

KADİR HAS UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING
PROGRAM OF PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

**INCORPORATING THE NON-EXPERT PUBLIC TO
HERITAGE PRACTICES FROM BELOW**

ÖZGE TOKTAŞ

MASTER'S THESIS

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Submitted to the Graduate School of Science and Engineering of Kadir Has University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master's in the Program of
Preservation of Cultural Heritage

ISTANBUL, APRIL, 2018

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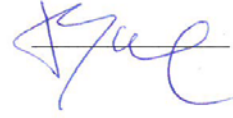
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INCORPORATING THE NON-EXPERT PUBLIC TO HERITAGE PRACTICES FROM BELOW

ABSTRACT

In our 21st century, cultural heritage field grows to be much more dynamic, participatory, open to change and dialogue. The scope of cultural heritage too broadens. People who are supposed to inherit heritage are acknowledged as not just mere inheritors anymore, but also as the creators of heritage itself. Quite supportive of this development, new media lead the way of hearing user-generated contents in cultural heritage practices that used to be strictly confined to the expert-based opinions. In light of these progresses, this thesis endeavors to make visible the efforts of incorporating the non-expert public to heritage practices from below in Turkey. Although there are institutional efforts of integrating the public to the cultural heritage practices through new media and there are studies on such efforts, the heritage practices from below are quite neglected by the scholarly literature here in Turkey. Following up this fact, this thesis elaborates on the four cases, which embrace a bottom-up heritage discourse in Turkey. Adopting an ethnographic approach, the thesis analyzes the four chosen cases (İstanbul Kent Savunması, Memory Map, UrbanObscura, Adalara Ses Ol) through in depth interviews and concludes with an argument that to achieve a bottom-up application of such participatory discourse is difficult while the expert's dominance, design and guidance is still impenetrable. Altogether, the cases examined here indeed variegate heritage stories.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage, New Media, the Non-Expert Public, Bottom-up Heritage Discourse, Participatory Heritage, Heritage from Below

UZMAN OLMAYAN KİTLEYİ AŞAĞIDAN MİRAS PRATİKLERİNE DAHİL ETME

ÖZET

21. yüzyılda kültürel miras, dinamik, değişikliğe ve diyaloga açık bir saha haline gelmiştir. Kültürel mirasın kapsamı da genişlemiştir. Kültürel mirası, miras olarak kabul edeceği farzedilen kitlenin artık mirasın sadece “mirasçısı” değil de; aynı zamanda mirasın “yaratıcısı” olarak kabul görmesi, bugün hakim olan bir görüş olarak literatürde yerini almaya başlamıştır. Daha öncesinde sadece uzman görüşü temelli yürütülen kültürel miras pratiklerinde, yeni medya sayesinde “kullanıcı içerikleri” de artık yer buluyor. Sözü edilen gelişmeler ışığında bu tez de, uzman olmayan kitlenin Türkiye’de, aşağıdan miras pratiklerine katılımına yönelik çabaları görünür kılmayı hedefliyor. Günümüzde, kitleleri yeni medya yoluyla kültürel miras pratiklerine entegre etme çabalarının kurumsal düzeydeki varlığı ve bu çabaların araştırılması yönünde çalışmalar olsa da, aşağıdan miras pratiklerinin çalışılması yönünde Türkiye literatüründe bir eksiklik bulunmaktadır. Bu noktadan yola çıkarak, bu tez, aşağıdan-yukarıya söylem benimseyen Türkiye’den seçilmiş dört kültürel miras pratiği (İstanbul Kent Savunması, Memory Map, UrbanObscura, Adalara Ses Ol) üzerine kafa yormaktadır. Etnografik bir metod benimseyerek, sözü edilen dört pratiği derinlemesine görüşmelerle inceleyen bu tez, hala uzman görüşü ve yönlendirmesinin baskın olduğu bir durumda aşağıdan-yukarıya miras söylemine pratikte erişmenin zor olabileceğine dikkat çekmektedir. Bununla birlikte, tezin incelediği pratikler, miras hikayelerini çeşitlendirmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Kültürel Miras, Yeni Medya, Uzman Olmayan Kitle, Aşağıdan Yukarıya Miras Söylemi, Katılımcı Miras, Aşağıdan Miras

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I love you all.

To our beloved Abdican
& Kara Mimi
And all the cats and dogs who died in our streets...

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKM: Atatürk Kùltür Merkezi (Atatürk Cultural Center)

AKP: Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)

ANAMED: Koç Üniversitesi Anadolu Medeniyetleri Araştırma Merkezi (Koç University Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations)

EU: European Union

FB: Facebook

İAE: İstanbul Araştırmaları Enstitüsü (İstanbul Research Institute)

ICOMOS: International Council on Monuments and Sites

IFEA: Institut Français d'Etudes Anatoliennes (French Institute of Anatolian Studies)

İKS: İstanbul Kent Savunması (İstanbul Urban Defense)

KOS: Kuzey Ormanları Savunması (Northern Forests Defense)

LGBTI: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

NPO: Non-Profit Organization

ODTÜ: Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi (Middle Eastern Technical University)

UK: United Kingdom

UN: United Nations

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

TED: Türkiye Eğitim Derneđi (Turkish Education Association)

TMMOB: Türk Mühendis ve Mimar Odaları Birliđi (Unions of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects)

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1. INTRODUCTION

Why do we need to protect our cultural heritage? This question has long been asked and answered by many scholars, so far. Especially in the last decade of heritage studies, what is striking in the very exciting sense is the alteration of the question itself but most importantly to whom the question may concern. In its quite basic form, we can now revise the question as “What is cultural heritage and what does it consist of according to us?” and direct it to each other, to its actual creators and then we can wholly grasp the very notion why we need a protection and preservation for our heritage.

Heritage literally means the things that we “inherit” from previous generations. But, what exactly are those things? Thinking of physical buildings, sites and structures, heritage is often considered as a strictly expert practice among the general public, as Laurajane Smith, prominent heritage scholar agrees, “common sense assumption identifies heritage as old, grand, monumental, and aesthetically pleasing sites, buildings, palaces and artifacts” (Smith 2006, 11). However since quite a while now,¹ both heritage academics, practitioners and institutions have started to utter the “intangible” aspect of heritage as well, which captures languages, culinary traditions, songs, dances, rituals and memories of the societies. Going even a little bit further, Smith asserts that indeed “all heritage is intangible” since the physical structures don’t have any “innate meaning” but those meanings are given by “the present-day cultural processes” (Smith 2006, 3). Through this acknowledgement, there come the many facets of heritage as a meaningful device to blend past and present. Quite similarly, David Gadsby, another scholar defines heritage as “a story, written or spoken in the present” (Gadsby 2009, 20). This exact multi-layered temporality of heritage makes it quite challenging to read and

¹ In 2003, UNESCO held a convention on safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage. See, “Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage,” accessed March 2, 2018, <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention>.

interpret opening to various discussions like: whom used to have the right to write or speak of these stories and whom has the right to write or speak of these stories now?

Since the culture institutions begin to acknowledge the need for public's participation to their practices in order for public to embrace what they are perpetually producing, the heritage practices too incorporate public's participation in their expertly defined field. Something has also triggered or better put, stimulated the above-mentioned changes in our perception of heritage.

With its fast and furious entrance to our lives, new media² have been transforming all the dimensions we can apprehend when we think and see the world around us. The participatory and dynamic feature of new media have doubled the discussions on the dissemination and the democratization of knowledge which is quite related to heritage issues as to extend what heritage is and whom has a saying on it. Now, as ordinary citizens, we don't just absorb knowledge through the Internet but we also create it. We can stumble upon new worlds in a "click" of a second and we can produce and share our ways of life, our "culture" no matter where we are. The National Gallery airs guided tours live and online, we can watch on YouTube even if we happen to reside outside of London or we can make a podcast of our own and publish it on our blogs or on any of the social media platforms. All these developments lead to what is called now "the participatory culture." Henry Jenkins, media scholar defines the participatory culture as "a culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expressions and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing creations" (Jenkins 2009, xi). The civic engagement and sharing that Jenkins talks about is what mark these changes as so transformative in our today's world. Indeed, heritage too becomes quite a living entity with its new participatory character owing to the abundance of these multi-layered communication channels. Another greater impact of this widely shared culture era on heritage is the chance that what Smith calls as "subaltern and dissenting heritage discourse" (Smith 2006, 35) has been having a lot wider network and thus, the efforts for public's participation to these heritage practices are getting noticeably multiplied.

² I will refer to new media in this thesis basically with an emphasis on social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and the websites and their mobile applications and Wikipedia, excluding blogs and virtual games.

Consequently, there are now interdisciplinary studies accumulating in heritage literature that explore the collaboration between new media and heritage. Some studies (Parry 2005, 333-348; Owens 2013, 121-130) tend to focus on technical aspects of this collaboration such as digitizing heritage or creating virtual museums, this way, enhancing the public's participation to and interpretation of the heritage sites. Some other studies (Liu 2012, 30-56; Silberman et al. 2012, 13-30) investigate new media's role on the discursive fields like collective memory and urban heritage thus emphasizing the above-mentioned "present" aspect of heritage, like how we perceive and re-interpret the past in today's world around today's concerns.

In Turkey, there are progresses at the institutional level such as the symposium "Spatial Webs: Mapping Anatolian Pasts for the Research and the Public" organized by ANAMED (Koç University Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations) (ANAMED 2017) and one other website of cultural heritage inventory of Turkey by the Hrant Dink Foundation (Hrant Dink Foundation 2017) and the website and its mobile app "Kentin Hikayeleri" (Urban Stories) created by Hacettepe University Urban Research Center (Kentin Hikayeleri 2017). Furthermore, there are memory walks organized by Karakutu, a voluntary and participatory organization (KARAKUTU 2018). Another quite recent example of a participatory mapping project through an open online questionnaire is Center for Spatial Justice's "Haritasını arayan Beyoğlu" (Beyoğlu, in search for its map) (Beyond İstanbul 2018).

Under the light of all these changes, this thesis seeks to examine heritage practices from below via new media in Turkey and specifically in the cities of İstanbul, Ankara by tackling the questions of why do these efforts for enhancing public's participation to the heritage related issues, find their place on new media and what do these efforts aim. After constructing its theoretical framework on this quite interdisciplinary subject in the second chapter, the thesis will go further on the reasons in embracing an ethnographic approach for this kind of study and will introduce the cases (Istanbul Urban Defense, Be the Voice of - The Princes Islands, Memory Map and UrbanObscura) in the third chapter. Reflections and analyses of the semi-structured interviews and participant

observation data will be conveyed throughout the fourth chapter. In the fifth chapter, discussion over the analyses of the previous chapter will be conducted. Finally, the thesis will conclude on the fact that all the cases studied here intend to achieve a bottom-up heritage discourse and the reasons for them to put such an effort attribute to a common problem in Turkey: the official, expert-based, excluding, top-down heritage discourse now even more seasoned with the neoliberal approaches to urban heritage. The thesis will draw attention to an argument that despite these efforts, the expert dominance, design and guidance can still be impenetrable, thereby getting harder to attain a bottom-up application of this kind of participatory discourse. Altogether, these heritage practices from below contribute indeed to the multiplication of “various” heritage stories.

This thesis endeavors to bring a fresh and a necessary step to the heritage literature especially in Turkey and to remind ourselves that heritage should not be confined only to an expert practice. As previously mentioned, there are too many heritage related events, various efforts on generating collective memory about our cities we are living in, memory walks and the collective websites like the thesis’ cases. Since all these examples are fairly new, the data on the public’s participation will be precious mine to dig in for further researches that this study did not include.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This thesis has sprouted from a growing sense that there is an arousing interest lately in heritage. However, what is different this time is that this interest comes not just from an institutionalized body, or the state but also from a large groups of people (in reference to this thesis' cases as well, non-official cultural experts) who are trying to incorporate non-expert public to the heritage production in favor of social inclusion and against the idea of the exclusionary approach to heritage. We need first to draw an outline of several different heritage discourses in order to understand the reasons behind this newly interest in heritage to which this thesis seeks to answer. How has heritage been interpreted through the years? And by whom?

Heritage is what we inherit from the previous generations, broadly. The things we inherit come from the past, while the act of inheriting happens in now, at present. As mentioned in the introduction, this temporality of heritage creates an intricate concept to interpret, since we may as well ask the questions: which ones do we accept and which ones do we reject? Whether the acceptance or the rejection of this inheritance is always shaped by our “present” reasoning and that reasoning relies on or affected by the contemporary political, socio-economical and cultural processes. David C. Harvey asserts, “Heritage resides in here and now- whenever and wherever that *here* and *now* happens to be” (Harvey 2008, 20). In this sense, heritage is inextricably linked with the contemporary conditions becoming a tool for the contemporary designs to shape societies. Another important question here will be who/what does have those designs to apply?

Harvey, particularly in his essay “Heritage Pasts and Heritage Presents” gives many examples of the “presentness” of heritage including how the Christian Church built upon the heritage of Pagan Rome, and then the nation states’ uses of heritage as a

contemporary means to map out their agenda of unifying citizens under an umbrella history (Harvey 2001, 319-338). All of these examples happened in their “present” as a result of their “present” attributions of their “past.” The power of attribution resonates in Harvey’s words: “the act of conferring the label ‘heritage’ onto something -whether physical or otherwise- provides a sense of purpose” (Harvey 2008, 21). We can easily see that any claims on some specific, chosen past serve to generate ever-changing sense of purpose in “present.”

Let us have a closer look into the temporality of heritage being used as a power tool. Laurajane Smith, a prominent heritage scholar depicts heritage as an “act of communication, meaning-making and a multi-layered performance using the past, and collective or individual memories to negotiate new ways of being and expressing identity” (Smith 2006, 2-4). What makes heritage problematic is this meaning-making process as to whom has the privilege to assign those meanings that we, as public must hold dearly. Coining the term “authorized heritage discourse,” Smith draws attention to “a hegemonic discourse, which is reliant on the power/knowledge claims of technical and aesthetic experts, and institutionalized in state cultural agencies and amenity societies” (Smith 2006, 11). There are three significant arguments that we need to reflect on in this definition: first, the experts’ power generating from their knowledge and then secondly, the institutionalization of this power in the state body, and thus, its becoming hegemonic. Smith attributes this hegemonic discourse to Western conceptualization of heritage deriving much of its essence from the late nineteenth century European modernity and the nationalist discourse (Smith 2006, 17). This modernization process, as Smith argues, had been grounded on the Enlightenment discourse that reveres scientific knowledge and Europe’s colonial expansions subjugating the other “races” and thus, promoting superiority claims of European ethnical and cultural identity (Smith 2006, 17). Supportive of this claim, we can remember famous world fairs (i.e. Expositionne Universelle 1900, Paris) where all the European industrial and cultural achievements and all the eccentricities of Orient were displayed side by side in order to remind the greatness of Europe to its citizens and the constant need for progress (Turkcewiki.org 2018). In this climate of changes, nation building around those progressive ideals and the superiority claims became dominant.

Since the early conservation and preservation movements were driven within the above-mentioned context and from “the upper class’ taste and experience,” heritage became a subject on which only educated and ruling elite classes had the privilege and the competence to articulate (Smith 2006, 23, 28). This is especially important since the idea of heritage as a strictly expert practice came exactly from this line of validation. When Smith further discusses the characteristics of authorized heritage discourse, the ascribed value to the “monuments” and “the monumentality” (Smith 2006, 18) especially provides another ground for the storytelling. An example from the 15th century Papal Rome may help to make solid her argument. Pope Nicholas V while attempting to expand Ponte Square and restore all together the glory of the city of Rome by building grandiose structures and churches, he supports his attempts claiming, “the literati can comprehend the grandness of the Church by reading, but we must *show* Its grandness to the illiterates” (Erder 2007, 24). It is certainly a well-known practice to design spaces -especially urban spaces- in order to establish and legitimize authority. Quite accordingly, this authority must also be regularly reminded and internalized by “showing” to public the physical symbols of authority and by teaching them the roots of that authority. What relates this example to Smith’s articulation of monumentality and aesthetics as the key aspects of authorized heritage discourse is the embedded “value and symbols” in monuments of which only the experts have the ability to decipher and let the public learn.

As a crucial counterpoint to the authorized heritage discourse’s emphasis on monumentality Smith makes is that “all heritage is intangible” that is to say, what makes tangible heritage -buildings, structures and sites is the present day’s intangible “cultural processes and activities” since “the places are not inherently valuable, nor do they carry a freight of innate meaning” (Smith 2006, 3). Smith points out that the above-mentioned Western conceptualization of heritage as a strictly tangible entity became “global” first with the *Athens Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments*, 1931 known also as “Carta del Restauro” and then with the *International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites* 1964 (Venice Charter) (Smith 2006, 21). UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural

Organization) and ICOMOS (the International Council on Monuments and Sites) are heritage agencies that operate on both national and international level for the conservation and preservation of heritage. Smith here notes that the authorized heritage discourse is institutionalized with a series of documents, charters and conventions applied by UNESCO and ICOMOS (Smith 2006, 87). As she discusses in depth the authorial voice in the Venice Charter through its articles, one of the important aspect of the authorized heritage discourse embedded in the charter stands out: the duty attributed to the experts as the ones who “must care for and reveal the inherent meanings of monuments and sites” (Smith 2006, 91).

The ultimate globalization of authorized heritage discourse created the World Heritage List that almost every country in the world would compete to enlist their heritage since being on that list is both a matter of prestige and a source of tourism income. This prestige comes from the long-lived tradition derived from the above-mentioned works and written documents that guide through heritage preservation. The World Heritage List was introduced in 1978 by UNESCO and with the updates lastly (1997) on the criteria for the selection and naming of heritage sites and monuments reveal further aspects of Western conceptualization of heritage echoed in the words like “masterpiece,” “unique,” “outstanding universal value,” “human creative genius” (Smith 2006, 95). The concepts like masterpiece, unique and genius are quite reminiscent of High Art, namely Renaissance and thus, are quite Western values. Referring to the comments of Fairclough and Cleere, she emphasizes the vagueness of the text as to what makes things a masterpiece, and what consists of human value and draws attention to the possible purpose of this vagueness as trying to be more “inclusive and flexible” -concerning the Non-Western nations- and most relevantly to this thesis’ concerns is the fact that the text stands quite self-referential in its vagueness in the sense that the creators of the text would know its meanings with an illusion for the reader as well would know that they know (Smith 2006, 97-98).

What is also significant here is the fact that before mentioned Western idealization and definition of heritage and accordingly expert-based emphasis on heritage preservation become “universal” with the World Heritage List. As one of the critics of UNESCO’s

World Heritage List, Turtinen poses quite rightly some series of questions upon the uses of World Heritage concept (Turtinen 2000, 7). From the nomination processes to its actors, the imbalances of the list (Western vs. Non-Western) and their intentions behind these processes (political issues/ sensitivities concerning the Nation States as ratifiers of the List), Turtinen argues thoroughly that this transnational concept of the World Heritage (he defines as “seemingly depoliticized and innocent”) has “a steering effect away from its actual problems and its complexity” (Turtinen 2000, 21).

The past is traditionally used to be written by people who have power and in order to have a continuous power, one must have the means to legitimize that power and one of those means is knowledge. We may as well extract this from previous discussions on heritage as a meaning-making process since especially this meaning-making process was and still is steered by the experts as in Smith’s argument of authorized heritage discourse. Then, another question may be: has not there been any contestation to this hegemonic discourse?

As a counter-discourse, Smith points out “the subaltern and dissenting heritage discourses” in which the community groups that do not fit in the nationalistic discourse, and thus left marginalized, express themselves (Smith 2006, 36). The community groups that have first ignited the contestation against the authorized heritage discourse were the Indigenous people (Smith 2006, 35) given the fact that this contestation sprouted through the independent movements from colonial subjugation.³ As Smith emphasizes that the dissenting communities were not just Indigenous people but also the communities from both Western and non-Western countries, the absence of “the cultural and social work” that these community groups perform leads to continuity of the contemporary present inequalities (Smith 2006, 36). In harmony with Smith’s

³ Subaltern as a term was first coined by Antonio Gramsci, Marxist theorist was used substantially in the post-colonial studies to identify groups of people, resistant to ruling elite class’ hegemony in the grounds of having left limited to express themselves, culturally and socially. As one of the most renowned works of post-colonial theory, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* in which Gayatri C. Spivak, the author with a broad critique of both post-colonial theory and colonialism concluding on the fact that subaltern groups’ unheard voices -because of the colonial ignorance of their existence ultimately got sounded through their “intellectual representatives”. For an introduction to the post-colonial theory and its implications in post-modern world, see, El-Habib Louai, 2012, “Retracing the concept of the subaltern from Gramsci to Spivak: historical developments and new applications”, *African Journal of History and Culture (AJHC)* 4, no.1: 4-8.

articulation of subaltern heritage discourse constantly challenged with the authorized heritage discourse, Robertson renders “heritage from below” as an alternative and a counter-discourse to that of hegemonic (Robertson 2008, 143-159). Drawing much of its main argument from “history from below” which was a democratic movement within the social historiography in the 60s, heritage from below Robertson argues, has the potential to “galvanize and cohere local communities around alternative constructions of identity and narratives of place” (Robertson 2008, 147). Here, Robertson uses Raphael Samuel’s “unofficial knowledge” concept that derives from common people’s experiences from everyday life in references to the past, making the history more about activities and therefore, alive (Robertson 2008, 146). The hallmark of history from below as a discourse “challenging elitist conceptions of who history is about, who should do history and who history is for” (Robertson 2008, 146) provides an alternative approach to heritage identity-making at a local scale. Quite a similar approach to heritage also resonates in Rodney Harrison’s article as he observes the significance of the unofficial heritage practices asserting that heritage may and should be considered as “a social action,” an everyday construction of the local and community (Harrison 2010, 243-247). Referring to Arjun Appadurai’s conceptualization of “locality” in which local becomes a living entity of social and cultural production rather than a simple and static geographical space, Harrison too, like Robertson underlines the idea of heritage “transformed from below” so that the communities perform an active role in heritage production at a local level that would eventually lead societies in a more broad context to transform their perceptions of their “shared” past and therefore effecting a positive change in their present and future (Harrison 2010, 242, 243, 273).

As another way of engaging public to the heritage issues, we see examples of a more “popular” kind. In line with Smith’s argument, Groote and Haartsen too refer to how heritage management discourses were used to focus on experts i.e. “those with knowledge” and thus, heritage was a subject for professional discourse mainly (Groote et al. 2008, 182). Groote and Haartsen acknowledge an increasing popularity in “the democratization of heritage” in the sense that non-experts can now have a saying on the definition and selection of heritage giving BBC’s *Restoration* TV program as an example, even though in this example, ultimately public were to vote among already

selected heritage places by the experts (Groote et al. 2008, 191). Marta Anico and Elsa Peralta point out that because of the multi vocal, diverse and fragmented identities in our contemporary societies, heritage too becomes a hot topic with unstable meanings and thus, conflicts occur “leading to a permanent struggle for asserting difference” (Anico and Peralta 2008, 2). This kind of conflict is examined through Mason and Baveystock’s analysis on ICONS of England, an online project supported by the government of UK with an intention of creating an open discussion in which the public can vote and debate on the notion of Englishness and together with some nominations presented by institutional bodies such as the National Trust and English Heritage and by public, Mason and Baveystock evaluate the project as a reflection of “both the processes of heritage authorization from the ‘top down’ and the dissonant nature of heritage ‘in the making’” (Mason et al. 2008, 21).

As by now, this chapter has given an outline of the discussions evolving around what heritage has been and what heritage is becoming lately and how heritage can operate on a condescending level that only a handful of people can articulate on and as a powerful tool that includes some and excludes others in order to establish authority through a seemingly unifying set of storytelling. Since previous paragraphs gives a clue about the changes that have been undergone, if we go further to look at the very implications of these changes, we can see that both in national and international level, states and cultural institutions are in the end impelled to embrace more participatory, multi-vocal approaches concerning heritage issues.

In 2001, UNESCO adopted *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* promoting that cultural diversity is “the common heritage of humanity” and asserting basically that culture is a fundamental human rights and “all cultures have the right to access to the means of expression and dissemination” in an attempt to acknowledge the need for contemporary societies with multiple cultural identities to social cohesion and harmony (UNESCO 2018). In 2003, UNESCO held the *Convention for the Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage* that brings an emphasis on the need for community participation to heritage preservation processes (UNESCO 2018).

As a recent and a very sensational example of these efforts of participatory approaches to heritage is the Faro Convention on *Value of Cultural Heritage for Society* held by the Council of Europe in 2005 since it makes clear that “everyone” can “participate in the identification, study, interpretation, protection, conservation and preservation of cultural heritage” (Council of Europe 2018). This top-down -since it is authorized by the Council of Europe, but participatory approach to heritage, generates excitement among scholars in the sense that now, everyone of us are “heritage experts” and heritage is just for us (Schofield 2014, 2). Schofield asserts that by defining heritage as “a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions,” Faro Convention makes the closest definition of a new approach which is participatory, bottom-up and one that is not fixed in time, but “constantly evolving” (Schofield 2014, 5).

Then, where exactly do we put new media among all these lines of thoughts? What has heritage got to do with new media? Everything, since mentioned in the previous paragraphs, heritage is an act happening “now” and “at present.” At present, our world is being constantly shaped around new technologies that make our world change for better or worse.

There is one eminent feature of new media that we all know and attribute the democratization of knowledge to is its user-generated content. It is this possibility of contributing to the knowledge production and its consequences that make new media differ from older media. Leah A. Lievrouw explains thoroughly the architecture of the Internet adding that through the “hyperlink,” users can surf among sites, resources and people (Lievrouw 2011, 10). As Lievrouw emphasizes on the interactivity as a major novelty of “new” media, she draws attention also to the fact that interactivity brings about the participation upon which the alternative activist media built (Lievrouw 2011, 13). Giaccardi also emphasizes this interaction that social media provide as one “that acts as places of cultural production and lasting values at the service of what could be viewed as a new generation of ‘living’ heritage practices” (Giaccardi 2012, 5).

Since new media, social mobilization and social change are inextricably interwoven in our world today, we should continue further to dwell upon the “new” social movements, also in order to grasp the idea existed in this thesis’ case studies. Lievrouw outlines the new social movements as a wider scale continuation of the smaller scale movements of the 1960s-1980s which were concentrated more on environmentalism, animal rights or on identity related concerns like women’s rights, LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex) movements, ethnic or cultural movements (Lievrouw 2011, 41-42). Furthermore, Lievrouw notes that the participants of these new social movements are more likely to be better educated and interested in cultural change rather than economic class struggle (Lievrouw 2011, 41-42). In addition to this, the participants of these new social movements cherish their subjective experiences and values in order to break out of the institutional domination and upon exactly these shared subjective experiences and values, they construct their collective identity (Lievrouw 2011, 49). Therefore, everyday life too becomes important for these movements since they practice what they believe in and future aspirations realize in present (Lievrouw 2011, 53). It is indeed so relevant together with the fact that there are now different, multiple concerns about everything we identify ourselves in our contemporary societies, heritage becomes even more multilayered and something that both communities and individuals protest. Manuel Castells points out that citizens did not find a way to express their disappointments and when they don’t have an adequate representation in the political institutions, they apply to other ways to manifest, more directly and openly (Castells 2015, 222).

Concerning the case studies of this thesis too, the knowledge production of the non-experts is quite carried out through new media tools. Lievrouw argues that “commons knowledge as a collaborative production of knowledge rivals the traditions, conventions and privileges of experts authorities and institutionalized knowledge itself” (Lievrouw 2011, 178). Lievrouw indicates that there are three main articulations on which some of the critics posit the negative features of commons knowledge: the free labor which can be resulted in such projects, the incomparable qualities of amateur and expert contributions, plagiarism, intellectual property theft and therefore obstructing creativity and as the third criticism, the lack of quality in the process of producing knowledge

collectively (Lievrouw 2011, 182-183). Lievrouw further emphasizes citing from Chris Kelty that “these kinds of developments like free culture are major signs of a cultural landscape in which society’s attitudes and relationships to knowledge and power are undergoing major reorientation (Lievrouw 2011, 185).

The fact that this thesis puts the emphasis on the efforts concerning participation of the non-expert public to heritage practices from below through new media and in Turkey has strong and valid reasons. If we start very briefly from the beginning of the official heritage discourse in Turkey, we see that Ottoman Empire through its top-down applied modernization process, adopted European ideals concerning heritage in order to surpass what it could not do in the other arenas in terms of technology and colonial expansions (Atakuman 2010, 111-112). Consequently, the first acts (1869, 1874, 1884, 1906) relating to cultural heritage assets legislated with the intentions of promoting an image of “civilization” to Europe as explained in Shaw’s articulation: “antiquities were used to signal modernity through a display of progress and civilized history rather than to improve understanding of historical unity and progress” (Atakuman 2010, 111-112). With the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, the need for identification of itself as a new-born nation state expressed through the Turkish History Thesis which excluded the Islamic elements of the past by concentrating more on the reverent existence and roots of the Turks in pre-Anatolian history with “scientifically evidenced archeological remnants” (Atakuman 2010, 111-112). The new Republic claimed itself through its secularist but ethnicity based identity politics. “Citizen, Speak Turkish!” campaign in 1928, which caused in the end, the loss of the language Ladino, spoken by the Jewish community in Turkey (Aslan 2007) appears to be as one of the consequences of these ethnicity based identity politics.

The era of post World War II marked for Turkish history an inclination towards the Islamicism especially after the Democrat Party won the elections in 1950 with a huge numbers (Atakuman 2010, 112-113). This era is especially significant since it was the beginning of a big scale, rapid urban transformations executed quite under-planned between the years of 1956-1960 (Akpınar 2010, 2). In these rapid urban transformation years in İstanbul, the main emphasis was given both to the “Turkish” experts and to the

Ottoman cultural heritage, replacing the Greek-Roman emphasis on urban planning applied by Henri Prost during the one-party era (Akpınar 2010, 4-6).

Concerning this above mentioned rapid urban transformation during Democrat Party era, Atakuman emphasizes a point, in fact, I would argue that is too much similar to today's articulation made by the present government politics. Atakuman asserts that there grew a conflict between the intelligentsia and state officials who were claiming that the academics were in the way of modernization and progress of Turkey (Atakuman 2010, 113). Furthermore, the implementation of Turkish-Islamic Synthesis into the official heritage discourse framed heritage as "a dangerous issue resulting from conflicts" and thus, officially heritage became a solely tourism purpose (Atakuman 2010, 113). And today, Atakuman argues, with the AKP (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, Justice and Development Party) government, the emphasis on the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis is still relevant when looking at the newly constructed mosque in Taksim, the cosmopolitan quarter of İstanbul (Atakuman 2010, 116). It is true that the highly controversial examples of this tendency in urban scale can be found especially in Taksim, where the symbols of a past belonging to the minorities (churches and building stock) and also to the secularist early Republic era (Gezi Park and AKM- Atatürk Cultural Center) dwell. Now, the demolition of AKM has been started in order to replace it with a new cultural center, devoid of its "old" meanings.

Another highly important argument of Atakuman is the fact that there is "a muted contestation between the government and academics" concerning cultural heritage policies and this leads academics and experts to "prioritize material culture in defense of legalized destruction" and eventually, the very "real" issues evolving around "democracy and human rights" has been obscured (Atakuman 2010, 124).

To emphasize the still existent expert-based approach to heritage preservation, I want to quote some lines from the preface of *Tarihi Çevre Koruma ve Restorasyon*, an important handbook for preservationist experts, written by Zeynep Ahunbay, one of the leading academic and practitioner of cultural heritage preservation in Turkey. Ahunbay while emphasizes that "the public must act responsible with an awareness and

internalize and embrace the cultural heritage in order to prevent destruction and to change the ongoing negative approaches to positive relating to preservation,” she concludes, “I believe that our country’s cultural heritage will be living through the efforts of sensitive, educated professionals embracing an interdisciplinary approach”⁴ (Ahunbay 2014). Although this book was written for the experts about the knowledge on the praxis of preservation, this sentence still omits, I think, very crucial point regarding the public participation to heritage preservation.

The examples of the expert-based authorized heritage discourses devoid of diversity in Turkey, invoke now the participation of the non-expert public to the heritage discourses since it is apparent that the public has no saying at all and got lost in translation between professionals and the state’s enforcements. New Media, being relatively easy to use and thus open to various debates, resonate those inclusive ideas and shared need for the public participation to the cultural heritage practices. Therefore, this thesis was written in order to examine these new heritage practices from below to incorporate non-expert public into cultural heritage production and preservation through new media, which our everyday lives circulate.

⁴ The selected quotes appear in the preface of the book. I translated these quotes from Turkish to English for this thesis.

3. METHODOLOGY

Since heritage has now been acknowledged as a social action, a daily performance, and a production and interaction of cultures, the cases analyzed here in this thesis must be handled in a qualitative manner. Therefore, the convenient approach would be to understand the meanings behind the how and why questions. As argued thoroughly in the previous chapter, heritage is a meaning-making process, and therefore, how those meanings are processed; in what way and why these processes are oppressed deserve a qualitative investigation.

This thesis' questions seek to understand why we do need a bottom-up heritage discourse in Turkey as the cases will show that they intend to achieve this, why new media are chosen to contest the authorized heritage discourse and despite their good intentions, how the cases examined here may display in the end, the expert prominence, which can still be unsurpassable. Therefore, the methodological approach that this thesis embraces is an ethnographic one since it was important for me to involve in order to gain a better understanding, and insights that otherwise I wouldn't have.

Before going into detail, it would be adequate to outline what ethnography is. Ethnography as a deep involvement to the study subject is a frequently used approach by anthropologists and sociologists and culture theorists. In ethnography, observation is the primary component of gathering information and can be conducted in two different ways: non-participant observation where ethnographer observes without participating to the environment she/he studies and participant observation consists of the ethnographer's own experiences as well, within the same environment that she/he explores (Gobo 2008, 5). Beside observation, ethnographer conducts interviews and engages with informal conversations as well in the field (Gobo 2008, 5). One particular difficulty in engaging with ethnographic researches is the balance that one needs to

deliver between one's own subjectivity deriving from one's experiences and the obligation of being objective for the sake of the study itself (Gobo 2008, 6-7).

I chose to embrace an ethnographic approach since this thesis derives at the beginning about my own personal experiences as a citizen living in İstanbul and before that, as a citizen in Turkey. So, in the sense that the choice I made about the subject of this thesis is a result of my own sensitivities shaped after the encounters I had and I still have with the authorized heritage discourse. Being in the field, encountering and having conversations and interviews with the individuals and collectives that I share similar sensitivities draw me in the end to conclude with an unexpected outcome. Although, at the very beginning, I began to the research with a presumption of a new existence of a bottom-up heritage discourse in Turkey, the more I involve to the research gaining insights about the case subject, I realized that the expert prominence as a characteristic of the authorized heritage discourse is still hard to overcome, even when intending to contest the hegemony of a discourse.

I interviewed four individuals who are coordinators, creators or participants of the projects. I conducted the semi-structured interviews in Turkish and in two weeks. One was via e-mail and one was via Zoom (another utility that makes our video conference pretty easy and it also recorded the whole three hours of our interview) and the others were conducted in face-to-face encounters.

Borrowing from Smith (Smith 2006), I use the term “non-expert” all through the thesis in a quite broad meaning, encompassing the citizens only who don't have the expertise in heritage preservation and management processes, in a traditional sense. This thesis did not include the data concerning participation of the non-expert public since in some cases, we don't have yet that kind of data because, some of the projects are still on progress, not concluding with their alpha versions. However, the absence of the non-expert public's participation mentioned in the thesis only when this absence tells us something that we can articulate on.

3.1 Introducing the Cases

What makes the cases comparable is their examples of the unofficial heritage practices in Turkey and the same idea they gather around: making the residents, the citizens more involved in urban rights, heritage preservation specifically in cityscape and while doing so, they use new media in their applications. All the cases I examined here, in this research are in search for a possibility to disengage from the boundaries of the official heritage by engaging in the personalized therefore decentralized, citizen-driven, participatory heritage practices.

3.2 İstanbul Kent Savunması (İstanbul Urban Defense)



Figure 3.1 IKS Twitter Page (@KentSavunmasi_), accessed March 28, 2018



Figure 3.2 IKS Facebook Page (@İstanbulKentSavunmasi), accessed March 28, 2018

İstanbul Kent Savunması (İstanbul Urban Defense) is a collective activist community, which their interest varies in a quite wide range from political issues to housing rights,

struggle for public space, everything related to the urban living. I conducted the semi-structured interview with Deniz, one of activist in the collective. I participated to their forums five times in order to gather participant observation data.

There are several other urban defenses, which were formed of activists from the Gezi Movement back in 2013. As Deniz states in our interview, these activist collectives began to assemble in the process, which soon later led to Gezi movement. It was this dynamic which contributed to the constitution of the collective spirit which brings various people together. I chose IKS, because IKS' structure consists of the others as well playing an umbrella role and they also have 27K followers on Twitter, 21K followers on Facebook which means they have been engaging with a much more wider audience. I should add that even though Kuzey Ormanları Savunması (KOS- Northern Forests Defense) has more followers on Twitter than IKS, I did exclude KOS from this research since they went to institutionalize under the name of Kuzey Ormanları Derneği. This decision makes sense considering I kept the limits of this research to the grassroots collective and communities or the individual efforts.

IKS has lawyers, blue-collar workers, unemployed, tradesmen, architects, and students in its body.

3.3 Memory Map

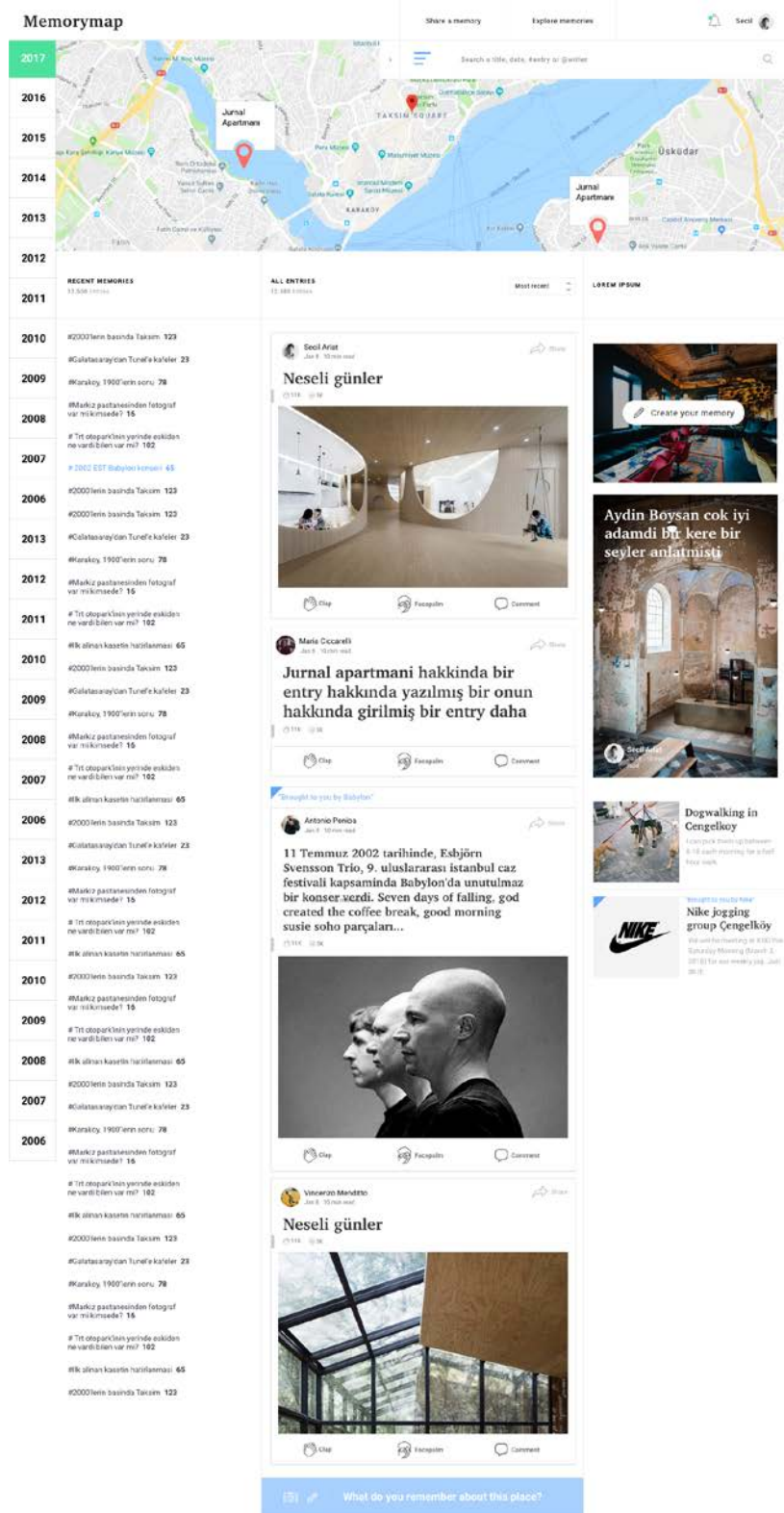


Figure 3.3 Memory Map Homepage Design

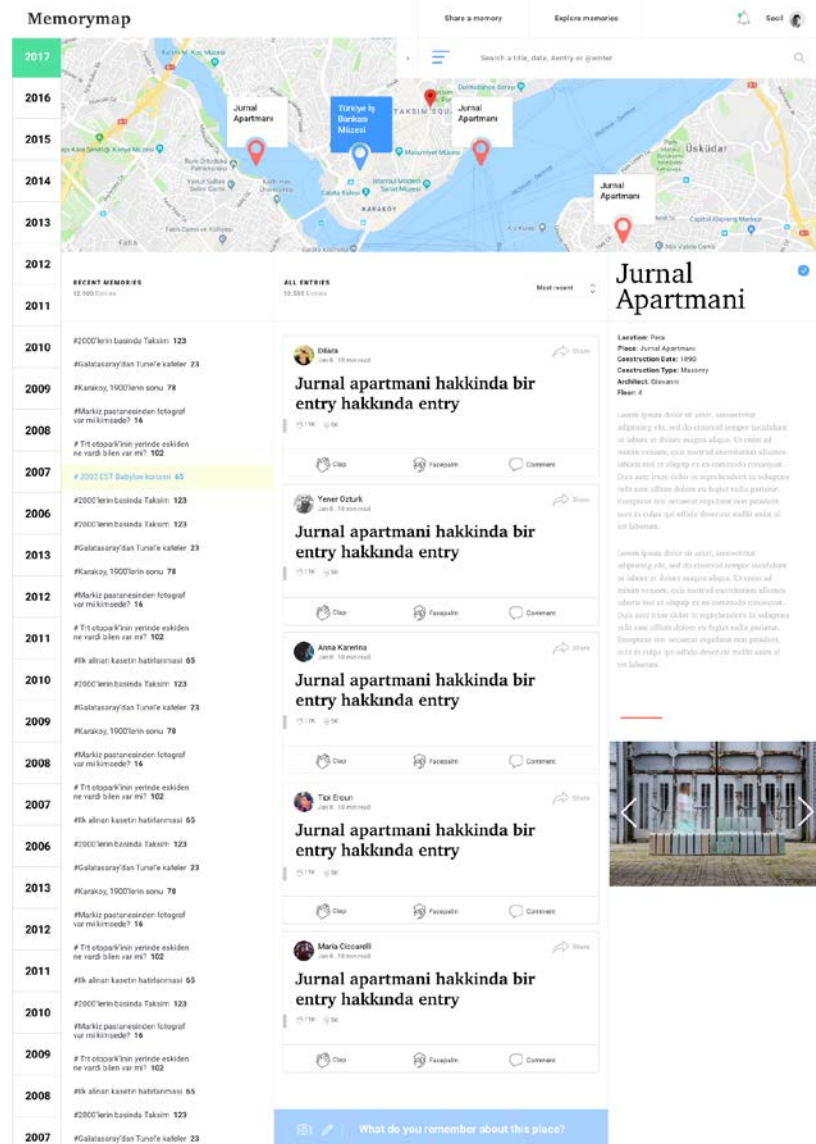


Figure 3.4 Memory Map Location Page Design

Memory Map is a “collectively written history platform” on where users generate the content. Currently, the team works on alpha version and in this version, the contributors are thought to be limited to the museums and the research institutions. I interviewed Erdem Dilbaz, the project coordinator and producer. I participated to their meetings at the beginning, as well.

The pilot area they choose for the beginning is Beyoğlu; because especially now, Beyoğlu is going through a deep transformation in the sense that there are several shops, culture institutions and bookstores started to close their doors one by one. Erdem is also my friend from my university years and when I see his albums regarding Beyoğlu’s

transformation on his Facebook page, I spoke to him and then learned that he is working on Memory Map.

There are three different accounts users will have to sign in: private, corporate and academic accounts. Users will see a digital map of Beyoğlu and then, when they click on a particular place, they can upload their memories, or the accounts that they have knowledge about even though they don't have their personal memories regarding that place. All the users can see each other's post but only the academic accounts can upload historical maps.

3.4 UrbanObscura



Figure 3.5 UrbanObscura Homepage, <http://www.urbanobscura.net>, accessed March 18, 2018

The second website I will study is UrbanObscura, which is a very similar website to Memory Map. I interviewed Aysin Zoe Güneş via e-mail since she resides in Ankara and we had a phone call before that. Zoe is the project coordinator and the project will be on after they first finish with the 3D mapping of the Jewish neighborhood in Ankara as a pilot area. Their goal is providing an online platform where it is possible to create the urban memory collectively and to archive it. Right after Ankara, the team will work on Kurtuluş, Tatavla another minority neighborhood in İstanbul.

The website functions through user-generated content, as well. However, contributors will have to pass through a confirmation process in this website and then later, they can upload their contributions to the digital map of their pilot area.

3.5 Adalara Ses Ol (Be the Voice of, the Princes Islands)

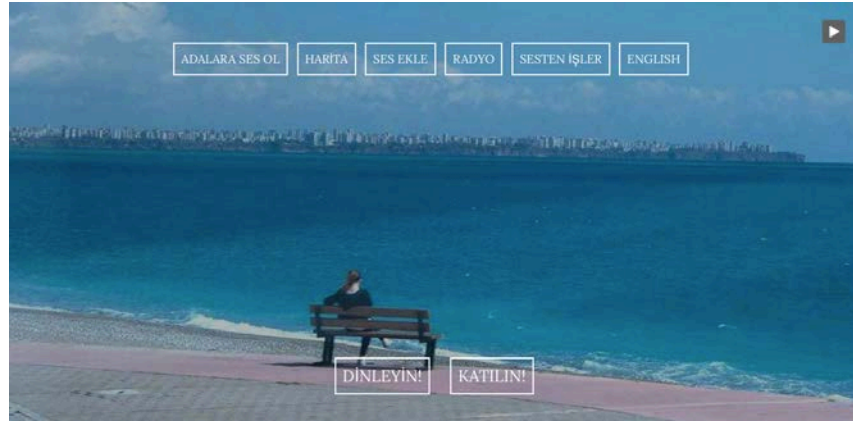


Figure 3.6 Sesol Homepage, <http://sesol.org>, accessed March 16, 2018

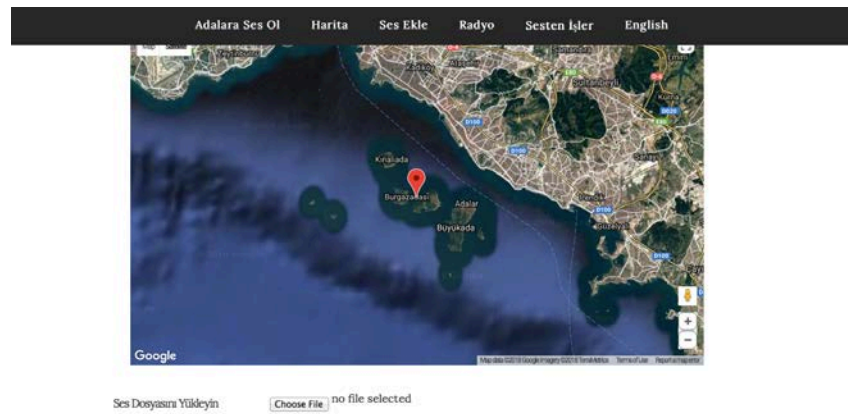


Figure 3.7 Sesol Sound Upload Page, <http://adalar.sesol.org/sesekle/>, accessed March 16, 2018

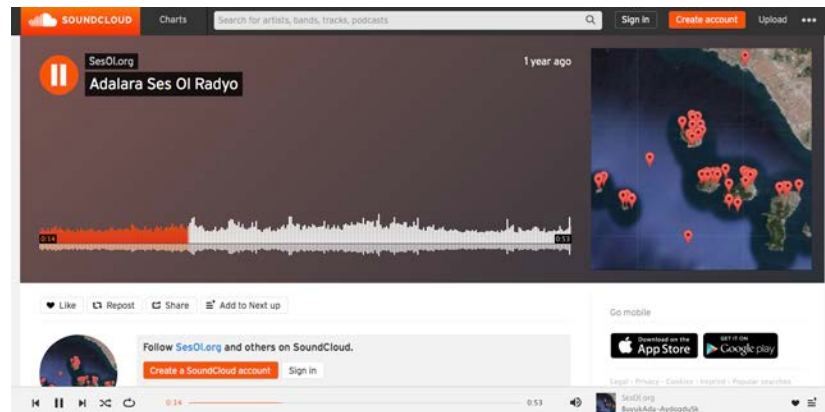


Figure 3.8 Sesol SoundCloud Page

And the fourth case is sesol.org, which is an open archive sound map platform. Ipek Oskay whom I have interviewed via Zoom is the coordinator of the project. The website's goal is to collect sounds of the nine isles in İstanbul and Marmara Sea. They have a SoundCloud account as well. We as visitors and contributors can upload our own

sound record directly to the website without going through a confirmation process. Beside contributing with the sound recordings, one can be part of the collective, as well, since for İpek, the website itself, is a collective, a community. Another move for sesol will be the sound installations moving around the Islands in order to enhance participation from the Islanders.

4. FINDINGS AND REFLECTIONS

In this chapter, I will recount the findings that I gathered from the participant observation and from the semi-structured interviews I conducted with the four interviewees represented in the previous chapter. I will analyze and reflect on these data in order to grasp the idea behind these cases' starting points, their interpretations of heritage and how they relate new media to their intentions of incorporating public to the cultural heritage practices. This chapter aims to trace the authorized heritage discourse and the contestation on it, here in Turkey through these findings.

First, we can begin with a tweet that will set just “an” example that runs counter to one of the aspects of the authorized heritage discourse. Underneath it, there is a common angst towards the restoration process of a building. However, as we go further in this chapter, we will be discerning that this angst was not just for a building, or buildings but for a far more broad concern in general about the almost every urban project that ignores the interpretations of the public.



Figure 4.1 Tweet of @Çirkinİstanbul, accessed November 15, 2017



Figure 4.2 A Comment to the @Çirkinİstanbul’s Tweet by Şörüklü Sumo @RagazzaMagaNera. Accessed November 15, 2017

These tweets are about Narmanlı Han (Arslan 2018), a historical and registered building recently restored. When it comes to that building, not just architects, art historian discussed over it but also people whether the residents of Beyoğlu or a passerby, since it was not just a building but a living memory of artists, cats and trees on some people’s mind. The account Çirkin İstanbul (Ugly İstanbul) posted this tweet with a comment “Disgusting.” The post was liked 1272 times and retweeted 476 times. Most of the comments were in accord with the general dislike of its restoration. One particular comment drew my attention since it can be a small example of a larger contestation. Şörüklü Sumo answers in anger to a comment of İbrahim Güvendikler who agrees to the accuracy of the restoration elaborating with a few technical term and adding that the building has no high architectural value. Şörüklü Sumo replies “we don’t give a fuck about architectural value, we are not architects, we are public and of course we will react to a redesign of a building with a historical smell (texture, he may mean) that was accomplished in more of a bad manner than a whorehouse aesthetic.” Şörüklü had 93 likes to his comment which can be read as a summary of the tension between the way things unfold and public’s reaction to it.

What we make of this series of comments will be clearer if we remember Narmanlı Han’s restoration process. A well-known restorer restored Narmanlı Han and its restoration plan approved by the Istanbul Preservation Board No2. One important point

here is that Şörüklü Sumo's cry for her/his right to speak over a subject widely acknowledged as an expertise field. Then, as the second point, this tweet mirrors also the protests against Narmanlı's restoration process, since its restoration plan foresaw a commercial use of building, which will transform Narmanlı into a kind of shopping mall. And all through this process, citizens' view on the subject did not count in. That is why there were protests. Narmanlı Han was just another example of what is now a grand scale urban transformation, renovation that has been undergone especially in the last decade, in İstanbul, as also mentioned in the second chapter. This kind of neoliberal use of heritage values too constrain the public's interaction with and production of heritage, just like the authorized heritage discourse does. Because Narmanlı, and any other similar values will be of use just for people who have the means to go to those shops or to eat and drink at the cafes there, or even as a drastic example "some" people will be displaced whereas "some" will live there as in the case of Tarlabası renewal project (Pişkin 2018). So, there will be no any free public use of these heritages.

Harvey argues, "The ambiance and attractiveness of a city is a collective product of its citizens" (Harvey 2012, 74). So, how are those collective products not spent collectively? Harvey articulates on how this neoliberal politics extract rents in the end by owning the value that all citizens create (Harvey 2012, 78). This is also where the state or local governance comes in and uses its governing power and relevantly spends the public investments "to produce something that looks like a common but which promotes gains in private asset values for privileged property owners" (Harvey 2012, 79). In the end, there are citizens who want to claim their *right to the city*. Therefore, *the right to the city* becomes interwoven with the right to heritage as well, as the cases below will show.

4.1 IKS- İstanbul Kent Savunması (İstanbul Urban Defense)

When I met Deniz and asked him first his opinion on the cultural heritage and its meaning to him, he wanted first to be sure about whether I wanted an expert answer or not. Although he is by now quite interested in these subjects and active in protesting the "wrong" applications of heritage preservation, but still even he, when he heard the

words “cultural heritage” sets back thinking on differentiating the expert answers from the non-expert ones.

For Deniz, heritage related news have become very widely discussed in Turkey since there is a serious cultural, ecological, archeological destruction especially at least in the last 5-10 years. These threatening developments force people to involve to the struggle according to him and this kind of involvement produces a cultural education effect meeting young generations with the cultural heritage concept and cultural and historical values. If they cannot involve, he adds, they are being aware of these developments also in other cities and he gives Emek Movie Theater as an example. For Deniz, this kind of wide accessibility about the cultural heritage issues has also side effects:

“It is not always a good thing that a story is widely breaks out because the press can manipulate the process by legitimizing what happened. For example, when the news like that AKM will be demolished covered, a legitimacy process immediately begins on people’s mind like it can be demolished because it has already deteriorated. There happened again the same thing about the official degradation of the Topkapı Palace. Right after it’s heard widely, Mustafa Demir, mayor of Fatih Municipality gave an interview to Hürriyet like all this process is normal, saying it is degraded because they will do preservation applications and after finishing they will elevate its grade again. But this cannot happen in a usual preservation board process. When this kind of remarks is on the spotlight, I mean it is good to be widely heard and known of this kind of requiring an expert opinion topic but sometimes it leads to ignore very easily the ethics, principles and legal aspects of the subject when it can be addressed by everybody if we talk about the press.”

From these lines, we can infer that Deniz both believes in the “good” as heritage becoming widely discussed by the wider public and at same time, this can be precarious since heritage is a subject that has ethical and legal aspects on which basically the experts can have a saying. When Deniz is commenting on this example, he probably means the mayor and the other officials, and “manipulated” public by their discourse. The reason that the officials are on his target is the same reason mentioned above. Since Deniz and IKS as a whole believe that we have been quite a while governed by the harsh politics, which transformed our city irreparably and without having our consent on any of these processes. Therefore, they are claiming their right to the city by calling us (all citizens in Istanbul): “Istanbul is yours, you are Istanbul Urban Defense!”

IKS has several NPOs (Non-Profit Organizations) in its body from mechanical engineers to urban planners, lawyers, pharmacists and doctors associations. After I participated to the IKS forums and our interview with Deniz, I observe that these NPOs have strong supports on delivering their expert knowledge depending on the cases IKS is dealing with. TMMOB (*Türk Mühendis ve Mimarlar Odalar Birliği* “Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects”) plays an important role especially on the heritage related cases and urban planning projects that the municipality authorizes and applies and IKS has objections to.

IKS is one of the thesis’ cases because they resist the authorized heritage discourse which privileges upper class’ aesthetics, excludes the “other” groups and communities that run counter to that aesthetics and to that neoliberal politics having grave impact on urban texture within our collective memories lie, hidden. However, I noticed in IKS an important aspect of authorized heritage discourse which is the one that privileges expert views’ over non-expert ones as Smith puts it (Smith 2006, 30).

Before elaborating further, an instant from one of the forums I participated may suggest a clue. While we were talking about AKM’s demolition news, some of the participants and Deniz said, “even if AKM deteriorated, it can be demolished and rebuild exactly as it was.” At that point, everyone knows that I am a cultural heritage preservation graduate student, and I said, “this won’t be a preservation example, we cannot demolish and rebuild the building and then call it preservation.” In the end, I could not persuade them.

Two weeks later at another forum, an architect told the exact same thing that I have said previously, but this time, he did persuade the audience, since he is an architect and this is his “expertise.” I have argued my point at that forum, according to my knowledge and to what I learned at the university and waited for an acknowledgement. This whole account may suggest that we still keep arguing around the physical aspect of heritage preservation, putting aside the meaning of “it” and that physicality promotes and legitimizes the expert view, as Smith suggests in her whole articulation about the authorized heritage discourse.

Deniz explains that they consult to the NPOs and pick their brains on the matter “when the topics require certain expertise, ethics and principal [...] We never act on our own, I mean, we have opinions about everything of course but for example, we consult with the medical association when we talk about the city hospitals benefiting from their knowledge.” He believes that they build a bridge between the knowledge of these organizations and the streets adding that with Gezi, the topics, which had been “confined” to the expertise field, became public now, everyone knows of and can talk about it. However, the question here is: can public produce a discourse around these heritage preservation issues? Or do just they repeat the already produced discourse by the experts?

Deniz clarifies further the relations between the NPOs and IKS emphasizing IKS’ power on stimulating the NPOs to act and share their knowledge to a wider audience, which is the street, and through new media. So, the NPOs -mainly TMMOB- are the knowledge where IKS is the action. I see a one way information flow here if we don’t discuss whether the street adds some knowledge of its own to it. Or is IKS simply a medium to the NPOs’ knowledge? Deniz also mentions that they are trying to build that bridge sometimes despite the NPOs since the institutions can be arrogant, he says. What he means, I observe, is that the barriers built around the regulation/rules based, hierarchical construction of institutionalized expert knowledge. We can remember how the authorized heritage discourse when institutionalized got even more powerful and difficult to change, because it is self-referential by legitimizing repeatedly its knowledge by itself.

At this point, I remember the third forum I participated. We were again discussing AKM demolition because the new project was just officially announced. Deniz was suggesting, “As IKS, we must do something about it, to act on it.” A press release in front of AKM first came to mind. Then, I suggested instead, a guerilla dance performance in AKM since the building was reminding me of the nights I have been there to see operas or ballets. Since AKM was not just a concrete building but also an emotional being for many of us, it has a place in our collective memories.

“Reminding this feature of AKM will have much more strong impact on people than a press release,” I explained my point. Just one person from an activist cycling collective liked my suggestion and believed that it is actually doable; others (and we were five people) didn’t react negatively or commented on it further. On that forum, we have also talked whether it would be convenient for IKS to make a press release after TMMOB as if we should have wait their release first. Because, TMMOB in their press release would explain why AKM cannot be demolished according the heritage preservation rules. I am not suggesting that TMMOB is doing wrong but instead, IKS can articulate on or open a public debate on this kind of heritage related issues, other than positioning their activities mostly around the expert knowledge. Because this can lead the public just “passively gaze” as Smith puts (Smith 2006, 32), to heritage whose meanings are traditionally deciphered by the experts. In the end, this can generate a distance between heritage and public.

In our interview, Deniz told something I did not know before: even before Gezi, they had formed Kent Hareketleri (Kent Hareketleri 2018) (Urban Movements) in 2010 but before that, he was in the urban activism struggle since 2007. He was following İmece’s (İmece 2018) (Toplumun Şehircilik Hareketi Forumu, Society’s Urban Movement Forum) activities and engaged with Tarlabası Association and then they founded Taksim Dayanışması (Taksim Dayanışması 2018) in 2012, which would be one of the leading actors in Gezi Movement. In 2009, they organized a rally against the current urban renewal projects in Tarlabası, Fener, Balat and Tozkoparan, which was a big success with the participation of 1500 people, mostly from those neighborhoods. In the course of Emek movie theatre and Gezi Park, Kent Hareketleri was organizing meetings, screenings and panels in the neighborhoods.

He further emphasizes a point crucial to what I was curious about. Even though they have been engaging with the other movements, namely migrant collectives, ecological collectives trying to establish a correlation between them, he points out that in all these networks, social media had no significant role. Deniz seems to still find the relations between social media and its impact on their movement a bit problematic.

I have first met IKS on Facebook right after Gezi Park Protests. Since then, I have been following them on Facebook and Twitter as many people in my social network do. I did not participate in any of their forums until I have decided to do research on, nor I did hear that anyone of my social network participated in. At the end of the first forum I participated, one of IKS' core activists hugged me in excitement when she heard that I came to the forum via their open call on social media. During the forum, they even thought that I was from the activist cycling collective. It was all too apparent that they have not been getting enough participation through social media. These forums are held with the participation of other activist groups.

Deniz later in our interview addresses to the same fact that even though they have 30K followers in total on Facebook and Twitter, five to ten people come to the forums. He says that they cannot use this potential in full and implies that social media creates a disillusion on people. He thinks that the advantage of social media becomes at the same time a disadvantage of which people satisfy themselves with just retweeting, posting and following the recent developments that otherwise they can be part of. "Since urban rights struggle is really a time consuming endeavor, social media turns into a comforting mechanism for people who might not find that time," Deniz says. However, if we also consider that in Turkey, people get in jail because of their tweets and posts, we can argue that social media do not even give that comfort.

Currently, IKS is helping with either lawsuits of or creating awareness and attention to the housing rights in Sultangazi, Esentepe Gazi, Eyüp Karadolap and Yenidoğan Gaziosmanpaşa neighborhoods. IKS embraces a concept that takes off from the locals to land in a more general sense of a citizenship. For IKS, it is very important to hold meetings in the neighborhoods to activate the residents by informing them about their legal rights. IKS' actions whether the cases are about public space, cultural heritage or housing rights are often directed by legal actions, opening lawsuits to wrongful applications. This is also another reason for the prominence of the expert view in IKS. What if legally speaking, everything is already in support of the defense but the result cannot be obtained anyway? Or it was too late and damage was done. Will it be helpful

to keep mostly pursuing legal actions where politically and legally all the roads are blocked? If the preservation laws are to be twisted or the preservation boards which are legally responsible institutions for preservation of cultural heritage act politically driven and in favor of rents as Harvey articulates like it happened before in Narmanlı Han and Tarlabası Renewal Project, then what can it be done?

I certainly do not underestimate the value of dissemination of the expert knowledge IKS strives for providing, regarding heritage related issues through social media. But we can still ask: are there any other ways to multiply heritage discourses other than this expert-based discourse by using dynamic feature of new media? Or else, would this be a really bottom-up discourse, or heritage consumption still mediated by the experts?

4.2 Memory Map

When I met with Erdem from Memory Map who is also a social media persona and my friend back from my university years, for our interview, he told me about his observation:

“There are too many people now researching about everything, trying to archive everything for there now has been happening too much fast of a transformation culturally. Especially there is this group of people who gather all the information on the Internet. This is an international phenomenon not just happening in Turkey. You see people’s urge for escaping the official history and trying to create their own history all by themselves and wanting to own it. That is quite good.”

What Erdem observes as “people’s urge for escaping the official history” reveals itself as a counter-argument to any authorized discourses, whether it be of heritage or of history. He also refers to another point, the strong affect of the new technologies on our desire to “collect” culture adding that through social media, people engage easily with community building. He says because now we can do this since we have the tools that feed our curiosity and our need for communication. It seems that he believes in the easing affect of new media in expressing oneself, and communicating others and he gives an example. He tells that on Facebook where his uncle and friends create a group called “Şehzadebaşılılar” (the residents of Şehzadebaşı, a district in Aksaray neighborhood), there they share old pictures of their youth in 50s in their neighborhood

and retell their memories and actually rebuild their own heritage by engaging one another's memories, thus, creating their memories collectively.

Quite relevantly, Harvey draws attention to the importance of what he calls "small heritages" (Harvey 2008, 20). He points out that contemporary efforts are directed to this kind of "localized, intimate and personal memory of the past" that constitutes these "small heritages" since "meta-narratives of heritage" began to be questioned lately - as also mentioned in the second chapter (Harvey 2008, 20).

Similar "small heritages" will also have a place at Memory Map because there will be "personal" accounts to which everyone can upload their memories related to that specific space in Beyoğlu. And since the website is about Beyoğlu, one of the most historically loaded quarters of Istanbul but it is also so contemporary and that is what makes Beyoğlu a whirling pool of various heritages, the website can host "small" but still contesting heritages, as well.

If we go back to what makes Erdem create Memory Map, we find a marvelously contrasted coincidence that Deniz was complaining about. Erdem emphasizes that in this age, everyone has to act and move so fast that we lose our memories. When we cannot find the time to look around us walking on the street, thus relate ourselves to the reality around us, we don't see too many things and also each other becoming disconnected to the city we are living in. For Erdem and probably for many people, this is a fact and the reality of our digital age. But the idea of finding that time exactly in between the night sleep while a cellphone is placed in the hand is just exciting for Erdem.

Paul Connerton when pointing out the processes of modernity becoming "a major source of forgetting," he makes similar examples of "the disappearance of walkable cities, (of) mega cities that are so enormous as to be unmemorable, superhuman speed" (Connerton 2009, 5). Connerton argues that by the late nineteenth century, with modernity, the bigger the modern cities get in scale, harder it gets to perceive the city physically and in addition to this, with "the production of speed" -which is the invention

of fast transportation- “the idea of a city, in which one can read, as it were, ‘buildings’ at a pedestrian’s pace is lost” (Connerton 2009, 104, 114). When differentiating place memories into two different categories, i.e. *memorial* and *locus*, Connerton emphasizes the power of the *locus* as one’s home and street for oneself, and defamiliarization of one’s surroundings would do the same impact, as if one loses a limb (Connerton 2009, 32).

In the account of Erdem’s, we see as well, this kind of defamiliarization mentioned above. We can clearly perceive that the very dynamics of this age, which brings about the new media technologies, compel new media at the same time to improve those defects it left to be questioned. Erdem and the minds thinking alike, they want to deconstruct time and stretch it out so that we can find a rabbit hole to get into. Since the most complained thing about this age is the lack of communication and bond with our surroundings caused by this fast living, Erdem suggests healing that wound with the same instrument that creates this fastness. Memory Map is therefore built in need of strengthening of the communication with each other and with the city. Everyone opening an account can upload their memories about that particular space and then interact with each other.

Taken into account one of the most discussed issues on the Internet, the disinformation, people will be left by themselves about fact-checking in this user generated content website. Erdem points out the need of this kind of self-control adding that they will give the necessary tools which will help to diminish the visibility of false information on the website anyway and people will be able to correct their information according to the warnings they get. This seems to me quite liberally democratic in the sense that it gives a chance to people about both whatever they want to record as their memories and also correcting themselves through an interaction with others.

The reason that Memory Map is one of this thesis’ cases is its being open to everyone and therefore when we talk about Beyoğlu’s heritage in this website, we can actually talk about transgender’s heritage, night club’s heritage, shoe polishers’ heritage. And especially also because Memory Map attempts making heritage a daily practice, a

“social action” as Harrison⁵ puts it. By reminding us that these old buildings of Beyoğlu are filled with our memories and still keeps hosting our memories and that is exactly what makes them heritage and gives them a value, Memory Map can mirror Beyoğlu as where not just acknowledged communities and values reside but also both the “unheard/ ignored” communities and groups and their everyday practices do as well. This way, Beyoğlu is not just remembered as a place where people used to go dressing appropriately but also as a place which belongs to everybody from the middle class to workers, from Christians to Muslims, Jews and atheists, from people to cats and dogs and Gezi Park.

Memory Map, with its user generated content seems to provide a space where the non-expert public can have a saying what heritage means for them, or which heritage they will embrace since it will be totally up to them by placing their memories onto Beyoğlu’s virtual map. At least, this is the starting point for Erdem. In its alpha version though, the academics, historians, researchers, novelists or the culture institutions such as Pera Museum, İAE (*İstanbul Araştırmaları Enstitüsü* -İstanbul Research Institute), IFEA (*Institut Français d’Etudes Anatoliennes*, French Institute of Anatolian Studies) are thought to be the first contributors. As previously discussed, even though Erdem emphasizes on the prominence of the varied contributions by the general public, they prefer to start with the above-mentioned institutions’ data on their alpha version. When I ask him why this change of heart, he replies that a big amount of proper data uploads that the institutions can easily and instantly provide would make the website more ready to the genuine version. As he hints slightly to this method being more safer, he may suggest that otherwise the website would look empty. Here, an assumption appears that the data the general public will provide can be cacophonous and unpredictable while the institutional/ expert data can provide a safer -in terms of organized and attractive outlook for then its beta version.

⁵ See, p.10 in this thesis.

4.3 Sesol.org (Be the Voice of!)

İpek Oskay who is also a sociologist and the coordinator of sesol.org expresses how she defines heritage in our interview. İpek rejects a static definition of cultural heritage:

“It is not right for me to study a mass with an attribution to a single historical point [.....] When constructing the language of heritage, the mobility of the nature and the city must be taken into consideration.”

She even thinks that heritage should be considered as a whole without configuring a hierarchy between cultural and natural heritage and gives an example. When in 2013, July right after Gezi, as the four different forums of Islands Defense, they organized an event on which their statements against the issue that authorized building permit on the islands of both Yassı and Sivri would be declared. As discussing about the event’s focal point, they had a disagreement. While the other forums insisted on a stress about the political heritage of Yassı⁶, İpek and few other activists resisted to what is for them, the trivialization of Sivri. İpek goes on telling about Sivri: a place where migrant birds stop by and lay their eggs and where underneath the island, there are coral reefs that actually with the currents help to clean Marmara Sea. So, she does exclaim, “If the birds are absent, the life is too, we are too!”

Accordingly, İpek and the others in the collective want to apply those words to the website, sesol.org. There are different kinds of sounds from storytelling format, songs sang by minorities, sounds recorded by hydrophones to the sound of tomatoes that children play with on the beach. These quite varied kinds of sounds are meant to be a metaphor for the polyphony of the Islands as well, since İpek thinks that the Islands’ basic problem is that they are codified solely as a touristic place but the Islands are actually neighborhoods.

She stresses the existence of a difference between the general perception of the Islands’ heritage and one that of the horseman’s. Ignoring this difference leads to the gentrification of the Islands’ heritage in a way that only certain group would like to see and in the end, this would become a problem. Emphasizing further on this one- way

⁶ Yassıada (Yassı Island) was the island where Adnan Menderes with Hasan Polatkan and Rüştü Zorlu were executed after 1960 coup d’état.

definition of heritage, İpek points out that the unilateral structures of the institutions like EU, UN, and UNESCO produce politics through a single “authentic” focal point. In addition to this, İpek argues that in the history of Turkey’s political movements too, we do have similar approaches that impose a single problem, a single target, a single symbol or a single leader.

It would be quite adequate at this point to look at how Smith refers to “authenticity” as an embedded frame of reference in the authorized heritage discourse institutionalized in UNESCO and ICOMOS charters (Smith 2006, 27). Smith also argues that the emphasis on authenticity had accelerated as a need for continuity after the destructions of cities in post World War II era, quoting from Colin Graham: “authenticity tends to a monologic unquestioning discourse concurrent with the idea of ‘the nation’, it arises also out of contexts in which the nation becomes an active arbiter between the past and a ‘people’... (it) combines the prioritization of ‘origins’ with ‘the pathos of incessant change’” (Smith 2006, 27-28).

While researching on the Romani movement in İstanbul, İpek goes on addressing similar points, she discovered herself questioning why we cannot create a heritage value for the Romani in Kağıthane while we can absolutely do for the Romani in Sulukule because they can play music while the others just collect paper on the streets. This sounds also similar to another aspect to authorized heritage discourse since those above-mentioned “origins” historically drew upon what is “grand,” “monumental” and “pleasing” to the eye. Quite relevantly, Smith gives Diane Barthel’s critique of industrial heritage sites as an opposed example to the “dominant aesthetics” of heritage (Smith 2006, 31-32).

With Gezi as a model in her mind, İpek tries to find an alternative way instead of following this politics of authenticity. As defining Gezi as “the practice of taking initiative of the ordinary people,” she relates the Gezi experience to the purpose for creating sesol.org that she questions the possibility of building a community in which the opposite problems, bugs and trees and everyone and everything can be included. From a quite parallel angle, İpek complains about that we here in Turkey have a habit to

employ institutional politics and therefore causing the lack of communication within the society.

She stresses furthermore on the importance of “ordinary” people’s taking initiative by suggesting that when the institutions, the governments issue a preservation plan on somewhere, they would have all the authority and their rules would be valid. What if do they cast out some essential part to the society? Further, she argues:

“If we can talk to each other when there is no third person (the institutions, governments) intervened then we can maybe have a real conversation and therefore develop a conscience because what we call conscience can only be developed by the steps we take all through those experiences.”

I infer from these consecutive utterances of hers one major issue related to the authorized heritage discourse: the agency. Whether it comes from the state, national or international or from the translations of the experts/ culture institutions, museums, there is always an agency between the positioning of the non-experts and the experts of heritage management. This is where the distance comes in between heritage and its inheritors.

What kind of discourse can open up a dialogue and stitch back that fissure caused by agency? The website sesol.org’s openness to all kinds of sounds actually derives from this need of communication among the members of our society, it seems. Even the possible negative attitudes are welcomed in this website, İpek believes explaining this wide-open approach with the motto “we must face with our ugliness as well.” Since they don’t aim to cover up something or display only the positive parts of the Islands, it is important for them to not limit the contributions in any way. And she asks: “Is there a way to make each other possible without becoming identical?”

İpek considers the website not just as an archive but also as an experience machine with which we can meet the experiences that differ from ours and in the end, this may become a chance to rethink our own experiences. She gives as an example into which the dichotomy of the children noises and a sound of a leaf, which reminds of the Islands’s peace to an old islander coalesces. İpek is also excited about using a MIDI Sprout device which can translate the living things e.g. plants’ fluctuations into sound.

She wants to record the plants' reactions to the noises or to breaking of its leaves, branches etc. and through these recordings and the reactions of people's to these recordings, she would claim that the plants are too members of our community. Quite parallel to this sensitivity, İpek also encourages people for underwater recordings in Marmara Sea, since the website is not just about the Princes' Islands but also about the Marmara Sea and the sea is not just water but a living ecosystem which should be included with all of its meanings.

The website sesol.org has a SoundCloud account as well. Via SoundCloud which is a quite known music and podcast streaming platform, İpek aims to reach out to DJs, underground musicians and sound artists in order to hear the sounds on the sesol.org circulated in the parties as well, not just stored on the website. Operating under the Attribution- ShareAlike CC BY-SA Creative Commons license, the website offers also to use uploaded sounds and modify them. In addition to this, İpek utters their wish that the experiences of sesol.org can be multiplied for different communities and groups. Through making a copy of the website and creating a subdomain, there can be sesol.org for Beyoğlu, for Tahtacılar etc.

As also an activist, İpek prefers to consider the website itself as a collective in which everyone can share whatever they can contribute. On this principle, they build together the website deciding on its features, boundaries together with no hierarchy established. We previously discussed that IKS works with the locals in the neighborhoods because they believe that the awareness of and the interest in urban rights can be built from the micro units in society. Quite similar to this approach, İpek expresses the lack of an attitude in which no one (referring to the intelligentsia in Turkey) starts from their own neighborhoods to make things right since this approach would be also a way to transform oneself and become more humble, according to her.

Creating the website sesol.org becomes itself an experience of how different people from different backgrounds come together as a collective, İpek describes adding that they try to execute the collective according to what they imagine for the community. The reason for İpek to be the project coordinator is that if there would occur a legal

problem, she would be the responsible person on behalf of the website. Other than this, there is an open call on the website declaring that everyone can still become a part of the collective and participate in decision-makings. İpek recalls how it can be difficult working together with professionals while developing the website even if they are volunteers and she does relate this to the lack of experiences we have in general here in Turkey on working together at the same time putting aside our insistence in our expertise for the sake of common grounds.

4.4 UrbanObscura

UrbanObscura.net is defined as a platform where urban memory is constructed and archived collectively. Ayşin Zoe Güneş, the project coordinator decides to design a digital platform and a mobile application when she discovers a lack of platforms that archive urban architectural history, socio-cultural history of the old buildings and neighborhoods. For Zoe, the need for this kind of platforms originates from the unappreciative behaviors to the cultural heritage in Turkey where there is a huge variety of cultural heritage. She emphasizes on a deficiency of an archiving habit that eventually fed this destruction of heritage. Here, I must say that Ottomans actually had quite well-established archiving habit even on the details of the renovations of the buildings as it can now be seen at the State Archives of the Prime Ministry of Republic of Turkey (T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü 2017) but only for those who have granted for the access both linguistically and therefore academically since most of the documents are in Ottoman.

Then, what causes this urge for remembering and also reconstructing our past? Zoe relates this phenomenon to the urban renewal projects, the gentrification of the neighborhoods and the socio-economic conditions in which citizens from different backgrounds can benefit from the city's cultural resources accordingly. Similarly, Connerton articulates on how the capitalist system with its "intentional destruction of built environment" through urban renewal projects and gentrification helps forgetting more intensely by "eroding cultural memory along with the building blocks" (Connerton 2009, 119-120).

As a quite similar view to Erdem's and Deniz's, Zoe emphasizes on the distance which the problems cited above create between the city and its citizens. She furthermore accentuates the impossibility of public encounters and togetherness caused by the socio-economic conditions.

Another starting point for UrbanObscura is the "forgotten" heritage of the minorities since they start to digitally map from the minority areas as in Jewish neighborhood in Ankara and then later, they will work on Kurtuluş in İstanbul. Zoe emphasizes the changes in place-names in the example of Kurtuluş whose old name was Tatavla, a reminder of the existence of the Greek minorities in the neighborhood. A place-name can be a "testimony to that place's history" as Connerton puts it (Connerton 2009, 10), and in this case, that testimony were effaced in order to serve a purpose which was, as mentioned in the second chapter, Republic of Turkey's establishing firmly its newly nation-state. By bringing back the memories of the minorities in these neighborhoods, they surely challenge with the authorized heritage discourse.

The target audience and contributors of UrbanObscura consists mainly of urban researchers, urban planners, architects, social scientists, students and the professionals who work on mapping and communication technologies and everyone else who is interested in urban transformations, Zoe states. She adds that they design the website as an open source platform on where people can either contribute via sharing their knowledge and the documents they have or they just access to the already created knowledge. The information shared by the contributors can only be published on the website after passing through a confirmation process with the related tags and references.

The quality of the non-expert knowledge appears to be one of the most discussed issues on new media. Both UrbanObscura's decision on generating a confirmation process for the user-generated contributions to the website and Memory Map's decision for their alpha version to work with the institutional data represent the common critique of new media concerning the non-professional data, which can be unorganized and messy, unedited, and unchecked for their veracity. All these critiques have strong and valid

grounds. However, there are also critics who consider “knowledge as a social phenomenon, and an interaction,” a process rather than just transmitting the “facts” (Lievrouw 2011, 128-129).

To be able to contribute only after passing through a confirmation would hamper seriously UrbanObscura’s aim to reach out to “everyone,” I argue. Because, from the very beginning, the website claims an authority on assembling the “true” information. This tone of superiority would eventually create an intimidating effect on the general public. Secondly, the confirmation process itself would impede the participation of people. Imagine that we remember something and note that down immediately on this digital platform, we could do it “immediately” since it is digital and accessible with a tablet, computer or a smartphone but we actually cannot do it immediately since it needs to be revised by the website’s confirmation. Even though, the website claims to archive urban memory collectively, they seem to rather mean an expert collective.

4.5 Financial Aspects of the Cases

At this point, I will give brief accounts of the financial aspects of the cases since this is all too relevant in terms of affecting their practices. Memory Map and UrbanObscura differ from sesol.org in their financial and structural aspects since these two websites are in very close relationship with the institutions. Erdem is still having meetings for funding while he also considers establishing a business for this project. Until now, he and the web developers and designers of Memory Map worked together without any financial need. But he thinks that developing a website with the help of the volunteer efforts makes the things slower and he wants to speed up. In order to develop a properly functioning website with a dozen dedicated professionals would cost at least 500.000 Euros in a year when this project is exercised in Berlin, he claims and adds that they have the possibility to work together here in İstanbul with openstreetmap.org and some other organizations in Berlin, London and USA.

Zoe from UrbanObscura aims to expand their urban mapping studies to the other cities besides Ankara and İstanbul and in order to that, she mentions the need of building strategic partnerships with the institutions such as NPOs, NGOs, Bilkent, ODTÜ, TED

and Bařkent Universities and related private sector companies. Zoe states that they are going to apply in 2018, April for a EU fund in order to make improvements on the website both data and visual wise. Their application to the EU fund is mediated through Bilkent University Visual Communication Design Department and a UK based creative branding agency called Redwhite Ca. They had also an exhibition of the project supported by the Architects Organization 1927, Ersal Furnitures and Gallery Siyah Beyaz.

As for the financial aspects of sesol.org, İpek emphasizes that they accomplish to create the website totally with volunteer efforts not getting any fund from the institutions. Although İpek is the creator of the website, she does not prefer to call it her project, as previously mentioned, the website is a collective and thus, she believes that it must be independent, even from herself. This is also why she didn't prefer to carry out the website as a project funded by the university which is an institution as well. She states that if so, the website would be the university's property which had to pass from the university ethics committee. For now, the website's financial needs are provided by personal funds and preferably not but if necessary in the future, applying for funds should be a decision made by the collective itself, İpek states.

Until the very beginning, IKS has moved on with the voluntary supports and the spaces for the forums have been provided by the NPOs. Deniz wishes for a free space of their own in the NPOs' offices but he also says that if the NPOs have given them the space, they would have demanded to be the determining component then they could not be independent as they should be. Deniz told me in our interview that they have an intention to institutionalize like KOS did for this will provide the finance needed in establishing proper workforce and a physical space where people can gather and participate in meetings.

Deniz refers to the importance of the physical space where the participants can also be trained for activism and this way the space itself would turn into a school of its own. Because he thinks that some people need more motivation and training and in order to adopt and protect, one needs knowledge and experiences.

4.6 Social Media Use of the Cases

Social media platforms specifically Facebook and Twitter are used to expand the communication web of IKS and these websites, clearly. İpek notes that she is quite well aware of the importance of Facebook and there are lots of FB groups that she contacted in order to widen that web of communication. This is exactly what Erdem stresses on the dynamic existence of the community building on social media. Deniz also emphasizes that Facebook is much more popular around middle aged groups while Twitter users are belong to a younger generation which he specifically calls as Gezi generation. Other than this obvious affect of social media on disseminating knowledge and creating an environment open to participation, İpek refers to another feature of Facebook she is quite happy to use, which is the statistics one can acquire on how the website that they build is getting into an interaction with people.

IKS is the most active and followed one both on Facebook and Twitter, whereas UrbanObscura has 536 followers on Facebook (UrbanObscura 2018) but quite active in posting heritage related events of institutions, and displays not an active existence on Twitter (UrbanObscura 2018). Although sesol.org is ready and open to contributions since two years now, the website's social media use is quite not active on Facebook (Sesol.org 2018) and on Twitter (Adalara Ses Ol! 2018) having circa 80-100 followers. As mentioned before, İpek states that a general successful announcement of the website has not yet made also because she couldn't come to İstanbul because she is working on her PhD dissertation abroad, but still for a website built as thoroughly thought and as meticulously theorized as sesol, this not-active existence stands odd and I would argue, implies a sense of not-working organically in praxis. As for Memory Map, since the alpha version of the website has not yet been released, they don't have any social media accounts for now.

5. DISCUSSION

In this chapter, an overall discussion regarding the thesis' cases will be conveyed. As by now, the common purpose of the thesis' cases are stressed which is, they intend to incorporate public to heritage related issues and they all are contesting the authorized heritage discourse with the different emphases they place. This chapter aims to reframe that common purpose but focus more on the different approaches. Further, the chapter will put emphasis on new media use of the cases and will conclude with an argument: even though the cases presented here contest the authorized heritage discourse by targeting the non-expert public, they seem to fail in some respect in engaging a bottom-up discourse.

From the very beginning of this research, we walk through how heritage becomes a subject, which now, exceeds the boundaries of any expertise entering to our daily lives in this digitally accessible world. As previously discussed in the second chapter, because now, we cannot ignore the fact that heritage is not just about the concrete structures from some old times but also about our ever produced and thus, ever-changing culture of today.

In our Information Age, we are both the creators and the consumers of knowledge. We even come to the point where many of us no longer want to own the knowledge and the works that we ourselves create. We are at a point where we can choose copyleft instead of copyright in order to build an environment of culture, free of charge and open to exchanges. We can let each other use our work and we can share what we know. This indeed matters. And this is also a mirror to what Erdem stresses on the fast cultural transformation in our world. The websites and the collectives' efforts that put on examination in this thesis are indeed the offspring of this worldwide-shared culture era.

As this quest begins in search of whether new media have any contribution to the multiplication of heritage practices from below in Turkey, asking as well whether this multiplication efforts aim at the same time the visibility of non-expert public on heritage related issues. Meaning that in this age of democratization of knowledge, can we talk about the existence of a bottom-up discourse in cultural heritage sphere that is previously defined solely by experts?

This thesis takes off where the existence of few culture experts' efforts concerning the participation of non-expert public on the Internet. Therefore, hint of a bottom-up heritage discourse appears. Whether it is Memory Map, UrbanObscura, sesol.org or IKS, they all claim that they are targeting the participation of the general public. But, if we look closely after the findings discussed throughout the fourth chapter, we can clearly see the different directions they take in the process.

Let us remember that all the cases presented in this thesis, are still on progress. Memory Map team is still working on its alpha version while UrbanObscura is about to finish the 3D mapping of the Jewish neighborhood in Ankara only after the website will begin to operate online and be open to contributions. İpek still works on some improvements on the website sesol.org which is currently functioning but lacks only a general successful announcement that will increase the contributors and the participants to the website, according to İpek. IKS keeps still going with their in-situ protests, neighborhood assessments as an activist collective and besides their social media accounts, establishing a website which will be the archive of their activities is on their agenda.

At this point, we should open up a parenthesis to turn to the studies on the activist's use of social media to seek for an answer to the question asked in the fourth chapter regarding IKS: what can be the reasons for IKS not being able to generate again that lively atmosphere in Gezi also stimulated and disseminated through new media? After the Arab Spring, Occupy movements and several uprisings all across the world including Gezi Park protests here in Turkey, there have been numerous academic studies on the immense and effective use of social media by activists. These protests were indeed powerful and accordingly to their nature, they occurred in a limited time

span and in symbolic physical public spaces, namely squares. There may be now no big scale protests but the activists are still on the scene keeping up their demonstrations and in-situ protests. Does the social media use in protests transform somewhat structurally these activist collectives? What kind of inferences do the activist collectives make from these strong experiences?

These are questions that have quite complex and broad answers. But we can extract some insights to help us out in questioning the findings in this thesis concerning especially IKS. Paolo Gerbaudo, the journalist and the lecturer, in his book “Tweets and the Streets” examines three movements (Occupy Wall Street in NYC, Arap Spring in Egypt and the Indignados in Spain) emphasizing on how is the individualistic character of social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter turned into a strong collective action by activists (Gerbaudo 2012). It is all too important of a change, which Gerbaudo relates to the one aspect in particular: the emotional drive used by the activists through social media communication. Gerbaudo contends that it is “the emotional rather than “informational” character of this mediated reconstruction of public space by activists through their use of social media” that makes people from diverse backgrounds come together “in a sense of solidarity” (Gerbaudo 2012, 160).

There is another important critic who is this time quite against the social media’s effectiveness on social mobilization in protests. Malcolm Gladwell argues that the benefits of social media can be anything but stimulating the social movements (Gladwell 2017). Facebook activism does not encourage people to make “real sacrifice” which can be in a form of high-risk activism, because one cannot act on the utterances of people whom they are not actual friends in real life, Gladwell argues relating his claim on the earlier civil rights movements in the 60s and 70s. I agree with Gladwell on the account that in this age, people won’t do much of “big” sacrifices either because of fear for repression (with the wide spread visibility/ surveillance through social media) or of apathy. But I think where Gladwell is unappreciative is the fact that people didn’t come to sit-ins of these recent protests just for their “acquaintances” on Facebook or Twitter but exactly because for themselves, too. The social media platforms were the

connection between people who don't know each other, yet can feel the exact anger against and discontent with the status quo.

Both Gladwell and Gerbaudo refer to Evgeny Morozov. Gerbaudo mentions Morozov's dislike for "slacktivism" which is "feel good about activism that has zero political or social impact but creates an illusion of having meaningful impact on the world without demanding anything more than joining a Facebook group" (Gerbaudo 2012, 7). This claim indeed resonates with what Deniz complains about. Deniz stresses on the side effect of social media in which people satisfy themselves just retweeting and posting on Facebook because either they are afraid of possible repercussions of their participation to the demonstrations or they don't probably have time for this "job" -activism is really time consuming that one should devote to, he claims. As a small but quite significant parenthesis, we can now point the direction to what Anja Kanngieser discusses on one conflicting aspect of the activism (Kanngieser 2011, 117). As Kanngieser gives examples of unusual, "performative" activist actions, she also refers to the necessity of incorporating "everyday life" into the political actions through these performative actions; since the other usual case would distance the "activist" from the "non-activist" asserting superiority over the latter by configuring "a relationship of value/ authority" (Kanngieser 2011, 135).

I find a correlation between the expert and therefore heavily informative character of IKS and the fact that IKS is not having enough participation to their meetings and forums. In IKS forums that I participated, there were mostly experts (architects, engineers, lawyers) and most importantly there is always a strong existence of TMMOB; depending on the subject, there is always an opening speech by the experts and the debates would evolve around those keynote speeches. Therefore, there is no room for alternative actions by multiple various social actors. IKS uses emotional drives but mostly on the basis of a loss, of the wrongdoings by the municipality. However, there is no element of today's creations by public itself, or as public, our use of, production of heritage in our everyday lives, of what we have already, something that we have not yet lost, something that we can cherish in our everyday life and then show effort in *solidarity* to not to lose it, but preserve it.

This dominance of expert-view, I argue is what makes IKS fail in engaging with a bottom-up discourse against the authorized heritage discourse. Surely, IKS is contesting the authorized heritage discourse through the resistance they show to the urban renewal projects, gentrification of historical therefore “valuable” areas which puts distance between the public and its heritage. However, there is an expert dominance in their actions, which prevails IKS to have a bottom-up discourse.

“Technological mediation supports and conditions the emergence of new cultural practices, not by creating a distinct sphere of practice but by opening up new forms of practice within the everyday world, reflecting and conditioning the emergence of new forms of environmental knowing” (Giaccardi et al. 2008, 283).

These “new forms” and “everyday world” are important words if one is going to embrace a participatory approach to heritage. Elisa Giaccardi and Leysia Paylen in their article have examined quite similar cases to this thesis’ cases with an emphasis on the lack of such projects in which the conversation between a community and its physical and social settings is reinforced (Giaccardi et al. 2008, 283). This conversation can be realized through new media tools since they invoke participation. The virtual museum project MUVI was initiated in 1999 by a publishing house to bring together the collective memory of Lombardia, a northern region in Italy with the participation of the local community through their contributions of pictures and storytelling (Giaccardi et al. 2008, 284). Giaccardi and Paylen define the project’s effort as a “transformation of its audience -local community- into active heritage and making it the main actor in the construction of museum” (Giaccardi et al. 2008, 284). After eighteen years and this time in Turkey, Memory Map, sesol.org and UrbanObscura have put the exact effort but this time with the help of even greater technological improvement. For also these three websites will augment the participation and therefore multiply variety of heritage in meaning-making through the computerized mobile phones we have today and social media as well, which were not there back in 1999. Especially through Memory Map and sesol.org, personal accounts, stories and recollections of recent or distant past would be told in reference to the present. One other significance of these “cross-media interactions” articulated by Giaccardi and Paylen is that they incorporate the “presentness” of human life and culture into heritage and thus stimulating the commitment to heritage preservation (Giaccardi et al. 2008, 282).

One of the Giaccardi and Paylen's case studies has also quite the same theme with sesol.org. SOL (Silence of the Lands) is a project initiated in 2005 at the University of Colorado, Boulder by Giaccardi in which "participants collect sounds of the natural environment using digital recording devices and sound cameras with GPS mapping software" (Giaccardi et al. 2008, 286). In sesol.org, one can record sounds anytime without any other particular recording devices since mobile phones has now the necessary hardware that enables to record sounds and GPS systems are also inherent in their hardware. This technological improvement augments the instantaneity and spontaneity of the act of recording sounds and then immediately uploading them to the website, sesol.org. Giaccardi and Paylen emphasize on the fact that this kind of interactions makes the heritage as a living practice through creating "a sense of ownership" that eventually leads to the commitment towards heritage" (Giaccardi et al. 2008, 291-294). Through these websites, heritage can become indeed a constant practice in the everyday contemporary life.

This sense of ownership indeed matters, especially when we talk about the absence of a conversation between the city and its citizens and therefore, a relationship with our heritage. There are several reasons for the absence of this kind of conversation. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Connerton relates "forgetting" -which can be interpreted also as a non-conversation- to the enormous scale that the cities get in this time we are living, while Harvey also emphasizes the impact of neoliberal politics on the inequalities between the creators of the city and its profiteers. Therefore, it is quite important to try building a bottom-up approach to heritage as all the cases presented here intend.

As it can be clearly seen in our interviews, Erdem is driven exactly by this contemporary need -the lack of time in relating oneself with the city and the very abundance of contemporary tools enabling the realization of conservation between the city and its citizens- when creating Memory Map. Zoe too draws attention to the lack of yet "untold" or "hidden" heritages like the Jewish neighborhood in Ankara thus opening holes in the texture of the present. Whereas İpek is motivated by the contemporary uncommunicative societal dynamics in Turkey effectuated both by the current political

environment and the authenticity based official politics in general which excludes the existence of not only other species and nature but also the other components of the community existing beyond the general conceptions of heritage.

However, through Memory Map approach concerning of its alpha version, we can face with an assumption that the data the general public will provide can be cacophonous and unpredictable while the institutional/ expert data can provide a more safer -in terms of organized and attractive outlook for then its beta version. UrbanObscura wants to keep the website even more safe, trustworthy by employing a confirmation process, whereas in sesol.org, we cannot talk about any of these critical assumptions on the qualities of the general public data, but instead an absence of participatory function even though there is not any limitations to contribute and the website is on since two years. This brings to mind a rather slippery question: is a meticulously theorized bottom-up discourse as in the case of sesol.org enough to turn into an organically bottom-up intervention to the authorized heritage discourse?

6. CONCLUSION

This thesis endeavored to show quite new efforts of a participatory approach in heritage studies and practices in Turkey. In order to emphasize the importance of such a participatory approach, the thesis first outlined what heritage used to mean and what heritage means now, in our 21st century. Establishing its theoretical ground around Laurajane Smith's articulation of the authorized heritage discourse, this thesis discussed how heritage functioned as a power tool for the nation states that unify its citizens under an umbrella history at the expense of excluding others; how the emphasis on the physicality of heritage leads to an expert dominance in heritage preservation and management and therefore, the non-expert public became just passive receivers. Thus, the authorized heritage discourse is the reason of the gap between the public and its heritage; it is this alienation process that makes heritage preservation hard to achieve and sometimes meaningless for public. There is also one other factor that distances heritage and the public, that is neoliberal use of the city's values and its heritage created by the citizens. Therefore, all above mentioned exclusionary, top-down interventions become valid reasons exactly for the thesis' cases as well, to embrace a participatory approach to heritage. Quite accordingly, the thesis employed an ethnographic approach in order to get a better grasp on the ideas behind these efforts of incorporating the non-expert public to heritage practices from below.

All of the cases presented here in this thesis are serious endeavors for including participation of the non-expert public to the heritage practices with the help of new media by the generation that creates and constantly shapes new media. Since heritage is a way to express oneself, and it is exactly an act happening now, at present, it makes sense that the cases use that "presentness" to communicate. Because, new media provide a space for communication by easing conversation and dialogue, stimulating new possibilities to enhance participation and interaction with heritage. One other

important aspect of the cases in using new media is their effort to make heritage a daily practice of the public.

Through findings, reflections and discussions, the thesis drew attention to the fact that although the cases contest the authorized heritage discourse embracing a participatory approach, the expert dominance, design and guidance can still be impenetrable, thereby getting harder to attain a bottom-up application of this kind of participatory discourse. Altogether, these heritage practices from below make us hear a range of varied heritage stories.

Emphasizing that heritage preservation does not mean solely restoration of the physical structures inherited from old times but a meaning-making process and a human right that all the citizens can define and celebrate encouraged this thesis to embrace a more interdisciplinary approach which in fact lacks in heritage studies in Turkey. Consequently, the thesis aimed to point out the new existence of the non-expert variations of heritage hoping to contribute to the proliferation of this kind of studies in heritage literature, especially in Turkey.

Further examination of the public use of these websites and their data analysis and also examination on the effect of new media as agency between heritage and its producers would be quite valuable endeavors for future researches.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

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APPENDIX A

A.1 Semi-Structured Interview Questions

- How do you define cultural heritage? What does it mean to you?
- What do you think about the current heritage practices/news in Turkey? Are there any examples that pop up to your mind?
 - What do you say about the relationship between the citizens of Istanbul and the city's heritage?
 - What was your purpose when starting this project/ organization and has it been evolved to any different way? Have you encountered any obstacles to steer your direction slightly elsewhere? Have you changed your mind in the process?
 - Who is your target audience?
 - How do new media serve to your cause?
 - Which platform/s do you use? Is there any particular reason for this choice of yours?
 - What kind of expectations do you have from the public (contributors)? Are there any limits/ conditions to contribute to this website/ organization? What is exactly public's role/place in your organization/ website?
 - Do you have any partner for your project/organization or an institution that help you out for the project/ organization and in what way?
 - How do you finance your project? / Do you need any finance for your organization?