

Contested Spaces In Contemporary Turkey

Contemplating the vibrant urban landscape of Turkey, a land woven with the intricate tapestry of cultures, religions, and histories, it becomes apparent that the concept of contested spaces plays a significant role in shaping its contemporary identity. As Turkey grapples with the challenges of rapid urbanization and globalization, various undercurrents of contestation emerge, reflecting the multifaceted complexities and divergent viewpoints within the society.

From the bustling metropolis of Istanbul to the historic city of Ankara, Turkey's urban spaces become the battleground for numerous competing interests, as different groups vie for recognition, power, and influence. These contested spaces manifest themselves in different forms, ranging from political protests in public squares to debates surrounding cultural heritage and urban development projects.

The Notorious Gezi Park Protests - A Catalyst for Wider Contention

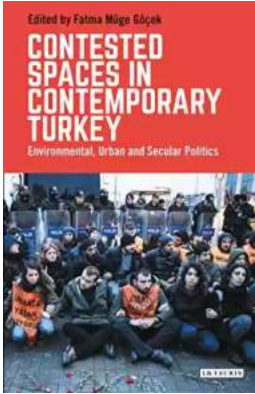
One of the most iconic examples of contested spaces in recent Turkish history is the Gezi Park protests that erupted in 2013. What initially started as a small environmental protest against the redevelopment plans of Istanbul's Taksim Gezi Park quickly transformed into a nationwide movement, encompassing a variety of grievances and demands.

Contested Spaces in Contemporary Turkey: Environmental, Urban and Secular Politics (Library of Modern Turkey)

by Masako Shibata(Kindle Edition)

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 519 pages



The Gezi Park protests not only brought attention to issues such as civil liberties, environmental concerns, and police brutality but also revealed the deep divisions within Turkish society. The mass demonstrations and clashes between protestors and security forces highlighted the contestation over the right to public space and the divergent visions for the future of Turkey.

Maintaining Cultural Heritage - A Battle for Identity

Another key area of contested spaces in contemporary Turkey revolves around historic preservation and cultural heritage. As Turkey embraces modernization and development, the tension between preserving the country's rich heritage and facilitating progress becomes increasingly evident.

One example of this tension is the ongoing debate surrounding the fate of Istanbul's historic neighborhoods. The rapid urbanization and gentrification often result in the destruction of centuries-old buildings, leading to the displacement of local communities and the erasure of cultural histories. This issue sparks contention between preservationists and developers, each presenting their arguments about the importance of heritage conservation or economic growth.

Artistic Expression and Political Dissent

Artistic and cultural spaces also serve as contested arenas in contemporary Turkey. Artists and intellectuals, sometimes through their creative works, voice critique, and dissent against prevailing political and social norms.

One notable example is the case of contemporary Turkish cinema and its relations with the state. Filmmakers who challenge the official narratives or address sensitive topics often face censorship or encounter difficulties in obtaining funding and distribution channels. This control over artistic expression generates conflict between creative freedom and governmental control, contributing to the contested spaces within Turkey's cultural realm.

The Struggle for LGBTQ+ Rights

Contested spaces in contemporary Turkey also extend to issues of minority rights, particularly LGBTQ+ rights. Turkey's conservative social structure clashes with the demands for LGBTQ+ inclusion and equality, resulting in an ongoing struggle for recognition and acceptance.

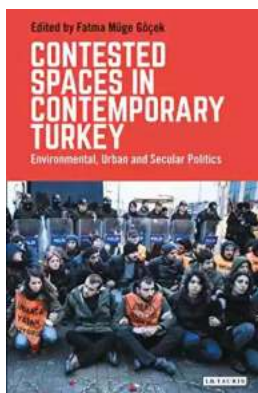
Annual Pride parades and events organized by the LGBTQ+ community face significant opposition and, at times, are banned by local authorities, leading to clashes between protestors and police. These confrontations highlight the deep divisions within society and showcase the contestation over the right to public space, visibility, and equality.

Contested spaces in contemporary Turkey reflect its diverse and complex societal fabric. These spaces highlight the struggles for recognition, power, and expression within the country, giving voice to divergent viewpoints and aspirations.

From the Gezi Park protests that ignited a nationwide movement to the ongoing battles over cultural heritage, artistic expression, and minority rights, the

dynamics of contested spaces in Turkey encapsulate the intricate layers of societal transformation and power negotiation.

As Turkey continues to evolve, it is imperative to acknowledge, understand, and engage with these contested spaces to foster inclusive and open dialogue, ultimately shaping a more harmonious and equitable urban landscape for all.



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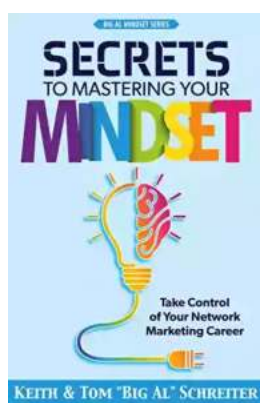
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The most significant political development of the post-Cold War era was, arguably, the diffusion of neoliberalism across the globe. Yet behind the illusion of abundance and development, the 'rule of the market' can be violent and destructive, exploiting the environment, dismissing cultural or historical conservation and ignoring individual rights. This book now examines the emergence and consequences of neoliberalism in Turkey. Of particular importance to the study are the contested spaces - those sites of struggle and protest - where the impact of this economic system is challenged or negotiated. The contributors look beyond the neoliberal cities of the West - Istanbul and

Ankara - to take into account the rest of the country and the groups that are most negatively affected: such as the Kurds, women and migrants. Chapters consider the complexity of neoliberalism in Turkey, where the power of the market, the agenda of the state, and significantly, the country's past, are shown to have shaped current economic practices and policies. *Contested Spaces in Contemporary Turkey* sheds new light on the societal processes that are re-shaping modern Turkey, a subject which is of increasing importance considering Erdogan's new model for an Islam-based state and in the aftermath of the July 2016 military coup attempt. It is at the cutting edge of research on urban history and social space and will be a significant resource for scholars of Turkish Studies and Kurdish Studies.



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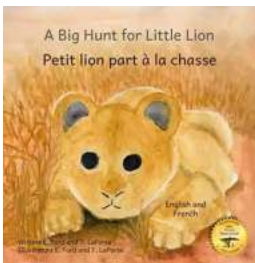
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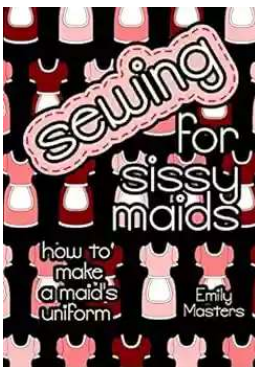
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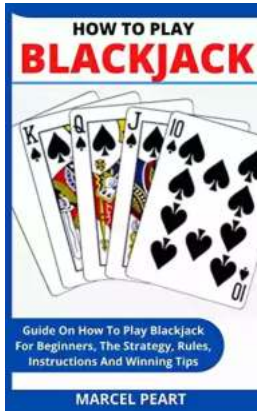
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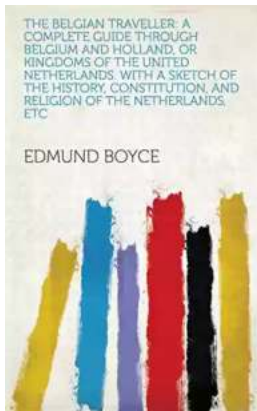
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