

Integrating the “Transforming” City into Feminist Activism: the Urban and Gender Politics in the 2000s in Turkey

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Abstract

This thesis scrutinizes the interrelatedness between urban and gender policies in the last decade in Turkey and argues that the feminist movement has to integrate the transforming urban site into its political agenda. I refer to the 2013 Gezi Uprising throughout the thesis as an inspiring example of the creation of an alternative living together of different social and political groups, which led to a new understanding of space. First, by focusing on the neoliberal and neoconservative policies of the consecutive AKP governments since the early 2000s, I bring together neoliberal and neoconservative radical transformations of the urban site, particularly in Istanbul, and new forms of women's subordination in this period. Secondly, I examine feminist politics in Istanbul in the last decade. The categories of women's bodies, labor and identities constitute the primary realms for the feminist movement through which feminists develop their struggles. I argue that women also experience the city in relation to these intertwined categories and I raise some questions regarding the role of space within feminist politics. I contend that although feminists in Turkey since the 1980s have contested how space is gendered, they have not carefully elaborated on the gendered impacts of the neoliberal and neoconservative transformation of urban spaces. In this regard, I refer to the Gezi Uprising which highlighted how women's freedom in the larger sense depends upon women's presence in public spaces, since patriarchy depends upon spatial control over women. In this thesis, therefore, I examine the ways in which neoliberalism and neoconservatism, in collaboration with patriarchy, reorganize both women's lives and urban spaces in relation to each other. On the basis of that examination I argue that the feminist movement in Turkey has to make the spatial reorganizations that have taken place in the last decade an intrinsic part of its resistance in order for women to get control over their bodies, labor and identities. Hence, I hope this thesis will contribute to underscoring the significance of reclaiming public spaces as one crucial aspect of women's liberation.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Mariam Kirollos, co-founder of Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment in Egypt, demonstrates in an interview in November 2013¹ that women face male violence, mob assaults and rape, during protests in Tahrir Square and on the streets in Egypt, and how the team endeavors hard to stop them. Mariam in her terrific account makes clear that rape is largely normalized in society, improperly defined in law² and barely punished, which relates to the reality of mob assaults today in the streets. Mob assault means up to 200 men surrounding a few women during the (anti-regime) protests and committing every sort of violence, including fatal acts such as rape with knives. The Operation team has been present in Tahrir Square since 2012 to prevent such crimes and help women during and after violence. Mariam defines mob assaults as an act of suppression of regime supporters against women who join protests, take to the streets or simply are there, outside the home. Mariam wonderfully demonstrates how it is crucial for women to insist on being present in the streets, which is directly linked to women's freedom:

“(...) We demand our basic rights as human beings to walk on the streets safely, we demand public spaces, and we demand public spaces and protests even if they are against the government. (...) I believed and dreamed of a strong feminist movement in Egypt that fights everything, capitalism, patriarchy, racism, nationalism, homophobia... the long lists of things that we are against. The Egyptian revolution continues and without women and their resistance I don't think the revolution will mean anything. And honestly, what keeps me so positive are Egyptian women basically and how they are resisting so much because no one recognizes them and no one recognizes how hard it is. Their very own presence in a demonstration is a form of

¹ http://roarmag.org/2014/02/against-sexual-assault-tahrir-egypt/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+roarmag+%28ROAR+Magazine%29 last access: 27.05.2014

² On June 6, the new President issued a decree criminalizing sexual harassment as a punishable crime.

resistance. People have been trying so hard to marginalize us. They know that if they stop them from going to protests, the next day they stop them from walking on the streets, and the next time they stop form them working. And this is not going to happen. We will keep on resisting till the last breath.”

In 2014 in Istanbul in Turkey, the Istanbul Feminist Kolektif (Istanbul Feminist Collective, IFK) made its regular call to women for the feminist night walk on 8 March at the Taksim Square. Since 2003, women gather for the celebration of International Women’s Day in a night demonstration in which they walk against patriarchy and all sorts of oppressions against women as well as to reclaim the streets and the nights for women. However, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (the Justice and Development Party, AKP) government, starting from the May Day celebrations at the square in 2013, prohibited protests both at the Taksim Square and in the Istiklal Street where the walks are headed to. Reinforced by PM Erdoğan’s words that “Taksim is not a place for demonstrations”³, each and every political gathering there has since been brutally attacked by police forces. Accordingly IFK in a recent statement mentioned the ban of the protests:

“Since the last 8 March, it has been another year of increasing male violence against women. Every day, we are reading about another murder of a woman in the news. The murderers and the rapists receive no punishment. The state is trying to stop divorces instead of male violence. The AKP government, although it could not ban abortion legally, practically restricted our right of abortion. We are sent away from the doors of the public hospitals. They are preparing laws that are going to condemn us to a flexible and insecure work life. The oppression is increasing, but we don't give up resisting and revolting against patriarchy!

³ http://www.evrensel.net/haber/82800/erdogan-1-mayista-taksimden-umidi-kesin.html#.U4Rw7v1_uSo last access: 27.05.2014

We, feminists, organize feminist night walks every 8 March since 11 years. The AKP government, which invades every space of our lives, now is trying to take the road on which we walk away from us. We will meet in Taksim, regardless of all the prohibitions, and raise our voices. In the 12th year of our feminist night walk, we will be again in streets at night calling out against patriarchy, male violence, heterosexism, capitalism, militarism, imperialism and war.”⁴

Although the political context, the forms of violence, and the conditions for women are different from each other in Egypt and Turkey, these two cases show that feminist women share the same worries and the feeling of revolt. Both Mariam Kirollos and IFK members illustrate that disallowing women from being in public spaces and holding demonstrations is deeply connected to other forms of oppression against women. What is at stake in Mariam’s account are mob assaults, and IFK calls out against police violence in protests; however, both of them are reacting simply against the confinement of women to the home by multiple means. In other words, the forms of patriarchy and the specific contexts differ, but feminists in both cases resist male control over women’s bodies, labor and identities. In this line, the two examples above clearly manifest how women’s freedom in the larger sense depends upon women’s presence in public spaces, since patriarchy depends upon spatial control over women.

In this thesis I will look at the ways in which feminist politics in Turkey has to incorporate politics on the urban space today. I will basically elaborate on what “taking away the road” from women in Istanbul means, the meaning of which is further highlighted by Mariam Kirollos’s crucial and even dramatic example about violence against women in the streets of Tahrir. More precisely, I will concentrate on the policies regarding the transforming urban site

⁴ <http://t24.com.tr/haber/dunya-gerinden-oyuna-8-mart-feminist-gece-yuruyusune-cagri.252541> last access: 27.05.2014

and women in the last decade in Turkey in order to develop a more comprehensive picture of patriarchy or forms of male dominance in Turkey. Although feminists always already acknowledge that space is gendered by multiple means and therefore contest men's supremacy in public spaces by the very presence and interference of women in Turkey, I will argue that the particularities of the changes in the urban site, particularly in Istanbul, in the last decade, as well as in relation to global dynamics, have to constitute much more an integral part of feminist politics today. In this regard, I will refer to the Gezi Uprising in 2013 as an informative example on the relationship between women and public space.

The thesis will address two major questions. First I will explore how the neoliberal and neoconservative spatial reorganization operates in an interrelated manner with current forms of patriarchy, and thus have created continuities and ruptures in women's subordination during the three consecutive governments of AKP in the last decade in Turkey. Secondly, I will try to answer the question why and how feminist politics has to take into consideration the transforming urban site as a necessary component of its perspective of struggle. In order to do this, I will particularly focus on the case of Istanbul, a city that has changed enormously in the last decade and the organized feminist movement there. Below I will explain the motivations and the rationale of the thesis. The following sections refer to thematic components of the suggested line of thought.

Istanbul: The neoliberal and neoconservative urban space of the AKP rule

The AKP came to power in 2002. Since then, the three consecutive AKP governments so far have implemented neoliberal and neoconservative policies, which I will define and contextualize in Chapter 2, just as has been happening worldwide. One of the major tools in implementing neoliberal policies in Turkey has been the construction sector, through which the AKP governments dramatically changed the urban landscape across Turkey (Balaban, 2013). In Istanbul, large-scale privatization has happened, basically according to the needs of

finance capital, such as the sale of state institutions (e.g. schools, hospitals, railways), the privatization of city lands in the name of “urban transformation policies” and dislocation of inhabitants to complexes newly built by the government, continuous investments in urban land such as highways, skyscrapers, and projects of a third bridge and a third airport. These policies or projects have meant the destruction of the environment, never-ending constructions of shopping malls and hotels through renovations of historical buildings, social segregation among the city inhabitants with an increasing concentration of gated communities on the one extreme, and government-led building complexes on the other (Çavdar and Tan, ed. 2013; Köse, 2014; Şengül, 2013). Neoconservatism as complementary to neoliberalism on the urban scale has to be mentioned as a simultaneous process in this regard. Neoconservative policies include construction plans of mosques in the strategic places in the cities, rising number of religious high schools in comparison to investments in regular schools, Ottoman symbolic buildings as well as restricting street life in public spaces with a ban on alcohol, arbitrary regulations on cafes and bars, increasing pressure on those who do not fast in the Ramadan month both in public spaces as well as residential neighborhoods, statements about “proper attitudes” in public spaces, allowing Muslim political gatherings whereas police raids disrupt other protests, etc. (Şengül, 2014). Examples are multiple, however, overall urban transformation in the neoliberal and neoconservative era leads to closure of communal, public spaces to the access of people from different backgrounds, such as class and gender, while allowing them only to the privileged ones, or to corporate finance.

Summer 2013: The Gezi Uprising

The story of the thesis dates back to the Gezi Uprising in Turkey which took place last summer. All started on May 27, 2013 in Istanbul with an ordinary protest against the bulldozing of the trees in Gezi Park in the center of Istanbul, at the Taksim square. The demonstration was organized by some groups against the overall transformation of Beyoğlu

(the district) into a privatized place with shopping malls and hotels by destroying all the cultural, political and social values and memories attached to Taksim since decades. The protests were suppressed by brutal police violence, which led to increasing numbers of people joining the protests in different regions of Istanbul as well as other cities of Turkey. The Gezi Park demonstration just in a few days was replaced by a more embrative term, the Gezi Uprising, which signaled that the uprising had become a combination of multiple reactions towards the policies of AKP. Put differently, the resistance against losing all the green public places in metropolitan Istanbul due to the AKP's urban transformation policies met with other objections against AKP's authoritarian policies. Accordingly, different political groups as well as individuals participated in the uprising and took to the streets for days, expressing their criticisms and raising demands. The composition of the protesters was strikingly broad and included socialists, anarchists, environmentalists, students, feminists, LGBTQI individuals, Kurds, Alevis, anticapitalist Muslims, Armenians, football fans, workers, unions' members, nationalists, Kemalists, independent individuals and so forth.⁵ In other words, the neoliberal and neoconservative agenda that the consecutive AKP governments have implemented, created an enormous number of vulnerabilities, and the Gezi Uprising embraced a variety of claims and reactions towards this discontent in a remarkable broad segment of society. In a city like Istanbul where everyday there is a protest, nobody expected that the small Gezi Park demonstration would lead to a massive countrywide revolt.

⁵ A small list of events which happened just before the Gezi Uprising to better understand the diversity of participants and reactions against the government: Sixty-eight-day of hunger strike of Kurdish prisoners supported by street protests countrywide (end of 2012, which later influenced beginning of "peace process" between the state and the Kurdish guerillas PKK), the police oppression against student movements such as the brutal police attack in the campus of ODTÜ in Ankara during the PM's visit (end of 2012), 52 death, 140 wounded in Reyhanlı near the Syrian border in 11 May 2013 by an unexplored bombing, proposed ban on abortion and monitoring pregnancies, a radical increase in male violence, and in murders of women, and trans individuals, government proposals on nuclear power plants and hydroelectric centrals, construction of giant Çamlıca Mosque in the highest hill of Istanbul, prevention of demonstration on May Day by police attacks and consecutively, ban on all marches, ban on alcohol sale and advertisement on a large scale, Erdoğan's statement on his disapproval of two young people kissing in Ankara subway, the construction of third bridge and its suggested name Yavuz Sultan Selim which was highly criticized by Alevis as an Ottoman ruler held responsible for killing many Alevis, police attacks on celebration of Revolution Day in Ankara, restrictions on football fans.

The experience of the Gezi Park occupation is primarily important for the thesis.⁶ The police completely withdrew from the park and the streets of Taksim outside of the boundaries of the barricades, and a stateless life started on May 31. Street protests in other regions and cities continued as strongly as well as the AKP government and the PM Erdoğan's statements on marginalizing the protesters.⁷ On June 1, protesters built their tents, organized food distribution, their own media channels, established a medical center, a library and several common places for meetings and cultural events in the Park. Until June 15, when the police evacuated the activists from the park with gas and water cannons, the Gezi Park saw a radical moment in the history of Turkey, a communal and political space in which the state was absent and the control belonged totally to its inhabitants.

The Gezi Park occupation was a unique experience certainly in multiple senses. The occupation first and foremost was a revolt about the space. Protesters reacted against the privatization of Taksim Square, the plan of converting the park into another shopping mall, the renewal project all over Taksim which meant deporting so many people (mostly Kurdish people and immigrants) from their neighborhoods, initiating shopping malls and hotels in the Istiklal street one after another, police violence in reaction to any sort of demonstrations in Taksim (which represents the most significant space for political organizations with a historical and political value), changing the public life of Taksim in the name of regulations on alcohol limitations (Atayurt, 2012), in sum; transformation of one of the liveliest places of Istanbul, used by many for so many different purposes, to a limited use by a minority without taking into account public opinion at all. Briefly, the Gezi Park occupation was a local, egalitarian and democratic response to the recently legislated "Urban Transformation Act" for

⁶ The park occupation was one part of larger protests. Street protests and brutal police attacks continued while the park was occupied. It is noteworthy that without the street protests which faced violent police attacks and the solidarity and the struggle in the streets and on the barricades, the park would not be freed from the police and available to activists' inhabitation. I do not overvalue park occupation among all other protests, however, for the purposes of the thesis I focus primarily on the Gezi Park experience.

⁷ <http://www.haaretz.com/news/middle-east/1.527188> last access: 29.05.2014

Beyoğlu, which both ensured capitalist accumulation on the urban land and allowed informal practices and arbitrary decisions that neoliberal governance brings forth (Köse, 2014). In addition, the Gezi Uprising formed a complexity of reactions against the government's oppressions towards different identities and lifestyles (as the composition of the protesters indicates). The Gezi Park occupation created a new space, the control over which belonged to its inhabitants, and showed what this space would look like and what purposes it would serve. The flags, symbols, graffitis, music and all the other designs reflected the diversity of participants, the daily requirements and the rules to run a communal and free place were determined collectively. The Gezi Park became a stateless place where experience and memory of the streets, the square, the park, the whole region changed for a period of time. The reactions against the AKP regime combined together in a park which shaped the creation of an alternative living together, and in return, the togetherness led a new understanding of space. For instance, the protesters learnt how to act collectively (thousands of people in squeezed manners) under a police attack without creating a stampede or any kind of disaster, constantly organizing help, including operating the infirmary, cafeteria and security channels even under the fire of tear gas. However, "together with differences" might be the most influential slogan of the park, it was the moments of encounters that established this collectivity; in the moments for instance where nationalists intentionally distracted Kurds with Turkish flags, feminists struggled with the supremacy of men and swear words of football fans, LGBT individuals fought with sexist and homo/transphobic slogans and attitudes, and independents made themselves heard against the over-visibility of organized/socialist groups. In other words, the Gezi Uprising was special in its "sudden alliance" of different groups and individuals (Yörük, 2014). Differences required constant effort and energy in a stateless place through the means of constant negotiation, arguments, fights and acting together (Üstündağ, 2013).

The Gezi Uprising, and particularly the Gezi Park occupation, has illustrated an effective case for understanding a variety of interconnected oppressions over the lives of people in Turkey. The uprising has brought together many distinct claims which were not simultaneously articulated as such before. Accordingly, for the purposes of this thesis, I will refer to this experience as a medium through which I will discuss the significance of considering different policies, vulnerabilities, and claims, thus, the intersections of different mechanisms of power. To be more precise, the Gezi Uprising is a connection point to show that urban politics has to be one of the major concerns of feminist activism. Now I will state the role of the feminist movement, in which I also participated in the Gezi Protests.

Meanwhile: The feminist movement in Istanbul

On the morning of 29 May 2013, when I had to leave Istanbul, a group of protesters had already started camping at the Gezi Park in order to stop bulldozers cutting trees. I was out with a group of women for 5 days for a trip to Diyarbakır watch the “peace process”⁸ which constituted one of the most contentious issues of that time. There in Diyarbakır, we were following the news in Istanbul; immediate police attacks on the protesters, raid on tents and, day and night long resistance spreading over the streets. Rarely did it happen before that being in the streets of Diyarbakır was much “safer” than Istanbul. When we were back to Istanbul the street protests had spread to other cities, already labeled as “the Gezi Uprising” or “the Gezi Protests”, the police did not step back from violence, and killed and injured people. The Gezi Park was occupied by the protesters surrounded by barricades until the 15th of June, when the police evacuated the park.

⁸ In January 2013 the Turkish government initiated a “peace process” on the thirty years long war (“the Kurdish question”) between the Turkish state and the Kurdish guerillas PKK. After several negotiations, the Kurdish guerilla forces started to withdraw all its forces within Turkey to Iraq last summer. Withdrawal of armed guerilla forces was the first part of the negotiations. It was supposed to be followed by constitutional changes, legal implementations and thus, concrete steps by the government towards the inclusion of Kurdish population in multiple ways. So far, the Turkish government (AKP) seems to act slowly in realizing other than discursive claims.

Members of the Istanbul Feminist Kolektif were in the streets since the first gathering on 28 May and built a “feminists’ tent” after the occupation of the park as all other groups and individuals did. Feminists took the streets primarily in reaction against the police violence. The Gezi experience, together with the street protests and the occupation of the park for two weeks taught the feminists and all other participants a lot. First of all the concept of “urban protest” came into being, and consequently displayed the discussion about the role of the city in the Gezi Uprising, in Istanbul and elsewhere in Turkey. Therefore, under this urban protest people from different backgrounds shared the very reactions against the AKP government and the wide range of women who joined the protests revealed the fact that the transformation of the city also contributed to women’s subordination. It was the first time for IFK to question the role of Istanbul in such a compact manner, given the fact that IFK did formulate feminist resistance against the demolition of the park not on the basis of reclaiming the city but of it being one of the results of the authoritarian regime of AKP.

As a member of the Sosyalist Feminist Kolektif (Socialist Feminist Collective, SFK), which is a group founded in Istanbul in 2008 and now has become an important group within the movement, I have actively taken part in demonstrations and campaigns held against patriarchy and the ways the AKP governments reinforced the oppressions against women since 2002. SFK also belongs to the Istanbul Feminist Kolektif, an umbrella organization for different feminist groups. During the Gezi Protests I was both in the park and in the streets believing in the insistence of the presence of feminist the movement to reclaim women’s liberation. After the evacuation of the park, I joined the meetings of IFK in which the experiences of feminists during the protests were evaluated and in which we criticized ourselves for not having immediate reaction on urban transformation policies. The self-criticism was even stronger because this time Taksim was under transformation, the place where the feminist movement grew and still present today, political and historical value of Taksim necessitated first and

foremost immediate action towards urban transformation policies. The feminist movement in Turkey is a strong and organized one, and always in action against, for instance, ban on abortion, draft law on social security, male violence and forced motherhood. However, we neglected the urban transformation as an issue of “urban movements”, for which feminists would take to the streets and show solidarity with other movements, but which we would not include into our feminist agenda in an inclusive manner. Put differently, the feminist movement is perfectly aware of the AKP government’s neoliberal and neoconservative policies which entrap women in multiple senses, such as with unpaid labor (at home), insecure conditions in paid labor (at the workplace), lack of support in the prevention of murders of women, any sorts of male violence, the identification of woman with motherhood, and so forth. Recognizing the overlap between the “interference with women’s bodies and choices” and “interference with the urban site” came into existence only after the Gezi evaluation meetings, then gradually disappeared again within the intense political agenda of Turkey. Because I think this overlap is crucially important and has to be made explicit and theorized further, this is what my thesis focuses on.

As a final remark, since I live in Istanbul and am involved in feminist activism and participated in the Gezi Protests there, the thesis investigates the further ways for struggle for the place I live, know and experience. The feminist movement in Istanbul is in contact with other movements in Turkey, as it happened during Gezi Protests as well. However, since the urban space is important for the sake of the thesis, I will concentrate on the relation of feminists with the city of Istanbul and particularly with the region of Taksim. Lastly, the concept “the feminist movement” will be used throughout the thesis to refer to an organized structure which recognizes, reclaims and maintains the history of feminist activism in Turkey since the 1980s. But, whereas the feminist movement is embrative of several groups and individuals, I will basically look at the politics of IFK and groups and individuals who share

the political line of the Collective. In the next section I will briefly discuss the main scholarly literature on gender and space.

Literature, lines of thought and the structure of the thesis

Feminist geographers have argued that space is gendered and that spatial segregation is one important mechanism to display, maintain, reproduce and contest male power (Spain, 1992; Massey, 1994; McDowell, 1999). Equally, it has been long argued by the feminist literature that male control over women's labor, as one of the primary tool for men's power, depends on women's unpaid labor in the home, which in itself requires a spatial regulation (Walby, 1985). Here I will briefly outline the basics of the literature on gender and space which I will refer to in this thesis, as well as attempt to provide further questions.

The feminist literature shows how the industrial stage of capitalism required a reorganization of the urban space according to male and female labor. This alliance between capitalism and patriarchy is one of the primary power operations on space. Therefore, under patriarchy and capitalism and on the basis of reinforced binary between the public and private, woman is held responsible for reproduction of industrial labor force at home as well as cheap and insecure labor in the market, whereas man is associated with wage labor, a breadwinner at workplace in the advanced industrial societies since the nineteenth century onwards (McDowell, 1999: 75). Accordingly, the literature revealed that the gendered impacts of spatial stratification have to be considered thoroughly, such as women's limited access to socially valued knowledge and skills. The role of spatial organization in this vein comes out as a crucial dynamic which reinforces women's secondary position in the family, education, and the workplace (Spain, 1992).

Developing capitalist organizations over time and across contexts led to changes in women's positions, such as increasing involvement in multiple job sectors, however, the separation of

home and workplace has persisted and been reproduced according to diverse forms of accommodation of patriarchy with capitalism (Massey, 1994: Ch. 8-9). Since confinement of women to home has been organically linked to control over women; potential escape that city offered to women, though relatively, from home by means of labor market has created a threat (Massey, 1994: 179). Employment opportunities in city not only appealed to women to go out home but also rendered difficult male control over women. In this sense, metropolitan cities seemed to be a lot less rigid in terms of patriarchal controls compared to less complex small communities (Wilson, 1991). In return, fear, anxiety and surveillance have become the primary feelings that women have been articulated as integral part of women's city experience (Massey, 1994: Ch.7) In other words, city as a public space connoted both danger and relative freedom for women (McDowell, 1999: Ch.6).

However, the gendered space does not affect all women in the same way all the time. One of the primary dynamics is work; women's experiences of city vary depending on the type of employment, wage, location and duration of work as well as impacts of community, household, and society (Hanson and Pratt, 1995: Ch.8.). Another key notion is migration; negotiations of patriarchy over migrant women differ due to the e.g. state regulations, border controls in relation to networks and households (Raghuram, 2004) which also led to take into account the role of transnational mobilities in the studies of feminist geographies (Yeoh, 2005). Research on gendered constructions of race accordingly has shown that woman as a category has to be regarded in intersection with race and placed as such into analysis (Kobayashi, 2005). Sexual orientation and gender identity have been similarly mapped out as distinguishing spatial practices among women (Valentine, 1996; Puar, 2005).

The feminist literature on space also deals with forms of struggle. Dwelling on the fact that the city being an embodiment of fear for most of women, feminists expose that fear towards the streets is influenced by patriarchal control and oppression at home through which the

claim of “safer places” has been developed (Beebejaun, 2009). “Take the night back” protests in the Western context emerged along these lines (Wekerle and Peake, 1996). Borrowing from David Harvey, gendered “right to the city” is put forward which implies women’s equal participation in decision making in the urban site, i.e. control over the living place as its inhabitants and as active urban citizens (Fenster, 2005).

With regards to Turkey, the role of spatial organization in shaping gender relations first of all discussed in relation to the nation-state building processes, i.e. Kemalist modernization project that started with the foundation of the republic in 1923, has relied on the presence of women in the public in particular ways. Women acquired new positions as a part of secular ideology which fostered equality in education, work, and political participation with men (Özbay, 1999) while at the same time motherhood and family were reinforced as again part of national ideology (Dedeoğlu, 2013). The Kemalist secular modernization policies regarding women occupied a significant place in the feminist literature in Turkey with reference to spatial regulations primarily on the binary of home and outside, private and public which led to other social constructions as well (Sirman, 1989). Today, the role of family, reproduction, women’s labor and sexuality constitute the key issues for feminist scholars in order to understand how patriarchy operates (Coşar and Yeğenoğlu, 2011; Acar and Altunok; 2013) however with less emphasis on the current transformations of space, namely neoliberal and neoconservative transformation. For instance, the gendered impacts of the urban transformation policies are barely mentioned (İngün, 2013) compared to the existing literature on the neoliberal transformations on women’s labor (Eraydın and Türkün-Erendil, 2005; Makal and Toksöz, 2012; Yaman, 2013). However, although women’s labor under neoliberalism bares attention, changing space is not taken account as a key analytical tool. Overall, the research on gendered spaces is a new academic focus in Turkey (Alkan, 2009),

let alone a special attention on the parallel processes of neoliberal and neoconservative policies of space and women.

A recent study explores the connection between spatial organization and male violence in order to shed light on the notion of increasing male violence in Turkey (Çelebi, Havlioğlu, Kayaalp, 2014). The edited book “Knowledge of Boundary” gives examples on how spatial control is an integral part of patriarchy which might fatally punish women who cross boundaries. That is, through an analogy between space and identity, Çelebi, Havlioğlu and Kayaalp argue that imposed identities on women, such as motherhood, in itself brings about boundaries, as spaces do, and violence –an embrative term which can imply multiple sorts-, thus, women who violate the boundaries of spaces that they are supposed to belong as well as identities are under the risk of violence (Çelebi, Havlioğlu, Kayaalp, 2014: 9-23) as a restoration of masculinity (Kandiyoti, 2013). I find the conceptualization of space in relation to identity underdeveloped in the book, however, helpful for the purposes of this thesis. In this sense, I will both substantiate the “knowledge of boundary” with given examples of policies and relate it with the feminist movement in Istanbul. In sum, the feminist literature on space and gender has largely focused on how male domination operates through spatial organization, but how particularly neoliberal and neoconservative transformations of city are influential in the ways women are oppressed today are not fully discovered yet. I aim, in this thesis, to benefit from the existing literature to reflect more on the current interrelations.

At the furthest in this thesis I want to follow the way Mariam Kirollos understands the connection between space and women’s liberation. Instead of focusing on a specific domain, I aim to provide a general look on the relation between the urban site and women in order to argue any sort of disempowerment on the urban site for women comes along other restrictions. Thus, I will look at the current policies regarding urban transformation the way space has been analyzed in multiple senses so far in combination with the term “knowledge of

boundary”. The knowledge and violation of boundaries will constitute my major analytical tools in understanding current situation in Turkey as well as the ground upon which I will construct my suggestions for feminist politics. In other words, I will show the connections between women’s equality in public spaces along the lines of safety, access, freedom of movement and to all central issues for women’s liberation such as violence, family, migration, employment, heterosexuality and so forth in order to argue that the feminist movement has to carefully include urban policies into its agenda. In so doing, I do not attempt to indicate the AKP governments as the sole perpetrators of oppressions against women nor I will replace male domination by neoliberalism and neoconservatism, instead, I will show how neoliberalism and neoconservatism reproduce patriarchy. Therefore, I will ground my analysis on the fact that neoconservative neoliberalism functions as the current form of patriarchal capitalism (Çağatay, 2014b).

Along these lines, in Chapter 2, first, I will give a brief account on neoliberalism and neoconservatism as the current rule of power in Turkey as well as worldwide. Secondly, I will go over how urban space, with particular focus on Istanbul has undergone change accordingly. Thirdly, I will focus on gender policies of in the last decade. Chapter 2 overall will map out what has been implemented by the AKP governments in the last decade on the two different realms. In other words, this chapter gives the material for the first question of the thesis; relocating seemingly distinct realms of power next to each other.

In Chapter 3, following the second question of the thesis to come up with critical evaluations from the perspective of feminist politics, I will look at main focuses of the feminist movement in Istanbul and contemplate on the missing links of the changes on the urban site. In the first section, I will state the role of Istanbul and Taksim for the feminist movement. The following three sections, divided as women’s bodies, labor and identities reflect three realms of male dominance over women, which was formulated by the feminist movement in Istanbul.

Explicit in the popular slogan “Our labor, our identities, our bodies are ours!”, feminists consider male dominance in an interrelated and comprehensive manner since the beginning of the movement. Thus, in these three sections, I will first look at how the movement has dealt with the patriarchal oppressions on each realm and then reflect on how neoliberal spatial reorganization can be taken into account with relevant examples from the case of the Gezi Uprising. In the Conclusion, I will argue that a gendered analysis on the neoliberal space is necessary in order to, first, to have a comprehensive analysis of patriarchy which consists of intersection of different dynamics. Secondly, I will state that politics on space has to be integrated in feminist politics in order to come up with mechanisms which would enable women take control over their labor, identities and bodies since the feminist movement is not solely based on immediate “protests” against patriarchal politics but it promotes an imagination on future which relies on a broader transformation in society.

Chapter 2: The last decade in Turkey: An overview of the AKP's urban and gender policies

Introduction

Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (The Justice and Development Party, AKP) has been in power for 12 years now. Since 2002, when the party came to power self-identified as “conservative democrat”⁹, the AKP government has pursued a line of neoliberal and neoconservative policies that have created a lot of public debate. The AKP's articulated affiliation with Islam led some to interpret the transformation that the country has been going through since then as the result of an Islamist organization of state and society, whereas for others, Islam was only a means through which neoliberal rationality was established within society, as was the case in other parts of the globe. Accordingly, the AKP's adaptation to and implementation of a neoliberal economy have been largely documented and simultaneously, its conservative aspects have been contested from different axes since the very beginning. In this chapter, first I will briefly look at what neoliberalism and neoconservatism mean, in order to contextualize and better understand how the AKP governments operate. Secondly, I will focus on the AKP's policies on the urban site, and Istanbul in particular. Thirdly, I will go over the events of the last decade regarding women and gender equality. My aim is to understand how the AKP's neoliberal and neoconservative policy agendas – hence two seemingly distinct realms - actually work together in strengthening male domination or patriarchy. As mentioned in Chapter 1, English-language feminist literature has discussed how gender and space operate together in a variety of ways, but a thorough analysis of neoliberal and neoconservative changes on the urban site in relation to new and enduring forms of patriarchy has hardly been made yet.

⁹ AKP defines its political ideology as both conservative and democrat.

A brief account of the “Unholy Alliance” between neoliberalism and neoconservatism

The economic, political and social restructuring on a large scale called neoliberalism has been governing the world since the early 1980s. Neoconservatism, on the other hand, is another global phenomenon of the last decades which is not necessarily affiliated with one religion; rather, it indicates a set of practices that is sometimes in harmony with neoliberalism and sometimes in contradiction to it. Political theorist Wendy Brown shows how these two distinct rationalities intersect and moreover enable each other and provides a thorough analysis (Brown, 2006) on which in this chapter I will draw in order to frame the power operations in Turkey.

Brown describes neoliberalism as “market driven political rationality” which depends on “liberating” the market from the state, downgrading welfare states, privatizing public services and at the same time creating “a specific and consequential organization of the social, the subject and the state” (Brown, 2006: 693). She says neoliberalism is a “political rationality” primarily focused on profitability which transforms not only economies but also social and political spheres by leading citizens to become “individual entrepreneurs” by means of “self-care” (Brown, 2006: 695), destroying any sort of collectivity in social terms and instead promoting communities (Larner, 2000). The concept of class is changing accordingly, as well as the concepts of “equality, political autonomy and liberty, citizenship, the rule of law, a free press” are challenged by the neoliberal rationality (Brown, 2006: 696).

Neoconservatism in Brown’s account is a “moral political rationality” which is based on an explicit call to the state to increase its power in both domestic and international spheres. In the US context that she is looking at, it is a reaction to the “declining or crumbling status of morality within the West” (Brown, 2006: 697). Neoconservatism promotes a stronger and authoritarian state with the emphasis on strengthening the notion of family, tradition,

patriotism, and the military. Brown also claims that it is “only unevenly and opportunistically religious” (Brown, 2006: 696). Neoconservatism has grown as also a response to neoliberalism which recognizes no party, no leader, no stable anything and has provided with meanings filled with the rationality of morality. The search for a meaning is surrounded by “worries” about “the future”; the future which is getting further away than the “good old past”. Neoconservatism thus is also the politics of “future threats” which require instant interventions into in present lives, especially into personal lives (Sirman, 2014: 16).

Sociologist and geographer Wendy Larner furthermore claims that neoliberalism and neoconservatism complete each other in the social codes they promote or rely on: while the former is formulating self-interested individualism, the latter provides disciplinary practices. Both Larner and Brown show that this alliance indicates a new form of governance. As importantly, this alliance leads, as Brown argues, to de-democratization in various ways by overvaluing individual interests while at the same time promoting the state as the sole authority whereas egalitarian principles and civil liberties are set aside (Brown, 2006).

The urban site: The neoliberal transformation of Istanbul and AKP’s role

Neoliberalism has been a global phenomenon spreading since the early 1980s, also in Turkey. After the Military Coup in 1980, the new government gradually started to adjust to neoliberal governance, which meant a total transformation of the country. The 1980 Coup was an economic response to the ongoing economic crisis in the 1970s as well as a political suppression of socialist and leftist movements (Keyder, 2004). The neoliberal economic restructuring, consolidated by Turkey’s financial liberalization in 1989, led in an interrelated manner to the dismantling of import substituting industrialization¹⁰, the downsizing and privatizing of factories and industries such as manufacturing, prioritizing the market rather

¹⁰ Import substituting industrialization is an economic policy which promotes domestic production in replacement of foreign imports.

than the state led-economy, the creation of entrepreneurs as a workforce and of competition as a guiding principle in the Turkish economy, and further integration of that economy into the global market. Consequently, deregulation, informality, flexible employment, subcontracting and growing discrepancy between the service sector and production constituted the ground for new forms of labor (Keyder, 2004). Although Turkey experienced debt crises and consequently an enormous rate of inflation and unemployment in the 1990s during the implementation of the neoliberal regime, the boom in privatization as a response to a huge crisis in 2001, which brought large scale legal and institutional changes, was the turning point in the neoliberalization of Turkey (Öniş, 2011).

Scholars have discussed and demonstrated the commodification of urban spaces as an intrinsic part of capitalism, and of neoliberalism. Geographer David Harvey, for example, discusses how urban sphere was always already a space of surplus extraction and thus, related to class phenomena (Harvey, 2012). The urban sphere, he argues, is one of the profitable terrains for capitalism. Harvey demonstrates how in the neoliberal age urban based politics, such as housing markets, constructions in multiple city spaces, low mortgage credits, low rates of interest for consumer goods and services are used to stabilize economies which were torn by global and local economic crises (Harvey, 2012: 11). He shows that urbanization is crucial for neoliberal capitalism, not only in suppressing crises but also as a produced commodity within which consumerism, tourism and cultural based industries take place (Harvey, 2008: 31). Profitability through commodification of the urban site works through “accumulation by dispossession”, dislocating some while relocating privileged groups also on the principle of turning public places to private property. This also creates an undemocratic rule, interwoven with neoliberal policies in general, since control over the surplus value, produced in the urban sphere, belongs to the privileged minority which dissolves the public

share: control over the surplus value then means control over the city, and this control is privatized (Harvey, 2008).

Just as the AKP did not initiate neoliberal policies in Turkey, the neoliberal transformation of Istanbul was not initiated by AKP either. Starting in the 1980s, with the transition to the neoliberal order, Istanbul has been designated as one of “the global cities” (Sassen, 2005)¹¹ and, like its counterparts, has gone through the necessary spatial transformations to acquire this position; industries were removed from the city center to the outskirts of the city and were replaced in the center with headquarters and finance centers, thus, the service sector became dominant in the center compared to production work, foreign investments grew while incentives for local and small enterprises decreased, information, networking and new technology centers emerged hand in hand with the privatization of state and industrial institutions. The global city had to produce culture as well, Istanbul thus was designed also as a tourism, cultural consumption and entertainment center according to “global desires”. All this led to uneven development and growing inequalities in neighborhoods and in urban relations among local people, as the districts were differentiated from each other (Keyder, 1999). “Urban transformation” and “gentrification” policies were initiated accordingly, which meant basically “renewing” the valuable spaces, mostly in the centers once illegally authorized for squatters for immigrants and now by way of dislocating these former inhabitants to the outskirts through mass housing projects. Gentrified buildings, which were first “scientifically” classified as “deteriorated,” then served new usages as shopping malls, hotels, restaurants and work offices relinquishing their residential purposes (Keyder, 1999).

¹¹ Saskia Sassen explains how global cities have worldwide constituted the necessary territories for a deregulated, privatized and globally integrated neoliberal economy (Sassen, 2005). In this sense, the global city accommodates the management, finance, service, control, communication (between the local and the global) and information functions of “a firm” of the contemporary age.

The commodification and neoliberal spatial organization of Istanbul is still on the agenda of the current government. Although it can be argued that from the beginning AKP followed neoliberal policies -i.e. since the current Prime Minister Erdoğan's reign of Istanbul in the 1990s and then with the AKP governments in the 2000s¹² which increased control over municipalities-, there are important differences in the AKP period compared to the previous neoliberal era. In the 1990s, the governments saw privatization as the major solution to fiscal deficits whereas in the 2000s investments in real estate and construction were added to the privatization measures (Balaban, 2013: 69). In other words, according to Urban Planning Scholar Osman Balaban, the growing construction sector since the 1980s, scaled up by the rule of AKP, worked as a tool for solving economic problems and potential for high profitability during the neoliberalization of Turkey and the urban transformation policies have to be understood in this vein too (Balaban, 2013: 68). One of the most significant aspects of this politics was the expectation of a temporary decline in the rate of unemployment caused by neoliberalism (Balaban, 2013: 70).

The Mass Housing Administration (MHA)¹³, founded in 1984, is a government institution that became increasingly active during the AKP regime. MHA constructed numerous building complexes in the outskirts of the big cities, primarily in Istanbul, to relocate inhabitants of central districts and urban land which were seen as having vast potentials of rent. Thus, “the victims” of gentrification policies were moved to apartment blocks far away from their previous residential eras bounded to pay higher rents or other expenses. Moreover, legal regulation in 2002 and 2008 allowed MHA to become “the sole agency to regulate the zoning and sale of almost all of state-owned urban land (excluding military land)” (Kuyucu and

¹² Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the current Prime Minister, was mayor of Istanbul between 1994 and 1998 and his successor Kadir Topbaş (mayor of Beyoğlu district in 1999 and 2004 onwards of Istanbul) maintained and implemented these policies.

¹³ The Mass Housing Administration is the governmental agency responsible for the provisioning of public housing and important actor for urban transformation policies.

Ünsal, 2010: 1485). MHA becoming a central actor in the implementation of gentrification policies contributed a lot to the neoliberal aims of transforming spaces of living as well as people themselves by reconstructing of urban site for the sake of profit of rent (Ergun, 2014: 282).

Although the simultaneous transformation of city spaces as well as the lives of urbanites seems contradictory in terms of the vast public support that AKP still received in its third period of rule¹⁴, Political scientist and geographer Tarık Şengül explains what differentiates AKP from its predecessors is neoconservatism that it put into play along with the neoliberal policies. In other words he says the already established collaboration of the state and capital since the 1980s, also required society to cooperate in order to gain success in wide terms. Political scientist Fethi Açıkel furthermore argues AKP “gave back to society its state that used to be exiled from it before” (Açıkel, 2012: 16) and therefore, today “society/community looking through the lens of the state” and “the state through the lens of society” exist concomitantly (Açıkel, 2012: 18). Şengül claims that this co-construction has been established through several mechanisms of AKP’s governance; the society was engaged into neoliberal policies out of which the power bloc of state-capital-society is strengthened while at the same time was divided into two camps of conservatives and nonconservatives (Şengül, 2014: 16). In so doing, AKP, relying on its popular support, worked on distributing the rent among the urban poor and small enterprises (Balaban, 2013: 69). MHA has become one of the central actors in this regard, mainly by regulating the privatization of state-owned land and creating a market for low-income former inhabitants of these state-owned lands. Moreover, other public institutions and spaces have been privatized such as Turkish State Railways, the region of Beşiktaş seaside and public hospitals and schools in the city centers (Balaban, 2013: 70).

¹⁴ AKP received in 2002 34.28%, in 2007 46.47% and in 2011 49.95% of the votes in general elections.

Other controversial projects of the last decade in Istanbul are briefly the following: the recent projects of a third bridge and a third airport which led to many discussions about the potential destruction of remaining forests and damage to water resources in Istanbul; enormous increase in constructions of shopping malls, hotels and skyscrapers via renovating protected historical buildings with the help of new legal regulations; the giant mosque project on the highest hill of Istanbul, Çamlıca, and another one at Taksim Square; Ottoman style architecture and symbolic buildings; privatization of central district Beşiktaş seaside when the Prime Ministry Building moved there with the shutting down of first the bus stop, then of the historical teahouse on the seaside and with the construction of a luxurious hotel there and speculations of selling the port which provides currently one of the most frequent ferry lines.

Taksim is of prior importance for this thesis, as I mentioned before. Taksim, a region in the district of Beyoğlu, has been under transformation for years. However, the recent public debate leans towards the view how the policies of AKP attempt to “prevent Istanbulites to have access to Beyoğlu” (Atayurt, 2012: 20). The urban policies in the Beyoğlu district might be best understood with the draft legislation of the 1/1000 scaled Reconstruction Plan to Protect Amendments of Beyoğlu County first introduced in 2011 which provisions to welcome “interventions of capital to the gaps provided under the name of ‘renewal’” (Atayurt, 2012: 19). According to this master plan, the neighborhoods in Beyoğlu, such as parts of and places in Tophane, Perşembepazarı, Tarlabası, Galata, İstiklal Street, Talimhane and Gümüşsuyu have been already marketed to big construction companies (Atayurt, 2012: 19). Respectively, these neighborhoods –some of them are squatter areas with non-Muslim or non-Turkish populations - will either become de-residential places or available for tourists and privileged groups who are able to pay enormously increased rents. Journalist Ulus Atayurt calls this process “hotelization of Beyoğlu” which would also impose tourism-based labor market with all its informality and insecurity due to the neoliberal work conditions

(Atayurt, 2012: 20). The gentrification of Beyoğlu by means of capital accumulation is also part of the sterilization project of city centers¹⁵ which is obviously a euphemism for limiting local neighborhoods to the use of elite groups or, better put, for a separation of different classes through spatial organization. Atayurt says that Beyoğlu is then designed as not the space for conservative masses where they spend time but instead “Simcity of capitalism” which a few privileged people would enjoy (Atayurt, 2012: 20).

Although the legislation about Beyoğlu and its articles are still contested in law courts, the implementations have already started.¹⁶ Taksim Square Pedestrianization Project which was included in the master plan mentioned above in 2011, envisages a complete modification of the way Taksim Square and İstiklal Street have been for years. First and foremost, the project was criticized since the plan would hamper the access to the Square; in contrast to its alleged pedestrianization purpose, it would enable more police control over demonstrations such as May Day, collapse more the traffic which will be relocated underground, and destroy the most important gathering point for a possible earthquake by the mall project at the square (Atayurt, 2012: 18). The 2013 Gezi Uprising had first started against the demolition of the Gezi Park in the Taksim Square since the demolition was the first step before building there an Ottoman Artillery Barrack which later would turn into a shopping mall.

The reorganization of Taksim is not limited to the transformation of the square. In 2010, Taksim Square was finally open to May Day demonstrations which had been banned for many years. However, in 2013, PM Erdoğan declared that “Taksim is not a place of demonstrations”¹⁷ and suggested groups to hold their demonstrations instead in Yenikapı or Maltepe, newly built isolated places outside of the city center. Since then police forces have

¹⁵ Especially utterly articulated in Istanbul Metropolitan Planning and Design Center of the Istanbul municipality, the city is designed as “clean and sterilized city”. See Pérouse, 2010.

¹⁶ Arbitrariness, unlawfulness, informality and illegality are yields of neoliberalism that provide overcoming all the legal obstacles to urban reorganization. See, Köse 2014.

¹⁷ <http://www.evrensel.net/haber/82800/erdogan-1-mayista-taksimden-umidi-kesin.html> last access: 10.06.2014

attacked every demonstration at the square and in İstiklal Street with tear gas and water canons. Taksim saw right after the general elections in 2011 in which AKP got 50% of the votes, “chair and table operation” of the Beyoğlu municipality through which the tables of restaurants and bars on the street were removed, small enterprises in the meantime were disturbed by municipal officers and the busy street life of the neighborhood was largely damaged. In addition, many historical buildings including the Emek Movie Theater were shut down in İstiklal Street in the last years in order to be renovated for the use of shopping malls with a remarkable indifference and police violence towards huge protests by architects association, local organizations and democratic initiatives. In sum, the intensive transformation of the urban site of Istanbul indicates an appropriation of the “secular” city history and culture for the sake of profit and political control; this happens not only through deporting the working middle and lower classes from the public and living spaces there, but also through depoliticizing and detaching Taksim from its historical political meanings. It was not a coincidence therefore, that the protests of June 2013 started in Gezi Park at the Taksim Square, before spreading across the country.

The gender politics of the AKP: Women under neoliberalism and neoconservatism

As mentioned above, neoliberalism and neoconservatism reinforce each other in many ways. It can be demonstrated that the governments of AKP in pursuit of this alliance have strengthened oppressions towards women’s labor, bodies and identities. However, concluding that the ongoing and new forms of women’s subordination in Turkey are the result of the neoliberal policies of AKP would disregard patriarchy as an independent power system which has existed before capitalism as well. In this section, without reducing patriarchy to neoconservatism, or making them synonyms, I attempt to show how patriarchy in Turkey in the AKP era feeds on both neoliberalism and neoconservatism through specific policies.

Since the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the state adopted many legal and institutional regulations concerning women's equality. The Turkish secular modernization was relying on reinforcing motherhood and the significance of the family tied to national goals, it also indicated new roles for women in public for which the notions of development, education and particular job opportunities were fostered as an intrinsic part of the secular ideology (Dedeoğlu, 2013). The growing feminist and women's movements in the late 1980s have shaped the gender agenda in politics in the 1990s, given that the improvements in gender equality remained slow for all these years. From 1999 Turkey's EU candidacy brought about visible and significant changes both in law and policies which were highly debated within the growing civil society (including an increasing number of NGOs) of that time (Acar and Altunok, 2013).

At the time of the first AKP government, which started in 2002, the Civil Code, with intense engagement of feminists, had already changed (most importantly articles concerning equal rights within marriage), additionally both the EU harmonization process and pressure of feminist groups and NGOs brought about changes in the Penal Code in 2004 (legal definitions of crimes against women's bodies and sexuality were dramatically changed and regulation of punishment on crimes of rape and violence was rendered more severe). In 2012, the law of the Protection Order from male violence against women was modified again with the engagement of women's movement although with less success in the end compared to the previous law reforms. In 2011, Turkey was the first country which ratified the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention (Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence) just as the country was rapid in signing CEDAW in 1985. All these new regulations were important in their emphasis on the state taking measures against women's discrimination. In this sense, not only the recognition of male violence or women's inequality

but also the direct implementation of measures to improve women's positions was on the agenda in the early 2000s.

While these legal amendments were taking place, AKP was at the same time certainly promoting its conservative patriarchal policies regarding women. From the beginning, women were located within the family through discourses which impose women the duty of motherhood, without any remarkable investments in other realms like women's participation in the workforce. While one tendency is to define this simultaneous existence of legislative structure at the advantage of women and maintenance of women's traditional roles as "an obvious tension" (Dedeoğlu, 2013), some scholars argued that what we have seen is exactly the patriarchy under the rule of AKP enmeshed with neoliberalism and neoconservatism which cannot be explained solely neither by the prevailing Islam nor by previous forms of state patriarchy in Turkey (Coşar and Yeğenoğlu, 2011; Acar and Altunok, 2013). Scholars Feride Acar and Gülbanu Altunok claim that "while the AKP has always defined its major identity axis as "conservative", between 2002 and 2007, it emphasized its strong commitment to Western democratic values and liberal economic principles" (Acar and Altunok, 2013: 14) while appropriating the neoliberal program. However, since 2007, they connote a change in the party politics towards more "patriarchal and moral notions and values" (Acar and Altunok, 2013: 14). Similarly, scholars Simten Coşar and Metin Yeğenoğlu cite the difference of AKP from previous governments, as generating "a new mode of patriarchy that is formed through a strategic combination of religious-conservative, nationalist and liberal value sets" (Coşar and Yeğenoğlu, 2011: 3). Here I will focus on the gendered policies of the last decade which created this "new patriarchy".

In 2003 AKP proposed for the first time a draft law with restrictions on abortion. Although it was then withdrawn due to the reactions of women's groups and medical associations, attempts to ban abortion continued by connected discursive and legal practices (Acar and

Altunok, 2013). In 2008 Erdoğan in his speech on the celebration of the 8th of March emphasized the government's financial incentives for women to give birth. The discourse on couples having "at least three children" advised as well in public wedding ceremonies to the couples by him or other party members dates back to this period. Imposing on women to "have at least three children" was related both to the aging population of Europe and the declining birth rate in Turkey in the last decades (Acar and Altunok, 2013: 16). The social policies on restricting abortion were directly linked to the AKP's approach towards women that exclusively associate them with the role of care giving. In this line, in the new regulation in 2012 (Regulation Concerning Treatment Centers for Assisted Procreation) about reproduction by the Ministry of Health, only married and heterosexual women were allowed to have access to assisted reproduction, with the requirement of consent from the two parties and prohibiting the use of donors for egg cell or sperm. All these practices have been formulated by the government as amendments for "reproductive health" while sexual health was not mentioned at all (Acar and Altunok, 2013: 17). Simultaneously, Cesarean deliveries have been increased in the last decade and mostly used in urban centers by women who belong to higher socioeconomic status and educational level (Acar and Altunok, 2013: 18). Cesarean deliveries were highly spread by privatization of health system as well. In 2012, Erdoğan made his famous speech on abortion in which he said that "abortion is murder", he mentioned that AKP was also targeting doctors and medical centers that allow Cesarean deliveries and abortions. Abortion at the end was not prohibited because of large women's protests but restricted on the basis of class, location and information differences among women. That is, the transformations in the health system such as large scale privatization, performance based system and arbitrary practices prevented women to have equal access to reproductive health services. Moreover, the discourse on condemning abortion itself has been influential for doctors to be reluctant towards it. Abortion was among the largely shared

reactions during the Gezi Protests because the discursive attack since 2012 had concrete results in women's everyday lives such as arbitrary measures towards pregnancy. Pregnancy period has been monitored and recorded by medical institutions which even introduced a new implementation of informing the parents about the pregnancy of their daughters (Karakuş, 2012).

While connecting abortion policies to the goal of strengthening the family, the decline of the welfare system –if it ever existed in Turkey- has to be mentioned. With the appropriation of the neoliberal order, in Turkey, social security and health services were largely privatized, and the state withdrew from care services and they were assigned to the family being the available locus of reproduction or they were privatized on the basis of obvious class distinctions simultaneously as the introduction of the new job market; i.e. flexible, insecure, part-time and informal labor targeted women as well. Public services such as social care services were diminished through which women's care labor at home for children, the elderly and disabled family members has been reinforced (Dedeoğlu, 2013). In other words, in the last decade women in Turkey have felt “the vicious circle” which is also a global phenomenon. On the one hand, strengthening of family has been tremendously uttered and implemented by the state and thus, women are called back home to their positions as care givers; on the other hand, they also have to provide for the family in a situation in which the neoliberal market is offering employment conditions that reproduce their subordination (Coşar and Yeğenoğlu, 2011: 7). In other words, the neoliberal patriarchy, while ascribing to women, positions in the labor market according to their vulnerability in unpaid labor at home, i.e. women being less educated and less experienced, consolidates and ensures the unpaid labor at home. As long as domestic labor persists on the shoulders of women, there is no opportunity for the majority of women to have secure and equally paid jobs and thus, to free themselves from the dependency on the family and the unpaid labor (Savran, 2009). Finally, the policies on “Family and Work

Life Balance” that came to the fore with EU candidacy process and “New Labor Legislation” invoked in 2003, helped to maintain the vicious circle for women in Turkey (Ulusoy, 2014).¹⁸ However, during the last decade, the employment rate for women increased from 24% in 2008 to 30% in 2011 which shows that women insist in joining the labor market. This statistics obviously excludes female participation in the informal labor market in which women’s estimated participation is higher (Dedeoğlu, 2013: 11).

The position of women of being stuck between paid and unpaid labor has been reified by the speeches and practices of AKP in many interrelated ways. For instance, the Finance Minister Mehmet Şimşek in 2009 explained the reason behind the high unemployment rates in Turkey as the increasing participation of women into the labor force in periods of economic crisis.¹⁹ In 2010 PM Erdoğan in a meeting held with women’s organizations said: “I don’t believe in equality between men and women anyway. So I prefer to say equality of opportunity [rather than gender equality]. Women and men are different, they are complementary to each other”.²⁰ In 2011, the Ministry of Women and Family was replaced by Ministry of Family and Social Policies which was not only a symbolic change but also the organizational structure was transformed: the new ministry would be charged with issues concerning children, the aged, the disabled and the families of soldiers who die during the military service as much as family and women’s rights. To the women’s organizations petition which demanded an “Equality Ministry” to independently deal with the ongoing women’s multi-layered subordination, Erdoğan responded as “We are a conservative democrat party. To us, family is

¹⁸ The New Labor Law no.4857 in 2003, provisions flexible and insecure adjustment of labor processes according to needs of capital. Family and Work Life Balance defines social rights only in relation to formal market and remove full time housewives, domestic workers, care laborers, seasonal workers from the social security system. Balance between work and family promotes women to work in part-time and flexible jobs in order to be able to endure housework and care labor at home (Ulusoy, 2014).

¹⁹ <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ekonomi/11240874.asp> last access: 10.06.2014

²⁰ <http://haber.gazetevatan.com/kadinla-erkek-esit-olamaz/318006/9/siyaset> last access: 10.06.2014

important.”²¹ Furthermore, with the introduction of the unit of the “family ombudsman”, the government started a new mechanism to prevent women who want to divorce their husbands. Divorce is already made difficult for women because of the reasons that I depicted above, mainly women’s lack of economic independence, AKP is reproducing in every aspect women’s designated roles as mothers without facilitating or publicly encouraging any other identity.

The divorce rates, however, have increased each year in the last decade, despite all policies for strengthening the family. According to the Turkish Statistical Institution’s rates, between 2004 and 2013, the rate of marriage fell 2.5 % whereas the divorce rate increased 38 %.²² These statistics indicates the complexity surrounding the outcomes of family ideology. The obstacles for women when they get divorced can be primarily listed as a visible loss of income, taking charge of care of children alone and prejudices of relatives and society (Özar and Yakut-Çakar, 2014). Those women who during marriage are not encouraged to join work force, they remain dependent economically when they are divorced (Özar and Yakut-Çakar, 2014: 105) usually in terms of the social insurance that they receive from their fathers or husbands which was legally regulated in 2008 (Özar and Yakut-Çakar, 2014:103). In addition, although divorced women in general receive subsistence money from their husbands, either the amount remains insufficient or husbands tend to be reluctant to pay it regularly. Unlike widows who receive support from the state, divorced women are left on their own since divorce is not promoted and even is regarded as a “threat” to the AKP’s family policies, thus, divorced women are excluded from social services in several manners (Özar and Yakut-Çakar, 2014: 106-107). This is definitely related to the availability of institutional support

²¹ <http://www.bianet.org/bianet/kadin/130585-kadin-bakanligi-kaldirildi-kadin-orgutleri-ofkeli> last access: 10.06.2014

²² <http://www.tuik.gov.tr/UstMenu.do?metod=temelist> last access: 10.06.2014

only to married women (Coşar and Yeğenoğlu, 2011:11). In addition, non-heterosexual women do not have any place in terms of legal recognition.

Another crucial aspect of the last decade regarding women's lives is male violence. In the process of divorce or after getting divorced, sometimes years later, many women are confronted with different forms of violence from male family members, mostly ex-husbands.²³ The unofficial data in the last years indicate that the number of divorced or divorcing women among women killings is significantly increasing (Özar and Yakut-Çakar, 2014: 98). Increasing male violence against women is a recent phenomenon shown by the state statistics as well. The Minister of Justice stated in 2009 that between 2002 and 2009 women killings had increased 1400 %. This enormous number was followed by the data showing each year's numbers; in 2002 66, in the first 7 months of 2009, 953 women were killed²⁴. Although we do not have recent numbers, journals and NGOs are keeping the information which allows us to argue that still everyday men kill women. Moreover, again according to the official statistics in 2009, 39% of women sharing their lives with a male partner or married exposed to physical violence at least once during their lifetime (Jansen, Yüksek and Çağatay, 2009). These numbers exclude of course unreported cases or suspicious women suicides. Cases of rape, sexual harassment, early (children) marriage and other forms of violence vary in terms of statistics which would be missing in any case due to the still ongoing difficulty for women to make sexual assault public or to file a court complaint. Therefore, although there are visible improvements in the Penal Code, in terms of punishments of such crimes, or given the fact that the AKP government ratified Istanbul Convention and promulgated the new Protection Law no.5284 in 2012, there is “contradictory” a constant increase in male violence against women. Feminist activists and scholars have long argued that the government does not deal with the structural sources of

²³ <http://www.bianet.org/english/women/152746-infographic-of-male-violence-2013>

²⁴ <http://istifhane.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/kadincinayetleri-tutanak.pdf> Last access: 10.06.2014

violence, instead, it leans towards protecting the family first and foremost (Acar and Altunok, 2013: 19). In other words, the government seems to try to avoid the violence “overflowing from home into streets” and to move it back to the private sphere by way of preventing divorces, abortions, any other identities than mothers and wives of women. Moreover, the mitigation of sentences in murders, acquittals in sexual assault cases and overall further subordination reproduced in court rooms and legal practices in the last decade show how law as an institution and a patriarchal practice also contributes to this picture (Baytok, 2012). Another problem regarding women both who are exposed to violence from family and divorced is shelters. Although according to the law no. 5393 in 2005, the municipalities have the duty to open shelters for women and children where population is more than 50000, it is not in general implemented. If it would, across Turkey 1400 shelters would be in service, instead of 78 according to the state records whereas according to scholars it is only 60 (Diner and Toktaş, 2014: 118). Çağla Diner and Şule Toktaş in their research demonstrate that this number is not only insufficient for women but also the existing shelters exclude many women including immigrants, sex workers, victims of human trafficking, women without id cards (Diner and Toktaş, 2014). Other problems concerning the shelters include the insufficient time amount there necessary for women’s empowerment, the lack of state budget and tendency of working personnel to “compromise” the husband and the woman in the shelter again in the name of preserving family which can have vital consequences for women while contradicting with the secrecy principle of shelters (Diner and Toktaş, 2014). After the new protection law of 2012, the government built new centers called Centers for Prevention of Violence (ŞÖNİM) which were intended to be temporary centers for women in which they would have access to any information and help before moving to shelters or else. However, from the practice so far, first the fact that they were built almost outside of city centers and

secondly the lack of psychologists, lawyers or councilors seem far from empowering and making “information” available for women (Bayram and Büyükgöze, 2013).

Conclusion

The AKP is promoting neoliberal and neoconservative politics in a steady manner. The three consecutive governments of AKP since 2003 have established a neoliberal economy based on unprecedented capital accumulation from living spaces, state institutions, and public services. Elimination of social spheres and public services as a result of this new form of governance led to an individuation (i.e. self-care) process in Turkey as well. I have shown in this chapter how the urban space, particularly Istanbul, provides a profitable terrain for neoliberalism. In this sense, the privatization of the control over the city in the AKP period fulfills one of the common goals of neoliberal power. Ottoman style architecture as well as high references to Ottoman Empire’s politics and to religious motives and messages in the AKP’s political discourse demonstrate an association of the government with the past, with an earlier period before the foundation of the Republic. I have also shown in this chapter that the ways in which AKP puts neoconservatism into practice also recalls other contexts across globe, in which an increase in authoritarianism of state power hand in hand with large public support has been established. As a result, everything might be privatized in principle, but under the surveillance of the authoritarian rule. Accordingly, a decrease in democratic values has been an important characteristic of this period as well. Along these lines, the urban transformation process in Istanbul illustrates a rich example to see how neoliberal and neoconservative policies cooperate in the case of AKP regime.

While framing the particularities of neoliberal and neoconservative regime in Turkey, the role of Islam has to be mentioned. It would be incorrect to interpret the AKP regime solely as an Islamic rule if we figure out the similarities of the AKP regime with other ruling parties in Europe and the USA (Acar and Altunok, 2013; Çağatay 2014a; Dinçer, 2014; Coşar and

Yeğenoğlu, 2011). However, in order to not dismiss the role of Islam as an instrument of power in the AKP regime, I would suggest to conceptualize Islam in its collaboration with the neoconservative state. In this regard, “AKP’s success” in the implementation of neoliberal policies with the huge support of society (demonstrated above as the collaboration of state-capital-society) is made possible on the basis of its populist policies on Islam in a country where the majority of the society identifies itself as Muslim.

Regarding the gender politics of the AKP governments, in the ways in which women have experienced subordination in the last decade, in the form of exploitation of labor, male violence, imposed motherhood and so forth, we see patriarchy in accordance with neoliberalism, neoconservatism (despite possible contradictions) and Islam. For instance, the persistent call to women to give birth to three children is first and foremost about nationalism, and future worries of a nation, rather than carrying any visible reference to Islam as I have depicted in this chapter. Here, we see an alliance of patriarchy with conservatism and nationalism. However, the explicit speech of the PM Erdoğan in 2012 in which he said that his government wants “to raise religious youth faithful to their past”²⁵ shows the right path to “mothers” who will raise these children. Similarly, Erdoğan in 2013 condemned mix student dorms and houses declaring that as a conservative democrat party they would not let “girls” and “boys” to stay together, while emphasizing that they are not interfering with anyone’s life-style.²⁶ This statement combines altogether patriarchal, neoconservative and Islam-based pressures. Therefore, without disregarding the priority of patriarchy as system of male dominance over women, it is illuminating to see the interrelatedness between patriarchy and neoliberalism and neoconservatism fed by Islam. In the following chapter, I will examine the political agenda of the feminist movement in Istanbul, the role of spatial reorganization today

²⁵ <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/19825231.asp> Last access: 10.06.2014

²⁶ <http://siyaset.milliyet.com.tr/erdogan-dan-tartisilan-aciklamaya/siyaset/detay/1787437/default.htm> Last access: 10.06.2014

in reifying further women's subordination and the ways in which feminist politics can incorporate the spatial reorganization in its further activism.

Chapter3: Integrating the “transforming” city into feminist politics: the feminist movement in Istanbul and the case of the Gezi Protests

(...) spatial confidence is a “manifestation of power”. Walking on the street can be seen as a political act: women “write themselves onto the street.”²⁷

Introduction

In Chapter 2, I have shown how neoliberal and neoconservative policies have affected the city and the lives of women in the last decade, with a particular focus on the context of Istanbul under the rule of the AKP government. In this chapter I move from demonstrating the policies on the urban site and on women, to investigating a political movement. In search for insights for a feminist activism which would integrate the transformation of the urban site into its agenda, I will in this chapter reflect on the question of how policies on the city and on women intersect, through which we can formulate further feminist claims.

In this chapter, I will first present the current motivations for the feminist movement to lay claims to Istanbul and to Taksim in particular. Then, I will go over the current political agenda and concerns of the feminist movement in Istanbul. In so doing, I will discuss the primary oppressions against women under three sections in the way the movement defines; on women’s bodies, labor and identities (with reference to the gendered implementations that I have demonstrated in Chapter 2). Based on that, I will reflect on the role of the urban space in maintaining women’s subordination and, therefore, on the connections between the politics regarding the urban space and women. Throughout the chapter I will refer to the case of the Gezi Uprising which has highlighted and enabled us to think about the interactions of the two realms by being a site of encounter for different movements and claims as described in the

²⁷ Koskela, Hille. 2005. “Urban Space in Plural: Elastic, Tamed, Suppressed” in *a Companion to Feminist Geography*, eds. Lise Nelson and Joni Seager, Blackwell Publishing, 263.

Introduction. In the conclusion of this chapter, I will argue that the feminist movement cannot consider the urban site solely as a location, but should claim more, because the city of Istanbul rather means a space of production; of patriarchy, male violence, capitalist exploitation, exclusion as well as forms of resistance for women.

The feminist movement in Istanbul: A brief history of its organization, the city and the role of Taksim

The independent feminist movement in Turkey gained power in the late 1980s. In Istanbul and Ankara women started to gather together with a variety of concerns under the influence of second wave feminisms globally. These concerns included criticisms of the socialist groups that some of them left at the period, the necessity of an independent feminist movement, self-reflections about their personal lives which turned later into the organization of “consciousness raising” groups through which they questioned family, marriage, sexuality and the need of a larger transformation of the society (Savran, 2002b; Tekeli, 1995). Respectively, they initiated campaigns against battering and sexual harassment, protested both in the streets and through legal institutions, published several magazines and founded Mor Çatı Women’s Shelter in 1995, which is still a unique independent shelter for battered women in Istanbul (Mor Çatı, 1988). In the 1990s women protested in Istanbul against the government’s policies on family by a symbolic act of divorce, started to litigate court cases on sexual assault and rape (Diner and Toktaş, 2010). The 1990s marked the growing organizational phase of the movement which led to emergence of many groups and NGOs for different purposes and from different backgrounds (Diner and Toktaş, 2010: 46). Women’s organizations²⁸ intervened in the process of lawmaking in the 2000s, which resulted in remarkable changes both in the Civil and the Penal Code (WWHR, 2005; Coşar and Yeğenoğlu, 2011). Today, feminist groups are not limited to Istanbul and Ankara anymore

²⁸ Feminist movement and women’s movement are not used interchangeably. I consider feminist movement as part of women’s movement.

although the movement in Istanbul is still the biggest and powerful in the whole of Turkey. I will carefully analyze the agenda of the movement in the 2000s in the following sections.

Istanbul has always been the central city for political organizations in Turkey. The feminist movement also grew and expanded there. Feminism in Turkey, as elsewhere, has been criticized for consisting of and appealing to middle-class, urbanite, secular and educated women. This criticism was partly justified, as women from the foundation years explain, since these were the women who initiated the first meetings in which they discussed their own subordination (Savran, 2002a) and thought through Western feminisms (Bora, 2004). The feminist movement of the 1980s in Turkey was critical of certain liberal and first world feminisms' mission of "saving women"; instead, the movement started with the notion of self-reflection, i.e. changing one's own life to be able to achieve larger transformations. Today the number of women as well as organizations in the movement has remarkably increased, yet feminism still preserves its strong affiliation with middle-class, urbanite and educated women. The movement started, grew and became visible in an urban space which is also a strong reason for feminists having a say about the city where they live and act in and the ongoing transformations.

Taksim, one of the popular neighborhoods of Istanbul, became a central place of meetings and demonstrations in the 1990s. For May Day demonstrations the Taksim Square has been of symbolic significance since the 1970s, especially after the protest in 1977 when 34 people died; moreover, in the 1990s the square became a locus of protests for different groups, again, attacked by police forces (Firat, ed. 2014). By the 1990s Political organizations gradually installed their offices in Taksim as well. In 2004, in the early AKP rule under the influence of EU candidacy, holding a press release in Galatasaray Square in Taksim was protected by the law. However, this did not mean that all the demonstrations were "allowed" by the police for two reasons: first the police could arbitrarily attack whatever the legal regulation was.

Secondly, since law recognized press release only, marches or other forms of demonstrations were open to police attack, especially if protesters would stop the traffic. Since Istiklal Street (where the protests are headed to) is a pedestrian one, protestors would walk also instead of sufficing with a press release.²⁹ Therefore, no matter the legal regulation says, the Taksim Square and Istiklal Street have been centers of gatherings, demonstrations and organizations for years, based on the right of meeting and demonstration protected in the Constitution. Feminists have also taken their place in Taksim since the 1990. They opened their institutions and organized street protests as did leftist, Kurdish and LGBT groups (Ekal, 2014). Therefore, the transformation that Taksim has undergone in 2014 that I have specified in Chapter 2 means for feminists first a depoliticization and dehistoricization of one particular space. Secondly, it is also privatization by means of not only opening whole Beyoğlu district to capital accumulation but also dislocating political groups by prohibiting any sort of demonstrations since 2013. Moreover, Taksim is a point of gathering for regular 25 November and 8 March protests, with the increasing number of women participants each year. In this sense, Taksim's possible restriction to political activism threatens women in a particularly manner since these marches claim first and foremost women's presence in streets and in public spaces. Therefore, the transformation of Taksim for the feminist movement in the first place signals an erasure of memory. This memory has more than "nostalgic" value but political, social and cultural content since the late 1980s.

The feminist movement in Istanbul showed interest in the urban governance too. For the general elections in 2007, some of feminists supported the independent candidacy of two women, Ayşe Tükrükçü and Saliha Ermez. They were former sex workers then candidates for deputy of Istanbul who made the visible vulnerability of licensed sex workers and other aspects of women's subordination. Feminists took the streets with them, made demonstrations

²⁹ In other words, press release was the only form legally regulated. Since there was/is no "freedom for marches", protesters expand the law to their benefits.

in front of brothels, highlighted the shared aspects among different women's conditions (Karakuş, 2013a). For the 2009 local elections, feminists started a symbolic campaign in a more organized manner. The campaign "We have a feminist say over Beyoğlu" basically reflected on how feminist local governance might be stating the difference between simply adding a women's agenda to already existing election programs and existing as an independent political actor with visions for the future. For the first time feminists in Istanbul came up with a plan for a comprehensive transformation for the city they have in: consisting of women's equal participation and representation in city councils, increase in public services such as creches, shelters, laundries, housing supports for single, elderly, divorced women and students, employment opportunities and gender quota in workplaces, turning streets and public to women-friendly places and so forth (Karakuş, 2013b). It was also the first time that the movement made such an explicit connection between neoliberal policies on women with the living spaces. The political program was intense and multifaceted yet this direct engagement with the city lasted only as long as the election campaign and was not continued in the agenda as thoroughly later.

Taksim Solidarity, founded as a platform gathering local organizations, professional chambers, socialist leftist parties and groups, started its regular meetings in November 2012, in order to take action against the Pedestrianization Project in Beyoğlu (see Chapter 2). Feminist women definitely participated into the process which ended up with Gezi protests. However, Istanbul Feminist Kolektif³⁰, which I belong to, and groups within it, did not follow the former meetings, even those which were held after May Day in 2013 (see Chapter 2) due to several reasons. These include the intensity of its program and in some degree the fact that they gave less priority in comparison to the explicit women's agenda. During the first days of

³⁰ Istanbul Feminist Kolektif is an umbrella organization of some feminist groups (including Mor Çatı Women's Shelter and SFK mentioned in the thesis) and independent feminists.

the Gezi Uprising, feminists joined the protests primarily to react against police violence, not to save the park.

In this section, I have briefly indicated how the feminist movement itself is related to the city of Istanbul and the region of Taksim. Hereafter, I attempt to show in which ways the transformation of a particular urban space is of importance for women, and thus for feminist politics; with references to the Gezi experience which formed one crucial step for this knowledge.

Women's bodies: Fear, violence and reclaiming the streets

One mediation through which women are engaged in or detached from the urban cite is their bodies. How women appear, dress, move and where they position themselves, with whom, when and for which purposes, all have direct influence on how women experience the city. The body has been analyzed by feminist scholars in multiple senses, they have primarily showed that the body connotes place and location and is unstable, transgressive and bound to change (McDowell, 1999). It is important also to note that the body definitely intersects with patriarchal control mechanisms over women's labor and identity, which are the following categories of this chapter. However, here, I will separately first look at how the feminist movement in Istanbul has handled "women in public space" in relation to fear and harassment and what are the obstacles that women face in relation to the control over their bodies. Secondly, I will examine how neoliberal urban space influences women's labor today. Lastly, I will point out what we can learn from the Gezi experience regarding on the connections between women and the urban site in relation to women's bodies.

In 1987 women submitted to the Parliament a "women's petition" in which they primarily asked the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), signed by Turkey in 1985 to be put into practice (Arat, 1994: 244). In 1989,

feminists in Istanbul decided to initiate a campaign against sexual assault at home, in the workplace and in the streets. “The Purple Pin campaign” started that year in a ferry in Istanbul where the pin was introduced to women as “an item” against assaults that they encountered in public places (Diner and Toktaş, 2010: 45). Concomitantly, the group went also to the streets at night and entered bars and taverns which were supposed to belong to men and presented them the pin. This symbolic act became popular within the movement and regained significance in 2008 when a woman tourist was harassed during the New Year’s Eve celebrations in Istiklal Street in front of police forces and TV cameras.³¹ Since then, the purple pin has been used by women in other cities as well depending on the occasion.³²

In 2003 feminists in Istanbul started the “feminist night walk” on 8 March in Taksim with a particular emphasis on war and invasion and the slogan “Hitler, Mussolini, Sharon, Milosevic, Bush, Saddam... All of them are men, is this a coincidence?” The purpose of the night walk is best illustrated with the slogan “we are not leaving neither the nights, nor the streets, nor the squares!” which is still one of the most popular slogans in feminist night gatherings. Since then, the women-only “feminist night walk” has been organized every year, with an increasing number of women participation. “Reclaiming the night” is largely associated with reclaiming the streets based on the ongoing fear and anxiety to be in streets as women. The fact that women do not experience the streets as freely as men, or in other words, that streets are supposed to belong to men whereas the home is the place of women, is a universal phenomenon has been long argued by feminists (Massey, 1994). Feminists all over the world launched campaigns through which they asked for the safety of women in public spaces as well as laid claim to identities as equal citizens and inhabitants of urban space (Wekerle and Peake, 1996). Furthermore, the fear of violence and the feeling of insecurity which ultimately lead women to avoid many public spaces are documented as a sign of power relations in spaces,

³¹ <http://www.bianet.org/biamag/kadin/110595-mor-igne-kampanyasi-19-yasinda> Last access: 21.05.2014

³² For instance, in “Mothers’ Day” this year IFK presented purple pin among the gifts to give mothers.

clearly male dominance over women; so that violence in streets is not simply a “criminal” issue (Koskela, 2005). Moreover, night protest is today a regular form of demonstration for feminists in Taksim in cases of harassment and assault in places like cafe/bars. Night protest is one of the methods for public unveiling of male dominance for feminists.

Since male violence has been a prior realm of feminist struggle, the feminist movement in Istanbul has primarily focused on fear and violence in public as well as at home regarding the issue of women’s bodies. In the 2000s male violence kept its significance for feminists. As I have shown in Chapter 2, the last decade saw a dramatic increase in male violence across Turkey. Moreover, it can be argued that the condoning of violence by impunity for murder and other sorts of male violence, despite the existing laws, the increase in male violence and murders in the streets and in other public places, and state officials’ contribution to a blaming-the-victim discourse even in cases of murder³³ have reinforced the everyday knowledge that encounters with male violence are highly likely. The feminist movement in Istanbul focused particularly on male violence since the 2000s then protests against perpetration of male violence (in collaboration of the state with its male citizens) spread to other cities.

As the above examples also show, male violence is a complex mechanism used to control women’s involvement in public space in multiple manners. In 2008, a woman who was fishing alone among men at the Galata Bridge in the center of Istanbul was punished by the court for “indecent behavior” because of her way of dressing. Feminists organized a demonstration at the bridge saying that the discourse of decency reproduces women’s inequality and such court decisions legitimate male violence on the basis of provocation,

³³ After the brutal murder of 17 year old Münevver Karabulut in 2009, the PM Erdoğan declared “If a girl is left unattended by her family, she will run away either to a drummer or a trumpeter” (a Turkish saying) and Chief of Police Celalettin Cerrah stated that the family did not look after their daughter and let her stay outside late with her boyfriend. See <http://disgruntledyoungpenguin.blogspot.hu/2013/11/15-akp-quotes-on-womens-role-in-society.html> These explanations created huge public debates, condemned by feminists: <http://sosyalistfeministkolektif.org/feminist-gundem/kadin-cinayetleri/692-celalettin-cerrah-kad-nlar-hedef-goesteriyor.html> Last access: 10.06.2014

immorality and improper women conducts.³⁴ Feminists since the 2000s first in Istanbul and across Turkey have litigated and intervened in court cases to abolish mitigation of sentences in the name of provocation, proper motherhood and morality. At Valentine's Days in the last years the movement organized demonstrations in front of shopping malls with the slogan "The love of men kills 3 women each day!" protesting against the normalization of violence under the guise of love.³⁵ During the campaign "We revolt against women killings!"³⁶, among the cases that feminists made public were Nejla Yıldız, who was killed in one big avenue in Ankara in 2010 in front of people by her daughter's ex-boyfriend; Sevim Zarif killed in Istanbul in 2007 in a street by her ex-husband 11 years after their divorce; Ayşe Yılbaş who was threatened for several years and killed in her workplace in front of people in 2007. The examples are multiple, in sum, feminists politicized these murders that happened at home as well as in public places and exposed neither home nor streets are devoid of male violence. They made male violence public by intervening in the court rooms and street demonstrations in front of court houses and else. The history in the last decade in Turkey shows that no matter where and in which form male violence takes place, all forms are related to and enabled by each other. In short, male violence is highly visible, tangible and frequent in women's lives and of crucial importance for the feminist movement in Turkey.

The reasons behind the recent aggravation in male violence in the last decade in Turkey obviously necessitate further elaboration. So far, some scholars explain the increase in violence as the result of "masculinity crisis" (Özkazanç, 2013) or "masculinist restoration" (Kandiyoti, 2013), some other refer to the consolidation of neoconservatism in the AKP period which increases men's control over women (Gülbahar, 2010). Feminists handle the

³⁴ "Women meet to walk without shame": <http://www.bianet.org/bianet/print/108094> Last access: 10.06.2014

³⁵ "Istanbul's feminists protest Valentine's Day": <http://www.bianet.org/english/gender/144358-istanbul-s-feminists-protest-valentine-s-day> Last access: 10.06.2014

³⁶ The campaign started in Istanbul in 2010 by IFK then was spread to other cities. Feminists since then follow law suits of women killings and make public the role of the state, law and police force in the perpetration of male violence: <http://kadincinayetlerineisyandayiz.blogspot.hu/> Last access: 10.06.2014

issue in its complexity; women's (economic and social) vulnerability due to their trapped positions between home and work, the underdiscovered long lasting consequences of 30 years of civil war in the country, the discourse of some media coverage while reporting crimes and also women's increasing objections to husbands or partners and the increasing rate of divorce, are among the reasons that feminists put forward to explain the increase in male violence (See Chapter 2). In short, on the one hand, male dominance over women is visible and more fatal than ever, on the other hand, women are not passive or submissive agents.

One dynamic to explain the increase in male violence that is shared and stressed by scholars and activists is “(relative) women's empowerment” (Kandiyoti, 2013; Özkazanç, 2013). The remarkable percentage in women killings shows that women are killed by their husbands, ex-husbands and partners in the process of divorce or breaking up.³⁷ Male killers in many of these cases call women for a “last talk” and commit crimes when they are rejected (Hacıvelioğlu, 2010). The above examples and many other unmentioned cases illustrate men's use of violence when they feel their dominance is no longer secure (Kandiyoti, 2013), i.e. women do not stay in the place men want to keep them. Put differently, what is punished and threatened is “female desire” which challenges heterosexual social and familial order (Ahıska, 2013). In this line, it can be argued that when women transgress certain boundaries, they face violence. In other words, the issue of violence in Turkey indicates that women challenge the spaces and identities that are assigned to them (Çelebi, Havlioğlu, Kayaalp, 2014: 9-23). The analogy between space and identity allows us to consider that power relations are spatially constructed as well: forcing women where and how to be brings forth spatial restrictions accordingly. As shown in the examples above, patriarchy obliges women certain proper social conduct and punishes or stops those who want to or already did alter the boundaries (Çelebi, Havlioğlu, Kayaalp, 2014: 12). Through reinforcing certain representations of male and

³⁷ “Infographic of male violence in 2013”: <http://www.bianet.org/english/women/152746-infographic-of-male-violence-2013> Last access: 10.06.2014

female bodies, violence in public space functions as a “deadly” call for women to go back home. Consequently, women have developed several strategies to be outside houses depending on their differences of class, age, ethnic, sexual orientation, gender identity, and political affiliation.

Although restrictions on women’s access to public spaces and male violence in streets did not start with the AKP regime, the government in the last decade has been increasingly forcing women “to stay in their places” with the help of neoconservatism and Islam rooted in society. Chapter 2 demonstrates that without establishing any social, economic and cultural opportunities for women in public, i.e. outside of the home and family, the government points out that the home is the first and foremost place for women. And those women who challenge assigned spaces and identities are left with self-care and are vulnerable to any violent acts from family members or are already excluded. The way the government is dealing with every sort of male violence with the primary focus on “preserving the family” although women face violence mostly from family members, leaves again women to struggle on their own. Mor Çatı Women’s Shelter has shown the practice of the Protection Order (i.e. state measures to prevent violence, see Chapter 2) which is beyond than eliminating male violence by violating the secrecy of shelters’ places, not implementing punitive rules against men who do not obey the suspension clause of the order and women are forced prove the violence in order to get protected.³⁸ The government’s policies orient women to gated communities and building complexes of Mass Housing Administration far from the centers of Istanbul, as a solution for safety while city centers are discursively depicted as chaotic and insecure. Security in public spaces is mostly left to the control of the private firms, as is globally the case. Privatization of security in public spaces by means of digital surveillance not only releases the state from its responsibility for maintaining safe and secure streets, but also might not make a significant

³⁸ <https://www.morcati.org.tr/tr/ana-sayfa/254-erkek-siddeti-azalmiyor-cunku-en-onemli-yasa-hala-kagit-uzerinde> Last access: 10.06.2014

change in women's perception of safety (Koskela, 2005) since women's knowledge on violence is also formed by the very knowledge of state of impunity in Turkey. The lack of women shelters and new constructions of shelters in isolated places of Istanbul and other cities show also that the government does not promote women's independent processes of recovery and empowerment. Other than that, fostering the representation of woman with family and children influences the public image of women. In the last decade in which Islamic conservative lifestyle is more and more evaluated with the practices in public such as veiling, dress codes, alcohol, fasting (Çavdar, 2012), women bear the burden of representation when they are present in the streets; the risk of carrying danger to the collective imagination of familial representation (Yuval-Davis, 1997). As such, male violence is justified with women's "provoking" outfit and their location, i.e. with their public visibility, as above examples also show. Mobility for women in the city, thus, has a violence loaded association, whatever form it takes. In this regard, although class differences definitely play an important role in terms of access to opportunities, male violence, including the act of murder, is a shared threat for all women in Turkey.³⁹

The case of the Gezi Protests illustrates what women freely using a public space together with men without the fear of harassment or any sort of violence might mean. The park occupation shows how encounters play a role in producing a space for women (Koskela, 2005: 257). The Gezi Park at the Taksim Square was significant for the protesters in several ways including its location, the meanings of Taksim, the privatization of the whole district and so forth. In addition, the use of parks is gendered. Parks in general in Turkey are men's places, even in day time women rarely enjoy parks. Overall parks in Turkey are not places for entertainment, activities, or gatherings that people themselves organize; women simply either do not

³⁹ Feminists especially since the beginning of the 2000s challenged the main public discourse which associated murders of women with ethnicity or class (Koğacıoğlu, 2004; Mojab, 2004; Sirman, 2004). Today, even in mainstream media, excuses under the name of honor killings, despair and mental health are rarely used instead the term women killings is in use which already in itself indicates to a universality of murder for all women.

frequently use parks or avoid them during nights due to the possibility of assault. In this regard, the Gezi Park occupation completely was a new experience for most of the women there.

The Gezi experience was unique for women for several reasons. First, women together with men organized a space; tents, cafeteria, infirmary, security, library and other common places. Second, the experiences of night were completely new to women; not only did they stay there during the nights with men, but also they knew that they were together with men among whom they usually would not feel safe in general in streets. Third, women experienced how invisibility of state and its control would enable acting more comfortably, and where not only the park but the streets of Taksim were full with “unknown” men.⁴⁰ It was actually possible to feel more secure as a contradiction to the insecurity embodied into women’s bodies (McDowell, 1993). In other words, the association of streets with male violence for women, perfectly learned if not experienced, disappeared for a certain period of time. Men and women used the park both in day and night time equally, were physically present equally working, protesting, talking, drinking, and sleeping in the park. The park experience has contested women’s experience both “spatially and temporally” (Koskela, 2005: 259): parks as well as night time could be safe and equally used. Moreover, feminists immediately spread the slogan “resist with tenacity, not with swear words” and crossed out the swear words on graffitis and through that women dared to argue with men in cases which would hardly take place in general and were able to stop the use of the sexist and homophobic words. Women’s presence then also created a constant alert atmosphere in which protesters were warning or stopping each other against forms of discrimination (Ellialtı, 2014). Women, who had learned to experience streets with the time and location restrictions, transgressed such boundaries by their very presence. All required efforts of course, sometimes it meant volunteering in security

⁴⁰ Since the occupation was spread to the streets of Taksim too.

group in objection to the call to the kitchen in the park, sometimes, it meant insistence in Taksim Solidarity meetings to make herself heard. Therefore, the park experience for women was also a struggle with men which required constant energy and effort, altering to some extent the male gaze on women, and in turn women established an egalitarian public space. The park occupation reaffirmed that women's mobility, i.e. ability to move among locations without fear, leads to further liberation for women (Massey, 1994), precisely in this case, to women's presence in public spaces according to their own will. The Gezi Park once signified for most women a place to skip; with this temporary elimination of fear and harassment it became a space where they could "freely move around" (Koskela, 2005: 258). In short, the Gezi Park experience showed how urban space plays a central role in creating gender equality in comprehensive terms.

Since the 1980s the feminist movement in Istanbul has explicitly exposed the interdependency between violence at home and in the public space. In this section I tried to argue that space and its changing facets play a bigger role in women's liberation overall. In other words, I contend that although public space is always already included in the feminist movement in Turkey, it has not taken into account fully the neoliberal and neoconservative transformation, so that the role of transforming and disappearing public spaces in perpetrating male violence and control over women has not been acknowledged enough by the movement. Therefore, how restriction on public spaces and transformation of neighborhoods are related to male violence and how "female desire" and "women's empowerment" indicate violence while the Protection Order is not efficiently implemented are among the questions. Moreover, the ways in which women escape from fear and violence and develop strategies in the city instead of restraining themselves to home are yet to be addressed by the movement. I will now look at what else than fear and violence shapes the current urban experience of women.

Women's labor: Home, workplace and mobility

Another factor which is influential in women's access to public spaces and the way they use city and city life is women's labor. Unlike bodily encounters in the urban site associated mostly with violence as acquired common sense knowledge shared by most women, experiences of women depending on labor seem to be more complex. In this section, I will first demonstrate how the feminist movement in Turkey sees the issue of labor, then point to the missing elaboration on the spatial segregation that Istanbul has undergone in relation with current forms of women's labor and thirdly see how the Gezi example provides for further reflection.

The feminist movement in Istanbul started to discuss the role of reproduction and domestic labor in women's subordination in the 1980s. In 1983, feminist women gathered to form a publishing house called "Women's Circle" (Kayır, 2011). The purpose of the house was to create a workplace "to recompensate and based on women's paid and unpaid labor both at home and outside" and worked as a publishing and counseling office for women. In the late 1980s, socialist feminists and radical feminists began to have lively discussions among themselves about the sources of women's oppression in relation to women's labor in their meetings and in their magazines as well.⁴¹ In 1990, feminists initiated a campaign to dissolve the article no. 159 of the Penal Code which necessitated husband's permission for a woman to earn a wage (Koçak, 2007). In the following years, especially through consciousness raising groups, domestic labor remained an area of attention for feminists, although it was as prioritized as male violence was. In 2006 the Initiative of Women's Labor and Employment (KEIG) was founded which in time developed projects and draft bills to the governments.⁴² In 2007, women in Istanbul organized a platform to campaign against the law draft of social

⁴¹ Access to the some magazines of that time (in Turkish): <http://www.pazartesisdergisi.com/> Last access: 10.06.2014

⁴² <http://www.keig.org/eng/default.aspx> Last access: 10.06.2014

security. Basically, they were reacting against the privatization of social security, negligence towards women's unpaid labor, abolishment of early retirement for women.⁴³ The same year, the women's movement in Istanbul initiated a campaign to show solidarity with women in strike in Novamed, a free trade zone factory, putting forth the connection between part-time, low paid and insecure jobs and reproduction of women's unpaid labor at home which reinforces housewifization (Acar, 2010). In 2008 a similar solidarity campaign⁴⁴ was organized with the fired women workers of DESA, a leather company. In 2008 with the foundation of Socialist Feminist Kolektif the actual circumstances that women were facing under AKP rule were again on the agenda, later developed in two campaigns "We Want Our Due from Men!"⁴⁵ in 2011 and "There is Life Outside the Family"⁴⁶ in 2013. Both campaigns protested against the AKP government's pro-family policies, the reinforced burden on women of housework and child and elderly care, deterioration of public support and options for women outside family, and preserving of male supremacy over women's labor. Since 2010 SFK in addition has regularly published a booklet called "Witches of the Kitchen"⁴⁷ in which articles deal with different aspects of women's labor in the neoliberal age and it organized an international conference "Women Trapped between Paid and Unpaid Labor"⁴⁸ in 2011 where "patriarchal capitalism" was discussed in international feminist circles. In 2013 the platform "the creche is a right"⁴⁹ was founded which gathered together multiple organizations in order to challenge the arbitrary implementation of the law regarding the right of every child and woman to reach free and secure creches. The platform exposed as well increasing

⁴³ <http://sosyalistfeministkolektif.org/feminizm/tarihimizden/kampanyalara/735-kad-nlar-icin-sosyal-haklar-sgss-ye-esastan-itaraz-m-z-var.html> Last access: 10.06.2014

⁴⁴ <http://www.feminisite.net/news.php?act=details&nid=611> Last access: 10.06.2014

⁴⁵ <http://sosyalistfeministkolektif.org/campaigns/59-we-want-our-due-back-from-men.html> Last access: 10.06.2014

⁴⁶ <http://sosyalistfeministkolektif.org/campaigns/524-antifamily.html> Last access: 10.06.2014

⁴⁷ <http://sosyalistfeministkolektif.org/emegimiz/mutfak-cadilari.html> Last access: 10.06.2014

⁴⁸ See Cynthia Cockburn's elaborations: <http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/cynthia-cockburn/%E2%80%9Cbeyond-fragments%E2%80%9D-i%E2%80%99m-socialist-feminist-can-i-be-radical-feminist-too> Last access: 10.06.2014

⁴⁹ <http://www.kreshaktir.org/> Last access: 10.06.2014

privatization of child care services in the last decade. Overall, in relation with the policies documented in Chapter 2, it can be said that the feminist movement does engage with women's labor in its variety as well as reacts against the implementations of neoliberal policies.

The feminist literature has for decades has discussed how capitalism and patriarchy overlap on the basis of the appropriation of women's labor both in the reproduction of the labor force and sustaining the labor market by assisting them low wage works (Eisenstein, 1979). Therefore, the role of women's labor defined with the help of spatial organizations (home versus outside) in maintaining patriarchal capitalism is not a new phenomenon, however, it does change over time and context-wise (McDowell, 1999). The participation of women in the labor force in Turkey, as I mentioned in Chapter 2, marked an increase especially in the last decade. Moreover, women are largely involved in the informal sector as well in less secure work conditions such as home-working or seasonal works, about which there are no definite statistics.⁵⁰ Since women's labor has been "the cheapest", export-oriented production work especially in developing countries has necessitated women's larger employment (Eraydın and Türkün-Erendil, 2005). As shown in Chapter 2, the neoliberal policies of the AKP government encourage women to take up the flexible, insecure, and part-time work while sustaining care labor at home. In addition, the social security law which passed in 2008 reinforced women's dependency on their fathers or husbands through the regulation of social insurance (see Chapter 2), i.e. again the place for women is designated as home, thus, women's increasing rate of participation in the labor force has to be regarded in this light.

In line with the aim of the thesis, i.e. introducing space into the feminist politics in Turkey, investigating the role of spatial reorganization would contribute to our understanding of

⁵⁰ <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/eurpro/ankara/areas/wemploymentstatistics2009.pdf> Last access: 10.06.2014

multiple women's situations under the neoliberal transformation of women's labor. Feminist scholars put forward the notion of mobility as a key dynamic in the analysis of how women's labor shapes and is shaped by their access and ability to move among locations in city (Massey, 1994: 217; Nelson and Seager, ed., 2005; Staeheli, Kofman and Peake, ed. 2004). Mobility in this section constitutes the overall title under which I will look at mobility in relation to work, migration and urban transformation of residential areas. These three dynamics enable us to reflect more on the relationship between the changing urban space and new forms of women's labor. In so doing, I aim to figure out further complexities for our understanding of current forms of women's labor in Istanbul, rather than giving specific examples that would require separate careful research and is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Regarding the mobility of work, the fact that women join the labor force in increasing numbers brings about spatial transformations accordingly (Preston and Üstündağ, 2005: 213). The relocation of workplaces in the neoliberal era, in which the production sector has been removed to the outskirts the city centers is left to service sector, firms' strategies change accordingly to appeal to the female labor force. For women who "choose" to work from home because of the safety reasons, patriarchal pressure (Çınar, 1994) or lack of public child care services, firms either designate workplaces that allow women to work near their home, or informal home-working takes place, whereas for those women who can commute, in other words, where public transport is largely used by women, firms initiate women dominated workplaces (Preston and Üstündağ, 2005). This changing urban landscape complicates the overarching argument that the city center is left to the privileged classes while the working class is moving to the periphery.⁵¹ The division of labor, which is also spatially distributed with regards to production, service and management work, simultaneously redesigns the map

⁵¹ Although this spatial distinction holds partly true in Istanbul in terms of residential space due to the privatization of the city center, city space still marks a diverse composition of differences depending on the labor market, e.g. active service sector in city centers.

of urbanites depending on employment. On the one hand, neoliberal transformation emphasizes class differences, separates expanding working class from shrinking upper class⁵², on the other hand, reunites them although with differing opportunities.

Although the literature on gendered urban sites largely deals with the fear and anxiety that women experience, cities also indicate spaces of possibilities where women escape from male dominance and obligations at home in small communities (McDowell, 1999). In other words, city space seems to have a contradictory character for women: while providing relative freedom, it evokes danger as well, for which women's labor constitutes an important factor. Women's mobility based on the work also applies to Istanbul. However, the mobility, that is necessary for having access to the opportunities that city life provides or the access to resources (Massey, 1994) are not equally shared by all women. Class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and gender identity influence the mobility for women to work outside and get rid of, if relatively, housework and economic dependence on the family. In addition, to what extent women have access to public transport, education, job qualifications complicates the picture and creates segregation among women (Preston and Üstündağ, 2005). Regarding Turkey, I argue that what has been unequally shared among women is not mobility per se but the content of the risk. If the increasing rate of women killed who wanted to divorce or filed lawsuits is taken into consideration as well as women's participation in the labor force, we see that women transgress the boundaries, both in terms of space and identity, but the patriarchal reaction that they receive in return is not same for every woman.⁵³

Another factor regarding women's labor in relation to mobility is migration. Although migration is a dynamic and complex phenomenon in Istanbul, research has shown that women

⁵² See Erkilet, 2013.

⁵³ See Chapter 2 to see how divorce and basically life outside marriage for women are not supported by the government policies. Therefore, where there is no public support for divorced or single women, women have to take control of their economic and thus independence. For further research, see http://www.spf.boun.edu.tr/content_files/SYDGM_NihaiRapor_ENG.pdf Last access: 10.06.2014

from rural areas associate migration to city with better opportunities than rural areas as well as noting their disadvantages compared to men (Erman, 1997). Although the burden of housework persists after migration, women's encounter with the city means also employment and thus, participation in decision making and a relative economic independence (Erman, 2001). Women from the second generation migrants from rural to urban places decide to work on their own different than first generation (Eraydın and Türkün-Erendil, 2005). Accordingly, women's participation in labor force after migration challenges as well home and workplace perceptions of women (Erman, 2001; Massey, 1994). That is, once women join labor market in city, they no longer want to be housewives (Eraydın and Türkün-Erendil, 2005: 157-8). Regardless of the forms of vulnerability caused by the work conditions, gender roles have been transformed by women's workplace experiences.

Back to migration and mobility, migration might be a completely different experience for Kurdish women. A recent study illuminates that Kurdish women immigrants face different obstacles in Istanbul and other big cities primarily depending on the use of the Kurdish language and accordingly on the basis of identity; migration means for Kurdish women continuities and ruptures in exclusion from economic, social and cultural life (Özar, Çağlayan and Doğan, 2011). Taking into account that under differing conditions, women develop different strategies to cope with the obstacles, Kurdish (and other ethnic groups) women migrants' experiences constitute also another feature to understand thoroughly the issue of women's labor.

The last component of mobility that I will deal with is housing. The shantytowns of immigrants once supported by the government during the 1950s and 1960s are today under the risk of destruction if the location is "valuable" for capital investment. The gendered results of urban transformation for inhabitants of former squatters are intrinsic part of this issue. For instance, old neighborhoods Dolapdere and Tarlabası next to İstiklal Street that are under

destruction which results in removing the inhabitants far away in the city would result in different results for men and women. Examples for transformed old neighborhoods can be augmented, however, increasing gated communities have to be mentioned as the other side of the coin in this regard. Keeping in mind that women do not have equal access to public spaces, moving to residential areas where there is less opportunity to be outside of the home, can be read as an attempt to confine women to the home as well as create isolated spaces within the urban site (Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu, 2008). In addition, the closure of common spaces or in other words privatization of public spaces accompanied by the increase in the construction of shopping malls in every neighborhood orient women to these malls, not only as safer places but also as the only easily accessible option for spare time activity, i.e. mostly on the basis of consumption. Both the building complexes of MHA and the gated communities change women's experiences with the city, the workplace, the meaning of safety, although these new residential areas are highly class segregated and thus both physically and socially separated from each other (Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu, 2008). Privatizing one neighborhood is more than demolishing or recreating a location but brings about new social relations and exclusions.

The class composition in the Gezi experience has been one of the controversial topics during and after the uprising (Yörük, 2014). Where more than half of the participants were women, it was also argued that the female participants were educated, urbanite and middle class women who could join the occupation. Although the participants' profile was much more complicated than this description suggests (Göztepe, ed. 2013) it can be said that women during Gezi protests visibly used the mobility. In order to be present equally as men in the uprising, some women left their children to men, some stopped housework, some took paid leave from their jobs, some stayed longer during nights and some refused to do solely cafeteria work inside the park. In other words, women "labor"ed there on the basis of choice or necessity of the

circumstances not because of imposed duties. Most shared reactions among women during the protests were against the burden of housework, the restrictions on abortion and the “three children” imposition.

To conclude, it can be said that the diversification of women’s labor during neoliberal and neoconservative regime on the urban site in Turkey yet needs to be comprehensively discovered. The changing spatial relations depending on the changing labor positions for women in the neoliberal period allow for some, as argued above, for mobility that results in their advantage of relative independency while for some do not (Preston and Üstündağ, 2005: 212). In this vein, mobility as something both physical and social can be articulated as a feminist demand on public transport. That is, safety and access to transport and making claims for mobility for women appear as significant concerns for the feminist movement. It can be simply argued that the consecutive AKP governments have reinforced their policies the strengthening of family where women’s place is designated as home, and their role as reproduction of labor force, never ending care labor. However, the role of neoliberal urban transformation, in enabling women’s trapped positions between home and work and, on creating new forms of exclusions and urban segregation require more attention due to the particularities and complexities that I have tried to tackle above. Therefore, a feminist critique of space which goes beyond looking at women’s presence and participation into the urban site is necessary in order to see how neoliberal urban transformation reproduces and challenges gendered power relations (İngün, 2013: 218). In this section, I tried to raise some points to indicate to the complexity of women’s labor in relation to changing urban space in Istanbul. Hereafter, I will deal with the last category of the chapter, women’s identities, which relates to both women’s bodies and labor.

Women's identities⁵⁴: Mother, wife and life outside the family

In chapter 2, I demonstrated the policies on “strengthening the family” which are imposed primarily on women. In this section I will elaborate on how the forced identity of motherhood as well as strong emphasis on forming heterosexual marriage relates to the urban experience of women. First I will illustrate the place of family in feminist politics and then figure out missing reflections in relation to the Gezi experience.

The feminist struggle against patriarchy in Turkey has always argued against the powerful identification of women with motherhood which reinforces women's secondary position and excludes states of womanhood outside of the family. In 1987 a judge in Çankırı, a city in Anatolia, rejected a woman's request for divorce on account of “You should never leave a woman's back without a stick and her womb with a colt” which passed to the reasoned decision as such. Women then got organized in the streets sending protest mail to the judge, which later evolved into the “campaign against battering” same year (Arat, 1994: 245). In 1989, during the campaign against sexual harassment, article no. 438 of the old Penal Code was abolished by feminists (Arat, 1994: 245). The article provided mitigation to the perpetrators of rape crimes to sex workers. Feminists visited brothels and reacted against the discussions on the articles which created a moral and amoral division among women. In 1990, a “divorce action” was initiated after the Minister of Family and Women declared that “flirt is nothing else than prostitution” and concomitantly, the government issued a decree of “Family Enhancement” followed by the formation of “Family Research Institution” (Diner and Toktaş, 2010: 45). Feminists in response submitted petitions to courts claiming that the enhancement

⁵⁴ The feminist movement in Turkey since the 1980s claim that men's control over women's bodies, labor and identities are complementary to each other, in other words, men's exploitation of women's labor enables control over sexuality, and domination on women's bodies leads to forced motherhood on women (Savran, 1989). The slogan “our labor, our bodies, our identities are our own” is still often used today by the movement to emphasize that different forms of men's power are interwoven and dependent on each other. Here the word identity is used in this regard, as the third category, which all women share under patriarchy and at the same time are divided depending on the differences of the conditions.

of family means women's subordination and, divorced. In 1995, feminists intervened in and made public the court case of Zeynep Uludağ who killed a man who assaulted them while they were enjoying their dinner as women, in one of tavern neighborhoods of Istanbul.⁵⁵ In 2001, women's organizations engaged in the dramatic changes in the Civil Code such as abolishment of the definition "head of the household is the husband", achievement of equal rights within marriage and after divorce. In 2004, the Penal Code was reformed which terminated the impunity of rape within marriage, categorized crimes of sexual assault under the title of "crimes against the inviolability of physical integrity" instead of "crimes against society, family or public morality", and abolished the use of terms such as virginity, honor, consent, indecent behavior in defining a crime or the amount of punishment (Coşar and Yeğenoğlu, 2011). In addition, state's responsibility for taking measures against such crimes is recognized. During the reform campaign for the Penal Code, there were major debates in Turkey about the well established discourse on women killings. Media and some state officials, represented the murders as "honor killings", as a result of "custom" and this custom belonged to the Kurds. Feminists highly disagreed on this underlining that patriarchy has no ethnicity (Koğacioğlu, 2004). In 2012, women's organizations again got together to fight for changing the "Protection Order" (from male violence).⁵⁶ The new law no. 6284 brought about important changes such as being available to all women (before only married women could apply), provisioned education on gender for police and court professionals, and established temporary Centers for the Prevention of Violence. However, the implementation of this law has not satisfied feminists, as discussed above. The same year the PM made a statement that "abortion is a murder"⁵⁷, which led thousands of women (and some men) to take to the streets. After many protests across Turkey the government was unable to ban the abortion (which is

⁵⁵ www.pazartesisidergisi.com *Pazartesi* 7, 1995. Last access: 10.06.2014

⁵⁶ <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/female-activists-make-history-with-new-law-to-protect-women.aspx?pageID=238&nID=15649&NewsCatID=339> Last access: 10.06.2014

⁵⁷ <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/abortion-is-murder-says-turkeys-pm.aspx?pageID=238&nID=21665&NewsCatID=338> Last access: 10.06.2014

legal in Turkey since 1983) but it restricted its access. In 2013, SFK initiated a campaign “There is Life outside the Family!” through which the AKP government’s vigorous pro-family policies were exposed and alternative ways of bonding instead of kin were discussed.

SFK’s campaign “There’s Life Outside Family” targeted the family as an institution and stated “there is labor exploitation, violence and death in family”. Feminists then via men’s control over women’s labor and bodies made the major connection between home and outside. Under the three titles of motherhood, marriage and heterosexism/sexuality in the campaign, SFK attempted to expose first and foremost that the family is not a “heavenly” place for women as the discourse kept emphasizing, instead, under all these titles women have been forced to sustain the chain of oppression between paid and unpaid labor, also suppressed by different sorts of violence (Adak, 2014: 165). The campaign secondly attempted to think of alternative ways of bonding instead of associating everything such as love, sexuality, solidarity, reproduction with one place, i.e. with a marriage oriented partnership, arguing that this facilitates patriarchal control (Adak, 2014: 167). With the particular emphasis on violence that women experience in family, SFK claimed that feminist imagination cannot not promote, for instance, homosexual marriage as an emancipatory model for women, but instead, has to come up with radical forms of relationships which would reduce the significance of marriage and go beyond the institution of the family (Adak, 2014: 168). In this vein, for SFK, the neoliberal notion of family which bounds women to a life based on unpaid labor, care giving, suppressed by violence could be altered, first, by “alternative household relationships” which includes multiple forms of collective living without necessarily a kin bonding and a dismantling the family as the locus of everything, e.g. separating sexuality from child care in terms of location and secondly, through demands such as free, qualified and universal child, adult and elderly care services, access to birth control and abortion and also allowance to

sperm banks, support for divorced women to build independent and self-sufficient lives including social security and employment.

If I go back once more to the Gezi Park experience which highlighted that the organization of space is highly gendered, women's great involvement in every step of the protests during the whole summer of 2013 gives clues about different possible positions for women in public spaces. First of all, before the occupation of the park in Istanbul as well, women with different backgrounds (not only organized in socialist or anarchist groups) were in the streets and clashed with police in front of barricades or elsewhere. Secondly, during the occupation, with the equal participation with men in the park also in the division of labor, i.e. organization of the space, cafeteria, security, infirmary, meetings, women took part in the whole organization definitely with struggles. That is, women were directly involved in decision making processes. Being the temporary residents of one place, they had control over its organization. This was completely in opposition to the government expects from women: to be able to control their personal spheres, or in other words, to pretend that they have control over the home (Fenster, 2005: 220). Feminists built their tent on the very first day, as everyone did, and collaborated with the separate "LGBT bloc" against the possible ways of sexism and male dominance while at the same time regularly participating in the everyday meetings of Taksim Solidarity, where decisions about the organization of park were made. Women participants of Gezi protests asked by journalists were saying that they were against the "interference of the AKP rule in different life styles" mostly giving examples of the efforts to ban abortion and Caesarian deliveries, the discourse of three children, the PM's statement that he did not believe in gender equality (in sum, the recent policies of the government demonstrated in Chapter 2).

Gezi Protests showed that how the AKP's policies of neoliberal and neoconservative urban transformation and the policies regarding women enable each other. The Gezi occupation by

gathering different belongings and different forms of discontent together, leftists, socialists, anarchists, feminists, LGBTQ individuals, football fans, Muslim groups, laicists, students, Kurds, Armenians, Alevis, nationalists, unionized workers and a big proportion of non-affiliates, revealed that policies were in operation simultaneously. Feminists' insistence on preserving the tent in the park⁵⁸ as a meeting point and presence regardless of police attacks marked the significance of the communal spaces for women to accomplish freely their engagement with the larger uprising (i.e. without state, police and male control). In addition, women's presence in the protests across Turkey was a reaction to the segregation that the government created both before the Gezi Protests among the protesters and the voters of AKP, during which reached its climax when the PM said "I don't know whether she is a girl or a woman"⁵⁹ in 2011 about a woman activist in one demonstration in Ankara. Therefore, while the government explicitly called on women to keep their places by also condemning them in such a sexist manner, being in the streets to protest is already gendered. Women at Gezi deployed possibilities of different forms of women's existence and revealed what they were deprived of under male dominance. All the women's identities which were disapproved, ignored or attacked by the AKP rule were there, i.e. political, feminists, socialist, single, divorced, lesbian, trans, Kurdish, Alevi, unionized women. The Gezi experience articulated what had been known but had not been formulated as such before by feminist activists: "the attempt to confine women to the domestic sphere was both a specifically spatial control and, through that, a social control on identity" (Massey, 1994: 179). In other words, women during the Gezi occupation by means of the power of collectivity experienced transgressing the boundaries of space simultaneously with those of identity.

⁵⁸ On June 1st until the evacuation of police, the park was full with tents, each and every group and individuals installed their tents decorated with their slogans, flags, and so on. The tents were also meeting points for several purposes as well as important sign of resistance to police forces.

⁵⁹ <http://disgruntledyoungpenguin.blogspot.hu/2013/11/15-akp-quotes-on-womens-role-in-society.html> Last access: 10.06.2014

In the 2000s the feminist movement has insisted on calling women outside the family for a collective empowerment among women themselves. However, the role that public spaces in the city played in the entrapment of women to home remained at the level of “the personal is political”, i.e. the movement revealed that the male violence or women’s subordination at home is legitimized and perpetrated by patriarchal organization of society at large. The SFK’s campaign seems to tackle the question of space by suggesting to dislocate certain “functions” of family outside the marriage bonding. In order to do that, public spaces where social encounters and solidarity bonds take place without the purpose of family forming are necessary. When women experience being outside family as dangerous, threatening or simply unappealing and the use of city is limited to shopping or other consumer activities, the need for family once more will be internalized by women. Moreover, the fact that in the neoliberal era in which all the public support and solidarity have been dismantled, family is still the “safest” space for women at least indicating an escape from men “outside” (Büyükgöze, 2014: 221), renders the feminist call to women to go outside family somewhat unachievable (Adak, 2014: 169). In other words, the stress on family as well as the fact that solidarity is associated with family for both men and women indicates to the lack of social solidarity outside home, and hides the responsibilities of the state in this concern. Keeping also in mind that women who already transgress the boundaries of imposed identities, such as lesbians, trans individuals and immigrants, are restricted in their use of spaces in city, mostly bound to Taksim, which again indicates to the significance of reclaiming the space that we inhabit or live in. Here we realize the significance of free public spaces for women, reclaiming neighborhoods as well as culture centers, parks and streets free and accessible places outside home, to avoid women’s going back to family, for women’s emancipation.

Conclusion

In this chapter first I addressed the first question of this thesis on the connections between urban and gender policies. I investigated multiple ways in which neoliberal and neoconservative spatial reorganization overlap with current forms of women's subordination from the lens of the feminist movement. Secondly, I asked the second question on how to incorporate space in the current feminist politics.

Under four headings I discussed urban site matters for the feminist activism in Istanbul. First, I showed that the feminist movement emerged, grew and still functions in Istanbul, i.e. is an urban movement and that Taksim as a region has also importance in terms of a meeting, protesting, organizing and experiencing place since the 1980s. Therefore, the urban site of Istanbul appears, for feminists, as a space to reclaim and to take control over its decision making processes under neoliberal transformation, both historically and politically.

In the following sections, I dealt with the movement's political agenda in order to seek how feminists discussed space in relation to women's subordination today. I used three categories; body, labor and identity that constitute three interwoven dynamics which shape male dominance over women as feminists have stated since the 1980s and I discussed patriarchy in its interconnectedness. Regarding women's bodies, I outlined how feminists have struggled to stop male violence at home and outside of the home which formed one of the prior issues in the history of movement. I argued that the neoconservative patriarchal call of the government for women to go back to the home and the increasing male violence both at home and in public overlap.

In the third section, I showed how feminists have been critical about the exploitation of women's labor from 1980s onwards. As a highly complex issue and differently experienced oppression among women, I displayed that the movement focuses on multiple consequences

of neoliberalism and neoconservatism on women's labor and reacts against them in several ways. In light of the struggles, I tried to bring forth some questions about the transforming city to give a fuller account of how women are affected by AKP policies and also for a comprehensive understanding embracing multiple conditions of women.

In the fourth section, I investigated the particular meaning of identity in the Turkish context which for the movement is inseparable from male control over women's bodies and labor. Although the emphasis on family, i.e. women's strong identification with motherhood, has always existed in Turkish politics, the feminist movement acknowledges that AKP has reinforced women's confinement to the family by means of neoliberalism and neoconservatism. Through examining feminist struggles against women's entrapment in family, I have discussed the significance of reclaiming public spaces as one important way of women's liberation. These last three sections altogether illustrate how body, labor and identity are intertwined dynamics for women's subordination and thus, conversely, for their emancipation. In addition, by giving examples from the Gezi experience throughout the chapter I drew attention to the possible ways in which "free space" intrinsically plays a role in the transformation of gender roles. Therefore, this chapter first and foremost attempted to see how conservative neoliberalism, as the new form of patriarchal capitalism, tries to reorganize both women's lives and urban spaces in relation to each other. How neoliberalism and neoconservatism transform the city and public spaces is related to taking away from women the control over their bodies, labor and identities; accordingly feminist struggle and claims require urban transformation to be taken into account.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

Taksim Solidarity called for a demonstration on Taksim Square and in the streets in other parts of Turkey on 31 May 2014, the one-year anniversary of the Gezi Protests. Prime Minister Erdoğan urged the citizens not to join the protests.⁶⁰ Access to the Gezi Park was blocked early in the morning, and a police force of 25, 000 officers was on duty in the streets. As expected, the police forces used a water cannon and fired tear gas and plastic bullets at demonstrators, not only in Istanbul but also elsewhere.⁶¹ Although the commemoration seemed like as an ordinary protest at Taksim, it actually highlighted a difference in how protesters in Turkey are being treated. While the protesters near the Gezi Park were clashing with the police the whole day, just a few kilometers away at the Golden Horn a largely Muslim crowd gathered for an anti-Israel march to commemorate the Israeli deadly attacks on Mavi Marmara, the boat which attempted to deliver aid to Gaza four years ago. The group marched along the shore, shouted slogans, and no police intervened.⁶²

May 31 was not only significant in its showing of how the AKP government treated differently both crowds. Two days earlier, on 29 May, the Governor of Istanbul sent a statement to political parties, unions and organizations announcing that three places in Istanbul were designated as location for demonstrations.⁶³ In other words, the governor declared that all other places of the city would be “cleaned” of protests and protesters with this regulation, such as primarily, and obviously, Taksim. Two days later, Istanbul saw a group which was able to make its demonstration “peacefully” in one undesignated area, whereas the others were met with police violence.

⁶⁰ <http://www.dw.de/turkish-pm-erdogan-warns-against-taksim-anniversary-protests/a-17674276> Last access: 10.06.2014

⁶¹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-27649472> Last access: 10.06.2014

⁶² http://www.jewishjournal.com/world/article/turkeys_islamists_protest_gezi_park_rioters_draw_police Last access: 10.06.2014

⁶³ On June 4th, the governance published a statement on its website. The number of locations dropped from three to two, one in the European side and one in the Anatolian
<http://www.istanbul.gov.tr/Default.aspx?pid=11336&hbid=6616> Last access: 10.06.2014

These three events are significant for the Conclusion of this thesis. Together they show not only that Erdoğan-led AKP government insists on blocking Taksim to political organizations and that limitless police measures can be taken in this regard, but also that the government reinforces divisions within society, since the crowded Muslim protest was a unique example where the police was barely even visible. In other words, the end of May stands as a signifier in the recent historical context of Turkey of how the government suppresses anti-government voices and simultaneously implicitly supports a particular Muslim activism, fortified by spatial regulations.

In this thesis I looked at the ways in which neoliberal and neoconservative policies regarding the urban transformation and regarding women reinforce each other in Turkey. Accordingly I endeavored to reflect on feminist analysis and demands which combine urban policies and new forms of patriarchy together. In order to do so, I examined both the policies of the last decade and the political agenda of the feminist movement in Istanbul. While thinking about the meanings of space, I benefited from the work of feminist scholars and the demands of the movement as well as the Gezi Uprising experience in summer 2013, which was an informative example of how a “freer” space can challenge male dominance and gender roles. The point of departure for my thesis was the fact that the feminist movement in Istanbul until recently did not consider the urban transformation in Istanbul as an essential part of its politics, but rather as an issue of the urban movement (with which the feminist movement does consider itself in solidarity). In other words, feminists have mostly interpreted the urban policies as one of the consequences of the authoritarian regime of the AKP regime, which did not necessarily relate to women’s (increasing) vulnerabilities. This became visible during the Gezi Protests in which the feminist movement first and foremost participated to protest against the AKP government, not to reclaim public spaces.

In Chapter 2 I looked at the urban transformation that Istanbul (and specifically Taksim) has undergone in recent years, in order to substantiate my claim about the AKP's neoliberal and neoconservative policies. Relying on the huge scholarly literature on the topic, I emphasized the core projects during the AKP regime which opened urban lands (including environment) to privatization and commodification, increased gentrification and transformation of "deteriorated" living spaces, displaced inhabitants to newly constructed state-led building complexes, invested a lot in the construction sector, and introduced a whole transformation to the region of Taksim. Secondly, I analyzed how neoliberal and neoconservative policies of the AKP governments in the last decade have reinforced patriarchy in Turkey. In its first years of rule, under the influence of the EU candidacy process, the AKP government improved legal regulations at the advantage of women. But oppressive politics became visible and intense after 2007, as I showed on the basis of a number of examples. Chapter 2 overall provided the material for the thesis which briefly framed the steady rule of the AKP governments in implementing neoliberalism and neoconservatism, and also the use of Islam, mostly discursively, to supplement its regime focusing on two different spheres; the urban site and gender politics.

In Chapter 3 I examined the recent history and politics of the feminist movement in relation to the new forms of patriarchy promoted by the AKP governments. My aim was to investigate how the changing urban landscape, which this thesis suggests is one influential aspect of women's subordination today, could be incorporated into feminist politics. First I showed that feminism in Turkey is primarily an urban movement, which already necessitates a feminist voice in the decision making processes regarding the changing city and the region. Then, under the headings of women's bodies, labor and identities, I explored the main concerns of the movement and focused on the role of urban transformation in supporting patriarchy.

Thinking together the AKP regime and the feminist struggles of the last decade first of all shows that the feminist movement has been active during all these processes, with an increasing number of women joining the protests and organizations. Secondly, it shows that women are not merely the objects of these policies but they somehow counteract, disobey and contest male dominance in Turkey. Campaigns against entrapment of women between paid and unpaid labor, women killings and harm done to women by the policies of strengthening the family in combination with an increasing rate of divorce, of an increase in women's paid employment –albeit under bad conditions- and no increasing rate of child birth –contrary to the government pressure on women to have three children- illustrate that women try and do find strategies and ways for a relative independence, despite the fact that they know that they can face forms of male violence in return (Çelebi, Havlioğlu, Kayaalp, 2014: 9-19). I mentioned in several places that different women's conditions (depending on class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability and so on) require further elaboration, so that coming up with a comprehensive analysis for all women is not possible; here I tried to focus on the forms of oppression that influence most women by the very fact of being “women”.

A careful examination allowed me to see that although public space is an integral part in exposing the interdependency between women's subordination at home and in public for the feminist movement, the particularities of the transformation of public spaces have not yet taken up a proper place in the movement. The neoliberal and neoconservative transformation of urban space cannot be solely understood in terms of the confinement of women to the home. As both Chapter 2 and 3 indicate, while women are constantly called to fulfill their duties at home, at the same time they step out, primarily because of the insufficiency of one salary in one household. The fact that women join the labor market has two dimensions. First, it literally brings about women's “being outside” of the boundaries of the home, i.e. new spatial experiences, and secondly, it results in them having new skills, new relationships, a

(relative) control over money or over household expenditures, changes which shape gender relations. On the other hand, women also face difficulties in participating in the labor market depending on both the job opportunities and the constant pressure on them to keep doing the household work. The majority of women are thus led to flexible, insecure, part-time and underpaid jobs, which all the more contribute to their accumulation of subordination. However, although women enter the paid work force less advantageous than men, they endure to be present in public spaces. The government policies on privatizing or reluctance in opening creches and shelters or providing other ways for women to get rid of their dependency on family, again make it difficult for women to step outside of the home. Moreover, the government's reluctance to address the high rate of male violence, mostly by family members both at home and outside of the home, reproduces women's acquired knowledge about public spaces and streets as unsafe places for women while depicting home as the most secure place.

In this thesis, I demonstrated how neoliberal and neoconservative spatial reorganization is also influential in the reproduction of women's subordination. A close examination of the implementations of the AKP governments showed that male control over women's labor, bodies and identities is supplemented by new spatial regulations. In other words, patriarchy depends upon spatial control over women which relates to the manners in which women are present in public. Therefore, I argue that the feminist movement in Istanbul has to integrate "claims over space" into its agenda, since the ongoing neoliberal and neoconservative transformation of the city contributes to deterioration in women's condition. Part of these changes is that the privatization of urban lands, and the decrease of and restrictions on public and communal spaces doom women to the home or shopping malls. Indeed, the reluctance towards improving or increasing kindergartens, schools, care centers, women's shelters, parks, and cultural centers; in opposition to the huge investments in highways, skyscrapers,

shopping malls, hotels, in never-ending logistical innovations (such as the projects of a third bridge and a third airport), on-going mosque constructions, the pressure on alcohol serving café and bars but support for huge public gatherings of fast breaking, etc. are not only related processes under the neoliberal and neoconservative rule of AKP, but also the latter (the investments) influence the former (the reluctance). The destruction of public spaces also leads to a lack of places for women outside the family and the home, which results in leaving women, who somehow struggle for their independent lives, on their own. That is, when there is no public means and ways of forming solidarity and fulfilling needs other than family, women who transgress boundaries and spaces are left alone in their struggle. Therefore, it is crucial to analyze how spaces are organized by neoliberalism and neoconservatism in order to better understand how patriarchy is a combination of multiple interwoven dynamics. Secondly and accordingly, I have shown that control over decision making processes about space is related to control over women's bodies, labor and identities and that therefore the feminist movement must formulate demands about and act for regulations which will sustain women's equal access and use of public spaces as men. In this regard, women's equal use of spaces, such as parks, sufficient lightening in streets and other measures to be taken in order to open safely public to women are urgent and vital feminist claims in today in Turkey. As this thesis demonstrated, women's lack of control over their lives is interrelated with the restrictions on public spaces, the feminist movement has to be engaged with each and every urban regulation. However, the Gezi Uprising made clear that what was at stake was, one step back, reclaiming even the presence of parks. This immediacy reveals for the feminist movement to make connections between urban politics and patriarchy.

Feminism is not only a movement based on protests but it has visions about the future. That is, feminism has an imagination about the future, about how to build a gender equal world. The Gezi experience illustrated how "free space" can be transformative of gender relations

and why the feminist movement has to appropriate control over decisions about the spaces we live in.

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