This paper is written for the Lecture Series Research Methods course as a theoretical basis for the graduation design studio of Public Building. The intention of this paper is to clarify what sort of research methods I have opted for in my graduation project, why I chose these certain methods, and how I dealt with these methods in my research within the broader theme of the studio.

In order to answer to these questions it is important to explain what the project is about. In my opinion architectural design process is comparable to scientific approach. Problem statement is the first step for both realms. This view goes in line with the objectives and framework of the studio.

The Studio focuses on the city of Istanbul. Each individual had to pose a question based on his or her own reading of the city that should have been done parallel with searching for own interests that are essential for creating a unique project. This step could have been done in different scales; scale of the city, a neighborhood, or a specific site. This problem statement or position taking is an essential step in Public Building studio which will later lead to composition and materialization. The three parties are merged to make an architectural design.

The Praxeological Reading of the City- Problem Statement

The French Marxist philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre In his book, The Production of Space, develops a theory that space is not simply out there as a priori category but it is a result of complex social production which affects spatial practices and perceptions. He was involved with the notions of time, space, the city, and everyday life. The concept of everyday that Lefebvre develops has potential for understanding the transformation of the world we live in.

Similarly, Alison and Peter Smithson, have the same bottom-up idea about the configuration of the city. In their book, Urban Structuring, they write: “A town is by definition a specific pattern of association, a pattern unique for each people, in each location, at each time” They compare the city to a living organism and believe that architecture and urban planning should reflect on these notions.

The above mentioned thinker’s theories can be categorized as praxeological ideas within the epistemological different frameworks. One can question that why we should look at the city through this point of view. If we compare aforementioned ideas to the other readings of the city -like typo- morphological reading for instance- it can

2 Lefebvre, H, 1996, Writing on cities, Oxford, Basil Blackwell Ltd, PP 4-6
be criticized that it is less about the architecture and more related to social science or anthropology. In my opinion, we cannot generalize and apply any certain methods of study for different projects. There is no right and wrong. There are only the choices that the architect should cleverly make considering the notions of the project itself. Within the framework of our studio we were free to take any position we liked. There was neither a problem, nor a program or a specific site predefined. I have decided to work with the praxeological episteme for my first step of the study which was the problem statement. For me, the important question was that what is there that people want in the city?

The world is dealing with the notions of globalization. Cultural as well as social and political integration is inherent in today's life. This is even more valid in globalized cities like Istanbul. The situation of this city puts it even in a more juxtaposed situation of duals: neither eastern, nor western, but both eastern and western…Neither old nor new but both old and new and thousands of other duals.

The society is in transition mode in Istanbul. The socio-political situation of Istanbul proves this statement. The Gezi park protests as followed by many other protests that happened recently in Istanbul show the public’s demand for some changes in the city. These happenings shed light on the demand of the city dwellers to be expressive. Moreover, a lot of these riots are about the public space itself, again the Gezi Park Protest to name an example of this claim since it was about a demolition of the park. People went to Takism square to protect the park; bodies against the government which gives it a performative and expressive character. The reaction of government to these protests shows that this expressiveness is not yet accepted by the authorities although they are quite peaceful. Architectural elements and different activities emerged out of the protests approve their peaceful character: a temporary library, a cultivated garden, and a temporary prayer's room as examples of architectural elements and dancing, reading, playing music, and cultivating fruits as examples of performative acts.

Continuing with the same praxeological method of research, it was interesting for me that how an event can create a real public space in the city which is not necessarily related to the place itself. For example a 5 minute flash mob can cause more social interactions compared to a park or public square which is initially built as a public space. The Taksim square becomes public only if there is an event happening there and thus the space becomes interactive.

By studying the city dweller's behavior in Istanbul, it can be said that there are not too many interactive public spaces in the city neither there are a lot of public events like carnivals or festivals that are free for everybody. There are some festivals like art biennales or sport festivals that are happening but they are restricted to a certain group of people and are mostly paid. This lack of public events can be seen also in the smaller scale events like public art. There are only a few examples of public art that are
mostly restricted to the touristic areas of the city like Taksim square, Istiklal Avenue or Galata neighborhood.

The praxeological study of the city and looking at people’s behaviors helped me to define my problem statement: If there is a huge demand for being expressive by the city dwellers, how can we design a public space which can host spontaneous events that lets the users have social interaction and be expressive?

The Event Space - Temporary Architecture

Mona El Khafif in her article, *Staged Urbanism as a Construction of Public Space*, explains that event as an experience allows discovering endogenous potentials and therefore serves as instructions for future usages that encourage new kinds of appropriation and perception in the public space. The design of the public space as a space of events must allow unplanned, spontaneous and chaotic actions in order to guarantee endogenous and heterogeneous urbanisms. In her opinion “The lively public space is a theatre of intended and unintended social interactions”

I believe that a lot of aforementioned notions can be covered if we deal with the fourth dimension, time. Temporary architecture reflects to the demands discussed above. First, temporary architecture does not have to follow all the rules of permanent architecture thus it can have a subversive character and anti-system which can raise the collective voice in a peaceful manner. Second, the future is neither predictable nor controllable. The protests show that this notion of unpredictability is even more valid in the context of Istanbul. Temporary architecture deals with experimentation as the event itself does. Experimentation allows us to constantly renew our knowledge.

“If we live in the moment instead of living towards an unknown future then we are up to date, adapted to the respective situation and its specific reality. Then we do not have the urge to have to design our surroundings as a fit for tomorrow. Then we do not understand it as a mould for our actions but as a process, space as transformation and city as one of the possible temporary states of this development.”

In temporary architecture uncertainties turn into stability defined by boundaries that let the reproduction of space happen. In his article *Beginning: Zero*, Han Tumertekin defines experience and the role of architect when dealing with temporary architecture: “Experience is the ultimate form of data collected from the environment

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5 Schutz, T, *Moments: Impressions from Vienna*, Published in Temporary City at Particular Locations, Dortmund, Herausgeber, PP 44-53
and processed through a personal filter...The architect can create neither event nor experience but can only determine that in turn would create this very experience.\(^6\)

Temporary architecture is not only a good host for events but it is an event itself. It opts for open-mindedness of a location that allows everybody to involve and allows time to take part. It is like a laboratory for people’s demands which searches for and generates interests. It causes city dwellers to become activists and get involved with their city. Thus it becomes a socio-political democratic space.

**City as a theatre- Phenomenology**

If we opt for a public space as a space for events then the city can be read as a stage or theatre. To develop the research and chose for further methods and tools of study, it is important to define the scale of the study and become more precise about what the event means. Event can be defined in different scales: the small scale of a performance, street music, or public art, the medium scale of temporary formations like street markets or bottom-up temporal configuration of specific spaces, or the large scale of protests, carnivales, and free national festivals. The scale of the study for me is the medium scale since it is the scale which is mostly related to architectural realm.

Three case studies have been chosen to study as the active stage. The first case study is Galata Bridge. It was initially built to connect one part of the city to the other but now it is a platform for fishing. A lot of temporal spatial configurations will emerge because of the fishing event on this bridge. Moreover, because of all those temporal formations, it becomes a space for social interaction. The second case study is Kadikoy Tuesday market. When the space is empty the reading of space would be totally different from when it is a market. When the space is empty, spontaneous events like football matches or biking races happen. Thus it would be an example of the stage that the event is constantly changing. The third case study is the stairs in front of the New Mosque. These stairs become a place for protests. The question is how should we study those spaces and what sort of methods should be developed in this stage of the research?

In his book, *The Image of The city*, Kevin Lynch studies the mental image of the city as perceived by its citizens. For him, space is constructed according to certain elements of the city, which he describes as paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks. To develop his point of view he illustrates the book with a series of mental maps and perceptional drawings. He believes that the city dwellers should have an active role in developing this image.\(^7\) Although what he does is comparable to the praxiological episteme since it is about the image of the city as formed by the city dwellers, but his

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method of study is phenomenological because it is related to different senses and the
study of different perceptions towards certain phenomena.

Similarly, the method of the study in this stage of my project will be related to
phenomenological episteme. It is about reading the city as a theatre thus the
perception and different senses are the most important elements to be studied. This
can be done through a series of drawing, mental maps, and study models which are
created according to scenographic methods. The elements that are studied in each of
the case studies are views, perception of the viewer, backgrounds, background
sounds, sequences, levels, and people’s movements. It is all about experience,
perception, and the senses as Lynch says: “Nothing is experienced by itself, but always in
relation to its surroundings, the sequences of events leading up to it, the memory of past
experiences.”

Mapping

It is important to choose certain methods of drawing for the analytical part of the
project because I strongly believe that choosing different methods of analytical
drawings will lead to different design projects in the end so that would be another
crucial decision to take in this stage of the research process. The method of mapping
is related to the phenomenological and praxiological epistemes that were used as
research methods in my approach. It is related to mental image and perception. It is
can reveal bottom-up interventions and it will be a great tool to take one step forward
towards the design.

James Corner, in his publication, The Agency of Mapping: Speculation, Critique and
Invention, explains that mapping is a collective enabling enterprise, a project that both
reveals and realizes hidden potential. He describes mapping as a method that is not
only a link between the study and the design but is somehow the design itself. In his
opinion the function of mapping is less to mirror reality than to engender the re-
shaping of the worlds in which people live. He distinguishes between a map and a
tracing to explain the agency of mapping. He believes that mapping reveals more than
just physical attributes of terrain like topography, rivers, roads, or buildings. It includes
also the various hidden forces like events, local stories, economic and legislative
conditions, and political interests. Thus it allows for an understanding of terrain as the
surface expression of a complex and dynamic imbroglio of social and natural
processes.

For him, mapping projects a mental image into the spatial imagination which is a
result of the inevitable abstractness of maps caused by selection, omission, isolation,
distance, and codification. He believes that mapping allows designers and planners

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8 Lynch, K, 1960, Image of the City, Boston, The MIT Press, P 1
Books Ltd, PP 213-215
not only to see certain possibilities in the complexity and contradiction of what already exists but also to actualize that potential.\(^{10}\)

By studying Istanbul city through a praxiological point of view, comparable to what Lefebvre and Smithsons do, we have concluded that the socio-political behavior of the people of Istanbul shows their demand for an interactive public space; a place that they can be expressive; a place for spontaneous events to happen in the city.

Parallel to that we have seen that temporary architecture is a proper architectural language that deals with unpredictable feature of today's life since it deals with the fourth dimension of time. It is not only a good host for the experimental approach I have chosen but also it is an explore lab itself.

In order to become more precise about the research methods, we explained that when we are dealing with a space that hosts events, it is like looking at the city as a theatre. Thus, phenomenological approach can help us understand the city better. In order to continue the study some case studies have been chosen to be studied as active stages in the city; places that certain phenomena cause spontaneous configuration of spaces and as a result of this process social interaction happens.

We saw that it was important to look for certain tools to continue with the research. Since the study method was comparable to phenomenological episteme and related to mental maps, certain phenomena, perception, views, senses, movement, and etc thus the technic of mapping as Corner explains becomes fruitful for such a study and can not only become as a medium between the study and the design but also can become the design itself.

\(^{10}\) Corner, J, Idem
- El Khafif, M, 2011, *Staged Urbanism as a Construction of Public Space*, published in *Temporary City at Particular Locations*, Dortmund, Herausgeber Publisher
- Schutz, T, *Moments: Impressions from Vienna*, Published in *Temporary City at Particular Locations*, Dortmund, Herausgeber