Urban Neighbourhood Forums in Ankara as a Commoning Practice

Ceren Ergenç

Department of China Studies, Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, Suzhou, China;
Ceren.Ergenc@xjtlu.edu.cn

Özlem Çelik

Global Development Studies and Helsinki Institute of Sustainability Science, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland;
ozlem.celik@helsinki.fi

Abstract: The neighbourhood forums in Ankara began to convene during the Gezi protests in 2013 and lasted about three years. The activities of Ankara Gezi forums are urban commoning practices in terms of a new set of demands and methods. This paper conceptualises urban commoning practices as method, content, and demand. This framework offers an understanding of urban commoning that is not based on monetary transaction, but focuses on seeing commoning as a social process. Commoning is not ahistorical, rather it is engaged with the historical political potential of urban spaces. Commoning as method discusses organising in commons, commoning as content focuses on the form and meaning of political action, and commoning as demand emphasises the discursive use of right to the city. The case selection of this research enables us to reflect on how urban commoning is experienced in a city under less financial investment pressure, but at the centre of national-level politics.

Öz: Ankara'daki mahalle forumları 2013'teki Gezi eylemleri sırasında başladı ve yaklaşık üç yıl sürdü. Ankara Gezi forumlarının faaliyetleri, yeni talepler ve yöntemler açısından kentsel müşterekleşme pratikleri olarak incelenebilir. Bu makale, kentsel müşterekleşme uygulamalarını yöntem, içerik ve talep olarak kavramsallaştırmaktadır. Bu kavramsal çerçeve, müşterekleşme parasal ilişkilere dayanmayan bir toplumsal süreç olarak görmeye odaklanan bir anlayış sunar. Müşterekleşme değişime kapalı bir kavram olarak değil, tam tersine yerelin tarihsel politik potansiyeli ile doğrudan ilişkilidir. Bir yöntem olarak müşterekleşme örgütlenme pratiklerini ifade eder; içerik olarak müşterekleşme siyasi eylemin biçimine ve anlamına odaklanır; ve, talep olarak müşterekleşme, kent hakkı söyleminin pratik kullanımlarını ifade eder. Bu araştırmanın vaka seçimi, kentsel müşterekleşmenin küresel kozmopolit kentlere göre daha az finansal yatırım baskısı altında, ancak ulusal düzeydeki politikanın merkezinde olan bir yerelde nasıl deneyimlendiğine odaklanmıştır.

Keywords: urban commoning, Turkey, Gezi movement, neighbourhood forums, right to the city

Introduction

In May 2013, the urban youth took to the streets to stop a redevelopment project in Istanbul and protests quickly spread throughout Turkey. The Gezi movement in Turkey started as a seemingly small-scale protest against a local government project to demolish a cultural heritage building and the park next to it to build a

shopping mall in Taksim Square, the historical centre of Istanbul. The Gezi movement, *as it started in Istanbul*, was an outburst of the accumulated resentment towards mainly the political and economic elite at the urban scale. Given the rise in and intensification of urban transformation through state-led gentrification in Turkey over the previous two decades, the Gezi movement was a backlash towards authoritarian and entrepreneurial interventions in urban practices (Eraydın and Taşan-Kök 2014).

When the police used violence to try to disperse the growing crowd, the Istanbul-based urban resistance went national and became about police violence, conservative social policies, and job insecurity as well as neoliberal urban transformations. As the movement *spread across the country*, it represented an upsurge of the indignation that had built up towards the central political elite due to expanded centralised decision-making processes. The Gezi urban uprisings led to street protests, occupation of spaces, and neighbourhood forums in many cities, including those where there was historically no or limited experience of acts of local solidarity. The street protests lasted about a month and were gradually replaced by meetings, protests, and other activities organised by neighbourhood forums across the country. The neighbourhood forums were formed by Gezi protesters but there is a lack of research on them.

Since the Gezi movement was a remarkable episode in the history of social movements in Turkey, it garnered wide coverage both in political and academic arenas (e.g. Eraydın and Taşan-Kök 2014; Kuymulu 2013; Saraçoğlu 2014; Sönmez 2013). Scholars examined the motivations and demands of protestors to go out onto the streets (Kongar and Küçükkaya 2013; Özkoray and Özkoray 2013), and whether this was a class movement (Boratav 2013) or an accumulation of urban solidarity alliances in the big cities (Erensü and Karaman 2017), which were discussed mostly in the conceptual framework of social movements. The Gezi forums lasted about two more years and became a new, but influential societal actor in Turkey's changing political climate. However, very little research has focused on the post-Gezi neighbourhood forums as a new form of political experience for Turkey, except the studies on Izmir and Istanbul (Akçalı 2018; Ozduzen 2019; Ugur-Cinar and Gunduz-Arabaci 2020).

The scholarship is also limited in its geographic scope as most of the fieldwork-based research analysed the Gezi movement and its aftermath as experienced in Istanbul. The research on Istanbul focused on the park forums, questioned the potential of forums to contribute to political change (Akçalı 2018) and examined the potential of park forums in the creation of spaces of hope (Ozduzen 2019) for progressive local politics. Both of the studies concluded with emphasis on the pluralist practices that paved the way for dialogues between different political stances, and an expansion of new platforms to find ways to relate with different political positions in society. Similar to the Istanbul case study, the research on Izmir also questioned the role of forums to create possibilities for a pluralist political form in an authoritarian setting (Ugur-Cinar and Gunduz-Arabaci 2020).

Our research on the Ankara forums shares the concerns of how political practices emerge in an authoritarian setting, but we contribute to the literature by using urban commoning practices as a lens through which to view the dynamics

and characteristics of the commoning practices of forum participants, rather than focusing on the pluralist form of discussions in the forums. In engagement with Mustafa Dikec and Eric Swyngedouw's (2017:15) propositions for analysing recent radical urban politics, we put our emphasis on the aftermath of Gezi as a moment of interruption.

This conceptualisation resonates with recent discussions in the social movements literature on movement continuity. Facing the diversity of collective action in terms of form, demographics and goals, the relevant literature has it that the form and intensity of social movements change over the course of time. The most visible form of social movements are rupture moments, for example protests. However, the periods before and after these ruptures are now included in the social movements' life (della Porta 2020). The networks and strategies developed during the periods before the rupture moments feed the collective action. The periods after rupture moments, even when tangible outcomes are unattained, are seen as a process of "saturation" for the new networks that emerged during the collective action. These new protest strategies and discourses are embedded into the everyday lives of the participants and broader society.

The literature on expanding urban commons also captures the fluidity of the commoning practices within social movements (Stavrides 2014). Most recently, scholars further explored these practices during the "saturation" period as discussed in the social movements literature. Urban commoning practices, including those that do not directly demand the right to property relations, were referred to as a continuation of the political processes that peaked during the rupture moments (Varvarousis et al. 2020). These practices are defined as prefiguration of the city that the activists would like to create. We locate our analysis of Gezi forums within this reconceptualisation of commoning practices.

The theoretical contribution of the present paper is twofold. First, the concept of urban commoning (Huron 2015) is discussed and developed by opening up the meaning of urban in commoning practices as opposed to rural commoning. The second contribution is suggesting an analytical set of commoning practices as content, as method, and as demand. The paper also demonstrates how the discursive use of the right to the city at the time of uprisings and occupy movements across the world also constitutes a form of urban commoning. This paper conceptualises commoning practices from an expanding perspective, where commoning and the right to the city framework learned from each other, created a new set of demands and practices, and reflect on everyday practices and production of space. We find that the forums used three commoning practices in a city, where the urban social movements are less central to the experience of the residents in comparison to national-level political movements, and commoning as a social process is not ahistorical, but rather engaged with the historical political potential of the city.

In the first section of the paper, the expanded practices of commoning are introduced in the theoretical framework of commons and the right to the city by suggesting an analytic lens of using commons as content, method, and practice. Secondly, the organisational structure, discourses, and activities of the forums are illustrated in order to provide background to our analysis of the perceptions and

actions of the forums. Thirdly, an analysis of the forum experience in Ankara by using the expanded framework of commoning is used to set out our findings. The paper concludes by focusing on how Ankara neighbourhood forums contributed to shaping new perspectives for future local politics.

Practices of Urban Commoning: From Right to the City to Social Movements

Our interest in commoning practices is motivated by the neighbourhood forums as a part of the political uprising following Gezi. We are also inspired by the growing literature on urban commoning practices and interested in developing the idea of commoning as a practice in the case of neighbourhood forums. The idea of commons dates back centuries, has been practised in different parts of the world, and is discussed in two streams in the literature. The first focuses on common pool resources, property regimes, and how to access them (Ostrom et al. 1999). The second, which we will focus on in this paper, is more concerned with the political meaning of commons on a larger scale in urban areas and the practice of commoning (Huron 2015:966).

A political analysis of urban commons involves analysis of antiglobalisation movements with a critique of capitalism. Commons are conceptualised as a network of resources and goods that are collectively produced and thus should not be available to an exclusive group, but rather should be available to all members of society (Harvey 2005). This approach sees commons as a social process of open-access, rather than a fixed resource accessible to certain groups (Linebaugh 2008). Thus, commons are seen as a dynamic form of social relations open to emerging customs and negotiations (Gidwani and Baviskar 2011) that embody ideas, knowledge, and culture (Huron 2015). A critique of the antiglobalisation theorists is provided by Silvia Federici. She argues that commons require an analysis focused more on the material requirements for its long-term maintenance to support everyday existence, rather than a theoretical analysis of the formal preconditions for the existence of commons itself (Federici 2010). Federici addresses the significance of commons as an ongoing social process that shifts the focus to commoning practices for the long-term maintenance of the commons over time. This approach provides a step further from the antiglobalisation theorists' concern about the reclamation of commons. This theoretical gap between the two strands of the same approach is significant for our research, showing the changing nature of commoning practices through time from a demand for the right to the city (similar to the reclamation of commons) to the everyday practices for the long-term maintenance of commons.

Commoning practices observed after square movements in particular have been employed to create communities and transform everyday practices prefiguratively (Varvarousis et al. 2020). The heterogeneity of square movements has led to diverse commoning practices and outcomes. For example, collectively run economic ventures were at the centre of urban commons in Barcelona and Athens after the anti-austerity protests in the 2010s (Varvarousis et al. 2020). Whereas, as this research demonstrates, horizontal decision-making mechanisms were the

most important outcome of the post-Gezi neighbourhood forums. Commoning practises redefine what "political" is differently in each case, therefore none of these practices are cases that failed.

Considering commons as a social process brings us to the discussions on urban commons, which deal with what is urban about commons. Similar to antiglobalisation movements theorists, urban commons theory emphasises reclaiming space, mostly framed by the right to the city debate in many cities across the globe (Harvey 2008). The commons literature historically theorises commons in terms of rural experiences, where the excluded masses are forced to move to the cities to get wage-labour jobs. The definition of commons changed as societies became more urban. Similarly, commoning practices as a form of political engagement, and how scholars see them also changed (Leitner and Sheppard 2018). Therefore, our concern is to reveal the commoning practices in the cities where expansive occupy and right to the city movements have formed recently. Right to the city is perceived and practised as a political demand to create the city where activists would like to live (Çelik 2014). Such an understanding of right to the city carries one of the key features of Lefebvre's conceptualisation of it in terms of carrying collective creativity not only as a mere slogan for a particular demand, but as a process (Stavrides 2020). Hence, the concept of right to the city for the Gezi forum participants was a creative way to explore commoning practises in their organisational structure. Here, similar to Amanda Huron (2015) and Patrick Bresnihan and Michael Byrne (2015), we focus on the experience of urban commons and commoning practices.

Huron (2015:968) explains the unique experience of urban commons through two key characteristics of cities. The first is the high population density in cities compared to rural areas, which creates pressure regarding the distribution of land use, resulting in competition for, or sharing of resources. This was one of the main motivations behind the Gezi uprising in Turkey, where the public spaces, including parks, schools, and hospitals, were under threat from privatisation and the poor living in the city centre were being forced to move out to its peripheries. The valuable land located in the centre has been transferred to certain groups who can afford it, which violates the collective idea of urban commons. Secondly, Huron (2015:969) conceptualises the city as the place where strangers meet, different from small-scale or rural environments. Supporting Huron's point, we show in our research that even the small-scale unit in a city remains the place where strangers meet. Our focus is the neighbourhood scale in a city, where people living on the same street or in the same apartment block can still be strangers to each other. Coming together in the neighbourhood forums after the Gezi uprising to create a safe space and to work on a common project is an urban phenomenon. Despite the participants being strangers, the neighbourhood functioned as a factor binding nonhomogeneous groups during the initial stages of the Gezi forums. In addition to Huron's defining aspects of urban commons, we also develop two more significant elements of city scale in practising urban commons, which are discussed below.

Firstly, the rise of authoritarian leaders and the militarisation of police forces over the last two decades have eroded civil rights, and this has been felt most in

the cities. These limitations vary among different countries, but are mostly exercised in the cities, which are financial or political centres experiencing uprisings of different size and scale. Secondly, the city itself turns into a significant part of capital accumulation, which creates a highly polarised population in the city in terms of class. While welfare is rising for certain groups, poverty increases and expands to include middle income households. This on the one hand creates atomised individuals but on the other hand turns cities into centres of organised collective action. Social movements are more frequent, visible, and impactful and the repertoires of collective action are transferable in the cities. The occupy, right to the city, and housing movements of the last two decades are distinctively an urban phenomenon and an internal part of the urban commoning discussion.

Commoning as a practice is discussed in the literature following Linebaugh's and Federici's understandings of commons as socially generated. How this social process is shaped is discussed by Huron (2015) and Bresnihan and Byrne (2015), who categorise commoning practices in Washington, DC and Dublin, respectively. Huron's (2015) categorisation of commoning involves analysis of housing cooperative tenants reclaiming their right to housing. Firstly, Huron states that reclaiming common space is more difficult in the cities, where there is great demand for urban land and reclaiming land requires working with strangers in the city. Therefore, commoning is used to show how to organise the demands according to different needs. Secondly, she shows the necessity of the urban commons in the city, where the financial pressures are higher and people are more dependent on their wage labour to pay their rents. Thus, the necessity for urban commons is a political demand for affordable housing and control over shaping the housing needed. Lastly, Huron claims that there is a need to maintain the commons in the city as they are under the threat of capital's interest in urban land.

In a similar vein, Bresnihan and Byrne (2015) categorise commoning practices in central Dublin, where a set of urban projects is resulting in privatisation and commodification of public spaces. This attempt is met by commoning practices of "independent spaces" that emerged as a reaction to the commercialisation of the city. The authors use three categorisations of everyday practices of commoning. Firstly, they emphasise the importance of ownership in commoning, because, as in Huron's (2015) paper, the high cost of rent is an obstacle to commoning. This category is similar to Huron's reclaiming commons in the city. Secondly, they conceptualise collective producing in commons as a practice of non-monetary exchange and circulation, and commons themselves as places that integrate people, space, and knowledge. Lastly, they discuss the management and organisation of commons using a similar approach to Huron's category of maintaining commons in the city. As commons have a different nature of ownership and production/reproduction process, how it should be governed is also a part of how it is socially generated.

Our analysis of the Ankara forums follows a comparable categorisation of commoning, as shown in Table 1. Both of the studies showed us that commoning as a practice in urban settings takes different forms, which do not necessarily happen at the same time, but are open to change in relation to the specifics of the

Table 1:   Commoning practices in the literature

Commoning as a Social Process	Washington DC (Huron 2015)	Dublin (Bresnihan and Byrne 2015)	Ankara (Authors)
	Reclaiming a Commons in the City	Owning in Common	Commoning as Method
	The Necessity of Urban Commons	Producing in Common	Commoning as Content
	Maintaining a Commons in the City	Organising in Common	Commoning as Demand

locality, expanded movements across the city, the nature of the ownership of land, and the potential of commoners to act collectively.

Both Huron (2015) and Bresnihan and Byrne (2015) actively engage with property relations. Huron (2015) explicitly challenges the possibilities of creating commons in capitalistic property relations, while Bresnihan and Byrne (2015) focus on urban commons in independent spaces, which are not free from capitalist relations. Thus, both cases deal with actual transaction relations to protect alternative and independent spaces as urban commons. On the other hand, the Ankara forums took place in public spaces, where there was no need for a discussion on how to maintain the actual space in monetary terms, but involved negotiating with the municipalities for the right to use the public spaces. Commoning practices in Ankara, however, also share similarities in terms of happening in an urban setting under the impacts of rising demands for a more democratic everyday life and a collective governing of city spaces for all. Therefore, we offer a new classification of commoning practices for when property relations are not central.

After the street protests died down due to excessive use of police force, people returned to their neighbourhoods to create safe spaces to discuss and find ways to create alternative spaces. They used the common land of green spaces in every neighbourhood. Similar to the commoning in the literature, practices took different forms: commoning as method, commoning as content, and commoning as demand. Commoning as method is similar to organising in common (Bresnihan and Byrne 2015), where neighbourhood dwellers discussed and listened to each other to find common organising tools in each neighbourhood. Second, commoning as content was a practice of the form and meaning of political action, including discussions of how to define the right to the city, commons, and collective decision-making processes. Third, commoning as demand is similar to reclaiming a commons in the city and maintaining a commons, where the participants of neighbourhood forums created different tools for their demands. For example, in the case of Ankara, the right to the city was used as a discursive tool to voice demands in the forums. The next section introduces the methods we used in our research to access the forum participants and to examine the commoning practices used, which also framed our conceptualisation of commoning practices.

Research Methods and Case Study Selection

This study is based on a review of 16 semi-structured interviews and three focus groups conducted between June and December 2014, with participants of the Ankara neighbourhood forums, working groups formed by these forums, networks, and platforms. The study also includes content analysis of written materials such as visual material for political canvassing, memos about scholarly debates, policy proposals, and meeting notes, which were regularly shared on the websites of neighbourhood forums and platforms.

Neighbourhood forums were set up in many cities of the country just after the Gezi uprising. The more long-term forums were based in Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir. Ankara as a case study stands out among the other cities in terms of its political significance as the capital city. Ankara is not a case where financial capital has a strong interest, and the volume of gentrification and state-led urban regeneration is not as expansive as in Istanbul. The polarisation among the habitants of the city is also less striking than in Istanbul.

While forum practices were intense in Istanbul, Izmir's experience was limited compared to Ankara's because Izmir remained under the control of the opposition party, which pursues a more egalitarian practice of governing. The main dynamic behind the expansive character of forums in Istanbul and Ankara was the local governing, under Justice and Development Party (AKP) rule, of almost the last two decades, which had deleterious effects on both cities. When the Gezi movement occurred, there was already brewing resentment towards local leaders in Ankara.

The discussions on the daily meetings of the forums, which were also delivered as a method in the network and platform meetings, concerned how to organise the forum, which we call commoning as method. These discussions were followed up by debates on how to define the right to the city and commons, which we call commoning as content. Lastly, the discussions included what kind of tools they needed to claim their demands, also called commoning as demand. Thus, the case study itself took us back to the discussions on commoning practices, rather than merely the right to the city.

The literature on urban commons mostly focuses on the cities expected to experience commoning practices due to their historical social and political relations. Ankara makes an unusual case study, as the city is not threatened by the interests of financial capital accumulation via the development of built environment as in the case of metropolitan cities such as Istanbul. Even if Ankara is not a city for investment, the resilient forum practices are not ahistorical; on the contrary, there has been political engagement at the city scale for more than a decade, which we will describe in more detail in the following section.

Background: Actors, Events, Places

There are institutions/actors and past experiences that have shaped urban politics in Ankara today: (1) municipalities and mayors that shape the institutional framework within which the Gezi forums operated; (2) non-state actors such as chambers that contribute to the Gezi forum networks and practices; (3)

neighbourhoods with distinct characteristics that hosted Gezi forums; and (4) previous urban movements that contribute to the Gezi forum networks and practices.

Actors: Municipalities and Mayors

Municipalities, as the elected pillar of local governance in Turkey, were first established in Ankara in the 1930s (Keleş and Duru 2008). Ankara is also the pioneer of city planning. The Municipality Law did not institutionalise channels of citizen participation in local governance (Bayraktar 2017; Keleş and Duru 2008). The political party representatives in the City Assembly nurtured partisan networks within their voter bases. Public services were delivered based on these nepotistic relations. In Ankara, the metropolitan municipality was controlled by the political party with the majority in the central government at all times, except during two successive tenures of self-proclaimed "social(ist) mayors" in the 1970s (Batuman 2010; Bayraktar 2017; Keleş and Duru 2008). Therefore, power was consolidated in the hands of a small group of political elites for the majority of the history of local governance in Ankara. The EU reforms in the 1990s required the establishment of participatory mechanisms such as City Councils, but this externally imposed actors' scope of influence has remained limited.

While strong mayoralty is a structural characteristic of the municipalities in Turkey, Ankara witnessed the exceptionally long tenure of a particularly autocratic mayor, Melih Gökçek, between 1994 and 2017. Gökçek was known for his intentionally antagonistic attitude towards the delegates in the City Assembly and professional associations, as a means for monopolising power (Bayraktar 2011). Ruling during the neoliberal transformation of Turkey, his tenure was replete with urban redevelopment and gentrification projects, displacements, environmental degradation, and corruption. Land grabbing was a problem in all decades (e.g. the formation and legalisations of slums), but during the neoliberal era the bypassing of the City Assembly consolidated the legal authority (besides the political power) in the hands of the mayor. Therefore, Gökçek was an obvious target for the Gezi forums in Ankara.

Actors: Societal and Professional Organisations

Professional associations such as the Chamber for City Planners, Chamber for Architects and Engineers, and public universities have been the most important non-state actors in local politics in Ankara since the early days of the republic, because they were invited to partake in the drawing up of the city's master plans. Having assumed responsibility to supervise the implementation of these plans, these professional organisations and universities still act as a restraint on the metropolitan municipality through reports and court cases (Keleş and Duru 2008). For example, Capital Solidarity (Başkent Dayanışması) platform composed of the aforementioned chambers and environmental NGOs, launched a campaign to stop the redevelopment plans for Ataturk Forest Farm (AOÇ) in 2012 (Batuman

2015). Such activism created an environment conducive to the Gezi forums and will be introduced in detail in the next section.

Experiences: Past Events

The 2010s witnessed urban activism that paved the way for the Gezi protests and forums in Ankara. Capital Solidarity, a platform set up by professional associations, organised campaigns targeting urban redevelopment projects and the Gökçek mayoralty in general. Capital Solidarity was gradually replaced by Ankara Solidarity in the post-Gezi era to include non-institutionalised platforms such as forums. The banning of mouth-to-mouth kissing in Ankara's underground rail system triggered mass resistance (Radikal 2013), and compounded the city residents' anxieties over neoliberal spatial policies and authoritarian conservative interventions in their lifestyles.

In 2010, former employees of the privatised tobacco monopoly TEKEL took part in a several month-long sit-in in Kızılay Square in the centre of the city (Yalman and Topal 2019). Even though Kızılay has weak symbolism in terms of its location as the state institutions surrounding the square "belong to everyone but no one owns them" (Batuman 2009), the "TEKEL resistance" garnered support from all segments of society; not only labour unions, political parties, and non-profits, but also ordinary citizens joined in their sit-in for months. The TEKEL sit-in, despite not being a locally organised movement, nevertheless strengthened the city residents' identity association with Kizilay Square prior to the Gezi protests.

These protests were triggered by restrictions imposed by the local administrators; therefore, they might be construed as a quest for the right to the city. However, they constituted the mobilisational basis for the Gezi protests as many forum participants cited these events as occasions when they realised that "they were not on their own". Hence, we can regard these protests as a commoning practice even if the forum participants do not explicitly make such a connection.

Places: Neighbourhoods

Neighbourhoods have formed in Ankara in three different ways (Keleş and Duru 2008). Housing for civil servants later became the oldest middle-class neighbourhoods. The Anıttepe Forum was based in one of these neighbourhoods. Ankara was the first city in Turkey to receive high numbers of rural migrants, before Istanbul became the financial centre in the 1950s. Therefore, the slums, called *gecekondu* in Turkish, were first formed in Ankara. This type of housing was later legalised in order to enable it to be included in the city plans and public services to be provided. The former *gecekondu* neighbourhoods still host the most recent generations of migrants and the working class. The short-lived Tuzluçayır Forum in Mamak was based in one of these neighbourhoods. Political mobilisation in these neighbourhoods is based on existing ties, such as migrant solidarity networks, rather than emerging ties such as the Gezi protests (Ertan 2019). The public housing projects completed during the social(ist) mayors' tenure host both blue-collar and white-collar workers. The Batıkent Forum is based in one of these

neighbourhoods. Since Batıkent was the flagship of the social(ist) mayors who are known for their participatory and egalitarian practices (Bayraktar 2007), the neighbourhood had a legacy of community networks prior to the Gezi era. Apartment building compounds and gated communities also first started in Ankara (Keleş and Duru 2008). The Seğmenler and Çayyolu Forums were based in the former and latter, respectively. The layout of these housing areas encouraged participation in collective action (Ertan 2019).

The socio-economic differences among neighbourhoods also led to plurality in power structures. The district municipalities were often governed by opposition parties during the tenure of Melih Gökçek. These district municipalities acted as institutionalised support for the marginalised communities in Ankara.

The Gezi forums in Ankara were based on both the emerging ties born out of the encounters during the Gezi movements and the existing ties and experiences based on neighbourhood solidarity networks, urban movements, and political events that preceded the Gezi movement. The next section will examine the process that formed the Ankara forums.

Ankara Neighbourhood Forums

Ankara, besides being the political capital of Turkey, is also remarkable due to the long period in office of a mayor who was a pragmatic ally of the AKP, Turkey's ruling party since 2001. While the volume of urban redevelopment and gentrification in Ankara is not as great as it is in Istanbul, Gökçek's policies significantly undermined public life in Ankara, forsook the city centre, destroyed cultural heritage and urban memory, and restricted access to public services by women, young people, the differently abled, the urban poor, migrants, and refugees (Açıkgöz 2015). At the time of the Gezi movement, there was already growing resentment towards the local leaders in Ankara (Forum Notes 2013).

Active street resistance, which lasted for about a month in Ankara, slowly declined and ended as of July 2013. The forums began to convene for the first time in Kuğulu Park while the street protests were still going on in order to discuss the logistics of the resistance. When the street protests began to cool down, the first neighbourhood forum was announced to convene in Seğmenler Park, in a prosperous part of the city, on 22 June 2013. The forums followed three stages, including centrally located park forums, neighbourhood forums, and collective forums.

Centrally Located Park Forums

The active participants in the Gezi movement initially got together in centrally located parks such as Seğmenler, Kuğulu, and Güvenpark (Informant 3; Informant 4). There were also other centrally located forums such as Çaldıran (later renamed after Ethem Sarısülük, the first person killed by the police during the Gezi protests; http://www.fraksiyon.org/) and Kolej. Those were dominated by leftist political organisations and did not survive the first stage. In this early stage of the Gezi movement, the forums were perceived as a mechanism to coordinate among

different groups and provide a safe space for individual protestors and therefore used the commoning practices *as a method* to sustain the movement networks. When forum participants wanted to use the meetings as an opportunity to think ahead about the desired outcomes of the movement that was an attempt to change the commoning practice into commoning *as content*. The clash between the leftist political platforms with traditional organisational structures and the Gezi participants ended with the withdrawal of the former from the forums.

The reason why forums in Ankara prioritised commoning in organisational practice in the initial stage was to protect themselves against the intense police violence during the still ongoing street protests. Such solidarity formed during a period of imminent danger eventually led to the social transformation of the space. The parks had been an unquestioned part of people's daily lives as they walked through them during their daily commute or when they met with family and friends for recreational purposes. The Gezi forums transformed these socially safe spaces into politically safe places or "urban solidarity spaces" (Arampatzi 2017a). The umbrella organisation, Parks Are Ours, symbolises this political reclaiming of the ordinary examples of urban commons.

Neighbourhood Forums

There was no tangible reason to keep the centrally located parks occupied in Ankara, unlike Gezi Park in Istanbul. Therefore, the active participants in the Gezi movement reconnected with the already existing activist networks in the neighbourhoods and the smaller scale yet very active neighbourhood forums were formed. The centrally located forums dominated by political organisations dissolved at this stage because these political actors soon retreated to their traditional mode of political action.

The remaining centrally located forums and neighbourhood forums commonised their practices via the non-hierarchical platform called Parks Are Ours— Ankara (Parklar Bizim Ankara; PBA). There were about 40 neighbourhood forums at its peak (Informant 3) including greater Ankara area neighbourhoods (Informant 4), even in those that were known for their conservative populations (Informant 5). The PBA coordinators estimate that Ankara neighbourhood forums hosted about 2000 participants in the second stage (Informant from PBA). At this stage, the forum sessions were mostly in the format of open-ended discussions, like free speech, on both urban and national politics (Informant from Batıkent Forum).

While the wide range of topics covered on a random basis made it difficult to set a political agenda, the very existence of a platform that people could use to voice their opinions had an empowering effect on the public. No matter how difficult it was in practice, all decisions were meant to be taken as a result of a deliberative process as in the cases of İzmir (Ugur-Cinar and Gunduz-Arabaci 2020) and İstanbul (Akçalı 2018; Ozduzen 2019). The deliberative practices both consolidated the democratic and pluralistic structure of the forums and enabled collective individualism as a basis for the practice of the right to the city (Kuymulu 2013). This stage of the forums was conducive to content production.

Collective Forums

In the last stage of the forums, free discussion sessions were shortened and refined with a more goal-oriented structure targeting a political agenda for the near future. The practice of commoning as content was narrowed to commoning *as demand* and became more focused.

The most regular participants in the forums collectively decided to organise public campaigns to frame the upcoming local elections in a way conducive to grassroots political mobilisation. The three successive joint forums used the right to the city discourse to hold the candidates for mayor accountable to the general public.

> We decided when we came together in this forum that we were going to stay away from electoral politics as corrupt party politics is not the way to create a new politics. We lose our relevance as political actors if we don't say anything about the current political developments. (Participant observation, 2014)

The result was the campaign called "Listen, Candidate!", a collectively created list of demands to the candidates standing in the local elections. The central theme was to enable citizens to exercise their *right to the city*. It was indeed a performance in a park in central Ankara where participants of all forums and passersby discussed local politics together and expressed verbally and in writing "the city they want to live in". However, the outcome of the local elections was heavily affected by the national-level politics except in a number of neighbourhoods in Batıkent, Dikmen, Keçiören, and Tuzluçayır districts where the candidates nominated by the forums were elected as Mukhtars.

The first discussion on urban commons in Turkey dates back to 2009, when several issue-oriented movements decided to act together such as the Migrant Solidarity Kitchen, the Ecology Collective, and Our Commons (https://istanbulke nthareketleri.wordpress.com/) based in Istanbul. These activist networks had been holding meetings and organising collective action just preceding the Gezi movement. Activists decided that urban commoning ought to be a two-stage process: first, the separate urban movements *commonise* their action practice; then, they commonise their life practice (Informant 1). Defined as such, urban commoning refers to both the communised use of a physical space and acts of solidarity.

Ankara Neighbourhood Forums at the Crossroads of Commoning Practices

Commoning as Method

Commoning is used as a new horizontal and spontaneous form of collective organisation in the context of grassroots movements against the austerity measures of the 2008 crisis (cf. Leontidou 2012; Stavrides 2014). Therefore, commoning echoes as a universal process when we focus on the aftermath of the crisis, yet takes different forms in its articulation with different geographies and political contexts. The Ankara forums demonstrate how political context shapes commoning practices. The neoliberal authoritarianisation in recent decades in Turkey

limited the repertoire of the city residents' participation (Bedirhanoglu et al. 2020), which led to alternative and creative forms of politicisation.

Hence, we consider the commons as a method that is used by the neighbourhood assemblies to form an alternative decision-making and deliberation process in Ankara. The earliest one was forums convened to establish a non-hierarchical yet efficient decision-making mechanism when the protesters occupying the park faced police brutality. The forums were based on two principles: unanimity in decision-making and deliberation until unanimity is achieved. The forum structure was left flexible and open to change as needed.

Another form of commoning is initiating action-oriented deliberation on issues rather than planning actions on issues and inviting people to join (Informant 7). Making a call for action is described as a commoning practice by an active participant in the Güvenpark Forum:

> We realised that when people receive a call for deliberation but not one for action, it empowers them, makes them realise their agency, and sparks their creativity. We saw that we don't have to provide people with a clearly delineated roadmap or a master plan or we don't have to stick to the tested, safe but old ways of protesting; we can let the creativity born out of discussions lead the way. That doesn't mean, of course, that we go to the meetings entirely unprepared and let ideas flow in an unstructured manner. We have half-structured, open-ended discussions and trust the creativity of the participants. It also shows us how direct democracy can be practised in our case. (Informant 7, translation by authors)

As Chatterton (2010) argues, the concept of the common describes a structure that can produce dynamic and alternative politics. In this sense, it is a form of struggle that can accumulate different tactics beyond just creating an area of defence and a network. The statements by the above-mentioned informant demonstrate that scholars and activists define urban commons in a similar fashion:

> What brings people together is having a common ideal of a city. The social networks in Gezi were praised a lot, but it makes it something larger than a social network. It's much more organised; it's a structure that considers its self-defence. In terms of relating to other resistance movements, it's a structure that actually gets up and goes to, say, Yırca[1] for solidarity. What enables this must be something way beyond a social network. (Informant 7, translation by authors)

We suggest commoning as method to conceptualise the organisational and logistical networking of the forums. In contrast to a liberal understanding of how social movements mobilise, we claim that commoning as method is a transformative social process. Since commoning as method that the forums employed in the initial stages had this transformative potential, the later stages were able to engage with commoning as content, as will be analysed below.

Commoning as Content
We consider commoning as content that is open to be discussed by the participants of neighbourhood assemblies in order to find new strategies of politics at

the local level. Commoning as content opens up the possibilities of encounters not only in the virtual space of Twitter, online blogs, and email lists, but also the politics of encounter in physical spaces (Arampatzi 2017b; Leontidou 2012; Merrifield 2013). Some forum participants defined urban commons as a form of transformative politics but also expressed reservations about the possibilities of mobilising around urban commons in Ankara as the places threatened by neoliberal urban policies are not immediately visible to ordinary citizens. Participants complained that the urban movement in Ankara was only reacting to state policies. Only after an urban redevelopment plan becomes public do the professional chambers and political parties mobilise against it. The prevention of the demolition of the historic Akün Theatre in an affluent part of Ankara was given as an example (Informant 7). However, the participants noted the forums could not go beyond what they saw as a passive attitude in taking part in urban politics. Eymir Solidarity, the activist network that stopped the landfill project at Lake Eymir, predominantly comprised academic staff and students, and the Ataturk Forest Farm campaign was initiated by city planners. Most of the forums only supported these two campaigns online, transforming these public spaces into a virtually shared space (Batuman 2015). While these two examples are cases in point for "digital commoning" as political action, forum participants saw them as important milestone towards the gradual disintegration of forums (Informant Y; Informant Z). Forum participants thought that the forums should have played a constitutive role by defining the city they would like to live in and charting a roadmap to achieve it (Informant 7).

Some participants were openly against engaging with the local election agenda as they perceived the forums as actors of a different political agenda that pursues self-governance beyond electoral politics in the way Gough interprets as the right to the city (in Çelik 2014), and commoning as a political process:

> We should be talking about how to realise self-governance instead of how to get a better candidate elected, we should be talking about not finding channels to voice our demands but finding ways to achieve them. (Joint Forum notes, translation by authors)

Some forums organised events with the purpose of creating "life spaces" (Erensü and Karaman 2017) similar to the commoning experience in Dublin (Bresnihan and Byrne 2015). For example, the Seğmenler Forum organised film screenings in the park amphitheatre in 2014, and a public talk series that amplified the voices of minorities prior to the general elections in 2015. The Anıtpark and Çayyolu Forums organised public talks on urban politics and concerts by musicians censored in the mainstream media. The Yüzüncü Yıl Forum created a public garden to transform the production cycles in their neighbourhood. Bresnihan and Byrne (2015) see producing creative and political content as a form of commoning practice. The Gezi forums in Ankara engaged in commoning as content for the majority of their lifetime. The public talks and creative events helped the forum participants and the interested public to reach a common understanding of their political values and stance. However, the time-consuming and voluntary nature of producing content as well as the pressing agenda of the upcoming local elections

prevented forums from developing a roadmap for large-scale political action. As the next section will analyse, the forums receded to commoning as demand.[2]

Commoning as Demand

Lastly, we consider commoning as demand, in which neighbourhood assemblies and city-wide organisations used commons and right to the city to shape their demands. Commoning as demand is an accumulated form of the previous movements' repertoire at the neighbourhood scale against urban regeneration, claiming the right to housing, and city-wide organisations claiming the right to the city (Ergin and Rittersberger-Tiliç 2014; Fırat 2011). As discussed by Ergin and Rittersberger-Tiliç (2014:48), right to the city has been the umbrella slogan of urban movements in Turkey since 2005, and it carries different meanings for different activists involved in neighbourhood to city-wide movements. The spectrum of the slogan had a creative impact on commoning practices, in particular on commoning as demand, where the activists focused on their immediate and further demands.

Using commoning as demand was a way of going beyond the "urban solidarity spaces" scale where different neighbourhood forums aimed to seek demands as how to govern their city. While forums agreed on the need for an alternative form of politicisation, they nevertheless channelled some of their collective efforts to have a louder voice in decision-making processes in Ankara as they saw constraining local officials as the most actionable path to take. In order to have a stronger alliance, joint forums were organised to create demands for the whole city as a part of the "ideal city" discussion. Ankara forum participants realised that there were structural constraints that shaped their right to the city as a political struggle or urban commons as content:

> We diagnosed the problems alright, but we didn't talk about the real issue, which is "how [to achieve change]?". For example, when we began to do some work on local politics, we realised that the real problem is the laws and regulations. There's not much difference between what's happening to Ankara and Izmir in this sense. (Informant from the City Report collective, translation by authors)

The Ankara forums convened joint forums three times throughout the period they were most active from 2013 to 2015. The joint forum called "What Kind of a Local Government Do We Want?" was held in September 2013; the one called "Listen, Candidate!" was held in November 2013; and the Multi-Forum was held on 28 December 2013 before the local elections of 31 March 2014.

The "Listen, Candidate!" forum was the one that explicitly referred to the right to the city as part of their political agenda. The forum aimed at eliciting from the residents of Ankara a list of demands for the candidates standing for mayor in the upcoming local elections, promoting a public campaign to oblige candidates to respond to the demands, and, once one of them is elected, holding the elected mayor responsible for meeting the demands as promised. The manifesto declared at the end of the forum included issues varying from public participation in decision-making processes to provision of safe, reliable, and high quality public

services such as public transportation and the maintenance of common areas such as parks.

This manifesto is the first of its kind to focus on the urban scale of politics (Drago 2019). The text uses the right to the city as its theoretical framework, defined primarily as an individual right, but it also keeps altering the power structures within its scope (Çelik 2014). The forum discussions and the manifesto represent Ankara residents who refuse to be seen as mere voters in political agendas imposed in a top-down manner by the national-level political parties and urge the candidates to abide by the agenda suggested to them by the forums in a bottom-up manner.

> The way they expressed their thoughts was different but the content was very similar. There was a commoning in demands: don't do things without asking us. That was the basic demand: improve the ways through which city residents participate in decision-making processes related to the city. (Informant Y, translation by authors)

The rejection of political hierarchies of scale was a common theme prior to the joint forum. Earlier, Eryaman People's Solidarity, the Çayyolu Forum, and the Yüzüncü Yıl Forum had organised sessions on the right to the city and urban transformation. These neighbourhood forums concluded that solidarity and sharing knowledge across neighbourhoods was vital to political mobilisation and they participated in the joint forum. The joint forum was successful in identifying the collective rights to the city and achieved considerable publicity and mobilisation. However, since the success of this political mobilisation was inevitably linked to the election results, when the incumbent mayor was re-elected with the backing of the leading party in the national parliament, the urban scale lost its importance in the eyes of forum participants and this negatively impacted the politicisation the forums had achieved so far.

After failing to influence the election results, the forums shifted their focus on the ways of constraining the elected mayor and the city council members. There are two prominent examples of such endeavours. First, the Cayyolu Forum convinced the head of the Cankaya District Municipality (the elected head of which is from the opposition party) to categorise forums as civil society organisations so that they could participate in the meetings of the Citizens' Council, a consultative organ for non-governmental entities that provides policy advice and feedback to the City Council, at the district level. Even though Citizens' Councils do not have any decision-making power, the forums would have access to the materials such as zoning plans that the City Council bases its decisions on (Informant G).

Second, a group of Segmenler Forum participants formed a collective called the City Report (Kent Karnesi) to monitor the City Council decisions. Their self-assigned tasks included creating a searchable database of decisions for public use so that those who would like to challenge the approval of urban redevelopment projects or to supervise the implementation of other policies could have early access to them, analysing the volume and nature of decisions on certain issue areas and publishing regular reports on them written in accessible language so that lay citizens without an understanding of the technical language the decisions are written in could hold their elected City Council representatives accountable.

As demonstrated above, the right to the city is understood in two ways: the right to set your own agenda for urban politics and pursue it and the right to constrain the state and supervise the urban policy making and implementation processes. The vagueness of the former understanding of the concept eventually frustrated the participants:

> The right to the city was over-generalised in the forum discussions. People could only voice demands. Much was talked about the right to the city, but not as "the right to the city". Yes, it was written on the poster, but the concept itself was not discussed at length. It was discussed in terms of needs rather than a struggle for rights. From the maintenance of pavements to lighting and from the safety of streets at night to shelters for the homeless. But these were discussed as very specific issues rather than as a holistic political stance. (Deliberant 6, translation by authors)

Gough foresaw that if the demands voiced are not accompanied by tangible agendas for political action, the right to the city concept is deemed to remain merely as a slogan (in Çelik 2014). Participants in the City Report collective were resolved to the fact that the right to the city is only good for political mobilisation:

> For example, the main slogan of our three joint forums was the right to the city. Even on our posters, we used "Ankara Demands Its Right to the City" … Conceptually, it's a very complex area and so many things come out that you cannot find time to do something for the right to the city after starting to read these. Maybe it's a good thing for the urban scale that it remains a slogan. In other ways, it prevents you from getting things done. (Deliberant 5, translation by authors)

The joint forum entitled "Listen, Candidate!", held in November 2013, produced a manifesto that contained citizens' demands to the candidates for mayor in the upcoming elections in March 2014. This text symbolised the urban turn that the neighbourhood forums took. From that point on, forums focused on urban issues even if their participants took part in political actions targeting national-level issues individually in other contexts.

As Gough claims, the right to the city contains a political struggle defined locally (in Çelik 2014). The dilemma that the Ankara forums faced reflects the constitutive relationship between the urban and the political. The urban experience contributes to the creation of the conditions conducive to politicisation but political movements do not necessarily address the urban issues once they mobilise the urban citizens (Drago 2019).

Forums failed to mobilise large numbers of residents in their neighbourhoods for a number of reasons. The low-income migrant neighbourhoods such as those in the Mamak district mobilise based on their existing ties, which are migrant solidarity networks (Ertan 2019). The construction of a Sunni mosque in an overwhelmingly Alevi neighbourhood in Mamak mobilised a large and prolonged protest wave in 2014, but those protests were mainly organised by the political parties that had a stronghold in Mamak. The forums in Mamak soon merged with these already existing political structures.

Previous research showed that gated suburban neighbourhoods in Cayyolu mobilised with less difficulty when they knew one another previously in their

compound (Ertan 2019). We reached the same conclusion for the gated communities in Cayyolu and Turkkonut, who maintained relatively long-lasting forums. These forums focused on constraining the metropolitan municipality regarding issues that concern the city at large, such as the project to redevelop Lake Eymir and Ataturk Forest Farm. Later, these suburban forums collaborated with in-city forums, whose participants were mostly young middle class and precarious professionals, in organising the campaign for the local elections. Those forums that "scaled down" their political actions to the neighbourhood level (Joint Forum notes), such as the Batikent forums, managed to get their candidates elected as Mukhtars (the lowest scale of elected administrative positions).

Mainstream political actors such as political parties, labour unions, and professional chambers remained among the main actors in urban politics in Ankara. The Ankara branches of political parties were criticised by the forum participants for using urban issues to delegitimise the macro-level policies of the central government (Informant X). Professional chambers were historically impactful in urban politics in Ankara (Keleş and Duru 2008), but forum participants criticised them for what they thought was a legalistic approach in their attempt to constrain the metropolitan municipality instead of conducting participatory and transformative politics.

The call for participatory and transformative politics is a practice of commoning *as method* and is reminiscent of the earlier phases of the forums in which they refused to engage with traditional/mainstream politics. However, in the last stage of the forums, the participants largely employed commoning *as demand*. With the looming urgency of the local elections, many forums channelled their organisational capacity towards the election campaigns and consequently had an impact on the next generation of government. The right to the city was the *discursive tool* that was most frequently used to demand participation in local decision-making processes. As the quotes reveal, forum participants were often aware of the other interpretations of the right to the city but given the history of the authoritarian mayor's office in Ankara, they settled for a version of it that mainly highlights citizen participation. Therefore, in the last stage of the forums, commoning was practised *as demand*. Unlike right to the city, the forums do not frequently use commoning to define their political activities. Commoning was used in two forms by the forum participants. In *joint forum texts*, commoning referred to the creation and maintenance of shared public places in the city. For example:

> We demand urban commons that are open to all, accessible by all, safe for all, promoting diversity, clean and functional. (Joint Forum Closing Manifesto 2014, translation by authors)

In the *interviews and focus groups* with forum participants, commoning was used to describe the way they organised joint events to expand their networks (Fieldwork notes). For example:

> The Ankara Solidarity was an attempt at commoning in political agendas. The political parties, professional associations and platforms predating the Gezi protests on the one hand, and the Gezi forums with diverse political views on the other, committed to

merge institutional politics with right to the city politics. The post-Gezi withdrawal from the streets required commoning strategies in other forms. The Ankara Solidarity platform only had a secretariat for organisational purposes. It called for a meeting whenever an opportunity for joint activity arose. (Informant from Halkevleri/Community Civil Rights Center, translation by authors)

The different interpretations of urban commoning by the forum participants show that they consider it to be a social process, as argued by Huron (2015) and Bresnihan and Byrne (2015). Thus, the evolution of the Gezi forums in Ankara allows us to conceptually refine urban commoning experiences differently from previous research.

Conclusion

This paper demonstrated that urban commoning is a social process and may take different forms in various contexts. The paper first establishes that the existing literature on urban commoning focuses on practices that have an explicit anti-capitalist focus and explicit organisational structures such as squatting. Moreover, a significant majority of the existing literature bases its theoretical formulations on case studies of global financial centres. While such a methodological choice has high explanatory value, the urban commoning experiences of political centres and ordinary cities remain outside of the scope of the scholarship.

The paper then presented forums as novel forms of urban commoning and practising. Neighbourhood forums have fluid organisational structures and rapidly evolving political agendas in Turkey. Yet these forums are solidly grounded in urban networks and issues. This paper contributes to the existing literature by analysing the experience of Ankara, the political capital of Turkey. Ankara is a case study of a low concentration of financial capital investment in a built environment and a strong-arm local administration. However, Ankara witnessed a long period of both Gezi protests and post-Gezi neighbourhood forums in terms of urban commoning.

The Gezi movement in Turkey had dual political foci. The protestors targeted the authoritarian central government and its use of political and legal tools of oppression. At the same time, they demanded the reversal of neoliberal financial urbanisation in their localities. When police violence rendered street politics unsustainable, the Gezi protestors reconvened in the neighbourhood forums. In the initial stage of the forums, commoning was practised as a way to maintain the transition from the streets to the neighbourhoods. In this sense, the forums initially took the form of commoning *as method*. The acts of solidarity, horizontal decision-making, and deliberation were practices that achieved an urban commons for the Gezi protestors.

In the second stage, the forum participants, now better settled in their organisational structures, began to dwell on the political transformations they would like to initiate. This stage of the forums, commoning *as content*, was less about actionable plans and more about developing a set of values, principles, and goals for political change. Later, these ideas developed in the forums were realised by

several platforms that were offshoots of the forums. In the final stage, the actions on which the forums focused centred on taking over the local administration as the overly centralised nature of public administration in Turkey does not leave room for bottom-up initiatives. The overly centralised public administration in Ankara had a structural impact on the politicisation of people and made the local scale extraneous. Forum participants kept meeting in their neighbourhoods but switched their focus of discussion and political action from how to transform different levels of their urban experience to how to influence the city level election campaigns. The neighbourhood forums became merely a convenient meeting place. Hence, the local conditions shape the way the right to the city and urban commons are perceived and practised. Urban commoning *as demand* takes the form of the right to the city in Ankara. The right to the city is also used in different ways in both scholarly and activist circles.

The overcentralised administrative system in Turkey and the strong-arm rule in Ankara, that had been in place for a decade by the time of the Gezi forums, eventually curbed the scope of mobilisation in Ankara and resulted in the forums confining themselves to electoral politics. The subsequent violation of the due process in the electoral system and formal politics caused major disillusionment among forum participants. The forums went into abeyance around 2016 with more active members finding themselves other platforms for grassroots politics and less active members withdrawing from local politics for the time being.

To conclude, urban commoning and the right to the city are theoretical tools developed in geographical contexts with long-lasting experience with local politics, self-governance, and effective challenges to capitalist property relations in the form of squats and city communes. In the absence of such experience, urban struggles use these concepts by modifying their initial meaning. The urban commons that help create new networks, solidarity practices and political socialisation are seen not as withdrawal from, but prefiguration of future political action. The analysis of various perceptions and practices would contribute to a better understanding of these concepts in the scholarly literature.

Endnotes

[1] Residents of an olive-producing village in western Turkey, women in particular, organised a long-haul resistance against confiscation of olive tree gardens to build an energy plant (Tuncer 2016).

[2] As forums gradually wound down after the 2015 general elections, many small-scale or local networks engaged in creating life spaces such as Öteki Bisiklet (The Other Bicycle/The Bicycle of the Othered) for cyclists' rights, Çerçöp Çorbacıları (Soupmakers Against Waste) against industrial food chains, and the Immigrant Solidarity Network for immigrants settling in the greater Ankara region. These networks were later viewed as practising "micro-politics" (Kara 2019). These examples of collective action, which took place after the Gezi forums faded in Ankara, constituted a form of commoning as content.

References

Açıkgöz M (2015) Belediye Meclisi Kararları Nasıl Alınıyor? *Solfasol Ankara'nın Gayriresmi Gazetesi* January

Akçalı E (2018) Do popular assemblies contribute to genuine political change? Lessons from the park forums in Istanbul. *South European Society and Politics* 23(3):323–340

Arampatzi A (2017a) Contentious spatialities in an era of austerity: Everyday politics and "struggle communities" in Athens, Greece. *Political Geography* 60:47–56

Arampatzi A (2017b) The spatiality of counter-austerity politics in Athens, Greece: Emerging urban solidarity spaces. *Urban Studies* 54(9):2155–2171

Batuman B (2009) *The Politics of Public Space: Domination and Appropriation in and of Kızılay Square.* Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag

Batuman B (2010) Toplumcu Bir Belediyecilik Modeli: "Yeni Belediyecilik Hareketi" 1973–1977. *Mülkiye Dergisi* 34(266):223–241

Batuman B (2015) Gezi'nin Devamı Olarak Atatürk Orman Çiftliği Mücadelesi Ya Da Rejim Değişikliğinin (Ve Buna Direnişin) Mecrası Olarak "Cumhurbaşkanlığı Sarayı". *Dosya* 34:53–62

Bayraktar S U (2007) Turkish municipalities: Reconsidering local democracy beyond administrative autonomy. *European Journal of Turkish Studies* https://doi.org/10.4000/ejts.1103

Bayraktar S U (ed) (2011) *Reform Sonrası İl Genel Meclisleri: Dönüşüm ve Statüko.* İstanbul: Kalkedon

Bayraktar U (2017) Kentin Annelerinden Babalarına: Beledi Siyasetin Başkanlık Rejimine Evrimi. In Y Taşkın (ed) *Türkiye'nin Rejim ve Sistem Sorunu* (pp 89–122). İstanbul: Küyerel Yayınları

Bedirhanoglu P, Dolek C, Hulagu F and Kaygusuz O (2020) *Turkey's New State in the Making: Transformations in Legality, Economy, and Coercion.* London: Zed

Boratav K (2013) Olgunlaşmamış Sınıfsal Bir Başkaldırı: Gezi Direnişi. In Ö Göztepe (ed) *Gezi İsyanı Üzerine Düşünceler içinde* (pp 15–20). İstanbul: Notabene Yayınevi

Bresnihan P and Byrne M (2015) Escape into the city: Everyday practices of commoning and the production of urban space in Dublin. *Antipode* 47(1):36–54

Çelik O (2014) Urban neoliberalism, strategies for urban struggles, and "the right to the city": Interview with Jamie Gough. *Capital and Class* 38(2):414–451

Chatterton P (2010) Seeking the urban common: Furthering the debate on spatial justice. *City* 14(6):625–628

Della Porta D (2020) Protests as critical junctures: Some reflections towards a momentous approach to social movements. *Social Movement Studies* 19(5/6):556–575

Dikec M and Swyngedouw E (2017) Theorizing the politicizing city. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 41(1):1–18

Drago A (2019) Lisbon's red belt: A cautionary tale on politicisation and depoliticisation of the urban realm. *Antipode* 51(1):87–106

Eraydın A and Taşan-Kök T (2014) State response to contemporary urban movements in Turkey: A critical overview of state entrepreneurialism and authoritarian interventions. *Antipode* 46(1):110–129

Erensü S and Karaman O (2017) The work of a few trees: Gezi, politics, and space. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 41(1):19–36

Ergin N B and Rittersberger-Tiliç H (2014) The right to the city: Right(s) to "possible-impossible" versus a mere slogan in practice. In G Erdi-Lelandais (ed) *Understanding the City:*

Henri Lefebvre and Urban Studies (pp 37–67). Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Ertan G (2019) Mobilization networks and the outcomes of neighborhood protests in Ankara. *Ankara Araştırmaları Dergisi* 7(2):303–320

Federici S (2010) Feminism and the politics of the commons. In S Hughes, S Peace and K V Meter (eds) *Uses of a Whirlwind: Movement, Movements, and Contemporary Radical Currents in the United States* (pp 283–294). Oakland: AK Press

Fırat B Ö (2011) "Ve madem ki sokaklar kimsenin değil": Talan, dolandırıcılık ve hırsızlığa karşı kentsel müşterekler yaratmak. *Eğitim Bilim Toplum* 9(36):96–116

Forum Notes (2013) Ankara Forumlarda Tanisiyor, Tartisiyor, Ögreniyor. *Solfasol Ankara'nın Gayriresmi Gazetesi* August

Gidwani V and Baviskar A (2011) Urban commons. *Economic and Political Weekly* 10 December

Harvey D (2005) *The New Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Harvey D (2008) The right to the city. *New Left Review* 53:23–40

Huron A (2015) Working with strangers in saturated space: Reclaiming and maintaining the urban commons. *Antipode* 47(4):963–979

Kara O E (2019) *Yapabilecegimizi Yapmak: Minör Siyaset ve Türkiye Örnegi*. Istanbul: Iletisim Yayınları

Keleş R and Duru B (2008) Ankara'nın Ülke Kentleşmesindeki Etkilerine Tarihsel Bir Bakış. *Mulkiye Dergisi* 32(261):27–44

Kongar E and Küçükkaya A (2013) *Gezi Direnişi*. İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Yayınları

Kuymulu M B (2013) The vortex of rights: The "right to the city" at the crossroads. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37(3):923–940

Leitner H and Sheppard E (2018) From kampungs to condos? Contested accumulations through displacement in Jakarta. *Environment and Planning A* 50(2):437–456

Leontidou L (2012) Athens in the Mediterranean "movement of the piazzas": Spontaneity in material and virtual public spaces. *City* 16(3):299–312

Linebaugh P (2008) *The Magna Carta Manifesto: Liberties and Commons For All*. Berkeley: University of California Press

Merrifield A (2013) *The Politics of the Encounter: Urban Theory and Protest under Planetary Urbanization*. Athens: University of Georgia Press

Myers G (2013) From expected to unexpected comparisons: Changing the flows of ideas about cities in a postcolonial urban world. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 35 (1):104–118

Ostrom E, Burger J, Field C B, Norgaard R B and Policansky D (1999) Revisiting the commons: Local lessons, global challenges. *Science* 284(9):278–282

Ozduzen O (2019) Spaces of hope in authoritarian Turkey: Istanbul's interconnected geographies of post-Occupy activism. *Political Geography* 70:34–43

Özkoray N and Özkoray E (2013) *Bireysellik ve Demokrasi: Gezi Fenomeni*. İstanbul: İdea Politika Yayınları

Radikal (2013) Ankara metrosunda öpüşme eylemi. 24 May http://www.radikal.com.tr/tur kiye/ankara-metrosunda-opusme-eylemi-1134799/ (last accessed 6 March 2021)

Saraçoğlu C (2014). Kent hakkı, ölçek ve siyaset. *soL* 14 March http://haber.sol.org.tr/yaza rlar/cenk-saracoglu/kent-hakki-olcek-ve-siyaset-89328 (last accessed 14 January 2021)

Sönmez M (2013) *Kent, Kapital ve Gezi Direnişi*. Ankara: NotaBene Yayınları

Stavrides S (2014) Emerging common spaces as a challenge to the city of crisis. *City* 18(4/5):546–550

Stavrides S (2020) Reclaiming the city as commons: Learning from Latin American housing movements. *Built Environment* 46(1):139–153

Tuncer A (2016) Ölmez ağaç: Yırca direnişi ve direnişin öznesi kadınlar. *Baslangic* 22 February https://baslangicdergi.org/olmez-agac-yirca-direnisi-ve-direnisin-oznesi-kadinlar/ (last accessed 22 December 2019)

Ugur-Cinar M and Gunduz-Arabaci C (2020) Deliberating in difficult times: Lessons from public forums in Turkey in the aftermath of the Gezi protests. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 47(2):224–246

Varvarousis A, Asara V and Akbulut B (2020) Commons: A social outcome of the movement of the squares. *Social Movement Studies* https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2020.1793753

Yalman G L and Topal A (2019) Labour containment strategies and working class struggles in the neoliberal era: The case of TEKEL workers in Turkey. *Critical Sociology* 45(3):447–461