, a period of increased conservation concerns and large-scale removals and injections in the mural zone (Baş Bütüner, 2010).

Between the 19th and early 20th centuries, Istanbul underwent significant changes due to the city's expansion. However, the Land Walls continued to loosely demarcate the western border since the city's growth towards the west was limited. Yet, they have already lost the feature of strictly marking and limiting the territory of Istanbul due to the loss of defensive function, which was the case in Byzantine period (Kuban, 1996). The Land Walls were largely abandoned to neglect and a striking contrast between the inner Historic Peninsula and exterior landscape emerged, not only demarcated with the Land Walls, as the ambiguous landscape of the mural zone,

mostly occupied by cemeteries, gardens and industry, was also a determining factor (Baş Bütüner, 2010).

In general terms, most of the transformations that took place in this area during this period interrupted the linear architectural structure of the Land Walls in many places and prevented its longitudinal continuity along the western edge of the Historic Peninsula. Most significant reasons behind the breakdown of the continuity were introducing new transportation lines that draw their route perpendicular to the Land Walls which caused ruptures in the walls and moving the industrial structures to the near of the Land Walls that turned some of the passive and active green areas (gardens, cemeteries, recreational areas) surrounding the Walls into consruction sites. Doğan Kuban (1996) also describes the 19th-century transformations in Istanbul as confiscating state-owned lands, which the Sultans primarily owned, and this involved the demolition of state mansions, gardens, and several deserted palaces to make room for the construction of military facilities, industrial buildings, and the railway. Expert participant Yiğit Ozar also mentions these fragmentation process of the Land Walls, yet, according to him the walls still protects their boundary characteristics as:

> *"The boundary is of course a temporal thing, that is, the continuous structure of the Land Walls from the past to the present has been disrupted and fragmented in some parts due to the definition of new transportation lines, the construction of industrial facilities in the immediate vicinity, the establishment of settlements in the nearby voids and some interventions of the municipalities, but perceiving of it as a borderline may still be valid for some parts because it is a long line."*

At the beginning of the 19th century, the state brought up the idea of demolishing the city walls and reusing the materials in new constructions. This would improve the organization of the city and make it more modern by building boulevards, roads and new structures in the areas occupied by the land walls. Although there were supporters of this idea, many historians, archaeologists, architects, planners and residents opposed this action on the grounds that a historical value would be lost. Consequently, the Land Walls were not destroyed, conserved, or renovated during

the 19th century which was the late Ottoman era, in contrast to the partial destruction of the Marmara and Golden Horn sea walls. Instead, they were left to stand in the city as dilapidated, damaged, and yet picturesque monuments (Baş Bütüner, 2010).

Although the continuation of agricultural production in the region through gardens can be identified from maps and other visuals from the period, it can be said that industrial production, which increased on the spatial voids on the urban periphery, grew much more extensive in both scale and size, especially in the 1900s. Within this scope, a textile industry was formed in Eyüp, while numerous industrial investments including as printing, iron production, leather manufacturing, textile production, guns manufacturing, rifle production, and gunpowder production were made in Yedikule and Kazlıçeşme (Başgelen, 2005). The aforementioned industrial-oriented spatial use has facilitated the formation of inappropriate residential areas that are incompatible with the original identity of the periphery such as dormitories for factory workers and military hospital.

Other major implementation of this period that affects the spatial transformation of the Walls is the new transportation line, Sirkeci – Halkalı railway – which was introduced and begun to function between 1870 and 1873 (Durusoy, 2021). While this line strengthened the relations between inner and outer of the city walls, which had been quite disconnected in the past, a certain part of the Land Walls were demolished for its construction.

Moreover, The Von Moltke Plan, which was developed during this period and whose objective was to improve access between the Historic Peninsula center and its edge-gates along the Land Walls, proposed various arteries to enhance transportation between Bab-i Hümayun and Aksaray, Aksaray and Topkapı, Beyazıt square and Fatih, Edirnekapı and Eğrikapı, Kadırga and Yedikule, along the Marmara coast, and lastly between Eminönü and Eyüp (Baş Bütüner, 2010). Even though it was the first example that suggested a design of a plan that penetrates to the Land Walls, this plan was not implemented, it had a noteworthy impact on decisions related to the planning

and implementation of urban projects in the Historic Peninsula until the mid-20th century (Kuban 1996).

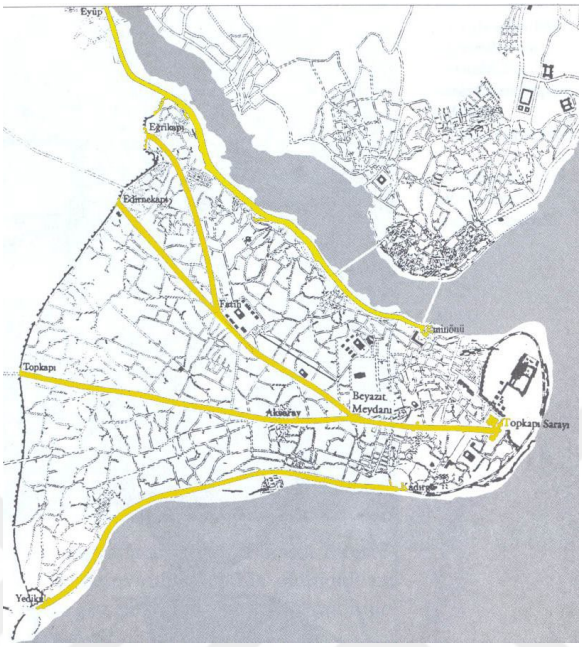


Figure 5.4 Von Moltke Plan. (Çelik, 1993)

Between 1930 and 1950, with the proclamation of the Republic in 1923, the administrators of the period prioritized the planning of Istanbul and invited a group of foreign architects and planners who had gained recognition in different countries to Istanbul in 1933. Istanbul Municipality opened a competition among well-known urbanists and invited three city planners that are Alfred Agache, Herman Elgötz and Jack H. Lambert. The competition was won by Elgötz, and although the plan proposal shows an approach that emphasizes historical buildings and gives importance to the environmental arrangement of them (Kart, 2008) when the views on the division of the city into districts are examined, there is no direct decision regarding the Land Walls and the gardens (Kıran, 2019). Afterwards, it was stated that the plan did not produce a solution at the desired level for Istanbul, and in 1936, Prof. Henri Prost, one of the French urbanism experts, was invited to Istanbul to manage the planning studies. As a result of the planning studies under the direction of Prost, the 1/5000 scale master plan of the Istanbul Historical Peninsula, which

entered into force in 1939, was prepared. With the planning studies of H. Prost, the walls were evaluated as an important urban element and protection areas were created inside and outside the Land Walls. In the Istanbul Master Plan prepared by Prost, the 500 m isolation area parallel to the city walls was planned as a green belt with the character of a buffer zone (Kıran, 2019). Furthermore, in order not to disturb the perception of the Land Walls in the silhouette, it is emphasized that no construction can take place above the 40 meter level and this decision applies to the entire periphery (Prost, 1938). Thus, unlike Alfred Agache, Herman Elgötz and Jack H. Lambert, Prost specifically thought about Land Walls and its surrounding throughout the design process of the plan proposal. Prost proposed a recreation-oriented green spatial void with various theme parks such as zoos, herbal and cultural parks, sports areas, promenades, landscape terraces, outdoor jogging tracks for the urban periphery (Prost, 1938). The fact that this plan has an approach to the Land Walls that embraces the potential of being a threshold space that interacts with the areas in its immediate vicinity, rather than just a borderline that ends the historical peninsula, supports the claim of the transformation process of the area into an interstitial space mentioned in this study.

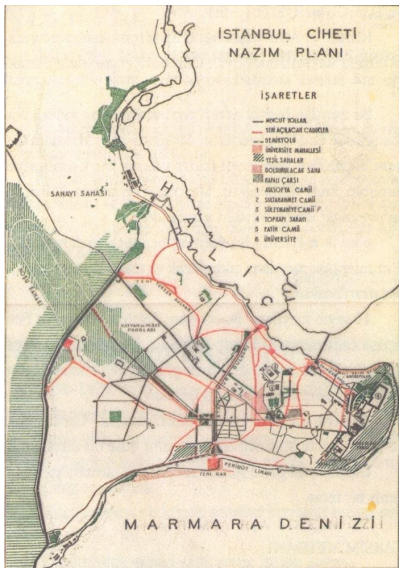


Figure 5.5 The Prost plan that proposed green belt along the Land Walls (Özler, 2007 cited in Baş Bütüner, 2010)

Furthermore, within the scope of the Prost Plan, a new road network designed for both vehicular and pedestrian use has been proposed for this spatial void-dominated texture proposed to surround the Land Walls. One of these transportation axes implemented immediately after the proposal is 10th Year Street. This street has become a busy traffic line that defines and limits this area from past to present. The relationship of this street with the Land Walls and the gardens adjacent to the walls has been evaluated in various ways. Expert participant Gökçer Okumuş, city planner, architect and the coordinator of the Public Design Office at the Istanbul Planning Agency (IPA), evaluates this street in terms of its relationship with the gardens and the user density of the various functions in the immediate vicinity:

> *"The garden is between the city wall and a 10th Year Street. There are people in the area who drive on that main axis. To the west of the road, there are cemetery areas and large amenity spaces, and these amenity spaces are not very intensively used areas. There used to be the Abdi İpekçi Sports Hall. It is being rebuilt now. So it was probably the mere place that was used once a week or once every 1-2 weeks which used intensively throughout this street."*

Expert participant N. Simla Uygaç, official of Istanbul Chamber of City Planners (ŞPO), defines the positionality of the gardens through the existence of the 10th Year Street:

> *"When we look at gardens' spatially, there is a Land Walls on one side, which is on the UNESCO historical heritage border. On the other side, even though it is not an E-5 highway, there is a crowded 10th Year Street like the E-5, that is, there is a heavy traffic flow. Despite the air pollution in the area, there is also resistance, an effort to keep it as an garden."*

Expert participant Oktan Nalbantoğlu underlines that people interact with this area, that is, Land Walls and the gardens by using the 10th Year Street:

> *"...people still nostalgically stop by the side of the road while driving. They somehow buy vegetables from there and leave. This is a bit of a habit."*

Yet, the Prost Plan was canceled before it could be fully implemented based on the reasons that it was insufficient to meet the needs of the growing city and instead of providing solutions to the problems, it dragged Istanbul into an understanding that emulated the modernizationist attitude of European cities (Tekeli, 2013).

In terms of industrial developments, they led to spatial changes in and around the Land Walls also during this period. In the late 1940s, many industrial factories established on the south-western sides of the wall resulted in the emergence of squatter developments in Kazlıçeşme and Zeytinburnu (Baş Bütüner, 2010). Thus, the west of the Land Walls gradually lost its positioning at the periphery in terms of development, while uninhabited areas were replaced by housing and other functions (Tekeli, 1994). This has catalyzed the gradual transformation of the Land Walls into an interstitial space, as defined by Mehrotra (2003, 2008, 2013), where formality (settlements from the past on the eastern inner eastern side of the wall) and informality (slum areas developed on the western side of the wall with the relocation of industrial facilities) overlap. This is also one of the developments that paved the way for the gradual positioning of the Land Walls from the edges of the city to its center and hence becoming an urban fissure.

Even though the emergence of the illegal housing around the Land Walls had increased, most of the gardens and cemeteries were still protected especially on the land between Silivrikapı and Yedikule adjacent to the walls, as it can be observed from the Pervititch maps dated 1929.



Figure 5.6 1-Pervititch map of Ayvansaray in 1929, 2-Pervititch map of Eğrikapı in 1928, 3- Pervititch map of Edirnekapı in 1929, 4-Pervititch map of Kazlıçeşme in 1939 (Salt Research: Jacques Pervititch, n.d.)

Between 1950 and 1980, Istanbul, which developed in its own course without being dependent on any plan and where no proposed plan was fully implemented until 1950, witnessed reconstruction operations carried out at an unprecedented speed with the approach of the 500th anniversary of the conquest (Tekeli, 2013). In the 1930-1950 period, the slums that emerged with the development of industrial areas to the west of the Land Walls expanded rapidly in the 1950s, making the Land Walls, which had defined the edge of the city for centuries, a reference line for the construction of illegal housing (Baş Bütüner, 2010). Thus it became a threshold

space that indicates the change of fabrics from settlement areas of the Historical Peninsula to industrial areas and illegal housing. Expert participant Sedanur Gezer, official of Istanbul Chamber of City Planners (ŞPO), explains the thresholds through its indicative quality as:

> *"...both morphologically and socially, this area is a threshold. While borders imply that we should not cross this space, that we should stay within this defined framework, in thresholds we emphasize space, and although it is possible to read the threshold as a border, in fact the threshold has a degree of permeability."*

This period, known as the Menderes Period, encompasses the period when Adnan Menderes became prime minister and put into practice his various ideas and critics on the planning of the city. Menderes, who perceived the land walls as an obstacle to be overcome against access to the inner city, aimed to ensure the flow of automobiles between inner Historic Peninsula and outer landscapes of the city walls by building important axes such as London Asphalt, Vatan Street, Millet Street and Ordu Street, and partial demolitions were carried out on the land walls to serve this purpose (Durusoy, 2021). The discontinuity caused by the large tears opened in the city walls as a result of the transportation network revision, the discontinuity in the walls, and the interruption in transportation caused by the streets parallel to the walls, caused major transportation-related problems in the future, especially by causing disruption in pedestrian circulation. This was actually the result of considering the Walls and their immediate surroundings as an obstacle to urbanization and reading this urban component as a border. This study perceives this area as a fracture in the urban fabric, a threshold in the textural continuity, and questions the transformation of this area into an interstitial space in morphological, spatial and social contexts, together with the loss of the military function of the walls, then, the development of the gardens in and around the triple wall system and the diverse domains and functions in the immediate vicinity that interact with this area.

In the beginning of the 1950s, a commission was established by the Municipality of Istanbul and was asked to review and evaluate all past Istanbul plan proposals. This

commission made some evaluations about the city by emphasizing the industrial development in the Land Walls and its surroundings as in previous periods. However, during this period, in order to legalize the implementation of the Menderes operation in Istanbul, the German urban planning expert Prof. Högg was invited to the city to direct the planning studies. Prof. Högg's planning studies were not enough to eliminate the public debate and as a result, the Istanbul Planning Directorate was established (Kıran, 2019).

Another significant plan produced during this period was developed under the expert guidance of Luigi Piccinato in 1958 (Baş Bütüner, 2010). Piccinato's plan concentrated on the regional scale over the city scale and aimed to create a decentralized, open, and linear structure for the city (Tekeli, 1994). This plan highlights the importance and benefit of the Land Walls concerning their position in transportation and recreation. However, neither Höggs' nor Piccinato's work was deemed adequate and appropriate for the development of the city and was not implemented, thus the unplanned development of the periphery had continued.

This period of unplanned development of the city has interrupted by 1:5000 scale development plan for the Historic Peninsula inner city (1964), in which conservation was the major focus, as in 1960s with the emergence of conservation as a primary component in planning (Baş Bütüner, 2010). Within this plan, which was created as a result of the blending of the plans made for Istanbul in the past years, the Historical Peninsula was divided into sub-regions and various regulations were defined for each region. It was emphasized that the provisions of the Prost Plan, which was previously decided not to be implemented, became valid for the Land Walls and its immediate surroundings, which are determined as the "Seventh Region". Prost's proposal to plan a 500 m isolation area parallel to the Land Walls in the Istanbul Master Plan was validated by the proposal of the 1964's plan, especially the 500 meter wide construction boundary, as a green protection band called the "Fortification Isolation Area". However, this plan was not be implemented either.

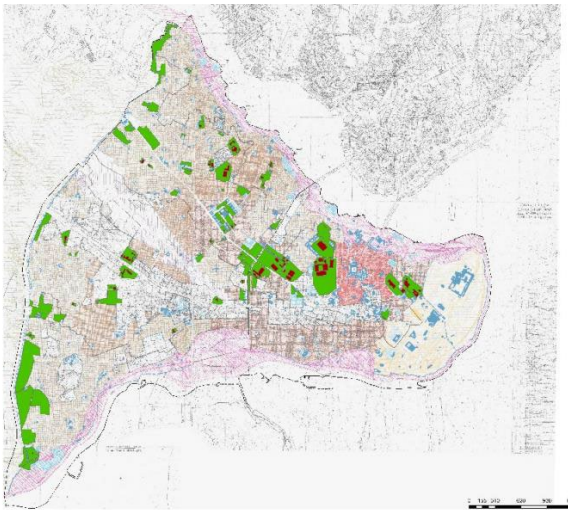


Figure 5.7 Proposed Green Areas in the 1964 development plan for the Historic Peninsula inner city (Kıran, 2019)

Regarding the impact of this time period on the gardens; the ditches, gardens, meadows and cemeteries that had covered much of the landscape surrounding the Land Walls for centuries were largely preserved until the mid-20th century. Yet, they began to disappear under a wave of construction as the construction processes in Istanbul accelerated from the 1950s onwards, and the gardens began to gradually diminish due to population growth and the main roads constructed throughout the city.

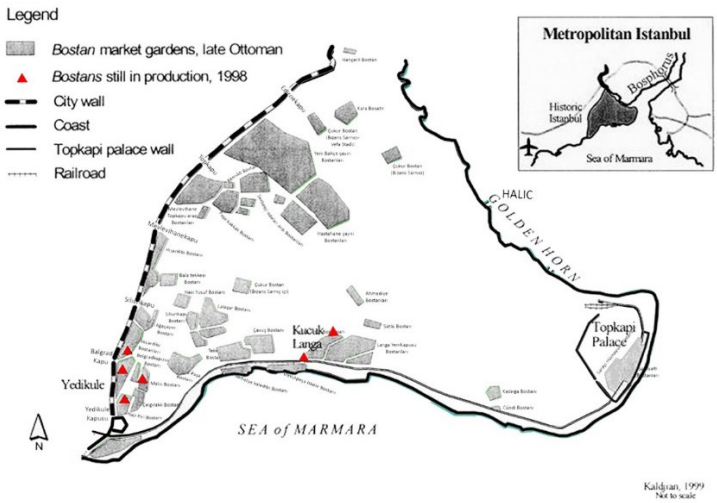


Figure 5.8 Map of Kaldijian Istanbul Gardens (Kaldijan, 2000; edited by the author)

This map was produced by Paul Kaldijan (2000) based on a map from the 1950s. Only a small number of the gardens where production continued in 1950 were still operational in 1998, as visualized on the map. A significant portion of the gardens within the city walls were destroyed as a result of Menderes's zoning operations and the opening of wide multi-lane boulevards during this period. From the 1970s onwards, with the uncontrolled and destructive impact of population growth, migration and urbanization, these areas of the city with traditional landscape features were rapidly transformed into built-up areas. By the 1990s, it is seen that many gardens are lined up and concentrated along the Yedikule - Topkapı line, adjacent to and in close proximity to the Land Walls (Günçıkan, 1990).

With the 1980s, considerable efforts were made to plan and design the spatial configuration of the Land Walls and their immediate environs, walled zones. Especially after the declaration of the Land Walls as a site of historic importance on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1985 (Baş Bütüner, 2010) interest in Land Walls and their surrounding has increased and the measures to be taken and interventions to be made to protect the values and qualities of this area have become the responsibility of both national and international institutions.

In addition, the Historic Peninsula was declared a protected area in 1995, and the Wall Isolation Area was designated as a conservation area for the Historic Peninsula. At the same time, preparations for a Management Plan for the entire Historic Peninsula were initiated. Within the scope of the Management Plan, large-scale renovation, rehabilitation, repurposing and restoration projects were developed to protect and integrate both the Land Walls and the periphery defined by them into Istanbul's urban life. With the implementation phases of such projects, the natural, social and physical context of the periphery has begun to change in the light of a vision focused on culture, tourism and recreation.

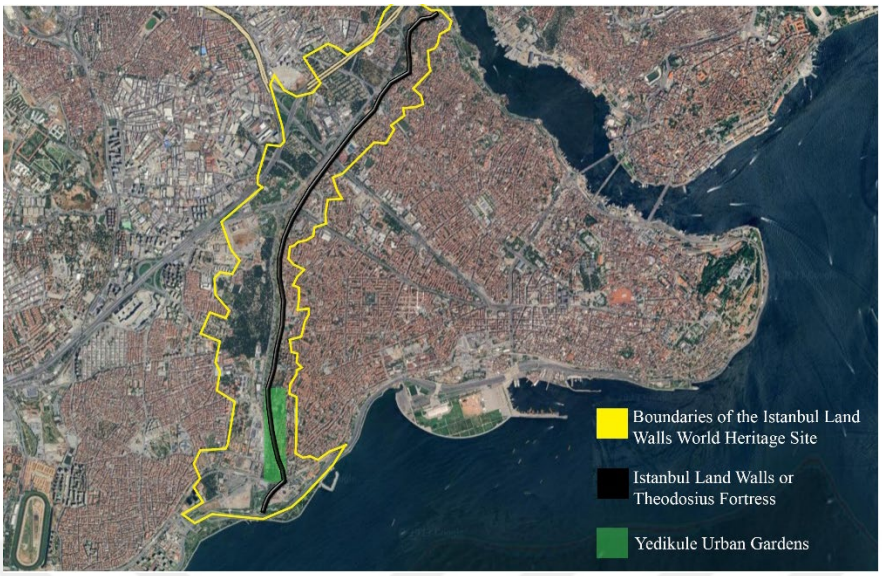


Figure 5.9 Historical Peninsula in Istanbul, Turkey. Visual depicts the scale and location of the historical Land Walls and the boundaries of the UNESCO Istanbul Land Walls Conservation Zone (Google Maps, 2023; edited by the author)

During this period, when these developments transformed the Land Walls from a local issue to a global one, many plan approaches were developed for this region. Even though the setting of the plans did not remarkably differ from each other, the scale of the plans (İstanbul Metropolitan Plans; 1:5000 Historic Peninsula Conservation Plans; and 1:000 plans or 1:500 urban design project plans) and focused site of the project areas (some plans only focus on the east side of the Land Walls, while others on the west side) have notably altered (Baş Bütüner, 2010).

In 1990, Historic Peninsula Conservation Master Plan established conservation zones with different usage and construction conditions, but this plan does not include the 500 m conservation band outside the land walls as envisaged in the Prost Plan. In this plan, the Marmara and Golden Horn coastal embankment bands and all the close surroundings (sur dibi) of Land Walls between Yedikule-Topkapı and Vatan Caddesi-Ayvansaray are considered as green areas, but it is noteworthy that the Yedikule wall close surroundings are planned as a children's playground (Kıran, 2019).

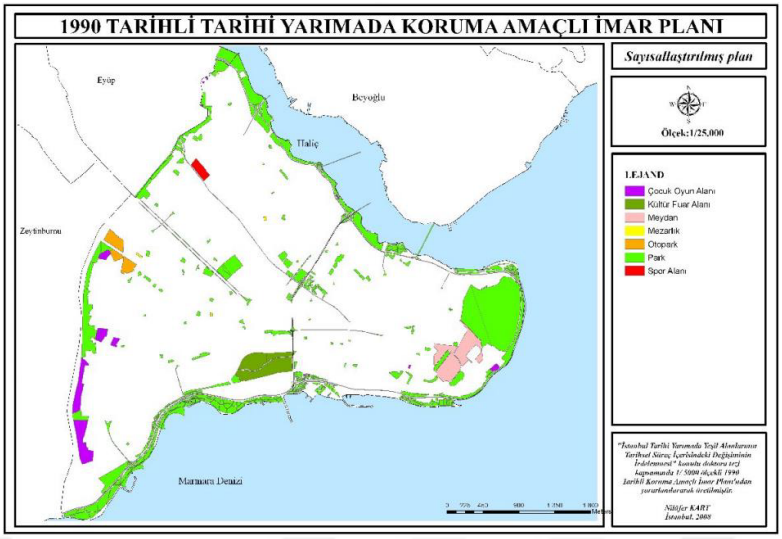


Figure 5.10 Proposed Green Areas in the 1990 Conservation Plan (Kart, 2008)

During this period, it was observed that many parcels in the historical peninsula were opened for development, green areas were destroyed, and the historical and cultural texture was largely destroyed.

In 2005, The İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality sanctioned a new Conservation Master Plan for the Historic Peninsula, which was prepared based on the recommendations of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. The design intended to improve the unfavorable conditions that had led to the decline of the inner walled area and placed particular emphasis on the global significance of the Historic Peninsula. One of the primary objectives of the plan was to designate the Historic Peninsula as the tourism, housing, and commercial center of Istanbul while moving industrial and manufacturing sites and warehouses to the outskirts of the city.

In the 1/5000 Scale Historic Peninsula Conservation Master Plan (2005), various zones have been established according to the priority of protection. The Land Walls are included in the 1st Degree Conservation Zone and the gardens are included in the 2nd and 3rd Degree Conservation Zones (short-term transformation areas). Grade 2 Conservation Areas include the gardens in the Inner Protection Area of the Land Walls. These areas constitute the immediate surroundings of the 1st Degree Conservation Areas, whose architectural character, road texture and cultural features

have been partially preserved until today. In the Plan, 3rd Degree Conservation Areas are defined as "Short Term Transformation Areas". These areas include the garden areas in the inner protection area of the Land Walls, which have lost their natural character but can be preserved with a new arrangement.

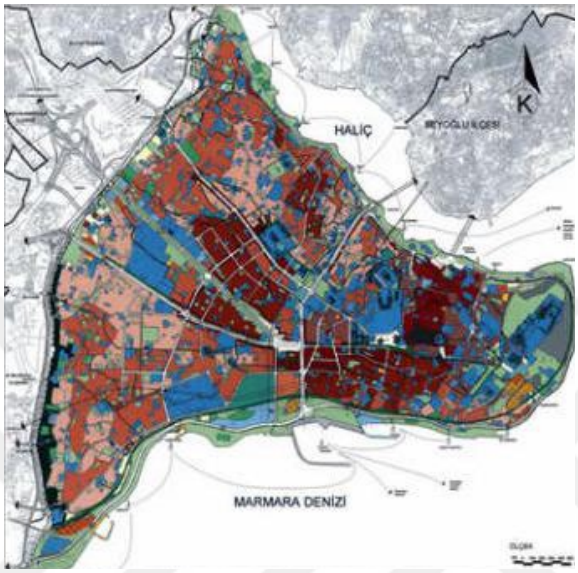


Figure 5.11 2005 Conservation Master Plan for the Historic Peninsula (İBB Archives, retrieved from Baş Bütüner, 2010)

Focusing only on the east side of the Land Walls, this plan acknowledged the west side, outer landscape, of the Land Walls as “Land Walls” and this area, for which no decision had been taken, continued to be planned as a 500-meter-wide green protection zone under the definition of the "Wall Isolation Area", as it had been defined in 1964 and re-approved in 1981.

2005 Conservation Master Plan’s approach to the design of the Land Walls and its immediate surroundings, which is similar to the approaches of past proposed plans to this area, indicates that although these walls have been fragmented by various interventions over the years and have been transformed from a periphery to a fabric in the middle of the city with the westward development of the city, the general view is that *the border* quality is still dominant. However, it will continue to be analyzed

whether this quality will contribute to the formation of interstitiality qualities in this area in the future.

Expert participant Oktan Nalbantoğlu also supports this perception as:

> *"Is it a border? Yes, it is a border. Because you can't get here without going through the gate. So there are gates here. I mean Mevlanakapı, Belgradkapı, Altınkapı, so you have to go to that gate and pass through it, and the boulevard built in the 1950s also underlined this border feature further."*

Expert participant N. Simla Uygaç:

> *"It is a border. I think it's a clear limit."*

Expert participant Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

> *"The Land Walls are the border… when we think of borders, we should think not only of physical but also mental issues, sets of thoughts and perceptions."*

Moreover, in 2005, Land Walls were included within the scope of "Law on the Renewal, Preservation and Sustenance and Use of Deteriorated Historical and Cultural Immovable Assets" which was "Renovation Law" in short. This situation has enabled the construction on the periphery and around the Land Walls under the name of "renewal zones". The initiation of the implementation in the designated renewal areas has led to a visible cultural and spatial impoverishment in the periphery, as users and stakeholders with a sense of belonging to the areas along the Land Walls have been sent to different parts of the city (Çorakbaş, Aksoy & Ricci, 2014). Projects for the "renewal zones", which include museums, recreation areas, a cinematography center, traditional handicraft workshops, picnic areas, an ice skating rink and a mini golf course, some of which have been completed and some of which are still in the process of implementation, have been criticized for not being appropriate to the physical context of the Land Walls and for creating a new identity independent of its past (Durusoy & Can, 2018).

In 2011, for the 1/5000 scale Conservation Master Plan, conservation zones have been established according to the importance and density of priority buildings and

their surroundings. In this plan, gardens are evaluated under the title of 1st and 3rd Degree Protection Zones. 1st Degree Conservation Zones include the garden areas with preserved green texture within the Land Walls Inner Conservation Area. Among the 3rd Degree Protection Zones, there are garden areas within the Land Walls Inner Protection Area whose green texture has deteriorated and will require urban renewal. It has been stated that the green texture and garden areas in this area can be preserved and developed through landscaping projects (Kıran, 2019).

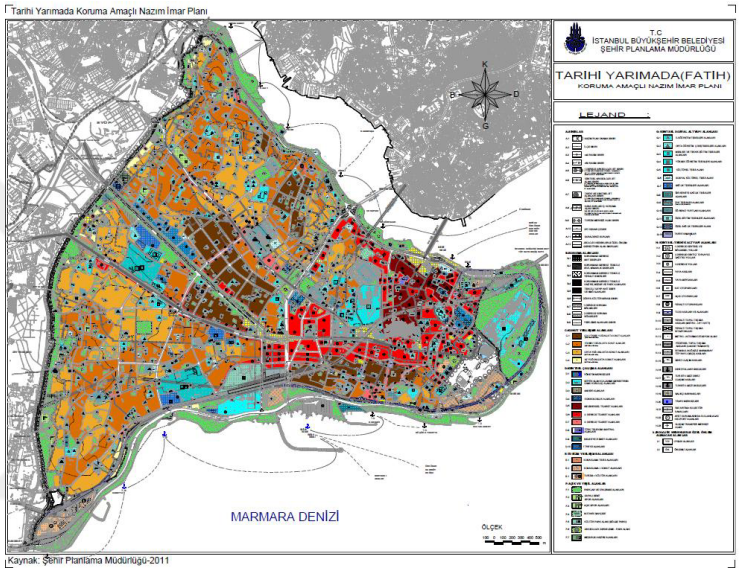


Figure 5.12 2011 Conservation Master Plan for the Historic Peninsula (İBB Archives retrieved from Kıran, 2019)

In 2018, Area Management Plan adopts the main approach of the prevailing 1/5000 scale Master Plan for Conservation of the Historic Peninsula. It is also stated in this plan that the target of "Programming the Integrated Conservation Practices of the Istanbul Land Walls together with the Garden Areas" has been included in the strategic program. By suggesting that Land Walls should be read as a whole with its immediate surroundings, this master plan actually goes beyond the perception of boundary towards Land Walls and considers the site holistically. This supports the characterization of the area as an urban fissure and therefore increases the possibility of exploring the correspondences of interstitial space qualities in the area.

In terms of industrial developments and transformations of this period, as the westward expansion of the city, which began significantly in the 1950s, gained acceleration during this period, the Land Walls quickly became part of the city center, making the industrial facilities in the vicinity of the Walls a more urgent threat in terms of conservation. For this reason, the issue of relocating the industrial facilities in Zeytinburnu, one of the districts surrounding the Land Walls, to the outskirts of the city came to the agenda again, and the leather industry, which had existed in Kazlıçeşme for 5 centuries, was moved to Tuzla in 1990, and a prestigious residential area was implemented on a large part of the empty and vague area it left behind (Baş Bütüner, 2010). Although many industrial structures were removed from the Zeytinburnu and Eyüp districts, which serve as important markers of the western wall line, during the 1990s, several industrial units still exist today. Nevertheless, these units do not comprise a zone, as was the case in the past; instead, they exist as individual structures.

In the context of housing in this period, various changes and transformations were observed due to the rapid growth of the city towards the west. Illegal housing structures, the formation of which intensified in the 1950s, were transformed into apartment buildings during this period. These changes to the west of the Land Walls led to its intensive urbanization and development into a residential area.

As for the cemeteries, sacred sites and gardens that that have existed in the immediate vicinity of the Land Walls for centuries, continued to exist as a noteworthy components of the surrounding landscape of Land Walls during this period. Even though, After 1950, most of the gardens were replaced by buildings and other urban uses (Figure 5.8), the plan proposals of this period, which emphasized conservation, constantly brought the issue of their protection to the agenda. Today, the gardens are located especially in the ditches between Mevlevihanekapı and Yedikule, and they become urban patterns that follow and emphasize the line marked by the Land Walls (Baş Bütüner, 2010).

With all these implementations and transformations, as the city expanded and built up towards the west, Land Walls was for the first time in this period not between the inner and outer zone, but between two urban tissues. This has changed the positionality of Land Walls in reference to the city, from being the edge of the city to being an urban fissure within the city.

5.1.1.1 Evaluation of the Macro Scale of Yedikule Urban Gardens through the Lenses of Interstitial Space

In the chapter 5.1.1, the Land Walls and the spatial transformations they have undergone throughout history have been examined via proposed, implemented or unimplemented renovation and conservation plans, and their effects on the historical fortresses and its immediate surroundings. During these investigations, some changes and transformations are associated with interstitial space and related concepts and the reasons underlying the thesis' claim that "Yedikule Urban Gardens is an interstitial space" is tried to be elucidated.

Consequently, this study evaluates Land Walls, the upper scale of Yedikule Urban Garden, as follows: The Land Walls began its existence as a military boundary (Sennett, 2018) defining the city, a borderline that crosses and divides the land (Sassen, 2005). Over the years, as a result of the processes of conflict, confrontation and negotiation between the diverse domains and opposing identities that have formed its immediate surroundings, multiple conservation and renovation plans being realized by diverse stakeholders and the rapid expansion and sprawl of the city, it has become in the middle of the urban fabric, fragmented and defined not only by the fortress itself but also by the fortress and its immediate surroundings (walled zone as named by Baş Bütüner, 2010). Therefore, this study claims that, the spatial and functional transformations it underwent, the change in its positionality in relation to the city center, and the fact that it remained within the urban fabric rather than on the periphery of the city as a result of the change in its positionality relative to the

city center, made this area a fissure, an interstice and consequently an interstitial space within the urban tissue.

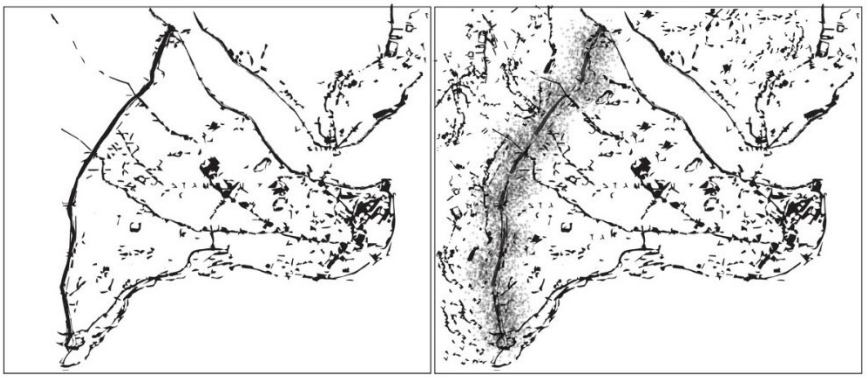


Figure 5.13 Illustration of the Land Walls' change of positionality with regards to the expansion of the city. Left map is based on the early 20th century maps of Historical Peninsula, while right map depicts the current situation (prepared by the author)

Figure 5.13 illustrates change in the positionality of the Land Walls relative to the city center due to the westward expansion of the city, left map shows Inner Historic Peninsula and sparse outer lands in the early 20th century while right map depicts the current positionality of the Land Walls, between urban tissues. The right map also tries to illustrate how Land Walls become fragmented and gradually identify a fracture, an interstice between the dense urban fabric of Istanbul.

In the next chapter, after the investigation and evaluation at the upper scale, the immediate surroundings of Yedikule Urban Gardens will be examined to explore the spatial and social transformation at the intermediate scale and the relationship of these changes with interstitiality and related concepts. In this scale, unlike the upper scale, the social transformation in the area will also be explored.

5.1.2 Spatial Transformation of the Meso Scale of Yedikule Urban Gardens: Immediate Surroundings

Since Yedikule Urban Gardens are intertwined with the Land Walls and following the trace of the Walls, it is inevitable to refer to the immediate surroundings of the Walls and the direct relationship of these areas with the Walls when dealing with the Yedikule Urban Gardens. The near surrounding of Yedikule, there are many districts and neighbourhoods, some of them are Eyüp, Bayrampaşa, Zeytinburnu and Kazlıçeşme at the west side and Ayvansaray, Sulukule, Fatih, Topkapı at the east side of the Land Walls.

Fatih, Zeytinburnu, and Eyüp are the three municipalities responsible for the immediate land surrounding the Walls. East of the Walls is the administration of Fatih Municipality, while west of the Walls, which extends all the way from Topkapi junction to the Marmara Sea, is primarily managed by Zeytinburnu Municipality, Eyüp Municipality includes the entire northern side up to the Golden Horn.

Expert participant Gökçer Okumuş:

> *"…the public owns the property, then the components of the public are also actors in this area, this could be the Ministry of Finance, if it is a land belonging to IBB, I mean the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. There are also the district municipality such as Fatih, Eyüp and Zeytinburnu…"*

Expert participant Oktan Nalbantoğlu:

> *"Fatih Municipality has started to become a stakeholder and an actor with their Yedikule Bahçe project, in the whole of the land walls. There are also other district municipalities such as Zeytinburnu and Eyüp, that have a say on this area. Because it is within the borders of Fatih Municipality, and if IBB gets involved in the management of the site, I think the area will be approached with a really professional organization."*

Expert participant Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

> *"If we say stakeholders, for example, the Metropolitan Municipality due to ownership, Fatih, Zeytinburnu and Eyüp district municipalities, the Ministry of Finance, Directorate of Foundations, these are also stakeholders in the end."*

This situation has resulted in a multiplicity of institutions having a say and rights on the periphery, and the Land Walls, which should be approached holistically, being under the influence of more than one plan and conservation projects which led to fragmented and disorganized interventions towards the area (Baş Bütüner, 2010). As a matter of fact, the part of the Land Walls located within the borders of the Historic Peninsula has the status of "Urban and Historical Protected Area"; the part located within the borders of Zeytinburnu, Bayrampaşa and Eyüp districts has the status of "Wall Isolation Area" and "World Heritage Buffer Zone"; and the part located within the borders of Eyüp district has the status of "Urban Protected Area" (Durusoy, 2021).

This multiplicity is not limited to the diverse municipalities making decisions on the area. The fact that this area is in the field of interest of many disciplines such as city-regional planning, urban design, architecture, conservation and restoration, archaeology, sociology, history, and that there are various actors such as academics, initiative members, gardeners (bostancı), municipality officials who interact with the area and each other suggest that the area is a heterotopia (Foucault, 1968) where diverse domains and identities coexist, encounter, conflict and reconcile. Moreover, this claim supports the thesis statements related to the interstitiality of Yedikule Urban Gardens, as heterotopias consist of the conflicting domains and transitory zones, which are in this case the interstitial spaces.

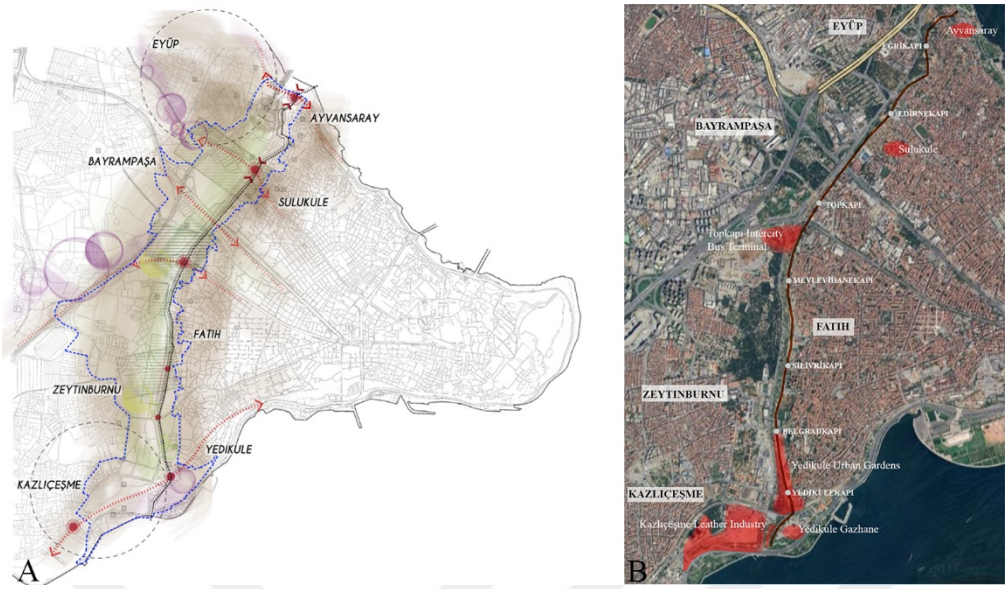


Figure 5.14 A- Land Walls, Yedikule and its immediate surroundings after 1980 (Durusoy, 2019). B- The key project areas located in the surrounding neighbourhoods (Baş Bütüner, 2010; adapted and developed by the author)

The figure 5.14 **A** by Durusoy (2019) depicts the surrounding municipalities of Land Walls (Zeytinburnu, Fatih and Eyüp municipalities) governing the area and the key neighborhoods (Kazlıçeşme, Topkapı, Sulukule, Ayvansaray) where gentrification and renovation projects taking place have resulted in the destruction of the physical, social and cultural fabric of the area. Figure 5.14 **B** indicates the surrounding of Yedikule Urban Gardens encompasses several significant projects, including the Kazlıçeşme Leather Industry area, the Topkapı Intercity bus terminal, Gazhane in Yedikule, and the Sulukule and Ayvansaray neighborhoods. This chapter will focus on the change and transformation that these neigborhoods in the immediate vicinity of Yedikule Urban Gardens underwent after 1980 as during this period, the Land Walls and its surrounding areas experienced significant transformations within the urban context of Istanbul.

Starting with the 1453 Conquest of Istanbul, the positioning of industrial facilities around the Land Wall, the spread and expansion of the slum texture around these facilities in the 1940s, and the relocation of these industrial facilities outside of

Istanbul while these slums were replaced by apartment buildings after 1980 are the processes that initiated and directed the formation and development of Kazlıçeşme, Zeytinburnu and Eyüp that are located at the west part of the Land Walls and in the immediate vicinity of Yedikule. Kazlıçeşme, a place that was developed and inhabited by Fatih Sultan Mehmed's decision on locating the leather industry in this area, with the expansion of the city to the west part of the Land Walls, underwent transformations. The rapid expansion of the city in the 1980s led to the relocation of the leather industry to the Tuzla Industrial District, situated respectively out of the city, in the early 1990s. Some of the derelict land created by the demolition of the industry and surrounding structures was used for the construction of luxury housing, while the other part, Kazlıçeşme Square, became a public space used for large rallies, public protests, political party meetings, mass rallies and Nevruz celebrations (Baş Bütüner, 2010).



Figure 5.15 A- Leather industry in Kazlıçeşme in 1982 (Baş Bütüner, 2010). B– Kazlıçeşme Square and rally area in 2023 (prepared by the author)

Another transformation realized during this period was the relocation of the intercity bus station from the western area of Topkapı to Esenler in 1994. In 1971, the city's largest bus station was built in Topkapı in order to create a strong connection

between the inner city walls and the outer city walls. Turning into a major transit center over time, Topkapı has been used as the node of the city's intercity transportation for many years. However, with the rapid increase in the population and the number of motorized vehicles, it has not only failed to fulfill the stated objective, but has further damaged the bond it aimed to create due to the traffic density and confusion it has caused in and around the Land Walls (Durusoy, 2021). Moreover, in the 1980s, the "Topkapı Flea Market", an illegal second-hand market that utilized the moat and bastion spaces of the Land Walls between Topkapı and Zeytinburnu as an exhibition area, was illegally established. The formation of these kind of unintentional, illegal spaces brings to mind the “fourthplace” concept by Aelbrecht (2016) and “spaces by people” by Cihanger Ribeiro (2018). These concepts challenge the idea of well-planned and meticulously designed urban spaces and proposes intentionally keeping some spaces underutilized, undefined, and empty. The objective is to create a sense of in-betweenness, where spontaneous and informal activities take place based on the needs and desires of the users.

However, in addition to the vehicle traffic in the area due to the Bus Terminal, the flea market also caused an increase in human mobility and the chaotic atmosphere in the surrounding area increased even more. In the 1990s, with the relocation of the Topkapı bus station to Esenler, these facilities were demolished and the Topkapı City Park or Topkapı Culture Park was created as a public space, as in the case of Kazlıçeşme.



Figure 5.16 A- Topkapı Intercity Bus Terminal in 1982 (Baş Bütüner, 2010). B- The Topkapı City Park is located at the site of the former Topkapı Intercity Bus Terminal in 2023 (prepared by the author)

In 2005, local governments have been given the authorization to implement urban transformation projects in the historical inner-city zone by designating "renewal areas" independent of conservation plans as a result of 2005's Law No 5366 on “Preservation by Renovation and Utilization by Revitalization of Deteriorated Historical Cultural Properties”. This legal regulation enabled the implementation of renewal projects by assigning responsibility to district municipalities and circumventing previous supervision mechanisms, such as urban conservation boards. Subsequently, a number of urban transformation projects were announced and implemented to Yedikule and its near environs.

After this verdict, Fatih Municipality proposed and implemented 3 separate "renewal projects" in 3 different areas under its administration. The first one was the "Sulukule project" realized in 2006. Within the scope of this project, Sulukule was seen as a "wound that needed to be healed" and the Council of Ministers decided to urgently

gentrify it, and the demolitions of three neighbourhoods predominantly inhabited by the Romanies in 2011 were followed by the construction of luxury housing (Hürriyet, 2019). In the lawsuit filed to the European Parliament against this project that forcibly displaces the people living in the neighborhood, it was decided that the 'new Sulukule' project prepared by the Fatih Municipality should be canceled because it destroys the historical texture and is unlawful, but the struggle of the people and non-governmental organizations here is still continuing. However, both the name (from Sulukule to Karagümrük) and the original inhabitants of Sulukule already have changed and the unique cultural activities and traditions of this location and neigbouthood solidarity have faced extinction, including the gathering of all neighborhood residents for weddings, circumcisions, and funerals in the neighbourhood (Hürriyet, 2019).



Figure 5.17 A resident who watches the transformation of the neighborhood from her window and resists staying in her house in Sulukule until the last moment (Ocak, 2019)



Figure 5.18 A- New TOKİ houses built in Sulukule (Ocak, 2019) B- Newspaper article from 2009 titled “Sulukule'nin Yeni Sakinleri” (New Residents of Sulukule) (Oral, 2009)

The second one was designated in Ayvansaray, again, after displacing the locals from the area, the “Turkish Neighbourhood” project was implemented by renovating the locals’ old houses and constructing an international hotel in 2012 (Ayvansaray Yenileme Çalışmaları, 2016). Although it was argued that the registered historical wooden structures would be dismantled and restored in accordance with the original and that the historical neighborhood would be revitalized, these structures were demolished with diggers, and in the area where the registered wooden structures were demolished, concrete blocks are now rising under the name of 'restoration' (Yılmaz, 2019).



Figure 5.19 A- Ayvansaray Turkish Neighborhood (Tokludede) before it was gentrified (Şahin, 2014) B- Construction process after the decision of gentrification in Ayvansaray Neighborhood (Şahin, 2013)

The last one was the "Yedikule Gardens" Project. In the summer of 2013, the Fatih Municipality announced a recreational park project in the conservation zone along the Land Walls where Yedikule Gardens were and are located. The 27 acres of garden land was lost due to the rushed project to build a restaurant, a square, a walking path, a children's adventure and exercise area, a soaking pool, an animal roaming area and a parking lot (Coşkun, 2023).The project was rejected by the metropolitan mayor after loud objections from various activist groups. However, some parts of the historic urban garden (gardens) within the Theodosius Walls had already been demolished due to the rubble dumped on it.

Expert participant Yiğit Ozar:

> *"Fatih Municipality wanted to destroy the gardens between Yedikule and Belgradkapı for a recreation area project in 2013. At first, since I am an archaeologist, I went to the area thinking that there was an archaeological destruction at that time, which there already was, and that it was not appropriate to carry out such a project in the protected area within the city walls."*

Expert participant Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

> *"Since 2013, I have been a part of such a struggle, solidarity, collectivity and interaction that has been making efforts to turn some of the gardens of Yedikule Urban Gardens back into an garden since some parts of it are unfortunately under rubble, and to keep the remaining gardens alive together with the Land Walls and to protect them together."*

Although the 2013 demolition attempt was stopped by the reaction and struggle of activists and the public, the IBB Department of Cultural Assets began restoration in 2021 to protect and strengthen the Land Walls and as a result, nine gardens were destroyed during the restoration (Coşkun, 2023). Moreover, construction equipment started working inner parts of the Land Walls too.



Figure 5.20 A- Construction equipment occupying Yedikule Gardens and the gardener who continues his work (Şenyuva, 2016) B- Muncipality demolishes the sheds of gardeners (Tarihi Yedikule Bostanları, 2016)

Although some of these plans and projects have resulted in the creation of public spaces that host various activities, most of the implementations have resulted in the loss of the original functions of the Land Walls and the surrounding fabric to a great extent, resulting in the problematic of an urban periphery that is isolated from its historical identity and locals. This has resulted in these areas falling into neglect and not being able to take part in the daily life of the city. For these reasons, the urban periphery and the Yedikule Urban Gardens, which have turned into areas that the people do not want to visit or even pass near, are in danger of losing their historical identity due to partial plans and projects that are not in line with their original features.

Expert participant Gökçer Okumuş also underlines the fact that Yedikule is a place excluded from the city, not visited by people, not recognized by the general public of Istanbul with the following statement:

> *"...in terms of Istanbul in general, for example, when you say Yedikule Urban Gardens to someone living in Küçükçekmece, it may not mean anything, or it may not even mean anything to someone living in Pendik, Sancaktepe or Levent. It may only mean something if you say Yedikule Urban Gardens to people living in Zeytinburnu and Fatih, but since it has been on the agenda for a long time, of course it has created its own agenda."*

Expert participant Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

> *"...but today, the element called garden has become conceptually and socially, if not physically, distanced from the city and the urbanites, that is, how many of the people living in Istanbul know about Yedikule and the gardens around it? Or if they do, how many of them have visited or intend to visit this area?"*

Although it was stated that this chapter would examine the transformation of Yedikule and its immediate surroundings after 1980, the researcher was struck by the fact that there were not many sources on the social and societal transformation of this area from the past to the present. Since not only the spatial but also the social transformation of this area will have a significant impact on the interstitiality of the space, and since the study's approach to the space has a social dimension as well as a morphological one, in order to underline this deficiency, the data found before 1980, which had a great impact on the social and societal transformation of this area, will be shared on this scale.

Few sources briefly mention that, in the Ottoman period, some of the Yedikule gardens were run and worked by Albanians, Armenians and Greek gardeners. Expert participant Abdullah Inanç Kıran states that:

> *"...in the past, in the Ottoman period, some of these gardens were run and worked by Albanians, there are sources that mention that Armenians and Greek gardeners worked in these gardens, and therefore it is also an area where demographic fractures in Istanbul and Turkey can be read. It is not only Istanbul's cultural heritage, but also an area where the social processes of the non-Muslim communities that existed in Istanbul's past were excluded and expelled from the city through political processes can be read."*

Expert participant Suna Kafadar, feminist publisher and co-founder of the Initiative for the Protection of Yedikule Gardens, underlines that:

“ ...the history of the Albanians, Greeks and Macedonians who worked here, their relationship with the gardens and the city is not known at all, it has never been studied, there are so many gaps in this area of knowledge.”

During the in-depth interview with Suna Kafadar (2023), who studies on the history of violence against non-Muslims, she discusses that especially in the Yedikule gardens and the Yedikule neighborhood, Istanbul has lost its unique garden culture due to the Turkification policies of the gardens that leads to the destruction of gardens cultivated by Greeks and Armenians during the 1955 Istanbul Pogroms and the expulsion of Greeks from the city in 1964. In her article “A Lettuce Hometown from Tanpinar to Tovmasian” Kafadar (2021) writes about non-Muslims and their presence in the gardens. In 1942, with the wealth tax, an Armenian family’s garden coffeehouse, they call it a bostan gazinosu, taken away from them, and the place where this story is told is not actually a book about the history of gardens. This is a cookbook written by Takuhi Tovmasian, she actually writes her own family history through food and mentions about this incident in her cookbook’s section related to Yedikule Lettuce.



Figure 5.21 1935 Yedikule Souvenir. Takouhi Tovmasian's young son Sarkis (top right) eating Yedikule lettuce with his Greek friends at the casino of his grandfather Gazaros Efendi (retrieved from Tovmasian family archive. Kafadar, 2021)

Hence, starting with the wealth tax in 1942, Beginning in 1942 with the wealth tax, continuing with the Istanbul Pogrom of 1955 and the deportation of Greeks in 1964, this violence, which was also effective in Yedikule and its immediate surroundings, led to the seizure of the gardens cultivated by non-Muslims and named after them, and the rapid change of hands and municipal seizure of these areas. The plans and projects proposed for and implemented in this area, intentionally or unintentionally, erase the connection of this area with non-Muslims, the processes that took place and the memories of these people whose gardens were taken away from them a long time ago (Kafadar, 2023). Expert participant Suna Kafadar argues that:

> *"When we look at historical maps, it is clearly written there, for example, Ismail paşa bostan, Bayrampaşa bostan, Manoli's bostan, Tommo's bostan, Yanni's bostan, yet, these new projects prevent us from asking questions like what happened to Yanni, what happened to Tommo, what happened to Manoli due to their approach towards these area."*

Although it is difficult to find sources with detailed information about the impact of these political processes on the gardens, it is inevitable that these events had a great spatial and social impact on non-Muslims, and therefore on the Yedikule gardens and their immediate surroundings, which had been owned, cultivated and harvested by non-Muslims throughout their history, and had a great impact on social transformation. By taking the gardens away from these people, not only the physical fabric but also the social and cultural fabric in this area has been damaged.

5.1.2.1 Evaluation of the Meso Scale of Yedikule Urban Gardens through the Lenses of Interstitial Space

In chapter 5.1.2, the diverse domains and opposing identities that have formed the immediate surroundings have been investigated in detail. It is perceived that there are multiple actors and stakeholders who play a role in this field, have a say, work, interact with this field and others through this field such as municipal authorities, gardeners (bostancı), local people, academicians, activists.

Expert participant Yiğit Ozar:

> *"When we look at areas that are very valuable and multi-layered, the more layers and the more values we can identify, the more authority and responsibility we have, and the more related areas we have, the more values and layered areas start to appear on the map. Therefore, we can say that it is a very multi-actor, multi-idea, multi-layered field."*

The multiplicity that exists in the immediate vicinity of this area is not only due to the actors and users, but also the functional diversity creates diverse enclaves, contradicted domains around the area, such as government buildings, gated communities, cemeteries, stadiums, etc. This diversity can lead perceiving the site as a heterotopia where different social groups, identities, domains co-exist in the same context or a thirdspace where diverse social groups negotiate their cultural and social identities through experiencing and reshaping the space. This consideration may coincide with the study's aim of searching for an "other space" beyond urban binaries to transcend these oppositions insufficiency in terms of understanding the urban space. It also provide space for exploring the interstitial quality of the site through constructing relations between the transformations and the related concepts.

However, the transformations that took place in this area, especially after 1980, resulted in the loss of original functions to a large extent, resulting in the isolation of its historical identity and local inhabitants. These people, who are an important part of the memory of the place, have been displaced through gentrification, and the historical and cultural identity of the area has been damaged for the sake of rent and homogenization of the diverse and rich identity of the immediate surroundings of the Land Walls.

Expert participant Suna Kafadar evaluated the destruction of historical and cultural memory with the plans and projects realized or proposed in this area in the context of Yedikule Gardens and stated that:

> *"These new projects prevent us from asking questions like what happened to Yanni, what happened to Tommo, what happened to Manoli. I read the renovation of the*

Land Walls from this perspective. While we question the history of a city, the construction of a city, why cities have to develop and grow in this way, through the gardens that exist there, in a sense, we invite us to ask the questions of who owns these gardens, who were here, what happened, and these renovation projects actually turn into a re-appropriation. This time, for example, there is a move to completely erase the memory of people whose land has already been taken away from them from the city, whether consciously or unconsciously."

This situation can reproduce the dysfunctional urban dichotomies and damage the relationship of this space with concepts such as thirdspace, heterotopia, and thus with the qualities of interstitial space.

5.1.3 Spatial Transformation of the Micro Scale: Yedikule Urban Gardens

Urban agriculture has historically been used to meet both the demands of daily urban life and large populations during times of hunger and economic collapse. Urban agricultural activities are a dynamic process that have the potential to exhibit numerous roles simultaneously. They developed not in response to the needs of the global food market but rather for the needs of the city and is different from rural agricultural activities in that it is based on the environment, is ecologically and socially sensitive and integrative, and offers on-site production with ease of access (Kanbak, 2016). It serves many purposes, ranging from local development to food security, from maintaining biological diversity to reuse of urban wastes and wastewater.

Dating from the Byzantine period and since the Ottoman era until the present, the urban gardens, *bostan* in Turkish, which have been present along Istanbul's Land Walls, have served as the city's primary production hub for sustainable urban agriculture. This has been made possible by the efficient use of land, seasonal variations, and other natural resources. The gardens of Istanbul are recognized as a heritage that passes on the knowledge of Istanbul's urban agriculture to the next

generations through the use of the techniques, wells, and wooden buildings (Kandak, 2016).



Figure 5.22 Yedikule Urban Gardens (Tarihi Yedikule Bostanları, n.d.)

The gardens of Istanbul are one of the notable instances of environment, agriculture, and social benefit. Yedikule Urban Gardens are the last example of the historical Istanbul Urban Gardens dating back to the Byzantine period that have survived for centuries and situated in the heart of the city. Some of the Yedikule Urban Gardens are located in 9 different places around the Theodosian Walls. however, a significant part of it is located within and adjacent to the Land Walls (Theodosian fortresses).

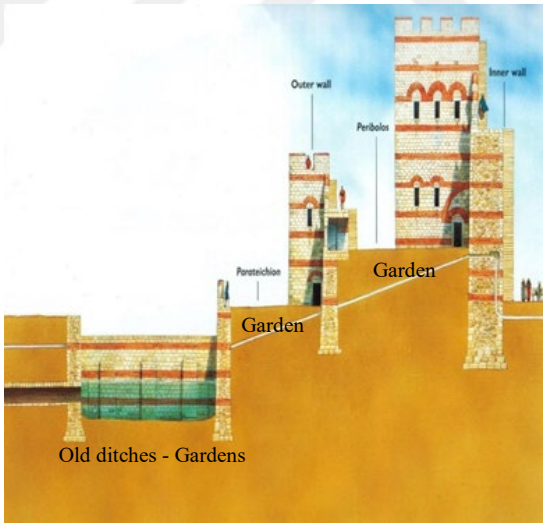


Figure 5.23 Architectural Configuration of the Land Walls – Triple Walled System (Turnbull, 2004)

The Land Walls basically consist of three parts; there is a ditch approximately 20 m wide and 10 m deep at the outermost part, the second part consists of a terrace with an average width of 15 m and outer walls with a height of 5 to 7 m, the third and last

part consists of a terrace with an average width of 24 m and inner walls 12 - 13 m high (Şahin et al., 2021). The gardens are located on the terraces in front of the walls and in the fields that were used as ditches in the Byzantine Period but filled with soil during the Ottoman Empire. There were also gardens located in walled city adjacent to inner walls of the Theodosian Fortresses.

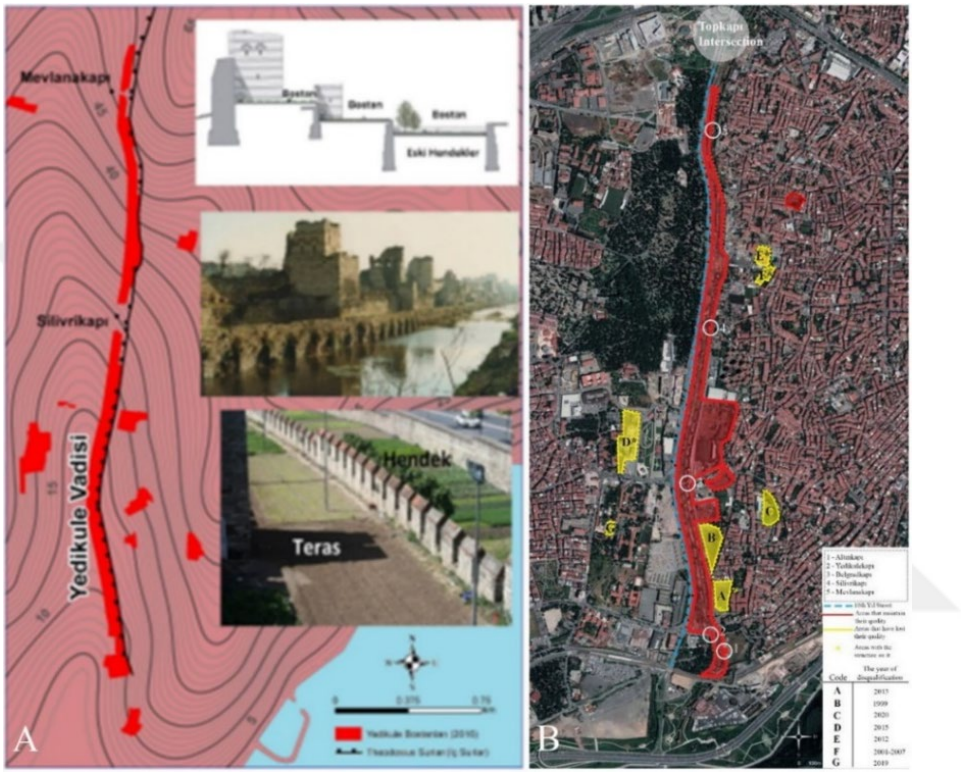


Figure 5.24 A- Istanbul Land Walls (historical Theodosius Fortress) and Yedikule Urban Gardens (Şahin et al., 2021). B- The gardens covered by the definition of Yedikule Gardens in the thesis and the gardens that have retained and lost their qualities in the recent past (adapted by the author from Kıran, 2019)

Expert participant Yiğit Ozar describes the positioning of the gardens as follows:

> *"There are differences in the status of the gardens according to their positionality with respect to Land Walls. The gardens inside the Land Wall, located in walled city, between the neighborhood and the city wall, have already been organized as gardens since the Ottoman period… The walls are a triple wall system, and in this triple wall system, there are gardens that have settled between the walls over time,*

and gardens that have settled in the moat, and after the moat, if there is any space left, there are gardens that have settled between the moat and 10th year street. Their dates are different from each other."

However, as a result of the rapid urbanization of the Historical Peninsula, most of the gardens located in the walled city were transformed into settlement areas. The gardens located between the triple system of the city walls and in the ditches were able to preserve most of their integrity longer than the gardens inside the city walls thanks to the boundaries of the Istanbul Land Walls World Heritage Site, which was declared by UNESCO in 1985.

The Yedikule Urban Gardens mentioned in this study cover the gardens between Topkapı and Yedikule (Altınkapı) within the boundaries of Istanbul Land Walls World Heritage Site designated by UNESCO. These gardens are located within the walled city and the triple wall system (ditches and terraces) and are bordered by 10th Yıl Street, an important transportation axis running along the Land Walls. The reason for this decision on the boundaries of the case study area is that although the area in question covers many gates and neighborhoods other than Yedikule, when asked during the field observations, gardeners and local people defined the boundaries of Yedikule Gardens in this way and this definition is in line with the definition of the area in the literature review. Figure 5.24 B depicts the boundaries of the case study area and indicates the gardens that have retained their inherent qualities with red while the gardens that have lost their qualities in recent past with yellow markers.

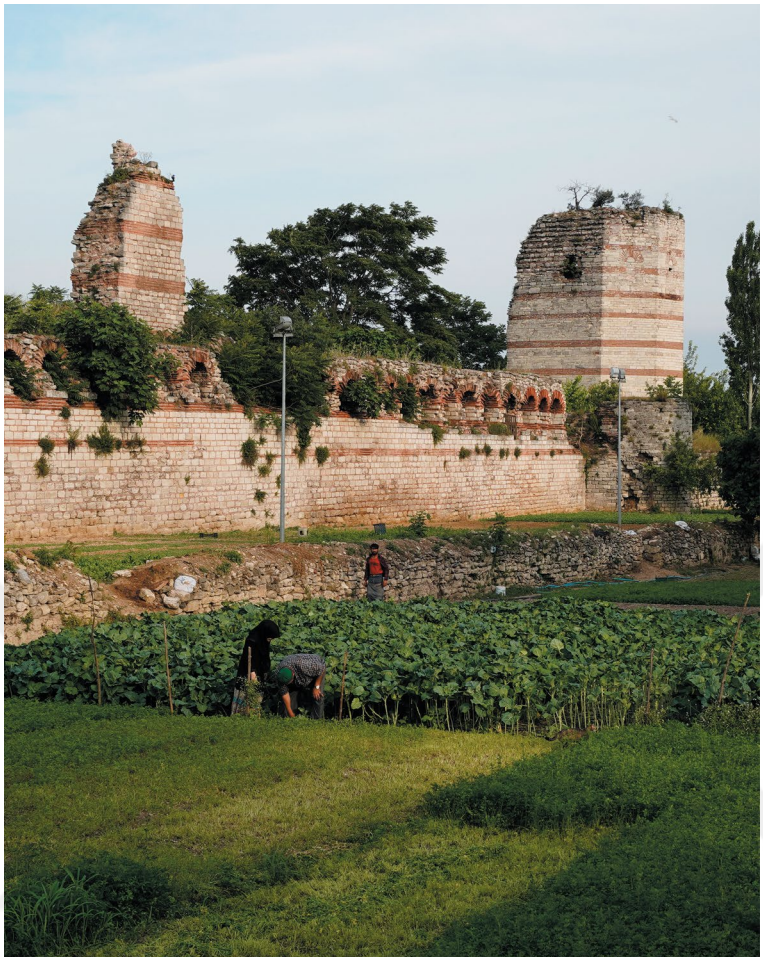


Figure 5.25 Yedikule Urban Gardens and Land Walls (İstanbul Kent Bostanları Çalışma Grubu, 2021)

The earliest recorded mention of gardens can be traced back to 422 A.D. under the reign of Eastern Roman Emperor II. Theodosius (401 – 450) who commissioned the construction of fortifications. According to his statement, the walls would pass through the gardens emphasizing that the lower floors of the wall towers would be designated for storing agricultural tools and crops, in accordance with the well-known "Theodosian Laws" of 438 (Ricci, 2008: 67). Based on this document, it can be stated that Yedikule Gardens have a history of approximately 16 centuries. During the 12th and 13th centuries, the vegetable requirements of around 300 to 500 thousand individuals in Istanbul were satisfied within a total area of 15 - 16 km² with

3 km² dedicated to Yedikule Gardens (Koder, 1995: 53). Gardens remained utilized for this purpose until the Conquest of Istanbul.

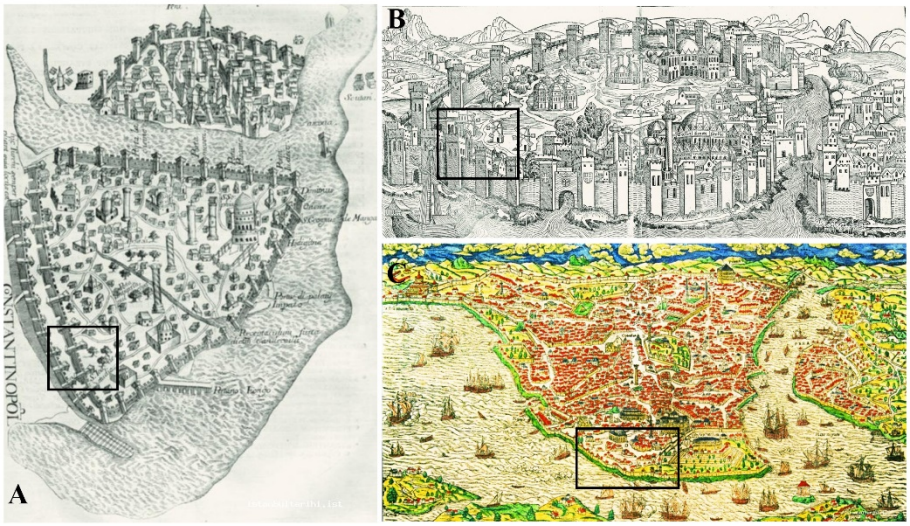


Figure 5.26 A- Florentine cartographer Cristoforo Buondelmorti's depiction of Istanbul: historical peninsula with sea and land walls in 1420, the oldest Istanbul map known in history (Yetişkin Kubilay, 2015). B- Hartman Schedel, the oldest published map of Istanbul, 1493, wood print (Yetişkin Kubilay, 2015) C- Sebastian Münster, an Overview of Istanbul, 1544, wood print (Yetişkin Kubilay, 2015)

Although Yedikule Gardens were also used during the Ottoman Empire, it is known that agricultural activities intensified especially from the 17th century onwards. Until the 17th century, agricultural areas such as Langa, Çukurbostan, Narlıkapı and Yenibahçe in the city of Istanbul were able to meet the basic agricultural needs of the existing population, especially vegetables and perishables (Shopov and Han, 2013: 36). However, after the 17th century, the population of the city of Istanbul increased and agricultural activities in Yedikule Gardens intensified in order to meet the food supply (Aktepe, 1958). For the same period, Evliya Çelebi stated in his Seyahatname that a total of 43,950 gardeners – bostancı - were active in Istanbul (Kahraman and Dağlı, 2003).

By the 19th century, the city of Istanbul had not yet moved outside the city walls, and thus the Yedikule Gardens existed as a green belt on the periphery of the city.

However, the gardens that continue to exist today are located within the city and are considered as urban agricultural areas. As a natural consequence of this situation, in addition to their historical features, the gardens have also undertaken an important mission by becoming an urban agricultural area, which has developed rapidly in big cities around the world in recent years.

Expert participant Yiğit Ozar expresses the significance of the Yedikule Urban Gardens being a historical urban agricultural land:

> *"When we look at Yedikule Gardens, while many metropolises in the world are trying to practice this and find space for it, we have a privileged value in terms of having an area that has been going on uninterruptedly for almost 1500 years. We can say that this is the value it brings to today's agricultural and food policies."*

Expert participant Oktan Nalbantoğlu states his point of view while proposing a plan for the area of Yedikule Urban Gardens:

> *"After understanding the qualities and historical value of the area, we made a prediction that it would be pointless to build a regular park here, and that it could be used as an agricultural park… we pointed out that recreational areas already exist everywhere, whereas agriculture is an element that is not always encountered in the urban fabric, and that the significance of an agricultural tradition dating back to Byzantium has been maintained in this area. We argued that this historical value should be preserved and Yedikule Gardens should be passed on to future generations."*

The transformation of the gardens from a peripheral green belt to an urban agricultural area is actually a reflection of the process of the transformation of the Land Walls from a boundary to an urban fissure within the city, mentioned in Chapter 5.1.1, at a lower scale. Just as the Land Walls evolved into an urban fissure (Bütüner, 2010) within the urban fabric, the gardens have also become a green interstice, an interstitial space between the Land Walls and the city center.

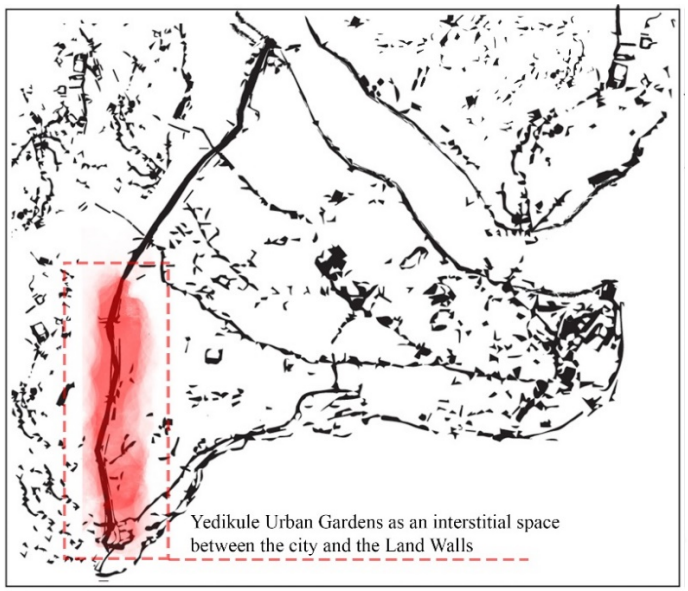


Figure 5.27 Yedikule Urban Gardens as an interstitial space between the city and the Land Walls (prepared by the author)

In 20th century, the city walls were added to the UNESCO world heritage list in 1985 (Şahin et al., 2021). In cooperation with UNESCO, the existence of gardens and the necessity of their protection are emphasized as the Yedikule Urban Gardens is not only a significant urban agricultural area with a rich historical legacy but also is the only surviving example of a wooden garden house, barn, well, water pool, and water canals from the Ottoman and Byzantine eras (Kanbak, 2016).

Expert participant Sedanur Gezer highlights the significance of Yedikule Urban Gardens as:

> *"The gardens are not only a green space, but also a cultural urban element and a heritage that is embedded in the memory of agriculture. Therefore, in terms of the city, it is not only a park or an area where urban agricultural practices are carried out, it is actually a significant part of the Istanbul's collective memory."*

Expert participant Abdullah Inanç Kıran also emphasize the uniqueness of the Yedikule Urban Gardens:

> *"There have been many gardens in Istanbul since ancient times, not just the Yedikule Gardens, but unfortunately very few of them have survived until today. The gardens in and around Yedikule are one of the rare gardens that have survived among the historical gardens of Istanbul, and they are also a part of Istanbul's disappearing cultural heritage. They are also areas where many social and spatial relations are intertwined and layered."*

Yet, the fact that it is located within the borders of the World Heritage does not guarantee the preservation of the historical gardens as they are. Because, in fact, which is under protection as a World Heritage Site in case of Yedikule is not the garden tradition or gardens, but the parts of historical land walls consisting of Istanbul Historical Peninsula, Sultanahmet Archaeological Park, Zeyrek Mosque and its surroundings, Suleymaniye Mosque and its surroundings and Istanbul Land Walls (Aykan et al., 2019).

Expert participant Gökçer Okumuş discusses this situation as:

> *"…just as we want to protect the Land Walls when they don't have any function right now, we need to protect the gardens there too, even though they don't have much of a function right now, and turn them into a place that invites people there to ensure that this area survives in order to pass them on to future generations."*

Expert participant Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

> *"In order to protect the area and transfer it to the future, the institutions that own the property should of course be seen as stakeholders and conservation planning should be done with a participation in which they and the gardeners are included in the process as partners. The authorities who own the property also have responsibilities to ensure that the gardens are preserved for the future."*



Figure 5.28 Spatial Change of Yedikule Urban Garden According to Selected Years (Şahin et.al., 2021)

Indeed, the rapid and unplanned urbanization, especially in the 1950s, as well as the passage of the main transportation network of the period, led to the rapid construction of the area. The reason why Yedikule gardens are considered to be relatively preserved compared to other gardens is its spatial proximity to the Land Walls and the fact that most of the existing gardens are located on the terraces and ditches of the city walls. As a matter of fact, the inclusion of the Theodosius Walls in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1985 made it possible to preserve the gardens in the ditches and terraces.

In 2005, Yedikule Gardens was designated as a "1/5000 scale Conservation Master Plan" "Land Walls Inner Conservation Green Area" and "2nd Degree Conservation Zone" (Emen et al., 2013). Again in 2005, the urban gardens, incorporated within Law No. 5366's purview on on the Renewal, Protection and Use of Worn Historical and Cultural Immovable Assets, was declared as a "renewal area" and a new development strategy was created (Aykan et al., 2019). Short after this declaration, municipality began working with the contracted construction and architectural firms. A portion of the green space was kept vacant in accordance with the 1/1000 scale zoning plans created in 2008, still, it was an inappropriate declaration with respect

to the 1/1000 scale Conservation Implementary Development Plan (Yedekçi Arslan, 2015 cited in Durusoy et al., 2016). The Greek Foundation owns this green space, which it is said was abandoned because of the expropriation issue. The goal of Fatih Municipality, which asserts that 80% of it was made available to the public for free and the remaining 20% was set up to reduce the cost of expropriation, quickly became apparent. 2-3 storey housings were built in this area, which was left vacant in the first proposal (Tunç, 2015). In 2010, Yedikule Mansions (Figure 5.29) was constructed as a housing project.



Figure 5.29 1- Orange circle indicates the location of the Yedikule Mansions and Zone A was the bostan where rubbles were poured in 2013 (Kıran, 2019; developed by the author) 2- Yedikule Mansions (Maksem Yapı, n.d.)



Figure 5.30 Construction process of Yedikule Mansions in 2010 (Tunç, 2015)

In 2011, the Gardens are declared as 2nd Degree Conservation Zone by adding the article "The garden areas on the map dated 1875 and which continue to exist until today will be protected" to the Historic Peninsula Management Plan prepared (Tunç, 2015).

After a short break, Fatih Municipality started a project “The Land Walls Inner Conservation Area Recreation Project Between Yedikule Gate and Belgrad Gate” in 2013 which aimed to transform the area into a social facility with sports ground, parking lot, walking path, children's playground, ornamental pool, restaurant and café by reorganizing the 8.5 hectares of land within the city walls in a way that “can meet the recreational and social needs of the people of Istanbul” (Fatih Municipality, 2013, p. 255). This project defined the area where the historical gardens are located in the city walls as a part of the city that "has remained idle and has not been brought to the user and the city as a service" (Fatih Municipality, 2013, p. 255).



Figure 5.31 Visuals and details of the project (Bayhan, 2013)

Following the approval of the project, a large part of Yedikule Gardens was rendered incapable of yielding by piling up rubble and unqualified soil within the scope of the project between 5-17 July 2013, and 27 decares of garden land was lost out of approximately 60 decares of arable garden land within the city walls (Kanbak, 2016).



Figure 5.32 Two pictures from the same area, first one is from 2009 and second is from 2013. After the initiation of the project rubble was poured to the garden areas located inside the land wall (Aykan et al., 2019)

The process of the project was stopped by Istanbul Municipality in 2014 due to the protests and collective efforts of Yedikule gardeners, non-governmental organizations, professional organizations and activists who advocate the protection of the gardens surrounding the walls as cultural heritage. Refusal reports by the "Istanbul Branch of Archaeologists' Association" (Arkeologlar Dernegi Istanbul Subesi), which highlight the inappropriate technique of excavations carried out in the region; forums, exhibitions, courses and other acivities of “Yedikule Gardens Protection Initiative” (Yedikule Bostanlari Girisimi); workshops conducted by researchers from Harvard University and RWTH Aachen University with contributions of Kadir Has University, Okan University, Istanbul Technical University and Bilkent University seek to raise societal awareness and motivate people to revitalize the site by constructing a collective resistance power against the municipality's damaging sanctions towards Yedikule Urban Gardens (Durusoy et al., 2016).



Figure 5.33 Workshops attended by RWTH Aachen University, Kadir Has, ITU, Okan and Bilkent Universities Landscape Architecture Department students and faculty members in 2013 (Tunç, 2015)

Expert participant Abdullah Inanç Kıran shares his memories of the protests and events organized for the protection of Yedikule as follows:

> *"I was very surprised by the struggle against the destruction of the gardens under rubble in 2013. I did not expect such an intense protest and resistance of actors from such different social groups. I did not think that this issue would attract so much public attention, interest and even international resonance. Because after all, it is an area in Yedikule that is not very visible. It is not as public as Taksim Square, and there were Gezi protests at the same time, and these may have been reflected in the protests in Yedikule, but I still did not expect that there would be so much interest in Yedikule. It means that there are certain qualities in the gardens that people want the city to have and continue to exist, or they have some objections because of some qualities that are not in the city or are insufficient."*

In 2013, a second project was developed for the gardens where rubble was dumped. A project was commissioned by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality to organize the area in question as an "Urban Agricultural Park". This project was approved as "Yedikule - Belgradkapı Land-use and Landscape Preliminary Project" with a board decision dated 2017. However, it was learned that the project was revised after this date. After a while, it was observed that the project construction site was removed and the project was halted for reasons not shared with the public.

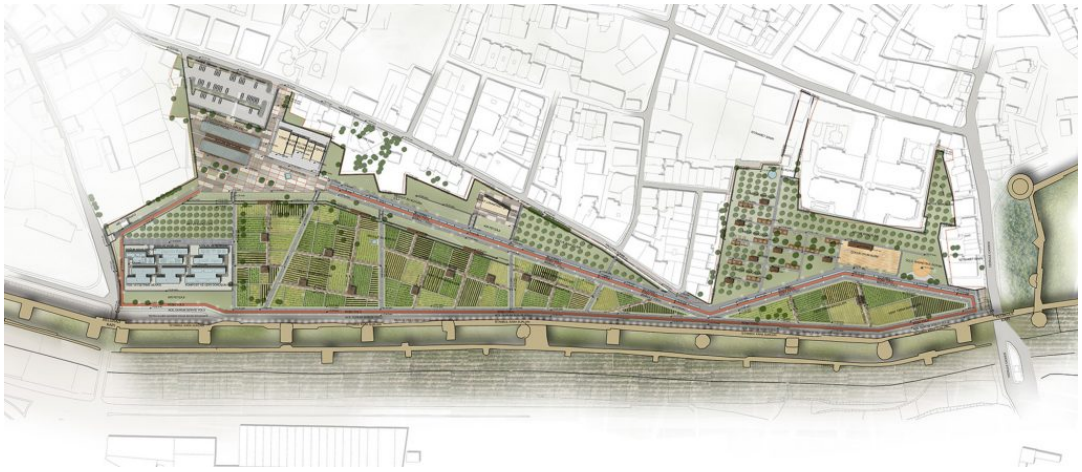


Figure 5.34 Plan of Yedikule - Belgradkapı Land-use and Landscape Preliminary Project (Çinkılıç, 2019)

Expert participant Oktan Nalbantoğlu, as the lead designer of this project, explains his design team's design approach as:

> *"We have designed an area where all the production plots will continue to be planted and harvested by the gardeners, where the gardeners will still be able to collect the products, but from a certain distance the people of the city can also watch them and be a part of this process, where harvest festivals can be organized from time to time and the products can be sold in the ecological marketplace… the main management of the area would still be in the municipality, but the municipality would leave the whole production system to the gardeners. The municipality would mainly be in charge of coordination and, this way, such a multi-layered and multi-stakeholder management system would be produced."*

He also emphasizes that:

> *"One of the focus of this project was on children, not adults. We especially aimed for children of primary school age to be involved in a continuous production here in a certain way. We even designed a classroom in the area. In other words, we proposed an area where lessons on agriculture could be given. From time to time, schools could bring students to visit the area and organize workshops, because the basis of this is actually the child.,, In the meantime, of course, we tried to build a system in which the gardeners (bostancı) would not be disturbed too much. We*

thought that this continuity in children's encounters with the area would enable them to understand the value of this area over time and become even more advocates of this system as they grow up."

In 2021, IBB Department of Cultural Assets started restoration to protect and strengthen the Land Walls and 9 gardens were destroyed during the restoration (Coşkun, 2023). Furthermore, construction equipment also has started working inside the Land Walls. During this, it was observed that there were newly formed damages on the masonry wall.



Figure 5.35 A- Visual of the recent construction (Coşkun, 2023) B- Brick detached from the wall with the destruction (Coşkun, 2023)

Expert participant Abdullah Inanç Kıran expresses his thoughts and concerns about the current restoration process:

"*The restoration currently being carried out by IBB on the Land Walls is very urgent for these walls, in other words, the necessary measures need to be taken urgently to protect the walls so that this historical element can be passed on to the future. However, after these works are completed, there are questions as to whether there will be gardens here, whether the areas where the Land Walls and the gardens are together will be protected? Although there is no written information at the moment, I have learned that there are efforts and plans to turn the gardens in the part called perigolos (space between the walls) into an area where rolled grass is laid, like the visitor centers in Mevlanakapı and Silivrikapı, where people can access, walk around, enter and exit some bastions, and see the city walls closely."*

Expert participant Suna Kafadar raises her concerns about the presence of gardens in these areas after the restoration and the inappropriateness of the proposed replacement of the gardens with a natural or artificial grass area in the context:

> *"Today, regarding the ongoing restoration work on the Land Walls, there is a claim that some of the gardens will be removed and replaced with a grassy area on the grounds that because the gardens are irrigated, water goes to the foundations of the Land Walls and damages the foundations of the walls. But then, for example, they would ask you, excuse me, how will you keep the grass green? They would ask what exactly is the logic of laying grass there, and we asked because there is no such grass in Istanbul's vegetation… Of course such grass dries up, especially in that weather, it is very difficult to keep the grass standing, it is an incredible waste of water, they will probably propose grass carpets instead of real grass in the current plan against our objections regarding this waste, but proposing this should be considered a crime against the authenticity of this historical context."*

5.1.3.1 Evaluation of the Micro Scale of Yedikule Urban Gardens through the Lenses of Interstitial Space

Yedikule Urban Gardens is located in a multi-layered spatiality that encompasses spaces with strict (cemetery, hospital, government buildings) and loose boundaries (unconstructed project areas and temporary installations such as open markets and entertainment areas), vacant areas for implementing new projects and forming illegal occupancies, and also bears the burden of the city's traffic arteries. The spatial conditions of the place and the compexity of the administrative organizations as several municipalities and international conservation organizations (UNESCO, World Heritage Committee and ICOMOS) having a say over the planning and protection of the area, result in conflicts in the development of projects and plans, and fragmented and disorganized interventions such as clearances, removals, constructions and injections implemented in Yedikule Urban Gardens and its immediate surroundings.

This area, which should be handled with a more holistic approach, is heading towards further fragmentation and destruction with the impact of multiple plans that ignore the historical identity of the place. The fact that the state sees the gardeners who work in the gardens and strive for the maintenance of a tradition as "invaders" and takes the occupying fee (ecrimisil) from these people, and does not provide any assurance to them, and dismantles the products in the field with construction buckets when they see their own reason, hinders the protection and maintenance of the garden and the gardening culture rather than supporting these key elements that protect the site from perishment due to the illegal activities and their destructive outcomes.



Figure 5.36 A- Gardeners keeps working on while construction equipment dismantles some of the products (Gürsel, 2014) B- Gardener with demolished gardeners' sheds in 2016 (Girit, 2016)

It is also significant that while Yedikule Gardens is an example of tangible cultural heritage with its historical gardens and masonry and wooden structures such as outbuildings, stables, wells, pools and terracing walls that have survived from the Ottoman period, this area should also be considered as intangible cultural heritage since traditional agricultural methods and techniques are still largely used in the gardens and these are an important living heritage of knowledge and skills that have been passed down from Byzantium to the Ottoman period to the present day.



Figure 5.37 1- Application of the traditional agricultural method "maşula/tava" in Yedikule Urban Gardens (Archaeologists Association Istanbul Branch, 2017). 2- Another traditional agricultural method implemented in Yedikule (author's archive)

However, when most of the plans and projects prepared for the gardens are examined, it is seen that instead of preserving the historical gardens, as the last example of urban agriculture in Istanbul, with their original texture and values; landscape designs with different functions are developed on the grounds that Yedikule and the surrounding neighborhoods are uncanny due to illegal activities, the area is neglected and not integrated with the public. Although the gardens and the culture of gardening are not the cause of the situations highlighted, rather than preserving this urban agricultural area, which is one of the most unique examples of the interaction between human and nature, and improving the current situation by regulating the existing conditions. the plans and interventions propose context-free urban landscape designs that do not take into account the heritage values and components of the area.

In a metropolis like Istanbul, where urbanization is experienced intensely, this area has evolved into a green interstice, a threshold space, an interface between the city center and the periphery, due to the spatial and social transformations and interventions it has undergone within the density of the urban fabric. However, as a result of the on-site observations, literature reviews, map analysis and the analysis of Yedikule Bostanları in 3 scales in chapter 5.1, this study predicts that the gardens

are in danger of disappearing day by day due to the fact that they are abandoned to their fate and are not subject to any plan which focuses on the observation and protection of the relationship between the existing social, cultural, economic, ecological tissue and the area, as well as the urban agricultural production put into practice. Unless strategies are implemented that protect and preserve the gardens along with the Land Walls, the integrity between the gardens and the the Walls may be disrupted, which will lead to the complete loss of the agricultural function of the area, the displacement of the gardeners and the erasure of the traces of the traditional, cultural and agricultural fabrics of the area.

5.2 Defining Yedikule Urban Gardens as an Interstitial Space

Throughout this study, the scope, scales and qualities of the concept of interstitial space have been explored. Moreover, the existence of a multitude of concepts in the literature that are related to this concept has led the study to question the reasons for focusing on the concept of "interstitial space".

This chapter discovers further qualities that a space may possess in order to be perceived as an interstitial space by analyzing data from literature and real-life setting. While conducting this analysis, the qualities that distinguish the concept of interstitial space from similar concepts in the literature can emerge from the points where the in-depth interview analysis and the data from the literature review overlap and differentiate.

Interstitial space is evaluated in chapter 3 in terms of its social and spatial qualities. According to the data obtained from the literature review, interstitial space can be analyzed from both morphological and event-oriented/evental (Brighenti, 2013) point of view. The morphological approach is realized in this study by adapting Phelps and Silva's conceptual framework, which analyzes interstices at different scales and positions in relation to the urban core, to the locality of Turkey. This framework has provided clues to the study about some morphological qualities of the concept of interstitial space. These can be ***multiscalarity*** as interstitial space can

be defined at diverse scales, ***polymorphism or flexible morphology*** as there is no restriction on the form of interstitial space, i.e. form is not a distinguishing feature of interstitial space and ***multi-positionality*** as interstitial space can be positioned between, in-between or diffused into two domains.

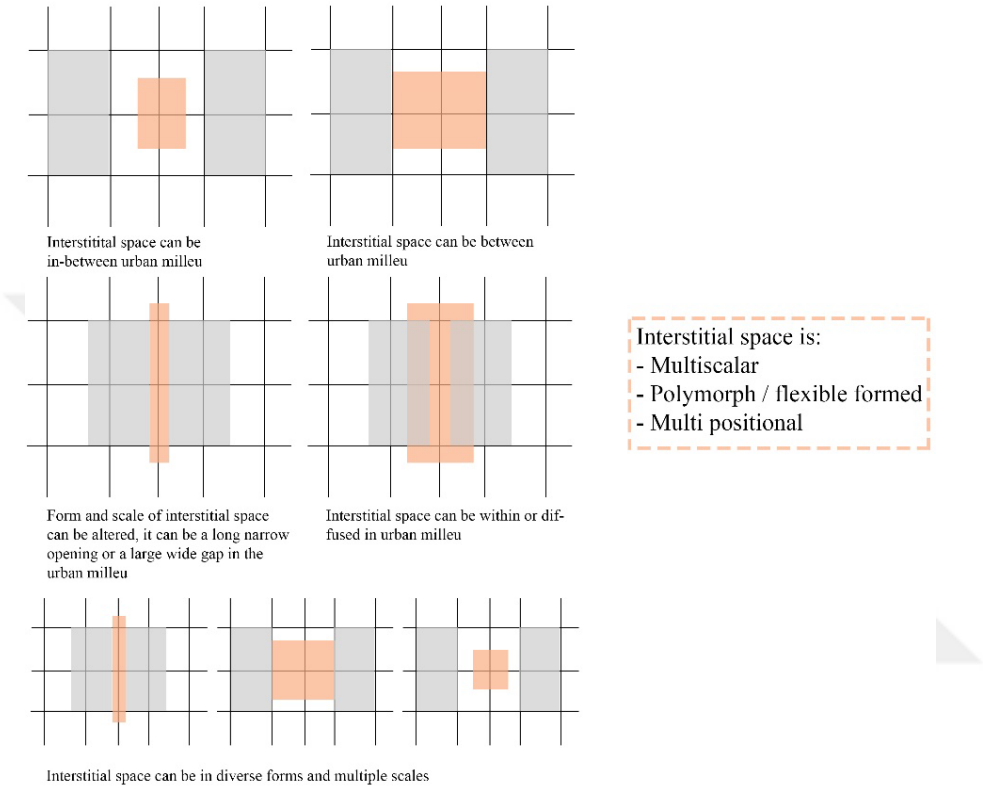


Figure 5.38 Spatial qualities of Interstitial space derived from literature review (Şevik, 2018; adapted and developed by the author)

The event oriented/evental point of view interprets interstitial space as a combination of encounters, interactions, divergences and negotiations of multiple actors existing in the same context. This interpretation supports Lefebvre's definition of "social production of space" that underlines the social and societal production of the space and also emphasizes the social and spatial approach of this study to urban space. This point of view has provided insight about the social qualities of interstitial spaces. These can be ***temporality*** in terms of the ***transiency*** of the events that happen in interstitial spaces and ***simultaneity*** as event taking place in interstitial space can

unfold in the same context, at the same time with diverse actors. This is also where the ***multi-actor*** dimension of interstitial space comes into play. According to the literature, diversity in the actor scheme can be considered as another feature of interstitial space.

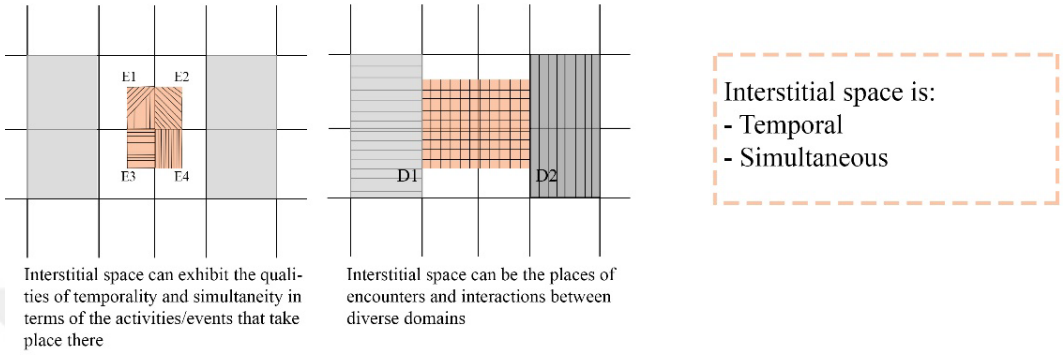


Figure 5.39 Social qualities of Interstitial space derived from literature review (prepared by the author)

Furthermore, during the literature review, various sociospatial qualities of "heterotopia" and "thirdspace", which were researched as concepts related to interstitial space, were analyzed by means of thematic analysis. These can be ***heterogeneity, transitoriness, temporality, multiplicity, fluidity*** and ***porosity*** (Figure 2.9). Since Interstitial space operates in heterotopias, i.e. it is a place that facilitate the interaction between diverse domains encompassed by heterotopia, (Figure 3.1) similar qualities can also be discussed for the interstitial space.

These qualities indicate that interstitial space can be defined as a sociospatial space where diverse and multiple actors and users can encounter, interact and form networks of relationships. Defining this concept in this way will provide an organic link between this concept and the commons that will be discussed in chapter 5.3 further.

During the literature review, the qualities of interstitial space can be separated into social and spatial. However, after the on-site observations and in-depth interviews with the expert participants, it is realized that the qualities of interstitial space are intertwined in accordance with the uniqueness and specificity of the space, Yedikule

Urban Gardens. In other words, it was not possible to separate these qualities as *social qualities* and *spatial qualities* in a real-life setting. This study also asks whether the intricate relationships that arise from the inseparability of these qualities are a reflection of interstitial space in the real-life setting, that is, whether this could be a characteristic of interstitial space.

Therefore, in-depth interview questions aim to explore the reflections of interstitial space's *sociospatial qualities* in the physical context by questioning the socisociospatial qualities of Yedikule Urban Gardens.

- In order to explore the sociospatial qualities of interstitial space in the context of Yedikule Urban Gardens, the expert participants are first asked to sociospatially evaluate the meaning of Yedikule Urban Gardens for the whole city of Istanbul. Expert participants' answers to this question were grouped thematically (Appendix D). As explained in the Data Analysis Chapter, the answers given by the expert participants to the interview questions are grouped according to their themes by analyzing the similar words and phrases they used (words reffering to common themes used by the participants are bolded).

Yedikule Urban Gardens and Its Physical Qualities

Expert participants began to describe the meaning of the site for Istanbul, mostly by talking about its physical qualities. Referring to the physical qualities of the space, the participants used the qualities of interstitiality that the study discovered during the literature review on interstitial space such as *"threshold, void, abandoned, empty, idle, fragmented, heterogenous"* when describing Yedikule Urban Gardens, but also mentioned qualities different from the literature such as *"adjacency, green infrastructure"*.

Gökçer Okumuş:

> *"Yedikule Gardens is a place that was formed **adjacent** to the Land Walls, in other words, it is a special place in terms of urban heritage, in fact, it is an urban space*

*on the other side of a border formed on an axis. It is also a topographical **threshold** where a water line used to cross… It is a **green** production area outside the Land Wall."*

N. Simla Uygaç:

*"Yedikule Urban Gardens is a **multi-layered**, **heterogeneous** area that **continues along the Land Wall**, in fact, when we read the history of that place, it is a **fertile soil** with the water saturation of its ground due to the fact that it is a ditch and its identity that has evolved into an garden over time,"*

Yiğit Ozar:

*"When we open the map of Istanbul in front of us and look at it, the line formed by the land walls gains an important feature as an area that both **demarcates** the historical core, which we call the historical peninsula or walled city today. Gardens actually provide **a green infrastructure** for it… Urban agricultural area that is **disrupted** and **fragmented.**"*

Yedikule Urban Gardens and Intangible Qualities

Stating that this area cannot be defined only by its tangible qualities, all participants characterized the gardens with intangible qualities. While discussing the meaning of Yedikule Urban Gardens for the city as a whole, the participants mentioned the sensory qualities of the space such as *"memory, safety, beauty, mistery, curiosity, rehabilitative effect"*, which contributed to the study's exploration of the intangible qualities of the concept of interstitial space that are needed to be addressed more in the literature.

Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

*"Gardens are more **attractive** to people, after all, I think seeing an garden in the city should be more **interesting** to many people, I think it should arouse more **curiosity.**"*

Oktan Nalbantoğlu:

> *"These are complete **rehabilitation areas**. You know, you go there, spend the whole day there and come back. You see the production, you collect the product with your own hands, and you get involved in agriculture, that is, you touch the soil. You are close to the soil, which is one of the most important problems today. Therefore, Yedikule Gardens has a **rehabilitative effects** on the visitors."*

Yedikule Urban Gardens as an Urban Agricultural Area

Since the function of the area for centuries has been urban agriculture, most of the participants' introductory sentences mentioned the relationship of the area with urban agriculture. The participants underlined the historical function of the area through using the terms *"agricultural heritage, historical urban agricultural area, production heritage and production activity"* and stated that the agricultural production techniques that take place are *"intangible cultural heritage"*.

N. Simla Uygaç:

> *"It is an **agricultural production site** right next to a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Land Walls, and this **production** is of course **common** in terms of passing the **intangible cultural heritage** from past to future."*

Yiğit Ozar:

> *"When we look at Yedikule Gardens, while many metropolises in the world are trying to practice **urban agriculture** and find space for it, we have a **privileged** value in terms of having a **historical agricultural space** that has been going on uninterruptedly for almost 1500 years."*

Gökçer Okumuş:

> *"...in such a period when **urban agriculture** is on the agenda in urban areas, yes, gardens can be called **as production activity**, **a production heritage** that needs to be protected."*

Yedikule Urban Gardens as an Urban Memory

Participants emphasized that this area is an important part of the city's memory and expressed their concern about the loss of this memory day by day.

Sedanur Gezer:

> *"In terms of the city, it is not only a park or an area where urban agricultural practices are carried out. It is actually a significant part of the Istanbul's* ***collective memory****... They have a* ***historical urban memory****."*

Oktan Nalbantoğlu:

> *"On the other hand, it is a very important place for* ***urban memory.*** *It is necessary to protect this space. Because even though the walls of Theodosius are included in the UNESCO World Heritage List as a fortification, in fact, it is the spaces in its immediate surroundings and the social life these spaces provide that give the fortification* ***its identity****."*

Yedikule Urban Gardens and Public Claim

Participants often emphasized the lack of relationship of Yedikule Urban Gardens with the public, which they attributed to the fact that the public has no claim to the site, and emphasized the importance of *public claim* for the preservation of the site.

Gökçer Okumuş:

> *"Here, it is necessary to involve the* ***public*** *a little more. Yes, it needs to become a degree of common… This is never something that a municipality should decide on its own or the property owner should decide on its own. There are some things that need to be* ***negotiated****. There should be the* ***participation of public*** *and* ***gardeners****. It is an area that needs to be* ***re-evaluated*** *in that way, and then be* ***included*** *in urban life."*

Oktan Nalbantoğlu:

> *"…it cannot interact with the public in its current condition because not many people go to this area… People should become a part of the production system and* ***claim*** *the space. It is* ***vital*** *for the society to* ***claim*** *their city."*

Yedikule Urban Gardens as a Place of Solidarity and Resistance

The participants' references to concepts such as *"claim, solidarity, resistance, protests"* when questioning the meaning of Yedikule Urban Gardens for the city as a whole are in line with the claim that the area contains traces of commonality, which underlies this study's association of the site with the commons.

Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

> *"I was very surprised by the* ***struggle*** *against the destruction of the gardens under rubble in 2013. I did not expect such an* ***intense protest and resistance*** *from actors from such* ***different social groups****. I did not think that this issue would attract so much public attention, interest and even* ***international resonance****. Because after all, it is an area in Yedikule that is not very* ***visible****. It is not as public as Taksim Square."*

N. Simla Uygaç:

> *"There is also* ***resistance****, an* ***effort*** *to keep it as an garden… and sometimes there are* ***protests*** *and* ***public events*** *to protect the gardens against construction and change of function."*

Yedikule Urban Gardens and the Security Problem

Some of the participants commented on the general belief that the area is an unsafe place. They emphasized the importance of public ownership of this area to resolve its insecurity rather than its abandonment. This study's questioning of the commons as a strategy for transforming the area was, in fact to save this area from abandonment by including it in urban life, and the expert participants also expressed ideas in support of this.

Oktan Nalbantoğlu:

> *"The **existence** and **protection** of Yedikule Gardens is actually very important in terms of **urban space security**. I mean, this area is regarded as an **unsafe** area today. ... When there is a continuous **agricultural activity**, agriculture gardeners protect the area against various threats. They provide a spatial security. ... everyone is slowly leaving because of **insecurity**. However, we should not **abandon** it."*

Yedikule Urban Gardens and the Accesibility Problem

Underlining that Yedikule and its immediate surroundings have accessibility problems, the participants criticized the fact that the accessibility problem of this area is mainly discussed through the gardens and questioned whether it is really necessary to keep every part of the area accessible.

Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

> *"The presence of the gardeners (bostancı) and gardens are seen as the source of the **accessibility problem**. Is it only the **presence** of the garden there that is the cause of the access problem, that is, there are also problems with accessing the city walls, entering and exiting the city walls where there are no gardens in this area. On top of that, do people have to step on **every point** of the land walls? Do they have to see every point?"*

Yedikule Urban Garden as a Promise

Most of the participants discussed the promised future and spatial potential of the site, rather than its current state, in terms of the qualities of the space it could transform into. This set the ground for another focus of the study, the commons and the interview questions related to it.

Gökçer Okumuş:

> *"Yedikule Urban Gardens can really become one of the important parts of **a flow, a route, a training program, a life practice**, if we approach this area with a comprehensive design and management plan that takes into account the **multi-layered nature** of it."*

Oktan Nalbantoğlu:

> *"With a **holistic and comprehensive management plan** produced through **the consensus of the multiple actors and users** of this site, this area can make a significant **contribution** to Istanbul in terms of **collective and local production.**"*

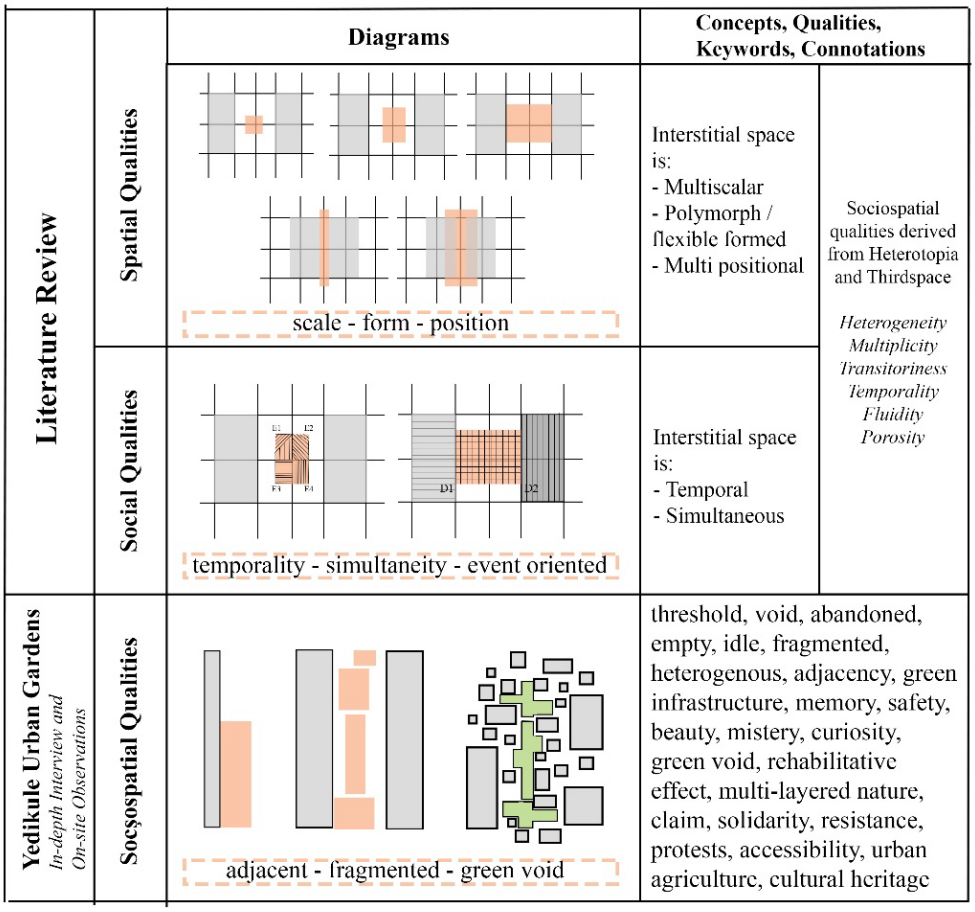


Figure 5.40 Although the definition of interstitial space in the literature review can be divided into two in terms of social and spatial qualities, when it comes to Yedikule Urban Gardens, this dichotomy disappears by looking at on-site observations and in-depth interviews because the qualities have started to intertwine with each other. (prepared by the author)

As a result of the In-depth Interviews, many qualities, concepts and content were discovered about the space in addition to the qualities derived from the literature

review. While some of the qualifiers encountered in the interviews such as ***threshold, void, abandoned, empty, idle, fragmented, heterogenous*** are related to qualities from the literature and concepts similar to interstitial space introduced in chapter 3, physical qualities and concepts such as ***adjacency, green infrastructure***; sensory and intangible qualities such as ***memory, safety, beauty, mystery, curiosity, rehabilitative effect*** were obtained as a result of these interviews. In addition, the fact that concepts such as ***claim, solidarity, resistance, protests*** were encountered in the interviews while questioning the meaning of Yedikule for the city as a whole, before the commons were mentioned at all, supports the existence of the trace of the commons in Yedikule Urban Gardens.

- In order to explore the actor scheme of interstitial space in the context of Yedikule Urban Gardens, the expert participants are asked to identify the users, actors and stakeholders who play a role, have a say, use and generally have an impact on the gardens (Appendix D). The actors commonly identified by the expert participants and the concepts referring to the themes related to these actors are bolded.

Abdullah Inanç Kıran emphasizes "*the significance of gardeners (bostancı) to exist"* in Yedikule Gardens:

> *"The most fundamental actor in a bostan is the **bostancı**, without the bostancı there is no bostan. If there is going to be an garden, there has to be an **gardener** so that the garden can be kept alive. It is important to understand that a heritage is defined not only by its physical aspects, but also by the actors who make it a place. Users and other stakeholders can exist in that context"*

Gökçer Okumuş and Sedanur Gezer underline "*the limitation of the diversity of actors in terms of the use of the field"*, despite the existence of a wide variety of actors associated with this field when counted one by one:

> *"There is a group here called **bostancılar (gardeners)**. There are people who have been running these gardens for many years, maybe 100 years, for a few **generations,** with a family tradition… There are also the **district municipality** such as **Fatih,***

> ***Eyüp and Zeytinburnu***. *Apart from that, there may be potential* ***recreational users in the immediate vicinity*** *such as Fatih, Zeytinburnu who see that area as a potential green area, or as a sports area… so we are not talking about a green area that* ***addresses the whole city***.*"*

Sedanur Gezer:

> *"At the current situation, interaction with and within gardens is generally limited to the* ***people in the neighborhood****, the residents of the neighborhood. This gives the perception that the area is* ***isolated and abandoned from the rest of the city***.*"*

Yiğit Ozar makes an assessment that there would be a correlation between the increase in the socio-spatial value and complexity of an area and the multiplication of the professions that the site is of interest to and the authorities responsible for the administration of it:

> *"The* ***gardeners*** *come first, but there are also* ***cultural heritage experts****,* ***architects****,* ***art historians, archaeologists, historical researchers, officials from different scales of local government, officials from public institutions****, such as* ***archaeological museums, conservation boards****, etc. who are interested in the area and its different values. When we look at* ***areas that are very valuable and multi-layered****, the* ***more layers and the more values*** *we can identify, the* ***more authority and responsibility*** *we have, and* ***the more related areas*** *we have, the* ***more values and layered areas*** *start to appear on the map. Therefore, we can say that it is a very* ***multi-actor, multi-idea, multi-layered field***.*"*

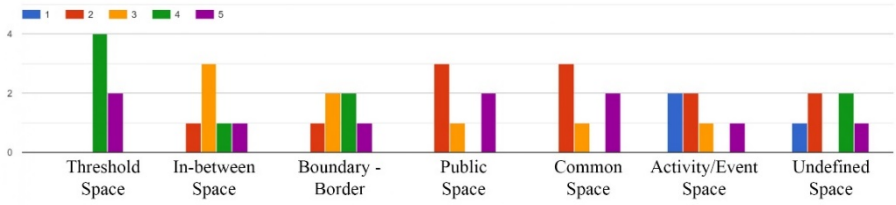
According to the in-depth interview and on-site observations, Yedikule Urban Gardens can be defined as a multi-actor area due to the multi-layeredness of the area, the tangible and intangible cultural heritage elements in the area, the potential of the area to be used for various functions and activities, the fact that the area is included in the borders of more than one local district and its agenda is of interest to people from different disciplines. However, due to the inadequacy of these actors' relations with the area and with each other, the area is currently perceived as abandoned and excluded despite such a diverse actor schema. This inference is in fact one of the

underlying reasons why the thesis associates this space with the commons. Therefore, this will be discussed in detail in chapter 5.3 and the conclusion.

- The participants are, lastly, given the concepts of threshold space, in-between space, boundary, public space, common space, activity/event space and undefined space and asked to rate these concepts according to their relevance in defining Yedikule Urban Gardens and were also asked how they would define this space (Appendix C).

As mentioned in Data Analysis before, this question was conducted using a Likert scale method. For this reason, a graph that emerged from the data is obtained and a table for the analysis of this graph is created. During the analysis, the averages and frequencies of the scores given by the participants to the concepts were calculated. The contribution of these calculations to the identifiability of Yedikule Urban Garden as an interstitial space will be examined in detail in relation to the participants' comments on these concepts.

From the analysis table of Likert Scale graph (Figure 5.41), among the given related concepts of interstitial space, defining undefined spaces at different scales of the city, when the total scores of the participants for each concept were averaged, threshold space was preferred as the concept that most defines Yedikule Gardens for the participants with a score of 4.3 out of 5 (the score that should be given to the one that defines the area the most). Analyzing the participants' comments on their scoring, the definitions they used for threshold space such as "texture change in the area", "intermediary area with inside/outside relationships", "a rupture between two similar tissues", "threshold line" show that they evaluated this concept mostly through the morphological qualities of the area, so morphological analysis may be important in a future study of interstitial space.



Concepts	*Scoring Summary*	*Total Score*	*Mean*	*Mode*
Threshold Space	*(4x4)+(2x5)=26*	26	4,3/5	4
In-between Space	*(1x2)+(1x4)+(1x5)+(3x3)=20*	20	3,3/5	3
Boundary - Border	*(1x2)+(2x3)+(2x4)+(1x5)=21*	21	3,5/5	3-4
Public Space	*(3x2)+(1x3)+(2x5)=19*	19	3,2/5	2
Common Space	*(3x2)+(1x3)+(2x5)=19*	19	3,2/5	2
Activity/Event Space	*(1x1)+(2x2)+(2x4)+(1x5)=18*	18	3/5	2-4
Undefined Space	*(1x1)+(2x2)+(2x4)+(1x5)=18*	18	3/5	2-4

Figure 5.41 Likert Graph and Analysis Table of the outcomes through mean and mode calculations (prepared by the author)

The *average score* for in-between space is 3.3, while it is 3.5 for boundary-border, 3.2 for public space and common space, and 3 for activity/event space and undefined space. When the average score values of the other concepts are analyzed and the average score values of all concepts are compared, the fact that the difference between the scores is very small and the scores are not far from the score of 5, which should be given to the one that defines the area the most, shows that the participants do not consider Yedikule Gardens as a clearly defined area to identify it with only one concept.

In terms of *frequency*, 2 out of 6 participants gave the definition of threshold space a 4, which is the closest value to 5, which should be given to the concept that most

defines the space, compared to the mode value of other concepts. For the concept of in-between space, 3 out of 6 participants gave 3 points; for border-boundary 2 out of 6 participants gave 2 points and the other two gave 4 points; for public space and common space 3 out of 6 participants gave 2 points each; for activity/event space and undefined space 2 out of 6 participants gave 4 points each. In other words, for example, this area may have been defined as a threshold for one participant and as a boundary for another, and may even be defined as a threshold and a boundary at the same time by a single participant. These evaluations can be read in this way in the context of the spatial and social attributes of the space because, as mentioned, when it came to the real-life setting, it was not possible to divide these concepts and attributes into spatial and social, as in the literature review, because the concepts and attributes were intertwined.

At this point, the study realizes once again that the dialectic relationship it tries to establish in the literature review while defining interstitial space does not work in real space due to the intertwining of social and spatial qualities or concepts. This, in fact, is precisely what supports the thesis's argument for the concept of interstitial space. Because, from the very beginning, the study claims that urban space cannot be defined by the definitions of space and urban oppositions currently used in the literature. For this reason, the study discusses whether it is possible to bring together the many undefined space definitions and concepts that exist in the literature (Figure 3.11) with an encompassing concept of interstitial space developed in relation to the Yedikule Urban Gardens and to overcome this complexity in the definition of space in this way.

5.3 The Meaning of the Commons for Yedikule Urban Gardens

This study critically examines the transformative potential of the commons within the interstitial spaces. In order to understand the space-transformative potential of the commoning processes and acknowledging the commons as an act rather than a substence, the commons is defined as a dynamic and living process of production

and organization of tangible and intangible shared resources in urban spaces. From a scholarly standpoint, Fournier (2013) argues that, with this perspective, the commons can be seen as a self-sustaining system of social organization that enables the ongoing (re)production and upkeep of shared resources. This expression also suggests the ongoing interaction between the collective resources and the users, highlighting their interconnectedness.

In order to understand how the commons can transform a space, this study firstly utilizes a literature review to gain different perspectives on this issue and case studies by compiling some of the ongoing commoning practices around the world. In order to analyze the dynamics underlying the potential of commons to transform space, examples of commons around the world were evaluated at three scales: commons at urban scale, commons at public scale and commons at building scale. These scales were produced by adapting Phelps and Silva's (2018) multiscalar theoretical framework to the commons. Examining the processes of commoning at these three different scales, it was discovered that there is no single definition of the commons. In other words, in the examples of the commons examined at the urban scale, the commons can be realized through the process of collective production. In the examples of the commons examined at the public scale, the commons is formed as a result of the collective actions of various and diverse actors who come together in more visible urban spaces, mostly in response to the possibility of losing the public character of this space, starting with a protest and then triggering other activities. These commons are temporary, as they usually end when the reaction is reciprocated, but commons at this scale can have repercussions at other scales. Commons at building scale is an example of this. Unlike the public scale, commons at this scale can be formed by people who informally settle in buildings that are not in the public eye and use this space to organize collective activities with different and diverse actors, and such commons are usually short-lived due to illegality, unless the formation turns into a social center and becomes legalized.

Although the scale, space, actors and motivation of the commons examined in these 3 scales are different, some common values and dynamics have been discovered that

constitute the commons in these areas and enable its processes to transform these spaces physically and socially. These are the *practices of commoning* and the *encounters, interactions* and *web of relations* catalyzed by these practices. That is, the qualities of the commons that transform a space sociospatially are not only the physical activities performed collectively, but also the reciprocal relations produced by these activities.

This study's attempt to analyze the relationship between the commons and interstitial space stems from Stavrides' (2015) discussion of interstitial space as a common space for space commoning practices to take place. According to this argument, the commons is considered as a multidimensional process that produces space, while interstitial space is the setting in which these processes take place. Furthermore, the socio-spatial qualities of the interstitial space and its multiple and diverse actor scheme can support the formation of the aforementioned dynamics of the commons practices. For these reasons, this study has chosen Yedikule Urban Gardens as a case study in order to examine the relationship between commons and interstitial space in more depth.

Although the commons cannot be mentioned in the current state of Yedikule Urban Gardens, it was encountered during the literature review that this area is the subject of some commons discussions. It is realized that these gardens were not created as a result of commons practices, however, traces of commoning can be read in the spatial and social transformation processes they have undergone from past to present. The fact that the gardens, whose functions were decided to be changed with the plan proposal of Fatih Municipality in 2013, continued to exist as a result of a collective struggle consisting of activists, academics, archaeologists, historians, architects, urban planners, families and children may be a trace of commoning in this area. The fact that schools organized classes open to everyone in the gardens after these protests, the Bostan school event, workshops and festivals are also indicators of the formation of a collective consciousness. Non-governmental organizations such as the Initiative for the Protection of Yedikule Urban Gardens, which was established as a result of these events, underline that commoning continues today. During the in-

depth interview, Suna Kafadar, feminist writer and co-founder of the Initiative for the Protection of Yedikule Urban Gardens, told the story of the establishment of this initiative as follows:

> *"I went to Yedikule Gardens for the first time in 2009. In 2013, during the Gezi events, at the beginning of July, we received a call from Uncle Recep, Recep Eraslan, who was an gardener, and he said that bulldozers had entered the garden. Aleksandar Shopov was coincidentally in Istanbul at the time, we went to the gardens, and when we saw that rubble was being dumped on the gardens, we decided to establish the Initiative for the Protection of Yedikule Gardens."*

Also other expert participants, Yiğit Ozar and Abdullah Inanç Kıran, who are the volunteers of the Initiative for the Protection of Yedikule Gardens, shared their thoughts about this incident:

Yiğit Ozar:

> *"My interaction with Yedikule Gardens started when Fatih Municipality wanted to destroy the gardens between Yedikule and Belgradkapı for a recreation area project. At first, since I am an archaeologist, I went to the area thinking that there was an archaeological destruction at that time, and that it was not appropriate to carry out such a project in the protected area within the city walls. But later, the relationship of the gardens in the area with the Land Walls, the fact that the agricultural practices in the area have a historical background and constitute a cultural landscape, together with the land walls, the gardens, the neighborhood, the surrounding historical cemeteries and other examples of civil architecture and the settlement texture, gave me the impression that the issue has a multi-layeredness that requires a more comprehensive approach."*

Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

> *"Since 2013, I have been a part of such a struggle, solidarity, collectivity and interaction that has been making efforts to turn some of the gardens of Yedikule Urban Gardens back into an garden since some parts of it are unfortunately under rubble, and to keep the remaining gardens alive together with the Land Walls and to protect them together."*

Although there are traces of commonality such as these, when the real-life setting was observed and in-depth interviews were conducted, it was realized that there was a lack of certain actions, concepts and qualities for this space to be read as common. In the in-depth interviews, expert participants were asked 2 questions to discuss the potential of the commons in the field.

- The participants are firstly asked what Yedikule Urban Gardens means for publicness, commons, common life and production (Appendix D). The answers given by the expert participants to this interview question are grouped according to the common themes by analyzing the similar words and phrases they used (words reffering to common themes used by the participants are bolded).

For publicness:

Participants found the publicness of the area problematic and stated that today, Yedikule Urban Gardens is losing its public characteristic that it had in the past due to inadequacies in the planning and management of this site and that it has become invisible in the city since it is not claimed by the public (Appendix D).

Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

> *"Today, whether Yedikule Gardens are a **public space**, to what extent they are **intertwined with the public**, to what extent they have a **public value** have become a debatable issue. Because in the past, gardens were **more visible** in the city, people used to **go to eat lettuce**, for example, and there used to be **entertainment and festivities** in the gardens. But today, the garden has become **conceptually and socially, if not physically, distanced from the city.**"*

N. Simla Uygaç:

> *"Yedikule Urban Gardens started to **lose its public identity** after the 1970s. The **loss of the public character** of these areas has negatively affected their **commonality**, **access** and **sustainability**. In order for **production** to continue, these areas need to be **actively used**, and they need to be **included in the lives of the users** of the region.**"***

For production:

Although the participants expressed the importance of the preservation of the agricultural production function of the area from the past to the present, they questioned the quantity of this production and its relation with the city as a whole (Appendix D).

Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

> *"It is also a very valuable, historical production area… However, according to the laws and plans, I say it is an undefined area because the garden, the gardener and the production of the gardener* ***do not have a name****, statistics* ***are not kept****, they are* ***invisible for the laws*** *and* ***legal system****. The gardeners, the garden and the production need to* ***have legal security****, to be* ***recognized by official institutions****, to be known and* ***visible in the city****."*

Gökçer Okumuş:

> *"If you think of it as an urban agricultural area, it is almost* ***non-existent*** *today. So, when you consider the scale of Istanbul, if you look at all the agricultural areas of the city from the perspective of an urban planner, the* ***contribution of this area to production*** *in terms of* ***quantity*** *is very* ***low*** *at the moment."*

Yiğit Ozar:

> *"I don't know if the products produced by the gardeners can contribute to the* ***sustenance of the whole of Istanbul****, but to what* ***extent*** *can they, and how far can they be* ***sufficient****? Will we direct them to the neighborhoods of the historical peninsula? Will we direct them to nearby markets? Are we really going* ***to municipalize this production*** *a bit more and find formulas that will* ***allow people to access cheaper food****? We need to look at this from within this conflictual relationship and answer these questions."*

For the commons and common life:

Participants implied that Yedikule Urban Gardens is not a common space, but that the implementation of commoning practices in the site has the potential to integrate

this site into the city. These evaluations support the study's claim that the area can be transformed through commoning processes and participate in urban life (Appendix D).

Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

> *"There is a **commonality**, after all, in the context of **access to fair and healthy food**, I think there is a **process** and **value of commons** in this area, even if it does not cover the needs of the whole city. At this point, gardens have the **potential** to provide a life, a **common life**, a **common future** around these values."*

Gökçer Okumuş:

> *"It could be a common space, it can be **transformed** into a common space with **integrative strategies**. It needs to be transformed into a place that **invites people to participate** in the **production processes** in **different ways**. Some people can **interact** with area via asking questions about the products, other can **learn to work with soil** and **participate in cultivation** and planting etc."*

Oktan Nalbantoğlu:

> *"Although we cannot talk much about commoning in the current situation, Yedikule has a serious **potential** in terms of **commoning and common life**. This potential needs to be realized. Otherwise, this place is rapidly moving towards becoming a **depressed area**... By addressing it in an **interactive way** with **multiple actors**, that is, with a **different management plan system** in which, for example, the **gardeners (bostancı) are also involved**, may help for **reviving the commons** here."*

When evaluating publicness and production, the participants talked about the qualities that are deficient in Yedikule Urban Gardens in order for the area to be referred to as a public space or a production space, while when evaluating commonality and common life, they interpreted the area through the potential for commoning. Also, participants made proposals that implied commonality in the area. They underlined that in the current state of the area, it cannot be considered as the commons except for food solidarities, protection initiatives and gardeners. This may

suggest that participants perceive the commons as a transformative potential for this area.

Shortcomings	*Potentials*
-multilayered master plan, -comprehensive and multi-actor management and operation system, -accessibility, -recognition, -legality, -public claim, -publicness, -active use, -public participation and interaction, -organization of activities, -quantity of production, -legal security for the orchardists	-access to the fair and healthy food, -inviting and inclusive place for people to participate cultivation, -production of an alternative space beyond urban oppositions, -interaction place for different identities, -place for solidarity and gathering, -power of bringing people together.

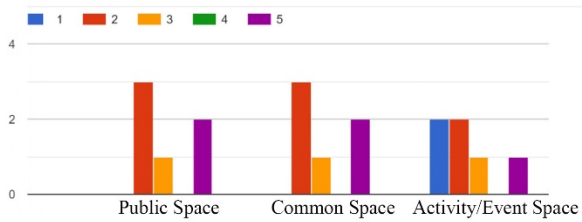
Figure 5.42 The meaning of the commons via the list of shortcomings and potentials (prepared by the author)

After the in-depth interview answers of the participants are examined, some of the stated shortcomings of the area are: *multilayered master plan, comprehensive and multi-actor management and operation system, accessibility, recognition, legality, public claim, publicness, active use, public participation and interaction, organization of activities, quantity of production, legal security for the gardeners.*

About the meaning of the commons for this area, participants interpreted as follows: *access to the fair and healthy food, inviting and inclusive place for people to participate cultivation, production of an alternative space beyond urban oppositions, interaction place for different identities, place for solidarity and gathering, power of bringing people together.*

- Second question is actually the same question that the participants are given the concepts of threshold space, in-between space, boundary, public space, common space, activity/event space and undefined space and asked to rate these concepts according to their qualities in defining Yedikule Urban Gardens. Here, the study will focus only on the concepts of public space, common space and activity/event space, in accordance with the scope of the

section 5.3, and will evaluate the meaning of the commons in Yedikule Urban Gardens through the analysis of the Likert scale graph .



Concepts	*Scoring Summary*	*Total Score*	*Mean*	*Mode*
Public Space	*(3x2)+(1x3)+(2x5)=**19***	19	3,2/5	2
Common Space	*(3x2)+(1x3)+(2x5)=**19***	19	3,2/5	2
Activity/Event Space	*(1x1)+(2x2)+(2x4)+(1x5)=**18***	18	3/5	2-4

Figure 5.43 Likert graph and analysis table focusing on the selected concepts (prepared by the author)

While evaluating the meaning of commons for Yedikule Urban Gardens, the reason for including public space and activity/event space in the analysis is that these concepts may reinforce each other according to the answers received from the interviews and on site observations. Looking at the average scores in the table, public and common space received 3.2 out of 5, while activity/event space received 3. The fact that scores are almost the same but moderate (3 is in the middle of 1 and 5) indicates that the participants rated the publicness of this space as inadequate, even though it is a public space . As for the commonality, although most of the participants underlined that the space has some traces of commonality, they also evaluated the high potential of the space to be common. Still, they did not find the commonality of this space is sufficient, and the same applies to activity/event space.

The reason why the study evaluates the commons together with the activity/event space is that the study defines the commons through the practices it realizes, that is,

through activities and events. It is mentioned in the literature review that through these activities, encounters, interactions and networks of relationships will be formed between the participants and that these are the dynamics of the commons that transform the space. According to the average scores in the table, while the commons get 3,2 out of 5; activity/event space get 3. The closeness of the scores can suggest that participants evaluate these concepts in a correlated way. From this evaluation, it can be derived that the publicness and commonality of this space is debatable, as the average score of these concepts is in the middle of the spectrum.

While responding these questions, as it is mentioned above, the expert participants touched upon the shortcomings and potentials of the site. Additionally, they proposed some ideas for the future of the area, based on these shortcomings and potentials.

Proposals that imply the need for the commons in Yedikule Urban Gardens:

Participants made various suggestions for Yedikule Urban Gardens to get rid of its invisibility in urban life. The fact that these suggestions aim to transform the area into an active urban space that can be frequently used by different social groups for various activities and the qualities of the proposed activities reflect "the commons and its processes" that this study proposes as a spatial strategy for the integration of the area into urban life (Appendix D).

Gökçer Okumuş:

> *"Here, it is necessary* ***to involve the public*** *a little more. Yes, it needs to* ***become a degree of common****... This area can be transformed into a* ***common space*** *such as an* ***urban agriculture training, practice*** *and* ***research area****."*

Suna Kafadar:

> *"In fact, one of the things we have been saying about gardens for years is that* ***gardens should work with schools****. If* ***schools have gardens that they can cultivate in****, or if Yedikule gardens* ***provide food to schools*** *in the surrounding neighborhoods, then the* ***sustainability and continuity of the gardens*** *can be ensured."*

The ideas proposed by these expert participants, who work in different disciplines and various branches of business, have some common characteristics. Although some of the proposals emphasize the importance of the presence of gardeners in this area and others the impact of the public on the site, they aim to find solutions to the lack of interaction between this urban space and potential users. This study considers the use of keywords such as "involve", "adding something from yourself", "being a part", "build a collective system", "continuity in users interaction with the site", "collective contribution", "establishing relationship networks" implies the need for the processes of commoning to transform and integrate Yedikule Urban Gardens into the urban life. These methods suggested by the participants during the in-depth interviews to protect, sustain and revitalize the site will be discussed further in the conclusion.

Shortcomings	*Potentials*	*Proposals*
-multilayered master plan, -comprehensive and multi-actor management and operation system, -accessibility, -recognition, -legality, -public claim, -publicness, -active use, -public participation and interaction, -organization of activities, -quantity of production, -legal security for the orchardists	-access to the fair and healthy food, -inviting and inclusive place for people to participate cultivation, -production of an alternative space beyond urban oppositions, -interaction place for different identities, -place for solidarity and gathering, -power of bringing people together.	- Orchards should work with schools. and schools should have orchards that they can cultivate in - There should be collective contribution of the local administration, non-governmental organizations, orchardists, those who design projects for the area and the public. - The proposal of agricultural parks to Yedikule orchards as a system - Urban agriculture training, practice and research area where the gardeners (bostancı) are also included in the practice and have a say, and where the municipality and local government also take responsibility and an educational area where school children can come and learn how agriculture can be practiced there

Figure 5.44 Shortcomings, potentials and proposals for the commons in Yedikule Urban Gardens (prepared by the author)

Understanding interstitial space through Yedikule Urban Gardens in sub-chapters 5.1 and 5.2, the sociospatial qualities and actor schema of this concept were analyzed. While these evaluations revealed the complex, multi-layered and multi-actor structure of the space, they also underlined its current excluded, neglected and invisible state. At this point, this study discusses the question of whether the commons can be a strategy for the integration or at least the preservation of the space in urban life. Although the commons is not a concept that currently defines Yedikule Urban Gardens, traces of the presence of commoning practices in this area have been encountered while analyzing the transformation processes of this area from the past

to the present (Chapter 5.1). The sociospatial qualities of the area as an interstitial space and its multi-actor structure (Chapter 5.2) provide opportunities for the production of the commons in this area. However, although there are various qualities in the space that point to the potential for the commons, when the current situation is analyzed, there are various deficiencies that cause this area to not be read as commons (Figure 5.44). In Chapter 6, this will be discussed again in detail.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

This research has elaborated the concept of "interstitial space" and the commons to overcome the urban dualities that seem inadequate if not ineffective in explaining, perceiving, and experiencing the complex and diverse nature of urban (public) spaces, in conventional planning and design theories. In this regard, first of all, the concept of interstitial space has been explored with a multiscalar approach and in order to resolve the confusion caused by the multiple concepts that exist in the literature to define "undefined spaces", a reinterpretation of interstitial space that can relatively encompass these concepts and define the social and spatial qualities of the urban space in a cohesive manner has been introduced. This study argues that interstitial space has the necessary qualities to produce the commons and transform space through its processes. These qualities stem from the fact that interstitial space is transitory, spontaneous and identifies a space beyond conventional urban binaries. Thus, with this approach, the commons can be recognized as a multidimensional process that produces spaces, it also positions interstitial spaces as settings and images of commoning practices.

In short, this thesis builds upon two main concepts, these are:

- Interstitial Space
- The Commons

The introduction chapter birefly introduces the “interstitial space” and “the commons” as the key concepts and states the main question, subject and objective of this study. Problematizing existing urban oppositions as insufficient and inoperative to define contemporary urban space, this study discusses whether the concept of interstitial space can be reinterpreted to define a space beyond these binaries. Since

the commons is a process that proposes the production of a space beyond the existing urban oppositions, there may be a relationality between these two concepts. This relationality is evaluated through investigating the potential of the commons as a strategy to transform interstitial spaces into actively engaged urban spaces within urban life. Here, Yedikule Urban Gardens is selected as a case study to analyze the reflection of the concept of interstitial space in the real-life setting. Yedikule Urban Gardens, situated within and along the historical Land Walls of Istanbul, has been an urban agricultural area with a multi-layered structure and a history full of transformations, yet today it has been excluded from urban life and neglected, rendered invisible, so to speak. Therefore, this study discusses whether Yedikule Urban Gardens as an interstitial space can be transformed by commoning processes. Furthermore, it focuses on the possiblities of integrating the site into city life through the contribution of the sociospatial qualities and diverse actor network of the interstitial space. Thus, this research has asked three questions on whether interstitial space can be explored beyond urban dualities, which socio-spatial qualities can define the interstitial space and how commoning processes can support the vitality of the interstitial space.

This final chapter, focusing on the research questions, unveils the qualities of the key concepts investigated throughout the thesis, and the reflections from a case study. Interstitial spaces are elaborated as transitory zones in which encounters, exchange, negotiation, sharing, diverse activities of the everyday life can be executed with the help of a space-transformative strategy that is “the commons” in the case of Yedikule Urban Gardens. To take this inference one step further and assess the discussion through keeping the social and spatial conditions of the site in mind, this chapter make some suggestions stemming from the outcomes of the on-site observations and expert interviews to construct social and spatial links between the site and the urban life through implementing commoning practices.

6.1 Interstitiality and Yedikule Urban Gardens

The first sub-question *"How can intersitiality be studied in different urban scales (to defy the singular descriptions and binary oppositions regarding public vs. private space)?"* aims to explore whether the concept of interstitial space can be reinterpreted as a concept beyond dichotomies, where social and spatial perspectives are intertwined.

The multi-layered, multi-actored and complex structure of the Yedikule Urban Gardens lead to the decision that it would not be sufficient for this study to evaluate the spatial and social transformation in this area only in a single scale. Moreover, examining the spatial transformation of the Land Walls on the macro scale, the social and spatial transformation of the immediate surroundings of the gardens on the meso scale, and the transformation of the gardens on the micro scale has enabled to observe the gradual evaluation of how this site has been transformed into an interstitial space over time by fragmenting and becoming spatially and socially complex and intertwined with the surrounding areas. The fact that the area is under the administration of three different local municipalities, and the lack of an inclusive strategy made the site neglected and invisible today. In order to explore the interstitiality of the area, this study evaluates the transformation processes of the area in three scales and discusses the possibility of producing the area as a space beyond urban dichotomies.

Evaluating the *spatial transformation* of the site in three interrelated scales through exploring the plan and project proposals from early 20th century to today, it is realized that no clear and consensus decisions were made in the design implementations and diverse plan proposals were suggested for the site by different administrative units independently of each other. Rather than considering the Land Walls and its surroundings holistically, the proposed plans only approached the historic wall as a boundary and an obstacle to be overcome. Moreover, the plans and projects proposed for the gardens in the immediate vicinity of the historic wall, which are as ancient as the historic wall itself, have been produced without involving the

main users of this area, the gardeners, making these design proposals dysfunctional and unrealistic to implement. These situations have damaged the social and spatial multilayeredness of the area and the socio-spatial richness that comes from this diversity.

Although the spatial transformation of the area has been attempted to be read through the proposed and implemented plans and projects, very few sources have been found in the literature on the *social transformation* of the area. According to the expert interviews and the information obtained from these few sources, it was learned that in the past, many non-Muslim residents owned land and engaged in agriculture here. Also, there were festivals and events took place in the gardens where residents of different ages, education and financial status came together. Over time, the social and cultural richness of the area has been eroded by imposed taxes, political events and neoliberal approaches. Hence, the garden has been excluded and rendered invisible not only by inappropriate spatial interventions and transformations, but also by these social erosions despite its potentials. In light of these considerations, this study realized that the site's position has gradually changed from a border to an urban space in the heart of the city. Yet it has, socially and spatially, become fragmented due to interventions carried out by the multiple authorities with a say over the site. These processes led the site into social and spatial exclusion from urban life. Could the combined impact of the site's urban evolution, social and spatial fragmentation, and exclusion be the primary factors leading to its transformation into an interstitial space?

For an urban space to be considered as an interstitial space, it must be characterized by the social and spatial qualities of interstitiality. *Multi-scalarity, polymorphology, multi-functionality* as morphological qualities and *temporality, simultaneity and multi-actorism* as social qualities were identified by the study as a result of an extensive literature review of interstitial space and similar concepts. However, apart from the qualities derived from the literature, could there be qualities of interstitiality that can be derived by observing and evaluating a real space? In order to explore this and to test the qualities from the literature in an actual space, i.e. Yedikule Urban

Gardens, the thesis constructs a second sub-question *"What are the concepts to define the morphological and social qualities of interstitial spaces?"* focusing on the socio-spatial qualities that can define the concept of interstitial space.

Interstitial space, in the existing literature, is interpreted through its spatial and social qualities. For the spatial qualities, the multiscalar framework by Phelps and Silva (2018) is elaborated. This framework identifies spatial qualities of the interstitial spaces with their positionality to city center and their diverse scales. In addition, since there was mere information about the form of the interstitial space, it is thought that these areas could exist in diverse forms. As for the social qualities, according to Brighenti's (2013) suggestion that it would be inadequate to define interstitial spaces only by evaluating their spatial qualities, an event-oriented point of view of this concept is needed to be examined. This approach defines interstitial space as a combination of encounters, interactions, divergences and negotiations of multiple actors existing in the same context. According to this definition, the actor schema can be understood as one of the significant factors that needs to be evaluated in order to define interstitial space.

However, when it comes to the real-life setting, Yedikule Urban Gardens, as a result of on-site observations and in-depth interviews, it is discovered that these social and spatial qualities of the space are intertwined and cannot be evaluated separately as in the literature. This argument also overlaps with the potential of producing a space beyond the dichotomies questioned by the thesis and reveals that the dialectic relationship that the study tried to establish. Moreover, after the interviews with the participants, intangible qualities and sensory concepts that are not mentioned extensively in the existing literature regarding the site were revealed, some of which are "*memory, safety, beauty, mystery, and curiosity*". It was also significant that most of the expert participants referred to the terms "*claim, solidarity, resistance, protests and struggle"* while discussing the meaning of Yedikule Urban Gardens for the city before discussing the relevance of the commons to the site as the participants' references to these concepts while defining this urban space validly support this study's association of it with the commons.

As reviewed in Chapter 3, there are various concepts in the literature that define "undefined spaces" at different scales and disciplines, such as threshold space, in-between space, loose space, fourthplace etc. Although the example of Yedikule Gardens can be handled with these concepts in different literature approaches, the fact that this space is a threshold space for some and an undefined space for others after the in-depth interviews, and even for a single person, both the concepts of threshold and in-between space are equivalent to define the space, may indicate that this space is too complex and intricate to be clearly defined. For this reason, this study discusses whether the concept of interstitial space can encompass all of these and resolve this confusion about the definition of this space.

In the context of Turkey, Yedikule Urban Gardens, which has multiple actors and a multi-layered socio-spatial structure, have been subjected to many transformations and planning interventions. This means that in the case of Yedikule, the area may have developed its own local qualities through these processes and therefore the participants may not be able to clearly define this space. Therefore, this study proposes a more encompassing conceptualization of interstitial space. Future studies can also make use of this concept by considering the local qualities of the area they are talking about and the sociospatial transformation processes that the area has undergone.

6.2 The Commons and Yedikule Urban Gardens

The third sub-question *"What is the role of commoning processes to support the vitality of interstitial spaces in cities?"* focuses on the relationship between the commons and interstitial space and tries to understand the meaning of the commons for Yedikule Urban Gardens in terms of reinforcing the vitality and integrity of this space with the urban life.

First and foremost, in order for commoning processes to transform interstitial spaces into active urban spaces and ensure their inclusion in urban life, it is necessary to speak of the commons as a verb rather than a noun (Linebaugh, 2008). According to

this study, when the commons is referred as social process of production and organization, rather than merely as resources available for appropriation, it can be possible to mention this concept's space transformative potential, thus, the possibility for integrating an interstitial space to the urban life through the commons.

Secondly, how this study defines the concept of the commons is important for addressing the intricate relationship between the site and the commons. Throughout the literature review, some scholars discuss the commons with its economic aspects (Ostrom, 1990; Mehan et al., 2022), this point of view defines commons as resources collected and shared by a community of actively using and maintaining them. Others focus on the ownership issues of the commons with a political angle (Fırat & Genç, 2023). There are few studies underline the potential of the commons for production and social organisation and consider its dynamic nature as an ongoing activity which encompasses the relationships within society (Lefebvre, 1996; Harvey, 2008; Linebaugh, 2008). As for this study, there can be more than one definition of the commons. The commonality of Yedikule Urban Gardens can be questioned through the act of production that takes place in this area, as well as through the activities carried out by various actors who come together for the preservation of this area and the interactions and relationship networks catalyzed by these activities. For this reason, the fact that Yedikule does not function like urban commons today or that it is not an area established by commoning practices does not prevent traces of the commons from being present in this area. It is a known situation that agricultural production in Yedikule Urban Gardens has not been carried out collectively from past to present. Could this not be one of the reasons why the area has been excluded from contemporary urban life and has become invisible to the residents?

Although this study is aware that there is no commonality in the production process in the site; the collective struggle by people of diverse ages, financial status, educational and occupational backgrounds against the project proposal by Fatih Municipality suggests complete destruction of the garden function (chapter 5.1.3), is what produces the commons in this site. Moreover, the non-governmental organizations such as Initiative for the Protection of Yedikule Gardens, DÜRTÜK

(The Resisting Producer-Consumer Collective) and the workshops, garden school, open lectures, charity sale and lettuce festivals organized by these collectives try to ensure that the the commons born out of the collective resistance is maintained in this area. In other words, there is formation of the commons in this area that goes beyond the conventional definition of the commons as “production and collection of the physical resources” (Ostrom, 1990). This relatively contemporary definition of the commons is in line with the study's suggestion above that the concept of the commons can be defined in multiple ways.

The multi-layeredness and complexity of Yedikule provides the potential for improvised activities, unexpected encounters, emancipated interactions to take place between different social groups in this area. Yet, at the same time, it makes this area vulnerable by leading it into a confusion regarding the design decisions to be made about the area, the management system to be built, the organizational steps to be implemented and the activities to be carried out.

Although, this study does not propose that Yedikule Urban Gardens should be completely transformed into urban commons due to the aim of preserving the memory and history of this space, it can be integrated into urban life by bringing people and the site together by means of commoning processes, i.e. reciprocal relationships and practices. Indeed, traces of the site's ability to bring together multiple and diverse actors and produce a collective consciousness have been encountered many times while examining the transformation process of this site (Chapter 5.1).

In this regard, after the on-site observations and in-depth interviews with expert participants, it is not possible to identify many instances of commoning practices in Yedikule today in the contexts of management, organization or production except for some occasional events. Yet, with some of the “marginal examples of commoning in the site and the potential of commons to transform urban spaces as shown by the similar examples in the world, this study highlights the "potential" of the commons to transform Yedikule Urban Gardens. In order for this potential to be

realized in the area, the existing and missing concepts, qualities and contents related to the commons are analyzed in Chapter 5.3 according to the information obtained from in-depth interviews and on-site observations and shown in Figure 6.1.

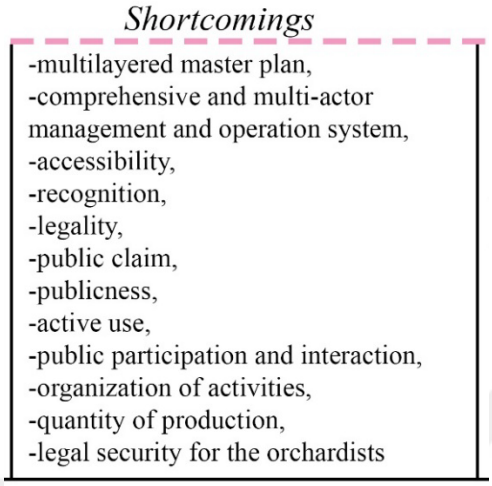


Figure 6.1 Shortcomings that prevent the realization of commons in Yedikule Urban Gardens according to the interview outcomes (prepared by the author)

After the on-site observations and in-depth interviews, it is concluded that although Yedikule Urban Gardens has very strong characteristics as an interstitial space, there are some obstacles to the realization of the commons in this area. These obstacles are, especially in the stages of common decision-making, common implementation and the production of reciprocal relations due to the political context of Turkey and the spatial development strategies for public space. For this reason, this study will make some suggestions for supporting and strengthening the potential of the commons to thrive in this area, based on the information gathered from various sources, conducted interviews and on-site observations.

These recommendations are as follows:

1- Integration of multiple actors into this area should be ensured through commons processes.

2- A multi-layered and multi-actor management system should be created for the management of the area. The gardeners should also be integrated into this system.

3- It will not be possible to leave the area as it is, nor is it possible to completely get rid of the garden texture. A design fiction that protects the garden and the gardener in the area and allows the public to interact with the area and participate in production while at the same time not harming the garden and the gardener should be realized.

4- Spatial interfaces should be designed in the area so that the public can interact with the garden and the gardener and form a commonality (for example, flexible spaces can be designed to support multiple uses)

5- Pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle routes should be developed to support access to the area.

6- Food produced in the gardens should be distributed to schools near the gardens. Thus, the recognition of the gardens in the area and their interaction with the public can be increased through children and young people. Schools should encourage students to spend time in the common gardens where they can plant and cultivate (some lessons can be taught in the gardens, the life cycle of a product cultivated in the gardens can be followed by regular field trips).

7- Considering and planning the Land Walls and the Gardens as two separate elements harms the richness of the area. These historical elements are intertwined with each other and produce their unique qualities with the existence of one another. For this reason, planning and design proposals for this area should approach the Land Walls and its immediate surroundings holistically and take into account the multi-layeredness of the area and the transformations it has undergone throughout history.

8- The gardeners who ensure the continuation of the existence of Yedikule Gardens to this day should not be treated as occupiers. The gardeners, the gardens and the products produced should be officially secured and they should have a say in decisions regarding this area.

9- The municipality, civil society organizations and initiatives in the area should work together to prepare an event calendar for the area and organize events and activities to increase the commonality of the area.

10- The unique qualities and functions of the area should be officially protected and all design proposals, activities and site arrangements should be carried out in accordance with these protection limits.

In *future studies*, these suggestions can be addressed in different design processes or urban spatial processes that develop in similar spaces. If the aforementioned concepts, qualities and contents that block the formation and continuation of the the commons in the area are eliminated by applying these principles, this space can be both preserved and transformed with commoning practices in a way that is integrated into the city as a whole.

6.3 Future Studies

This research has explored alternative ways of elaborating urban spaces that are beyond conventional urban dichotomies via discussing the concepts of "interstitial space" and "the commons" in locality of Istanbul, Turkey. Major emphasis has been on the re-interpretation of the concept of interstitial space and its intricate relationship with the commons. These concepts are detailly studied firstly with a comprehensive literature review and their inherent qualities are discussed through on-site observations and expert interviews. However, to further advance the discussion on the interstitial spaces and the potential of commons to transform these spaces, there are a few study areas that may be explored.

A further research can be conducted by testing the concept of interstitial space and observing its qualities on another physical space. This study has conducted interviews and on-site observations on Yedikule Urban Gardens. Yet, by testing and exploring different localities, qualities of this concept can be altered and enriched.

Another way of conducting a similar research at the same space, Yedikule Urban Gardens, can be done by communicating with the nearby residents and gardeners. This study conducts expert interviews due to its unique focus on interstitial space and its relation with the commons. Since the terms and concepts used in the

interviews require background knowledge on these topics, this study is based on expert interviews. However, diversifying the participants by differentiating the interview questions could provide more content to the study.

This study can be further developed by reinterpreting the conceptual drawings and mappings produced for the concept of interstitial space with more social and societal qualities. As mentioned before, the fact that the social transformation of the case study area is not sufficiently covered in the literature suggests that this study can contribute to this deficiency in such an developed version.

As a final recommendation, commoning processes can be triggered in an area similar to the case study area of this study and its impact on the site can be observed. This study claims that commons can have the potential to transform interstitial space and integrate it into urban life. It bases this claim on a review of the literature, similar case studies from around the world and traces of commons in Yedikule Urban Gardens. Future studies can test this claim by implementing commoning practices in such an urban space and monitoring the gradual social and spatial changes observed in the space.

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APPENDICES

Conducted In-depth Interviews in English

In-depth Interview with Abdullah Inanç Kıran

MT: Could you briefly tell us about yourself? What is your interaction, interest or work related to Yedikule gardens?

AIK: I am Abdullah İnanç Kıran, I am a part of the Initiative for the Protection of Yedikule Gardens. Since 2013, I have been a part of such a struggle, solidarity, collectivity and interaction that has been making efforts to turn some of the gardens of Yedikule Urban Gardens back into an garden since some parts of it are unfortunately under rubble, and to keep the remaining gardens alive together with the Land Walls and to protect them together. I have a bachelor's degree in Sociology and Geography and a master's degree in Urban Regional Planning. Therefore, I wrote a thesis on Yedikule Urban Gardens in my master's degree. Apart from that, I am already taking part in various workshops and studies related to urban gardens.

MT: What do Yedikule Urban Gardens mean for the city of Istanbul as a whole and for your field of study or interest? Can you evaluate them spatially and socially?

AIK: There have been many gardens in Istanbul since ancient times, not just the Yedikule Gardens, but unfortunately very few of them have survived until today. The gardens in and around Yedikule are one of the rare gardens that have survived among the historical gardens of Istanbul, and they are also a part of Istanbul's disappearing cultural heritage. They are also areas where many social and spatial relations are intertwined and layered. In other words, not only are these gardens predominantly run by people from Kastamonu, Cide today, but in the past, in the Ottoman period, some of these gardens were run and worked by Albanians, there are sources that mention that Armenians and Greek gardeners worked in these gardens, and therefore it is also an area where demographic fractures in Istanbul and Turkey can be read. It is not only Istanbul's cultural heritage, but also an area where the social processes of the non-Muslim communities that existed in Istanbul's past were excluded and expelled from the city through political processes can be read.

MT: Can you identify the users, actors and stakeholders who play a role, have a say, use and generally have an impact on the gardens?

AIK: Bostancı (gardener) of course, the most fundamental actor in a bostan is the bostancı, without the bostancı there is no bostan. If there is going to be an garden, there has to be an gardener so that the garden can be kept alive. It is important to understand that a heritage is defined not only by its physical aspects, but also by the actors who make it a place. Users and other stakeholders can exist in that context. First and foremost, it is the gardener, there are gardeners. Apart from that, of course,

some of the gardeners give what they grow in the gardens to the market, some to the vegetable and fruit market, and some to local tradesmen. As users, there may be a small number of people from the neighborhood, Zeytinburnu, Fatih or some passersby who know the garden. If we say stakeholders, for example, the Metropolitan Municipality due to ownership, Fatih, Zeytinburnu and Eyüp district municipalities, the Ministry of Finance, Directorate of Foundations, these are also stakeholders in the end. In order to protect the area and transfer it to the future, the institutions that own the property should of course be seen as stakeholders and conservation planning should be done with a participation in which they and the gardeners are included in the process as partners. The authorities who own the property also have responsibilities to ensure that the gardens are preserved for the future. They also need to fulfill these responsibilities. They need to make an effort to ensure the continuation of gardening here in a way that respects this place's heritage aspect.

MT: What do you think Yedikule Urban Garden means for publicness, commonality, common life and production?

AIK: Today, whether Yedikule Gardens are a public space, to what extent they are intertwined with the public, to what extent they have a public value have become a debatable issue. Because in the past, gardens were more visible in the city, people used to go to eat lettuce, for example, and there used to be entertainment and festivities in the gardens, but today, the element called garden has become conceptually and socially, if not physically, distanced from the city and the urbanites, that is, how many of the people living in Istanbul know about Yedikule and the gardens around it? Or if they do, how many of them have visited or intend to visit this area? In other words, if you ask anyone passing through Istanbul today, they may perceive these gardens as idle areas in someone's garden or hobby gardens. No one knows that there was such a use along the historical city walls and they have no knowledge of Istanbul's centuries-old relationship with gardens. They do not even have such an imagination in this city. Therefore, in order for a publicness to be formed in this area in a way that integrates with the people, as I said, it needs to be more visible in social memory, it needs to be more intertwined with people's lives. That's why perhaps today, gardening may not be perceived as public. You know, it may not be associated with the public so much. But in the past, I think it had more of a public value because people actually used to go to the gardens, they used to pass through the gardens, you see people passing through the gardens on postcards and so on, but today, I think this memory has been broken, unfortunately, because of the demolitions and transformation projects for the gardens from the past to the present, I think this public value has also been eroded. But is it a common space? Of course, there is a commonality, after all, in the context of access to fair and healthy food, I think there is a process and value of commonality in this area, even if it does not cover the needs of the whole city. At this point, gardens have the potential to provide a life, a common life, a common future around these values. It is also a very valuable, historical production area. Of course, these areas cannot be protected only by the protection of institutions, by plan notes or decisions in the plans stating that these

areas will be protected as gardens. Of course, these areas can be protected and the gardens can survive by securing the presence of the gardener there, and not only by the commercial relations of the gardeners with the market or tradesmen, but also by the people in the city establishing a connection with the area. For example, I was very surprised by the struggle against the destruction of the gardens under rubble in 2013. I did not expect such an intense protest and resistance from actors from such different social groups. I did not think that this issue would attract so much public attention, interest and even international resonance. Because after all, it is an area in Yedikule that is not very visible. It is not as public as Taksim Square, and there were Gezi protests at the same time, and these may have been reflected in the protests in Yedikule, but I still did not expect that there would be so much interest in Yedikule. It means that there are certain qualities in the gardens that people want the city to have and continue to exist, or they have some objections because of some qualities that are not in the city or are insufficient. Because people around the world are also looking for green spaces. On the one hand, there is a food crisis. In fact, such areas meet this need. Therefore, perhaps a commonality can be achieved with both Yedikule gardens and other such gardens in Istanbul on the basis of Yedikule gardens. These areas can produce a common value and Yedikule gardens can be a pioneer in this sense. The restoration currently being carried out by IBB on the Land Walls is very urgent for these walls, in other words, the necessary measures need to be taken urgently to protect the walls so that this historical element can be passed on to the future. After all, it is a cultural heritage, a cultural asset, of course, the necessary works and practices to protect, strengthen and transfer these walls to the future are inevitable, and no one has any objection to this point. However, after these works are completed, there are questions as to whether there will be gardens here, whether the areas where the Land Walls and the gardens are together will be protected, and the current IBB administration's point of view, which was also the point of view of the previous IBB administration, seems to be that there will be no gardens, although there is no definite statement.

But as I said, after these restorations are completed, will those areas be given back to the gardeners, will those areas be utilized as gardens again? These questions exist for me. However, although there is no written information at the moment, I have learned that there are efforts and plans to turn the gardens in the part called perigolos into an area where rolled grass is laid, like the visitor centers in Mevlanakapı and Silivrikapı, where people can access, walk around, enter and exit some bastions, and see the city walls closely. But as I said, there will be a project for these, after all, what is called restoration will of course be continued under another administration after this one. Maybe the perspective of that administration will be to protect the gardens there, but as I said, unfortunately there is no continuity on these issues in Turkey. Maybe this administration will not protect them, but maybe the next administration will see the protection of the gardens here as a better choice. I think the important thing is that the gardeners should be remembered after this process and they should continue to exist in this area with their gardens.

Of course, there are access problems in the area where the Land Walls are located, but as I said, on the other hand, the gardens are part of the Land Walls, and together with them, they are one of the values that make up the cultural heritage there. In other words, without excluding these values, such a conservation planning and design should be developed for the integrity of the land walls in a way that includes these values and includes them in the conservation process. The presence of the gardeners (bostancı) and gardens there is seen as the source of the access problem. Is it only the presence of the garden there that is the cause of the access problem, that is, there are also problems with accessing the city walls, entering and exiting the city walls where there are no gardens in this area. On top of that, do people have to step on every point of the land walls? Do they have to see every point? After all, wouldn't conveying and explaining a historical value that lives there be a value in itself? Will there be an experience, a value, when tourists come and walk the 7.2 kilometers of the city walls from beginning to end? Is it really necessary to access every spot of the Land Walls? I mean, I even go to these visitor centers myself from time to time, and frankly, I haven't seen such dense crowds. Because I think gardens are more attractive to people, after all, I think seeing an garden in the city should be more interesting to many people, I think it should arouse more curiosity. Because unfortunately agriculture is not perceived as a city-specific function today. I think that if people learn, perceive and experience the history of the gardens here with these visitor centers or the areas to be organized, or at least if this experience is offered to them, that wall line would become more meaningful for tourists and locals. Of course, this can be achieved in a holistic design and planning. I am not saying that there should be only gardens, of course, but problems such as accessibility can be solved with minimal intervention by preserving the historical garden tissue. These can be discussed as long as the aim is to protect it. In other words, in the 2013 project, some options were presented to the municipality with some sketches based on the question of whether the municipality's park design and gardens could coexist. If you have such an intention, if you want to produce green spaces or develop such an area, a proposal was submitted to the municipality at that time, saying that it was possible to produce and design areas both with historical gardens and also according to some new needs and users, but it was not taken into consideration.

MT: I'll ask my last question then, which of the following concepts (threshold space, in-between space, boundary, public space, common space) best defines gardens for you? Please rate from 1 to 5, with the degree of definition increasing.

AIK: We can call gardens a threshold place. So if we need to give a score to this, we can say 4. I mean, the city walls are a kind of periphery, a boundary. You know, in the history of fortifications, they have always been perceived as an obstacle to be overcome. Since the gardens are located together with the city walls, I call it a threshold space because the city walls are still inaccessible in the general perception, an obstacle that needs to be overcome.

The gardens have an aspect that actually brings the countryside and the city together. After all, what is called agriculture is something specific to the countryside, the

existence of such a texture through the gardens, the existence of such a layeredness can enable this space to be read as an in-between space within the city. Therefore, I give it 5 points for being an intermediate space.

The Land Walls are the border and it is not possible to evaluate the gardens separately from the walls. In other words, there are no gates between each garden, and it is not easy to move from one garden to another because of the land walls. This can create a perception of a border. Even though the gardens are open to everyone, when we think of borders, we should think not only of physical but also mental issues, sets of thoughts and perceptions. It seems to me that people have a prejudice against gardens and the area where they are located. You know, there is a general opinion that prevents them from going to the gardens. That is actually related to the land walls. It is also related to the perceptions that stem from the fact that the city walls and the area have always been criminalized, unsafe and uncanny in the recent past. Otherwise, the gardens are open to everyone, anyone can greet the gardener and walk around the gardens, but there are still physical and ideational distances between people and the gardens. So we can say that there is still a border between people and gardens that needs to be crossed. That's why my score for the concept of border is 4. Regarding being a public space, gardens do not have much publicness. After all, there is a commercial gardening there now, so it doesn't work like a public space, we can say it's like a semi-public and semi-private space, but of course it can produce a public value. That is why I can call it a 3. A common space? It may not be considered

a common space today, but it has the potential to be a common space. But as I said, as a result, because of the food here, of course, people's access to fair, healthy food and the production of local food networks, food solidarities, as I said, are, actually, practices of commoning. For this reason, I say 3 for the current situation, but of course, with more gardens joining this network, it may be possible to enhance its commonality qualities.

I would say 5 for being an activity-event space. Not only gardening, but also various activities such as the garden school, workshops, festivals, film screenings, and lectures open to everyone take place in this area. For example, an garden school was organized in August 2013. After 10 years, an garden school is organized again in August 2023. When I say activities in these gardens, I don't think of activities for large crowds, but for small groups. After all, here, for example, students from primary and high schools come and see how a tomato grows here. They see a gardener making a pan (maşula), opening a pan, watering the pan which is an example of traditonal agricultural methods. In other words, they have the chance to observe agricultural traditions, which is an intangible cultural heritage. they witness how that heritage is lived, how it is made, and experiences it in this area. In this sense, it is a place of activity, and many schools also come here and bring students from their schools. They see strawberries, they see tomatoes, they see mint, they pick mint. I don't think it is an area where big protests can take place, where large groups of people can come, but I think it has an aspect where people can learn something, share stories, and I think at this point, a common space, the commons is produced

with these actions. If this interaction is supported and produced with events and activities in accordance with the historical and cultural identity of the area, I think it will be possible for the area to become more integrated with the city. When I say undefined area, now in my mind, of course, it is a more defined area because of my studies, but after all, in the plans, for example, the gardens are seen as parks. Therefore, it can be asessed as an undefined space right now, that is, what is called a gardener is also undefined because gardeners are not farmers. The products they produce are not counted as crops, they are not calculated, they are undefined. You know, after all, they enter the fruit and vegetable market, but none of the gardeners are producers, since they are not included in the farmer registration system, that is, they are not actors defined by what they produce. The gardeners are also not defined, In most of the plans made for this area, since they are seen as parks, there is an implication that they are no different from any other green area, and the gardeners are seen as occupiers because they pay ecri misil fees. The gardeners need to have legal security, to be recognized by official institutions, to be known and visible in the city. The same is true for the gardens, so I can say that it is an undefined area and I give 5. According to the laws and plans, I say it is an undefined area because the garden, the gardener and the production of the gardener do not have a name, statistics are not kept, and the only way to record it is through the payment of the ecri misil fees.

MT: So apart from these, I mean apart from the definitions I have given, how would you define this space?

AIK: Multilayered cultural heritage site.

In-depth Interview with Gökçer Okumuş

MT: Could you briefly tell us about yourself? What is your interaction, interest or work related to Yedikule gardens?

GO: Let me briefly tell you about myself, I graduated from Istanbul Technical University Department of Urban and Regional Planning in 2005. In 2007, I completed my double major in architecture. Then I did my master's degree in ITU Urban Design program between 2008 - 2011. I did my PhD in Urban and Regional Planning between 2011 - 2017. During this time, I worked as a research assistant at ITU Urban Planning. Then I worked as a lecturer in the Department of Architecture at Ticaret University between 2018 and 2020. Between 2019 and 2021, I volunteered as a consultant at the IBB Department of Parks, Gardens and Green Spaces. During this time, I worked on Life Valley projects. We organized competitions. I was their consultant jury. I was a jury member at the same time. Then, from 2021 until today, I have been working at the Istanbul Planning Agency as the coordinator of the Public Design Office. I did not have a one-on-one interaction with Yedikule gardens, but of course, it was on the agenda there when I was a consultant at the IBB Department of Parks, Gardens and Green Areas. Because it has been on the agenda for many years. But for some reason, it could not be solved in a way that would satisfy everyone.

MT: What do Yedikule Urban Gardens mean for the city of Istanbul as a whole and for your field of work or interest? Can you evaluate it spatially and socially?

GO: Currently, the share or contribution of Yedikule Urban Gardens in the whole city of Istanbul is quite low. I mean, if you think of it as an urban agricultural area, it is almost non- existent today, so when you think about the scale of Istanbul, that is, if you look at it from an urban planner's point of view or if you look at all the agricultural areas of the city, it is a very multi-qualified area. If you look at all the green areas of the city, it is still a small area, but this area has a special feature, if you compare it with the positioning of urban gardens in other world cities, Yedikule Gardens is a place that was formed adjacent to the Land Walls, in other words, it is a special place in terms of urban heritage, in fact, it is an urban space on the other side of a border formed on an axis. It is also a topographical threshold where a water line used to cross. The fact that it is one of the only lands that can actually be used for agriculture due to the accumulation of alluvium with the flow of water over long periods of time. Two such qualities came together in a row and an agricultural function was formed there. At the same time, it is located just outside the walls of the ancient city or the walls of traditional Istanbul, because you don't have much chance to do agriculture inside the city walls as that area is mostly used for settlement purposes. This can be seen in all walled cities, but also in Europe, during the time of the feudal lordships, the agricultural areas were outside the fortress cities, and of course they were at the closest points to the city walls. Therefore, according to my perception, it has such an established history. Socially, as I said, in terms of Istanbul in general, for example, when you say Yedikule Urban Gardens to someone living in Küçükçekmece, it may not mean anything, or it may not even mean anything to someone living in Pendik, Sancaktepe or Levent. It may only mean something if you say Yedikule Urban Gardens to people living in Zeytinburnu and Fatih, but since it has been on the agenda for a long time, of course it has created its own agenda. In other words, if you ask people who do research, study and follow the agenda, especially in our professional field of architecture, landscape architecture and urban planning, yes, Yedikule Gardens has become one of the areas of struggle in the city for a long time. For this reason, it is an interesting point as an area that everyone wants to preserve from a romantic point of view, as a potential area where the need for green space can be met, as an area that everyone wants to solve or transform, where everyone wants to do something.

MT: Can you identify the users, actors and stakeholders who play a role, have a say, use and generally have an impact on the gardens?

GO: I mean, there is a group here called bostancılar (gardeners). There are people who have been running these gardens for many years, maybe 100 years, for a few generations, with a family tradition. As far as ownership is concerned, for example, I don't have clear information on this issue, but as far as I know that they don't own the property. Because they pay a fee that is called "ecri misil". So it is owned by public. I don't know if there are other actors using it or shopping there. If there are, it may be a very small amount. The gardeners (bostancı) who pay ecri misil may be

selling the produce from there to wholesalers. They may have their own market areas, but I don't know anything like that, I haven't heard of it. I mean, there is an garden there. Yes, is there a sales unit outside the garden where only the products from there are sold? I haven't heard of such a thing. Apart from that, since it is not really in an area that is easily accessible to anyone, it doesn't seem to have any other users. In other words, people inside the city wall cannot access the garden area behind the city wall, they cannot step on it, they cannot pass through it anyway. The garden is between the city wall and a main axis. There are people in the area who drive on that main axis. To the west of the road, there are cemetery areas and large amenity spaces, and these amenity spaces are not very intensively used areas, there used to be the Abdi İpekçi Sports Hall. It is being rebuilt now. So it was probably a place that was used once a week or once every 1-2 weeks, it was used intensively. So it's something where the number of actors is really low. Actually, we are also talking about a plot of land. There is also a pattern of ownership. Yes, if the public owns the property, then the components of the public are also actors in this area, this could be the the Ministry of Finance, if it is a land belonging to IBB, I mean the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. There are also the district municipality such as Fatih, Eyüp and Zeytinburnu, and the gardeners (bostancı) who pay ecri misil on it as I mentioned before, and the people who consume the produce that comes out of it. Apart from that, there may be potential recreational users in the immediate vicinity such as Fatih, Zeytinburnu who see that area as a potential green area, or as a sports area if you turn it into a sports field, so we are not talking about a green area that addresses the whole city, but potential recreational users in the immediate vicinity, so we can define it like this.

MT: What do you think Yedikule Urban Garden means for publicness, commonality, common life and production?

GO: When we look at it from a public point of view, for one thing, since the land is owned by the public, it is definitely an area that should remain in the public domain, so yes, it can also be a common space, but is it a commonally produced area? Not really. In other words, as I just said, it is a green area outside the city wall, not an area that people frequently use. In fact, there used to be ditches filled with water outside the city walls between the road and the city walls, and while this had a purely protective function, now there is nothing like that on it. There are now agricultural fields on these ditches and it has been used in this way for a long time, so it really doesn't mean much for production, not much in terms of production quantity, but in such a period when urban agriculture is on the agenda in urban areas, yes, it can be called a production activity, a production heritage that needs to be protected. But how this production is done, by whom, for whom, needs to be shaped a bit. Here, it is necessary to involve the public a little more. Yes, it needs to become a degree of common. In other words, it is a bit problematic that the land there, the agricultural land that we can call fertile, is only used by the gardeners there, as if it is land that has been given to them as a gift. On the one hand, this area can be transformed into a common space such as an urban agriculture training, practice and research area where the gardeners (bostancı) are also included in the practice and have a say, and

where the municipality and local government also take responsibility. It can turn into an educational area where school children can come and learn how agriculture can be practiced there, and get to know the plants.

In other words, there is certainly a point of view that says let's remove the agricultural texture completely, let's plant grass there and let it turn green, let it be a beautiful background for the Land Walls, but it is absolutely unacceptable, but the idea that the owner of the place is the gardeners (bostancı), let the gardeners decide for themselves what they want to do is also not an appropriate approach. I think this is where commonality comes into play, but supporting it with bicycle paths, pedestrian paths, routes that increase accessibility to the area is needed, and such things have actually started to happen, for example, Yedikule Gas House is being transformed, it is becoming a center of attraction. Abdi İpekçi Sports Hall is being reborn as a huge sports center in the vicinity of Yedikule Gardens. The Metropolitan Municipality is trying to make the Land Walls an accessible cultural asset again, for example, a visitor center is opening at the gates. If a comfort is created where there are some checkpoints and we can pass through this agricultural area on our way between those checkpoints, or if, for example, we can go there on the weekend without worrying about how to get there with children, by taking the children to the school bus or walking, then yes, you can turn that area into a public space. But not in its current form. It is an area that needs to be touched, and it is an area where we cannot just say let's leave and let the gardeners do whatever they want, but I can say that it is definitely an area that cannot be transformed into a park or a sports field by removing the agricultural tissue from there.

Today, it is a public space that no one is aware of, that some people claim it because it has been forgotten, so this is no different from building a shanty on a public land in the center of the city. On the one hand, I believe that all public spaces should be designed together with the public, with public participation, and on the other hand, this is never something that a municipality should decide on its own or the property owner should decide on its own. There are some things that need to be negotiated. It is an area that needs to be re-evaluated in that way, and then be included in urban life. Because there are a lot of things happening around that support each other. In order for it not to be left in that in-between, a participation environment where this area is also a subject must be provided.

MT: My last question then, which of the following concepts (threshold space, intermediate space, public space, communal space) best describes gardens for you? Please rate from 1 to 5, with the degree of definition increasing.

GO: So are these things going to be competing with each other?

MT: They are not really competing things but there are certain nuances between some of them. I'm trying to understand them.

GO: Okay. For example, let's start with the last one, is it an undefined space? I mean. It's close to undefined. Yes, four.

Is it a place for activity? Absolutely not, 2. I won't say absolutely, let's not go to extremes again. But I don't think it's an activity-event place.

A common space? It could be a common space, it can be transformed into a common space with integrative strategies but since it is not currently, I give it a 2.

Public space? It should be a public space, but, currently, it does not have publicness, so I would give it a 2 here. It is an area that should be a public space. So it is not a public space at the moment.

It's definitely a boundary, but it's not a self-imposed limit. That's why I can give it a 3. I mean, it's a boundary because there's a wall behind it. The Land Walls and the road are the border.

An in-between space? I give 2. It's a space between the road and the wall, so neither of these two is a space on which human activities are carried out. One is a vehicular road and the other is a wall, so there are no people in the square. A threshold space, let's call it 4. It is not an in-between space, but it is a threshold as it is an intermediary area and there is an imply of inside (historical peninsula) and outside (periphery) and they merge in the gardens.

It is a border, but because of other elements that support it as a border. It is a public space but does not have publicness. That is why I give 2 to the expression public space.

Since it is not a common space at the moment, I think to give 2.

It is definitely not an activity event venue, not at the moment. But if this activity event is going to be an activity and event in the way I just described, then yes, it had to be.

Undefined space? Yes, for some people it is very defined, but for me it is not very defined due to its complexity and multilayeredness., so I say 4 for the concept of undefined space.

MT: So apart from these, I mean apart from the definitions I have given, how would you define this space?

GO: Abandoned. It is unknown to the general public or to urbanites. Neglected, left behind. We can say the roadside, the refuge area, which are not seen very important. This is not the case for me, but we can say this for the vast majority of people living in Istanbul. But it can really become one of the important parts of a flow, a route, a training program, a life practice, if we can make a good fiction there. I mean. I can say that just as we want to protect the Land Walls when they don't have any function right now, we need to protect the gardens there too, even though they don't have much of a function right now, and turn them into a place that invites people there to ensure that this area survives in order to pass them on to future generations and to ensure that they are accepted by everyone in society. I would say that it needs to be transformed into a place that invites people to participate in the production processes

in different ways (some people can interact with area via asking questions about the products, other can learn to work with soil and participate in cultivation and planting etc.) in order to ensure that this area is accepted by everyone in society.

In-depth Interview with Oktan Nalbantoğlu

MT: Could you briefly tell us about yourself? What is your interaction, interest and work with Yedikule Urban Gardens or Yedikule gardens?

ON: Okay, I'm a landscape architect. I graduated from Ankara University, then I completed my master's and doctorate at the same university, and now I'm a faculty member at Bilkent University, Department of Urban Design and Landscape Architecture. I also have a design office called ON design. We work in a multidisciplinary office, mostly on urban design and landscape design, so our office is staffed by architects, landscape architects, city and regional planners, interior designers and graphic designers. So we work in such a multidisciplinary way. I have been running an urban design studio for about 20 years and I can say that I try to blend practice and theory at the same time. My knowledge about the Yedikule gardens is as follows: In the first place, what we call Yedikule gardens is the area at the foot of the Theodosius walls in the historical peninsula, in fact, its original name is İsmail Ağa Gardens. Our design office was asked to make a urban park in that area by the Istanbul Municipality. When I went and observe Yedikule Gardens, after understanding the qualities and historical value of the area, we made a prediction that it would be pointless to build a regular park here, and that it could be used as an agricultural park. This is what I told the mayor of the time, Kadir Topbaş, in a meeting. At first this concept was foreign to them because they wanted pools and green areas to be designed for this area. However, as the design team, we pointed out that recreational areas already exist everywhere, whereas agriculture is an element that is not always encountered in the urban fabric, and that the significance of an agricultural tradition dating back to Byzantium has been maintained in this area. We argued that this historical value should be preserved and Yedikule Gardens should be passed on to future generations. We also argued that it could be used as a very good practice to keep the ideology of urban agriculture, which has recently been on the agenda in the world, alive and sustained in this area. Although the municipality officials were a bit skeptical at first, they were eventually convinced, and in this way, when we redesigned the Yedikule Gardens, we made this area a part of urban recreation by addressing it in an interactive way with multiple actors, that is, with a different management plan system in which, for example, the gardeners (bostancı) there are also involved, and we readdressed it with a mixed-use method in which urban agriculture production also continues. But from that time until now, to be honest, no work has been done in the area regarding this design proposal. So it is actually a very clear project that can be implemented at any time, and also this project can create a domino effect along the entire land walls. Because there is currently active agriculture outside the land walls, it would be good to implement this project to protect this area.

MT: You mentioned a management system that includes the gardeners. Can you explain a bit more how you propose this in your project?

ON: The scenario of the project was actually based on the gardeners. Most of the gardeners are from Kastamonu and with their families, they have been doing this for several generations. We need to protect this tradition on this area. Otherwise, insecure spaces will emerge and we will lose the bostan culture, which is a cultural value that has been going on since Byzantium. So we have designed an area where all the production plots will continue to be planted and harvested by the gardeners, where the gardeners will still be able to collect the products, but from a certain distance the people of the city can also watch them and be a part of this process, where harvest festivals can be organized from time to time and the products can be sold in the ecological marketplace. Thanks to this ecological marketplace design, not only the gardeners but also those outside the land walls would be able to come and sell their products in a more systematic way. We also proposed 3 professional greenhouses close to the area, where seedlings would be grown and the grown ones would be served directly to the producers, because right now, gardeners are trying to produce in greenhouses with primitive conditions. However, if we made the first seedling, the transformation of seeds into seedlings more professional, the income of this area would increase, a better quality product would be produced and this area would become more sustainable. Of course, the main management of the area would still be in the municipality, but the municipality would leave the whole production system to the gardeners. The municipality would mainly be in charge of coordination and such a multi-layered and multi-stakeholder management system would be produced. But this project could not be transferred to the gardeners in the right way. So I think this is one of the most important handicaps. A participatory model could not be created, so maybe the project process can be criticized in that context. If there had been a participatory model, I have no doubt that the gardeners would have embraced this system.

MT: During the project process, representatives of the gardeners, members or representatives of the initiatives established to protect this area were not consulted?

ON: Unfortunately, I think this was also one of the biggest handicap of the project, they (municipality) didn't want us to meet with them either. They were afraid that this situation would become a polemic because at that time there were initiatives, non-governmental organizations related to the Yedikule gardens and they were trying to protect the gardens on the one hand, but on the other hand, I think they damaged the system there, in my personal opinion. Because they had an overly aggressive attitude, it was as if their concern was to beat the winegrower, not to protect gardener, in my opinion. This kind of trouble also damaged the proposed system. If they hadn't been so aggressive, maybe with the proposed management design, the gardeners could have had a say in this area by being included in the system. Because like Yedikule Gardens, the gardeners have always been excluded and left insecure for many years. Today, the area still remains without any holistic plan.

MT: According to your project proposal, the gardeners would continue to cultivate, manage and produce in the gardens. Would there also be an interface involving the public sector?

ON: We had proposed something like that only in 1-2 parcels. The focus of this was on children, not adults. We especially aimed for children of primary school age to be involved in a continuous production here in a certain way. We even designed a classroom in the area. In other words, we proposed an area where lessons on agriculture could be given. From time to time, schools could bring students to visit the area and organize workshops, because the basis of this is actually the child. If you learn something at a young age, it will continue. So our target here was not adults, to be honest. It was more aimed at children. In these interfaces, children would have fun on the one hand, for example, there would be agriculture-themed playgrounds, nature-themed playgrounds. So that the child would encourage the family to visit the Yedikule Gardens on weekends and get involved with the area frequently. In the meantime, of course, we tried to build a system in which the gardeners (bostancı) would not be disturbed too much. We thought that this continuity in children's encounters with the area would enable them to understand the value of this area over time and become even more advocates of this system as they grow up. Frankly speaking, we handled it in this framework.

MT: My second question is, what do Yedikule Gardens mean for the city of Istanbul as a whole in your opinion and within your field of interest? Can you evaluate it spatially and socially?

ON: The existence and protection of Yedikule Gardens is actually very important in terms of urban space security. I mean, this area is an unsafe area today. We know that it is a place where addicts are located and illegal businesses are carried out because we witnessed it during the field trip and analysis. When there is a continuous agricultural activity, agriculture and gardeners protect the area against various threats. They provide a spatial security. On the other hand, it is a very important place for urban memory. It is necessary to protect this space. Because even though the walls of Theodosius are included in the UNESCO World Heritage List as a fortification, in fact, it is the spaces in its immediate surroundings and the social life these spaces provide that give the fortification its identity. Therefore, it is possible to keep the people living in the immediate vicinity here by making it safe. Because gradually the city started to expand there. In other words, everyone is slowly leaving because of insecurity. However, we should not abandon it. In this context, I can say that it has a very important contribution to the city in the spatial sense. On the other hand, this suggests also a very important strategy in terms of protecting the agricultural areas that are stuck in the city, which we always discuss today. In other words, there is now a need for some landscape design approaches that use less water, use it correctly and protect nature. In my opinion, these agricultural parks are also very important, and we see many examples of this abroad. For example, agriculture is now practiced on rooftop gardens in New York. There are also examples of urban agriculture in London. People cultivate and produce in what we call community

gardens in their neighborhoods. Thus, they become a part of the production system and claim the space. In this respect, this area could have been, and still could be, an important model for urban agriculture. Especially in houses with gardens, where there are idle gardens, encouraging people to produce lightly is also very important in terms of food security. In that sense, it has a spatial meaning. Socially, in my opinion, these are complete rehabilitation areas. You know, you go there, spend the whole day there and come back. You see the production, you collect the product with your own hands, and you get involved in agriculture, that is, you touch the soil. You are close to the soil, which is one of the most important problems today. I think this area will be a rehabilitation center. Therefore, Yedikule Gardens has a rehabilitative effect on the visitors In any case, the vast majority of our society actually has a rural character, that is, the majority migrated to Istanbul. Since they have not yet passed the second and third generations, everyone has a longing for agriculture. So, no matter who you talk to in Istanbul, everyone dreams of returning to their village, but they can never or will never return. For this reason, I honestly think that this is a very important area in terms of softening the stress or the dense physical texture of urban life. But unfortunately, it cannot interact with the public in its current conditions because not many people go to this area.

MT: My third question is, can you define the groups, actors, stakeholders and users who play a role in the garden with your own experience?

ON: Today, the actors who have a say in the garden are really the gardeners. I mean, they still have a dominant character there and this is very important, but on the other hand, even though there are still debates about whether it is healthy to consume the products in this area because of the proximity of the area to the road, people still nostalgically stop by the side of the road while driving. They somehow buy vegetables from there and leave. This is a bit of a habit. This actually shows us that the people of the city are still an important actor there. Currently, the municipality is trying to take steps as a stakeholder. Right next to the Yedikule garden, Fatih Municipality has created an agricultural park. I think it works very well, even if it is not very suitable to the context of the historical gardens in terms of design, I think it works very well in terms of method. Because it is used very intensively. So obviously there is such a longing. Within this framework, Fatih Municipality has started to become a stakeholder and an actor in the whole of the land walls. There are also other district municipalities such as Zeytinburnu and Eyüp, that have a say on this area. Because it is within the borders of Fatih Municipality, and if IBB gets involved in this as the main manager, I think the area will be approached with a really professional organization. The only thing missing here right now, in my opinion, are children. If we can make them a stakeholder, then I think this place will be saved.

MT: My fourth question is what do you think Yedikule Gardens mean for publicness, commonality, common life and production?

ON: What you call a public space is a place that serves the whole city, where people of all ages and cultures can come together and find something of their own. But in our public sphere, everything is expected from the state. That is, the state creates the

public space and maintains it. However, in our general culture, the phenomenon of really owning the public space or owning the city is quite weak. Because we expect everything from the state. So we don't do anything ourselves. Now, the management and operation forms proposed in the agricultural park project may constitute a very important triangulation point for the public to take ownership of public space or to understand the value and worth of public space. For this reason, I see the agricultural park project as an important step in creating a culture of communal use of space. I am talking about the case of using this place as an agricultural park. Otherwise, if this place is preserved in its current state, in its original state, it is difficult to talk about much commonality because there is already an owner. You cannot enter some gardens without permission. I mean, you don't know what you will encounter the moment you enter. You can only have a say in the space if you are going to spend money because you are going to buy something, but for commonality, everyone should use the space in a respectful way. It is a situation that spatializes that space even more. Because no matter what happens, the land walls will become one of the most important sightseeing routes in the near future, which is why they are being restored. Since it forms the border with the historical peninsula, it is of great importance that the system here is already designed correctly. So now, if this place is organized as a normal park, we cannot talk about any commons. I mean, someone does something, you come and use it, you do what they say. Whereas here you are now adding something from yourself or making suggestions or being part of the whole voting system. For this reason, I think that the proposal of agricultural parks to Yedikule gardens as a system will make a very important contribution, especially in terms of commonality. In other words, it is also vital for the society to claim their city. I think it will also be important in terms of a culture of common life, a culture of common production, everyone respecting each other. With a holistic and comprehensive management plan produced through the consensus of the multiple actors and users of this site, this area can make a significant contribution to Istanbul in terms of collective and local production. Although we cannot talk much about commoning in the current situation, Yedikule has a serious potential in terms of commoning and common life. This potential needs to be realized. Otherwise, this place is rapidly moving towards becoming a depressed area. I find the presence of gardeners (bostancı) in Yedikule today important. If they were to disappear tomorrow, this area would become idle. It could turn into a system that is unused, idle, desolate, unknown to whom it belongs, and that people stay away from, further shrinking the peripheries of the city. For this reason, it is very critical to be able to include the gardeners and the gardens in the city.

MT: My last question is which of the following concepts best describes the Gardens for you? I mean, can you evaluate these concepts as 5 best defines them and 1 least defines them?

ON: I would give 5 for the threshold space. It is an important threshold because this place is a break between two similar textures, the historical peninsula on one side and residential areas such as Zeytintinburnu, Kazlıçeşme on the other, you suddenly encounter a completely different world. So it's not like a transition, it's a threshold,

you have to cross that threshold. The ditches in Surdibi, etc. there, it has its own morphological structure, morphology itself, already accompanies it, I see it as a threshold in that framework. So it is actually a threshold that needs to be crossed. Because the character of the city completely changes here. The quality of in-between space is a bit weak because there is a problem between the east and the west. In other words, the west is an area defined by public spaces and cemeteries, while the east is more urban, so the character of an intermediate space can be 3.

Is it a border? Yes, it is a border, I give it 5 because if we consider this together with the walls, I can say that it is a border. Because you can't get here without going through the gate. So there are gates here. I mean Mevlanakapı, Belgradkapı, Altınkapı, so you have to go to that gate and pass through it, and the boulevard built in the 1950s also underlined the border feature. Therefore, I would give the border a 5.

Is it public space? I give it a 2.

Is it a common space? I would give it 2. If you ask me about its potential of becoming the commons, I would give it a 5 because I think the physical and social qualities and the diversity of actors necessary for the realization of commoning practices are present here.

Is it an activity-event space? I would give it 3 because it is still visited by local and foreign tourists, especially during daylight hours. I mean, there are some activities around it, and frankly, visiting the cemetery is also an activity.

Is it an undefined space? This is not an undefined area. Then we need to give it a 2, that is to say, a low score to indicate that it is defined. First of all, the 10th Year Boulevard is an important definition. What will be more defined than that? Even the parking lot behind it is actually a defined area. It is used as a parking lot. So I would give 2 points for that.

MT: Apart from these definitions, how would you define this place, for example?

ON: I think threshold is an important term here. Apart from that, it is fluid, especially on the north-south axis. In other words, the system of the Land Walls is actually built in a completely fluid way, there is always a focal point or a transition element along the land walls. I mean, if you go further, there is Yedikule itself, then you go to Topkapı, then you go to Kariye Mosque, then you go to Tekfur Palace, then you go to Anemas Dungeons, then you go to Mihrimah Sultan Mosque. So it is also a heterogeneous space. So it is never homogeneous. It is a very heterogeneous place in terms of both social and spatial characteristics. It is also mysterious. And it preserves its mysteriousness wonderfully. Of course, I think we can easily use concepts such as history and memory to define a space here, these are the ones that come to my mind. As a result, I would define this area as the gateway of the Historic Peninsula, which is why it is a threshold. In other words, this is actually a place of confrontation with the historical peninsula. So it is such a surprise place. When you are outside you can never imagine what life is like inside, and when you are inside

you can't imagine what is happening outside. Yedikule gardens have a critical feature in terms of being an urban production mechanism. I mean, I would directly call this area urban agriculture land, that, urban agriculture, is the exact definition. In the past, there were also gardens around it like Çukur Gardens, etc., and then they killed them, so this is one of the most critical points of urban agriculture for Istanbul. It excites me that it has maintained this function for hundreds and thousands of years. I mean, what happened to them to keep them like this? They couldn't disappear, they didn't disappear. When I talk about urban agriculture, I give Yedikule Gardens as an example everywhere, and when it comes to what we call urban agriculture, it is Yedikule Gardens. There are very few agricultural areas with such a strong history that are stuck in the city.

In-depth Interview with Sedanur Gezer

MT: Could you briefly tell us about yourself? What is your interaction, interest or work related to Yedikule Urban Gardens?

SG: I am Sedanur Gezer; I work at the Istanbul Branch of the Chamber of City Planners. I did my master's degree in Urban Planning, I do not have a direct study on Yedikule Gardens, but of course I can say that I have knowledge in terms of professional knowledge. Because I have also worked on urban road trees in my own research or study areas and it was more on climate, climate impact and terrestrial carbon storage. That's why I was also interested in gardens. I think that they have a historical urban memory, and when we look at them in terms of green space and agricultural practices, I think that they are among the areas that need to be integrated with the city. In this context, I think that gardens are important both in terms of planning green spaces in terms of my work and in terms of the reflections of the relationship between the city and the countryside in the urban area. Therefore, it is also very valuable for me to contribute to this study.

MT: What do Yedikule Urban Gardens mean for the city of Istanbul as a whole and for your field of work or interest? Can you evaluate it spatially and socially?

SG: When we look at the memory and history of Istanbul, I think that the gardens are not only a green space, but also a cultural urban element and a heritage that is embedded in the memory of agriculture. Therefore, in terms of the city, it is not only a park or an area where urban agricultural practices are carried out, I can emphasize the concept of ecosystem service here, I think that it should actually be considered as a part of the whole city, and in the space, in fact, apart from the ecological improvements specific to the space, that is, it is generally more in this context now, but it is really important that you emphasize the social aspects here. From a social point of view, I think it is a potential area that will keep its memory alive based on its traditional uses, and as we said, it is also a potential area for the commons in terms of space production.

MT: Can you identify the users, actors and stakeholders who play a role, have a say, use and generally have an impact on the gardens?

SG: When we look at the current situation, interaction with and within gardens is generally limited to the people in the neighborhood, the residents of the neighborhood. This gives the perception that the area is isolated and abandoned from the rest of the city. I think it should be a little more selective about

the city as a whole, and I don't have any information about user profiles in different time periods. I'm actually curious about this, I haven't observed that much. After all, there is also a user profile as bostancılar. At that time, what kind of a social environment did it create around it based on the practices of use in urban life and what were the lives of this environment in relation to this area? As I said, I think that it has established a relationship with its immediate surroundings for recreational purposes, a user profile has been formed in this context. Apart from that, as actors and so on, of course, the local administration or the parks and gardens department of the Metropolitan Municipality and the district municipality are more involved in organizing and taking care of it, they play a role in the spatial arrangement of this place. But I think that there are elements that need to be realized here, that need to be looked at within the scope of landscape heritage.

MT: What do you think Yedikule Urban Garden means for publicness, commonality, common life and production?

SG: I guess the first thing that comes to my mind is; what can we do for the present and the future? It has the potential to be a place where collective consciousness can be revived, especially in terms of publicness I think this can be done with a social memory and conservation awareness that spreads first to its immediate surroundings and then, gradually, to the city as a whole. When this is achieved, I foresee that the space can be defined more communally, it will be strengthened and come to the fore, and the relationship of the area with the city can be ensured through this commonality. I also evaluate this place in terms of climate. If the importance of this area is interpreted with a consciousness that approaches both its history and these future possibilities, I think that this area can be transformed into a more productive production space with the collective contribution of the local administration, non-governmental organizations, gardeners, those who produce projects in the area and the public. Maybe we cannot ensure the participation of all of these elements in this area right now, but if we ensure that it is a common space by establishing these relationship networks with an arrangement in terms of community, design criteria and space use, we can move towards the creation of a model area that can even produce solutions to other common problems of the city in the future.

MT: My last question then, which of the following concepts (threshold space, intermediate space, public space, communal space) best describes gardens for you? Please rate from 1 to 5, with the degree of definition increasing.

SG: If we evaluate it according to the current state of the space, then I would say 4 for the undefined area. In terms of undefined space, I look at the space in terms of

memory, for example, or in terms of current use. This is a very large area. Not all of them are parks, not all of them are currently protected and visited, they are undefined because they do not serve the city as a whole.

My association of this area with the concept of threshold is stronger than that of in-between space. That's why I will call the concept of in-between space 3. Because in my mind, threshold being a space is 5 and being a border is 2. In terms of threshold, that is, both morphologically and socially, this area is a threshold. While borders imply that we should not cross this space, that we should stay within this defined framework, in thresholds we emphasize space, and although it is possible to read the threshold as a border, in fact the threshold is permeable.

Is it a public space? For the time being, its publicness is 2. I cannot define its current use as a very clear public space. But the potential may be high.

As a common space, we can say 2 for now because of food production and the fact that the culture of gardening still exists. But if I were to rate the commoning potential of this area, I would say 5. In terms of urban space, I think it should be taken into consideration and developed in a way that feeds each other. If I move on to the next one, the activity and event space is also a tool of this, that is, being an activity and event space will feed the publicness and the commons, considering its potential, I said 4, but if we look at it from the current perspective, it is probably 2.

I don't see that there are communities of people who come together in this area for a specific purpose, so it doesn't have the characteristics of a common space today. As I said, since there are people who come for recreational purposes, they don't have a purpose such as feeling the spirit of the place, thinking about the memory of the place or coming with the instinct to protect it. Since there is no such situation of coming together for a common purpose, today this area is not a common space, but it has qualities that can catalyze commonality, such as, urban agriculture can be an example of this.

MT: So apart from these, how would you describe this space?

SG: I would say it is a permeable threshold space. Although the Land Walls have caused the physical permeability to be questioned, I think that the activities, encounter and relationship networks in this area, the coming together of people from different cultures, education, income groups make the area permeable, transform it into a permeable space. Considering its current state, I can say that it is abandoned. As I said, since I think of this area in terms of climate, I hope that it will become a resilient and protected area.

In-depth Interview with N. Simla Uygaç

MT: Could you tell us a little bit about yourself first? What is your interaction, interest or work related to Yedikule gardens?

SU: My name is N. Simla Uygaç, I am a graduate urban planner. I did my master's degree on Urban Conservation at Yıldız Technical University. I am currently doing my PhD at the same university. I am also working at the Chamber of City Planners (ŞPO). My interaction with Yedikule gardens is due to being a place that I have seen and passed by a lot as a place because my grandmother and grandfather lived there in my childhood. Afterwards, I said that I was an urban conservation specialist as a profession, that was my master's degree. As a studio course, I worked on the land walls, between Yedikule and Topkapı, so my knowledge of the region is a little bit from that time. I don't have any work that I have focused on it in particular, but it is an area that I used to pass by a lot and I worked on it for a short semester and a short assignment. That's why I know it. The fact that I have been interacting with this area since the past allows me to witness the transformation of the area in a vivid way. I mean, the oldest version I remember was quite neglected. Then it was very popular for a while. Then it was empty again for a while. For a while there were small makeshift shacks, they were demolished by the municipality and there were incidents related to this. So I experienced this place mostly as someone who lives in the area and interacts with it in a natural way.

MT: What do Yedikule Urban Gardens mean for the city of Istanbul as a whole and for your field of work or interest? Can you evaluate it spatially and socially?

SU: If I evaluate it through my experience, I feel that Yedikule Urban Gardens are very compressed and I think that it is a very large area that is not noticed. I am aware of it, but I am also aware that there are many people who are not aware of it. In other words, Yedikule Urban Gardens is a multi-layered, heterogeneous area that continues along the Land Wall, in fact, when we read the history of that place, it is a fertile soil with the water saturation of its ground due to the fact that it is a ditch and its identity that has evolved into an garden over time, and sometimes there are protests and public events to protect the gardens against construction and change of function. When we look at it spatially, there is a land wall on one side, which is on the UNESCO historical heritage border. On the other side, even though it is not an E-5 highway, there is a crowded 10th Year Street like the E-5, that is, there is a heavy traffic flow. Despite the air pollution in the area, there is also resistance, an effort to keep it as an garden. The main quality there is that it produces its own food. When you look at it, it is actually an urban agricultural area. In other words, as a social integrity, when you look at it, when everyone within the city wall and its immediate surroundings can claim rights there, a certain group comes and owns it, and then they first produce their own food, then they become a little more widespread, and even if they want to be disrupted from time to time with the aim of making their growth more regulated and organized, those gardens remain as gardens again with a social consciousness and unity, in short, they have such a spatial and social processes.

MT: Can you identify the users, actors and stakeholders who play a role, have a say, use and generally have an impact on the gardens?

SU: I mean, local activists, the activists of that region are actors, the gardeners who produce there are actors, and the people living in the neighborhood are also actors.

Because they go there and shop there regularly. I think that area also has a grocery function. When we look at the stakeholders, it is probably Fatih Municipality and IBB, but I think UNESCO is also a stakeholder here because it is important not to think of the gardens separately from the Land Walls, but to consider these elements as a whole. Academics can be another actor, although they play a role in this field, unfortunately they are not mentioned much.

MT: What do you think Yedikule Urban Gardens means for publicness, commonality, common life and production?

SU: I think it should definitely be a public space, a space whose publicness is not debated. Maybe the people who produce on that land can claim the product, but the openness of the garden to everyone makes me think that everyone can claim rights on the spot, contribute to production, that is, it should be an area where common production can be done. I think it is a common space because this space is not the property of one person or dominated by one person, but there are problems that prevent the concept of common life. As I said, since it is an area that I have always been near and observed since my childhood, for example, makeshift huts can be built there to put picks, shovels and scythes. But then they can turn into a private space and I think it becomes a state of belonging to someone, I put up this shanty and this is my land, this is my field. No, this is not your field. You are producing here, but this is everyone's garden. So as long as there is no illegal construction on it, I think there is no question mark about the publicness of that place. For production, as I said, it also serves as a grocery store. It is a living garden where I can stop on my way home and buy 2 lettuces and continue on my way. I don't think it is owned, I don't think it should be owned. As a result, It is an agricultural production site right next to a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Land Walls, and this production is of course common in terms of passing the intangible cultural heritage from past to future. It has been observed that it started to lose its public identity after the 1970s. The loss of the public character of these areas has negatively affected their commonality, access and sustainability. In order for production to continue, these areas need to be actively used, and they need to be included in the lives of the users of the region. The disappearance of urban gardens may cause urban life to become introverted, reduce the common spaces of urbanites and disrupt the structure of urban identity.

MT: My last question then, which of the following concepts (threshold space, intermediate space, public space, communal space) best describes gardens for you? Please rate from 1 to 5, with the degree of definition increasing.

SU: As an activity-event space, I would give it a 1, because it is not an activity space, it is an actively used space, but I think that is not what I understand by activity and event. Production is also an activity, but I don't include it in that scope.

I give the threshold a 4.

The in-between space, I'll give you 3

I give it a border of 4. I think it's a clear limit, especially with the land walls behind it. Public space is 5 points, commons is 5 points, so it is very clearly public and commons.

I think it's a defined area, I mean, maybe it's different in terms of legends, I'm not saying it's defined in terms of legends, but I mean, where is the garden, where is the road, where are the land walls are very clearly defined, in fact, the borders and the gardens among themselves are also defined,

There are certain intervals, Mevlanakapı, Silivrikapı, they divide it and those intervals are also defined. That's why I can call the concept of undefined area 2.

Regarding the concept of threshold, when analyzed morphologically, gardens are urban agricultural areas located in front of the city walls, which have historically been characterized as threshold lines. There is a Land Walls and a very dense housing development behind it, and on the other hand, there is an area extending towards Zeytinburnu with roads, cemeteries and other usesThat is why, it is a very clear threshold because the texture changes there, the timeline you are in changes, it changes right down to the construction conditions. For example, just as the moat you have to cross if you want to enter the city is a threshold, the texture above the moat, the gardens, is also a threshold. The Land Walls and the gardens are now inside the city with the westward development of the city, but it is still a threshold that changes over time by preserving its own identity as a different texture from the surrounding textures, so for me, that's why I give it 4.

MT: So apart from these, I mean apart from the definitions I have given, how would you define this space?

SU: The first definition that comes to mind is a very oppressed space. I mean it is almost struggling for existence. I would define it as an oppressed space. I also think it is a fluid and heterogeneous space in terms of functions and users.

But it has a border. I mean, the fact that there are walls behind it, you know, it continues in such a continuation. Because it doesn't give the feeling that there is an garden on the other side of the city wall, it is not such a transitional space, that is, it is not a transparent place for me, it is like a stage, it is a place with a wall behind it and an open space in front of it, it is an garden area, in an exhibition, it actually exhibits urban agriculture when you look at it, that's how I would define it.

In-depth Interview with Suna Kafadar

MT: Could you briefly tell us about yourself? What is your interactions, interests or studies related to Yedikule Urban Gardens?

SK: I am a feminist publisher. I am one of the editors of a publication called 5 Harfliler. I am also one of the volunteers among the people who have been working to protect Yedikule Gardens since 2013. I went to Yedikule Gardens for the first time

in 2009. My friend Aleksandar Shopov, the Historian of Early Modern Garden Agricultural Technologies, took me to Yedikule and I have been going back and forth since 2009. Until, in 2013, during the Gezi events, at the beginning of July, we received a call from Uncle Recep, Recep Eraslan, who was an gardener, and he said that bulldozers had entered the garden. Aleksandar Shopov was coincidentally in Istanbul at the time, we went to the gardens, and when we saw that rubble was being dumped on the gardens, we decided to establish the Initiative for the Protection of Yedikule Gardens. That started, so we have done various work over the years, both independently and as part of the initiative. Different people from diverse fields have carried out multiple studies on the Yedikule urban gardens, especially the importance of Istanbul gardens for Istanbul. There are archaeologists, architects, urban planners, artists, historians, anthropologists, and so on that are people from different fields. I myself wrote a master's thesis in the History Department of Boğaziçi University on Yedikule lettuce and the city's environmental imaginations at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. I have done and am doing more cultural history research, and with this research, in recent years I have been focusing on the history of violence against non-Muslims, especially in the Yedikule gardens and the Yedikule neighborhood, and I am reading the gardens through this history of violence. The Wealth Tax, pogroms, but even before that, I have been researching how the city lost its garden culture within the Turkification policies of the gardens and the city, which led to the Armenian genocide. In my article "A Lettuce Hometown from Tanpınar to Tovmasyan" published in 5 Letters, I talk about the social change of this area through non- Muslims.

MT: What do Yedikule Urban Gardens mean for the city of Istanbul as a whole and for your field of work or interest? Can you evaluate it spatially and socially?

SK: Yedikule gardens touch on many different issues in many different areas. Today, with the increasing food crisis and climate crisis, for example, people are thinking and working a lot on food sovereignty. Even now, recently, for example, there is a food urban agriculture meeting organized by İPA. IBB prepared a food policy document, they are trying to build community gardens to support urban agriculture, etc. In other words, there has been such an influx of urban agriculture all over the world for a while, for 10 years. For 10 years now, there have been initiatives taken officially by municipalities, especially by metropolitan municipalities, not the government or the state. This is an interesting phenomenon because there is a part of it that tries to go beyond the nation state. In other words, the agricultural policies of nations have poisoned the lands and waters so much that municipalities are trying to overcome this somehow. Therefore, the issue has a very serious food sovereignty and food crisis dimension, of course, not everyone looks at urban gardens in terms of food sovereignty. In other words, the issue of urban gardens is mostly read and discussed through the concept of food security, but I also think that the concept of food sovereignty is much deeper and more meaningful than food security, because food sovereignty contains the cores of an approach that emphasizes environmental injustice more seriously, involves different stakeholders there and is not only anthropocentric, but food security is not the same. Food security is human-centered

and deals with how people eat or what they eat, whereas food sovereignty is another issue. Therefore, the issue of gardens has recently been discussed especially through this, and this is a very important thing, of course, if we consider the social inequalities in the city, especially in times of food crisis and economic crisis, when people go hungry at work, for example, one of the most talked about issues in the last few years is that children faint from hunger in schools, they cannot follow the lessons. In fact, one of the things we have been saying about gardens for years is that gardens should work with schools. If schools have gardens that they can cultivate in Yedikule gardens, or if Yedikule gardens provide food to schools in the surrounding neighborhoods or through municipalities, then the sustainability and continuity of the gardens can be ensured, and the gardeners will not be under the constant threat of being evicted., and of course they are very affected by the market and since they are not considered farmers, they are constantly on the periphery of the system. In other words, they are neither registered in a farmer registration system nor included in the economic data of the city. For example, in a study conducted by the Yerküre Cooperative for Greenpeace, city markets, bazaars, etc. were studied, but gardens were not included at all. However, there is an incredible production in the gardens, we are talking about nearly a hundred gardeners. Tons of crops come out every season every year. Anyway, as a result, we are talking about an area that has been removed from the economic data of the city. Therefore, the first of its spatial significance is the lack of a place for gardens in the modern urban fiction, the coding of gardens as a peasantry and peasantry as an inferior category, an inferior existence, the absence of agriculture in the development and growth imaginations of the city, in this sense, gardens are very interesting data in terms of revealing the violence in the history of architecture and urban planning, and the urban planners and architects working with us look at it from this side. Why always stone, why always buildings, why always bridges, why always roads? There is a guy called Devin Bahçeci. For example, in his thesis, he studies the ecological contribution of gardens to the city in numbers. I mean, others need to do this kind of work too so that we can have a numerical information about gardens, as it is important to know the ecological contribution of gardens to the city. There is also classical information about the contribution of gardens to the city, for example, that the temperature of the city is 5 degrees lower in the shade of trees in the summer months, because concrete heats the city, whereas the temperature of the city decreases in garden areas, and in this sense, it may be beneficial for the climate crisis, such more general information is spoken, but we do not know the answer to the question of what is the ecological contribution of gardens in a multi-layered way, considering every element. Recently, when thinking about disasters, there have been studies on how urban gardens can be useful in times of disaster and after disasters. There have been various studies on how mentally, physically and therapeutic urban gardens can be for immigrants, the elderly, children and other marginalized groups, and this has been happening more and more in the last 2-3 years. So there are many examples and research from Australia to Canada. There is the “Spatial Justice and Urban Agriculture” issue of Beyond.Istanbul, organized by the Association for Justice in Space, which I edit. In that issue, there are many articles on different meanings of urban agriculture. You

can also find some of the things I mentioned there, for example, the issue of disasters, the cultural history side, the issue of food security, the issue of food sovereignty, the publication of food documents by different cities, and various municipal studies in the field of urban gardens. So it is in that issue. In short, my area of interest is quite wide in terms of Yedikule gardens because it touches so many issues and in that issue, let me say that I tried to bring these areas of interest together, but one thing that is very important to me is of course not to lock the issue of urban gardens to food security. I think that urban gardens are not only about food, they represent very important symbols, ideas and solidarities for the history of culture, but also, of course, in a place like Turkey and in a place like Istanbul, they provide a space for us to reveal and talk about different forms of violence. In this respect, I find it very important to talk about urban gardens from the perspective of cultural history. From this point of view, I find it very important to talk about urban gardens from within the history of culture, because it is somewhat easier to talk about food security and food sovereignty. It is much more difficult to talk about the killing of Armenians or the expulsion of Greeks from the city and the destruction of the urban garden culture, vineyards, viticulture and the killing of the nature of the city for different reasons. For example, in my article "A Lettuce Hometown from Tanpınar to Tovmasyan" I write about non-Muslims and their presence in the gardens. In 1942, with the wealth tax, an Armenian family had an garden coffeehouse, they call it a bostan gazinosu, taken away from them, and the place where this story is told is not actually a book about the history of gardens. This is a cookbook written by Takuhi Tovmasyan, she actually writes her own family history through food and there is a very nice section on Yedikule and Yedikule lettuce. I highly recommend it. It is a delicious book. Apart from that, in the events of 1955, September 6-7, for example, we mostly know these events through the images of Beyoğlu, like the shops that were turned inside out and the horrible state of Beyoğlu, but in fact, these pogroms took place all over the city, from Yeniköy to Yedikule, and gardens and vineyards were always destroyed, so as part of the pogroms, the lands cultivated by Greeks and Armenians were also destroyed and attacked, but this is not talked about as part of history, for example or the Greek community, especially despite the events of 1955, very few people left Istanbul until 1964. But in1964, they told them to take their suitcases and leave, giving them the right to 20 kilos of luggage, and after this date an incredibly fast wave of migration started, especially to Athens. That's actually why I'm in Athens, I'm learning Greek and I'm trying to meet with people here who have left Istanbul. In short, I've just started to study this issue, as I said, I've been slowly getting into this issue for 1-2 years and my goal is to try to reveal a clearer story of these processes these disappearances.

MT: Can you identify the users, actors and stakeholders who play a role, have a say, use and generally have an impact on the gardens?

SK: I mean the gardeners from Kastamonu Cide. There is an article by Aleksandar Shopov and Ayhan Han, according to that foundations are also the stakeholders, the issue of foundations is of course very important because there are areas owned by both Muslim and non-Muslim foundations in this area, and there are areas owned by

individuals, but especially with this wealth tax and the events of 1955, the lands in Yedikule and its immediate surroundings changed hands very seriously, as I said, it is difficult to find detailed information about this process because the archives related to the wealth tax are already closed. If they are opened one day, there will probably be many things to study there. But when we say that the lands here changed hands, the municipality and the national real estate seized these lands, and this is the reason why the gardeners are currently in the position of occupiers. In fact, the municipality and the national real estate appropriated the lands that had been taken from the Greeks and Armenians, and they didn't really know what to do with these lands at the time, and, the 1950s was a period when internal migration started, the first settlement in Istanbul with internal migration was in Zeytinburnu, and this place is mentioned as the first slum of Istanbul, and what we call Zeytinburnu is already just outside Yedikule, that is, the city walls. Families and individuals from Kastamonu, Cide, most of whom were already relatives of each other, came. There is family farming there now. One or two people from Mardin have also come in recent years. There are farmers from Mardin who do floriculture there. At the same time, Afghan immigrants work in the gardens. Yedikule gardens have always been a place of immigrants, especially immigrants from the Balkans. But for example, the history of the Albanians and Macedonians who worked here, their relationship with the gardens and the city is not known at all, it has never been studied, there are so many gaps in this area of knowledge. Today, Afghan immigrants work in many gardens. So right now there are mostly gardener families from Kastamonu Cide, a few Mardinite farmers and Afghan migrants working under them. Apart from the gardeners, city residents are also users. There are people from the immediate neighborhood, especially from Fatih and Zeytinburnu, who regularly come and do their shopping there; in fact, there are many people I have seen over and over again for years who do their weekly shopping there, but it is not just a matter of shopping, of course, this area is also a place of solidarity and gathering. Places that have their own unique time regime and another form of governance and this is not only determined by the gardeners. It is determined by the animals and plants there. Because their growing times, who gets along well with whom, which plant can be planted next to which plant, what a bee likes and what a beetle damage, all these make the garden places with their own autonomous management and therefore they are actually places that the municipality and the state do not like at all, because they are places they can never fully control. That is why they are very happy to keep the gardeners in the position of occupiers. Because they can remove them whenever they want, they want to be able to turn these areas into areas under their control whenever they want. For example, the place called Yedikule Bahçe was an garden, there was an extraordinarily beautiful garden in the place of this garden. The gardener there, Uncle Mehmet, who was in his 80s, had a small waterfall, he was a beekeeper, it was really one of the most beautiful gardens in the world that had survived. Uncle Mehmet is an 80-something year old man who has been gardening with his son for years, and the Fatih Municipality bought it and turned it into "Yedikule Bahçe". We met his son the other day when we went to Yedikule Bahçe. It's a very interesting thing, for example, they took the idea we came up with, they built areas for schools

to come and teach children how to cultivate and harvest the soil. It's very cute, in fact, they named the parcels and crops according to the schools, for example the X school's tomatoes, but it's such a sterile place with no relationship with each other, for example, we talk to the gardener, he tells us that we grew corn here. In fact, we need to leave a few of them to seed so that we can get seeds from there and plant them next year, but when they are left to seed, they look very pale and bad, they had them uprooted for a few days so that they wouldn't look pale and bad, and they couldn't get seeds. Why? Because They don't understand the context, they are mentally very far away from the area's unique qualities. However, for example, there are heirloom seeds, the seeds of Yedikule, and heirloom seeds can still be grown there. For one thing, there cannot be an idea as illogical as destroying an garden and replacing it with a garden, and there cannot be an action as out of context as putting them in such wooden boxes. That place is already an ecosystem in itself. That soil has been cultivated for centuries, can you imagine, you cover it, you lay gravel on it for the sake of sterility and appearance, and you put such tiny wooden boxes in between. In other words, it's a complete show-off and hobby gardening, and as a hobby, they take the gardener there to water and take care of the crops, but there is no self-governing life there anymore. In short, there is only an image there. Yedikule Bahçe is an incredible story, a very good example to understand the current approaches to the area or to understand the mind of the municipality, the mind of the state, and of course, by doing this, it is a practice that destroys the questions I mentioned earlier about who was here when we were not here, who was cultivating these lands, When we look at historical maps, it is clearly written there, for example, Ismail paşa bostan, Bayrampaşa bostan, Manoli's bostan, Tommo's bostan, Yanni's bostan. These are written, of course they are all men's names, by the way, of course there are not many women's names yet, women also have gardens, we come across in old sources, but there are always men's names on the maps. But these new projects prevent us from asking questions like what happened to Yanni, what happened to Tommo, what happened to Manoli. I read the renovation of the Land Walls from this perspective. While we question the history of a city, the construction of a city, why cities have to develop and grow in this way, through the gardens that exist there, in a sense, we invite us to ask the questions of who owns these gardens, who were here, what happened, and these renovation projects actually turn into a re-appropriation. This time, for example, there is a move to completely erase the memory of people whose land has already been taken away from them from the city, whether consciously or unconsciously.

Today, regarding the ongoing restoration work on the Land Walls, there is a claim that some of the gardens will be removed and replaced with a grassy area on the grounds that because the gardens are irrigated, water goes to the foundations of the Land Walls and damages the foundations of the walls. But then, for example, they would ask you, excuse me, how will you keep the grass green? They would ask what exactly is the logic of laying grass there, and we asked because there is no such grass in Istanbul's vegetation. They did the same weird thing in Diyarbakır. They completely demolished the city walls in Diyarbakır. Of course such grass dries up, especially in that weather, it is very difficult to keep the grass standing, it is an

incredible waste of water, they will probably propose grass carpets instead of real grass in the current plan against our objections regarding this waste, but proposing this should be considered a crime against the authenticity of this historical context.

MT: What do you think Yedikule Urban Garden means for publicness, commonality, common life and production?

SK: When we say common life, for example, we are not talking about a symbiosis in which you only include people, we are talking about something in which we include the plants, animals, winds, rains, water resources of the city and we are talking about a whole of beings that they have their own time, their own way of life, and that they have learned to coexist together without us. The history of gardens is also a human history, of course, because there are many agricultural technologies, terracing, architectural and human touch is also a very important element for gardens. But these are not only places that are shaped by human touch, they are places that allow us to open up to other lives, other temporalities beyond human control, places that call us to open up to others. In that sense, I attach great importance to this space. I attach great importance to it because it encourages different forms of autonomous governance, because it harbors within itself. What I see especially when I research the cultural history of gardens is that gardens always bring together people from different places. I mean, we say Muslim, we say non-Muslim. You know, this can also happen within communal boundaries, for example, the gardens are very important for the Armenian feast, but it doesn't necessarily have to be like that. In the gardens, people from all over the city, from all identities can come together to eat lettuce, hang out, drink, men and women can be together. The gardens were actually a place where Istanbul's promenade culture continued after it disappeared in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The most common thing criticized about this place is that it was closed by the invaders and no one could enter, but this is a production area, so why do you have to enter a man's women's garden? I mean, the people who shop there already come there, each gardener usually has a small shed, a wooden bench, something like a picnic table, and everyone sits around it. So by the way, whenever I go there, people who shop there come, as I said, they do their shopping, but the conversation there lasts at least 2 hours. I met and encountered so many different people there, it's very strange. We had very good political discussions, for example, there is actually a very different and multiple relationship there, from Saadet Party supporters to AKP supporters, from MHP supporters to CHP supporters. The gardens have the power to bring people together and I think it is very important to see that. I think it is illogical to think that not being able to walk everywhere is a problem with this area. After all, there are a lot of spaces in the city that are designated as public but have certain usage patterns and certain rules, and we all follow those rules somehow. I mean, if you enter the gardens and crush the man's mint or damage his labor, of course the man won't let you in there. There is a production activity going on here and you need to understand what is happening there, you need to respect it because both the gardener and the garden expect respect from you, and if you don't show that respect, of course the gardener won't let you in, why should he? Publicness does not always mean accessibility to the all parts of the

space. Accessibility always has certain rules depending on the nature of the space, and if we abide by these rules in other places in the city, we will abide by them here as well. The real motivations of these criticisms on gardens are actually different. For example, an example came to my mind. You know there is a team called Women in Mosques, a movement started by Muslim feminists, for the last 10 years' state have uprooted the trees in mosque courtyards, they have removed the grassy areas there, and this was actually a move against women, children and socializing activities there. This is a general approach, that is to say, destroying the spaces where people gather, come together, where spontaneous and surprising encounters can take place, and where these can happen and flow in daily life. This is also the approach to gardens. The power of gardens to bring people together is very high. Its power to create a community is very, very high. But of course, today, for example, rich people don't go to gardens. But yes, for example, if you look back to the 1920s, 30s, 40s, there are actually newspaper reports that a lot of rich people from Beyoğlu, Yeniköy, from here and there would get up and go to Yedikule just to eat lettuce and mulberries. So we see that it is indeed a place where people from different classes and ethnic groups come together. In other words, the gardens have such a potential, this was the case in the past, but it is not the case today. Of course, today, people from mid-lower income groups like Zeytinburnu and Fatih come here, and of course there is also a problem in Yedikule, that is, the people from the neighborhood around the gardens has abandoned the gardens a little bit. That's another story, Yedikule was actually a very communist neighborhood in the seventies, 1960-70s. In fact, the principal of Yedikule primary school is known as a communist, that's how he is nicknamed, and of course, with the 80's coup, some of the social changes that took place all over Turkey manifested themselves here as well. The face of the neighborhood is changing, and the consciousness that attaches importance to social networks, that attaches importance to the gardener, that attaches importance to labor and workers' rights is gradually being eroded. There was also such a story here. I mean, as I said, it is a multi-layered field, there are so many stories and factors. That's why I love it so much, it's so fertile in every sense, that's why I've been studying on it for years, I mean, it hasn't ended, on the contrary, it keeps opening up and opening up and opening up. In short, keeping the gardens for the future can remind us of the potential, the possibility of producing an alternative city, a space. A city can be experienced beyond urban binaries, it can be an alternative way of living, it can be a common space where different classes and different identities can come together. It can become a place where we think of the city not only as a human-centered place, but also by including other elements and actors of this city, and in that sense it touches on animal rights, it touches on the climate crisis. But at the same time, of course, it is a space where we break the chains of all the big companies, where we can establish a direct relationship with the producers in the food issue, in the things we eat and drink. So, for example, one of the other things they criticized about the gardens is that they claim that there are who knows how many heavy metals in the products because it is on the side of the road. However, we do water analysis and soil analysis in this area, there are no heavy metals. But let's say you go to the market, do you know where the product you buy from the market comes from and how it is

produced? The market vendor doesn't know most of the time anyway. Whereas in Yedikule, you can go and ask the gardeners, you can go and talk to them, for example, if the municipality supported the gardeners, even ecological agriculture could be practiced there. We even talked about soil restoration. These are the things we always talk about with the gardeners. Even soil repair was discussed with the gardeners. Before Uncle Recep passed away, we were trying to make natural fertilizer in his garden with Alex in 2009 - 2010 when we first went there. Most of the gardeners are very open-minded. So restorative soil practices can also be done here. So many things can be done here, so it's a matter of perspective and approach, how the municipality looks at this place. But the municipality prefers to lay artificial grass, to propose out-of-context projects because 2-3 tourists will come and walk there. It will destroy all the production there, it will destroy and discredit the gardeners, and as a result, it will turn the area into a place where the children of the gardeners' families do not want to continue the agricultural working.

MT: My last question then, which of the following concepts (threshold space, intermediate space, public space, communal space) best describes gardens for you? Please rate from 1 to 5, with the degree of definition increasing.

SK: Let me skip this question, okay? I don't know what most of these concepts mean anyway, and for example, when you say public space, I don't know how you define public space. I mean, I don't like this kind of survey questions, so I'll pass this question.

MT: Okay, well then, this was my last question, I don't have any other questions. Thank you very much.

In-depth Interview with Yiğit Ozar

MT: Could you briefly tell us about yourself? What is your interaction, interest or work related to Yedikule gardens?

YO: Yiğit Ozar, archaeologist, member of the Initiative to Protect the Historic Yedikule Gardens since 2013. My interaction with Yedikule Gardens started when Fatih Municipality wanted to destroy the gardens between Yedikule and Belgradkapı for a recreation area project. At first, since I am an archaeologist, I went to the area thinking that there was an archaeological destruction at that time, which there already was, and that it was not appropriate to carry out such a project in the protected area within the city walls. But later, the relationship of the gardens in the area with the city walls, the fact that the agricultural practices in the area have a historical background and constitute a cultural landscape, together with the city walls, the gardens, the neighborhood, the surrounding historical cemeteries and other examples of civil architecture and the settlement texture, gave me the impression that the issue has a multi-layeredness that requires a more comprehensive approach.

MT: What do Yedikule Urban Gardens mean for the city of Istanbul as a whole and for your field of work or interest? Can you evaluate it spatially and socially?

YO: We can look at it from several different angles. Of course, from a cultural heritage perspective, we are talking about the garden areas, which used to be larger in the past, but still exist in an important region today. Therefore, when we open the map of Istanbul and look at it, the line formed by the land walls has an important feature as an area that borders the historical core, which we call the historical peninsula today, and also named as walled city before, and actually provides a green infrastructure for it. Apart from this, discussions on urban agriculture are very common in the world today. In food policies, urban agriculture has become an important issue in discussions such as cities having more unmediated access to food. When we look at Yedikule Gardens, while many metropolises in the world are trying to practice this and find space for it, we have a privileged value in terms of having an area that has been going on uninterruptedly for almost 1500 years. We can say that this is the value it brings to today's agricultural and food policies.

MT: Can you identify the users, actors and stakeholders who play a role, have a say, use and generally have an impact on the gardens?

YO: An article about this was prepared by the initiative to protect Yedikule Gardens. I am one of the contributors to the article. A relationship network is also specified there. It is possible to see the stakeholder groups in more detail there. Roughly speaking, of course, the gardeners come first, but there are also cultural heritage experts, architects, art historians, archaeologists, historical researchers, officials from different scales of local government, officials from public institutions, such as archaeological museums, conservation boards, etc. who are interested in the area and its different values. When we look at areas that are very valuable and multi-layered, the more layers and the more values we can identify, the more authority and responsibility we have, and the more related areas we have, the more values and layered areas start to appear on the map. Therefore, we can say that it is a very multi-actor, multi-idea, multi-layered field.

MT: What do you think Yedikule Urban Garden means for publicness, commonality, common life and production?

YO: When we look at it in terms of publicness, if we define it as a more rigid/strict concept through legislation; as some administrators think, which I don't, for example, that the gardeners there as squatters and criticize the fact that such an activity is still being used by these small interest groups in such a valuable area, which is a public property and a world heritage site, and they interpret this situation as a damage to the publicness of the property. There is a difference of approach here in terms of what publicness is, what the commons is already a broader concept, or what cultural heritage is. After all, what is produced there can of course be the livelihood of the family there, family or not. It can be a source of livelihood for the business owner there, but today, the businesses in the inn district in Eminönü are also a source of livelihood, and they can earn much higher profits. But at the same time, it is not strange for them to exist as a function to be preserved in an area that we call a traditional commercial center within this historical texture. Of course, there are capital and management groups who want to turn the hotel into a hotel and gentrify

it, they are separate, but in general, it is not strange. I think the situation of those have similarities. If we consider the activity they carry out there as intangible heritage, rather than how much they earn or don't earn, the practice of urban agriculture here is an activity that needs to be preserved and sustained in situ. But we also need to recognize that if the garden is a value, the land walls there are also a monumental value. Of course, it is important to protect both together. And if there have been many problems arising from the fact that the area has been almost completely left to the gardeners for all these years, or not left to the gardeners, but at least left free from an integrated master plan or management plan, if there are damages caused by the gardeners to the area, these should of course be taken under control because the other values of this area, such as being one of the important elements of medieval and late antique war architecture, its monument value, its documentary value, and the right of other residents of Istanbul to experience this space, need to be balanced.

However, another way to ensure publicness is to organize this discussion on how to publicize this place by keeping the gardener or the gardening there as a performance, if this agricultural practice is cultural heritage and an income can be generated from it in such a conspicuous way and in a way that will carry out a public discussion, then we need to organize this discussion on how we can publicize this place by keeping the gardener or gardening there as a performance. Then we can really come up with a management and policy. I don't know if the products produced by the gardeners can contribute to the sustenance of the whole of Istanbul, but to what extent can they, and how far can they be sufficient? Will we direct them to the neighborhoods of the historical peninsula? Will we direct them to nearby markets? Are we really going to municipalize this production a bit more and find formulas that will allow people to access cheaper food? We need to look at this from within this conflictual relationship and answer these questions. In other words, I think making polarizing choices would upset the complex but unique value potential of this area.

MT: So how do you make a reading of this area right now through this common life, commoning, commonality?

YO: This is where commonality emerges. In other words, finding the commonality of values and stakeholders will actually create a common space here.

MT: My last question then, which of the following concepts (threshold space, intermediate space, public space, communal space) best describes gardens for you? Please rate from 1 to 5, with the degree of definition increasing.

YO: I can give 5 to the common space and the public space. The boundary is of course a temporal thing, that is, the continuous structure of the Land Walls from the past to the present has been disrupted and fragmented in some parts due to the definition of new transportation lines, the construction of industrial facilities in the immediate vicinity, the establishment of settlements in the nearby voids and some interventions of the municipalities, but it may still be valid for some parts because it is a long line. When we focus on Yedikule. We can call the border a 3, and the

threshold and in-between space a 4. I call the activity area 1 and the undefined area 1. As for the commons, it is a place that has the potential to awaken the commons. On the one hand, the fact that the gardener is there can be thought as the existence of the commons, but some of them pay ecri misil, some pay other things, and so on. Some from foundations, some from the municipality. In the Ottoman period, for example, when you look at the ditches, that is, the gardens inside the city walls and the gardens on the city walls, some of our friends say outside the city walls, but there are differences in the status of the gardens according to their positionality with respect to Land Walls. The gardens inside the city wall, between the neighborhood and the city wall, have already been organized as gardens since the Ottoman period. Now, the gardens inside the city walls, I mean, you can find it in more detail in the publications of Aleksandar Shopov and Ayhan Han, but if I remember correctly, even in the 16th-17th century, it was drawn like this on the map in Ottoman documents, the garden of İsmail Paşa, there are the garden, the historical pool, the well. We can still see these. The garden's house is historical, we can see it. So there are outbuildings, gardens with borders organized in this way. Their situation is different. There are also the gardens that have settled between the walls of the Land Walls, now the walls are a triple wall system, and in this triple wall system, there are gardens that have settled between the walls over time, and gardens that have settled in the moat, and after the moat, if there is any space left, there are gardens that have settled between the moat and 10th year street. Their dates are different from each other. During the years when the city walls maintained their function, it was probably not possible for those areas to become gardens, although I am not sure. Because if the city wall was being used as a military facility, there was already another function there, but after a period of time, we see that the dykes within the ditches were rented to be used as gardens. Therefore, when we look at their property status at that time, there is a land use that originates from such places. The older gardens on the inner side are already the property of the foundation of an important people in the Ottoman Empire, or the property of the Belgradekapı Church's own foundation, or their foundations were written in a way that protects them for being gardens. If you want to get to the historical roots of this debate, you should proceed from there. But the concept of commoning is also a flexible concept. For an area to be commons, we do not necessarily need to be able to set foot on every piece of land. Sharing in the value produced from that piece of land can be a way of commoning too. The common value we are talking about here could be food, for example, or it could be the knowledge that produces this food and cultivates the land. Yes, but as I said, there is a management problem here. It is necessary to come up with a management system that defines a future that will balance the needs and expectations of both the gardener and the public space, the public and the local government. And this is not just a matter of scaffolding and restoring the city walls. It may be possible to come up with a master plan, a management plan, a framework that looks at the entire city walls in an integrated way, because the gardens are not the only form of use that makes access to the city walls difficult and makes the "publicness" of the city walls a matter of debate. At the foot of the city walls, there are construction sites of different municipalities. I haven't been there recently, but there used to be a huge parking lot

where the garbage trucks of Fatih Municipality used to park, for example, at the bottom of the city walls, which is a much bigger problem in terms of the reputation, accessibility and spatial perception of the city walls. There are many inaccessible, fenced areas like this. The response to this should not be to sterilize the monument and its surroundings with an old school approach. So the Millet Bahçesi project is also problematic in this respect. When you look at the national gardens, is it public? You can call it public, it will be opened to public use when it is finished, but is the only thing we are trying to publicize there that we can look at a piece of land in square meters and step into it, or is the meaning and value of that land interpreted at a level acceptable in today's conditions and revealed through a different urban design? I think we need to discuss the issue from these points.

MT: And finally, what would be your definition, in a nutshell? How would you define these gardens in your experience?

YO: We usually talk about this area in terms of it being a multi-layered cultural landscape area, but now, when we look at it in terms of common space and other concepts, of course it deserves a broader definition. But in terms of the way I deal with the subject, I have always approached it by focusing on the fact that it is a multi-layered cultural landscape area.

Conducted In-depth Interviews in Turkish

Abdullah İnanç Kıran Görüşmesi

MT: Kendinizden kısaca bahseder misiniz? Yedikule bostanlarıyla ilgili etkileşiminiz ilginiz ya da çalışmalarınız nelerdir?

AIK: Ben Abdullah İnanç Kıran, 2013'ten bu yana Yedikule Bostanları denilen alanda Yedikule Kapı ile Belgradkapı arasındaki suriçi bostanlarının ne yazık ki molozlar altında olması sebebiyle yeniden bostan haline getirilmesi, kalan bostanların da surlarla beraber yaşatılması, bir arada korunması için çaba sarf eden ve böyle bir mücadelenin, dayanışmanı, beraberliğin, etkileşimin bir parçasıyım. 2013'ten beri Yedikule Bostanları ve çevresindeki diğer bostanların korunması için elinden gelen gayreti göstermeye, sarf etmeye çalışıyorum diyeyim. Sosyoloji ve Coğrafya lisansım var ve Şehir Bölge Planlama yüksek lisansım var. Dolayısıyla da yüksek lisansımda Yedikule Bostanları üzerine bir tez yazdım. Onun dışında zaten bostanlarla ilgili çeşitli atölyelerde, çalışmalarda da yer almaya çalışıyorum.

MT: Yedikule Kent Bostanları İstanbul kent bütünü için sizce ve çalışma ya da ilgi alanınız için de ne ifade ediyor? Mekansal olarak ve toplumsal olarak değerlendirebilir misiniz?

AIK: İstanbul'da çok eski tarihlerden beri sadece Yedikule Bostanları değil bir sürü bostan varmış ama ne yazık ki çok azı günümüze kadar varlığını sürdürebilmiş. Yedikule ve çevresindeki bostanlarda İstanbul'un tarihi bostanları arasında günümüze ulaşabilmiş nadir bostan alanlarından bir tanesi, aynı zamanda İstanbul'un kaybolan kültür mirasının bir parçası. Bununla beraber de bir sürü toplumsal ve mekansal ilişkinin iç içe geçtiği, katmanlaştığı alanlar. Yani sadece bu bostanlar günümüzde ağırlıklı olarak Kastamonu Cideliler tarafından işletilse de geçmişte, Osmanlı zamanında bu bostanların bazılarını Arnavutlar işletmiş ve çalışmış, Ermeniler, Rum bostancıların çalıştığından bahseden kaynaklar mevcut ve dolayısıyla bir taraftan da İstanbul'da ve Türkiye'de demografik kırılmaların da okunabileceği bir alandır. Sadece İstanbul'un kültür mirası olarak değil, aynı zamanda İstanbul'un geçmişinde var olan fakat politik süreçlerle şehirden dışlanan, sürülen, gönderilen Gayrimüslim topluluklarının toplumsal süreçlerinin okunabileceği bir alan aslında.

MT: Bostanlarda rol alan, sözü geçen, kullanan ve genel olarak bostanlar üzerinde etkisi olan kullanıcı, aktörler ve paydaşları tanımlayabilir misiniz?

AIK: Bostancı tabi ki, bostanda en başta en temel aktör bostancıdır, bostancı olmadan bostan da olmaz. Eğer bostan olacaksa illaki o bostancı da olacak ki o bostan yaşatılsın, sadece bir miras fiziksel yeriyle değil, aynı zamanda o yeri mekan yapan aktörüyle tanımlıdır. Kullanıcıları da diğer paydaşları daha çok o bağlamda var olabilir yani. En başta bostancıdır, bostancılar var. Onun dışında tabii ki bostancıların bazıları bostanlarda yetiştirdiklerini pazara, bazıları sebze-meyve

haline, bazıları da yerel esnaflara veriyor. Kullanıcı olarak az bir miktarda da olsa belki mahalle denilen işte Fatih ve Zeytinburnu'ndan belki birkaç insan, bostanı bilen yoldan geçen bazı insanlar belki olabilir. Paydaş dersek, mesela mülkiyetten dolayı Büyükşehir Belediyesi, Fatih, Eyüp, Zeytinburnu belediyeleri, maliye hazinesi, vakıflar, bunlar da sonuçta bir paydaş alanın korunması ve geleceğe aktarılması için mülkiyet sahibi kurumların da elbette bir paydaş olarak görülmesi ve onların ve bostancıların ortak olarak sürece dahil edildiği bir katılımla koruma planlaması yapılması gerekir. Bostanların geleceğe aktarılması konusunda mülkiyet sahibi yetkililerin de sorumlulukları vardır. Bunları da yerine getirmeleri gerekiyor. Buna riayet edecek şekilde buradaki bostancılığın devam etmesi konusunda çaba sarf etmeleri gerekiyor.

MT: Yedikule Kent Bostanı kamusallık, müştereklik, ortak yaşam ve üretim için sizce ne anlama geliyor?

AIK: Yedikule Bostanları günümüzde bir kamusal alan mıdır, ne kadar kamuyla iç içedir, ne kadar bir kamusal değerdir konusu tartışılır bir mesele haline gelmiştir. Çünkü geçmişte bostanlar şehir içerisinde daha görünürlerdi işte insanlar mesela marul yemeye gidiyorlarmış, bostanlarda eğlenceler, şenlikler oluyormuş ama günümüzde bostan denilen unsur şehirden ve kentlilerden fiziksel olmasa da kavramsal ve toplumsal olarak uzaklaşmıştır yani İstanbul'da yaşayan insanlardan kaçı Yedikule ve yakın çevresindeki bostanları biliyorlardır? Ya da biliyorlarsa kaçı bu alanı ziyaret etmiştir ya da etme niyetindedir? Yani bugün İstanbul'dan geçen birine sorsanız bu bostanları birilerinin bahçesindeki atıl alanlar ya da hobi bahçeleri olarak algılayabilirler. Kimse tarihi surlar boyunca böyle bir kullanım olduğunu bilmiyordur ve İstanbul'un bostancılıkla olan asırlık ilişkisine dair bir bilgileri yoktur. Böyle bir tahayyülü dahi yoktur bu şehre dahil. O yüzden bu alanda kamuyla bütünleşecek şekilde bir kamusallığın oluşması için de dediğim gibi toplumsal hafızada daha görünür olması, insanların hayatıyla daha böyle iç içe olması gerekiyor. O yüzden belki günümüzde bostancılık biraz daha kamusal olarak algılamayabilir. Hani kamuyla çok ilişkilendirilmeyebilir. Ama geçmişte bence daha çok bir kamusal değeri vardı çünkü gerçekten insanlar bostanlara gidiyordu, bostandan yolu geçiyordu, bostanlardan geçen insanlar görüyorsunuz kartpostallarda falan fakat günümüzde bence bu hafıza kırıldı ne yazık ki o geçmişten günümüze süregelen bostanlara yönelik yıkımlar sebebiyle, dönüşüm projeleri sebebiyle bence bu kamusallık değeri de aşındı. Ama müşterek alan mıdır? Elbette, müşterekliği var, sonuçta adil ve sağlıklı gıdaya ulaşma, erişme bağlamında tüm şehri kapsamasa da bence bir müştereklik süreci ve değeri mevcut bu alanda. Bu noktada bostanların bu değerler etrafında bir hayat, bir ortak yaşam, ortak gelecek sağlama potansiyeli vardır. Aynı zamanda da çok değerli tarihi bir üretim alanıdır. Elbette bu alanlar tabii ki sadece kurumların korumasıyla, planlarda bu alanların bostan olarak korunacağı şeklindeki plan notlarıyla veya kararlarla korunamaz. Elbette bostancının orada varlığının güvence altına alınmasıyla ve alanın sadece bostancıların pazarla ya da esnafla olan ticari ilişkileriyle değil, aynı zamanda kentte var olan insanların da alanla bir bağ kurmasıyla bostanların korunması söz konusu olabilir ve bostancı

ayakta kalabilir. 2013'teki bostanların molozlar altında kalmasına karşı verilen mücadele beni çok şaşırtmıştır mesela. Bu kadar farklı sosyal gruplardan aktörlerden böyle yoğunluklu ve şiddetli bir protesto ve direniş ben beklemiyordum. Bu meselenin halktan bu kadar ilgi bulacağını, ilgi göreceğini ve hatta uluslararası yankı uyandıracağını düşünmemiştim. Çünkü sonuçta çok göz önünde olmayan Yedikule'de bir alan. Hani bir Taksim Meydanı kadar kamusal değil, aynı dönemde gezi protestoları da vardı ve bunların da Yedikule'deki protestolara yansıması olmuş olabilir ama yine de Yedikule'de bu kadar bir ilgi alaka oluşmasını beklemiyordum. Demek ki bostanlarda insanların kentte olmasını ve var olmayı sürdürmesini istedikleri birtakım nitelikler var veya birtakım itirazları var kentte olmayan ya da yetersiz olan bazı niteliklerden dolayı. Çünkü dünya genelinde de insanlar yeşil alanları arıyorlar. Bir taraftan acayip bir şekilde bir gıda krizi var. Aslında bu tür alanlar da bu bu ihtiyacı karşılıyor. Dolayısıyla belki hem Yedikule bostanları hem de Yedikule bostanları üzerine İstanbul'da bu tür başka bostanlarla beraber bir müşterekliğe elbette ulaşılabilir. Ortak bir değer üretebilir bu alanlar ve Yedikule bostanları da bu anlamda bir öncü olabilir. Şu an İBB tarafından Kara Surlarında gerçekleştirilmekte olan restorasyon, bu surlar için çok acil, yani surların korunması için gerekli önlemlerin acilen alınması gerekiyor ki bu tarihi unsur geleceğe de aktarılabilsin. Sonuçta bir kültürel miras, bir kültür varlığı elbette bu surların acilen korunması, güçlendirilmesi ve geleceğe aktarılması için gerekli çalışmalar, uygulamalar kaçınılmaz zaten kimsenin bu noktada itiraz yok. Ancak bu çalışmalar tamamlandıktan sonra burada bostanlar yer alacak mı, surlar ve bostanlıların bir arada olduğu alanlar korunacak mı soruları var ve şu anki IBB yönetiminin bakış açısı, daha önceki IBB yönetiminin bakış açısı da öyleydi, bostanların olmayacağı yönünde gibi anlaşılıyor kesin bir açıklama olmamakla birlikte. Ama dediğim gibi bu çalışmalar tamamlandıktan sonra o alanlar tekrar bostancılara verilecek mi, o alanlar tekrar bostan olarak değerlendirilecek mi? Bu sorular benim açımdan mevcut. Ancak şu an, yazılı bir bilgi olmamakla birlikte şunu öğrendim, perigolos denilen kısımdaki bostanlar Bu Mevlanakapı, Silivrikapı'daki ziyaretçi merkezleri gibi rulo çimlerin serildiği, insanların daha erişebildiği, yürüyebildiği, gezebildiği, birtakım burçlara da girip çıkabildiği, surları yakından görebilecekleri bir alana dönüştürme, böyle bir alan haline getirme yönünde çabalarının ve planlarının olduğunu söylediler. Ama dediğim gibi bunların bir projesi olacaktır sonuçta restorasyon denilen şey işte bu yönetimden sonra da elbette başka bir yönetimle devam ettirilecektir. Belki o yönetimin bakış açısı oradaki bostanları korumak yönünde olacak ama dediğim gibi Türkiye'de ne yazık ki bu konularda bir süreklilik yok. Belki bu yönetim korumayacak ama belki sonraki yönetim buradaki bostanların korunmasını daha doğru bir tercih olarak görecek. Önemli olan, bostancılar tabi ki bu süreç sonrasında hatırlanmalı ve bostanlarıyla beraber bu alanda var olmaya devam etmeliler diye düşünüyorum.

Kara sularının bulunduğu alanda elbette erişim problemleri var ama dediğim gibi bir taraftan da bostanlar surların bir parçası, onlarla beraber oradaki kültür mirasını oluşturan değerlerden bir tanesi. Yani bu değerler dışlanmadan, bu değerleri de içerecek, koruma sürecine dahil edecek şekilde kara surları bütünlüğüne böyle bir

koruma planlama ve tasarım geliştirilmeli. Oradaki bostancının varlığı erişim probleminin kaynağı olarak görülüyor. Sadece bostancının varlığı mı orada erişim probleminin sebebi yani bu alanda bostanların olmadığı yerlerde de surlara erişmekle, surlara girip çıkmayla alakalı sorunlar var. Bir de üstelik insanlar surların her noktasına ayak basmalı mı? Her noktasını görmek zorunda mı yani? Sonuçta orada yaşayan bir tarihi değeri insanlar aktarmanın, anlatmanın kendisi de bir değer olmaz? İlla turistler gelip 7. 2 kilometrelik sur hattını baştan başa yürüdüğünde mi bir deneyim, bir değer oluşacak? Yani hatta ben bu ziyaretçi merkezlerine kendim arada sırada gidiyorum ya çok da fazla böyle yoğun kalabalıklar göremedim açıkçası. Çünkü bence bostanlar insanlara daha cazip geliyor sonuçta şehir içerisinde bostan görmek bence birçok insana daha ilgi çekici gelmeli, daha çok merak uyandırmalı diye düşünüyorum. Çünkü tarım günümüzde ne yazık ki şehre özgü bir işlev olarak algılanmamakta. İnsanlar buradaki bostanların tarihini bu ziyaretçi merkezleriyle ya da düzenlenecek alanlarla beraber öğrenseler, algılasalar ve bu deneyimi yaşasalar ya da en azından bu deneyim onlara sunulsa bence o sur hattı turist açısından da yerli halk açısından da bence daha anlamlı hale gelir diye düşünüyorum. Tabii ki bu bütüncül bir tasarım ve planlamayla elbette bir şekilde sağlanabilir. Yani sadece bostanlar olsun demiyorum elbette fakat bostan dokusunu koruyarak, enaz müdahaleyle erişilebilirlik gibi problemler çözülebilir. Bunlar tartışılır. Yeter ki amaç korumak olsun. Yani 2013'teki projede de belediyenin park tasarımıyla bostanlar bir arada var olamaz mı sorusundan hareketle birtakım seçenekler birtakım eskizlerle belediyeye sunulmuştu. Madem böyle bir niyetiniz var, yeşil alan üretmek veya böyle bir alan geliştirmek istiyorsanız hem tarihi bostanların olduğu hem de bunun dışında da birtakım yeni ihtiyaçlara göre de kullanıcılara göre de alanlar üretebilmeniz, tasarlayabilmeniz mümkün denilerek bir öneri iletilmişti belediyeye o zaman, fakat dikkate alınmadı.

MT: Son sorumu soruyorum o zaman, aşağıdaki kavramlardan hangisi veya hangileri bostanları sizin için en iyi tanımlıyor (eşik mekan, ara mekan, kamusal mekan, müşterek mekan)? 1'den 5'e doğru tanımlama derecesi artacak şekilde puanlayınız.

AIK: Eşik mekan diyebiliriz bostanlara. Yani buna puan vermek gerekirse 4 diyebiliriz. Yani surlar bir nevi çeper, bir nevi duvar. Hani sonuçta surlar tarihinde hep aşılması gereken bir engel gibi algılanmış. Bostanlar surlarla beraber konumlandığı için bir taraftan da surlar genel algıda hala erişilemez olmasından, aşılması gereken bir engel olmasından dolayı da eşik mekan diyorum.

Bostanlar kır ve kenti de aslında bir araya getiren bir yönü var. Sonuçta tarım denilen şey kıra özgü bir şey, böyle bir dokunun bostanlar yoluyla varlığı, böyle bir katmanlılığın varlığı da kent içerisinde bir ara mekan olarak okunmasını sağlayabilir bu mekanın. Dolayısıyla ara mekan olmasına da beş veriyorum.

Kara Surları sınırdır ve bostanları surlardan ayrı değerlendirmek mümkün değil. Yani her bostan arasında kapılar yok, surlardan dolayı da bir bostandan bir bostana kolay değil. Bu durum bir sınır algısı oluşturabilir. Bostanlar herkese açık olsa da sınır denilince akla sadece fiziksel değil zihinsel meseleler, düşünce ve algı setleri

de gelmeli. İnsanların bostanlara ve bulunduğu alana karşı bir önyargısı var gibi geliyor bana. Hani onları bostana gitmekten alıkoyan bir genel kanı var. O da aslında surlarla alakalı. Surların ve bölgenin yakın geçmişte hep kriminalize, güvensiz, tekinsiz bir alan olmasından kaynaklı algılarla da alakalı. Yoksa bostanlar herkese açık, isteyen herkes bostancıya selam verip bostanlarda dolaşabilir, ama insanlar ve bostanlar arasında hala mesafeler var. O yüzden insanlarla bostanlar arasında hala aşılması gereken bir sınır var diyebiliriz. Bu yüzden sınır kavramı için puanım 4.

Kamusal mekan olmasıyla ilgili, bostanlar çok da kamusal alanlar değiller. Sonuçta şu an ticari olarak orada bir bostancılık var bu yüzden kamusal alan gibi işlemiyor çok da, yarı kamusal yarı özel mekan gibi diyebiliriz ama elbette bir kamusal değer üretebilir. Buna 3 diyebilirim bu yüzden. Müşterek mekan günümüzde pek sayılmayabilir fakat müşterek olma potansiyeli vardır yine buna da 3 diyebilirim. Ama dediğim gibi sonuçta burada gıdadan dolayı da insanların elbette adil, sağlıklı gıdaya erişmesi ve bunun üzerinden dediğim gibi bir yerel gıda ağları, gıda dayanışmaları üretilmesi bir müşterek pratiğidir. Bu nedenle güncel durumu için 3 diyorum ama tabii ki daha fazla bostanın bu ağa katılmasıyla daha fazla ortak alana dönüşmesi mümkün olabilir.

Aktivite-etkinlik mekanı olmasına 5 diyebilirim. Sadece bostancılık değil kurulan bostan okulu, düzenlenen atölyeler, şenlikler, film izletileri, herkesin katılımına açık dersler gibi çeşitli etkinlikler gerçekleştiriliyor bu alanda. Bostan okulu mesela 2013 ağustosta bir bostan okulu yapılmıştı. Tekrar 10 yıl sonra 2023 ağustosta bir bostan okulu yapıldı. Bu bostanlarda aktivite-etkinlik derken ben çok büyük kalabalıklar için değil ama küçük gruplar için etkinlikler düşünüyorum. Sonuçta burada mesela ilköğretimden, liseden öğrenciler gelip burada bir domatesin nasıl yetiştiğini görüyor. Burada bir bostancı tava (maşula) yaparken, tava açarken, tavayı sularken bir onu görüyor. Yani somut olmayan bir kültür mirası olan tarımsal gelenekleri gözlemleme şansı olabiliyor. O mirasın nasıl yaşadığına, nasıl yapıldığına birebir şahit oluyor, bu alanda deneyimliyor. Bu anlamda da bir aktivite etkinlik mekanı, aynı zamanda birçok okul da geliyor buraya okuldan öğrenciler getiriyor. Çileği görüyorlar, domatesi görüyorlar, naneyi görüyorlar, nane koparıyorlar. Ben çok büyük protestoların olabileceği, büyük gruptan gelebileceği bir alan olarak değil de ama insanların bir şeyler öğrenebileceği, konuşabileceği, sohbet edebileceği, paylaşımda bulunabileceği bir yönü var diye düşünüyorum ve sanırım bu noktada da bu eylemlerle bir ortak yaşam alanı, bir müşterekleşme üretilmiş oluyor. Bu etkileşim alanın tarihsel ve kültürel kimliğine uygun etkinlik ve aktivitelerle desteklenir ve üretilirse de alanın kentle daha bütün hale gelmesi mümkün olacaktır diye öngörüyorum.

Tanımsız alan derken şimdi benim zihnimde elbette daha tanımlı bir alan çalışmalarımdan dolayı ama sonuçta planlarda mesela bostanlar park olarak görünüyor. Dolayısıyla hani tanımsız bir yer şu an yani bostancı denilen şey de tanımsız çünkü bostancılar çiftçi değiller. Ürettikleri ürünler de mahsulden sayılmıyor, hesaplanmıyor, tanımsız yani. Hani sonuçta meyve-sebze haline giriyor

ama bostancıların hiçbiri üretici, çiftçi kayıt sistemine dahil olamadıkları için yani ürettikleri ile de tanımlı aktörler değiller. Bostancılar da tanımlı değiller, bostanlar da tanımlı değiller. Bu alana yapılan planların çoğunda park olarak görüldükleri için herhangi bir yeşil alandan farkı yokmuş gibi bir ima söz konusu, bostancılar da bir işgalci olarak görülüyorlar ecri misil ödedikleri için. Bostancıların yasal güvenceye kavuşmaları, tanınmaları, resmi kurumlar tarafından tanınmaları, şehir içerisinde bilinir olmaları, görünür olmaları gerekiyor. Bostanların da keza öyle, o yüzden tanımsız alana 5 diyebilirim. Yasalara ve planlara göre oradaki bostanın, bostancının ve bostancının yaptığı üretimin bir adının olmaması, bir istatistiğinin tutulmaması, bir kaydının sadece ecri misil almak üzerinden olması sebebiyle tanımsız alan olduğunu söylüyorum.

MT: Peki bunların haricinde, yani bu benim verdiğim tanımların haricinde bu mekanı siz nasıl tanımlarsınız?

AIK: Çok katmanlı kültürel miras alanı.

Gökçer Okumuş Görüşmesi

MT: Kendinizden kısaca bahseder misiniz? Yedikule Bostanlarıyla ilgili etkileşiminiz ilginiz ya da çalışmalarınız nelerdir?

GO: Kendinden şöyle kısaca bahsedeyim, 2005 yılında İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi Şehir ve Bölge Planlama bölümünden mezun oldum. 2007'de de mimarlıkta çift ana dalımı bitirdim. Sonra 2008 - 2011 arasında yine İTÜ Kentsel Tasarım programında yüksek lisansımı yaptım. 2011 - 2017 arasında da Şehir ve Bölge Planlama doktorası yaptım. Bu süre zarfında yine İTÜ Şehir Planlamada araştırma görevlisi olarak çalıştım. Sonra 2018 - 2020 arasında Ticaret Üniversitesi'nde mimarlık bölümünde öğretim üyeliği yaptım. 2019 - 2021 arasında gönüllü olarak IBB Park, Bahçe ve Yeşil Alanlar Daire Başkanlığı'nda danışman olarak görev yaptım. Bu süre zarfında Yaşam Vadisi projelerinde çalıştım. Yarışmalar düzenledik. Onların danışman jürisi oldum. Jüri oldum aynı zamanda. Sonra da 2021'den bugüne dek İstanbul Planlama Ajansında çalışıyorum. Kamusal Tasarım Ofisi koordinatörü olarak. Yedikule bostanları ile birebir etkileşimim olmadı ama IBB Park, Bahçe ve Yeşil Alanlar Daire Başkanlığı'nda danışmanlık yaparken orada gündem olmuştu tabi ki. Çünkü uzun yıllardır gündemde olan bir konu. Ama nedense böyle herkesi memnun edecek bir şekilde çözülemedi.

MT: Yedikule Kent Bostanları İstanbul kent bütünü için sizce ve çalışma ya da ilgi alanınız için de ne ifade ediyor? Mekansal olarak ve toplumsal olarak değerlendirebilir misiniz?

GO: Şu anda Yedikule Kent Bostanı'nın İstanbul kent bütünü içerisindeki payı oldukça düşük. Yani burayı bir kentsel tarım alanı olarak düşünürseniz günümüzde

yok gibi bir şey, yani İstanbul ölçeğini düşündüğünüz zaman, yani bir işte kent plancısı bakış açısı ya da işte kentin tüm tarım alanlarına bakarsanız çok farklı bir alan. Tüm yeşil alanlarına bakarsanız yine ufak bir alan ama şöyle bir özelliği var tabi bu alanın yani bu diğer dünya kentlerinde kent bostanlarının konumlanışıyla karşılaştırırsanız İstanbul, kara surlarının komşuluğunda oluşmuş bir yer, yani kent mirası açısından özel bir yerde hatta bir aks üzerinde oluşmuş aslında bir sınırın öte tarafındaki kentsel boşluktur. Eskiden de aslına bakarsanız bir su hattının geçtiği topografik olarak da bir eşik. Uzun zamanlarda oluşan suyun akışıyla alüvyon birikmesiyle aslında tarım yapılabilecek yegane arazilerden de biri olması. Böyle üst üste 2 tane nitelik bir araya gelmiş ve orada bir tarım işlevi oluşmuş. Aynı zamanda antik kentin ya da geleneksel İstanbul'un surlarının hemen dışında konumlanıyor çünkü surun içerisinde tarım yapabilme şansınız pek yok çünkü o alan yerleşim amacıyla kullanılıyor. Bu bütün surlu şehirlerde karşımıza çıkabileceği gibi Avrupa'da da derebeylikler zamanında kale şehirlerin dışarısındaydı tarım alanları ve sura en yakın noktalardaydı tabii ki. O yüzden öyle yerleşmiş bir geçmişi var benim algıma göre. Toplumsal olarak da dediğim gibi yani İstanbul geneli açısından mesela işte Küçükçekmece'de oturan biri için Yedikule Kent Bostanları dediğinizde hiçbir şey ifade etmeyebilir ya da işte Pendik'te, Sancaktepe'de yani Levent'te oturan biri için bile etmeyebilir. Bu sadece Zeytinburnu ve Fatih'te oturan insanlara Yedikule Bostanları derseniz bir şey ifade edebilir ama uzun zaman gündemde olan bir konu olduğu için tabii kendi gündemini de yarattı. Yani özellikle bizim meslek alanımızda mimarlık, işte peyzaj mimarlığı ve şehir planlama alanında araştırma yapan, inceleme yapan, gündemi takip eden insanlara sorarsanız evet Yedikule Bostanı uzun zamandır kentteki birtakım mücadele alanlarında biri haline gelmiş vaziyette. O yüzden bir açıdan romantik bir bakış açısıyla da korunmak istenen bir açıdan işte yeşil alan ihtiyacının karşılanabileceği potansiyel alan olarak bakılan, herkesin gözünün üzerinde olduğu herkesin bir şey yapmak istediği çözmek ya da dönüştürmek istediği bir alan olarak ilgi çekici bir nokta.

MT: Bostanlarda rol alan, sözü geçen, kullanan ve genel olarak bostanlar üzerinde etkisi olan kullanıcı, aktörler ve paydaşları tanımlayabilir misiniz?

GO: Yani burada bostancılar diye bir grup var. Bu bostanları aileden gelen bir gelenekle uzun yıllardır belki 100 yıllardır yani bir kaç nesildir bu bostanları işleten insanlar var. Mülkiyet konusunda mesela bu konuda net bir bilgim yok ama bildiğim kadarıyla mülkiyet onlar da değil diye biliyorum. Ecri misil ödüyorlar çünkü. Demek ki kamu arazisi. Başka aktörler neler kullanan aktörler oradan alışveriş yapan var mı bilmiyorum. Varsa çok düşük bir miktarda olabilir. Ecri misil ödeyen bostancılar oradan çıkan ürünü toptancılara satıyor olabilir. Kendi pazar alanları olabilir ama öyle bir şey bilmiyorum duymadım. Yani orada bir bostan var. Evet, bostanın dışında da bir oradan çıkan ürünler sadece oradan çıkan ürünlerin satıldığı bir satış birimi var mı? Öyle bir şey duymadım. Onun haricinde gerçekten kimsenin çok rahat erişebildiği bir bölgede olmadığı için başka da kullanıcısı yok gibi. Yani surun içindeki insanlar, surun arkasındaki bostan alanına erişemiyor, oraya basamıyor zaten oradan geçemiyor. Bostan Surla bir ana aksın arasında kalmış. Bölgede o ana

akstan aracıyla geçen insanlar var. Yolun batısında da. mezarlık alanları ve büyük donatı alanları var, Büyük donatı alanları da çok yoğun kullanılan alanlar değil, eskiden Abdi İpekçi Spor Salonu vardı. Şu anda tekrar inşa ediliyor. Yani muhtemelen haftada 1-2 haftada bir kullanılan bir yerdi, yoğun olarak kullanılan. Dolayısıyla böyle gerçekten aktör sayısının az olduğu bir şey. Şimdi ortada bir arsadan araziden bahsediyoruz. Bir mülkiyet dokusu da var. Evet mülkiyet kamudaysa bu sefer kamunun bileşenleri de bu işin aktörün bu ne olabilir Maliye Bakanlığı olabilir, IBB'ye ait bir arazi ise İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi olabilir. İlçe belediyesi bir de üzerinde ecri misil ödeyen bostancılar, oradan çıkan ürününü tüketen insanlar var. Onun haricinde o alanı potansiyel bir yeşil alan olarak gören ya da işte spor alanına dönüştürseniz spor alanı olarak gören çok yakın çevredeki mesela Fatih ve Zeytinburnu, yani bütün kente hitap eden bir yeşil alandan bahsetmiyoruz, çok yakın çevredeki potansiyel rekreatif amaçlı kullanıcılar olabilir, yani böyle tanımlayabiliriz.

MT: Yedikule Kent Bostanı kamusallık, müştereklik, ortak yaşam ve üretim için sizce ne anlama geliyor?

GO: Kamusal açıdan baktığımızda bir kere arazinin mülkiyeti kamuya ait olduğu için kesinlikle kamuda kalması gereken bir alan dolayısıyla evet, aynı zamanda müşterek bir alan olabilir ama işte müşterek olarak üretilen bir alan mı? Pek de değil. Yani geçmişten, az önce söylediğim gibi surun dışındaki bir yeşil alan, insanların kullandığı bir alan değil. Gerçekten artık bir alan yani yol ile sur arasında kalan aslında eskiden surların dışında içi suyla dolu hendekler vardı bunun tamamen korunma amaçlı bir işlevi varken şimdi üzerinde öyle bir şey yok. Bu hendeklerin üzerinde şimdi tarım alanları var ve uzunca bir süredir de bu şekilde kullanılıyor dolayısıyla üretim için çok bir anlam ifade etmiyor gerçekten yani miktarı çok değil ama kentsel alanlarda kentsel tarımın gündeme geldiği böyle bir dönemde evet korunması gerekli bir üretim faaliyeti, üretim mirası denilebilir buna. Ama bu üretimin nasıl yapıldığını, kim tarafından yapıldığını, kim için yapıldığını biraz şekillendirmek gerekiyor. Burada halkı biraz daha bu işin içerisine katabilmek gerekiyor. Biraz evet müşterek olabilmesi gerekiyor. Yani oradaki araziyi, oradaki verimli diyebileceğimiz tarım alanını sadece oradaki bostancıların kullanması biraz sorunlu gibi sanki onlara hediye edilmiş araziler gibi duruyor şu anda orada bir taraftan. Bir taraftan şöyle bir müşterek mekana dönüşebilir mesela bu alan, bostancıların da uygulamaya dahil edildiği ve söz sahibi olduğu, belediyenin, yerel yönetimin de sorumluluk aldığı bir kentsel tarım eğitim ve uygulama, araştırma alanı gibi bir şeye dönüşebilir. Okul çocuklarının gelip orada tarımın nasıl yapılabileceğini öğrenebildiği, bitkileri tanıyabildiği, eğitim alanına dönüşebilir. Yani üzerini tamamen tarım dokusunu kaldıralım, oraya çim ekelim ve yeşile dönsün, surlarda güzel bir arka plan olsun diye de bir bakış açısı mutlaka vardır fakat kesinlikle kabul edilemez ama kesinlikle de oranın sahibi bostancılar, bostancılar ne yapmak istediğine kendileri karar versin de fikri de uygun bir yaklaşım değildir. İşte burada müştereklik devreye giriyor sanırım fakat onu destekleyen bir takım oraya erişilebilirliği arttıran bisiklet yoludur, yaya yoludur, bir takım güzergâhlardır, bu tip

şeyler de aslına bakarsan gerçekleşmeye başladı mesela Yedikule Gazhanesi dönüşüyor, bir çekim merkezi haline geliyor. Abdi İpekçi Spor Salonu Yedikule Bostanlarının yakın çevresinde devasa bir spor merkezi olarak yeniden doğuyor. Büyükşehir Belediyesinin surları tekrardan erişilebilir bir kültür varlığı haline getirmeye çalışıyor, kapılara ziyaretçi merkezi açılıyor mesela. Birtakım böyle check pointlerin olduğu ve o check pointler arasında giderken bu tarım alanından da geçebildiğimiz ya da mesela hafta sonu oraya çocuklarımla nasıl giderim derdini yaşamadan, çocukları okuldan servise bindirerek ya da yürüterek gidilebilecek bir konfor yaratılırsa o alan evet müşterek alan haline getirebilirsiniz. Ama bugünkü haliyle olmaz. Dokunulması gereken bir alan tamamen böyle biz çıkalım bostancılar ne yaparsa yapsın diyemeyeceğimiz de bir alan yani öyle diyeyim ama kesinlikle oradaki tarım kültürünü oradan söküp atıp üzerine park ya da spor alanını da dönüştürülmeyecek bir alan diyebilirim.

Günümüzde kimsenin farkında olmadığı, unutulduğu için birilerinin sahiplendiği, sahiplenildiği için hak iddia ettiği belki de bir kamusal alan, yani bunun gidip de kentin merkezinde bir kamu arazisinde gecekondu yapmaktan bir farkı yok. Bütün kamusal alanların halk ile beraber halk katılımıyla birlikte tasarlanması gerektiğine inanıyorum bir taraftan da yani bu hiçbir zaman bir belediyenin tek başına karar vermesi ya da oradaki mülkiyet sahibinin tek başına karar vermesi gerekli bir şey değil. Müzakere edilmesi gereken birtakım şeyler var. O şekilde tekrardan değerlendirilip kent hayatına katılması gereken bir alan. Çünkü birbirini destekleyici etrafta bir sürü şey oluyor. O arada kalacak gerçekten o arada o şekilde kalmaması için mutlaka bu alanın da konu edinildiği bir katılım ortamı sağlanmalı.

MT: Son sorumu soruyorum o zaman, aşağıdaki kavramlardan hangisi veya hangileri bostanları sizin için en iyi tanımlıyor (eşik mekan, ara mekan, kamusal mekan, müşterek mekan)? 1'den 5'e doğru tanımlama derecesi artacak şekilde puanlayınız.

GO: Peki bunlar birbiriyle yarışan şeyler olacak mı yani?

MT: Aslında yarışan şeyler değiller ama bazılarının arasında belli nüanslar var. Bende onları anlamaya çalışıyorum.

GO: Tamam. Mesela en sonuncusundan başlayalım, tanımsız alan mıdır? Yani. Tanımsıza yakın bir alan. Evet 4.

Aktivite etkinlik mekanı mıdır? Kesinlikle hayır, 2. Kesinlikle demiyim hadi biraz yine uçlarda gezinmemek adına. Fakat aktivite-etkinlik mekanı değildir bence.

Müşterek mekan mı? Müşterek mekan olabilir ama şu anda olmadığı için 1 veriyorum buna. Kamusal mekan mı? Şöyle. Kamusal mekan ama kamusal alan değil yine burada 2 diyebilirim. Kamusal mekan olması gereken bir alan. Yani şu anda kamusal alan değil.

Sınır mı kesinlikle sınır ama bu kendinden kaynaklı bir sınır da değil. O yüzden 3 verebilirim buna. Yani arkasında sur olduğu için sınır. Kara Surları ve yol da sınır.

Ara mekan mı? ara mekan pek değil. Yol ile sur arasındaki bir ara mekan, yani bu ikisi de insan faaliyetlerinin üzerinde sürdürüldüğü bir alan değil. Biri araç yolu, diğeri de sur insan yok meydanda yani.

Eşik mekandır, Buna da 4 diyelim. Ara mekan değildir ama eşiktir yani.

Sınırdır ama sınır olmasını destekleyici diğer öğelerden dolayı bu kimliği kazanmıştır. Kamusal alandır ama kamusal mekan değildir.

Müşterek mekan şu anda değil olduğu için bir ya da 2 veriyorum ana olması gerektiğini düşünüyorum.

Aktivite etkinlik mekanı kesinlikle değil, şu anda değil. Ama bu aktivite etkinliği işte az önce tarif ettiğim şekilde bir aktivite ve etkinlik olacaksa eğer evet olması gerekti.

Tanımsız alan mı? Evet kimilerine göre çok tanımlı ama bana göre çok da tanımlı değildir bu yüzden 4 diyorum tanımsız alan konsepti için.

MT: Peki bunların haricinde, yani bu benim verdiğim tanımların haricinde bu mekanı siz nasıl tanımlarsınız?

GO: Terk edilmiş. Toplumun geneli için ya da kentlinin geneli için bilinmez. Işte terk edilmiş geride bırakılmış. Çok önemsenmeyen, refüj alanı nasıl bir şeyse yol kenarı yani yol kenarı diyebiliriz. Bu benim için böyle değil ama İstanbul'da yaşayan insanlar için diyebiliriz bunu büyük çoğunluğu için. Ama gerçekten bir aksın bir rotanın bir eğitim programının bir yaşam pratiğinin önemli parçalarından biri haline gelebilir oraya iyi bir kurgu yapabilirsek. Yani. Surları nasıl koruyorsak şuan hiçbir işlevi yokken surları nasıl korumak istiyorsak şu an çok da bir işlevi olmamasına rağmen oradaki bostanları koruyup gelecek nesillere aktarmak için yaşamasını da sağlamak ve toplum tarafından herkes tarafından kabul görmesini de sağlamak için insanları oraya davet eden insanları o işin içerisine sokan bir hale dönüştürülmesi lazım diyebilirim.

Oktan Nalbantoğlu Görüşmesi

MT: Kendinizden kısaca bahseder misiniz? Yedikule Kent Bahçeleri ya da Yedikule bostanlarıyla etkileşiminiz, ilginiz ve çalışmalarınız nelerdir?

ON: Tamam, ben peyzaj mimarıyım. Ankara Üniversitesi'nden mezun oldum. Sonra yüksek lisans ve doktoramı da aynı üniversitede tamamladım, şu anda da Bilkent Üniversitesi Kentsel Tasarım ve Peyzaj Mimarlığı bölümünde öğretim üyesiyim. Aynı zamanda ON tasarım adında bir tasarım ofisim var. Kentsel tasarım ve peyzaj

tasarımı çoğunlukta olmak üzere çok disiplinli bir ofiste çalışıyoruz yani ofisimiz mimarlar, peyzaj mimarları, şehir ve bölge plancıları, iç mimar ve grafik tasarımcı görev yapmaktadır. Yani böyle çok disiplinli olarak çalışıyoruz. Yaklaşık 20 yıldır kentsel tasarım stüdyosu yürütüyorum aynı zamanda ve pratikle teoriyi aynı anda harmanlamaya çalışıyorum diyebilirim. 7 kule bostanlarıyla ilgili bilgim şöyle ilk etapta Yedikule bostanları dediğimiz zaten tarihi yarımadada Theodosius surlarının dibindeki alan aslında bunun orijinal adı İsmail Ağa Bostanlarıdır. O bölgede kendi ofisimizden bir kent parkı yapmamız istenmişti. Alanı gidip gördüğümde, alanın niteliklerini ve tarihi değerini anladıktan sonra burada bir park yapmanın anlamsız olacağını, buranın bir tarım parkı olarak kullanılabileceğiyle ilgili bir öngörüde bulunduk. Zamanın belediye başkanı Kadir Topbaş'a da bu şekilde belirttim bir toplantıda. Önce bu konsept onlara yabancı geldi çünkü bu alan için havuzlar ve yeşil alanlar tasarlanmasını istiyorlardı. Fakat biz tasarım ekibi olarak bu konspetlerde rekreatif alanların zaten her yerde var olduğunu, hâlbuki şehir dokusu içinde tarımın her zaman karşılaşılmayacak bir unsur olduğunu ve Bizans'tan bugüne kadar gelen bir tarım geleneğinin bu alanda sürdürüldüğünü belirttik. Bu tarihi değerin korunarak Yedikule Bostanları'nın gelecek nesillere aktarılması gerektiğini savunduk. Ayrıca dünyada da son zamanlarda oldukça gündemde olan kent tarımı ideolojisini bu alanda yaşatmanın ve sürdürmenin çok iyi bir pr olarak da kullanılabileceğini öne sürdük. Belediye yetkilileri başta biraz şüpheci yaklaşsalar da sonunda ikna oldular ve bu şekilde biz Yedikule Bostanlarını yeniden tasarlarken bu alanın çoklu aktörleriyle etkileşimli şekilde, yani mesela oradaki bostancıların da işin içinde olduğu farklı bir yönetim planı sistemiyle ele alarak hem kentsel rekreasyonun bir parçası haline getirdik hem de kentsel tarım üretiminin de sürdüğü karma kullanım içeren bir yöntemle yeniden ele aldık. Ama o zamandan şu ana kadar bu tasarım önerisiyle ilgili alanda herhangi bir çalışma yapılmadı açıkçası. Yani aslında çok net ve her an uygulanabilecek durumda bir proje ve ayrıca Bu proje bütün kara surları boyunca domino etkisi yaratabilir. Çünkü sur dışında da şu anda aktif olarak tarım devam ediyor. Bu alanı korumak adına bu projenin uygulanması iyi olabilirdi.

MT: Bostancılarını da dâhil olduğu bir yönetim sisteminden bahsettiniz. Bunu projenizde nasıl önerdiğinizi biraz daha açıklayabilir misiniz?

ON: Projenin senaryosu aslında bostancılar üzerine kuruluyordu. Bostancıların büyük bir çoğunluğu Kastamonulu ve akrabadırlar. Birkaç nesildir bu işi yürütüyorlar. Bu çok değerli yani onları oradan kaçınmamak lazım. Aksi takdirde güvensiz mekânlar çıkacak ortaya ve bir bostan kültürünü kaybedeceğiz ki, gerçekten Bizans'tan bu yana devam eden bir kültürel değerdir. Yani biz orada bütün üretim parsellerinin bostancılar tarafından ekilip biçilmeye devam edildiği, ürünleri de yine bostancıların toplayabilecekleri ama belirli bir mesafeden kent halkının da onları izleyebileceği ve bu sürecin bir parçası olabileceği, zaman zaman hasat şenliklerinin düzenlenebileceği ve ürünlerin ekolojik pazar yerinde satılabileceği bir alan tasarladık. Bu ekolojik pazar yeri tasarımı sayesinde sadece bostancılar değil sur dışındakiler de gelip ürünlerini daha sistematik bir şekilde satabileceklerdi. Alanın yakınına da 3 tane de profesyonel sera önerisi getirdik ki burada da fideler

yetiştirilip yetişenler direkt olarak üreticilere servis edilecekti çünkü ya şu an bostancılar iptidai şartlardaki seralarda üretim yapmaya çalışıyorlar. Oysa ilk fideyi, tohumu fideye dönüştürmeyi daha profesyonel yaparsak böylece bu alanın gelirleri artar, hem daha kaliteli ürün ortaya çıkar hem de burası daha sürdürülebilir hale gelirdi. Tabii alanın ana yönetimi yine belediyede olacaktı fakat belediye bütün üretim sistemini bostancılara bırakacaktı. Belediye esas olarak koordinasyonda görev alacaktı ve böyle çok katmanlı ve çoklu paydaşlı bir yönetim sistemi üretilecekti. Ama bu proje bostancılara doğru bir şekilde aktarılamadı. Yani bence en önemli handikaplardan birisi bu. Katılımcı bir model oluşturulamadı bu nedenle belki proje süreci o çerçevede eleştirilebilir. Katılımcı bir model olmuş olsaydı, bostancıların bu sisteme sıkı sıkı sarılacaklarından hiç şüphem yoktu benim.

MT: Proje sürecinde bostancıların temsilcileriyle, bu alanı korumaya yönelik kurulmuş inisiyatiflerin üyeleri veya temsilcileriyle görüşülmedi, öyle mi?

ON: Maalesef, bence projenin en büyük handikabı buydu yani bizim de görüşmemizi istemediler açıkçası. Bu durum bir polemik konusu olur diye çekindiler çünkü o zaman Yedikule bostanlarıyla ilgili inisiyatif, sivil toplum örgütleri vardı ve onlar bir taraftan bostanları korumaya çalışıyorlardı ama bir taraftan da bence oradaki sisteme zarar verdiler benim şahsi görüşüme göre. Çünkü, aşırı agresif bir tutumları vardı, dertleri sanki bostancı değildi de bağcıyı dövmekti bana kalırsa. Bu tarzdaki sıkıntılar da önerilen sisteme zarar verdi. Onlar o kadar agresif olmasaydı, belki önerilen yönetim tasarımıyla bostancılar sisteme dahil edilerek bu alanda söz sahibi olabilirlerdi. Çünkü Yedikule Bostanları gibi bostancıları da uzun yıllardır hep dışlanmış ve güvencesiz bırakılmıştır. Günümüzde alan hala herhangi bir bütüncül bir plan uygulanmamış halde durmakta.

MT: Bu proje önerinize göre bostancılar bostanlarda yine ekip biçmeye, orayı yönetmeye ve üretime devam edeceklerdi. Ayrıca kamunun da dahil olduğu bir arayüz mü oluşturulacaktı?

ON: Şöyle, sadece 1-2 parselde öyle bir şey önermiştik. Bunun da odağı yetişkinler değil çocuklardı. Özellikle ilkokul çağındaki çocukların belirli bir şekilde burada sürekli bir üretime dahil olmalarını hedeflemiştik. Hatta alanda bir derslik de tasarladık. Yani tarımla ilgili derslerinin verilebileceği bir alan önerdik. Zaman zaman okullar öğrencileri getirerek hem alanı gezdirsinler hem de bir workshoplar düzenlensin, çünkü aslında bunun temeli çocuk. Bir şeyi çocuk yaşta öğrenirsen o devam eder. Yani buradaki bizim hedefimiz yetişkinler değildi açıkçası. Daha çok çocuklara yönelikti bu arayüzlerde çocuklar bir taraftan eğlenecek mesela tarım temalı oyun alanları, doğa temalı oyun alanları olacaktı. Böylece çocuk aileyi hafta sonları Yedikule Bostanlarını ziyaret etmek için teşvik etsin ve alanla sık sık haşır neşir olsunlar. Hem Tabi bu sırada bostancıların da çok rahatsız edilmeyecekleri bir sistem kurgulamaya çalıştık. Çocukların alanla karşılaşmalarında sağlanan bu süreklilik zamanla bu alanın değerini anlamalarını ve büyüdükçe daha da fazla bu sistemin savunucuları olmalarını sağlar diye düşündük. Açıkçası biraz da bu çerçevede ele aldık.

MT: İkinci sorum hocam Yedikule Bostanları İstanbul kent bütünü için sizce ve çalışma ilgi alanınız dahilinde ne ifade ediyor? Mekansal olarak ve toplumsal olarak değerlendirebilir misiniz?

ON: Yedikule Bostanlarının varlığı ve korunması aslında kentsel mekan güvenliği açısından çok önemli. Yani bu alan bugün güvensiz bir alan. Bağımlıların konumlandığı, illegal işlerin yürütüldüğü bir yer olduğunu biliyoruz çünkü arazi gezisi ve analizi sırasında şahit olduk açıkçası. Sürekli bir tarımsal etkinlik olunca zaten o tarım ve bostancılar alanı çeşitli tehditlere karşı koruyorlar. Mekansal bir güvenlik sağlıyorlar. Diğer taraftan kent hafızası, kent belleği için çok önemli bir mekan. Bu mekanı korumak lazım. Çünkü Theodosius surları sur olarak UNESCO Dünya miras listesinde yer alsa da aslında, bir taraftan da suru kimliklileştiren unsurlar yakın çevresindeki mekanlar ve bu mekanların sağladığı sosyal yaşam. O nedenle yakın çevrede yaşayan halkı burada tutabilmek, burayı güvenli hale getirmekle mümkün. Çünkü yavaş yavaş kent orada büzüşmeye başladı. Yani güvensizlikten dolayı herkes yavaş yavaş orayı terk ediyor. Halbuki orayı terk etmemek lazım. O çerçevede mekansal anlamda kente çok önemli bir katkısı olduğunu söyleyebilirim. Diğer taraftan da bu, günümüzde hep tartıştığımız kentin içinde sıkışmış kalmış olan tarım alanlarının korunması açısından da çok önemli bir strateji ortaya koyuyor. Yani bu alanda artık suyu az kullanan, doğru kullanan, doğayı koruyan birtakım peyzaj tasarım yaklaşımlarına ihtiyaç var. Bu tarım parkları da bana kalırsa ki yurt dışında bunun örneklerini çok fazla görüyoruz. Mesela neredeyse New York'ta çatı bahçelerinde artık tarım yapılıyor. Londra'da da kentsel tarım örnekleri mevcut. İnsanlar mahalle arasında community garden dediğimiz alanlarda ekip biçiyorlar ve üretiyorlar. Böylece üretim sisteminin bir parçası oluyorlar ve mekana sahip çıkıyorlar. [MT1]Bu bakımdan bu alan önemli bir model olabilirdi kentsel tarım için yani hâlâ da olabilir. Özellikle böyle bahçesi olan evlerde atıl bahçelerin olduğu yerlerde hafif hafif insanları üretime teşvik etmek gıda güvenliği açısından da oldukça önemli. O bakımdan bir mekansal bir anlamı var. Toplumsal olarak da bana kalırsa tam bir rehabilitasyon alanları bunlar. Yani bildiğiniz gidiyorsunuz orada bütün gününüzü geçirip geliyorsunuz. Hem üretimi görüyorsunuz hem ürünü topluyorsunuz kendi elinizle hem de yani tarımla haşır neşir oluyorsunuz, yani toprağı eliniz değiyor. Toprağa yakın oluyorsunuz ki bugün en önemli problemlerden birisi toprağa uzak olmak. Bu alanın adeta bir rehabilitasyon merkezi olacağını düşünüyorum. Ne olursa olsun toplumumuzun büyük çoğunluğu aslında kırsal karaktere sahiptir, yani çoğunluk göç ederek İstanbul'a gelmiştir. Henüz daha ikinci üçüncü nesili deviremedikleri için herkesin bir tarım özlemi var. Yani İstanbul'da kime giderseniz gidin sorun herkes köyüne dönmenin hayalini kurar ama hiçbir zaman dönemez veya dönmez. Bu nedenle burası kentsel yaşamın stresini veya yoğun fiziksel dokusunu biraz yumuşatmak açısından da çok önemli bir alandır diye düşünüyorum açıkçası. Fakat ne yazık ki güncel şartlarıyla halkla pek etkileşime giremiyor çünkü bu alana giden pek yok.

MT: Hocam üçüncü sorum bostanda rol alan sözü geçen bostanı kullanan gruplar, aktörler, paydaş ve kullanıcıları kendi deneyiminizle tanımlayabilir misiniz?

ON: Bugün için bostanda sözü geçen aktörler gerçekten bostancılardır. Yani onların baskın bir karakteri hâlâ var orada ve bu çok önemli ama bir taraftan da, bu alandaki ürünleri, alanın yola yakınlığından dolayı tüketmek sağlıklı mıdır tartışmaları devam etse de, hala insanlar nostaljik bir şekilde araçla giderken yolun kenarında duruyorlar. Sebzeleri bir şekilde oradan satın alıyorlar, gidiyorlar. Bu biraz alışkan. Bu durumdan kent halkının da hâlâ orada önemli bir aktör olduğunu bize gösteriyor aslında. Şu anda paydaş olarak belediye adım atmaya çalışmakta. Hemen Yedikule bostanının yanında Fatih Belediyesi bir tarım parkı oluşturdu. O bence iyi çalışıyor yani tasarım olarak çok uygun olmasa da, bana kalırsa, yöntem olarak çok iyi çalışıyor.

Çünkü çok yoğun bir şekilde kullanılıyor. Demek ki böyle bir özlem var açıkçası. Bu çerçevede de kara surlarının bütününde de şimdi Fatih Belediyesi de bir paydaş olmaya bir aktör olmaya başladı orada. Çünkü Fatih Belediyesi sınırları içinde, Zeytinburnu ve Eyüp belediyelerinin de Kara Surları üzerinde etkisi olabilir, şimdi İBB de esas yönetici olarak bu işin içine girerse bence alana gerçekten profesyonel bir organizasyonla yaklaşılmış olur. Burada tek eksik şu anda bana kalırsa çocuklar. Onları da bir paydaş haline getirebilirsek o zaman bence burası kurtulur diye düşünüyorum.

MT: Hocam dördüncü sorum Yedikule Bostanları kamusallık, müştereklik, ortak yaşam ve üretim için sizce ne anlama geliyor?

ON: Kamusal alan dediğiniz şey kentin bütün en hizmet eden her yaştan gruptan el kültürden insanın bir arada gelip ortaklaşabildiği kendine ait bir şey bulabildiği bir mekan demek. Ama bizdeki kamusallıkta her şey devletten beklenir. Yani devlet kamusal alanı oluşturur ve onun onu sürdürür. Halbuki yani bizim genel kültürümüzde gerçekten kamusal alana sahip çıkmak veya kente sahip çıkmak olgusu oldukça zayıftır. Çünkü her şeyi devletten bekleriz. Yani kendimiz bir şey yapmayız. Şimdi tarım parkı projesinde önerilen yönetim ve işletim biçimleri biraz halkın da kamusal alana sahip çıkması veya kamusal alanın kıymetini, değerini anlaması açısından çok önemli bir nirengi noktası oluşturabilir. Bu nedenle tarım parkı projesini müşterek mekan kullanma kültürünün oluşturulabilmesi açısından önemli bir adım olarak görüyorum. Buranın bir tarım parkı olarak kullanılması durumundan söz ediyorum. Aksi takdirde yani burası eğer böyle bir şu andaki haliyle, orijinal haliyle korunursa çok fazla müştereklikten söz etmek zor çünkü zaten oranın bir sahibi var. Bzı bostanlara izinsiz giremezsin. Yani girdiğin anda da neyle karşılaşacağını bilemezsin. Sadece bir para harcayacaksan mekanda bir sözün olabilir çünkü bir şey alacaksındır ama müştereklik için herkesin birbirine saygılı bir şekilde mekanı kullanma kültürüne sahip olması gerekir. O mekanı daha da bir mekansallaştıran bir durumdur. Çünkü kara surları ne olursa olsun yakın bir gelecekte çok önemli bir gezi rotalarından biri haline gelecek bundan dolayı da restorasyon yapılıyor. Tarihi yarımada ile hemen sınırını oluşturduğu için burada sistemin şimdiden doğru kurgulanmasının çok büyük önem var. Yani şimdi eğer burası normal bir park olarak düzenlense hiçbir müştereklikten söz edemeyiz. Yani birisi bir şey yapıyor, sen gelip kullanıyorsun, o ne diyorsa onu yapıyorsun. Halbuki

sen şimdi burada kendinden bir şeyler katarak veya önerilerde bulunarak veya tüm oy sisteminin bir parçası olarak ilerliyorsun. Yani o nedenle bu tarım parkı kavramıyla Yedikule bostanlarının bir sistem olarak ele alınmasının özellikle müştereklik açısından çok önemli katkısı olacağını düşünüyorum. Yani toplumun kentine sahip çıkması açısından da bence önemlidir. Ortak yaşam kültürü, ortak üretim kültürü açısından da bence önemli olacaktır herkesin birbirine saygılı olması. İyi bir yönetim planıyla bu alan İstanbul'a önemli bir katkı sağlayabilir bu çerçevede. Şu anki durumda müşterekleşmeden çok fazla söz edemesek de Yedikule müştereklik ve ortak yaşam bağlamlarında ciddi bir potansiyel taşıyor. Bu potansiyeli hayata geçirmek lazım. Yani aksi takdirde burası bir çöküntü alanı olma yönünde hızla ilerliyor. Alanın bu çöküntü alanı halinden kurtarılması lazım. Ben bostancıların günümüzde Yedikule'deki varlığını önemli buluyorum. Yarın olmasınlar bu alan atıl hâle gelir. Kullanılmayan, atıl, kimsesiz, kime ait olduğu belli olmayan ve insanların da uzak durduğu, daha da kentin çeperlerinin büzüştüğü bir sisteme dönüşebilir. Bu nedenle bostancılar ve bostanları kente dahil edebilmek çok kritik.

MT: Son sorumu soruyorum o zaman, aşağıdaki kavramlardan hangisi veya hangileri bostanları sizin için en iyi tanımlıyor (eşik mekan, ara mekan, kamusal mekan, müşterek mekan)? 1'den 5'e doğru tanımlama derecesi artacak şekilde puanlayınız.

ON: Eşik mekan için 5 veririm. Önemli bir eşik çünkü burası yani bir kırılma yaşanması anlamında birbirine benzer 2 tane dokunun arasında bir tarafta tarihi yarımada, bir tarafta da Zeytinburnu Kazlıçeşme gibi yerleşim alanlarının arasında bir anda bambaşka bir dünyayla karşılaşıyorsunuz. Yani geçiş gibi değil bir eşik, o eşiği atlamanız gerekiyor. Oradaki sur dibindeki hendekler vb. kendi morfolojik yapısı bizatihi morfolojisi zaten oraya eşlik yapıyor ya ben o çerçevede bir eşik olarak görüyorum. Yani atlanması gereken bir eşik orası aslında. Burada şehrin karakteri de tamamen değişiyor çünkü.

Ara mekan niteliği biraz zayıf çünkü doğusuyla batısı arasında bir sorun var. Yani batısı daha böyle kamusal ve mezarlıklarla tanımlanmış bir alan işte doğusu daha kentle dokusu olduğu için ara mekan karakteri 3 olabilir.

Sınır mıdır? Evet sınırdır 5 veriyorum çünkü surlarla beraber bunu düşünürsek bir sınır olduğunu söyleyebilirim. Çünkü buraya kapıdan girmeden geçemezsin. Yani buranın bir kapısı var. Yani Mevlanakapı, Belgradkapı, Altınkapı yani illa ki o kapıya gidip oradan geçmen gerekiyor ayrıca 1950'lerde inşa edilen bulvar da sınır özelliğinin altını çizmiştir. Onun için sınıra ben 5 veririm.

Kamusal alan mıdır? Buna 2 veririm.

Müşterek mekan mıdır? 2 veririm. Müşterek olma potansiyelini sorarsan 5 verirdim çünkü müşterek pratiklerinin gerçekleşmesi için gerekli olan fiziksel ve sosyal nitelikler ve aktör çeşitliliği mevcut burada bence.

Aktivite etkinlik mekanları 3 denebilir çünkü hala da burası yerli yabancı turistler tarafından özellikle gündüz saatlerinde ziyaret edilebiliyor. Yani çevresinde birtakım etkinlikler de var açıkçası mezarlık ziyareti de bir etkinliktir yani.

Tanımsız alan mıdır? Tanımsız alan değil burası. O zaman buna da 2 vermek yani tanımlı olduğunu anlatmak adına. düşük puan vermek lazım. Bir kere 10. Yıl Bulvarı önemli bir tanım. Daha bundan tanımlı ne olacak? Duvar desen sur tam tanımlı arkasındaki otopark bile aslında tanımlı bir alan. Otopark olarak kullanılıyor. Yani onun için böyle 2 ya da 3 veririm.

MT: Hocam bu tanımların haricinde siz bu mekanı nasıl tanımlardınız mesela?

ON: Bence burada eşik önemli bir terim. Onun dışında özellikle kuzey güney ekseninde akıcı. Yani Kara Surlarının sistemi aslında tamamen akıcı bir şekilde kurgulanmıştır, kara surları boyunca sürekli bir odak noktası ya da geçiş elemanı mevcuttur. Yani bunun devamında giderseniz Yedikule'nin kendisi var sonra gidiyorsun, Topkapı var, sonra gidiyorsun Kariye var sonra gidiyorsun, Tekfur Sarayı var, sonra gidiyorsun Anemas Zindanları var, sonra Mihrimah Sultan Camii var. Yani aynı zamanda da heterojen bir mekan. Yani homojen asla değil. Hem sosyal hem mekânsal özellikleri açısından çok heterojen bir mekan. Aynı zamanda gizemli. Gizemliliğini de müthiş koruyor. Tabii tarih, bellek gibi kavramları çok rahatlıkla burada mekan tanımlarken kullanabiliriz diye düşünüyorum aklıma gelenler bunlar. Sonuç olarak bu alanı ben Tarihi Yarımada'nın kapısı olarak tanımlardım. Bu sebeple de eşiktir zaten. Yani tarihi yarımada ile yüzleşme mekanı aslında burası. Yani böyle sürpriz bir mekan. Ne yapacağını dışarıdayken içeride nasıl hayat olduğun hiçbir zaman hayal edemezsiniz, içerideyken de dışarıda neler olduğunu hayal edemediğiniz çok acayip sürpriz bir mekan. Yedikule bostanları yani bende bir kentsel üretim mekanizması olabilmesi açısından kritik bir özellik taşıyor. Yani kentsel tarım derim bu alan için direkt, yani böyle kent tarım yani tam tanımı budur. Geçmişte çukur bostan vb bostanlar da vardı çevresinde sonra oraları öldürdüler bu yüzden burası İstanbul için kent tarımının en kritik noktalarından birisidir. Yüzlerce binlerce yıldır bu işlevi sürdürmesi beni heyecanlandırıyor. Yani ne oldu da bunlarda sürekli böyle kaldılar? Bir türlü yok olamadılar, yok olmadılar. Ben kent tarımı denince Yedikule Bostanlarını özellikle örnek olarak her yerde veriyorum zaten kent tarımı dediğimiz şey nedir dendiği zaman Yedikule Bostanlarıdır işte. Bu kadar geçmişi güçlü, kentin içinde sıkışıp kalmış olan tarım alanları çok azdır.

Sedanur Gezer Görüşmesi

MT: Kendinizden kısaca bahseder misiniz? Yedikule bostanlarıyla ilgili etkileşiminiz ilginiz ya da çalışmalarınız nelerdir?

SG: Ben Sedanur Gezer, Şehir Plancıları Odası İstanbul Şube'de çalışıyorum. Yüksek lisansımı Şehir Planlama üzerine yaptım, Yedikule Bostanları üzerine direkt bir çalışmam yok ancak meslek bilgisi açısından bilgim olduğunu tabi ki söyleyebilirim. Çünkü bir de kendi araştırma ya da çalışma alanlarımda da ben de kentsel yol ağaçları üzerine çalışmıştım. Biraz daha iklim üzerinden, iklim etkisi ve karasal karbon depolaması üzerinden. O yüzden bostanlara da ilgi duydum. Hem tarihi kent hafızasının olduğunu düşünüyorum hem de yeşil alan ve tarım pratikleri açısından baktığımızda da kentle bütünleşmesi gereken alanlardan olduğunu düşünüyorum. Bu kapsamda da yani bostanları hem dediğim gibi benim çalışmalarım açısından yeşil alanların planlanması bir de kent ve kırın kurduğu ilişkinin kent alanında yansımaları açısından önemli olduğunu düşünüyorum. O yüzden bu çalışmada katkı sağlamak benim için ayrıca çok değerli.

MT: Yedikule Kent Bostanları İstanbul kent bütünü için sizce ve çalışma ya da ilgi alanınız için de ne ifade ediyor? Mekansal olarak ve toplumsal olarak değerlendirebilir misiniz?

SG: Bostanların İstanbul'un hafızasına, tarihine de aslında baktığımızda yalnızca yeşil alan olarak değil, kültürel kentsel ögesi ve tarım hafızasına yer etmiş bir miras olduğunu da düşünüyorum. Bu yüzden kent açısından da yalnız bir park veya kentsel tarım uygulamalarının olduğu bir alan değil, ekosistem servisi kavramına burada vurgu yapabilirim, onun aslında kent bütününün de bir parçası olarak değerlendirilmesi gerektiğini düşünüyorum ve mekânda da aslında mekâna özgü ekolojik iyileştirmeler dışında yani şu an genel olarak daha bu kapsamda gidiliyor ama burada toplumsal olana vurgu yapmanız gerçekten çok önemli. Toplumsal açıdan da hem eski kullanımlarından yola çıkarak bu hafızasını yaşatacak hem de dediğimiz gibi mekân üretimi açısından hem de müştereklik için de potansiyel bir alan olduğunu düşünüyorum. Bunu da zaten toplumla birlikte yapabiliriz

MT: Bostanlarda rol alan, sözü geçen, kullanan ve genel olarak bostanlar üzerinde etkisi olan kullanıcı, aktörler ve paydaşları tanımlayabilir misiniz?

SG: Güncele baktığımızda genelde çevredeki kişilerle, mahalle sakinleriyle kısıtlı kaldığını düşünüyorum. Kent bütününe dair biraz daha bu konuda seçici olması gerektiğini düşünüyorum ve farklı zaman aralıklarındaki kullanıcı profillerine dair bir bilgim yok. Bunu aslında merak ediyorum o kadar gözlemim olmadı. Sonuçta bostancılar olarak da bir kullanım profili vardı. O zamanlar kent hayatındaki kullanım pratikliklerine nasıl bir toplumsal çevre oluşturuyordu çevresinde ve bu çevrenin bu alanla ilintili yaşantıları nasıldı? Bunların şu an çevrede izini bostan çevresinde görebiliyor muyuz? Bunları merak ediyorum. Dediğim gibi şu an daha çok rekreatif amaçlı yakın çevresiyle ilişki kurduğunu, bu kapsamda bir kullanıcı profili oluştuğunu ve kullanıcı gruplarını oluşturduğunu düşünüyorum. Onun dışında aktör vesaire olarak tabii ki yerel yönetim ya da Büyükşehir Belediyesinin ve ilçe belediyesinin park bahçeler kısmı daha çok düzenleme yapıp ilgileniyor, buranın mekân düzenlemesinde rol alıyorlar. Ama biraz farklı olarak, miras kapsamıyla yani,

burada hayata geçirilmesi gereken, bakılması gereken biraz peyzaj mirası kapsamında olması gereken unsurlar olduğunu düşünüyorum.

MT: Yedikule Kent Bostanı kamusallık, müştereklik, ortak yaşam ve üretim için sizce ne anlama geliyor?

SG: Benim sanırım ilk aklıma gelen şey; günümüz ve geleceğe dair ne yapabiliriz? Özellikle kamusallık açısından, öncelikle kolektif bilincin canlandırılabileceği bir yer olma potansiyeli taşıdığını düşünüyorum. Bunun için de önce yakın çevresiyle daha sonra kent bütününe yayılan bir toplumsal hafıza ve koruma bilinciyle birlikte bunu yapılabileceğini düşünüyorum. Bu sağlandığında mekânın daha müşterek olarak tanımlanabileceğini, güçleneceğini ve ön plana çıkacağını ve alanın kentle olan ilişkisinin bu müştereklik yoluyla sağlanabileceğini öngörüyorum. Ben iklim açısından da burayı değerlendiriyorum. Bu alanın önemi hem tarihi hem de bu gelecek olasılıkları açısından yaklaşan bilinçle yorumlanırsa yerel yönetim, sivil toplum kuruluşları, bostancılar, alanda proje üretenler ve halkın talepleriyle bu alanın daha verimli bir üretim mekânına dönüşebileceğini düşünüyorum. Bu unsurların hepsinin katılımını belki bu alanda şu an sağlayamıyoruz ama müşterek alan olmayı hem toplum, hem tasarım kriterleri açısından, mekân kullanımı açısından bir düzenlemeyle bu ilişki ağlarını kurarak sağlarsak, ilerleyen aşamalarda, kentin diğer ortak sorunlarına bile çözüm üretebilecek örnek alan yaratısına doğru ilerleyebiliriz.

MT: Son sorumu soruyorum o zaman, aşağıdaki kavramlardan hangisi veya hangileri bostanları sizin için en iyi tanımlıyor (eşik mekan, ara mekan, kamusal mekan, müşterek mekan)? 1'den 5'e doğru tanımlama derecesi artacak şekilde puanlayınız.

SG: Mekanın güncel durumuna göre değerlendirirsek o zaman tanımsız alan için 4 diyebilirim. Tanımsızlık açısından, hafıza üstünden mesela alana bakıyorum ya da güncel kullanım açısından bakıyorum. Bu çok geniş bir alan. Hepsi park değil, hepsi şu an korunup gezilen bir alan değil, kent bütününe şu an hizmet etmediği için tanımsız.

Eşik kavramıyla bu alanı ilişkilendirmem ara mekana nazaran bende daha güçlü. O yüzden ara mekan kavramına 3 diyeceğim. Çünkü zihnimde eşik mekân olması 5 ve sınır olması 2. Eşik açısından, yani hem morfolojik olarak hem sosyal anlamda bu alan bir eşik. Sınırlar bu alanı aşmayalım, bu tanımlı çerçevede kalalım imasına sahipken eşiklerde alana vurgu yaparız ve eşiği de bir sınır gibi okumak olasıysa da aslında eşik geçirgendir.

Kamusal mekan mıdır? Şu an için kamusallığı 2. Ben çok net bir kamusal alan olarak tanılandıramıyorum mevcut kullanımını. Ama potansiyel olarak yüksek olabilir.

Müşterek mekan olarak da şu an için 2 diyebiliriz gıda üretiminden ve bostancılık kültürünün hala var olmasından dolayı. Ama bu alanın müştereklik potansiyelini puanlasaydım 5 derdim. Kent mekanı açısından hani dikkate alınıp birbirini besleyecek şekilde geliştirilmesi gerektiğini düşünüyorum. Bir sonrakine geçersem

de aktivite ve etkinlik mekanı da bunun bir aracı, yani kamusallığı ve müşterekliği aktivite ve etkinlik mekanı olmak besleyecek, onun da potansiyelini düşünerek ben 4 demiştim ama mevcut açıdan bakarsak herhalde o da 2.

Bu alanda belirli bir amaçla bir araya gelen insan topluluklarının olduğunu ben şu an görmüyorum bu yüzden müşterek alan niteliği günümüzde çok taşımıyor. Dediğim gibi rekreatif amaçlı gelen kişiler olduğu için hani onların da tam olarak oranın ruhunu hissetmek, oranın hafızasını düşünerek ya da koruma iç güdüsüyle gelmek gibi bir amaçları yok yani. Bu gibi bir ortak amaç uğruna bir araya gelme durumu olmadığı için günümüzde bu alan müşterek alan değildir ama müşterekliği katalize edecek niteliklere sahiptir mesela kentsel tarım buna bir örnek olabilir.

MT: Peki bunların haricinde siz bu mekân nasıl tanımlarsınız? Sıfatlar da kullanabilirsiniz işte dışlanmış, parçalarmış, geçirgen. Eğer senin için öyleyse gibi gibi.

SG: Geçirgen bir eşik mekan diyebilirim. Kara Surları fiziksel geçirgenliğin sorgulanmasına sebep olsa da ben bu alanda aktivitelerin, karşılaşma ve ilişki ağlarının, farklı kültürden, eğitimden, gelir gruplarından insanların bir araya gelmesinin alanı geçirgen kıldığını, geçirgen bir alana dönüştürdüğünü düşünüyorum. Mevcut durumunu düşünürsek terk edilmiş diyebilirim. Biraz dediğim gibi ben bu alanı iklim açısından düşündüğüm için de biraz da dirençli ve korunan alan olmasını umut ediyorum.

N. Simla Uygaç Görüşmesi

MT: Önce kendinizden kısaca bahseder misiniz? Yedikule bostanlarıyla ilgili etkileşiminiz ilginiz ya da çalışmalarınız nelerdir?

NSU: Ismim N. Simla Uygaç, yüksek şehir plancısıyım. Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi'nde Kentsel Koruma üzerine yüksek lisans yaptım. Şu anda da yine aynı üniversitede doktoramı yapıyorum. Bir yandan da Şehir Plancıları Odasında (ŞPO) çalışıyorum. Yedikule bostanlarıyla etkileşimim aslında çocukluğumda anneannemin dedemin orada yaşamalarından dolayı sürekli bir geçiş mekanı olarak yani ailemin aileleri orada yaşadıkları için hani gidip gördüğüm ve çok geçtiğim bir yerdir. Sonrasında meslek olarak da kentsel koruma uzmanı olduğumu söyledim, Yüksek lisansım o olanda. Stüdyo dersi olarak kara surlarını, Yedikule ve Topkapı arasını çalışmıştım. O yüzden yani bölgeyle ilgili bilgim biraz o zamandan kalıyor. Üzerine özellikle yoğunlaştığım bir çalışmam yok ama hem çok geçtiğim kullandığım hem de kısa bir dönem ve kısa bir ödev kapsamında çalıştığım bir alan. O yüzden biliyorum. Bu alanla geçmişten beri bir etkileşimimin olması alanın nasıl bir dönüşüm geçirdiğine canlı bir şekilde şahit olmamı sağlıyor. Yani benim hatırladığım en eski hali oldukça atıldı. Sonra bir dönem çok gündeme geldi. Sonra bir dönem yine boş kaldı falan. Bir ara barakalar vardı böyle küçük derme çatma,

onların belediye tarafından yıkılması ve bununla ilgili olaylar oldu. Yani daha çok, o bölgede yaşayan, doğal bir şekilde alanla etkileşimi olan biri olarak burayı deneyimledim.

MT: Yedikule Kent Bostanları İstanbul kent bütünü için sizce ve çalışma ya da ilgi alanınız için de ne ifade ediyor? Mekansal olarak ve toplumsal olarak değerlendirebilir misiniz?

NSU: Deneyimim üzerinden değerlendirirsem Yedikule Kent Bostanlarının çok sıkıştığını hissediyorum ve fark edilmeyen ama aslında çok da geniş de bir alan olduğunu düşünyorum. Yani farkındayım ama bunun farkında olmayan çok kişinin olduğunun da farkındayım. Yani bir Yedikule Bostanı var ama sur boyunca devam eden işte aslında orası tarihinde okuduğumuz zaman hendek olmasından kaynaklı zemininin suya doygunluğu ve zaman içerisinde bostana evrilen kimliğiyle de birlikte verimli bir toprak, kimi zaman bostanları yapılaşma ve işlev değişimine karşı korumaya yönelik direnişlerin de olduğu çok katmanlı, heterojen bir alan. Mekan olarak baktığımızda çok arada kalmış bir tarafında UNESCO tarihi miras sınırında olan bir kara surları var. Diğer tarafında yani bir e-5 olmasa da e-5 gibi kalabalık bir 10. Yıl Caddesi yani yoğun trafik akışı mevcut. Alanda hava kirliliğine rağmen aslında bostan olarak direniş de var. Orada bostan olarak kalması için bir çaba da var. Yani oradaki aslında temel nitelik kendi gıdasını üretiyor olmasıdır. Kentsel tarım alanı aslında baktığınızda. Yani toplumsal olarak bir bütünlük aslında baktığınızda sur içinde ve yakın çevresinde kalan herkes orada hak iddia edebilecekken belli bir grup gelip orayı sahiplenip sonrasında önce kendi gıdalarını üretmeleri, sonra biraz daha yaygınlaşmaları ve büyümeleri daha kurallı ve düzenli bir hale getirilmek hedefiyle zaman zaman bozulmak istense dahi o bostanlar sonrasında toplumsal bir bilinçle birliktelikle yine bostan olarak kalması böyle bir mekânsal ve toplumsal süreçleri var kısaca.

MT: Bostanlarda rol alan, sözü geçen, kullanan ve genel olarak bostanlar üzerinde etkisi olan kullanıcı, aktörler ve paydaşları tanımlayabilir misiniz?

NSU: Yani bir yerel aktivistler, o bölgenin aktivistleri bir aktör, orada üretim yapan bostancılar bir aktör, yakın çevrede yaşayanlar da bir aktör. Çünkü hani oraya gidip de oradan düzenli alışveriş yapıyor. Hani bir manav işlevi de var o alanın bence. Paydaşlara baktığımızda Fatih Belediyesi ile IBB dir muhtemelen ama bence UNESCO da bir paydaş burada çünkü bostanları Kara Surlarından ayrı düşünmemek, bu unsurları bir bütün olarak ele almak önemli bence. Akademisyenler de bir diğer aktör olabilir, her ne kadar bu alanda rol alsa da sözü pek geçmiyor ne yazık ki.

MT: Yedikule Kent Bostanı kamusallık, müştereklik, ortak yaşam ve üretim için sizce ne anlama geliyor?

NSU: Bence kesinlikle kamusal bir alan yani kamusallığı tartışılmayan bir alan olması gerekiyor buranın. Yani o toprak üzerinde üretimi yapan kişiler üründen hak

iddia edebilir belki ama bostanın herkese açıklığı, herkesin noktada hak iddia edebileceğini, üretime katkı koyabileceği, yani ortak üretimin yapılabileceği bir alan olmasını düşündürüyor. Müşterek alan olduğunu düşünüyorum çünkü bu alan bir kişinin mülkü ya da bir kişinin hâkimiyetinde olan bir alan değil bence fakat ortak yaşam konseptine engel olan şöyle sıkıntılar oluyor. Ben dediğim gibi çocukluğumdan beri sürekli yakınında bulunduğum ve gözlemlediğim bir alan olduğu için mesela orada derme çatma kulübeler kazma, küreği, tırpanı koymak için inşa edilebiliyor. Fakat sonrasında bir özel alana dönüşebiliyorlar ve birine ait olması hali gerçekleşiyor bence, bu gecekonduyu ben koydum ve burası benim arazim, burası benim tarlama dönüyor. Hayır, burası senin tarlan değil. Burada sen üretim yapıyorsun ama burası herkesin bostanıdır. Yani üzerinde o kaçak bir yapılaşma olmadığı sürece oranın kamusallığıyla ilgili bir soru işareti yok bence. Üretim için de işte dediğim gibi yani orası bir manav görevi de görüyor. Eve dönüş yolumda yol üzerinde durup 2 tane marul alıp devam edebildiğim canlı bostan orası. Mülkiyetinin olmadığını, olmaması gerektiğini düşünüyorum. Sonuç olarak UNESCO Dünya miras alanının bitişiğinde, dibinde bir üretim yapılıyor ve bu üretim tabii ki de kamusal yani. Gerçi 1970'lerden sonra kamusal kimliğini yitirmeye başladığı görülmüştür. Bu alanların kamusal niteliğini kaybetmesi müşterekliği, erişimi ve sürdürülebilirliğini de olumsuz etkilemiştir. Üretimin devam ettirilebilmesi için bu alanların aktif olarak kullanılabilmesi, bölge kullanıcılarının yaşamlarına dahil olarak varlığını sürdürmesi gerekmektedir. Kent bostanlarının yok olması, kentsel yaşamın içe dönük hale gelmesine, kentlilerin ortak alanlarının azalmasına ve kent kimliği yapısının bozulmasına sebep olabilmektedir.

MT: Son sorumu soruyorum o zaman, aşağıdaki kavramlardan hangisi veya hangileri bostanları sizin için en iyi tanımlıyor (eşik mekan, ara mekan, kamusal mekan, müşterek mekan)? 1'den 5'e doğru tanımlama derecesi artacak şekilde puanlayınız.

NSU: Etkinlik-aktivite alanı, mekanı olarak 1 veririm, çünkü orası bir etkinlik alanı değil, aktif kullanılan bir alan ama bence aktivite ve etkinlikten anladığım şey o değil. Üretim de bir etkinliktir ama onu o kapsama almıyorum.

Eşik mekana 4 veriyorum.

Ara mekan olarak 3 veriyorum.

Sınır olarak 4 veriyorum. Bence net bir sınır hele o arkasında kara surları ile birlikte.

Kamusal alan net 5, müşterek net 5 puan yani çok net bir şekilde kamusal ve müşterek orası.

Bence orası tanımlı bir alan, yani lejant olarak belki farklıdır yani lejant olarak tanımlı demiyorum ama yani neresi bostan neresi, yol neresi kara surları çok net tanımlı aslında sınırları da kendi arasında bostanlar da tanımlı yani bir bostan böyle upuzun devam etmiyor. Aralıkları da belli aralar da işte Mevlanakapı, Silivrikapı,

onlar da bölüyor ve o aralıklar da tanımlı. Bu yüzden 2 diyebilirim tanımsız alan kavramına.

Eşik kavramıyla ilgili olarak da, morfolojik olarak incelendiğinde bostanlar, tarihsel süreçte eşik hatları olarak nitelendirilen kent surlarının önünde bulunan kentsel tarım alanlarıdır. Yani bir taraftan arkasında sur ve çok yoğun bir konut yapılaşması, diğer tarafında yol mezarlık ve işte diğer kullanımlar diyelim Zeytinburnu'na doğru uzanan bir alan. Yani orası çok net bir eşik çünkü orada doku değişiyor içinde bulunduğununuz tarih değişiyor, yapılaşma koşullarına kadar değişiyor. Mesela şehre girmek istiyorsanız geçmeniz gereken hendek nasıl bir eşikse hendek üstündeki doku olan bostanlar da eşiktir. Kara Surları ve bostanlar şehrin batı yönlü gelişimiyle şimdi şehir içinde kaldı ama orası yine de çevre dokulardan farklı bir doku olarak kendi kimliğini koruyarak zaman içinde değişen bir eşik yani benim için, bu yüzden 4 veriyorum

MT: Peki bunların haricinde, yani bu benim verdiğim tanımların haricinde bu mekanı siz nasıl tanımlarsınız?

NSU: Ilk gelen tanım çok sıkışık bir mekan. Yani var oluş mücadelesi veriyor neredeyse. Sıkışmış bir mekan olarak tanımlardım orayı. Akışkan da aynı zamanda işlevler, kullanıcılar bağlamında akışkan ve heterojen bir alan olduğunu düşünüyorum. Fakat sınırları var. Yani arkasında Surların olması hani böyle bir devamında da devam ediyor. Bu ve hani Surun diğer tarafında da bostan var hissi vermediği için bu kadar geçişli bir mekan değil yani saydam bir yer değil benim için orası böyle bir sahne gibi yani arkası duvar ve önüne doğru açık bir yer orası, bostan

alanı, bir sergide mekanı aslında baktığında kentsel tarımı sergiliyor, bu şekilde tanımlardım.

Suna Kafadar Görüşmesi

MT: Kendinizden kısaca bahseder misiniz? Yedikule bostanlarıyla ilgili etkileşiminiz ilginiz ya da çalışmalarınız nelerdir?

SK: Ben feminist bir yayıncıyım. 5 Harfliler adlı yayının editörlerinden biriyim. Aynı zamanda 2013'ten bu yana Yedikule Bostanlarını korumak üzere çalışan gönüllülerden biriyim. Yedikule Bostanlarına ilk kez 2009 senesinde gittim. Arkadaşım Erken Modern Bostan Zirai Teknolojiler Tarihçisi Aleksandar Shopov beni götürmüştü Yedikule'ye ve 2009'dan bu yana gidip geliyorum, geliyordum. Bostancılarla görüşmeler yapıyordum vesaire. Ta ki, 2013'te Gezi olayları esnasında Temmuz'un başında bir telefon aldık bostancı Recep amca, rahmetli şimdi Recep Eraslan aradı ve dedi ki dozerler girdi bostana yetişin. Alex de tesadüfen İstanbul'daydı o sırada, bostanlara gittik, orada bostanlara molozlar döküldüğünü görünce ondan sonra Yedikule Bostanlarını Koruma Girişimi denen şeyi kurduk. O

başladı yani hem bağımsız olarak hem de girişimin bir parçası olarak seneler içerisinde çeşitli çalışmalar yaptık. Daha çok şehir bostanlarının tarihi, özellikle İstanbul bostanlarının İstanbul için önemine dair farklı kişiler farklı alanlardan insanlar değişik çalışmalar yaptılar. Aramızda arkeologlar var, mimarlar var, şehir plancıları var, sanatçılar var, tarihçiler var, antropologlar var, var da var. Değişik alanlardan insanlar ben de Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Tarih bölümünde bir master tezi yazdım 19. yüzyıl sonu 20. yüzyıl başı Yedikule marulu ve şehrin çevre tahayyülleri üzerine. Daha çok kültür tarihi araştırması yaptım ve yapıyorum ve bu araştırmayla beraber son senelerde özellikle Yedikule bostanlarının ve Yedikule mahallesinin aslında gayrimüslimlere yönelik şiddet tarihine odaklanıyorum ve bostanları da bu şiddet tarihi üzerinden okuyorum. Varlık Vergisi pogromlar ama ondan da evvel Ermeni soykırımına da götürecek şekilde bostanların ve şehrin Türkleştirme politikaları dahilinde şehrin bostan kültürünü nasıl kaybettiğini araştırıyorum. Son zamanlarda buna odaklanıyorum. 5 Harflilerde yayımlanan "Tanpınar'dan Tovmasyan'a Bir Marul Memleketi" yazımda bu alanın gayrimüslimler üzerinden toplumsal değişiminden bahsediyorum.

MT: Yedikule Kent Bostanları İstanbul kent bütünü için sizce ve çalışma ya da ilgi alanınız içinde ne ifade ediyor? Mekansal olarak ve toplumsal olarak değerlendirebilir misiniz?

SK: Yani Yedikule bostanları çok farklı alanlara çok farklı konulara değiyor. Bugün gittikçe artan gıda krizi ve iklim kriziyle beraber mesela gıda egemenliği üzerinden insanlar çokça düşünüyorlar, çalışıyorlar bu meseleyi. Hatta şimdi yakın zamanda mesela İPA'nın yaptığı bir gıda Kent tarımı toplantısı var. IBB gıda politikası belgesi hazırlattı, kent tarımını desteklemek için halk bahçeleri yapmaya çalışıyorlar vesaire vesaire. Yani bütün dünyada böyle bir kent tarımı akını var bir süredir, bir 10 senedir. 10 senedir resmi olarak belediyeler tarafından özellikle, hükümet veya devlet değil de büyükşehir belediyelerinin aldığı inisiyatifler var. Bu ilginç bir fenomen çünkü biraz ulus devletin ötesine geçmeye çalışan bir tarafı var. Yani ulusların tarım politikaları o kadar zehirledi ki toprakları suları, belediyeler bir şekilde bunu aşmaya çalışıyorlar. Dolayısıyla meselenin çok ciddi bir gıda egemenliği, gıda krizi boyutu var tabii ki herkes kent bostanlarına gıda egemenliği üzerinden bakmıyor. Yani daha çok gıda güvenliği kavramı üzerinden okunuyor, tartışılıyor kent bostanları meselesi ama ben de gıda egemenliği kavramının çok daha derinlikli ve anlamlı olduğunu düşünüyorum gıda güvenliğindense çünkü gıda egemenliği çevre adaletsizliğine daha ciddi vurgu yapan, oradaki farklı paydaşların ve sadece insan merkezci olmayan bir yaklaşımın nüvelerini içeriyor ama gıda güvenliği aynı şekilde değil. Gıda güvenliği, insanı merkeze alan ve insanların nasıl yemek yediği ya da ne yediği ile ilgilenen bir şey. Gıda egemenliği ise başka bir konu. Dolayısıyla yani bostanlar meselesi son dönemlerde özellikle bunun üzerinden tartışılıyor ve bu çok önemli bir şey elbette, şehir içerisindeki sosyal eşitsizlikler özellikle gıda krizi ve ekonomik kriz dönemlerinde insanların işte aç kaldığını düşünürsek, mesela son birkaç senedir en çok dillendirilen şeylerden bir tanesi çocukların okullarda, açlıktan bayıldığı, dersleri takip edemedikleri ve aslında bizim senelerdir bostanlarla ilgili söylediğimiz

bir şey, bostanların okullarla çalışmasıydı. Okulların bostanlarının olması ya da Yedikule bostanlarının mesela çevredeki mahallelerde ya da belediyeler aracılığıyla okullara gıda sağlaması böylece hem bostanların sürdürülebilirliği ve devamı getirilebilir, bostancılar sürekli çıkarılma tehdidi altında kalmazlar hem de tabii ki piyasadan çok etkileniyorlar ve çiftçiden sayılmadıkları için tam olarak, sürekli sistemin çeperindeler. Yani ne bir çiftçi kayıt sistemine kaydolabiliyorlar, ne şehrin ekonomik verileri içerisine giriyorlar. Mesela Yerküre Kooperatifi'nin Greenpeace için yaptığı bir araştırmada şehir pazarları hal vesaire çalışıldı ama bostanlar içerikte hiç yok. Hâlbuki bostanlarda inanılmaz bir üretim var yani yüze yakın bostancıdan bahsediyoruz şu an. Tonlarca mahsul çıkıyor her sene her mevsim. Her neyse, sonuç olarak, yani şehrin ekonomik verilerinden de atılmış bir alandan bahsediyoruz. Dolayısıyla yani mekansal önemlerinden ilki modern şehir kurgusu içerisinde bostanların yerinin olmaması, bostanların bir köylülük ve köylülüğün de aşağı bir kategori, aşağı bir var oluş olarak kodlanması şehrin gelişim büyüme tahayyüllerinde tarımın olmayışı bu anlamda mimari ve şehir planlama tarihindeki şiddeti ortaya çıkarması açısından bostanlar çok ilginç bir veri ve bizimle çalışan şehir plancılar ve mimarlar işe biraz da bu tarafından bakıyorlar. Neden hep taş, neden hep bina, neden hep köprü, neden hep yol? Devin Bahçeci diye bir adam var. O mesela tezinde bostanların rakamsal olarak şehre ekolojik katkısı, bakmanı öneririm. Çünkü öyle bir çalışma başka yok. Yani başkalarının da bu tür çalışmalar yapması gerekiyor ki hani bostanlara dair rakamsal bir bilgimiz olabilsin mesela bostanların ekolojik olarak şehre kattığını bilmek önemli. Bostanların kente katkısıyla ilgili klasik bilgiler de var mesela ağaçların gölgesinde şehrin ısısının yaz aylarında 5 derece daha düşük olduğu yani çünkü beton sonuçta şehri ısıttığı için mesela bostanlık alanlarda şehri ısısının düştüğü bu anlamda iklim krizine faydası olabileceği gibi, bu tür daha genel bilgiler konuşuluyor ama böyle çok katmanlı bir şekilde bostanların her elementini düşünerek ekolojik olarak katkısı nedir sorusunun cevabını bilmiyoruz. Son zamanlarda mesela afetler üzerine düşünürken, kent bostanlarının afet anlarında afet sonrasında ne kadar faydalı olabileceğine dair araştırmalar çıkmaya başladı. Göçmenler, yaşlılar, çocuklar ve farklı marjinal addedilebilecek gruplar üzerinde bostanlık alanların özellikle mental anlamda yani hem fiziksel ama mental anlamda da ne kadar sağaltıcı yerler olabileceği üzerine çeşitli araştırmalar yapılıyor ve bu son 2-3 senedir daha çok yapılıyor. Yani Avustralya'dan Kanada'ya kadar pek çok örnek ve araştırma var. Benim editörlüğünü yaptığım Mekanda Adalet Derneği tarafından düzenlenen Beyond.İstanbul'un "Mekanda Adalet ve Kent Tarımı" sayısı var. O sayının içerisinde kent tarımının farklı anlamlarına dair pek çok yazı var. Bu söylediğim şeylerin bir kısmını orada da bulabilirsin mesela afet meselesi, kültürel tarih tarafı, işin gıda güvenliği meselesi, gıda egemenliği meselesi, farklı şehirlerin gıda belgeleri yayınlaması ve kent bostanları alanındaki değişik belediye çalışmaları falan bunlara dair pek çok şey var. O sayının içerisinde yani. Kısacası ilgi alanım epey geniş Yedikule bostanları nezdinde çünkü çok fazla meseleye dokunuyor ve o sayıda da hani bu ilgi alanlarını bir araya getirmeye çalıştım diyeyim ama benim için çok önemli olan bir şey tabii ki bu kent bostanları meselesini, gıda güvenliğine kitlememektir. Kent bostanlarının sadece gıda ile alakalı olmadığını, kültür tarihi için çok önemli semboller, fikirler, dayanışmalar taşıdığını, aynı zamanda tabi ki Türkiye

gibi bir yerde ve İstanbul gibi bir yerde farklı şiddet biçimlerini de açık etmemize ve konuşmamıza alan açtığını düşünüyorum. Bu açıdan kent bostanlarının kültür tarihi içerisinden konuşulmasını çok çok önemsiyorum. Çünkü gıda güvenliği, gıda egemenliği konuşmak bir nebze daha kolay ama. Ermenilerin öldürülmesini ya da Rumların şehirden sürülmesini ve bununla beraber şehirdeki bostan kültürünün, bağların, bağcılığın yok olması, şehrin doğasının öldürülmesini konuşmak çok daha zor farklı sebeplerden ötürü. O yüzden işin bu tarafını vurgulamayı çok önemsiyorum.

Gayrimüslimler ve bostanlardaki varlıkları hakkında "Tanpınar'dan Tovmasyan'a Bir Marul Memleketi" yazımda bir kısmından bahsediyorum mesela. 1942 varlık vergisiyle Ermeni bir ailenin elinden bir bostan kahvehanesi, bostan gazinosu diyor onlar, bostan gazinosu ellerinden alınıyor mesela ve bu hikayenin anlatıldığı yer bostan tarihiyle alakalı bir kitap değil aslında. Bu Takuhi Tovmasyan'ın yazdığı bir yemek kitabı aslında kendi aile tarihini yazıyor yemek vesilesiyle ve orada çok güzel Yedikule ve Yedikule marulu kısmı var. Çok tavsiye ederim. Nefis bir kitap. Benim başucu kitaplarımdan biri onun haricinde 1955, 6-7 Eylül olaylarında mesela daha çok biz bu olayları Beyoğlu imajları üzerinden biliriz dimi yani böyle işte içi dışına çıkartılmış dükkanlar ve Beyoğlu'nun o korkunç hâli ama aslında bütün şehirde olmuş pogromlar bunlar Yeniköy'den Yedikule'ye kadar ve bostanlar ve bağlar hep tahrip edilmiş yani pogromların bir parçası olarak aslında Rumların, Ermenilerin işlediği topraklar da yok edilmiş ve onlara da saldırılmış ama bu tarihin bir parçası olarak konuşulmuyor mesela. Ya da Rum cemaati özellikle 1955 olaylarına rağmen 1964 senesine kadar çok az insan gidiyor İstanbul'dan. Ama ne zaman ki 1964 oluyor, bavulunuzu alıp gidin diyorlar, 20 kilo bavul hakkı vererek, bu tarihten sonra inanılmaz hızlı bir göç dalgası başlıyor özellikle Atina'ya. Ben de biraz o yüzden Atina'dayım aslında, Yunanca, Rumca öğreniyorum ve buradaki İstanbul'dan gitmiş olan insanlarla görüşmeye çalışıyorum. Kısacası bu konuyu çalışmaya ben yeni başladım yani dediğim gibi 1-2 senedir böyle ağır ağır girmeye başladım bu meseleye ve hedefim zaten bu süreçlerin, bu yok oluşların daha net bir hikayesini ortaya çıkarmaya çalışıyorum.

MT: Bostanlarda rol alan, sözü geçen, kullanan ve genel olarak bostanlar üzerinde etkisi olan kullanıcı, aktörler ve paydaşları tanımlayabilir misiniz?

SK: Kastamonu Cideli bostancılar yani. Aleksandar Shopov'a ve Ayhan Han'ın makalesi var. Yani vakıflar, vakıf meselesi tabi çok önemli çünkü bu alanda hem Müslüman hem gayrimüslim vakıflarının sahip olduğu alanlar var hem de kişilerin sahibi olduğu alanlar var ama özellikle bu varlık vergisi ve 1955 olaylarıyla Yedikule ve yakın çevresindeki topraklar çok ciddi el değiştiriyor dediğim gibi bu süreçle ilgili detay bilgi bulmak zor çünkü zaten varlık vergisi ile ilgili arşivler kapalı. Onlar bir gün açılırsa orada çalışılacak pek çok şey olacaktır muhtemelen. Ama buradaki araziler el değiştirdi dediğimizde sonuçta belediye ve milli emlak el koydu bu arazilere ve şu anda bostancıların işgalci pozisyonda olmasının sebebi bu. Aslında Rumların, Ermenilerin elinden alınmış toprakların belediye ve milli emlakla temellük edildi ve bu topraklarla ne yapacaklarını o sırada pek bilemediler ve zaten

1950'ler içgöçün başladığı bir dönemdi, İç göçle İstanbul'a ilk yerleşim Zeytinburnu'na gerçekleştirilmiş ve burası İstanbul'un ilk gecekondusu olarak geçiyor ve Zeytinburnu dediğimiz zaten Yedikule'nin yani surların hemen dışıdır. Kastamonu, Cide'den çoğu da birbirinin zaten akrabası olan aileler, kişiler geliyor. Şu an orada bir aile çiftçiliği yapılıyor. Son senelerde Mardin'den de 1-2 kişi geldi. Orada çiçekçilik yapan Mardinli çiftçiler var. Aynı zamanda Afgan göçmenler çalışıyor bostanlarda. Yedikule bostanları zaten hep göçmen yeri oldu özellikle Balkanlar'dan gelen göçmenlerin alanıydı. Fakat mesela burada çalışmış olan Arnavutların, Makedonların tarihi, bostanlarla ve şehirle olan ilişkisi hiç bilinmiyor, hiç çalışılmadı yani o kadar çok eksik var ki bu alanla ilgili. Bugün de Afgan göçmenler çalışıyor pek çok bostanda. Yani şu an daha çok Kastamonu Cideliler, birkaç tane Mardinli çiftçi ve onların altında çalışan Afgan göçmenler var. Bostancılar dışında kent sakinleri de kullanıcıdır. Özellikle yakın çevreden, Fatih'ten Zeytinburnu'ndan düzenli gelip alışverişini oradan yapan insanlar var benim hatta senelerdir gide gele, üst üste gördüğüm pek çok kişi var yani haftalık alışverişini oradan yapan ama sadece alışveriş yapmak meselesi değil tabii ki, bu alan aynı zamanda dayanışma ve toplaşma yerleri. Kendine has kendine ait başka bir zaman rejimi ve başka bir yönetim biçimi olan yerler. Mesela bunu sadece bostancılar belirlemiyor. Bunu oradaki hayvanlar ve bitkiler belirliyor. Çünkü onların büyüme zamanları, yetişme zamanları, kimin kiminle iyi anlaştığı, işte nanenin hangi bitkinin yanına dikilebilecek, işte bir arının neyi sevdiği ama bilmem ne böceğinin neye zarar verdiği bütün bunlar bostanları kendi özerk yönetimi olan yerler haline getiriyor ve bu yüzden de aslında belediyenin ve devletin hiç sevmediği yerler çünkü hiçbir zaman tam olarak kontrol altına alamadıkları yerler. O yüzden de zaten bostancıları işgalci pozisyonunda tutmaktan çok memnunlar. Çünkü istedikleri zaman çıkartabilirler, istedikleri zaman bu alanları kendi kontrol ettikleri alanlar haline çevirebilmek istiyorlar. Örneğin mesela Yedikule Bahçe denen yer mesela bostandı, bu bahçenin yerinde olağanüstü güzel bir bostan vardı. Oranın bostancısı 80 yaşlarında Mehmet amca içinde ufak bir şelalesi olan, kendisi arıcılık yapan, gerçekten dünyanın hayatta kalmış en güzel bostanlardan biriydi. Mehmet amca 80 küsur yaşında oğluyla beraber senelerdir bostancılık yapan biri ve orayı Fatih Belediyesi aldı ve Yedikule bahçeye çevirdi. Oğluyla da geçen gün görüştük, Yedikule bahçeye gittiğimizde. Çok ilginç bir şey yani mesela bizim ürettiğimiz fikri almışlar mesela, okullar gelsin burada çocuklar öğrensinler toprak nasıl ekilir, nasıl biçilir buna dair alanlar yapmışlar. Çok şirin aslında okullara göre parselleri, mahsülleri mesela domatesleri isimlendirmişler ama o kadar birbiriyle ilişkisi olmayan, steril bir yer ki mesela bostancıyla konuşuyoruz, bize anlatıyor burada mısır yetiştirdik diyor. Aslında bir kaçını tohuma bırakmamız gerekiyor ki hani oradan tohumlar alalım ve seneye ekebilelim ama tohuma bıraktığında onlar çok solgun ve kötü gözüküyorlar, birkaç gün ve solgun ve kötü gözükmesin diye söktürmüşler tohum alamamış. Niye? Çünkü bağlamı anlamıyorlar, alandan zihinsel olarak çok uzaklar. Hâlbuki orada mesela yadigar tohumlar, Yedikule'nin tohumları var hâlâ orada yadigar tohumlar yetiştirilebilir. Bir kere bir bostanın yok edilip yerine bahçe kurmak kadar mantık dışı bir fikir olamaz ve bunları böyle ahşap kutular içerisine koymak kadar da bağlama aykırı bir eylem olamaz. Orası zaten kendi içinde

bir ekosistem. Yüzyıllardır o toprak işleniyor, düşünebiliyor musun sen onu kapatıyorsun üstüne sterillik ve görünüm uğruna çakıl döşüyorsun, araya da böyle minik ahşap kutular koyuyorsun. Yani tam bir gösteriş ve hobi bahçeciliği işle hobi olarak o bostancıyı da oraya alıyor ürünleri sulasın, baksın diye ama orada kendini yöneten bir hayat yok artık. Kısacası sadece bir imaj var orada. Yedikule Bahçe inanılmaz bir hikaye o yüzden bunun için alana güncel yaklaşımları anlamak için ya da belediyenin aklını, devletin aklını anlamak için orada çok iyi bir örnek Yedikule Bahçe ve tabii ki böyle yaparak demin bahsettiğim o biz yokken burada kimler vardı, bu toprakları kim işliyordu sorularını yok eden bir pratik bu, yani biz mesela tarihi haritalara baktığımızda oralarda açıkça yazıyor mesela Ismail paşa bostanı, Bayrampaşa bostanı, Manoli'nin bostanı, Tommo'nun bostanı, Yanni'nin bostanı. Bunlar yazıyor, tabi hep erkek isimleri bu arada tabi ki kadın ismi pek yok. Kadınların da bostanları var bu arada çıkıyor eski kaynaklarda karşımıza ama haritalarda hep erkek isimleri var. Ama mesela Yanni'ye ne oldu, Tommo'ya ne oldu, Manoli'ye ne oldu gibi soruları sormamızı engelliyor bu yeni projeler. Kara Surları'nın renovasyonunu ben bu perspektiften okuyorum. Biz orada var olan bostanlar vesilesiyle hem bir şehir tarihini, şehir kurgusunu, neden şehirlerin bu şekilde gelişmek ve büyümek zorunda olduğunu sorguya açarken bir anlamda bu bostanların sahibi kim, burada kimler vardı, ne olmuştu sorularını sormaya davet ediyoruz ve bu renovasyon projeleri aslında bir yeniden bir temellük etmeye dönüşüyor. Bu sefer mesela toprakları zaten elinden alınmış insanların bir de hafızasını tamamen şehirden silmeye yönelik bir hamle oluyor aslında, bu bilinçli veya bilinçsiz fark etmez. Hamle bu. Anlatabiliyor muyum? Günümüzde Kara Surları'nda sürmekte olan restorasyon çalışmasıyla ilgiliyse bostanlar sulandığı için Kara surlarının temeline su gidiyor ve surlarının temellerine zarar veriyor gerekçesiyle bazı bostanların kaldırılıp yerine çim alan olacağı iddiası söz konusu.

Ama mesela o zaman sana sorarlar, pardon çimleri nasıl yeşil tutacaksınız? Oraya çim döşemenin tam olarak mantığı nedir diye sorarlar ve sorduk çünkü İstanbul bitki örtüsünde öyle bir çim yok. Diyarbakır'a da aynı garabeti yaptılar. Diyarbakır surlarında suru yıktılar tamamen. Bu yaz orayı da gördüm. Böyle çimler tabii kuruyor, hele o havada çimleri ayakta tutmak çok zor, inanılmaz bir su israfı, muhtemelen bizim bu israfı baskımıza karşı güncel planda gerçek çim yerine çim halı önerecekler ama bu kadar bağlamın özgünlüğüne bir şey olabilir mi?

MT: Yedikule Kent Bostanı kamusallık, müştereklik, ortak yaşam ve üretim için sizce ne anlama geliyor?

SK: Ortak yaşam dediğimizde mesela sadece insanları kattığınız bir ortaklıktan bahsetmediğimiz, şehrin bitkilerini, hayvanlarını, rüzgarlarını, yağmurlarını, su kaynaklarını kattığımız bir şeyden bahsediyoruz ve bunların kendi zamanları olduğunu, kendi yaşam biçimlerini bir arada, bizim haricimizde bir arada olmayı öğrenmiş bir varlıklar bütününden bahsediyoruz. Bostanların tarihi aynı zamanda bir insan tarihi elbette ki çünkü onun içerisinde bir sürü zirai teknolojiler var, teraslama var, mimari anlamda da yani insan dokunuşu da çok önemli bir unsur bostanlar için. Ama sadece insan dokunuşuyla şekillenen yerler değil bunlar, insan kontrolünün

ötesinde başka yaşamlara, başka zamansallıklara açılmamızı sağlayan, bizi başkalarına açılmaya çağıran yerler bunlar. O anlamda çok önemsiyorum bu alanı. Farklı, özerk yönetim biçimlerini teşvik ettiği, kendi içinde barındırdığı için çok önemsiyorum. Özellikle bostanların kültür tarihini araştırırken gördüğüm şey bostanların hep farklı yerlerden insanları bir araya getirmesi. Yani hem Müslüm diyoruz, gayrimüslim diyoruz. Hani komünal sınırlar içerisinde de olabiliyor bu mesela Ermenilerin bayramı için çok önemli bostanlar ama illa öyle olmak zorunda da değil. Bostanlarda, şehrin her yerinden, her kimlikten insan bir araya gelip marulunu yiyebiliyor, takılabiliyor, içebiliyor, kadın, erkek bir arada olabiliyor. Biraz böyle istanbul'un mesire kültürünün kaybolmasıyla beraber devam ettiği yerdi aslında bostanlar 19. Yüzyıl sonu 20. Yüzyıl başında. Yine burayla ilgili en çok söylenen şey buranın işgalciler tarafından kapatıldığı, kimsenin giremediği fakat burası bir üretim alanı yani sen zaten niye adamın kadın, bostanına tamamen girmek zorundasın ki? Yani oradan alışveriş eden insanlar zaten geliyorlar orada her bostancının genelde minik bir barakası var, ahşaptan bir bankı var, böyle piknik masası gibi bir şey, her gelen onun etrafında oturuyor. Yani bu arada ben ne zaman oraya gitsem orada alışveriş yapan insanlar geliyorlar dediğim gibi alışverişlerini yapıyorlar ama oradaki muhabbet en az 2 saat sürüyor. Orada o kadar değişik insanlarla ben tanıştım ve karşılaştım ki çok acayip. Biz acayip iyi politik tartışmalar yürüttük mesela işte Saadet Partilisinden AKP'lisine, MHP'lisinden CHP'lisine böyle çok değişik ve çoklu bir ilişkilenme var aslında orada. Bir araya getirme gücü var bostanların ve onu görmek çok önemli bence. Yani her yere yürüyüp ayak basamıyor olmanın bu alanla ilgili bir problem olarak addedilmesi mantık dışı bence. Sonuçta şehirde bir sürü alan var yani kamusal olarak belirlenmiş ama belli kullanım şekilleri olan ve belli kuralları olan, o kurallara hepimiz uyuyoruz bir şekilde. Yani bostanlara da langur lungur girip adamın nanesini ezersen ya da emeğine zarar verirsen e tabii ki adam seni sokmayacak oraya. Yani burada üretim faaliyeti sürmekte ve senin orada ne olduğunu anlaman, oraya saygı göstermen gerekiyor çünkü bostancı da bostan da senden saygı bekliyor yani ve o saygıyı göstermezsen tabii ki bostancı içeri sokmayacak seni, niçin soksun ki? Kamusallık mekana her zaman ve mekanın her yerine erişilebilirlik anlamına gelmiyor. Erişilebilirliğin her zaman mekanın niteliğine göre belli kuralları vardır ve biz bu kurallara şehirde başka yerlerde uyuyorsak eğer burada da uyuyacağız. Bostanlar üzerine bu eleştirilerin asıl motivasyonları farklı aslında. Aklıma bir örnek geldi mesela. Kadınlar camilerde diye bir ekip var biliyor musun? Müslüman feministlerin başlattığı bir hareket, son 10 senedir cami avlularındaki ağaçları söktüler, oradaki çimlik alanları kaldırdılar ve bu bayağı aslında kadınlara, çocuklara ve oradaki sosyalleşmeye yönelik, bu tarz etkinliklere karşı bir hamleydi. Bu genel bir yaklaşım, yani bir anda insanların toplaştığı, ortaklaştığı, birtakım spontane ve sürprizli karşılaşmaların olabildiği ve bunların gündelik hayat içerisinde olabildiği ve akabildiği alanları yok etmek. Bostanlara da böyle bir yaklaşım söz konusu. Bostanların insanları bir araya getirme gücü çok yüksek. Cemaat oluşturma gücü çok çok yüksek. Ama tabi günümüzde mesela zengin insanlar bostanlara gitmiyor yani. Ama evet mesela 1920'lere, 30'lara, 40'lara bakarsan aslında gazete haberleri var bir sürü zenginin Beyoğlu'ndan Yeniköy'den, oradan buradan kalkıp Yedikule'ye sırf marul yemeye dut yemeye

gittiği anlatılıyor. Yani hakikaten farklı sınıflardan insanların farklı farklı etnik gruplardan insanların bir araya geldiği bir yer olduğunu görüyoruz. Yani böyle bir potansiyeli var bostanların, bu olmuş daha evvelden bugün öyle değil. Tabii ki bugün daha çok Zeytinburnu, Fatih gibi orta-alt gelir gruplarından insanlar geliyor buraya genelde ve tabi Yedikule'de bir şey sorunu da var yani hemen bostanların civarındaki mahalleli birazcık bostanları terk etmiş durumda. O da biraz başka bir hikaye yani Yedikule aslında yetmişlerde 1960-70'lerde falan bayağı komünist bir mahalle. Hatta Yedikule ilkokulunun müdürü komünist diye biliniyor öyle yani lakabı da öyle anılıyor ve tabii işte 80 darbesi ile beraber bütün Türkiye'de yaşanan bazı sosyal değişimler burada da tabii ki kendini gösteriyor. Mahallenin çehresi değişiyor ve bütün o daha sosyal ağlara önem veren, bostancıya önem veren, iş ve işçi haklarına önem veren o daha gündelik bilinç gittikçe erozyona uğruyor. Burada da öyle bir hikaye de vardı. Yani dedim ya çok katmanlı bir alan, çok fazla hikaye, etkenler var. O yüzden de çok seviyorum. O kadar bereketli ki yani her anlamda üstüne o yüzden yıllardır düşünüyorum yani bitmedi konu bilakis daha da açıldıkça açılıyor, açıldıkça açılıyor. Kısacası gelecek için bostanların kalması bize alternatif bir şehir, bir mekan üretme potansiyelini, ihtimalini hatırlatabilir. Başka türlü olabilir bir şehir, başka türlü yaşanabilir, farklı sınıfların farklı kimliklerin bir araya gel geldiği bir ortak alan olabilir. Şehrin sadece insan merkezli bir yer değil de, işte bu şehrin başka öğelerini de işte aktörlerini de katarak düşündüğümüz bir yer haline gelebilir ve o anlamda hayvan haklarına dokunuyor, iklim krizine dokunuyor. Ama aynı zamanda tabii ki bütün büyük şirketlerin zincirlerini kırdığımız, gıda meselesinde, yediğimiz içtiğimiz şeylerde, üreticiyle doğrudan ilişki kurabildiğimiz bir alan. Yani mesela bostanlarla ilgili söylenen şeylerden bir tanesi yolun kenarında olduğu için ürünlerde kim bilir ne kadar çok ağır metal mevcuttur gibi iddialarda bulunuyorlar. Hâlbuki biz bu alanda su analizini de yapıyoruz, toprak analizini de yapıyoruz, hiç ağır metal yok. Fakat sen pazardan gidiyorsun, alıyor diyelim, pazardan aldığın ürünün nereden geldiğini ve nasıl üretildiğini biliyor musun hiç? Pazarcı da çoğu zaman bilmiyor zaten. Oysa sen Yedikule'de gidip bostancıya sorabilirsin, gidip konuşabilirsin ya ne yapıyorsunuz, ne ediyorsunuz burada mesela belediye desteklese bostancıları orada ekolojik tarım bile yapılır. Biz toprak onarımı falan bile konuştuk. Bostancılarla hep konuştuğumuz şeyler bunlar. Toprak onarımı bile konuşuldu bostancılarla. Beraber biz, Recep amca vefat etmeden evvel doğal gübre yapmaya çalışıyorduk onun bostanında daha ilk gittiğimizde 2009 – 2010'da Alex'le beraber. Bostancıların çoğu oldukça açık fikirliler. Yani burada onarıcı toprak pratikleri de yapılabilir. O kadar fazla şey yapılabilir ki yani mesele bakış ve yaklaşım, belediyenin buraya nasıl baktığı. Ama belediye yapay çim döşemeyi, 2-3 tane turist gelip orada yürüyecek diye bağlam dışı projeler önermeyi tercih ediyor. Oradaki bütün üretimi darmaduman edecek, bostancıyı darmaduman edecek, itibarsızlaştıracak ve sonuç olarak alanı bostancıların ailelerinin çocuklarının devam ettirmek istemediği bir yere dönüştürecek.

MT: Son sorumu soruyorum o zaman, aşağıdaki kavramlardan hangisi veya hangileri bostanları sizin için en iyi tanımlıyor (eşik mekan, ara mekan, kamusal mekan, müşterek mekan)? 1'den 5'e doğru tanımlama derecesi artacak şekilde puanlayınız.

SK: Ben bu soruyu pas geçeyim olur mu?

MT: Tamam, peki hocam o zaman bu son sorumdu zaten başka da bir sorum yok. Teşekkürler.

Yiğit Ozar Görüşmesi

MT: Kendinizden kısaca bahseder misiniz? Yedikule bostanlarıyla ilgili etkileşiminiz ilginiz ya da çalışmalarınız nelerdir?

YO: Yiğit Ozar, arkeoloğum, 2013 yılından beri Tarihi Yedikule Bostanlarını Koruma Girişimi üyesiyim. Yedikule Bostanlarıyla etkileşimim de şu şekilde; Fatih Belediyesi'nin Yedikule ve Belgradkapı arasındaki bostan alanlarını bir rekreasyon alanı projesi için yok etmek istemesiyle birlikte başladı. İlk olarak arkeolog olduğum için o dönem bu konuda bir arkeolojik tahribat olduğunu düşünerek ki zaten vardı, sur içerisinde sur koruma alanında böyle bir projenin yapılmasının uygun olmadığını düşünerek alana gitmiştim. Ama daha sonra alandaki bostanların surlarla kurduğu ilişkiyi, alandaki tarım pratiklerinin kendisinin de bir tarihsel arka planı olması ve bir kültürel peyzaj oluşturması, surlar, bostanlar, mahalle, çevredeki tarihi mezarlıklar ve diğer sivil mimarlık örnekleriyle birlikte ve yerleşim dokusuyla birlikte konunun daha geniş kapsamlı ele alınmasını gerektiren bir çok katmanlılığı olduğu izlenimini uyandırdı.

MT: Yedikule Kent Bostanları İstanbul kent bütünü için sizce ve çalışma ya da ilgi alanınız içinde ne ifade ediyor? Mekansal olarak ve toplumsal olarak değerlendirebilir misiniz?

YO: Birkaç farklı açıdan bakabiliriz. Tabii ki bir kültürel miras üzerinden, kültürel miras dokusu üzerinden bakıldığında kara surlarının iki yanında. Eskiden daha geniş alanlarda olmakla birlikte günümüzde hala önemli bir bölgede varlığını sürdüren bostan alanlarından bahsediyoruz. Dolayısıyla İstanbul haritasını önümüze açıp baktığımızda kara surlarının oluşturduğu hat hem günümüzde tarihi yarımada dediğimiz ama aslında sur içi olan tarihsel çekirdeği sınırlayan hem de ona aslında yeşil bir altyapı sunan bir alan olarak önemli bir özellik kazanıyor. Bunun dışında günümüzde kent tarımıyla ilgili tartışmalar dünyada çok yaygın. Gıda politikalarında kentlerin gıdaya daha aracısız ulaşması gibi tartışmalarda kentsel tarım önemli bir konu haline gelmiş durumda. Yedikule Bostanlarına baktığımızda ise dünyada pek çok metropol bunu pratik etmeye, alan bulmaya çalışırken bizim elimizde neredeyse 1500 yıldır hiç kesintisiz bir şekilde devam eden bir alan olması açısından bizi ayrıcalıklı bir değerle karşılaştırmış oluyor. Bu da günümüzün tarım politikaları, gıda politikalarıyla ilgili kazandırdığı değer diyebiliriz.

MT: Bostanlarda rol alan, sözü geçen, kullanan ve genel olarak bostanlar üzerinde etkisi olan kullanıcı, aktörler ve paydaşları tanımlayabilir misiniz?

YO: Bununla ilgili bir yazı Yedikule Bostanlarını koruma girişimi tarafından hazırlandı. Ben de yazıya katkı verenlerden biriyim. Orada aynı zamanda bir ilişki ağı belirtilmiş. Orada paydaş gruplarını daha detaylı görmek mümkün. Kabaca söyleyecek olursak, tabii ki bostancılar başta geliyor ama bunun dışında alanla ilgilenen, farklı değerleriyle ilgilenen kültürel miras uzmanları, mimarlar, sanat tarihçiler, arkeologlar, tarih araştırmacıları, yerel yönetimin farklı ölçeklerinden yetkililer, kamu kurumlarından, örneğin arkeoloji müzeleri, koruma kurulları gibi yetkililer. Çok değerli ve çok katmanlı olan alanlara baktığımızda ne kadar fazla katman ve ne kadar fazla değer tespit edebiliyorsak o kadar fazla yetki ve sorumluluk o kadar fazla da ilgili bir alanda o değerlerin ve katmanlılığın karşısında haritada belirmeye başlıyor zaten. Dolayısıyla oldukça çok aktörlü, çok fikirli, çok düşünceli bir alan diyebiliriz.

MT: Yedikule Kent Bostanı kamusallık, müştereklik, ortak yaşam ve üretim için sizce ne anlama geliyor?

YO: Kamusallık üzerinden baktığımızda bunu mevzuat üzerinden daha rijit/katı bir kavram gibi tanımlayacak olursak; bazı yöneticilerin düşündüğü gibi ki ben o düşüncede değilim, mesela oradaki bostancıları işgalci olarak görüp burasını bir kamu mülkü ve dünya mirası alanı bu kadar kıymetli bir alanda böyle bir faaliyetin hâlâ daha bu küçük çıkar grupları tarafından kullanılmasını eleştiren ifadeler kullanılıyor olması mülkün kamusallığına zarar olarak yorumluyorlar bu durumu.

Burada işte kamusallık nedir, müştereklik zaten daha geniş bir kavram ya da kültürel miras nedir diye bir yaklaşım farklılığı var. Sonuçta orada üretilen elbette oradaki ailenin geçim kaynağı olabilir. Aile ya da değil. Oradaki işletmecinin geçim kaynağı olabilir ama günümüzde Eminönü'nde hanlar bölgesindeki işletmeler de aynı şekilde bir geçim kaynağı, üstelik çok daha yüksek kazançlar elde edebiliyorlar. Ama aynı zamanda bu tarihi dokunun içerisinde geleneksel ticari merkez diye de gösterdiğimiz bir alanda, korunacak bir işlev olarak varlığını göstermeleri çok da yadırganmıyor. Tabii ki oteli otele dönüştürmek isteyenler soylulaştırmak isteyenler sermaye ve yönetim grupları var, onlar ayrı ama genel olarak baktığımızda yadırganmıyor. O sancıların durumu bence benzer. Ne kadar kazanıp kazanmadıklarından ziyade orada gerçekleştirdikleri faaliyeti eğer somut olmayan miras olarak görüyorsak, buradaki kentsel tarım pratiğini, yerinde korunması ve sürdürülmesi gereken bir faaliyet. Ama bununla birlikte şunu da kabul etmek gerekiyor, bostan bir değerse oradaki kara surları da anıtsal bir değer. Elbette ikisini birlikte koruyabilmek önemli. Ve eğer ki alanın bunca yıldır neredeyse tamamen bostancılara bırakılması ya da bostancılara bırakılması da değil ama en azından bir bütünleşik master plan ya da yönetim planından azade bırakılmasından kaynaklı pek çok sorun oluştuysa bu boşlukları doldururken bostancıların alana verdiği zararlar varsa bunların kontrol altına alınması gerekiyor tabii ki. Çünkü bu alanın diğer değerleri işte bir orta çağ, geç antik çağ savaş mimarisinin önemli unsurlarından biri olması, anıt değeri, belge değeri, İstanbul'un diğer sakinlerinin bu mekânı deneyimleyebilme hakkı gibi değerler üzerinden bir denge kurulması gerekiyor.

Bununla birlikte kamusallığı sağlamanın bir başka yoluyla da eğer bu tarım pratiği bize göre öyle zaten, kültürel mirassa ve buradan bir gelir elde edilebiliyorsa bu kadar göze çarpan bir şekilde ve kamusal tartışması yürütecek bir şekilde, o zaman buranın kamusallığını oradaki bostancıyı ya da bostancılığı bir icraat olarak tutarak nasıl kamusallaştırabiliriz üzerinden bu tartışmayı örgütlemek lazım. O zaman gerçekten bir yönetim ve politika ortaya çıkarabiliriz. Bostancıların, ürettiği ürünler bütün İstanbul'un iaşesine katkı sağlayabilir mi bilmiyorum ama ne ölçüde sağlayabilir, nereye kadar yetebilir? Tarihi yarımadanın semtlerine mi yönlendireceğiz? Yakındaki pazarlara mı yönlendireceğiz? Bunları gerçekten biraz daha bu üretimi belediyeleştirerek halkın daha ucuz gıdaya ulaşmasını sağlayacak formüller mi bulacağız? Bu çatışmalı ilişki içerisinden buna bakmak, bu soruları cevaplamak gerekiyor. Yani kutuplaştırıcı seçimler yapmak bu alanın bu karmaşık ama özgün değer potansiyelini alt üst eder diye düşünüyorum.

MT: Peki bu ortak yaşam ortaklaşma, müştereklik üzerinden, bu alanın şu an okumasını nasıl yapıyorsunuz?

YO: İşte müştereklik de tam burada ortaya çıkıyor. Yani değerlerin, paydaşların müşterekliğini bulabilmek burada aslında müşterek alan oluşmasını sağlayacaktır.

MT: Son sorumu soruyorum o zaman, aşağıdaki kavramlardan hangisi veya hangileri bostanları sizin için en iyi tanımlıyor (eşik mekan, ara mekan, kamusal mekan, müşterek mekan)? 1'den 5'e doğru tanımlama derecesi artacak şekilde puanlayınız.

YO: Müştereklik ve kamusala 5 verebiliriz. Sınır tabii zamansal bir şey, yani geçmişten bugüne Kara Surlarının süreklilik taşıyan yapısı bazı yerlerinde, yeni ulaşım hatlarının tanımlanması, endüstriyel facility lerin yakın çevreye inşası, yakın çevre boşluklara yerleşim yerlerinin kurulması ve belediyelerin bazı interventionları sebebiyle bozulmuş ve fragmente olmuş olsa da ama bazı bölgeleri için uzun bir hat olduğu için hâlâ geçerli olabilir tabii. Yedikule odağında baktığımızda. Sınıra 3, eşik ve ara mekâna da 4 diyebiliriz. Aktivite alanına 1 ve tanımsız alana da 1 diyorum.

Müşterek mekan içinse müştereklik uyandırılma potansiyeli olan bir yer tabi. Bir yandan yine de bostancının orada olması bir müşterek olarak kullanabilir belki fakat kimisi ecri misil ödüyor, kimisi başka şeyler ödüyor vesaire. Bazısı vakıflardan bazısı belediyeden. Osmanlı döneminde mesela hendeklere baktığında yani sur içi bostanları ve surun üzerinde, surun dışında diyorlar bazı arkadaşlarımız fakat üzerinde diyebileceğimiz bostanların, bu statülerinde farklılık var. Surun içinde kalan, mahalleyle sur arasında kalan bostanlar, Osmanlı döneminden beri bostan olarak organize edilmiş zaten. Şimdi orası sur içinde kalan bostanlar, yani onu Alexander Shopov ve Ayhan Han yayınlarında daha detaylı rastlarsın ama yanlış hatırlamıyorsam 16-17. Yüzyılda dahi Osmanlı belgelerinde haritada böyle çizilmiş, İsmail Paşa bahçesi, bostanı, tarihi havuzu var kuyusu var. Bunları hala görebiliyoruz. Bostancın evi var tarihi, görebiliyoruz. Yani müştemilatı var, bu şekilde organize edilmiş sınırları olan bostanlar. Bunların durumu farklı. Bir de surların, şimdi surlar üçlü bir sur sistemi ve bu üçlü sur sisteminde duvarların arasına

zaman içerisine yerleşmiş olan bostanlar ve hendeğe yerleşmiş olan bostanlar ve hendekten de sonra eğer alan kaldıysa hendekle 10 yıl caddesi arasına yerleşmiş olan bostanlar var. Bunların tarihleri birbirlerinden farklı. Surlar işlevini koruduğu yıllarda o olanların bostanlaşması herhâlde çok mümkün olmamış çok emin olmamakla birlikte. Çünkü sur askeri bir tesis olarak kullanılıyorsa orada zaten başka bir fonksiyon vardı ama bir dönem sonra hendeklerin içerisindeki bentlerden, beşinci bentle altıncı bent arası bilmem kimin şeklinde bostancılık yapmak üzere kiralandığını görüyoruz. Dolayısıyla o zaman onların mülkiyet statüsüne bakıldığında öyle yerlerden kaynağını alan bir arazi kullanımı mevcut. İç taraftaki daha eski olan bostanların zaten her birinin Osmanlıda önemli bir kişinin vakfının akarı ya da işte Belgradkapı Kilisesi'nin kendi vakfının akarı ya onları zaten vakfiyeleri de bostan olmayı, olmasını koruyan şekilde yazılmış. Hani bu tartışmanın tarihsel kökenine ineceksen, buradan ilerlemek gerekir. Ama müştereklik kavramı da esnek bir kavram. Bir alanın müşterek olabilmesi için illaki her arazi parçasına ayak basabiliyor olmamız gerekmiyor. O arazi parçasından üretilen değerde ortaklaşmak da bir başka müştereklik meselesi.

Burada bahsettiğimiz müşterek değer gıda olabilir mesela ya da bu gıdayı üreten, toprağı işleyen bilgi de olabilir

Evet ama dediğin gibi burada bir yönetim sorunu var. Hem bostancının hem kamusal alanın, kamunun, yerel yönetimin ihtiyaç ve beklentilerini dengeleyecek bir geleceği tarif eden bir yönetim sistemi ortaya koymak gerekiyor. Bu da sadece sur duvarlarına iskele kurup restore etmekle olmuyor. Bütün sur hattına bütünleşik bakan belki bir Master plan, bir yönetim planı, bir çerçeve ortaya koymakla olabilir çünkü oradaki surlara erişimi zorlaştıran, surların "kamusallığını" tartışma konusu haline getirebilen tek kullanım biçimi bostanlar da değil. Surların dibinde, farklı belediyelerin yerleşmiş şantiyeleri var. Yakın zamanda gitmedim ama eskiden Fatih Belediyesi'nin çöp kamyonlarının park ettiği kocaman bir otopark alanı vardı mesela sur dibinde, bu çok daha büyük bir problem surun itibarı, erişilebilirliği ve mekansal algısının kente kazandırılabilmesi açısından baktığında. Bunun gibi çok fazla erişilemez, çitlenmiş alan var. Bunun karşılığı daha eski ekol bir yaklaşımla anıt ve anıtın çevresinin sterilize edilmesi olmamalı. Yani millet bahçesi projesi de bu açıdan sorunlu. Millet bahçesine baktığında kamusal mı? Kamusal diyebilirsin, işte bitince halkın kullanımına açılacak ama orada kamusallaştırmaya çalıştığımız tek şey, bir araziye metrekare olarak bakıp içime adım atabilmemiz mi yoksa o arazinin taşıdığı anlamın, değerin günümüz koşullarında kabul edilebilir bir düzeyde yorumlanıp farklı bir kentsel tasarımla açığa çıkarılması mı? Buralardan tartışmak gerekiyor bence meseleyi.

MT: Peki son olarak sizin yani kısaca tanımınız ne olurdu? Sizin deneyiminizde bu bostanları nasıl tanımlardınız?

YO: Çok katmanlı bir kültürel peyzaj alanı olması üzerinden dile getiriyoruz bu alanı genelde ama şimdi yani müşterek mekan ve diğer kavramlar üzerinden baktığımızda daha geniş bir tanımı hak ediyor tabi ki.

Answers of the Expert Participants to 5th Question in Interview

Q5: Which of the following concepts (threshold space, intermediate space, public space, common space) best describes Yedikule Urban Gardens for you? Please rate from 1 to 5, with the degree of definition increasing. Apart from these concepts, how would you define this space?

For threshold space:

Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

"**For threshold,** I give **4**, as when you enter this area spatial tissue changes drastically with respect to the previous and forthcoming urban tissues."

Gökçer Okumuş:

"**For threshold,** I give **4**, as it is an intermediary area and there is an imply of inside (historical peninsula) and outside (periphery) and they merge in the gardens."

Oktan Nalbantoğlu:

"**For threshold,** I give **5**, as It is an important threshold because this place is a rupture between two similar textures, the historical peninsula on one side and residential areas such as Zeytintinburnu, Kazlıçeşme on the other, you suddenly encounter a completely different world. So it's not like a transition, it's a threshold, you have to cross that threshold."

Sedanur Gezer:

"**For threshold,** I give **5**, as both morphologically and socially, this area is a threshold… and although it is possible to read the threshold as a border, in fact the threshold has a degree of permeability.

N. Simla Uygaç:

"**For threshold,** I give **4**, as morphologically, gardens are urban agricultural areas located in front of the city walls, which have historically been characterized as threshold lines. There is a Land Walls and a very dense housing development behind it, and on the other hand, there is an area extending towards Zeytinburnu with roads, cemeteries and other uses. That is why, it is a very clear threshold because the texture changes there, the timeline you are in changes, it changes right down to the construction conditions.

Yiğit Ozar:

"**For threshold,** I give 4.

For boundary:

Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

“For boundary, I give **4**, as the Land Walls are the border and it is not possible to evaluate the gardens separately from the walls. In other words, there are no gates between each garden, and it is not easy to move from one garden to another because of the land walls. This can create a perception of a border.”

Gökçer Okumuş:

“For boundary, I give **3**, It's definitely a boundary, but it's not a self-imposed limit.”

Oktan Nalbantoğlu:

“For boundary, I give **5**, as we consider gardens together with the walls, I can say that it is a border. Because you can't get here without going through the gate. So there are gates here. I mean Mevlanakapı, Belgradkapı, Altınkapı, so you have to go to that gate and pass through it, and the boulevard built in the 1950s also underlined the border feature.”

Sedanur Gezer:

“For boundary, I give **2**, as borders imply that we should not cross this space, that we should stay within this defined framework, yet this is not the case here.”

N. Simla Uygaç:

“For boundary, I give **4**, as I think it's a clear limit, especially with the land walls behind it.”

Yiğit Ozar:

“For boundary, I give **3**, eventhough it is fragmented throughout the history, being a border is valid for some parts and gardens should be thought together with the Land Walls.”

For in-between space:

Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

“For in-between space, I give **5** as the gardens have an aspect that actually brings the countryside and the city together. After all, what is called agriculture is something specific to the countryside, the existence of such a texture through the gardens, the existence of such a layeredness can enable this space to be read as an in-between space within the city.”

Gökçer Okumuş:

“For in-between space, I give **2** as it is a space between the road and the wall, so neither of these two is a space on which human activities are carried out. One is a vehicular road and the other is a wall, so there are no people in the square.”

Oktan Nalbantoğlu:

"For in-between space, I give **3** as the quality of in-between space is a bit weak because there is a problem between the east and the west. In other words, the west is an area defined by public spaces and cemeteries, while the east is more urban."

Sedanur Gezer:

"For in-between space, I give **3** as my association of this area with the concept of threshold is stronger than that of in-between space."

N. Simla Uygaç:

"For in-between space, I give **3**."

Yiğit Ozar:

"For in-between space, I give **4**."

For undefined space:

Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

"For undefined space, I give **5** as in most of the plans made for this area, since they are seen as parks, there is an implication that they are no different from any other green area… The gardens need to be known and visible in the city, yet it is not the case for today."

Gökçer Okumuş:

"For undefined space, I give **4** as for some people it is very defined, but for me it is not very well-defined due to its complexity and multilayeredness."

Oktan Nalbantoğlu:

"For undefined space, I give **2** as This is not an undefined area. the 10th Year Boulevard is an important definition. What will be more defined than that? Even the parking lot behind it is actually a defined area. It is used as a parking lot."

Sedanur Gezer:

"For undefined space, I give **4** as in terms of current use. This is a very large area. Not all of them are parks, not all of them are currently protected and visited, they are undefined because they do not serve the city as a whole."

N. Simla Uygaç:

"For undefined space, I give **2** as I think it's a defined area, where is the garden, where is the road, where are the land walls are clearly defined. In fact the borders of the gardens are also defined as there are intervals such as Mevlanakapı, Silivrikapı, they divide it and those intervals are also defined."

Yiğit Ozar:

“For undefined space, I give **1**.”

For public spaces:

Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

“For public space, I give **3** as gardens do not have much publicness. After all, there is a commercial gardening there now, so it doesn't work like a public space, we can say it's like a semi-public and semi-private space, but of course it can produce a public value.”

Gökçer Okumuş:

“For public space, I give **2** as It should be a public space, but, currently, it does not have publicness.”

Oktan Nalbantoğlu:

“For public space, I give **2** as public’s interaction with this area is not much.”

Sedanur Gezer:

“For public space, I give **2** as I cannot define its current use as a very clear public space.”

N. Simla Uygaç:

“For public space, I give **5** as it is very clearly public.”

Yiğit Ozar:

“For public space, I give **5** as it is a public.”

For common space:

Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

“For common space, I give **3** as it may not be considered a common space today, but it has the potential to be a common space. But as I said, as a result, because of the food here, of course, people's access to fair, healthy food and the production of local food networks, food solidarities, as I said, are, actually, practices of commoning.”

Gökçer Okumuş:

“For common space, I give **2** as it may not be considered a common space today, It could be a common space, it can be transformed into a common space with integrative strategies.”

Oktan Nalbantoğlu:

“For common space, I give **2**. If you ask me about its potential of becoming the commons, I would give it a 5 as I think the physical and social qualities and the diversity of actors necessary for the realization of commoning practices are present here.”

Sedanur Gezer:

“For common space, I give **2** as food production and the fact that the culture of gardening still exists.”

N. Simla Uygaç:

“For common space, I give **5** as it is very clearly commons.”

Yiğit Ozar:

“For common space, I give **5** as it is a place that has the potential to awaken the commons. The fact that the gardener is there can be thought as the existence of the commons,”

For activity/event space:

Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

“For activity/event space, I give **5** as not only gardening, but also various activities such as the garden school, workshops, festivals, film screenings, and lectures open to everyone take place in this area.”

Gökçer Okumuş:

“For activity/event space, I give **2** as it is definitely not an activity event venue, not at the moment.”

Oktan Nalbantoğlu:

“For activity/event space, I give **3** as it is still visited by local and foreign tourists, especially during daylight hours. I mean, there are some activities around it, and frankly, visiting the cemetery is also an activity.”

Sedanur Gezer:

“For activity/event space, I give **2**, yet, being an activity and event space would feed the publicness and the commons.”

N. Simla Uygaç:

“For activity/event space, I give **1** as it is not an activity space, it is an actively used space, but I think that is not what I understand by activity and event. Production is also an activity, but I don't include it in that scope.”

Yiğit Ozar:

"For activity/event space, I give **1** as it is not an activity space other than gardening."

Expert participants' definitions of Yedikule Urban Gardens:

Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

"Multilayered cultural heritage site."

Gökçer Okumuş:

"Abandoned. It is unknown to the general public or to urbanites. Neglected, left behind. However, it can really become one of the important parts of a flow, a route, a training program, a life practice, if we can make a good fiction there."

Oktan Nalbantoğlu:

"Threshold is an important term here. Apart from that, it is fluid, especially on the north-south axis. It is also a heterogeneous space. The gateway of the Historic Peninsula, which is why it is a threshold. In other words, this is actually a place of confrontation with the historical peninsula."

Sedanur Gezer:

"Permeable threshold space."

N. Simla Uygaç:

"A very oppressed space. I mean it is almost struggling for existence. I would define it as an oppressed space. I also think it is a fluid and heterogeneous space in terms of functions and users."

Yiğit Ozar:

"a multi-layered cultural landscape area."

Answers of the Expert Participants to 2nd, 3rd and 4th Questions in Interview

Q2: What do Yedikule Urban Gardens mean for the city of Istanbul as a whole and for your field of work or interest? Can you evaluate it spatially and socially?

Yedikule Urban Gardens and Its Physical Qualities

Expert participants began to describe the meaning of the site for Istanbul, mostly by talking about its physical qualities.

Gökçer Okumuş:

"Yedikule Gardens is a place that was formed **adjacent** to the Land Walls, in other words, it is a special place in terms of urban heritage, in fact, it is an urban space on the other side of a border formed on an axis. It is also a topographical **threshold** where a water line used to cross… It is a **green** production area outside the Land Wall."

Sedanur Gezer:

"Gardens are important both in terms of being **green void** spaces and the reflections of the relationship between **the city** and **the rural** in the urban area… and when we look at them in terms of **green space** and **agricultural practices**, I think that they are among the areas that need **to be integrated** with the city."

N. Simla Uygaç:

"Yedikule Urban Gardens is a **multi-layered**, **heterogeneous** area that **continues along the Land Wall**, in fact, when we read the history of that place, it is a **fertile soil** with the water saturation of its ground due to the fact that it is a ditch and its identity that has evolved into an garden over time,"

Yiğit Ozar:

"When we open the map of Istanbul in front of us and look at it, the line formed by the land walls gains an important feature as an area that both **demarcates** the historical core, which we call the historical peninsula or walled city today. Gardens actually provide **a green infrastructure** for it… Urban agricultural area that is **disrupted** and **fragmented.**"

Yedikule Urban Gardens and Intangible Qualities

Stating that this area cannot be defined only by its tangible qualities, all participants characterized the gardens with intangible qualities.

Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

"Gardens are more **attractive** to people, after all, I think seeing an garden in the city should be more **interesting** to many people, I think it should arouse more **curiosity**… Yet, If you ask anyone passing through Istanbul today, they may perceive these gardens as **idle** areas in someone's garden or hobby gardens. **No one**

knows that there was such a use along the historical city walls and they have no knowledge of Istanbul's centuries-old relationship with gardens."

Oktan Nalbantoğlu:

"These are complete **rehabilitation areas**. You know, you go there, spend the whole day there and come back. You see the production, you collect the product with your own hands, and you get involved in agriculture, that is, you touch the soil. You are close to the soil, which is one of the most important problems today. Therefore, Yedikule Gardens has a **rehabilitative effects** on the visitors."

Suna Kafadar:

"We are talking about an area that has been **removed** from the economic data of the city. Therefore, the first of its spatial significance is the **lack of a place** for gardens in the modern urban fiction, the coding of gardens as a **peasantry** and peasantry as an inferior category, an inferior existence, the **absence of agriculture** in the development and growth imaginations of the city."

Gökçer Okumuş:

"When you say Yedikule Urban Gardens to someone living in Küçükçekmece, it may sound **meaningless,** or it may not even mean anything to someone living in Pendik, Sancaktepe or Levent. It may only **mean** something if you say Yedikule Urban Gardens to people living in Zeytinburnu and Fatih, but since it has been on the agenda for a long time, of course it has created its own agenda."

N. Simla Uygaç:

"I mean, the oldest version I remember was quite **neglected**. Then it was **very popular** for a while. Then it was **empty** again for a while. For a while there were small makeshift shacks, they were **demolished** by the municipality and there were **incidents** related to this."

Sedanur Gezer:

"When we look at the current situation, interaction with and within gardens is generally **limited** to the people in the neighborhood, the residents of the neighborhood. This gives the perception that the area is **isolated** and **abandoned** from the rest of the city."

Yedikule Urban Gardens as an Urban Agricultural Area

Since the function of the area for centuries has been urban agriculture, most of the participants' introductory sentences mentioned the relationship of the area with urban agriculture.

N. Simla Uygaç:

It is an **agricultural production site** right next to a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Land Walls, and this **production** is of course **common** in terms of passing the **intangible cultural heritage** from past to future.

Oktan Nalbantoğlu:

"We pointed out that recreational areas already exist everywhere, whereas **agriculture** is an element that is not always encountered in the urban fabric, and that the significance of an **agricultural tradition** dating back to Byzantium has been maintained in this area… It could be used as a very good practice to keep the ideology of **urban agriculture**, which has recently been on the agenda in the world, alive and sustained in this area."

Yiğit Ozar:

"When we look at Yedikule Gardens, while many metropolises in the world are trying to practice **urban agriculture** and find space for it, we have a **privileged** value in terms of having a **historical agricultural space** that has been going on uninterruptedly for almost 1500 years."

Gökçer Okumuş:

"…in such a period when **urban agriculture** is on the agenda in urban areas, yes, gardens can be called **as production activity**, **a production heritage** that needs to be protected."

Yedikule Urban Gardens as an Urban Memory

Participants emphasized that this area is an important part of the city's memory and expressed their concern about the loss of this memory day by day.

Sedanur Gezer:

"In terms of the city, it is not only a park or an area where urban agricultural practices are carried out. It is actually a significant part of the Istanbul's **collective memory**… They have a **historical urban memory**."

Oktan Nalbantoğlu:

On the other hand, it is a very important place for **urban memory.** It is necessary to protect this space. Because even though the walls of Theodosius are included in the UNESCO World Heritage List as a fortification, in fact, it is the spaces in its immediate surroundings and the social life these spaces provide that give the fortification **its identity**.

Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

"In the past, people actually used to go to the gardens, they used to pass through the gardens, you see people passing through the gardens on postcards and so on. But today, I think this **urban memory** has been broken, unfortunately, because of the

demolitions and **transformation** projects for the gardens from the past to the present, I think this **public value** has also been **eroded**."

Yedikule Urban Gardens and Public Claim

Oktan Nalbantoğlu:

"…it cannot interact with the public in its current condition because not many people go to this area… People should become a part of the production system and **claim** the space. It is **vital** for the society to **claim** their city."

Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

"These areas can be **protected** and the gardens can **survive** by securing the presence of the gardener there, and not only by the commercial relations of the gardeners with the market or tradesmen, but also by the **people** in the city **establishing a connection** with the area."

Gökçer Okumuş:

Here, it is necessary to involve the public a little more. Yes, it needs to become a degree of common… This is never something that a municipality should decide on its own or the property owner should decide on its own. There are some things that need to be **negotiated**. There should be the **participation of public** and **gardeners**. It is an area that needs to be **re-evaluated** in that way, and then be **included** in urban life.

Yedikule Urban Gardens as a Place of Solidarity and Resistance

Stating that this area cannot be defined only by its physical qualities, some participants characterized the gardens with social qualities.

Suna Kafadar:

"I think that urban gardens are not only about food, they represent very important **symbols, ideas** and **solidarities** for the history of culture, but also, of course, in a place like Turkey and in a place like Istanbul, they provide a space for us to reveal and talk about different **forms of violence**."

Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

"I was very surprised by the **struggle** against the destruction of the gardens under rubble in 2013. I did not expect such an **intense protest and resistance** from actors from such **different social groups**. I did not think that this issue would attract so much public attention, interest and even **international resonance**. Because after all, it is an area in Yedikule that is not very **visible**. It is not as public as Taksim Square."

N. Simla Uygaç:

“There is also **resistance**, an **effort** to keep it as an garden… and sometimes there are **protests** and **public events** to protect the gardens against construction and change of function.”

Yedikule Urban Gardens and the Security Problem

Some of the participants commented on the general belief that the area is an unsafe place.

Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

“It seems to me that people have a **prejudice** against gardens and the area where they are located. You know, there is a general opinion that prevents them from going to the gardens. That is actually related to the Land Walls. It is also related to the perceptions that stem from the fact that the city walls and the area have always been **criminalized, unsafe** and **uncanny** in the recent past.”

Oktan Nalbantoğlu:

“The **existence** and **protection** of Yedikule Gardens is actually very important in terms of **urban space security**. I mean, this area is regarded as an **unsafe** area today. … When there is a continuous **agricultural activity**, agriculture gardeners protect the area against various threats. They provide a spatial security. … everyone is slowly leaving because of **insecurity**. However, we should not **abandon** it.”

Yedikule Urban Gardens and the Accesibility Problem

Underlining that Yedikule and its immediate surroundings have accessibility problems, the participants criticized the fact that the accessibility problem of this area is mostly discussed through the gardens and questioned whether it is really necessary to keep every part of the area accessible.

Yiğit Ozar:

“It may be possible to come up with a **master plan, a management plan, a framework** that looks at the entire city walls in an **integrated way**. Because the gardens are not the only form of use that makes **access** to the city walls **difficult** and makes the "publicness" of the city walls a matter of debate… The response to the **accessibility problem** should not be to **sterilize** the monument and its surroundings with an old school approach.”

Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

“The presence of the gardeners (bostancı) and gardens there is seen as the source of the **accessibility problem**. Is it only the **presence** of the garden there that is the cause of the access problem, that is, there are also problems with accessing the city walls, entering and exiting the city walls where there are no gardens in this area. On top of that, do people have to step on **every point** of the land walls? Do they have to see every point? After all, wouldn't conveying and explaining **a historical value** that lives there be a value in itself? …I am not saying that there should be only gardens,

of course, but problems such as **accessibility** can be solved with **minimal intervention** by **preserving** the historical garden tissue."

Gökçer Okumuş:

"It is not really in an area that is **easily accessible** to anyone, it doesn't seem to have any other users. In other words, people inside the city wall **cannot access** the garden area behind the city wall, they cannot step on it, they cannot pass through it anyway… increase **accessibility** to the area is needed."

Yedikule Urban Garden as a Promise

Most of the participants discussed the promised future and spatial potential of the site, rather than its current state, in terms of the qualities of the space it could transform into. This set the ground for another focus of the study, the commons and the interview questions related to it.

Sedanur Gezer:

"This area can be transformed into a **more productive** production space with the **collective contribution** of **the local administration, non-governmental organizations, gardeners, those who produce projects** in the area and the **public**."

Oktan Nalbantoğlu:

"With a **holistic and comprehensive management plan** produced through **the consensus of the multiple actors and users** of this site, this area can make a significant **contribution** to Istanbul in terms of **collective and local production.**"

Gökçer Okumuş:

"Yedikule Urban Gardens can really become one of the important parts of **a flow, a route, a training program, a life practice**, if we approach this area with a comprehensive design and management plan that takes into account the **multi-layered nature** of it."

Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

"I think that if people **learn, perceive** and **experience** the history of the gardens here with the areas to be organized, or at least if this experience is offered to them, that wall line would **become more meaningful** for tourists and locals."

Q3: Can you identify the users, actors and stakeholders who play a role, have a say, use and generally have an impact on the gardens?

Abdullah Inanç Kıran emphasizes the significance of gardeners (bostancı) to exist in Yedikule Gardens:

"The most fundamental actor in a bostan is the **bostancı**, without the bostancı there is no bostan. If there is going to be an garden, there has to be an **gardener** so that the garden can be kept alive. It is important to understand that a heritage is defined not only by its physical aspects, but also by the actors who make it a place. Users and other stakeholders can exist in that context… As users, there may be **a small number of people from the neighborhood**, Zeytinburnu, Fatih or some passersby who know the garden. If we say stakeholders, for example, **the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality** due to ownership, **Fatih, Zeytinburnu** and **Eyüp district municipalities**, **the Ministry of Finance**, **Directorate of Foundations**, these are also stakeholders in the end."

Gökçer Okumuş underlines the limitation of the diversity of actors in terms of the use of the field, despite the existence of a wide variety of actors associated with this field when counted one by one.

"There is a group here called **bostancılar (gardeners)**. There are people who have been running these gardens for many years, maybe 100 years, for a few **generations,** with a family tradition… As far as I know that they don't own the property. Because they pay a fee that is called "ecri misil". So it is **owned by public**. The gardeners (bostancı) who pay ecri misil may be selling the produce from there to **wholesalers**. Since it is not really in an area that is easily accessible to anyone, it doesn't seem to have much any other users… The components of the public are also actors in this area, this could be the **Ministry of Finance**, if it is a land belonging to IBB, I mean **the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality**. There are also the **district municipality** such as **Fatih, Eyüp and Zeytinburnu**. Apart from that, there may be potential **recreational users in the immediate vicinity** such as Fatih, Zeytinburnu who see that area as a potential green area, or as a sports area… so we are not talking about a green area that addresses the whole city."

Oktan Nalbantoğlu:

"The actors who have a say in the garden are really the **gardeners**… **People** still nostalgically stop by the side of the road while driving. They somehow buy vegetables from there and leave. This is a bit of **a habit**. This actually shows us that the people of the city are still an important actor there. **Fatih Municipality** has started to become an active stakeholder with the project of Yedikule Bahçe and an actor in the whole of the land walls. There are also other **district municipalities** such as Zeytinburnu and Eyüp, that have a say on this area. Because it is within the borders of Fatih Municipality, and if **IBB** gets involved in this as the main manager, I think the area will be approached with a really professional organization. The only thing missing here right now, in my opinion, are **children**. If we can make them a stakeholder, then I think this place will be saved."

Sedanur Gezer:

“At the current situation, interaction with and within gardens is generally limited to the **people in the neighborhood**, the residents of the neighborhood. This gives the perception that the area is **isolated and abandoned from the rest of the city**… The **local administration** or the parks and gardens department of **the Metropolitan Municipality** and **the district municipality** are more involved in organizing and taking care of it.”

N. Simla Uygaç:

“**Local activists**, the activists of that region are actors, **the gardeners** who produce there are actors, and the people living in the neighborhood are also actors… When we look at the stakeholders, it is probably **Fatih Municipality and IBB**, but I think **UNESCO** is also a stakeholder here because it is important not to think of the gardens separately from the Land Walls, but to consider these elements as a whole. **Academics** can be another actor.

Suna Kafadar:

“I mean the **gardeners from Kastamonu, Cide**… Apart from the gardeners, **city residents** are also users. There are **people from the immediate neighborhood**, especially from Fatih and Zeytinburnu. **IBB** and **local municipalities** are also the stakeholders.”

Yiğit Ozar:

“The **gardeners** come first, but there are also **cultural heritage experts**, **architects**, **art historians, archaeologists, historical researchers, officials from different scales of local government, officials from public institutions**, such as **archaeological museums, conservation boards**, etc. who are interested in the area and its different values. When we look at **areas that are very valuable and multi-layered**, the **more layers and the more values** we can identify, the **more authority and responsibility** we have, and **the more related areas** we have, the **more values and layered areas** start to appear on the map. Therefore, we can say that it is a very multi-actor, multi-idea, multi-layered field.”

Q4: What do you think Yedikule Urban Orchard means for publicness, commonality, common life and production?

For publicness:

Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

"Today, whether Yedikule Gardens are a public space, to what extent they are intertwined with the public, to what extent they have a public value have become a debatable issue. Because in the past, gardens were **more visible** in the city, people used to **go to eat lettuce**, for example, and there used to be **entertainment and festivities** in the gardens. But today, the garden has become **conceptually and socially, if not physically, distanced from the city** and the urbanites, that is, how many of the people living in Istanbul **know about Yedikule and the gardens** around it? Or if they do, how many of them **have visited or intend** to visit this area?... **No one knows** that there was such a use along the historical city walls and they have **no knowledge** of Istanbul's **centuries-old relationship** with gardens. They do not even have such an imagination in this city. Therefore, in order for a publicness to be formed in this area in a way that **integrates with the people**, as I said, it needs to be more **visible in social memory**, it needs to be more **intertwined with people's lives.**"

Gökçer Okumuş:

"When we look at it from a public point of view, for one thing, since the land is owned by the public, it is definitely an area that should **remain in the public domain**… It is an area that needs **to be touched**. Also, it is an area where we cannot just say let's leave and let the gardeners do whatever they want, but I can say that it is definitely an area that cannot be transformed into a park or a sports field by **removing the agricultural tissue** from there. Today, it is a public space that **no one is aware of**, that some people claim it because it has been **forgotten**… It should be a public space, but, currently, it does **not have publicness**. **Accessibility** is a huge handicap for this site. One of the reason behind its invisibility can be this issue, I think."

Oktan Nalbantoğlu:

"What you call a public space is a place that **serves the whole city**, where people of all ages and cultures can **come together** and find something of their own. But in our public sphere, everything is expected from the state. That is, the state creates the public space and maintains it. However, in our general culture, the phenomenon of really **owning the public space** or **owning the city** is quite weak. Because we expect everything from the state. So we don't do anything ourselves… It is **vital** for the society to **claim their city.** The **management and operation forms** proposed in the agricultural park project may constitute a very important triangulation point for the public to take ownership of public space or to understand the value and worth of public space… "

Sedanur Gezer:

“I cannot define its current use as a very clear public space. But **the potential** may be high… establishing these **relationship networks** with an **arrangement** in terms of **community**, **design criteria** and **space use**.”

N. Simla Uygaç:

“It started to **lose its public identity** after the 1970s. The **loss of the public character** of these areas has negatively affected their **commonality**, **access** and **sustainability**. In order for **production** to continue, these areas need to be **actively used**, and they need to be **included in the lives of the users** of the region.**”**

Suna Kafadar:

“I think it is illogical to think that not being able to walk everywhere is a problem with this area. After all, there are a lot of spaces in the city that are designated **as public** but have **certain usage patterns** and **certain rules**, and we all follow those rules somehow. I mean, if you enter the gardens and crush the man's mint or damage his labor, of course the man won't let you in there. There is a **production activity** going on here and you need to understand what is happening there. Moreover, you need to **respect** it because both the gardener and the garden expect respect from you, and if you don't show that respect, of course the gardener won't let you in, why should he? Publicness **does not** always mean **accessibility to the all parts** of the space. **Accessibility** always has **certain rules** depending on the nature of the space, and if we abide by these rules in other places in the city, we will abide by them here as well.”

Yiğit Ozar:

“This area has **left free** from an **integrated master plan** or **management plan**… Way to ensure **publicness** is to organize this discussion on how to **publicize this place** by **keeping the gardener or the gardening** there as a performance… There is **a management problem** here. It is necessary to come up with a **management system** that defines a future that will **balance the needs and expectations** of both the **gardener** and **the public space**, the **public** and the **local government**. And this is not just a matter of scaffolding and restoring the city walls. It may be possible to come up with **a master plan**, **a management plan, a framework** that looks at **the entire city walls in an integrated way**”

For production:

Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

“It is also a very valuable, historical production area… However, according to the laws and plans, I say it is an undefined area because the garden, the gardener and the production of the gardener **do not have a name**, statistics **are not kept**, they are **invisible for the laws** and **legal system**. The only way to record it is through the **payment of the ecri misil fees**. The gardeners, the garden and the production need to **have legal security**, to be **recognized by official institutions**, to be known and **visible in the city**.”

Gökçer Okumuş:

“If you think of it as an urban agricultural area, it is almost **non-existent** today. So, when you consider the scale of Istanbul, if you look at all the agricultural areas of the city from the perspective of an urban planner, the **contribution of this area to production** in terms of **quantity** is very **low** at the moment… But this area has a special feature. If you compare it with the positioning of urban gardens in other world cities, Yedikule Gardens is a place that was formed **adjacent to the Land Walls**, in other words, it is a special place in terms of being a **cultural heritage** and its **relationship with a cultural heritage**.”

Suna Kafadar:

“They prefer to lay artificial grass, to propose **out-of-context projects** because 2-3 tourists will come and walk there. It will **destroy all the production** there, it will destroy and **discredit the gardeners**, and as a result, it will turn the area into a place where the children of the gardeners' families **do not want to continue the agricultural working**… However, there is an incredible **production** in the gardens, we are talking about nearly a hundred gardeners. Tons of crops come out every season every year. Anyway, as a result, we are talking about an area that has been **removed** from the **economic data** of the city.”

Yiğit Ozar:

“I don't know if the products produced by the gardeners can contribute to the **sustenance of the whole of Istanbul**, but to what **extent** can they, and how far can they be **sufficient**? Will we direct them to the neighborhoods of the historical peninsula? Will we direct them to nearby markets? Are we really going **to municipalize this production** a bit more and find formulas that will **allow people to access cheaper food**? We need to look at this from within this conflictual relationship and answer these questions.”

For the commons and common life:

Abdullah Inanç Kıran:

“There is a commonality, after all, in the context of **access to fair and healthy food**, I think there is a **process** and **value of commons** in this area, even if it does not cover the needs of the whole city. At this point, gardens have the **potential** to provide a life, a **common life**, a common future around these values. Therefore, perhaps the Yedikule gardens can be **collectivized together** with other such gardens in Istanbul. These areas can produce a common value and Yedikule gardens can be a pioneer in this sense. It may not be considered a common space today, but it has the potential to be a common space. But as I said, because of the food here, of course, people's access to fair, healthy food and the production of local food networks, food **solidarities** are, actually, **practices of commoning**.”

Gökçer Okumuş:

"It could be a common space, it can be **transformed** into a common space with **integrative strategies**. It needs to be transformed into a place that **invites people to participate** in the **production processes** in **different ways**. Some people can **interact** with area via asking questions about the products, other can **learn to work with soil** and **participate in cultivation** and planting etc. in order to mention about the commons… This area can be transformed into a common space such as an **urban agriculture training**, practice and **research area** where the gardeners (bostancı) are also included in the practice and have a say, and where the municipality and local government also take responsibility. It can turn into an **educational area** where school children can come and learn how agriculture can be practiced there, and get to know the plants."

Oktan Nalbantoğlu:

"Although we cannot talk much about commoning in the current situation, Yedikule has a serious **potential** in terms of commoning and common life. This potential needs to be realized. Otherwise, this place is rapidly moving towards becoming a **depressed area**… By addressing it in an **interactive way** with **multiple actors**, that is, with a **different management plan system** in which, for example, the **gardeners (bostancı) are also involved**, may help for reviving the commons here… If you ask me about its potential of **becoming the commons**, I would say high because I think the **physical and social qualities** and **the diversity of actors** necessary for the realization of commoning practices are present here."

Suna Kafadar:

"Keeping the gardens for the future can remind us of **the potential**, the **possibility** of producing an **alternative city**, a **space**. A city can be experienced **beyond urban binaries**, it can be an **alternative way of living**, it can be a **common space** where different classes and **different identities can come together**. It can become a place where we think of the city **not only as a human-centered** place, but also by including **other elements and actors** of this city… There are people from the immediate neighborhood, especially from Fatih and Zeytinburnu, who regularly come and do their shopping there. In fact, there are many people I have seen over and over again for years who do their weekly shopping there, but it is not just a matter of shopping, of course, this area is also a **place of solidarity and gathering**… The gardens have **the power to bring people together** and I think it is very important to see that."