

**PLACEMAKING DURING THE PANDEMIC:
EXPLORING THE SPACES OF CELEBRATIONS
IN TURKEY THROUGH TWITTER**

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By
Bilge Begüm Yavuzyiğit
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We certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

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ABSTRACT

PLACEMAKING DURING THE PANDEMIC: EXPLORING THE SPACES OF CELEBRATIONS IN TURKEY THROUGH TWITTER

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M.Sc. In Architecture

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The thesis studies the recent placemaking practices that have been realized during the COVID-19 pandemic in spaces such as balconies and digital space. During the pandemic, due to measures taken to decrease the spread of the virus, citizens have been confined to their homes' boundaries and to the interaction of their households. Consequently, there have been disruptions in citizens' collective practices within public spaces, rendering the city unclaimed. Yet, longing for community interaction and sense of community, citizens moved their interactions to the digital realm, and subsequently to balconies, to accommodate communal and social practices. Relatedly, one of the prominent collective practices in the urban context of Turkey, national holiday celebrations were also carried out in balconies and digital space. Citizens have organized through Twitter and realized celebration practices in their balconies, to compensate for the gatherings they normally held in public places such as city squared and streets. The expressions of experiences related with the celebrations were also reflected onto the digital realm. Building up on these observations, this study will explore how collective celebration practices in balconies and digital place have led to placemaking of these realms through the case study of Turkey. Based on data gathered from Twitter through specific hashtags and keywords, how the experiences of digital spaces and balconies correspond to placemaking during the pandemic will be discussed. Since official practices of placemaking, the communal place and the process of social production of place have been challenged during the pandemic, the thesis builds up on the idea that revisiting the definition of placemaking can provide new opportunities in understanding how places are made and placemaking is realized in the contemporary world. Thus, by understanding the placemaking of the pandemic the thesis aims to provide a new and revised perspective towards placemaking, by integrating the literature, findings of the thesis and the context of the pandemic to guide further studies.

Keywords: Placemaking, Balcony, Digital Place, National Holiday Celebrations

ÖZET

PANDEMİ SIRASINDA MEKAN OLUŞTURMA: TÜRKİYE’DEKİ KUTLAMA YERLERİNİN TWITTER ÜZERİNDEN İNCELENMESİ

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Bu tez çalışması, COVID-19 salgını sürecinde balkon ve dijital ortam gibi alanlarda gerçekleştirilen mekân oluşturma pratiklerini incelemektedir. Bu süreçte, virüsün yayılmasını azaltmak için alınan önlemler nedeniyle kentliler, evlerine hapsedilmiş ve toplulukları ile olan sosyal etkileşimleri sınırlandırılmış, ev halkının etkileşimlerine bağlı kalmışlardır. Bağlantılı olarak kentlilerin kamusal alanda gerçekleştirdikleri kolektif pratikler de sekteye uğramış, kentsel alanlar kullanılmaz hale gelmiştir. Topluluk etkileşimi ve hissini devam ettirmek isteyen kentliler etkileşimlerini önce dijital ortama, sonrasında da balkonlara taşımış, toplumsal sosyal pratiklerini bu mekânlarda devam ettirmiştir. Alakalı olarak, Türkiye’deki kentsel bağlamın öne çıkan kolektif pratiklerinden biri olan milli bayram kutlamaları da dijital ortam ve balkonlarda gerçekleştirilmiştir. Kentiler, normalde kent meydanı, sokak gibi kamusal alanlarda gerçekleştirdikleri toplu etkinliklerin yerine geçecek üretimleri, Twitter üzerinden organize olup balkonlarda kutlama yaparak telafi etmiştir. Kutlamalar ile ilgili kentlilerin deneyimleri de dijital ortamda paylaşılmıştır. Bu gözlemlere dayanarak bu çalışma, balkonlar ve dijital mekândaki toplu kutlama pratiklerinin, bu alanların üretimine nasıl yol açtığı Türkiye üzerinden incelenecektir. Twitter üzerinden, belirli hashtag (etiket) ve anahtar kelimeler üzerinden toplanan verilere dayanarak, pandemi sırasında dijital alan ve balkonlardaki deneyimlerin ne açılardan mekân oluşturma olarak değerlendirilebileceği tartışılacaktır. Tez, pandemi sırasında kasıtlı mekân oluşturma uygulamaları, kamusal mekân ve mekanın sosyal üretimi süreçleri zorlaşmış olmasından dolayı, mekan oluşturma tanımlarının yeniden gözden geçirilmesinin, çağdaş dünyadaki mekanların nasıl yapıldığını ve mekan oluşturma nasıl gerçekleştiğini anlamak adına yeni olanaklar sağlayacağı fikri üzerinden ileriye sürülmüştür. Bu nedenle tez, mekan oluşturma literatürünü, çalışmanın sonuçlarını ve pandeminin koşullarını bir arada inceleyerek mekan oluşturma tanımına yeni bir bakış açısı katmak ve böylece ileriye sürülen çalışmalara katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mekan Oluşturma, Balkon, Dijital Mekan, Milli Bayram Kutlamaları

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Placemaking in the literature has been defined as the collaborative process of creating the public realm through iterative actions and engagement of the citizens, facilitating strengthened bonds between people and their places and among people in places (Project for Public Spaces, 2007; Schneekloth & Shibley, 2000; Silberberg et al., 2013). It is a theory and practice that emerged within urban planning in the 1960s, inspired by Jane Jacobs (1961) and William H. Whyte's (1980) works. During the modern urbanization process, a top-down approach was followed where communities and their way of living were neglected due to the emphasis given to design of highways, leading to citizens being detached from their environments. Jacobs and Whyte were among the influential scholars who have put the fundamental focus of the built environment back on the people and communities. Placemaking acknowledges that architectural and urban places are created through not only professional practices but also rather informal processes through social interaction and production. Even though placemaking refers to a more deliberate act of planning and practice, it is studied in close relation to the social production of place in the literature, in relation to how people practice, experience and attach meanings to their places. Relatedly,

placemaking marks a comeback for the community to make their places and environments through social interactions and practices.

The divide between people and their environments caused by the urbanization processes has been further deepened due to the COVID-19 pandemic and there have been radical changes in how places are occupied and experienced. The first case of the Coronavirus was reported on December 31st, 2020, in Wuhan, China. The virus rapidly spread all over the globe reaching almost all of the continents except for Antarctica (Kantis et al., 2021). After the rapid spread of the virus, causing thousands of deaths, it was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization on the 11th of March 2020 (World Health Organization, 2020), which is when Turkey's first case of COVID-19 was confirmed as well. Since then, Turkey has gone through various phases of spatial precautions in relation to the number of cases to decrease the spread of the virus. Apart from the social distancing and isolation measures, complete lockdowns were also issued in weekends and during national and religious holidays during the first year of the pandemic.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the precautions taken by governments all over the world to decrease the spread of the virus, the urban environments where citizens used to carry out their collective and communal practices were rendered unclaimed. Relatedly, communities have lost the means of making their urban places, and have occupied the digital place, since it provided them with a safe space where interactions and conversations can be sustained. By organizing in the digital place through hashtags, people were able to plan collective practices, such as celebrations and concerts, and realized them simultaneously from their houses, and especially their balconies. In relation to citizens' connection to the public environment being challenged, citizens have also carried their conversations to the digital place. Relatedly, an archive of their experiences related with the collective celebrations was created, providing an influential source of information in understanding the placemaking of the pandemic.

Turkey, similar to many other countries, have realized prominent collective practices in spaces other than the urban space. One of the prominent practices of collectivity, that can be realized as placemaking in the urban context of Turkey – “a country rich in holidays” (Öztürkmen, 2001, p. 48) - is the national holiday celebrations. The

Turkish word for holiday, *bayram*, is “a nationally celebrated festival or holiday, applicable to both national (i.e. secular) and religious celebrations” (Urban Dictionary, n.d.). Under normal conditions, national holidays, are collectively celebrated throughout the country, with people marching among streets towards memorials such as statues, city squares, and monuments. Furthermore, public squares host collective practices such as parades and torchlight processions. During these celebrations, the citizens sing national marches while waving the Turkish flag and chanting.

During the lockdowns of national holidays in Turkey, celebrations were realized as events that provide collectivity. Citizens have organized in the digital space under certain hashtags and articulating certain keywords, facilitating the social production of digital space. Their actions and interactions within social media have led to the creation or continuation of communities. Consecutively, communities have realized practices related with national holiday celebrations in their balconies. Balconies being in-between the public and the private space have provided the citizens with a communal place, where the collective practices of the urban environment can be carried out. Relatedly, the spatiality of balconies has changed, becoming places where practices of the urban place can be realized, within the borders of the private house. This has led to the borders and the connections between the public place of the urban environment and the private place of the house to be challenged. Considering mentioned aspects, studying balconies and how they are collectively practiced for celebrations provides influential information on the placemaking of the pandemic, and allows new perspectives towards architecture to be established while asserting a conceptual approach towards places and how they are made.

1.1 Aim and Objective of the Thesis

Building up on the previously mentioned observations, the aim of the thesis is to explore, understand and discuss recent placemaking practices in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. From an architectural standpoint, understanding placemaking and how it is realized by communities during the pandemic provides new perspectives and opportunities on how to make better places. Furthermore, understanding how places were made during the pandemic provides insights on how to rehandle places, especially after a crisis that caused spatial disruptions. Relatedly, the research questions the thesis aims to answer are:

1. In which realms and ways placemaking practices are realized during the pandemic?
2. How can a framework for understanding placemaking under various circumstances be established in light of the placemaking theory?
3. How can placemaking be re-conceptualized and understood considering the context of the pandemic?
4. How places within the contemporary world can be rehandled in light of the COVID-19 pandemic?

In order to answer the research questions, the balcony celebrations in Turkey realized in the first two years of the pandemic (2020-2021) were selected as a case study. The determined timeframe of the pandemic that is explored in the thesis starts with the first reported case of the virus in Turkey -11th of March 2020- until when most of the preventative measures were lifted by the government -1st of June 2021 (T.C. İçişleri Bakanlığı, 2021). Since during the pandemic, Twitter was widely utilized for sustaining informal communications among people and has provided a digital place where valuable information about the experience of the citizens with the pandemic celebrations can be traced, it was chosen to be the social media platform where data is collected from. In relation to the celebrations, tweets related to the query of “*balkon*” (balcony in Turkish) are collected through Twitter API and Postman software, from selected national holidays -23rd of April, National Sovereignty and Children’s Day and 19th of March, Youth and Sports Day- for both 2020 and 2021. The tweets are then studied and analyzed through discourse analysis, via the matrix that is created according to placemaking literature. Selected hashtags that were used to facilitate the celebrations are also studied quantitatively in terms of the interaction they facilitated during the pandemic. The findings of the study are discussed in relation to the theoretical framework established to understand how places can be rethought in light of the placemaking realized during the pandemic. The definition of placemaking is revisited as well, regarding the discussion of the study, to provide a revised understanding of how places are made, influenced by the conditions of the pandemic.

1.2 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is composed of 4 chapters including the Introduction and Conclusion chapters. The Theoretical Framework chapter is formulated in 4 sections, exploring the placemaking literature and practice. First, theories of place related with how placemaking is realized within the contemporary context is given, in order to provide a basis of understanding. Here, place being socially produced and being a complex network of relations is emphasized. Section 2.2 focuses on placemaking literature, first giving its definitions categorized under certain theories and approaches. Then, typologies of placemaking are explored while establishing how they relate or can be related to the placemaking of the pandemic. Lastly, digital placemaking is separately explored since it has various definitions and practices within itself and it helps to understand the placemaking realized in the hybridity of the contemporary context, especially when there were physical disruptions. Section 2.3 and 2.4 are dedicated to examples of placemaking practice. First, three placemaking examples from the world are given, two of them being physical interventions and one being an example of digital placemaking. In the last section of the second chapter, examples of placemaking from the context of Turkey is explored, where 2 organizations that actively practice placemaking is given and the events of Gezi Parkı is discussed, since it was an influential practice that was realized through hybridity provided by social media platforms and have led to the placemaking of the urban environment.

The third chapter is dedicated to the practices of placemaking realized during the pandemic. The chapter is divided into two main sections, first exploring how places and the practices associated with them have changed in relation to the conditions of the pandemic, then analyzing the placemaking for the case study of Turkey's national holiday celebrations. Section 3.1 provides background information on the context of the pandemic, the spatial precautions taken to decrease the spread of the virus, and how it affected the practice and relatedly the production of places. The chapter explores cases of placemaking done within the digital realm and balconies to provide examples for the practices realized during the pandemic. In section 3.2 which is the section dedicated to the empirical study, first how social media -especially Twitter- can be an essential source of information in analyzing placemaking practices is explained. The Methodology section continues with the methods of data collection and

analysis. Since the methodology of the thesis was established following various steps of data collection and preliminary analysis, these steps are also explained consecutively. Furthermore, methodology section also provides the matrix according to which the data is categorized and analyzed. In the Findings and Discussion section, the results of the empirical study are elaborated on and discussed in relation to the theories of placemaking. First, the results of the quantitative study done on selected hashtags and how they have provided insights on the physical placemaking through the interaction they have facilitated is discussed, followed by the qualitative analysis done by discourse analysis. Lastly, definitions of placemaking are revisited in light of the empirical study and the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, to provide new perspectives on how places and placemaking can be rethought in relation to how places are made by communities during the pandemic.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Placemaking has many definitions within the literature because at its core, it is inherently related to places and the practices of how they are made, both of which are conceptions that are already complex. Relatedly, placemaking focuses on the complex set of relations between people and the places they share, in order to facilitate the making of better places for people to live in, through collaboration and citizen engagement. The definition of placemaking that the thesis focuses on is “Strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm” (Project for Public Spaces, 2007). Even though placemaking is a deliberate practice, done in collaboration between organizations, communities and sometimes governmental bodies, it relies heavily on the practices of communities as it “belongs to everyone: its message and mission is bigger than any one person or organization” (PPS, 2007).

In the literature, placemaking has been studied in close relation to how places are produced, and the practices through which they are made. This chapter aims to establish a framework, by first defining the theories of place -studied in relation to placemaking- that provide understanding of the production of place during the pandemic. Following, placemaking theory will be explored to better understand the practices of the pandemic better, in terms of how they refer to the making of places - both physically and through the network or relations established among people and their places. In order to provide a basis of understanding, the section will establish the definitions, types and practices of placemaking, how they are realized in the world and in Turkey, to provide a background of theory for the findings of the thesis.

2.1 Place

In the theories of place¹, the subject matter has been handled in terms of being produced through social practices, and that it entails and accommodates a complex network of relations, in relation to the contemporary context. Here, before moving on to the theories on social production of place, the difference between placemaking and the social production of place should be emphasized: Even though placemaking involves and can be realized through the social production of place, the practice itself is a deliberate act, compared to social production being more of an organic process.

French philosopher Henri Lefebvre, in *The Production of Space*² (originally published in 1974) is among the first scholars who have put forth that space is a social construct, directly related with attached values and meanings attributed. He believes that social production of space happens through three modes, two of which are directly related with placemaking of the pandemic: through citizens' daily routines carried out in their environments, and through the associations and complex network of connections among spaces and their inhabitants (1991). Lefebvre states that spaces are dynamic social constructs which are constantly made and remade through various interactions (1991). The complex interrelation of spaces (networks), arising out of their coexistence, is the essence of social spaces (Lefebvre, 1991). Even though his theory on space is a much more complex system, it provides two focal points of how they are

¹ The terms space and place have been studied by many scholars, and within the literature their definitions are sometimes interchangeable. However, the conception behind how they differ from each other is similar. The thesis, in line with the theory of placemaking, takes place as a meaningful space

² Lefebvre's usage of space coincides with the conception of place accepted in the placemaking theory

realized and produced: place is a social product, and it entails a complex network of relations. Especially for studying places that are influenced by the modern context and layered with digital technologies, one should consider all the interactions happening among various networks, because “social space contains a great diversity of objects, both natural and social, including the networks and pathways which facilitate the exchange of material things and information” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 77). Relatedly, Lefebvre’s theory on place being produced through social practices and being a complex entity provides a basis for social media to be considered as a place, where networks of interaction among people are accommodated and facilitated, especially if there is a disruption in the physical place.

Chinese-American geographer Tuan states that place is approached from two different perspectives in geography: “place as location, a unit within a hierarchy of units in space; and place as a unique artifact” (1975, p. 151). He believes that space and place require each other for definition (1977) and there is a process of transformation among the two notions, which depends on the users’ experience: “What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value” (Tuan, 1977, p. 6). His ideas, similar to Lefebvre’s, emphasize that places are made through the meanings citizens attach to their environments, through their practices, interactions and experiences. However, his main focus is on the practices, and relatedly the experiences citizens have in relation to a given place. Tuan’s ideas are important for the placemaking of the pandemic, since citizens not being able to physically experience their urban environments have carried experiences related with their public places -such as collectivity- to the digital media and the balconies, participating in the making of place through generating shared and individual meanings. De Certeau (1984) also highlights practice as a fundamental component of place³. For him, a place is the stable form of elements in a form of coexistence with one another (De Certeau, 1984). Place can be interpreted as simply a location with fixed coordinates and elements. On the other hand, “space is composed of intersections of mobile elements. It is in a sense actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it” (De Certeau, 1984, p. 117). Thus, according to his terminology, “space is a practiced place” (De Certeau, 1984, p. 117). With the ever-developing digital

³ Certeau uses the terms opposite compared to Tuan, even though the idea behind how they differ compared to one another is the same.

technologies, there are now various networks -information, people, place- being mobilized and superimposed onto the physical places, turning them into spaces. During the pandemic, even though people were not physically mobile in their urban environments, they were able to utilize the digital realm for the mobilization of communication and practices, especially the ones held simultaneously on balconies. This, by attributing new practices to balconies, have ultimately added a new layer to the social production for the places of the pandemic.

British geographer Tim Cresswell –following Lefebvre- believes that place is ‘social space’ (Cresswell, 1996). Focusing on Tuan’s ideas on experience, Cresswell (2008) states “Focusing on place, therefore, attends to how we, as humans, are in the world - how we relate to our environment and make it into place” (p. 138). Thus, he approaches the interplay between space and place through an experience-based understanding. Referring to Agnew (1987), he defines place as “a meaningful site that combines location, locale, and sense of place (Cresswell, 2009, p. 169). Combining different conceptions of place, he forms his theory around the idea that any given place is “a combination of materiality, meaning, and practice” (Cresswell, 2009, p. 169). For him, the *materiality* of a place corresponds to the locale, the setting in which social relations occur. It’s the places’ physicality such as streets, balconies, parks... *Meaning* for him is based on *sense of place*, stating that meanings are “... associated with a place: the feelings and emotions a place evokes” (Cresswell, 2009, p. 169). These meanings associated with a place can be individual or shared. Lastly, he defines *practice* as people’s daily activities and states that places are repeatedly reconstructed with the “reiteration of practice on a regular basis” (Cresswell, 2009, p. 170). He believes that there is a constant cycle of influence between the three notions of materiality, practice and meaning. For instance, since places are practiced, “People do things in place. What they do, in part, is responsible for the meanings that a place might have” (Cresswell, 2009, p. 170). His deconstructed theory on how places are made through materiality, meaning and practice provides opportunities for analyzing the placemaking practices of the pandemic in terms of the changing components of the places and how they are practiced, thus his theory is utilized in the thesis for the analysis of the data.

The main physical space, where social production of place happens through interactions and encounters is the public space. As stated by Caves (2004), public

spaces are “conventionally defined as those spaces that can be freely (and legally) accessed by all citizens” (p. 549) and include the internal spaces of communal buildings as well as streets, city squares and plazas. Such places also provide a milieu of socializing while also giving identity and reputation to cities livability, while also contributing to the well-being of the residents (Collins & Stadler, 2020). The inherent social production within the public space is highlighted by Sendi and Marušić (2012) through the reciprocal interaction between the inseparable components of public (people) and space (place). Thus, “Public space is then not just a spatial frame, a waiting scene where an event will occur; it is more – it is publicspace” (Sendi & Marušić, 2012, p. 21). Apart from accommodating the daily rhythms and lives of people, public places also have political roles: “Located between the private spaces of the home and the workplace, such spaces have often been valorized as democratic spaces of congregation and political participation, where marginalized groups can vocalize their rights” (Caves, p. 349). Furthermore, the public milieu also accommodates festivals, celebrations and parades. Duffy (2020), by studying the interrelation between public spaces and festivals, state that within the public space, “these events are sites for social relations, and it is here that different types and forms of relational networks overlap and meet” (p. 74) and the social and spatial relations facilitated lead to the regulation and representation of identity.

In addition to the social production, spaces –and especially public spaces- are also realized through their physicality and materialities. As stated by Project for Public Spaces (n.d.-c), public places are where citizens interact with each other and with their institutions and “when these spaces work well, they serve as the stage for our public lives”. PPS (n.d.-c), by analyzing various successful public places around the world, have identified physical qualities that make a good public place such as accessibility, being engaged in activities, being comfortable and sociable. They summarized their findings in The Place Diagram (Figure A1). According to them, good public spaces should provide people with places to sit and interact with their communities should provide sociability and various activities since they are “the basic building blocks of great places: They are the reasons why people visit in the first place, and why they continue to return” (PPS, n.d.-c). In terms of accessibility, the connections of a given space to its surrounding –both visually and physically- plays a key role. Public spaces such as historic urban squares like Kızılay and Taksim –where celebrations as well as

protests take place- have articulated connections to their surroundings, and they have main routes of transportation that pass through them since they are central within their cities. In relation to the accessibility, they are sociable places as well, since they accommodate diverse and intense flows of people and thus provides for encounters and opportunities of interaction. Furthermore, such successful public spaces that are accessible and sociable lead to them being associated with shared meanings and experience, strengthening their role as celebration places.

The complexity of places, previously explored by Lefebvre, has been intensified due to the technological developments, where physical places started to be influenced by the network of social and spatial relations sustained on the Internet. As stated by Hjarvard (2008), “Contemporary society is permeated by the media, to an extent that the media may no longer be conceived of as being separate from cultural and other social institutions” (p. 105). Furthermore, such technological developments, when integrated into everyday life, leads to the “next generation of public sphere, which is virtual one” (Barlas & Çalışkan, 2005, p. 1). Among the first scholars who focused on places in relation to technological developments was Manuel Castells, who defines *space of flows* as “the material organization of time-sharing social practices that work through flows” (Castells, 1997, p. 14). Through the mobilization of the elements -by digital developments- which affect places, the digital and physical place became overlapped and started to shape each other in complex ways (Graham, 1998). The narratives that have accumulated in the digital space became superimposed onto the physical space, and they “act as feedback loops recursively transforming the very situations that produce them” (Mitchell, 2003, p. 107).

Relatedly, how physical public spaces are realized and practiced has changed as well, through digital technologies influencing the “particular way in which place is configured, and the modes of engagement that are operative within it” (Malpas, 2012, p. 31). In relation to placemaking, these technologies also provide “a medium to extend place-based interactions” (Evans-Cowley, 2010, p. 408) relatedly providing new layers of meaning and practice to our everyday environments (Dourish, 2006, p. 304):

The technologically mediated world does not stand apart from the physical world within which it is embedded; rather, it provides a new set of ways for that physical world to be understood and appropriated. 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

Thus, the urban public spaces within the contemporary context are realized through the recursive loop of influence among the digital and physical place. Castells (2012), by studying the occupy movements⁴ that are similar to the collective practices of the pandemic, state that such movements should be studied in relation to the hybridity of the contemporary urban places. For him, networked practices facilitate a new form of space that is “a mixture of space of places, in a given territory, and space of flows, on the Internet. One could not function without the other; it is this hybrid space that characterized the movement.” (Castells, 2015, p. 171). Thus, urban environments within the contemporary context should be handled in relation to the hybridity of the places, which also provides new practices and appropriations that becomes vital during such spatial crisis as the COVID-19 pandemic.

The theories of place explored in this section highlight that within the contemporary world, places should be studied in relation to the social and spatial networks that are facilitated both physically and digitally. Relatedly in terms of placemaking, it should be noted that digital place provides a new layer and form of production for physical places through mediated experiences. As social media platforms offer the possibility for people to connect and form new communities from afar, the place-based relations challenged due to modernization and the pandemic can be facilitated through digital networks leading to such practices becoming a part of contemporary placemaking.

2.2 Placemaking

The concept of placemaking have emerged as a result of the planning practices of the 20th century which overlooked the inhabitants of cities. It's argued within the theory of placemaking that the authorities and governments who undertake the planning of cities forgot the daily life of the users. Placemaking as a field of theory and practice emerged inspired by the works that considered people as the fundamental focus for the study of the built environment. Jane Jacobs (1958) was among the first scholars who acknowledged that during the modernization process of urban planning, citizens and their daily lives were renounced in favor of buildings and highways. She argues that

⁴ Occupy movements, as Castells explains, are acts that are organized in social media platforms, that are later carried onto the physical space, generally by the collective occupation of urban environments.

the fundamental focus of urban planning should be on citizens who make the city: “There is no logic that can be superimposed on the city; people make it, and it is to them, not buildings, that we must fit our plans” (Jacobs, 1958, p. 127). She believes that the cities are constructed of ‘bits and pieces’, continuously knitted into the fabric of the city through the citizens (Jacobs, 1961). Since her primary focus for the built environment is on the citizens, her ideas were influential in the placemaking theory.

Jan Gehl (1987) had an important impact on the emergence of placemaking theory and practice as well, by emphasizing the importance of the human scale in urban planning and realized the places left between buildings as important environments for social interaction. His theory was influential since he defined various other places in the urban environment, that were not defined or designed to be public places but are serving as one as a result of the social practices of the citizens. Following Jacobs, William H. Whyte started his project *The Street Life Project* in 1970 with a group of researchers, to observe the dynamics of the urban space. He later published his findings in *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (Whyte, 1980). Supporting that the human dimension of design was lost, his findings were that people tend to go to places where there are other people and sit wherever they can (Whyte, 1980). This, similar to Gehl, emphasizes that people appropriate public spaces in relation to their needs for communal activities, as how the space fits their daily routines, and the places they establish attachments to do not always have to be pre-designed. Thus, people have the power to shape the public space. Apart from his work being fundamental in placemaking in terms of the focus on human factor, Whyte was the mentor of the non-profit organization Project for Public Spaces (PPS) founded in 1975. The organization was founded by Fred Kent, who was a researcher in Whyte’s *The Street Life Project*. PPS has been acknowledged as an organization that focuses on placemaking and how it facilitates the participation of communities in the making of public places.

PPS has defined 11 principles about how placemaking processes should be, which highlights the collaboration and community aspects of the practice (Walljasper & PPS, 2007, p. 3-4):

1. The community is the expert.
2. You are creating a place, not a design.
3. You can’t do it alone.
4. They’ll always say, “It can’t be done”.
6. Develop a vision.
7. Form supports function.
8. Make the connections.
9. Start with petunias.

5. You can see a lot by just observing.

10. Money is not the issue.

11. You are never finished.

These principles, which are established for the deliberate placemaking practices highlight the importance of community in the making of place, the importance of collaboration, how small interventions can lead to the creation of a place and observing the patterns of citizens' social practices can lead to new understandings. Relatedly, these principles also apply to the placemaking of the pandemic, which was realized autonomously by communities, yet still made possible by collaboration, small interventions and the social interaction of the citizens, organically adapted to the conditions of the pandemic.

2.2.1 Definitions of Placemaking

Placemaking theory is based on the relation between people and their places, especially how people's collective practice in a given space turns it into a place that has shared and individual meanings through the bonds facilitated (PPS, 2007; Schneekloth & Shibley, 1995; Silberberg et al., 2013). Thus, the place component in placemaking is closely related with the social production of place. Relatedly, one of the first definitions of placemaking is done in relation to the social production of space: Placemaking is "the way all of us as human beings transform the places in which we find ourselves into places in which we live" (Schneekloth & Shibley, 1995, p. 1). Furthermore, the interaction among the components of placemaking is iterative since "spaces shape us, yet we also contribute to the shaping of these spaces through placemaking" (Hes et al., 2020, p. 2). As a result, many definitions of placemaking are done focusing on the interrelation of communities and how they practice their places.

In defining placemaking, some studies focus more on the aspects related with communities. These studies that focus on how placemaking facilitates community engagement, and relatedly community bonds, focus on the place-based relations people establish among themselves through placemaking practices (Badenhorst, 2019; Nursey-Bray, 2020; Silberberg et al., 2013). Such approaches emphasize that community building is promoted during the process, even so that "... placemaking is actually community building" (Badenhorst, 2019, p. 5). Acknowledging the transformation of places as a result of the placemaking practices, some believe that the

vital transformation happens in the participants' minds and “process and community engagement can be as important or more important than the ‘product’ of a built-out place (Silberberg et al., 2013, p. 21). A similar approach is adapted by PPS (2007) as well, who state placemaking is the act of citizens collectively reimagining their public spaces and the question put for by the organization is question “What if we built our communities around places?”. Their definition is important, especially at a time when public places that communities normally realize collective practices are challenged. By organizing in non-conventional “public places” such as balconies and the digital place, citizens have seen to sustain their community bonds during the pandemic. Some keywords PPS associate with placemaking –that are also valid for the placemaking practices during the pandemic- are “community-driven, inclusive, adaptable, dynamic, collaborative and sociable” (PPS, 2007). The approaches that focus on community engagement often emphasize that placemaking -apart from having professional collaborators such as governments, urban planners and designers- is much more related with the unofficial actors: the people and the community. These approaches acknowledge that placemaking, still being a deliberate practice that is focused on a physically defined place, is “not limited to experts but is a practice that can be performed by ordinary people” (Strydom et al., 2018, p. 174). Similarly, Silberberg et al. (2013) state that “Today’s placemaking represents a comeback for community. The iterative actions and collaborations inherent in the making of places nourish communities and empower people” (p. 3). Thus, it is believed that by empowering and engaging communities in shaping their environments, the power -that was lost due to modernity- to shape urban environments can be given back to the citizens. This is even more valid for the contemporary context, where due to the increasing technological developments, citizens have been mobilized and the space-based relations have been weakened. As stated by Nursey-Bray (2020), through placemaking, the communities that are dispersed in space, can realize collective practices through community engagement.

Furthermore, there are several approaches that study placemaking by highlighting the interrelation between communities and places (Mateo-Babiano & Lee, 2020; Shibley et al., 2003). Such approaches believe that the ‘people’ element in placemaking can encourage wider community engagement for place-based change, facilitating stronger connections to both people among themselves and the places and communities they

share (Mateo-Babiano & Lee, 2020). Furthermore, as stated by Shibley et al. (2003), “Placemaking understands the public realm and its publics as mutually constitutive; it cherishes public dialogue as much as it values the design of public spaces” (p. 28). These definitions and approaches have put the fundamental focus on how community bonds and the bonds people establish to their places effect each other in the making of places. Other approaches have focused on the end product of the process of placemaking, the places themselves. Here, the transformation of spaces into places through community engagement is highlighted: placemaking is the “...participation in both the production of meaning and in the means of production of a locale” (Lepofsky & Fraser, 2003, p. 128).

Through the bonds facilitated among communities and between people and their places, placemaking also facilitates place attachment and relatedly well-being (Brunnberg & Frigo, 2012; Heller & Adams, 2009; London, 2020; Nursey-Bray, 2020; PPS, 2007;). As stated by Brunnberg and Frigo (2012) “The art of placemaking values not only the physical but also the social and even the spiritual qualities of a place” (p. 114). PPS puts it as “With community-based participation at its center, an effective placemaking process capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, and it results in the creation of quality public spaces that contribute to people's health, happiness, and well-being” (PPS, 2007). A similar but more contemporary approach is taken by Nursey-Bray (2020), who puts it as “When placemaking has community engagement at its heart, it becomes a process that can result in the creation of public spaces that facilitate community well-being in important ways” (p. 306).

Another study that explores the relation between community engagement and well-being that is facilitated through the end-product is done by London (2020), through what he defines as *healthy placemaking*, which he defines as dependent on “(...) social interaction and building community” (p. 40). Compared to the previously mentioned studies, his approach to well-being is more focused on the community aspect of placemaking. He believes that communities, through shared experiences, generate “a sense of belonging that helps us feel connected to the places where we live and work” (London, 2020, p. 30) and through such place-based relations being realized, place attachment is facilitated. Heller and Adams (2009) also studied the relation between placemaking, and well-being facilitated by community participation. Following the

idea that sense of place is an important component of wellbeing (Williams et al, cited in Heller & Adams, 2009) they believe that placemaking "...seeks to engender a sense of place through the design of spaces intended to contribute to community inclusion and engagement" (Heller & Adams, 2009, p. 18). Thus, placemaking process can provide sense of belonging among a community and sense of place, that can lead to an increase in wellbeing.

Since placemaking is the efforts of people turning spaces into places that belongs to them, it is studied in relation minority communities as well. Minorities tend to create strong emotional connections with their environments, influenced by place attachment and sense of place (Shdema & Martin, 2020). Through placemaking, these communities are able to create a shared sense of place through collectively practices. In *Black Placemaking: Celebration, Play, and Poetry*, the placemaking practices of black people are studied, and black placemaking is defined as: "the ability of residents to shift otherwise oppressive geographies of a city to provide sites of play, pleasure, celebration, and politics" (Hunter et al., 2016, p. 34). Here, it is emphasized that placemaking offers these minority communities opportunities to create their own places in an environment that is not designed for their needs and that might even be against them. The case of minorities is similar to the case seen in the pandemic in a sense that it includes people who are experiencing challenges in practicing their environments, due to it being oppressive. Through celebrations, similar to the case of the pandemic, the minorities were able to carve out places that are their own, which provides important theoretical background for the case of the placemaking during the pandemic.

These definitions of placemaking are valid and important in analyzing the placemaking practices during the COVID-19 pandemic since sense of community, connection to and practicing public places, and sense of place -and interrelatedly well-being- were all challenged throughout the lockdown periods. On the other hand, the practices of placemaking realized during the pandemic are different from the ones studied in the literature. Because they are not officially planned, the engagement they require is different: Citizens can't create a sense of place by physically coming together and participating in the making of the place. Furthermore, the public places where the collective practices are realized have been lost as well, causing the loss of communal

places. Nevertheless, the definitions outlined here are important in providing insights on how placemaking was altered and realized during the pandemic, and how the outcomes of the study can be interpreted to benefit the theoretical field.

2.2.2 Typologies of Placemaking

With the growing theoretical and practical field in placemaking, it has been approached through various different backgrounds in multidisciplinary ways. These different approaches have resulted in various placemaking practices. Relatedly, there have been studies that tried to systematically analyze and categorize different practices of placemaking under various new typologies.

Mark A. Wyckoff was among the first scholars who tried to differentiate and categorize the various approaches to placemaking. Here, it should be noted that he mainly approaches placemaking as a tool for economic development rather than a means to facilitate community and place building. His definition of placemaking – which he refers to as the standard placemaking- revolves around the idea that it is a process for making places where people would like to live, play, and work (Wyckoff, 2014, n.p.). Some practices of **Standard Placemaking** are given as “Regularly programmed events in public places like sidewalks, streets, town squares, civic buildings, parks, waterfronts, etc.” (Wyckoff et al., 2015, p. 26).

His theory of **Tactical Placemaking** relies on two different approaches: tactical urbanism and “*Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper*” approach of PPS used to describe certain practices. He handles tactical urbanism as “(an approach) to neighborhood building and activation using short-term, low-cost, and scalable interventions and policies” (Lydon & Garcia, 2015, p. 2). For the “Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper” (LQC) approach, he refers to PPS⁵, who define it as a local development strategy that is relying on the creative energy of communities (PPS, 2011). It is based on the idea of doing small interventions, which can even be seasonal, in order to draw the community in and give them a place to communicate. Building up on these two similar approaches, Wyckoff et al. (2015) define tactical placemaking as:

Tactical Placemaking is the process of creating quality places that uses a deliberate, often phased approach to physical change or new activation of space

⁵ PPS have adapted the term from Eric Reynolds, in relation to the projects he has realized in the organization Urban Space Management

that begins with a short-term commitment and realistic expectations that can start quickly (and often at low cost) (p. 27).

Thus, for them, tactical placemaking is about doing small —often short-term— interventions in places that are not used enough or completely abandoned. Tactical placemaking aims to show the potential of a place and gain the involvement of local actors in the process (Wyckoff et al., 2015). During the pandemic, tactical placemaking was practiced by communities, through them simply needing communal places where they can continue their celebration practices. Through small interventions within their homes, citizens were able to turn such places into places of celebration.

Another type of placemaking that Wyckoff identifies is **Creative Placemaking**. The term itself was coined by Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa (2010) who define it as:

In creative placemaking, partners from public, private, non-profit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, city, or region around arts and cultural activities (p. 3).

Apart from the previously mentioned types of placemaking, creative placemaking tends to institutionalize the practices of art and incorporate them into the practices of placemaking. It tries to bring the community together through collaborations among institutions and creative people. Through creative placemaking practices, places where diverse groups of people come together for celebrations is created (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010). The practices of creative placemaking put forth the creativity of the people and facilitates collective practice of places “where music, art, fashion, entertainment, drinking, eating, and socializing are celebrated” (Wyckoff et al., 2015, p. 29). Relatedly, communities facilitated around the practices of art emerges.

The last type of placemaking that was differentiated by Wyckoff is **Strategic Placemaking**. Out of the four typologies mentioned by Wyckoff, strategic placemaking is the one that focuses on economy the most. As he states, all types of placemaking aim to make better places for people to live and socialize in. However, the main focus of strategic placemaking is to create places that are for “talented workers so that they want to be there and live there, and by so doing, they create the circumstances for substantial job creation and income growth by attracting businesses that are looking for concentrations of talented workers” (Wyckoff et al., 2015, p. 29).

The projects and practices of strategic placemaking is much more targeted and long-term, and as a result, economic development is achieved.

Apart from the types acknowledged and differentiated by Wyckoff, there are various other practices of placemaking that are realized in relation to different types. Two of these types are identified in relation to the complex spatiotemporal network of relations concerning the modernized world. As defined by Rios and Watkins (2015), **Translocal Placemaking** entails “practices that territorialize translocal circuits of social and material relations in space and time” (p. 209). They believe that existing approaches to placemaking “fail to capture how places contain ideas and practices that circulate to and from other locations” (Rios & Watkins, 2015, p. 209). **Relational Placemaking**, coined by Pierce, Martin and Murphy has emerged through similar concerns, focusing on analyzing the placemaking practices for actions of networked politics such as social movements. They define placemaking “an inherently networked process, constituted by the socio-spatial relationships that link individuals together through a common place-frame” (Pierce et al., 2011, p. 54). They believe that any given place is relational in a sense that there are many networks –that can be social, economic, political–simultaneously influencing and passing through places. Building up on theories of place by Doreen Massey and David Harvey, they conclude that people tend to “(...) make places – by referencing and (re)configuring the many simultaneous places that they participate in; these placebundles are socially negotiated, constantly changing and contingent” (Pierce et al., 2011, p. 58). Both of these types and their related theories are influential in understanding the placemaking of the pandemic. Especially at the beginning of the COVID-19, where lockdowns were strictly enforced, the relation citizens had to their urban environments were through translocal networks provided by the digital communication platforms. Relatedly, placemaking was realized through such complex translocal networks of interaction, provided by social media platforms where new meanings associated with places were simultaneously in development, in relation to various other influences.

With community participation being a key element in placemaking practices, related types of placemaking that focus on communities have emerged in relation to specific practices. These approaches to placemaking are defined as **Community-driven Placemaking** (Hou & Rios, 2003) and **Participatory Placemaking** (Badenhorst,

2019; Al Waer et al., 2017). Al Waer et al. approach participatory placemaking as a collaborative framework stating that community-driven placemaking are usually done in collaboration with various actors, it combines local and technical knowledge (2017). Following the same idea as Al Waer, Badenhorst (2019) explains the community-led practices of placemaking as:

The emphasis on a community-led process therefore means that besides design inputs, the art of placemaking entails several tools to facilitate community participation, social inclusion, place analysis and experimentation (i.e. try-out of ideas to improve a public space) as well as animation of a place (e.g. events and activities of people to creatively use the public space) (p. 3).

On the other hand, Hou & Rio give emphasis to the public place as a network of social relations, they suggest that placemaking should focus on “how resources and social networks are mobilized, how issues and ideas are developed” (Hou & Rios, 2003, p.21). Both of these approaches in relation to communities are important for understanding the placemaking of the pandemic, since it was realized mainly through the citizens’ interaction through social networks and emerged through them collectively occupying their balconies.

2.2.3 Digital Placemaking

In the context of our contemporary world where digital media has spread to every aspect of our daily lives, practices of placemaking extended to the digital media. As stated by Farman (2014), “Our contemporary mobile technologies, like the many mobile media that have come before them throughout history, are radically transforming how we produce and practice space” (p. 101). With the evolution of social media platforms, communication and interaction among citizens -and even the interaction between citizens and local governments- shifted to the digital realm. As a result, the communities that historically rely on social interaction in physical public places have experienced shifts in how their citizens interact and the medium of interaction. “This has had a dramatic influence upon the way that the idea of public space has been communicated, transforming the representation of place from a professional and institutional practice into a social practice” (Cameron, 2020, p. 139). Furthermore, as stated by Sak (2013), “Cyberspace resembles the physical urban spaces in realization of collective productions and experiences, therefore in its social production and publicness” (p. 81). As a result, placemaking became the subject of

contemporary studies, and the term “digital placemaking” emerged as a new type, with various new definitions and related new practices. Especially during the pandemic, the theory of digital placemaking became important because civic and collective engagements were carried out in the digital milieu.

Before the mainstream usage of Internet and social media, digital developments in the light of modernization were evaluated as the decline of community by some scholars because “that deep-seated technological trends are radically ‘privatizing’ or ‘individualizing’ our use of leisure time and thus disrupting many opportunities for social-capital formation”⁶ (Putnam, 1995, p. 75). Digitalization had spatial implications as well where “The desire for simultaneity, which coursed through modern sensibility at the beginning of the century, has transformed the social and political terrain, creating radical new ‘communities’ dispersed in space but joined in time” (McQuire, 1997, p. 186). However, with the rise of the Internet and the computer mediated communication technologies, the social networks -and relatedly the social production of place- accommodated by the digital place were realized. Wellman (2001) states “When computer-mediated communication networks link people, institutions, and knowledge, they are computer-supported social networks” (p. 2031). Such communities that are detached in physical places, similarly to the conditions of the pandemic, can realize placemaking practices through the complex computer-supported social networks.

Within the contemporary context, digital placemaking became a subject in the theoretical field. As Sak (2013) states, the digital place provides new channels of communication and interaction for spatially distant users while also providing the extension of physical place and its experience. Relatedly, digital placemaking as a field of study aims to extend traditional placemaking strategies, mainly by expanding the medium of community engagement, participation and interaction; facilitating communication among various actors of placemaking (Alvarez et al., 2017; Aurigi & De Cindio, 2008; Breek et al., 2018; Rainie & Wellman, 2012; Toland et al., 2020). One of the first definitions of digital placemaking is established by the influential

⁶ Putnam, after the rise of the Internet, has realized that digital technologies enhance social capital in his following works: “Telecommunications in general and the Internet in particular substantially enhance our ability to communicate; thus it seems reasonable to assume that their net effect will be to enhance community, perhaps even dramatically. Social capital is about networks, and the Net is the network to end all networks” (2020, p. 184)

placemaking organization Project for Public Spaces in 2011. They define digital placemaking as “... the integration of social media into placemaking practices, which are community-centered, encouraging public participation, collaboration, and transparency” (PPS, 2011). Halegoua (2020) acknowledges that digital media has become an integral part of the social production of places. She believes that with the digital technologies becoming integral to the daily lives of the citizens, the power of reproducing and reshaping the urban environment is given to the public (Halegoua, 2020). Thus, digital placemaking is seen as a tool to empower communities in placemaking practices. Furthermore, she believes that locative media –such as geotagging tweets/posts- lead to the reconceptualization of spatial relations by “re-place(ing) the city into the hands of the public” (Halegoua, 2020, p. 147) and facilitating the creation of new meanings through “the representation of location through locative and social media emphasizes the mobile, social production of place through the announcement and archiving of personal, physical experiences” (Halegoua, 2020, p. 19).

Other approaches acknowledge that digital and physical places are intertwined, and that digital practices of placemaking facilitate a sense of physical and social space (Wilken et al., 2020; Witteborn, 2021). Digital placemaking involves “practices that create emotional attachments to place through digital media use” (Wilken et al., 2020, p. 1). Furthermore, they are repetitive practices sustained in mediated places, transcending time and space, resulting in “a digital, physical, social, and symbolic location for individuals and groups of people” (Witteborn, 2021, p. 3). Such definitions apply to the contemporary world under the influence of the pandemic: Because the citizens have lost their connection to the physical public space, through digital placemaking practices they are able to collectively participate in the making of a digital place. With them occupying the digital place, physical places are also affected through the social production and the interrelation among the two milieu.

Definitions of digital placemaking -done by actively functioning organizations which focus on the augmentation of public places through the usage of digital technologies- have defined it in relation to how it can enhance the physical experience of the users, promote participation and facilitate urban regeneration programs (DPI, n.d; Morrison, 2018). In such approaches, the digital representation of the place is used as a tool rather

than a place itself where people can engage in communal activities. It can be seen from such approaches that they see digital place as an intermediary tool, rather than a place where placemaking can happen. Their primary focus is on the physical space, and not the interrelation between the digital and the physical milieu, that ultimately results in placemaking. However, a more recent approach by Morrison is seen to embrace the hybrid space created by the use of digital media and stating that usage of digital technology can affect the experience of users in a given place, and that the communities' view of a place can be changed through hybrid place that is created by digital placemaking, without altering the physical environment itself (Morrison, 2020). However, the definition still lacks the understanding of digital and physical place having an interrelation that effects and changes both of them.

Digital placemaking have also been studied in relation to the conditions of the pandemic, since digital place has provided people with a safe space where they can sustain their social practices and have mediated experiences of physical places. An influential example of how digital place was utilized in the process of placemaking during the pandemic is AirBnb's project *Online Experiences*. As explained by Norum and Polsum (2021), the Online Experiences project is a service where people can have curated tours of places from all over the world through their computers, guided and streamed by local hosts. In relation to the service, Norum and Polsum (2021) have define digital placemaking as the "... interweaving of meaning-making in relation to place, occurring through social relations, communication, embodiment, and personal and shared experience enacted via a digitally mediated platform..." (2021, p. 4). Their findings highlight the physicality of the place and the community aspect of placemaking. Online Experiences is an influential example of how the hybrid space, generated by the overlaying of the digital and physical place, can lead to translocal networks and new practices of placemaking, realized in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

To sum up, digital placemaking as a field of practice have been evaluated as the digital technologies as tools to augment and enhance the experience of the physical public place. Even though some studies acknowledge that physical place can be altered by utilizing the digital milieu as a tool, there are few studies that acknowledge the iterative cycle of influence the milieus have on each other. The theory of digital placemaking

on the other hand, have built up on the community engagement facilitated on digital platforms and acknowledges the digital place as both a place for extending place-based experiences related with the physical milieu and a place within itself, where communities and their practices can be sustained. For the case of the pandemic, the theoretical and practical background have acknowledged that the practices of digital placemaking were realized in relation to the hybridity of the modern context. However, the example given here have failed to comprise the iterative cycle between digital and physical place.

2.3 Placemaking Examples in the World

Even though the theory of placemaking originated in the 1960s, it was realized as a field of practice in 1975 by Fred Kent, following the foundation of Projects for Public Places. The organization was founded “as a three-year project⁷ to get public spaces to be planned as if people mattered” (PPS, n.d.-a). PPS did the first example of placemaking on Bryant Park, in New York. In the early 1980s, the park had a bad reputation among New Yorkers, it was neglected and unsafe. In order to revitalize the area, a collaboration between Bryant Park Corporation (BPC) and Project for Public Places was done, where PPS had conducted research on the park and observed how it was used. As a result of the report, which concluded that the park was deemed to be unsafe by the citizens, spatial changes were implemented in relation to its findings (PPS, n.d.-b).

Through collaborations with various companies and using the revenue generated by the amenities in organizing events and facilitating community engagement, Bryant Park has been referred to the “most dramatic examples of successful placemaking in the last half century and is a good illustration of the power of public-private partnerships and of strong programming” (Silberberg et al., 2013, p. 31). The park is still highly utilized by the community (Figure 2.1) through its successful maintenance and management, where a wide range of activities and events are offered monthly through collaborations⁸ (FigureA2-A4). The park is an influential example of placemaking because during the planning stage, the citizens were involved within the

⁷ Project for Public Spaces was decided to be continued by Kent after the initial 3 years of its functioning, because he believed that there were still a lot of problems to be handled concerning the public realm. The organization still actively functioning in 2022.

⁸ The website for Bryant Park provides information of their collaborators under each activity. For instance, Movie Night events are realized in collaboration with Paramount Pictures.

process, where they have been interviewed in order to understand their needs. Following the type of standard placemaking, Bryant Park has shown that the successful utilization of a place, in terms of planning and realizing events through collaborations, have facilitated interaction of the citizens with the environment creating a communal place.



Figure 2.1 Bryant Park after the placemaking interventions (Source: <https://bryantpark.org/activities/the-lawn>)

A more contemporary example of a placemaking practice, that is organized by citizens every year internationally, is Park(ing) Day⁹ (Figure 2.2). As explained by them Park(ing) Day “is a global, public, participatory art project... It is a day where people across the world temporarily repurpose street parking spaces and convert them to tiny parks and places for art, play, and activism” (Park(ing) Day, n.d.-a). The main idea behind the event is similar to how placemaking as a theory emerged: The team behind Rebar, have realized “the space dedicated to vehicle movement” as a “precious part of San Francisco’s Public realm” (Park(ing) Day, n.d.-b). Based on the idea that with modernization, cars have become the main concern of the design of the public place, the team looked at parking spots and figured out that the parking places were like cheap real estate where interaction among the citizens can be achieved. As John Bela has expressed “We created an opportunity for social interaction that wasn’t there before” (Quoted in Schneider, 2017).

⁹ Park(ing) Day was initiated in San Francisco, in 2005, where a design group called Rebar (John Bela, Matthew Passmore, Blaine Merker) have transformed a curbside parking space into a tiny park with only two benches. It has since been planned for the third Friday of September every year all around the world.



Figure 2.2 *The original installation of Park(ing) Day done by Rebar in San Francisco, 2005*
(Source: <https://www.myparkingday.org>)

After its initial installation, the documentation of the event has sparked interest on the internet, it became “an annual event for people to reclaim urban space from cars, one parking space at a time” (Park(ing) Day, n.d.-b). The event is an important example of contemporary placemaking, since it highlights that even a place as small as a parking lot can become a communal place, with the engagement of citizens and articulation of participation. By following the principles of tactical placemaking, Park(ing) Day has been acknowledged as a way for people to reclaim their streets. Even in small spaces -such as parking spots and balconies- citizens can create communal places, by only facilitating community interaction through small interventions. During the 15 years the event has been carried out, these parking spots have accommodated places of conversation for communities while also having more planned events such as yoga, golf, chess tournaments (FigureA5-A6).

An example from festivals and celebrations should be given as well, since as stated by Richards (2017), such events provide placemaking in terms of both temporal and spatial dimensions, whose effects extend beyond the event itself. Furthermore, such activities also provide for the image and identity of the city (Johansson & Kociatkiewicz, 2011). Stockholm Culture Festival (Figure A7) is one of the many examples of urban festivals. It was initiated in 2006 with the aim of to enhancing the cultural image of the city while also encouraging participation of citizens to the cultural events of Sweden (Johansson & Kociatkiewicz, 2011). As stated by Johansson and Kociatkiewicz (2011) “The participatory aspect can be seen as a representation of the contemporary notion of mobilizing culture for social inclusion” (p. 399). The festival offers a wide range of communal activities and performances in 6 festival areas

dispersed within the city, and draws in people from all around the world. With the large number of attendees their interaction both between themselves and with parts of the city, the event is an important facilitator of shared experience. Relatedly, such festivals and celebrations are important in facilitating placemaking through social interaction among people, while also engaging citizens in the making of their cities, rather than perceiving them as a backdrop daily practices and events (Richards & Palmer, 2012), and turning them into places of celebration (Ilhami & Ellisais, 2020).

A more recent and contemporary example of digital placemaking that highlights the importance of collectivity of communities in the process of digital placemaking is the r/place event organized by Reddit¹⁰. r/place first started as a social experiment in 2007 and ran for 72 hours. It was established by Josh Wardle as “a project that explores the way that humans interact at large scales” (Simpson et al., 2017). The project provided users with a 1000 x 1000 pixel canvas, where they can place a pixel from a palette of 16 colors every 5 minutes. As the developers of the project explain, users were encouraged towards collaboration since the time limitation “de-emphasized the importance of the individual and necessitated the collaboration of many users in order to achieve complex creations” (Simpson et al., 2017). r/place was revived in 2022 on April 1st and took place over the span of four days. The project started with a 500 x 500 pixel canvas which was then doubled twice, reaching 2000 x 2000 pixels. Furthermore, in 2017 more than a million users participated in the event with 16 million pixels placed on the canvas whereas in 2022, 6 million users were involved, and more than 72 million pixels were placed (Lorenz, 2022). The About Community description in 2022 read:

*Some have visited a canvas before.
A place where togetherness created more.
Now in numbers far greater, taking more space,
It falls upon you to create a better place.*

From various standpoints, the project is an important example of placemaking within the digital realm. Various communities, along with citizens of different countries, collectively practiced the digital place and participated in the event, in order to represent themselves through pixels in the digital realm (Figure A7). The final version

¹⁰ Reddit is home to thousands of communities, endless conversation, and authentic human connection” (reddit, n.d.). The platform is known for its subreddits, where communities can create subpages within the website, and get involved in conversations related to their interests. As of 2020, the platform has 52 million daily active users with 2.8 million subreddits.

of the canvas before “the white void” took place is shared by Reddit, becoming a significant example of creatively made digital place.

The examples given here are important in showing that placemaking is normally realized as a deliberate practice which focuses on the making of a specific place. For the case of Bryant Park, how the park will be turned into a public place with the engagement of the citizens was planned, and realized through various collaborations. For the case of r/place, the users of the platform were given a defined digital place, the canvas. However, the participation of the users happened through the connectivity and the vast network of interaction of the Internet. The case of Park(ing) Day on the other hand is different compared to the other examples in a sense that it was not realized in one defined place. Even though the practice involved parking spots, it was not realized in a specific location but rather in various parking spots all over the world. Thus, placemaking was not physically bounded and it was realized through the collective practice and experience people had.

2.4 Placemaking in Turkish Context

The placemaking theory and practice have not been fully recognized within the contemporary context of Turkey yet. Even though there are some non-governmental organizations that focus on including the public within the design and making of their urban environments, urban planning is mostly done by governmental bodies, in a top-down fashion. However, social networks and protests have showed the citizens of Turkey that they can collectively re-claim their public places and be involved as actors in the bottom-up making of their urban environments.

The organizations that are concerned with placemaking in Turkey, similar to the efforts of Project for Public Spaces, value collaboration among professionals and the users in the making or revitalization of the urban places. two of such organizations currently operating in the contemporary context of Turkey are TAK and Onaranlar Klübü.

TAK is an organization that gives importance to social change within urban problems and values design (*tasarım*), research (*araştırma*) and participation (*katılım*) in the solutions they come up with. As they define themselves:

TAK is a place of innovation and creativity where citizens, designers, volunteers, students and supporters create ideas and share their products with the public by establishing national and international collaborations for the

solution of urban problems. It is an independent organization that produces programs and projects on a voluntary and collaborative basis, together with designers from all disciplines (TAK n.d.).

Similar to Project for Public Places' key qualities in a good place, TAK have defined core principles of how their solutions to urban problems should be such as Participatory Ideas, Sharing of Experiences and Social Capital. The principles put forth by them are closely related with the placemaking literature, by giving emphasis to the involvement of citizens in the process of projects through ideas and design, facilitating an environment for collaborations and promoting social capital.

TAK has two types of collaboration through which they realize their placemaking projects: through corporates and based on projects. For corporate collaborations, by working together with the municipalities of Kadıköy and Kartal in İstanbul, they have established Tasarım Atölyesi Kadıköy¹¹ and Tasarım Atölyesi Kartal¹², where workshops are held with citizens and volunteers to come up with inclusive design solutions for urban environments. For program collaborations, they have three more sub-types. The first one is "*Kıyı Köşe: Canlanan Mekanlar*"¹³, where neglected public places are: designed by volunteers, the one to be implemented is selected by the residents and build with the collaboration of municipalities or supporters. Idle Places is similar to the typology of Tactical Placemaking, in how it is planned and realized. The other sub-types of program collaborations - "*TasarlaTAK: Kent Kimliği*"¹⁴ and "*Sosyal Etki: Duyarlı Tasarım*"¹⁵ - are more concerned with the social impact their projects have on cities and neighborhoods.

As an example, one of the workshops of TAK Kadıköy was conducted in 2014 for Kadife Street in İstanbul, where its usage during late night caused several problems for the locals. During the workshop, with the participation of residents, shop owners, the streets' users and the chief of the district, alongside with observers from the municipality, the problems were first outlined and spatial solutions, and ideas were generated (Figure 2.3).

¹¹ Design Atelier Kadıköy

¹² Design Atelier Kartal

¹³ Idle Places: Activated Places

¹⁴ DesignTAK: City Identity

¹⁵ Social Impact: Responsive Design



Figure 2.3 Photograph from the Kadife Street Workshop, organized by TAK Kadıköy, 2014
(Source: <http://takortak.org/blog/ortak-sorunlara-ortak-cozumler-icin/>)

Another organization that supports placemaking practices in Turkey is Onaranlar Kulübü¹⁶. As they put it, the aim of the organization is to “increase our belonging to the areas we live in with the principles of participation, inclusiveness and sustainability” (Onaranlar Klübü, 2022). They implement collective projects to enhance the bonds between cities, environments and people (Onaranlar Klübü, 2022). Similar to TAK, they have divided their projects of placemaking into categories. They have launched “*Dijital Atölyeler*”¹⁷ during the pandemic, in order to facilitate engagement among their followers who have lost connection to public places. Within the scope of the category, they have organized various online workshops, where citizens can participate in upcycling or DIY projects. The rest of the categories, “*Kamusal Alan Müdahalesi*”¹⁸, “*Kent Hackleme Atölyeleri*”¹⁹, “*Onarma Atölyeleri*”²⁰ and “*Sokak Yerleştirmeleri*”²¹ are all directly related with the public place and the processes placemaking. As for the events under these categories, they are collaborating with planning and organizing events with municipalities and brands, while also facilitating community participation in the making of the place, to produce places that are meaningful to the users.

A significant example of their work under the category of Public Place Intervention is the Kalamış Park Collective Transformation Project (Figure A9). In collaboration with

¹⁶ Repairs Club

¹⁷ Digital Workshops

¹⁸ Public Place Intervention

¹⁹ Urban Hacking Workshops

²⁰ Repair Workshops

²¹ Street Implementations

Nike and Municipality of Kadıköy, they have talked with the “real owners of the park” -the users. Through an open call, they have invited the users to the park and asked their needs. With the feedbacks they received, they have continued the design process in collaboration. Their main aim was “Increasing the functionality of Kalamış Park, improving problematic uses and enabling users to perform various activities together and comfortably” (İtez, 2021, n.p.).

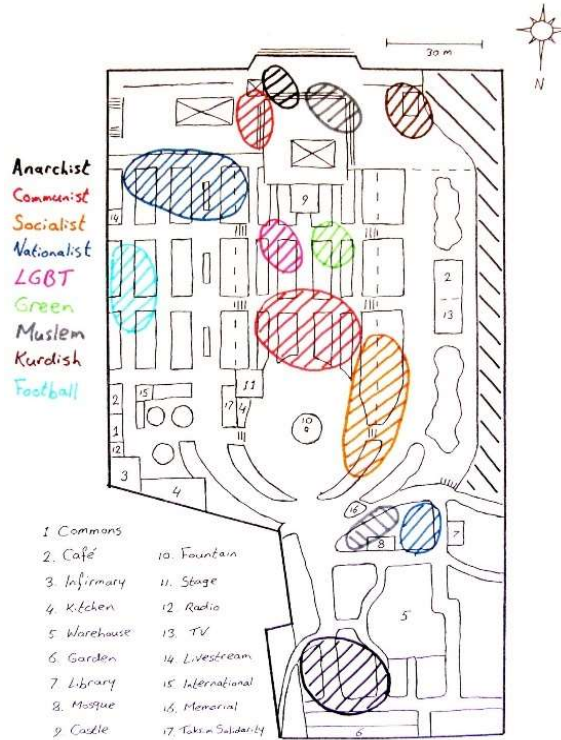
The active non-governmental organizations functioning in Turkey design and realize quality public places, or make interventions, so that communities can be nourished, strengthening the bonds citizens have to their urban environments, through various collaborative partners, such as brands, local governments and citizens. Throughout their process of designing and realizing said projects, these organizations value citizen engagement, in both understanding their needs and involving them in the planning and making of the projects.

An important event of placemaking that have marked a milestone in the urban context of Turkey is Gezi Parkı²². During the time of the event, the bonds citizens have to their urban environments have been challenged and made stronger, as a result of the protests. Thus, the protest, that turned into an influential social movement, marks a significant historical point for the citizens to reclaim their rights to the city through placemaking (Figure A10). As stated by Germen (2015), “Gezi movement can easily be considered as responsible citizens’ reaction against the Turkish ruling party AKP’s top-down decision-making involving no consultation with fellow citizens adopting individual attitudes towards public matters” (p. 18). Furthermore, it is a movement where citizens re-claimed their right to the city against the “profit-based urban projects in a dictatorial way without consulting people” (Germen, 2015, p. 18).

As a result of citizens’ resistance, the occupy movement started and people established a city on the park (Figure 2.4), which offered main amenities, such as a cafeteria, an infirmary, a library and a market place, along with communal places. As described by

²² The occupy movement of Gezi started as a protest towards the urban development plan for İstanbul’s Taksim Gezi Parkı in 2013. According to the plan, the “AKP government of Erdogan decided to destroy the last park remaining in the historic center of Istanbul, adjacent to Taksim Square. The park was to be destroyed in order to build a shopping center” (Castells, 2012, p. 297). However, it marked an important community place for LGBTQ+ individuals and informal meeting place for the youth where music and art were performed (Castells, 2012). Thus, its destruction was seen as an attack towards the free way of living.

Bravo “There were also several remarkable public spaces ... A Peace Square was also opened, together with a forum for debates and assemblies, a playground for children and a “Speakers’ Corner” (2018) (Figure A11).



(Figure 2.4) The hand drawn plan view of allocated places made by the citizens in Gezi Parkı (Source: <http://postvirtual.wordpress.com/2013/06/27/historical-atlas-of-gezi-park/>)

“The Gezi Park protests, like many other protests around the world, favored self-organization and rejected formal politics and organizations” (Tüfekçi, 2017, p. xv). People of Turkey, even the ones outside of İstanbul, have been organized on Twitter and the movement was further fueled by the repression. As a result, the citizens who occupied the park in resistance and the ones showing their support through social media in terms of distribution of knowledge under the #OccupyGezi participated in physical and digital placemaking. Users on Twitter added “çapulcu” (looter, an insult Erdoğan used regarding the protestors) before their usernames, facilitating the formation of an online community.

The events of Gezi, similar to the practices of placemaking during the pandemic, were realized through translocal networks of communication. As stated by Tüfekçi (2017), digital connectivity and Twitter have provided the resistance with mobility, sustaining

spontaneous protests around Turkey. Citizens from various provinces organized and occupied the public places in their provinces to stand in unity with their fellow protestors in İstanbul. In Ankara, supporters took Kızılay Square and Güven Parkı and in İzmir, they have gathered in Güngöğdu Square to protest against the government. Throughout the country, citizens have written Taksim on road banners, creating a sense of place that transcends spatial borders. Furthermore, citizens from all over the Turkey has stood in their balconies and windows to show support to the defenders of the park, by collectively banging pots and pans (Gürsel, 2013; Öztürkmen, 2014). As stated by Öztürkmen (2013), through various networks of communication, the protestors in Gezi Parkı have called the citizens into action:

The public response was incredibly strong and creative: some people flashed their lights on and off continually for the minute, and many banged empty metal pots with spoons from open windows and balconies. This way, those who could not come into the streets could join the protests from the confines of their homes (p. 43).

The Gezi Resistance is an important milestone for citizens to re-claim their rights to the city and having a voice in the decisions regarding their urban environments. The movement has “sparkled the participatory, collaborative policy/placemaking efforts and made conscious people motivated about shaping their lives, cities” (Germen, 2015, p. 20). The physical placemaking inherent in the Gezi resistance was articulated and supported by the digital place provided by Twitter. Through certain hashtags, citizens that were not on the streets or in the park were able to realize practices from their homes and neighborhoods to show support to the event. Furthermore, the protests were important in emphasizing the translocal networks of movements and have provided for the collective practice of balconies, whether in shows of protest or solidarity, to enter the discourse of public realm in Turkey.

CHAPTER 3

PLACEMAKING DURING THE PANDEMIC

During the pandemic, the public places where citizens normally carry out their social interactions and practices of collectivity were rendered inaccessible. Citizens under social distancing and lockdowns have been limited to the boundaries of their private households. Even though they were physically bounded to place, they were “more mobile digitally” (Devine-Wright et al., 2020, p. 1). Relatedly, the practices of the daily life such as work, education and social interaction, started to be accommodated in the materiality of homes realized through digital spaces. Such practices were carried out by video conference platforms such as Zoom and social media platforms such as Twitter. Within the hybrid contemporary context, the utilization of the digital place to sustain the practices of physical place have led to the placemaking of both the realms. The interactions held within the digital space have influenced its transformation from a communication place to a social place of conversation and interaction. Furthermore, the physical places have been mediated by the digital place, in terms of both extending the experience to the digital milieu and providing the opportunity for them to be practiced as communal places. Especially during collective demonstrations of the

pandemic, the organization provided by social media platforms have led to balconies being occupied simultaneously. For the case of Turkey, national holiday celebrations –which normally are carried out in public places and lead to the placemaking of the urban place- have become a prominent practice of collectivity during the pandemic. Relatedly, such celebrations have been chosen as a case study to understand the placemaking of the pandemic.

This chapter first starts with the Places and Practices During the pandemic section, which explains the spatial conditions of the pandemic, and explores the places and collective practices of placemaking during the pandemic. The section also provides background information on how celebration practices are realized, focusing on the case of Turkey. The following section –Tracing Placemaking in Social Media- is dedicated to the empirical study of the thesis, where the placemaking of the pandemic is studied through the national holiday celebrations realized in balconies in Turkey. By discussing the findings of the study in relation to the placemaking literature, a new layer of understanding and a revised perspective for placemaking is aimed to be provided.

3.1 Places and Practices During the COVID-19 Pandemic

After the first reported case of the Coronavirus in China on 31st of December 2019, it started spreading rapidly, causing panic and anxiety among many countries and citizens. Up to the current date there have been 446.5 million confirmed cases with 6 million deaths globally (WHO, 2022a). As for Turkey from the start of the pandemic, there have been 14 million confirmed cases with 95.681 deaths (WHO, 2022b). As the virus started to spread to other countries through travelers, the first lockdown was implemented in Wuhan on the 23rd of January 2020, causing many spatial disruptions (Taylor, 2020).

The Chinese authorities closed off Wuhan by canceling planes and trains leaving the city, and suspending buses, subways and ferries within it. At this point, at least 17 people had died, and more than 570 others had been infected, including in Taiwan, Japan, Thailand, South Korea and the United States.

Even though it was believed that the virus reached Europe in February of 2020, first death being reported by France on the 14th of February, it was later confirmed that the virus first appeared in Europe in December 2019, days before China reported the

illness to the World Health Organization (Taylor, 2020; Cerqua & Di Stefano, 2022). After the cases outside of China being reported, lockdowns started to be implemented in countries worldwide. “The mobility restrictions related to COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in the biggest disruption to individual mobilities in modern times” (Poom et.al, 2020, p. 1). The first country that introduced a lockdown in Europe was Italy – on 9th of March- and it was shortly followed by Turkey. Turkey first implemented a curfew for people over the age of 65 or citizens with chronic illnesses on 21st of March 2020 (T.C. İçişleri Bakanlığı, 2020a). Shortly after that, on 3rd of April, the curfew was extended to people younger than 20 years old (T.C. İçişleri Bakanlığı, 2020b). The first complete lockdown of Turkey was put into action on the 29th of April, following an 18-day curfew (T.C. İçişleri Bakanlığı, 2020c). In the following days, it was decided to continue the curfews on weekends and national and religious holidays.

The COVID-19 pandemic had many spatial implications in relation to places and how they are practiced, since the pandemic is “anti-place: in particular, it is counter to the particularly urban design of collective occupation and has created a fear of human proximity and taken from us our familiar collective social experiences and sites of serendipitous encounter” (Courage, 2020, p. 1). Even though physically the urban places were not lost, citizens have lost their power and collective practices of making such places: Due to the spatial distancing measures taken, the public environments, where communities carried out their collective practices and daily activities were rendered inaccessible, leading to the social production of place being challenged, in terms of collective experiences, interactions and the daily practices of the users. During such periods, citizens had to accommodate the practices of their daily lives, such as working, exercising and socializing, in their houses through digitally sustained networks. Relatedly, homes have experienced shifts in their meaning, related to the dramatic changes in how they are practiced, from places of rest and shelter to being the locus of daily life (Aridi, 2021; Khalil & Eissa, 2022).

As a result of practices normally realized in public places -together with other people-being accommodated within the privacy of the houses, the boundaries between the public and private realm were challenged. With the proliferation of video conference platforms, such as Zoom, the exposure of one’s private place have been increased as well (Hacker et al., 2020). Moreover, people have experienced strict physical borders

and fluidity simultaneously within their households. Due to the preventative measures taken, people were physically limited to the borders of their houses, where fluidity was also experienced in relation to houses being practiced both for private and public functions. The increase in both the type and number of practices being realized in houses have altered their privacy as well: Citizens have curated a portion of their private interiors (Rice, 2020), in order to have a two-dimensional public backdrop for their practices in the digital realm. Thus, in light of the spatial implications of the pandemic, it can be inferred that with the publicity brought into houses, the idea of private volumes was deconstructed, where certain surfaces of one's private volume have become public.

3.1.1 Social Media

An important example of how social media was used for placemaking practices during the pandemic was the livestreams that were done through various digital platforms. These livestreams were important in bringing people together and creating a sense of belonging and solidarity among people from all around the world. In terms of content and functions, these livestreams varied greatly; there were concerts done by the artists themselves or in collaboration with music studios; some livestreams were done to raise money and awareness for COVID-19 whereas some were done to have a sense of continuity of daily life. An influential case is the COVID-19 aid livestream was organized by Global Citizen in collaboration with World Health Organization: “*One World: Together at Home*”. The event took place on the 18th of April 2020 and started with a 6-hour broadcast on YouTube prior to the two-hour global television broadcast. Especially on Twitter “#TogetherAtHome” became a trending topic worldwide and reached a total of 1 million Tweets in 7 hours (Twitter Trend Worldwide, 2020). Over 100 artists took part in the event, and it reached 21 million viewers (Low, 2020). It was recorded that “In terms of the social nature of the special, there were 4.9 million total interactions across Facebook, Instagram and Twitter about One World: Together at Home on April 18, 2020” (Nielsen, 2020). The event was important in creating engagement among people from all around the world, and \$127.9 million was raised for COVID-19 relief (Low, 2020). The title of the event does imply solidarity and a sense of place that is specific to the pandemic as well. Apart from people losing their daily interactions due to the social distancing measures, collective practices of the physical public place -such as concerts, celebrations, festivals- were rendered as

dangerous. Thus, during these livestreams, people were able to feel sense of community by collectively experiencing an event and being able to interact through the chat provided by the digital platform. Through these collective experiences, the overlapping relation between the physical and digital world becomes more apparent, leading to the spatial borders being challenged, since the only place for people to come together safely was the digital place, and as it was accommodated within the individuals' houses.

In Turkey, social media platforms were utilized by the government, ministries, and the local governments to facilitate solidarity and sense of community among citizens. Throughout the course of the pandemic, various aid campaigns were established online, along with specific hashtags. The most prominent among these hashtags were #BirlikteBaşaracağız²³, which was also used by the Presidency of Turkey. In the following days, various local governments followed with aid campaigns of their own, in order to unite the citizens of their cities. In Istanbul, the mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu started the campaign of *Askıda Fatura* on the 4th of May by Tweeting the following (İmamoğlu, 2020):

We are starting the campaign of Askıda Fatura. We are bringing together those in need, who have difficulty in paying their monthly bills, with our philanthropic citizens who want to meet these needs on their behalf. We will be together under solidarity and #BirlikteBaşaracağız²⁴

The name of the campaign (*suspended bill*) refers to a long-standing tradition in Turkish culture, associated with solidarity and sense of community. Historically, it is a tradition that started with bread, where citizens that were able to afford would buy one extra bread and leave it at the baker shop. Later on, a citizen in need would go to the shop and take one of the “*bread on hold*”, facilitating a chain of solidarity and welfare. With the prolonged effects of the pandemic, the campaign was later extended (İBB, n.d.), and is still running in 2022 with a total of 75.4 million Turkish Liras raised. As stated in the Municipalities Website “Our charity campaign, which started with the name ‘Askıda Fatura’, went down in history as an unprecedented solidarity movement in the world. This happened thanks to you” (İBB, n.d.)

²³ “we will succeed together”

²⁴ All of the following tweets have been translated by the author

Consecutively, various local governments adapted hashtags specific to their provinces and started aid campaigns. For instance, one of the hashtags used by the local government of Ankara was #6MilyonTekYürek²⁵, where 6 million refers to the population of the city. It was first used as a facilitator for the relief campaign that aimed to help people in need who were economically affected by the pandemic. As a result of the social media campaign, more than 15 million Turkish Liras was raised (Ankara Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2020). Later on, citizens started an unofficial campaign called #VeresiyeDefteri²⁶. Through the campaign, philanthropists closed off the debts of their fellow citizens, while also supporting the grocers economically. It was later on supported by the Mayor of Ankara, Mansur Yavaş who tweeted (Yavaş, 2020):

Support grew like an avalanche on this road that we started off by saying goodness is contagious. Our philanthropist citizens paid off the debts of our tradesmen, Ankara experienced the beauty of being united. I would like to express my gratitude to my fellow citizens...

The Izmir Metropolitan Municipality also started a campaign of their own under the hashtag #BizVarız²⁷, to help the citizens and tradesmen in need. As the mayor Tunç Soyer puts it “Volunteer solidarity is growing. With the strength of unity, we will ensure that our city comes out of this epidemic with the least damage” (İzmir Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2020).

People being detached from their communal places have experienced challenges in terms of sense of community and relatedly sense of place. The local governments have utilized social media to bring their citizens together under solidarity and to accommodate the collective practices of the physical public places. Through the active engagements of citizens on social media, similar acts of goodness spread all over Turkey, since “Online media enable conversations that can transcend geographic boundaries (Papacharissi, 2008, p. 235). Through the aid campaigns, translocal community bonds among the citizens were facilitated, leading to the production of a social place in the digital realm. Since communities have direct relations to the places they share, the bonds realized online can be evaluated as having positive effects of the

²⁵ “6 million people, one heart”

²⁶ The name of the campaign refers to a traditional practice in Turkish culture, where local grocers have a book of debts so that shoppers can pay later

²⁷ “we are here”

physical environment through the citizens attaching shared meanings of solidarity and unity to their provinces, thus leading to the placemaking of the urban environment.

As seen from the given examples, during the pandemic, the digital place of social media platforms has accommodated the functions and practices of public places, thus have become the extension of the physical place –even has replaced them. The interrelation between the two realms have enhanced their related experiences and meanings. However, the difference between the publicness of the physical and digital place should be acknowledged. The physical public space by definition refers to a space which everyone has access to. On the other hand, the accessibility of digital place is limited by the digital divide, that refers to “a division between people who have access and use of digital media and those who do not” (Van Dijk, 2020, p.1). Thus, the utilization of digital place as a public sphere is directly related with how much the society is involved in digital communications.

3.1.2 Balconies

Lefebvre explains that spaces are socially produced and can accommodate practices that are outside of their designated functions. “To picture space as a 'frame' or container into which nothing can be put unless it is smaller than the recipient, and to imagine that this container has no other purpose than to preserve what has been put in it - this is probably the initial error” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 94). Thus, places have the potential to adapt to the ever-changing conditions of the world. They are not merely the background of users’ daily activities, neither they only accommodate the functions they were designed for. During the pandemic, as a result of the lockdowns and social distancing measures, spaces were used apart from their ordinary use: homes turned into offices and balconies turned into public places where citizens can continue their social and communal practices. As Banai (2020) states, “When the pandemic limited or prohibited access to the public realm, its (*balconies*’) significance became even more apparent, albeit with an eerie sense of a public realm that is no longer a public domain” (p. 2). During such conditions, citizens have expressed their need for the public realm through their balconies (Banai, 2020) and thus practiced it as communal places.

Balconies are the liminal places that serve as gateways between the private life of the house and the public life of the urban environment. They are important elements in

offering “connection, communication, and community” (Aronis, 2020, p. 475). As stated by Lefebvre (2004), balconies provide the citizens to be inside and outside simultaneously, and it is a place for people to watch over the street and the daily routines of the citizens. Similar to Lefebvre’s approach, Cowan (2011) states balconies are places to observe the street while also being observed and they “are neither entirely part of a house, nor are they part of the street” (p. 722). Lastly, Aronis (2009) defines the spatiality of balconies as:

... the balcony has liminal character. As a three-dimensional aperture of the apartment into the street and bounded by rails, it usually protrudes from the exterior walls of buildings, and can be considered a physical threshold of both arenas ... it is an intermediary zone between the private and the public ... it is a middle space, simultaneously creating an interim state of detachment from and attachment to both the apartment and the street... (p.158).

Because of their liminality, during the pandemic, balconies have emerged as places of communication. As stated by Aydin & Sayar (2020), under the conditions of the pandemic, “the relationship of the house with the exterior, the windows and balconies that allow visual and auditory socialization have been important during the long stay at home during the pandemic period” (p. 52). As a result of people being detached from their everyday public places, “the urban balcony could further be explored as the newly-made-public space framing hope for restoring physical as well as social health” (Grigoriadou, 2020, p. 1). Through the utilization of social media, people have realized balconies as places that can accommodate their collective social practices, while also maintaining a safe distance from one another. Soon after, balconies started to be utilized for spontaneous acts of solidarity, improvised concerts and many more activities.

All around the world, these balcony events became popular in a span of weeks. For Aronis, “Balconies provide something those digital technologies cannot: a sense of community and an authentic feeling of standing for each other” (quoted in Traverso, 2020). Among the first collective practice done in balconies were the expressions of gratitude towards the health workers that were tackling the virus. People under social isolation stood in union on their balconies, and collectively clapped for health workers. Gvirtz (2020), who names such practices of clapping for healthcare workers as “balcony parties” state that “(balcony parties) should thus be examined as a tool to break the walls of social isolation and express solidarity with healthcare workers” (p.

6). Examples of such acts of solidarity were seen all around the world: in United States of America, United Kingdom, Italy, Turkey. “By mid-March, the first flash mobs promoted by social media in Italy began to call for group applause for the doctors and nurses risking their lives in the virus wards” (Booth et al., 2020). As reported by Anadolu Ajansı, “Videos on social media showed neighbors of entire buildings performing the Italian national anthem, while waving the Italian flag, or banners with the hashtag #Andratuttobene (#Allwillgowell)” (Zompano, 2020). Furthermore, these acts were seen to be facilitating community bonds. The Washington Post reported that one of the residents living in the center of Madrid’s historic part said (Booth et al., 2020):

“It’s weird to live in a place without actually knowing the people in that place. I was a ghost on my street until I started going to the balcony and establishing relationship with my neighbors. My neighbor on the front balcony told me last night: ‘After this is all over, I can’t wait to go to the street to finally meet you and have a drink together’”.

This quote is significant in highlighting that even though the neighbors have already met each other –since they are having a conversation from their individual balconies– there is still a need of physically shared experience, such as having a drink together, for them to feel as though they have properly met. Such discourse raises important insights in showing that citizens are able to form bonds among each other through interactions that are not necessarily physical, but for them to acknowledge it in the conventional sense requires a level of physicality, which will further be discussed in the following chapters.

Similar acts of collectivity and solidarity were also done in Turkey. The Minister of Health of the Republic of Turkey, Fahrettin Koca tweeted on the 21st of March: “Thank you for your third applause Turkey! Let’s show the health workers our support in every given chance” alongside a video of various provinces clapping and flicking the lights of their living rooms” (Koca, 2020). These simple acts of organizing to collectively practice balconies in certain times for demonstrations of solidarity have established bonds among communities and provided neighbors with places to interact and sustain sense of community. Such demonstrations have become a dominant example of how balconies were collectively practiced during the pandemic leading to the generation of shared meaning attached with balconies and relatedly the urban places. Consecutively, the social production and placemaking of balconies was seen since “The culture of

place making involves, humans adding layers of shared experiences” (Foth & Sanders, 2016, p. 77).

Another practice that was adapted to balconies in various parts of the world was music in the form of balcony concerts (Figure 3.1). Shortly after the lockdowns started in Italy, Italians started to take to their balconies and give concerts: “The resilience of the human spirit, evidenced by a bunch of Italians making music together on their balconies” (James, 2020). The effects of these celebrations were also seen in Vencouver, Canada. Hadani Ditmars (2020), who is a writer and performing artist recorded the experiences she had during balcony concerts in a personal essay that was published by The Sunday Magazine, CBC. While she claims 2020 to be the year of the balcony, she describes that “My little balcony, crammed with an earnest victory garden in pots, and a Venezuelan hammock, became a kind of portal” (Ditmars, 2020). This “portal” became substantial in a time of crisis, where people are restricted from their environments of interaction. Furthermore, she states that through her singing in her balcony, she became acquaintance of her neighbors: “The lady who always played her television too loudly turned out to play a mean saucepan. And the middle-aged couple across from me introduced themselves and asked if I could play Alicia Keys's tribute to front-line workers, *Good Job*” (Ditmars, 2020). Her essay illustrates the bonds established among neighbors during the small interactions held through balconies. The balcony concerts were studied for the case of Spain as well; Calvo and Bejarano (2020), in their study note that underlying the community formation achieved by the concerts was “a sense of similarity with those people living nearby, a commonality that needed to be reinforced in times of distress” (p. 330). Furthermore, during the interview they did with the artists of, they learned that many of the respondents associate their impact on social media with a sense of togetherness that can last beyond the pandemic (Calvo & Bejarano, 2020). These concerts, while supporting community bonds, facilitated spatiotemporal process of placemaking, where people from all over the world were able to have a shared experience. Furthermore, through the facilitation of communities and the positive bonds established among them, balconies were also attached with new meanings, influencing the social production of place.



Figure 3.1 Examples of balcony concerts from Italy (left) and Jerusalem (right) (Sources: <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/the-pandemic-is-remaking-what-performance-can-be>
<https://www.timesofisrael.com/stuck-at-home-jerusalem-neighbors-join-in-balcony-sing-a-long/>)

Turkey was also among the countries that held balcony concerts in order to boost morale and feel a sense of community. Mostly, these concerts were held on special days, such as the national holidays. Musicians were played national marches and the national Anthem throughout the day of national holidays. The first national holiday that was celebrated during the pandemic was in 2020, 23rd of April, the National Sovereignty and Children's Day. In 23rd of April 1920, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey was established, and the celebrations would have been for its 100th year. In light of the spread of the virus, The Speaker of the Grand Assembly Mustafa Şentop announced on Twitter that the planned celebrations for the national holiday were postponed, and he called citizens into action to sing the National Anthem on the 23rd of April at 21:00 from their houses and balconies (Şentop, 2020). Later on, balconies were realized as places of celebration, which will be further explored in the following sections.

As seen from the examples of Turkey, the pandemic has added a new layer of usage for balconies and enhanced their practice and experience, in terms of them becoming communal places. Previous to the pandemic, balconies in Turkey have mostly been utilized as storage places (Köymen cited in Çoktan, 2020). Furthermore, as Aronis states, “Since physically the balcony seems to be an incompletely constructed room, some people feel a necessity to close their balcony, to create a ‘full’ room from it” (2009, p. 159). For the case of Turkey, Tanyeli identifies a similar issue for the case of Turkey, where balconies are incorporated into the design of apartments as places that can provide extra square meter and yet not used for daily practices such as reading books, having breakfast... (cited in Çoktan, 2020). Relatedly, for the case of Turkey,

balconies are not utilized as places of daily life, and Tanyeli identifies the reason for it as the concern of privacy rooted in culture (cited in Çoktan, 2020). For that reason, Hasol states that balconies are mostly attached to the backside of apartments where the interaction with neighbors is limited (cited in Çoktan, 2020). However, it is believed that the usage of balconies during the COVID-19 pandemic will have long term effects on the design of buildings, architectural projects and the demands of the users (Çoktan, 2020).

Throughout the pandemic, balconies were seen to support physical social interaction among neighbors in a time that they were stuck within the borders of their homes. By interacting and sharing the same place from a safe distance, a sense of community and sense of place was created that is specific to the conditions of the pandemic and relations to the urban context such as the streets were formed. Furthermore, since the collective practices held in balconies were made possible by the digital place, and they have also been articulated within the social media platforms, the two realms have interrelatedly effected and enhanced each other.

3.1.3 Celebrations

An influential and prominent collective practice that leads to placemaking in the urban context is collective celebrations and festivals (de Brito & Richards, 2017; Houghton et al., 2015; Hunter et al., 2016). Furthermore, as explained by Fisker et al. (2021), such celebrations are realized in translocal interactions within the networked society, through the making and remaking of meanings and bonds associated with places. Since during the pandemic, collective practices -done in bigger scales with the citizens- were realized through national holiday celebrations in Turkey and thus it was selected as a case study, a background of how they are practices will be given in this section.

Turkey is a country that is rich in *bayrams*. The national holidays are celebrated in the urban public places nationwide whereas other important holidays such as the local holidays related with the independence of a given province or the ones related with the Republic's reforms are mostly celebrated locally, in schools in smaller scales (Öztürkmen, 2001). Furthermore, during religious holidays, people generally go to mosques and even squares as a community to perform prayers and close relatives are visited. For the month of Ramadan, tarawih prayers are held which is when people go to mosques as a congregation every night for the duration of the month. Furthermore,

citizens gather in large *iftar tents* to break their feast together. Both national and religious holiday celebrations are facilitating shared experiences among the citizens, that eventually becomes a part of the placemaking by adding layers of meaning to the place. However, compared to the national holidays, the celebration of religious holidays is smaller in scale, celebrated within the family and not directly related with the urban environment. Every year, 5 national and 2 religious holidays are celebrated in Turkey. Due to the collectivity inherent in them, during the pandemic lockdowns were implemented as a precaution to decrease the spread of the virus, especially at the beginning (Table B1).

The national holidays all mark a significant event in foundation of Turkish Republic, and they were all officially declared as national holidays after the proclamation of the Republic, around 1930s. However, they started to be celebrated by the citizens right after the events that marked them. As Arzu Öztürkmen (2001) translated Şapolyo's description of the 29th of October Celebrations following the declaration of the Republic in 1923:

Although there had been no prior agreement to celebrate the Republic being declared, the people hung flags on their shops on their own accord (...) The Millet Garden, the gardens and square of the Ministry of Culture were filled to the brim. There was joy on the faces and in the spirits (...) The joy and excitement of the people of Ankara over the declaration of the Republic continued into the night as well. In front of the Municipal Building, the Assembly band played national melodies, large torches were burned in the squares, and there were fireworks. The sounds of drums and zurnas were heard coming from every street. A large lantern brigade was formed, and thousands of people, soldiers, civil servants, merchants, laborers, students, women, and children poured into the streets (p. 56).

These celebration practices have been carried out to the contemporary context of Turkey as well. With governmental bodies planning and realizing celebrations in public squares and citizens organizing themselves to collectively occupy urban places, they are prominent practices of placemaking in the context of Turkey. As explained by the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism, national holidays are:

(they) celebrated in a festive atmosphere in cities and towns; military parades, torch regiments, etc. folk-dance teams participate in "official" performances with their special clothes. However, after the official demonstrations are over due to these holidays, the entertainments organized by the workers and tradesmen among themselves in the government or municipality squares until

late at night in some places add a different meaning to these festivals (T.C. K lt r ve Turizm Bakanlıđı, n.d.).

During the national holiday celebrations, citizens from all over Turkey meet in urban places and collectively walk towards landmarks, statues and squares. During their walk, citizens carry flags and banners, collectively singing national marches and a sense of community is facilitated. Through the shared experience of the citizens, new meanings are generated, resulting in placemaking. Furthermore, organized events, such as torchlight progressions, marches, parades and bands realized in public squares further facilitate meaning and experience, creating bonds among the community and to the urban place (Figure 3.2-3.3). Various other practices, in relation to national holiday celebrations from other metropolises is given in Figures A12-A15.



Figure 3.2 Republic Day, Torchlight procession from Ulus Square to Kızılay Square, Ankara, 2016 (Source: <https://www.sabah.com.tr/ankara-baskent/2016/10/29/ulustan-kizilaya-fener-alayi>)



Figure 3.3 Republic Day, Ulus Square, Ankara, 2016 (Source: <http://www.golbasisongaste.com/ankara-29-ekimi-kutladi-14808h.htm>)

During the pandemic, the celebration practices were realized on balconies due to the loss of the public place and they were made possible by the hybridity of the contemporary context. Citizens have organized under certain hashtags to plan simultaneous celebrations in balconies and engage fellow citizens in participating. The hybrid public realm “expands the range of ways a person can experience the physical space around them” (Morrison, 2020) and for the context of the pandemic, especially the experiences related with the public place were mediated by the social media platforms. The case of the balcony celebrations is similar to how occupy movements –such as Gezi Parkı- were realized. As Lim (2014) states, “The importance of digital media in the formation of social movements cannot be separated from the reality of contemporary urban conditions” (p. 69), thus such practices should be evaluated in relation to the spatial conditions they are accommodated in. Normally, balconies are not perceived as places of celebration due to their materiality and the experiences related with balconies are generally limited to the household. However, as stated by Cresswell (2009), “Meanings gain a measure of persistence when they are inscribed into the material landscape but are open to contestation by practices that do not conform to the expectations that come with place” (p. 170). As a result of the collective practices realized in balconies through Twitter during national holiday celebrations, new shared meanings were attached to balconies, changing how they are realized as places. The following chapter will explore the case of the national holiday celebrations during the pandemic in depth, through the interrelation between the digital and physical place, and how it affected the materiality of our urban environments.

3.2 Tracing Placemaking in Social Media

With the rise of digital media, it became an important tool to understand communities and their interaction with places (Arefi, 1999). In the contemporary world, social media has become an influential digital place for communication, information, participation and social movements (Castells, 2012). Relatedly, with the growing percentage of the population using social media platforms, it can be used as a tool to understand communities and their placemaking practices. “Digital connectivity alters the architecture of connectivity across an entire society even when much of it is not yet connected” (Tüfekçi, 2017, p. 18). Social media users, by sharing the posts with people that are not yet using these platforms are engaging them with the content articulated online, reaching a wider percentage of the population. As seen on the Gezi

Events collective demonstrations, such as the celebrations held in balconies during the pandemic, also lead to increase in the usage of social media platforms, such as Twitter (Ozturkcan et al., 2017), increasing the digital connectivity of the involved communities.

Currently, Turkey has a population of 85.5 billion people and 80.8% of the population are active social media users (Kemp, 2022). The social media usage has increased by 14.8% compared to 2021, which indicates that the penetration of social media platforms in the lives of the population is rapidly increasing. As of January 2022, Twitter has 436 million monthly users (We Are Social et al., 2022a) and Turkey is the seventh ranking country in terms of Twitter users, with 16.1 million people (We Are Social et al., 2022b). Relatedly, Turkey is a case that has a substantial accessibility to social media and is digitally connected, and thus the digital public place was easily occupied and practiced collectively by the people.

Social media platforms, because they have “altered and made fluid our sense of time and space, more so than previous technologies” (Narayan, 2013, p. 37) provide the citizens to overcome spatial barriers. During crises -especially the ones that cause spatial disruption- social media such as Twitter holds a great potential for citizens to come together and organize under hashtags. As Chris Messina (2007) who invented hashtags states “Hashtags become even more useful in a time of crisis or emergency as groups can rally around a common term to facilitate tracking”. The hashtags, being initiated in Twitter, as distributed to various other citizens through different communication channels –that are not necessarily social networking platforms- and reach a bigger portion of the people. Furthermore, Twitter becomes an important source of data during times of crisis, because the citizens are familiar with the platform (Goolsby, 2010), and thus it provides a potential of communication for the communities. Such communications can also lead to the creation of online communities, facilitate engagement and solidarity (Narayan, 2013). Twitter also provides participation among citizens by allowing them “to report from their own perspective, to provide updates on the local situation” (Bruns, 2012, p. 16). The network of information that is accommodated by Twitter leads to the articulation and interpretation of the information by the discussions users have among themselves and influences awareness positively (Akhgar et al., 2013). For the specific case of the

pandemic, it is stated that with the social interactions moving to the digital realm, citizens have utilized platforms like Twitter feel a sense of community and such platforms “have become central to the technological and social infrastructure that allows us to stay connected even during crises” (Chen et al., 2020, p. 2). All of these aspects make Twitter a powerful tool of analysis for the placemaking practices of the pandemic.

Relatedly, the thesis utilizes Twitter as a source of data related with the places of the pandemic celebrations, to explore and understand how placemaking is realized. In this section, first the methodology is explained through the preliminary and final data collection, followed by the findings and discussion of the study in relation to the placemaking literature. The research questions that are aimed to be answered are:

1. In which realms and ways placemaking practices are realized during the pandemic?
2. How can a framework for understanding placemaking under various circumstances be established in light of the placemaking theory?
3. How can placemaking be re-conceptualized and understood considering the context of the pandemic?
4. How places within the contemporary world can be rehandled in light of the COVID-19 pandemic?

3.2.1 Methodology

The data for the thesis is mined through the Twitter API (Application Programming Interface) offered by Twitter Developer Platform. The API utilized in the thesis is Twitter API v2 with the Academic Research Track. The tweets are mined through Postman software with two endpoints: *GET Tweet Counts – All* for only pulling the number of tweets related to the query and the *GET Tweets – Full-archive search* for gathering the tweets that will be analyzed within the thesis. Postman writes the responses of queries as “.json” files, which are then converted into data tables through Microsoft Excel’s Power Query tool. Furthermore, to refine the data sets, the language parameter was filtered on Postman to only mine tweets in Turkish. Because Postman does not have a parameter for discarding retweets, one of the problems faced with retweets were that, if an original Tweet had 50 retweets, the data set would turn out

with all 50 of them being included separately. These duplicates were later deleted manually on Excel, by using the Remove Duplicates command.

Since the celebrations of national holidays were realized in relation to the interaction between the digital and physical place, the data collection and the analysis of the thesis includes both the placemaking on the digital place of Twitter (quantitative) and on the physical place of balconies (qualitative). The data collection method of the thesis was established through various steps in order to grasp the size of the data to be drawn and analyzed and find out the optimal way of collecting tweets that coincides with the aim of the thesis. Thus, the methodology will be explained through the steps taken during the data collection phase.

3.2.1.1 Preliminary Data Collection

For the preliminary study, the goal was to have a comprehensive data set where patterns among the tweets can be observed and explored. Initially, the dates of celebrations were identified, alongside their corresponding lockdowns –if there were any (Table B1). Initially, the study started with a balanced data set of both religious and national holidays, but ended up focusing solely on the national holidays: Since two religious holidays are celebrated in Turkey, two national holidays were selected for the analysis. Here, since April and May have coincided with intensive lockdowns in both 2020 and 2021 –and especially in 2020 since it was only a few months after the virus reached Turkey- 23rd of April National Sovereignty and Children's Day and 19th of May Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day were chosen to be studied. For religious holidays that span 3-4 days, the chosen date for data collection is the first day of the holiday, as noted on Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Identified celebrations and corresponding lockdowns for the preliminary study

	NAME OF CELEBRATION	DATE OF CELEBRATION	CORRESPONDING LOCKDOWN
NATIONAL	National Sovereignty and Children's Day	23 April 2020	23-26 April 2020
		23 April 2021	23-25 April 2021
	Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day	19 May 2020	18 May – 1 June 2020
		19 May 2021	No lockdown
RELIGIOUS	Feast of Ramadan	24-26 May 2020	23-26 May 2020
		13-15 May 2021	29 April – 16 May 2021
	Feast of Sacrifice	31 July – 3 August 2020	No lockdown
		20-23 July 2021	No lockdown

The preliminary data collection focuses on certain keywords that are extracted from the theories of placemaking and the places of celebrations. Because during the pandemic, homes and balconies have replaced the urban places where celebrations are held -streets and squares- the selection of keywords were done accordingly, consisting of: *balkon*²⁸, *ev*²⁹, *sokak*³⁰ and *meydan*³¹. By choosing places of celebration for both the pre-pandemic and pandemic conditions, the interrelation among these places facilitated by the balcony celebrations was also expected to be seen.

In order to grasp the size of the data to be analyzed, first, tweets under each keyword are mined for the selected dates. Based on the large number of tweets, data collection was limited to a 12-hour period, between 11:00 and 23:00. This timeframe also involves the determined time of celebrations (between 19:00 and 21:00). The repetitive retweets and replies are then manually eliminated since they do not provide any further information for the discourse analysis.

The comprehensive data set gathered was refined by eliminating the tweets that are not relevant to celebrations and explored in order to trace the patterns among the tweets related with places. In the initial reading of tweets, it is observed that for the religious holidays, the tweets did not significantly imply collective celebration practices. Their scale was observed to be limited to the household and eventually religious holidays are removed from the data set, and the study focused solely on the selected national holidays. The tweets that involved “meydan” were neither related with the collective practice of celebrations nor they were related with the physical place. The tweets that involved “sokak” and “ev” were also not rich in spatial and communal connotations, so did not provide significant input for the discourse analysis and thus were excluded. However, the keywords related with public places of celebrations, sokak and meydan, are decided to be studied quantitatively to have a comparison of their usage between the pre-pandemic and the pandemic periods.

As a result, the query for the data to be analyzed through discourse analysis was limited to the keyword of balcony. Furthermore, the original tweets where citizens have shared

²⁸ balcony

²⁹ home

³⁰ street

³¹ square

their experiences in relation to the balcony celebrations were mostly posted around the time of the celebration, thus the timeframe for data collection was limited accordingly.

During the preliminary study, the tweets that were predominantly used were identified through the initial reading of the tweets as well (Table B2), in order to provide a basis for the quantitative study. Twitter Trends were also researched for Turkey during the days of celebration, in order to not overlook any hashtags. The number of tweets under each hashtag -obtained by the *GET Tweet Counts endpoint*- is noted for the duration of 11th of March 2020-1st of June 2021 (between when the first case of the virus was reported in Turkey and when most of the precautions related with the virus were lifted). Within this timeframe, the number of tweets under each hashtag coinciding with the celebration periods –one day prior and subsequent to the date of the celebration- is also noted in order to understand if the hashtag is used directly in relation to the celebrations or they are used more generally for various situations. The hashtags with lower than 4.000 tweets and 50% relevance are eliminated, and three of the most used hashtags for each celebration are determined to be quantitatively studied.

3.2.1.2 Final Data Collection

Based on the inferences from the preliminary study, the final data collection method is established for both the quantitative and qualitative analysis (Table 3.2). For the quantitative study, three of the most used hashtags from the table established in the preliminary study (Table B2), for each of the celebrations are selected to be analyzed in terms of the interactions they have facilitated. These hashtags include #23Nisan³², #23NisanKutluOlsun³³ and #23NisanUlusalEgemenlikveÇocukBayramı³⁴ for the 23rd of April celebrations whereas for 19th of May, #19Mayıs1919³⁵, #19Mayıs³⁶ and #19MayısGençlikveSporBayramı³⁷ are selected.

The keywords of balkon, meydan and sokak are studied quantitatively for 2018 and 2019 as well, in addition to 2020 and 2021, in order to understand the change in how much they are included within the conversations on Twitter during the pandemic

³² 23rd of April

³³ Happy 23rd of April

³⁴ 23rd of April National Sovereignty and Children's Day

³⁵ 19th of May, 1919

³⁶ 19th of May

³⁷ 19th of May Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day

compared to times when the celebrations were held without spatial disruptions, and they were directly experienced instead of being mediated by the digital place.

Table 3.2 Final data collection dates according to the queries, and how they are analyzed

	Query	Data Collection Dates
Quantitative Analysis	balkon / meydan / sokak	22-24 April 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 18-20 May 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021
	#23Nisan #23NisanKutluOlsun #23NisanUlusalEgemenlikve...	22-24 April 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021
	#19Mayıs #19Mayıs1919 #19MayısGençlikveSporBayramı	18-20 May 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021
Qualitative Analysis	balkon	23 April 2020, 2021 – 20:30-21:30 19 May 2020, 2021 – 18:49-19:49
	#1919dabalkonlardayız	18-20 May 2020, 2021
	#aynıbalkondayız	22-24 April 2020, 2021

For the qualitative analysis of the physical placemaking, tweets are collected through the query of balkon, from a one-hour period: 30 minutes prior and subsequent of the designated celebration time for each national holiday. For the 23rd of April celebrations, the designated time was announced by the Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey to be 21:00 o'clock. For 19th of May, the designated time of celebration is 19:19, since it refers to the year when Atatürk arrived in Samsun to start the independence war. Thus, for the 23rd of April, the data is collected between 20:30-21:30 whereas for 19th of May it is collected between 18:49-19:49. Furthermore, the hashtags that involve “balkon” from the list of identified hashtags in the preliminary study -#aynıbalkondayız³⁸ and #1919dabalkonlardayız³⁹- are involved in the discourse analysis since they are directly related with the query of the study.

3.2.2 Findings & Discussion

During the pandemic, citizens who couldn't occupy their traditional places of collective celebrations have realized these practices both in the digital place of social media platforms and in their balconies. Relatedly, the findings of the thesis are given in relation to the realms in which placemaking was realized. Through the communal place created on Twitter, the citizens were able to plan and practice celebrations by collectively occupying their balconies. After such celebrations, the citizens have again utilized Twitter as a place of conversation, where they have expressed their physical

³⁸ we are in the same balcony

³⁹ we are in out balconies at 19:19 o'clock

experiences in relation to balcony celebrations, which provides influential information on the physical placemaking of the balconies.

To understand how Twitter have provided for the planning and engagement of the practices on balconies, the interactions facilitated by the hashtags in terms of original tweets, retweets, replies and quoted tweets is studied quantitatively. To understand the physical placemaking in balconies, discourse analysis on tweets related with the keywords of *balcon* is done according to the Matrix⁴⁰ given in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 *The matrix constructed, and the explanation of related keywords under the components*

ENGAGEMENT	COMMUNITY	PLACE				
		MATERIALITY		MEANING		PRACTICE
		public place	location	shared meaning	individual meaning	
Statements of interaction, call for action, invitation (come on, are you ready are you out, etc.)	Statements that show community and collectivity (unity, solidarity, togetherness, 83 million one heart, etc.)	Keywords and expressions that imply public place, street, square, celebration places, etc.	Specific names of cities, provinces etc.	Expressions of shared meaning, associated with celebrations (enthusiasm, pride, national holiday, etc.)	Expressions related with the feelings facilitated in relation to the celebrations on balconies (it was beautiful, unforgettable, being emotional etc.)	Expressions related with how balconies were practiced (in relation to how they are normally realized, singing marches, clapping, waving flags, etc.)

The placemaking of balconies during the pandemic, similar to how they are normally practiced, required organization and thus, digital place of Twitter was utilized to engage the citizens in celebrations. Various tweets have been posted to call the citizens into action and engage them in the practice of celebrating national holidays in balconies. Such expressions of calling into action and phrases like “come on, lets” have been coded under engagement in the matrix. These tweets are handled similar to how deliberate placemaking practices are planned normally.

The ‘place’ component of the matrix is established based on Cresswell’s theory of place. For Cresswell, places are created out of the interaction between materiality,

⁴⁰ Sample keywords identified in relation to the components of the matrix is given in Turkish and English in Table B3

meaning and practice (1996, 2008, 2009). Here, if the tweet includes places of pre-pandemic celebrations such as streets, squares, neighborhoods and provinces, it is marked under materiality. For meaning, the positive bonds citizens have established to their balconies, materialities and communities as a result of the celebrations, and the shared meanings associated with the celebrations which ultimately gets attached to the balcony is coded. Which practices are mentioned within the tweets in relation to the balcony celebrations are marked under the Practice column. Lastly, words and phrases associated with collectivity and unity are marked under Community to understand the engagement of the citizens.

The usage of the matrix enables certain patterns observed within the data set to be categorized directly in relation to placemaking literature. For instance, if a tweet mentions the act of signing the National Anthem during the celebration, it will be categorized under shared meaning and practice. Furthermore, inferences of sense of community, sense of place, and bonds established to environment and citizens have been made according to the matrix (Table 3.4). For instance, if a tweet is coded with positive individual meaning and has mentioned their community, it is inferred to mean the facilitation of positive bonds among neighbors.

Table 3.4 Coding of findings in relation to placemaking inferred through the interaction within the components of the matrix

	community	materiality		meaning		practice
		pub.	loc.	ind.	shared	
positive bonds established between citizens	+			+		+
positive bonds established to environments		+	+	+		+
sense of community	+			+	+	+
sense of place		+		+	+	+

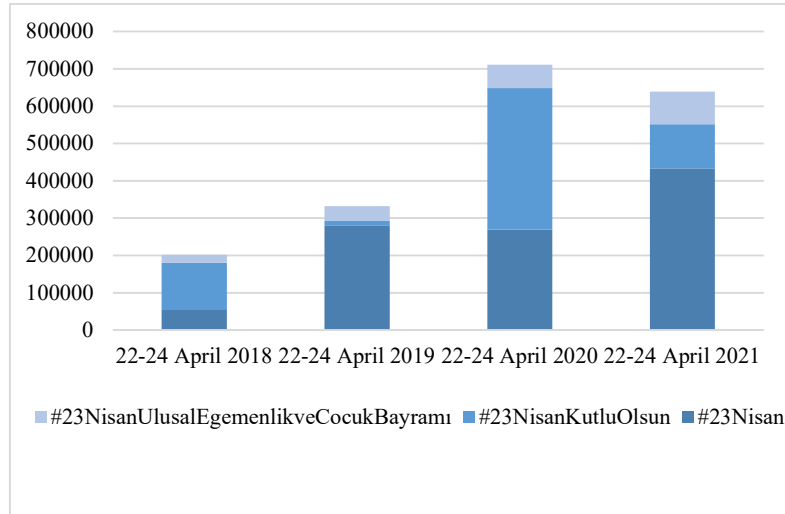
3.2.2.1 Quantitative Data

Throughout the celebrations held in balconies during the pandemic, citizens have utilized hashtags to act collectively, in sharing their ideas and to interact with other citizens on the same topics. As established in the preliminary study, for the 23rd of April celebrations, the most articulated hashtags are #23Nisan, #23NisanKutluOlsun and #23NisanUlusalEgemenlikveÇocukBayramı whereas for 19th of May,

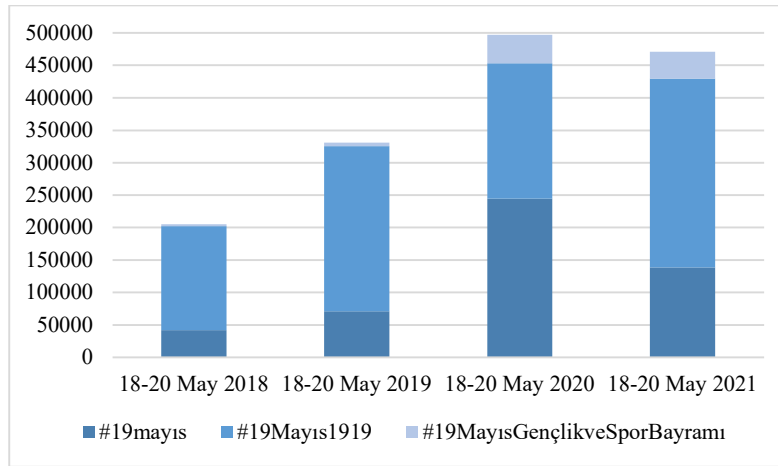
#19MayısGençlikveSporBayramı, #19Mayıs1919 and #19Mayıs are mostly used during the celebration periods.

The study done solely on the usage of these hashtags before and during the pandemic shows that, even though these hashtags were used in the 2018 and 2019 celebrations, their usage is significantly higher for the pandemic period (Graph 3.1-3.2). One of the factors related with the increase of the usage on the hashtags is because active Twitter users in Turkey is also increasing with every passing year. As reported by We Are Social et al., Twitter had 9 million active users in 2019, that increased to 11.8 million in 2020 and 13.6 million in 2021 (Graph B1). Compared to the increase in the number of users, the peak in the graphs implies that under the spatial restrictions of the pandemic, citizens have utilized hashtags more in order to both organize and express their experiences related with the pandemic celebrations. Another important indicator that the increase in number of tweets is directly related with the spatial conditions influenced by the pandemic can be seen between 2020 and 2021 for both of the holidays. Here, the hashtags have been used more in the 2020 celebrations, where the spatial precautions were stricter compared to 2021 -even though the number of users is higher in 2021.

Such data implies that when the citizens were strictly restricted from coming together within their physical places for their celebrations, they turned to Twitter in order to sustain their conversations and have a continuation of their collective practices. Through their collectivity and their interactions, the undefined digital space has turned into a place. Furthermore, these digital places can be evaluated as public since Twitter provides “a range of online public spaces that provide opportunities for city dwellers to meet collectively” (Foth & Sanders, 2008, p. 74).



Graph 3.1 The usage of 23rd of April hashtags during celebration periods of 4 years

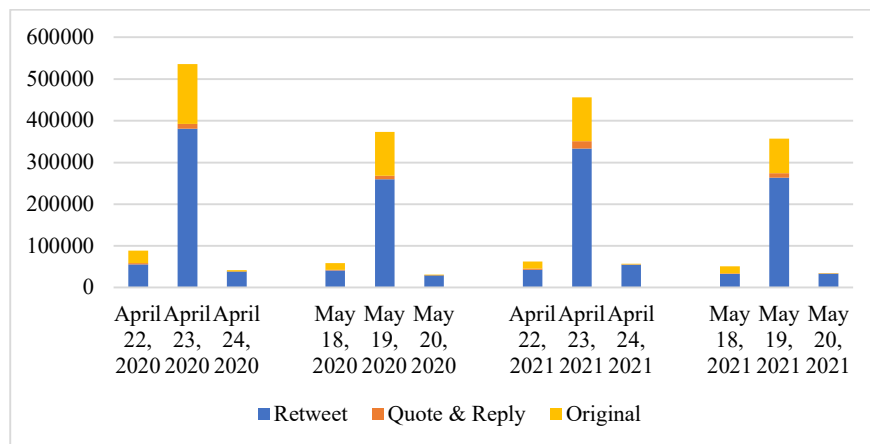


Graph 3.2 The usage of 19th of May hashtags during celebration periods of 4 years

The most used type of interaction within the platform of Twitter, facilitated by these hashtags in general is retweeting, it makes up 71% of all of the tweets for the selected hashtags. By retweeting, citizens are articulating certain expressions -whether tweets that call citizens into action in means of participating in balcony celebrations, or tweets that citizens have talked about their personal experiences- and facilitate a network of interaction among the citizens that have organized under the hashtags. Through retweets of ones following, the original tweets from accounts that are not followed are included in their timeline, reaching a bigger audience, and including new users in the conversation, providing further possibilities of interaction while also broadening the network of communication among the citizens. Furthermore, with the engagement of the citizens provided by the digital articulation of the hashtags, the medium of community participation is extended as well (Alvarez et al., 2017; Breek et al., 2018;

Rainie & Wellman, 2012; Toland et al., 2020), empowering the citizens in making their places (Shipley & Utz, 2012) and providing collectivity to the physical placemaking of balconies.

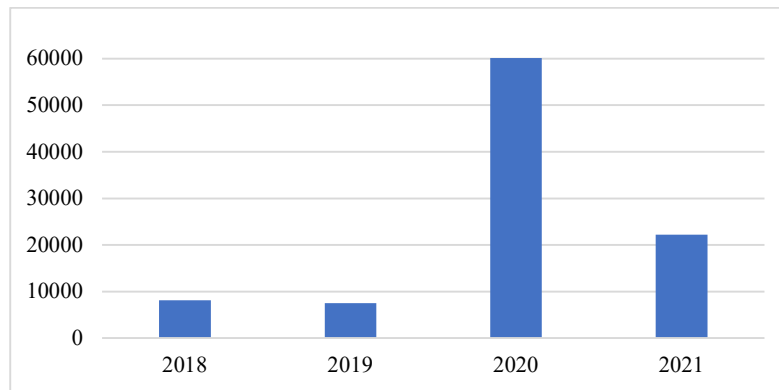
It is also seen that following retweets, the second most utilized method of interaction among the data set is through original tweets. With these original tweets, citizens have utilized Twitter as a tool for extending their spatial experiences and share their thoughts on balcony celebrations. A significant finding related with such tweets is that they are posted mostly during the date of the celebration (Graph 3.3). This indicates that citizens are utilizing Twitter as a tool for conveying their perspectives: After their celebrations on balconies, citizens are turning to Twitter to talk about their experiences during the collective practices, while some also sharing videos and photos from the celebrations in their localities. Furthermore, the date of the celebration also coincides with the most retweets, indicating that the users are also engaging in the perspectives and experiences of their fellows, facilitating an environment of shared experience. Such interactions lead to the social production of the digital place and enhances the production of physical places within hybridity, while also highlighting the mobility within the contemporary world (Halegoua, 2020). This can be interpreted as the formation of a sense of place that transcends spatial borders, since citizens are experiencing places from all around Turkey through digital mediation, and facilitating the generation of shared meaning and attachment.



Graph 3.3 Interactions facilitated by the selected hashtags

The quantitative analysis on keywords related with places of celebration are done on the number of tweets from queries of 4 variations of the keyword: the keyword itself, its plural form and their spatial preposition forms. For instance for the keyword

balcony, the variations drawn are: *balkon*⁴¹, *balkonlar*⁴², *balkonda*⁴³, *balkonlarda*⁴⁴. In relation to balconies, it is seen that there is a significant increase of the keyword usage in the discourse during the pandemic (Graph 3.4). The keywords are used 5,3 times more during the pandemic celebrations compared to the pre-pandemic ones. Furthermore, similar to the case of the hashtags, it has been mostly used in 2020 where most of the celebratory practices were carried out in balconies. These may imply that during the pandemic, balconies have been associated with new practices and relatedly new meanings. The inferences of how balconies have gone through placemaking is given in the discourse analysis section, in relation to the exploration and analysis of the collected data.



Graph 3.4 Usage of balcony keywords during the celebration periods for 4 years

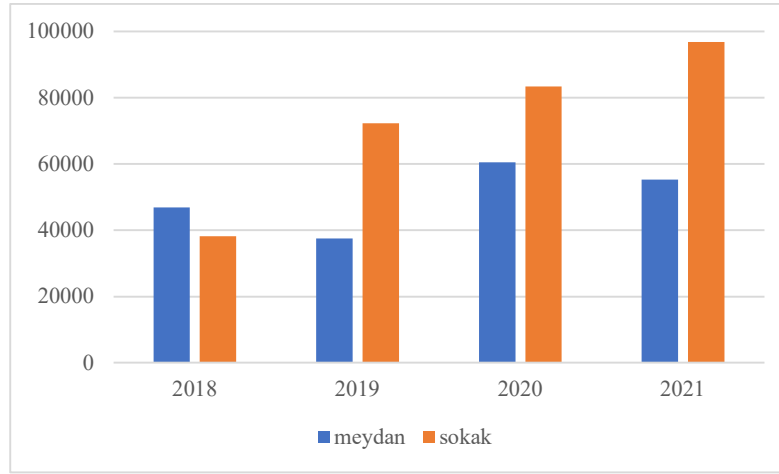
Even though it's not as significant as the case of balcony keywords, the keywords related with the places of pre-pandemic celebrations, sokak and meydan, are also mentioned more during the pandemic (Graph 3.5). Citizens not being able to physically experience these places, yet still mentioning them within the discourse can be evaluated as citizens' attachment to such physical public places.

⁴¹ balcony

⁴² balconies

⁴³ in balcony

⁴⁴ in balconies



Graph 3.5 Usage of square street keywords during the celebration periods for 4 years

As established within the theoretical framework, digital placemaking is based on extending place-based experiences citizens have, by facilitating engagement through utilizing digital connectivity and the complex network of interaction formed between the users. Since contemporary urban environments are realized in relation to hybridity, the interaction facilitated on the digital platforms ultimately affect the urban environment. Furthermore, from the quantitative analysis of the keywords, it can be interpreted that citizens started to engage in physical place-based interactions more, especially for the case of balconies.

Online interactions, in relation to space-based digital communities, have a mutual relation to offline interactions (Breek et al., 2018). Especially during a time where offline interactions were limited to the residents of the household, communities have realized communal interactions primarily through digital platforms. Relatedly, Twitter has become a mediator for social connectivity, sustaining social interactions of the community. As can be seen from the quantitative findings, the citizens by utilizing hashtags and mostly interacting through re-tweets on the dates of the celebration, have engaged in the place-based conversations, participating in the creation of a shared meaning. Apart from the quantitative study, the digital place has also provided data in terms of balcony-based experiences of the citizens during the pandemic.

3.2.2.2 Discourse Analysis

In this section, the tweets obtained through the final data collection is analyzed qualitatively through the coding of the data set into the matrix (Graph B2) and

discussed in relation to the placemaking literature. In total, the final data set that is read and analyzed in terms of placemaking consists of 6650 tweets. The distribution of the tweets according to their queries is given in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5 *Tweet counts according to queries*

QUERY	DATE	TIME	TWEET COUNT
#1919dabalkonlardayız	18.05.2020-20.05.2020	00:00-23:59	506
	18.05.2021-20.05.2021		
#aynıbalkondayız	22.04.2020-24.04.2020	00:00-23:59	944
	22.04.2021-24.04.2021		
balkon ⁴⁵	23.04.2020	20:30-21:30	4157
	19.05.2020	18:49-19:49	846
	23.04.2021	20:30-21:30	75
	19.05.2021	18:49-19:49	217
TOTAL	6650		

The analysis of the tweets in terms of placemaking has been done in relation to the components of the matrix established according to placemaking literature. Table 3.6 shows the usage percentage of keywords related with the components in the data set. In line with how placemaking is realized under normal conditions, first the findings related with how the citizen engagement is ensured is elaborated on.

Table 3.6 *Percentage of the matrix within the data set*

			Number of Related Tweets	Percentage Within the Data Set
Place	Practice		5603	84%
	Materiality Total		1390	16%
		Location	539	8%
		Public	628	9%
	Meaning Total		3383	51%
		Shared	2210	32%
		Individual	1560	23%
People	Community		2909	44%
	Engagement		2164	33%

Engagement. Placemaking practices -and similarly national holiday celebrations- require a certain level of pre-planning and organization by professionals to assure community participation. During the pandemic, in order to facilitate such participation, tweets of engagement were utilized in 33% of the data set. The primary use of

⁴⁵ Some variations of the keyword used in the query include: balkona, balkonda, balkondan, balkonlar balkonlara, balkonlarda, balkonlardan, balkonlarımız, balkonlarımızda, balkonlarımızdan

engagement tweets was through the hashtags (Table 3.7), both of which are implying collectivity and engagement themselves: They are written in the first-person plural form, signifying collectivity and inherently calling the citizens into action. The hashtags, as previously stated by Messina, provides organization and tracking in times of spatial crisis (2007). Due to the pandemic restrictions the citizens who were not spatially mobile have utilized the organization provided by the hashtags in calling people into action in the physical realm. Thus, hashtags have provided the citizens with participation in both the digital and physical realm. It was through the collective organization provided by the hashtags that the placemaking practices were able to be realized.

Table 3.7 Percentage of engagement tweets

	Total Number of Tweets	Tweets of Engagement	Engagement Tweet Percentage
Hashtags	1450	1098	76%
Keywords	5200	1066	21%
TOTAL	6650	2164	33%

Some engagement tweets have been posted by official accounts of municipalities, governorship, political parties, associations and youth centers to engage citizens. These accounts functioned as facilitators of placemaking, since they were able to spread the plans of balcony organizations to a majority of the citizens through their followers. Especially Youth Union of Turkey (Türkiye Gençlik Birliği – TGB), its associate branch High-school Union of Turkey (Türkiye Liseliler Birliği – TLB) and the youth centers established by the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Turkey have been actively calling citizens to partake in the celebrations and encouraging them to share the videos of the celebrations under the hashtags utilized. Such accounts, through their following, were able to reach the information on balcony celebrations to bigger crowds, facilitating further participation. The tweets of engagement have been utilized more so by the citizens as well, whom normally don't have much power in organizing such practices. However due to the digital connectivity and the networks of interaction facilitated by Twitter they were empowered. Such usages of engagement tweets by the citizens have acted as an initial step for the autonomous realization of placemaking by the ordinary citizens.

Since after the engagement phase, place is made through complex interactions among its components: materiality, practice and meaning, and their relation to the community,

the following discussion is established by explaining the findings related with the components and how they affected each other (Figure 3.4). The findings and related discussions are initially given in a deconstructed manner, under certain components, in order to organize the data and inferences. However, since these components are always in interaction and placemaking is realized through such interactions as a whole, the findings and discussions are also approached in relation with other components of placemaking.

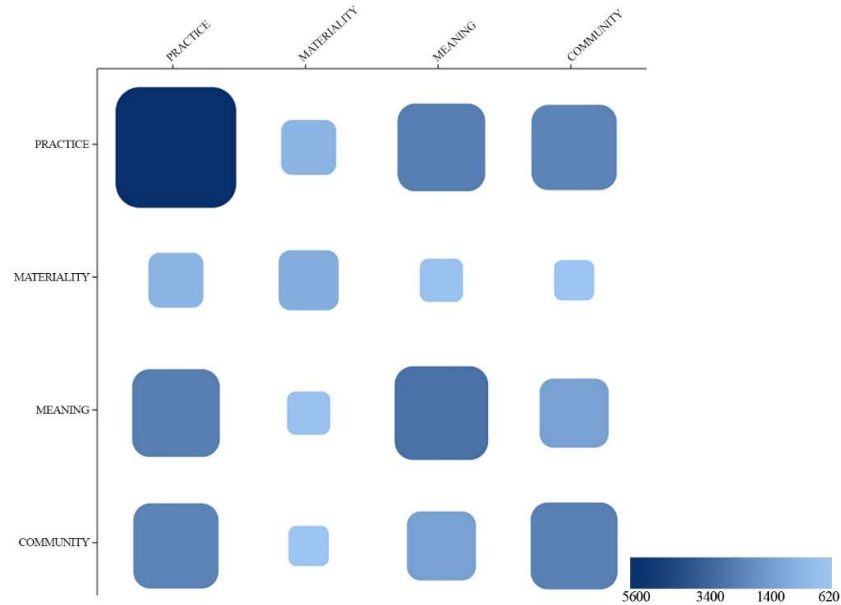


Figure 3.4 The interaction between the components of place and the element of community (Legend shows number of tweets)

Practice. The practices realized in balconies were mentioned in 84% of the data set, and the partial percentage of keywords within the tweets related with practices are given in Table 3.8. The majority of the practices mentioned are related with national holiday celebrations and some that were being practiced at the beginning of the pandemic, such as clapping, whistling and balcony concerts. Furthermore, 42% of the tweets mentions practices accompanied by keywords of community, implying collectivity and strengthening placemaking through the implication of shared experience. Throughout the tweets related with practices, citizens have referred to encounters, which are normally accommodated in public places and they have mentioned their communities and the inferences and meanings related with them.

Table 3.8 Partial percentage of predominant practices in the data set for practices

Practice	Percentage
singing marches	73%
going out	45%
organizing / decorating	11%
clapping / whistling	8%
waving flag	6%
dancing / singing	4%

During the pandemic citizens have lost their privilege in making and practicing their urban environments. By realizing celebrations as tools of collectivity, they have adapted celebration practices to their balconies, facilitating the creation of places of community and celebration (Figure 3.5) in an otherwise oppressive and limiting environment, similar to the case explored by Hunter et al. (2016). Under normal circumstances, whether during official ceremonies in stadiums and schools or unofficial celebrations in streets and squares, singing marches unites citizens and communities within their environments. During the pandemic, people came together in their balconies to primarily sing or play the national anthem and continue their celebrations with other marches “While we were singing the national anthem on the balcony, the enthusiasm of the people really reminded me of the celebrations we had at school”⁴⁶. Such tweets show that citizens have related the balcony celebrations to their personal experiences of the pre-pandemic celebrations, attributing a new layer of meaning to balconies through the accommodation of the celebration practices.



Figure 3.5 Citizens collectively celebrating from their balconies

⁴⁶ Tweet no. 1780: Balkonda İstiklal Marşı okurken sonrasında insanların coşkusu gerçekten bir an okulda yaptığımız kutlamaları hatırlattı

The organization required to be able to sing the marches simultaneously and decorating the balconies have been mentioned in the data set as well, adapting the organization inherent in the national holiday celebrations to the balconies. This was also mentioned in 19th of May celebrations of 2020, where one stated that “Our building complex was more prepared this time. At 19:19 more people were on the balconies. This time we put sound systems on our balcony, which seemed to increase the enthusiasm a little more”⁴⁷. Further comparisons between the organization of balcony celebrations were made for 19th of May 2020, where citizens commemorated their 23rd of April 2020 celebrations by stating “I'm waiting for the national anthem on the balcony, I hope it will be as good as April 23”⁴⁸. These examples show that the balconies have started being part of celebration practices.

Another aspect related with the normal practice and organization of national holiday celebrations that was adapted to balconies is decorating: “Don’t you think it was great to decorate the balconies and sing İstiklal Marşı collectively as a neighborhood?”⁴⁹. National holidays of 23rd of April and 19th of May are celebrated in schools, decorated with flags, balloons and children’s drawings with only the Turkish flag being hung onto the balcony rails. During the pandemic, apart from the flags, citizens decorated their balconies and windows with children’s drawings and balloons, especially for the kids which could not celebrate the national holiday that is attributed to them, which have led to the alteration of the materiality of balconies and the meanings associated with them (Figure 3.6). Furthermore, the apartments that are not normally prepared for the national holidays were also seen to be decorated with celebratory banners (Figure 3.7). By decorating their balconies and apartments as how they would normally decorate their public environments, citizens have commemorated and created places of celebration in a restricted urban environment. Such practices are also important since through decoration, symbolic meaning associated with such decorations are being attached to the materiality of the balcony, turning them into places with connotations.

⁴⁷ Tweet no. 6472: Bizim site bu sefer daha hazırlıklıydı. 19:19’da daha çok kişi balkonlardaydı. Bu sefer hoparlörleri balkona çıkarmamız da coşkunun biraz daha artmasını sağladı.

⁴⁸ Tweet no. 6330: Balkonda İstiklal Marşı’nı bekliyorum, umarım 23 Nisan’daki gibi güzel olur.

⁴⁹ Tweet no. 2231: Balkonları süsleyip mahallece İstiklal Marşı okumak çok güzel bir hareket değil miydi sizce de?



Figure 3.6 A group of photos shared in the data set in relation to the decoration of balconies and windows



Figure 3.7 A group of photos shared in the data set in relation to the decoration of apartments

A practice that has been influential in the data set is going out onto the balcony (*çıkma*), which was mentioned in 30% of the tweets, with 15% accompanied with words of community: “I was proud of both my neighbors in the building I live in and my neighborhood. Everyone went out onto the balcony singing our National Anthem with our flag in their hands. I accompanied them with tears in my eyes”⁵⁰. Such expressions can be seen as a sign that going on to the balcony has become a collective practice rather than one that is generally limited to the household. Citizens, by going out onto their own private balconies, simultaneously with their communities had a chance to interact with their neighbors and have a collective experience within the borders of their houses. Accordingly, it becomes possible to argue that balconies have turned into a common place. Such inferences are visible in some tweets too: “I had another 20-minute of national holiday celebration that I felt to my bones. The people

⁵⁰ Tweet no. 3605: Hem oturduğum binadaki komşularıyla hem de mahallemlerle gurur duydum, herkes balkonda elinde bayrağımız dilinde marşımızla. Gözümde yaşla eşlik ettim.

of Izmir are really sensitive everyone went out to the balconies! It's wonderful to meet so many different people you don't know in a common place!”⁵¹.

Placemaking, even though is mostly realized as a deliberate practice, is much more related with the practice of communities and how they engage with a given space, making it into a place (Brunnberg & Frigo, 2012; Silberberg et al., 2013; Strydom, 2018). As the founder of Project for Public Spaces, Fred Kent (as quoted in Silberberg et al., 2013) says “placemaking is an act of doing something. It’s not planning, it’s doing. That’s what’s so powerful about it” (p. 9). The conditions of the pandemic have emphasized that placemaking is a practice of the community. The citizens, by utilizing the digital place of Twitter to plan celebrations on their balconies have participated in the placemaking of both their balconies and their urban environments through their practices. The adaptation of balconies to accommodate national holiday celebrations is similar to tactical placemaking (Wyckoff et al., 2015) since the main idea behind the type is to be able to convert a given space into a communal place with small interventions through possibilities already at hand, similar to the example of Park(ing) Day. Normally, tactical placemaking relies on professionals to be realized and planned. However, during the pandemic, a more organic form of tactical placemaking was seen through the citizens longing for a place where they can collectively occupy to interact and celebrate. Balconies, being the only semi-public place citizens have access to, have become a part of the street by the celebration practices of the citizens. Even though spatially there were smaller interventions –such as decorating- to make the place, the transformation happened more so in the practice of the citizens, where balcony became a place where collectivity can be practiced.

Meaning. The most interaction among the components of place happened between practices and associated meanings. By accommodating national holiday celebrations in balconies, meanings already associated with the celebrations were attached to their materiality. Furthermore, citizens by collectively practicing their balconies, have produced a new layer of meaning, which have ultimately affected both balconies and urban places, while also facilitating community bonds. The meaning facilitated by the celebrations is mentioned in 51% of the data set, with 32% being associated with the

⁵¹ Tweet no. 1079: İliklerime kadar hissettiğim 20 dakikalık bir bayram anım daha oldu. İzmirliiler gerçekten çok hassas ve duyarlı herkes çıktı balkonlara! Tanımadığım onca farklı insanla ortak bir yerde buluşmak şahane!

shared meaning already established by the practice of national holiday celebrations being attributed to balconies and 23% being individual meanings, associated with the experiences individuals had during the balcony celebrations (Table 3.9). Within the tweets related with individual meaning, citizens have inferred to the bonds they have established among themselves and their places, they have referred to the sense of community by utilizing statements of unity and solidarity. As a result, a multi layered meaning associated with balconies, realized in relation to the collective practice of celebrations was facilitated.

Table 3.9 Partial percentage of predominant meanings in the data set for meanings

Meaning	Percentage
enthusiasm (shared)	33%
national / celebrations (shared)	30%
positive meaning (individual)	25%
being touched / moved (individual)	19%

There are overlaps among the two types of meaning –individual and shared- where citizens have compared the pre-pandemic celebrations to the ones held in balconies, even stating that the balcony celebrations were more enthusiastic: “The last time I was having such an emotional 23rd of April celebration, I was around 10 years old. Today on the balcony, it's like I'm 10 years old again”⁵². With the enthusiasm experienced through the balcony celebrations and the collectivity it facilitates, citizens have stated that the practice should continue in the following years and become a tradition: “Let it be a tradition to sing the National Anthem from the balconies on every national holiday. Seeing that most of the balconies are full and singing the anthem together adds strength to one's strength”⁵³ and “This should become a tradition; we should not end our national holidays by just a few bureaucrats laying wreaths. On national holidays, the place of our National Anthem should be 21:00 in balconies and squares”⁵⁴. Some citizens have even claimed that the balcony celebrations were the best national holiday celebrations they had: “I've been in Izmir for 35 years, I haven't seen 23 April celebrated so beautifully... It was awesome. Songs, marches, whistles,

⁵² Tweet no. 3103: En son 10 yaşında falandım bu kadar duygu yüklü bir 23 Nisan kutlaması yaşarken. Bugün balkonda, 10 yaşına geri döndüm sanki.

⁵³ Tweet no. 6377: Balkonlardan İstiklal Marşı söylemek her milli bayramda bir gelenek olsun. Çoğu balkonun dolu olduğunu görmek, hep birlikte marş söylemek insanın gücüne güç katıyor.

⁵⁴ Tweet no. 2625: Bu gelenek haline gelmeli milli bayramlarımızı sadece çelenk koyma töreni ve birkaç bürokratla bitirmemeliyiz. Milli bayramlarda İstiklal Marşımızın yeri balkonlar ve meydanlar saati de 21:00 olmalıdır.

applause from the balconies”⁵⁵. Such expressions -through showing the shared and individual meanings associated with the conventional practice of national holiday celebrations being attributed to balconies- are adding a new layer of meaning towards the making of balconies into communal places. Furthermore, citizens are also generating new shared and individual meanings, through their collective practices on the balconies, where celebration is attributed as a practice that belongs to balconies, thus creating an iterative cycle of influence between the components of practice and meaning. Such discourse is important in terms of placemaking since placemaking happens through citizens engaging in production of meaning, leading to the creation of a locale (Lepofsky & Fraser, 2003) and balconies, by accommodating new practices related with communality and collectivity, facilitated shared experienced.

Materiality. Within the data set, the interaction between the two types of materialities’ -location and public place- is seen to have spatial implications, in relation to how the balconies are practiced and relatedly the meanings facilitated. The citizens have mentioned their environments in 16% of their tweets 9% being dedicated to public places of pre-pandemic celebrations and 8% being related with their localities. The distribution of keywords within the materiality tweets is given in Table 3.10. Tweets related with materiality provide a base for inferences on how the spatiality of balconies were changed while also giving insights on how the public place was affected in relation to the practices carried out in balconies. “Whether we're at home or just going out on the balcony, I've experienced the most beautiful celebration today. I see the enthusiasm on the balconies that I couldn't see in the squares”⁵⁶.

Table 3.10 Partial percentage of predominant materialities in the data set for materialities

Materiality	Percentage
province (location)	39%
neighborhood (public)	27%
places of celebration (public)	19%

It was observed in the data set that citizens are attributing the experiences they had on their balconies to their localities. Such tweets include ones in which citizens have mentioned that their practices on balconies have affected the surroundings: “Even

⁵⁵ Tweet no. 933: 35 yıldır İzmir'deyim böyle güzel kutlanan 23 Nisan görmedim... Müthişti müthiş. Balkonlardan şarkılar, marşlar, ıslıklar, alkışlar #23NisanKutluOlsun.

⁵⁶ Tweet no. 3139: Evde de olsak, yalnızca balkonlara çıkabiliyor olsak da hayatımdaki en güzel kutlamaya şahit oldum bugün. Meydanlarda göremediğim coşkuyu balkonlarda gördüm.

though we couldn't take to the streets, we made the neighborhood howl from the balconies”⁵⁷. Through linking the places of pre-pandemic celebrations and balconies via their collective practices, citizens have expressed the transformation of their balconies, implying placemaking: “We had to stay at home, maybe we didn't have the event we always had, but we turned our balconies and windows into places of celebration”⁵⁸. Furthermore, many tweets have included the locality of the user, along with the experience of the balcony celebrations.

Interactions Among the Components. The interaction of components of the matrix, established according to the placemaking literature, leads to traces of placemaking of both the balconies and the urban environment on a bigger scale, in relation to the placemaking literature. Most significantly, the pandemic and the related data has made it apparent that the materiality of the balconies and the digital place have played an influential role in providing for the making of them into communal places –by accommodating collective celebration practices that once belonged mainly to urban places- through the accommodation of collective practices and as a result of such practices, the materiality of balconies has been altered as well in relation to the practices, highlighting the iterative cycle between the components of materiality and practice.

Balconies are thresholds that provide the connection between the public and private life. By being places in between with no strictly defined practices -compared to the rest of the house- they have the potential to be reconstituted and it's “the ‘freedom’ of this space (that) enables its multi-functional use, and lures resident to appropriate it for their own benefit” (Aronis, 2009, p. 159). As Simmel (1994) states, “Only to humanity, in contrast to nature, has the right to connect and separate been granted, and in the distinctive manner that one of these activities is always the presupposition of the other” (p. 5). Being considered as a separator from or a connector to the street is, in fact, dependent on how the users practice balconies and how they make it their own. As a result of the collective practice accommodated in balconies, they have started to be a

⁵⁷ Tweet no. 4629: Sokaklara dökülemesek de balkonlardan mahalleyi inlettik.

⁵⁸ Tweet no. 3177: Evlerde kalmak zorundaydık, belki hep yaptığımız gösteriler yoktu ama balkonları, pencereleri bayram yeri yaptık.

part of the street, becoming a public place, even the only public place the citizens had access to during the pandemic.

As stated by Gehl (1987), there is a “hierarchical system of communal spaces – from the living room to the city’s town hall square – and the relationship of these spaces to various social groups, it is possible to define varying degrees to which different spaces are public and private” (pp. 58-59). However, he states that in most cases, there isn’t a transitional place in between the two where social structure of communities could be supported (Gehl, 1987). During the pandemic, the liminal places, by being intersection of public and private place, have attained the function of being a place of moderation, while also becoming a communal space: “The major function of the communal spaces is to provide the arena for life between buildings, the daily unplanned activities (...) play, and simple social activities from which additional communal life can develop, as desired by the residents” (Gehl, 1987, p. 57). With the liminal places of balconies and the digital place being occupied collectively by the citizens, they have become places that can support communities and their celebrations during spatial crisis. Thus, balcony, normally within the borders of the private house, have become part of the urban public place: “Great public spaces are those places where celebrations are held, social and economic exchanges occur, friends run into each other...” (PPS, n.d.-c).

Sense of place and sense of community have been realized within the data set as well, in relation to the interaction of materiality, community and practice. By having a collective experience in balconies, citizens have established emotive bonds towards their places and neighbors as well, which is in line with how placemaking is approached in the literature by various scholars (PPS, 2007; Schneekloth & Shibley, 2000; Silberberg et al., 2013). The positive bonds among the people have been traced through the interaction of individual meaning and community. As for the positive bonds between people and their places, meaning is studied together with materiality. In relation to the bonds citizens form with their environments: “I love this street. Everyone stood on their balconies, and we sang the National Anthem in unity”⁵⁹ and “We all poured onto the balconies, our national anthem echoed in the street, very beautiful, very proud”⁶⁰. Since people from the same community are connected by the

⁵⁹ Tweet no. 6399: Ben bu sokağı çok sevdim. Herkes balkona çıktı ve hep bir ağızdan İstiklal Marşı okuduk.

⁶⁰ Tweet no: 3622: Hepimiz balkonlara döküldük, sokakta İstiklal Marşımız yankılandı, çok güzel çok gurur verici.

places they share, there is an interrelation among the two norms. Having a positive relationship with people from the same community influences how the person is attached to their environments positively and vice versa. An influential portion of the data set have mentioned this positive influence in terms of both spatial and communal relations: “I didn't know my neighbors because I just moved, today we all shouted, 'Long live Mustafa Kemal Pasha' from our balconies and applauded, what a beautiful place we moved to”⁶¹.

As the findings related with meaning and practice revealed, during the pandemic, balconies have become places that citizens continued their collective celebration practices, where community bonds were sustained, even strengthened: “We experienced all our joys from the balcony. I personally made many neighbors. Perhaps the greatest value that these quarantine periods have added to us, we had the opportunity to re-kindle the neighborly relations that we lost”⁶². Such findings are important in terms of placemaking since as previously mentioned, placemaking entails facilitation of community bonds and strengthening the bonds citizens have to their places (Badenhorst, 2019; PPS, 2007). Furthermore, as explained in community-driven placemaking, within the contemporary world, such mobilized social networks are important in understanding the public realm (Hou & Rios, 2003), thus can provide important input in how to make better places for communities.

With such inferences of citizens linking the balcony celebration to their surroundings and establishing new attachments towards their public places, a new sense of place, associated with balconies can be argued to have emerged. As defined by Foote and Azaryahu (2009), “Sense of place refers to the emotive bonds and attachments people develop or experience in particular environments, from the national, regional, or urban levels all the way to the personal scale of the neighborhood and home” (p. 95). Sense of place is closely related to placemaking, since practices of placemaking facilitate bonds and attachments to be formed between people and places through generation of a shared meaning (Badenhorst, 2019; Silberberg et al., 2013; PPS, 2007) and it seeks

⁶¹ Tweet no. 7070: Yeni taşındığım için komsularımı tanıımıyordum bugün hep birlikte balkonlarımızdan ‘Yaşa Mustafa Kemal Paşa Yaşa’ diye coşkuyla bağırıp alkışladık ne güzel yere taşınmışım.

⁶² Tweet no. 6522: Bütün sevinçlerimizi balkondan yaşadık. Ben şahsen birçok komşu edindim. Beklide bu karantina dönemlerinin bizlere kattığı en büyük değer, kaybetmiş olduğumuz komşuluk ilişkilerini yeniden yaşamamız oldu.

to facilitate sense of place (Heller & Adams, 2009). In line, it can be argued that, through the balcony celebrations, the shared meanings facilitated by the citizens have affected the sense of place associated with balconies, and in relation to it, their neighborhoods, thus leading to the placemaking of both.

Also, the usage of #aynıbalkondayız, through citizens forming spatial bonds by the shared historical meaning associated with the origins of the 23rd of April celebrations, can be evaluated as an implication of sense of place. Citizens have commemorated the balcony of the 1st Grand Assembly Building –now the Museum of the War of Independence- along with photographs of Atatürk and his fellows greeting the people from that balcony (Figure A16). The balcony has a symbolic meaning within the timeline of War of Independence, and citizens have used it as a facilitator of unity, stating that they are still on that same balcony: “We were on the same balcony 100 years ago, we are on the same balcony today. The balcony of independence, freedom and national sovereignty. #aynıbalkondayız”⁶³ and “It was a handful of pioneers who could reach Ankara a century ago. But the entire Turkish nation was on that balcony on April 23, 1920. Today, no matter how far we are from each other, we are #aynıbalkondayız”⁶⁴. The meaning associated with the balcony of the 1st Grand Assembly Building have been superimposed onto the citizens’ own balconies, adding a new layer of meaning that is related with the history of the celebrations. This, by articulating a historically shared meaning, becomes a factor of placemaking for the case of balconies during the pandemic, while also supporting sense of place and sense of community.

Sense of place have also been influenced by the hybrid materiality of the modern context. As explained by Castells (2012), in relation to occupy movements of the networked society, the hybridity of the modern world allows for “a mixture of space of places, in a given territory, and space of flows, on the Internet” (p. 171). Thus, anything happening in the digital place affects the physical place or vice versa. First, citizens under lockdowns realized digital place as a public communal place and through the communication they have established, they planned physical collective

⁶³ Tweet no. 8129: 100 yıl önce aynı balkondaydık, bugün yine aynı balkondayız. Bağımsızlık, özgürlük ve Milli Egemenlik balkonu #aynıbalkondayız.

⁶⁴ Tweet no. 8391: Bir asır önce Ankara’ya varabilen bir avuç öncüydü. Ama Türk milletinin tamamı 23 Nisan 1920’de o balkondaydı. Bugün de birbirimizden ne kadar uzak olursak olalım #aynıbalkondayız.

gatherings on balconies. The digital place has mediated the practice of balcony celebrations, extending the ways of experiencing it. Furthermore, 7% of the tweets have attached media, where celebrations on the balconies and neighborhoods are portrayed. Citizens, by sharing the images and videos related with the celebrations on their neighborhoods and expressing their experiences through the platform of Twitter, have facilitated a sense of place that is transcending the limits of their physical environments, challenging the spatial barriers that differentiate them in the first place. As mentioned previously, with the mobility provided by digital media, simultaneity is achieved without being limited by spatial borders (Harvey, 1990; McQuire, 1997) and through placemaking, citizen engagement can be achieved among people that are dispersed in space (Nursey-Bray, 2020). Thus, with the digitally connected world, spatial barriers are overcome, generating a new sense of place for the people that are engaged in the practice of celebrations. Moreover, by accommodating and accessing the public digital place from the private environment of their houses, citizens have again challenged the barriers between these two realms.

The placemaking realized in relation to the hybrid materiality can be addressed similar to relational (Pierce et al., 2011) and translocal (Rios & Watkins, 2015) placemaking, since they are typologies that are established in relation to the networked relations of the contemporary world. The concern of both of the typologies is to acknowledge the networks of social and material relations, that are independent of the physicality of the places yet still simultaneously affecting them. Especially during the pandemic, since physical places were realized through the digital space and placemaking of the urban environment happened through mediums of balconies and digital place, these practices became important examples of relational and translocal placemaking.

Furthermore, the urban context within which the balconies are located have seen to be influencing the experience and practices related with them and celebrations. Within the context of Turkey, balconies are mostly closed off in order for them to be included within the privacy of the house. Furthermore, the neighborhood and the urban fabric within which the balconies are located is influential in how they are practiced. For instance, in neighborhoods predominantly occupied by apartments, where the balconies faced each other, it can be stated that the celebrations were more collective since the people had the opportunity to visually see fellow neighbors and interact with

them. Whereas in places that do not have dense housing, like rural areas, and neighborhoods that are made up of detached houses can be handled as places where less collectivity and participation was involved. The traces of mentioned cases are visible within the data set as well: “Of course, I would like to go out to the balcony, but nothing will happen if I do, the nearest house is 500 meters away, the young population in the village is really low as well”⁶⁵ & “It is very difficult to live in a village. We went to the balcony to celebrate April 23. There are 3 houses around and two of them are occupied by elderly”⁶⁶. As can be seen from the examples, the demography of the context has also played an influential role in participation. Furthermore, some citizens have also complained that they do not have any balcony to participate in the celebrations, whereas some users have mentioned that the celebrations were different within their balconies that face different streets and parts of the neighborhood: “The back balcony is filled with celebrations whereas the front balcony is quiet”⁶⁷. Relatedly, it should be noted that the practices in balconies, and relatedly the celebrations have been affected by the urban fabric and context as well.

Other Findings. Apart from the findings related with the components of placemaking identified in the thesis, there are several other patterns observed that relate to placemaking literature from a more general perspective. For instance, placemaking emerged as a theory and practice due to citizens losing the power of shaping their urban environments in the light of modernization and this was worsened due to the pandemic. Thus, it aims to empower people in reclaiming their rights on making their public places. Citizens detached from their urban environments, via the collective practices carried out in balconies, had the possibility to experience their public environments through a new layer of placemaking. Here, national holiday celebrations, which also lead to the placemaking of urban environments under normal circumstances, have provided the citizens to participate in the placemaking of their urban place by extending the communal space into their private balconies. This can be seen as an empowerment of the communities, representing a comeback for them in reclaiming their rights on making their urban places (Silberberg et al., 2013).

⁶⁵ Tweet no. 2313: Ben de balkona çıkmak isterdim tabi ama çıksam ne olacak, en yakın ev 500 metre ötede köyde genç nüfusu da çok az.

⁶⁶ Tweet no. 4375: Köy yerinde yaşamak çok zor. 23 Nisan’ı kutlamaya balkona çıktık. Etrafta 3 ev var zaten, ikisinde yaşlı oturuyor.

⁶⁷ Tweet no. 6806: Ön balkon sessizken arka balkon coşuyor.

In the data set, it was observed that citizens were able to continue their celebration practices through the placemaking of balconies into communal places, with some even stating that balconies gave the practice they lost towards the contemporary times back. Here, there are two standpoints as to how balconies gave the practice of celebration – and relatedly placemaking- back. Some citizens state that in the recent years, national holidays were celebrated only by the bureaucrats: “In the past, national holidays were celebrated by the state, but in the last few years it has been celebrated by the nation. I have never witnessed national holidays celebrated with such enthusiasm from 7 to 70. All of Turkey have celebrated the holiday with enthusiasm on balconies”⁶⁸. Another standpoint is that after compulsory education, adults tend to stop celebrating national holidays, and the continuation of balcony celebrations will provide participation: “I like the balcony celebration, it can be continued every year. It carried the celebrations that we normally do not attend much after compulsory education to every house with enthusiasm”⁶⁹. Thus, with the practices in balconies, the citizens were able to continue the placemaking of their urban environments.

Furthermore, how the collective placemaking practices held in balconies have empowered the citizens of Turkey is visible in the data set through expressions on balcony speeches. Balcony speeches have been utilized by many governmental bodies all around the world where “they addressed both the peoples of the countries they assumed management duties and the world” (Göksu & Aslan, 2015, p. 64). It has entered the political discussion of Turkey after the General Elections of 2007, following the controversy associated with the administration. Thus, balconies in the Turkish context have connotations primarily related with the currently ruling party. The tweets show that during the pandemic, the primary connotations have shifted to collective celebrations which empowered the citizens through the sense of community facilitated: “The real balcony speech has been delivered by all of the citizens of Turkey”⁷⁰ and “This time, the people are giving the balcony speech”⁷¹. As a result, the

⁶⁸ Tweet no. 5906: Eskiden milli bayramlar devlet tarafından kutlanırdı ama son birkaç senedir millet tarafından kutlanıyor. Milli bayramların 7'den 70'e böyle coşkulu kutlandığına hiç şahit olmadım. Tüm Türkiye balkonlarda coşkuyla bayramını kutladı.

⁶⁹ Tweet no. 1403: Balkon kutlamalarını beğendim, her sene devam edebilir, normalde zorunlu eğitimden sonra çok fazla katılmadığımız kutlamaları her eve coşkuyla taşıdı.

⁷⁰ Tweet no. 1209: Asıl şimdi balkon konuşmasını tüm Türkiye olarak yaptık.

⁷¹ Tweet no. 1395: Balkon konuşmasını bu sefer halk yaptı.

placemaking of balconies have provided the citizens with opportunities of reclaiming their power in making their environments.

To sum up the section of Findings & Discussion, an important pattern observed was that 84% of the tweets in the data set included practices associated with balconies and celebrations, 51% implied shared and individual meanings while 44% included keywords of community and 16% included materialities related with localities and the public environment. These statistics are in line with the expected results of query of the data set, which is drawn through the keyword of balconies and collected from the time period of the celebrations. The analysis of these components in relation to each other with the syntheses of placemaking literature have put forth inferences on how placemaking was realized during the pandemic by the collectivity of communities and their shared experiences. Such discussions can guide further studies on new perspectives related with how to make better places for communities.

3.2.2.3 Revisiting the Definition of Placemaking

The pandemic has altered how places are produced and practiced, thus revisiting the definition of placemaking, considering the community and space relationships realized during the pandemic can provide new insights and a revised perspective on how communities make places, and how placemaking can be practiced in the contemporary world. To do so, this attempt on revisiting the definitions of placemaking is based on first summarizing the social and spatial changes in the components of placemaking during the pandemic, followed by revisiting the definitions of placemaking in literature to finally come up with a revised approach.

Citizens who have lost physical connection to their public places and their communities had experienced disruptions in social interactions that are normally accommodated in public places, and have compensated for such collective practices by occupying the digital place and balconies. Relatedly, the private place of the home has attained new functions and practices, including communal practices such as celebrations, which has eventually lead to placemaking. Furthermore, placemaking was emphasized as an autonomous practice that belongs to communities, where citizens themselves have organized and produced a communal place on their balconies by their collective practices. The change in practices due the conditions of the pandemic had spatial implications as well. Due to the accommodation of new functions

within the households, spatially citizens have experienced very strict and fluid borders simultaneously:

- As a result of the social distancing measures and lockdowns, citizens were bordered off from their public places and limited to the strict borders of their houses
- Having to accommodate the practices of daily life within their houses, the borders between public and private place have been challenged and made fluid
- With the proliferation of video conference programs being used for daily practices and such daily practices being accommodated within the borders of the private house, the conception privacy has been challenged as well

During the pandemic, balconies, by being in between the private place of the house and the public place of the street, have also become associated with new functions and spatial qualities:

- Balconies have attained a new spatial importance in providing a connection to the outside world
- Relatedly they become places where sense of community and sense of place can be sustained, and citizens –through having visual connections to their neighbors- can participate in collective practices, leading to balconies becoming communal places
- With the realization of balconies as a communal place within the spatial limits of the private house, they also became places where borders of the private and public life were challenged

Returning back to the definitions of placemaking explored within the theoretical framework, the placemaking realized during the pandemic dominantly relate to the approaches established through facilitation of communities, and how they create their own places through their actions:

- “Strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm” (PPS, 2007, para. 1)
- Placemaking “belongs to everyone: its message and mission is bigger than any one person or organization” (PPS, 2007, para. 9)

- “Placemaking is an act of doing something. It’s not planning, it’s doing. That’s what’s so powerful about it” (Kent quoted in Silberberg et al., 2013, p. 9)
- Placemaking is “not limited to experts but is a practice that can be performed by ordinary people” (Strydom et al., 2018, p. 174).

In relation to the established theory and in light of the findings of the study –which relate to theories that focus on communities and the practices of how place is socially made- realized through the conditions of the pandemic, a new and revised perspective on placemaking can be suggested. First of all, placemaking within theory and practice is discussed in relation to a specific physical space, deliberately selected for creating a public place from one that is neglected or not practiced. Through citizens’ engagement, such spaces are turned into places with attached meanings and experiences. However, the pandemic has shown that placemaking does not have to be physically bounded and approaching it from a conceptual framework can provide new perspectives in how places are made. During the pandemic, citizens have carried the practices of urban environments to their own balconies separately, however conceptually, the meaning and practices attributed to balconies have been altered in relation to collectivity. Relatedly, approaching the subject of placemaking as a collectively experienced place rather than a public space can provide new insights and opportunities towards placemaking. From an architectural and spatial perspective, such approaches can lead to an enhanced understanding of how places are socially produced and provide opportunity to make better places. Furthermore, the pandemic has shown that placemaking can be realized autonomously by communities, and through collective practices and shared experiences that are not deliberately done to make a place. The practice of placemaking does not necessarily have to be realized by changing a physical space, it might rather refer to transformation of the meaning of a space. In terms of the digital milieu, which is generally seen as a tool to extend the physical placemaking practices, it was seen that the digital place can accommodate communities and provide a communal place where they can continue their collective practices, while also facilitating a shared experience and meaning.

Furthermore, as a result of the spatial conditions of the pandemic and the challenging of the borders between the public and private place, the conception of privacy has been deconstructed from a three dimensional volume to being realized through surfaces. Certain surfaces of the private volume were designated as a background by the user

and become publicly shared within the digital place. Similarly, balconies being approached and practiced as a part of the public place deconstructed the privacy of the house. Relatedly, it can be argued that places can be realized through surfaces, opening up new ways of approaching to the conception.

To sum up, the pandemic has provided important insights in how people realize placemaking practices autonomously, in direct relation with collectivity and shared experience. As a result of how places and the placemaking were realized during pandemic, new conceptual and deconstructed approaches to places can be established. Relatedly, such approaches provide new opportunities in understanding how places are made and provide an important architectural input to how places within the contemporary world and in the post-pandemic situation, can be rehandled and spatially improved.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

This thesis examines the recent placemaking practices, realized under the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic to understand how places are made, since rehandling places and placemaking after a spatial disruption can provide new perspectives on how to architecturally make better places. As a result of the social distancing measures and the lockdowns issued to decrease the spread of the virus, the citizens were detached from public places where they normally carry out their daily and communal practices. Relatedly, the social interaction of the communities had been carried onto the digital public place, and consecutively the balconies. Furthermore, the places and practices of placemaking have also been altered as well, in relation to the context of the pandemic.

In the case of Turkey, national holiday celebrations are prominent collective practices within the urban context. By these collective practices, citizens attach shared and individual meanings to their environments. During the pandemic, since citizens were isolated from their urban places with curfews and from each other with social distancing measures, the celebrations were realized as practices of collectivity in the liminal places of balconies and the digital place, strengthening sense of community in challenging times. Citizens have first utilized the digital place as a tool for engagement and planning, then carried their celebration practices onto their balconies collectively. Since during the pandemic, citizens who have lost their communication places utilized Twitter as a place for conversation as well, the experiences related with balcony celebrations were also shared on the platform, facilitating the creation of a digital

public place. Thus, Twitter was utilized as a tool to collect data on citizens' experiences and feelings related with the balcony celebrations, to be analyzed and discussed in relation to the placemaking literature in order to understand how these places other than the public place were practiced and how placemaking was realized. The data to be studied was collected through the query of *balkon*, drawn from selected national holidays -23rd of April National Sovereignty and Children's Day & 19th of May Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day- for 2020 and 2021.

The tweets gathered are coded into a matrix that was established in line with the theory of placemaking, including components of engagement, place and community. The engagement component of the matrix refers to the phase of planning inherent in the deliberate practices of placemaking. After the engagement stage, since placemaking happens through the interaction between people and their places, the matrix was established accordingly. The component of place was then deconstructed further into component identified by Cresswell, who states that places are realized in relation to the interaction of three components: materiality, practice and meaning. The utilization of the matrix has made it possible to code the patterns seen in the dataset in relation to placemaking literature and have made the interactions among the components of visible. Thus the framework of analysis constructed within the thesis, in line with the placemaking theory, can be utilized further or can be adapted to future case studies on placemaking in relation to various different circumstances.

The findings of the study have shown that 33% of the data set includes expressions of engagement, where the citizens are called into action to participate in the balcony celebrations, prior to the practice. This is similar to how deliberate placemaking practices are realized normally. The placemaking realized during the pandemic was also realized autonomously by the citizens, made possible by the connectivity the digital milieu has provided. 84% of the tweets include expressions related with how the citizens have practiced their balconies, most of them being practices that are related with how the national holiday celebrations are realized in the urban environment. Citizens have adapted the traditional practices of celebrating to the liminal place of balconies, in terms of organization, singing marches, waving flags etc. Furthermore, 42% of the data includes keywords of practice accompanied by word of community, thus implying that balconies became places that are practiced collectively, emphasizing their transformation into a communal place for citizens where they

compensate for the public place they have lost. Thus, placemaking was emphasized as a practice of communities: By being collectively practiced, balconies became places that belong to everyone and made into communal places by the citizens themselves.

The citizens have related the shared historical meaning associated with the national holiday celebrations to their balconies, while at the same time generating new individual meanings, associated with the celebratory practices held in balconies. Through the interaction of the components of practice, individual meaning and community, the positive bonds formed between the citizens is realized within the tweets. Citizens, by facilitating positive bonds to their communities as a result of the balcony practices, sustained community bonds and creating a place where such bonds can be sustained or even strengthened. Furthermore, citizens have expressed the positive bonds attached to their environments such as neighborhoods and streets. In line with the placemaking theory, such expressions, by strengthening the bonds between people themselves and between the people and the places they share, leads to placemaking. Citizens have also directly related their urban environments and places of pre-pandemic celebrations to the materiality of their balconies. With the practice and experiences people had in balconies, such expressions have facilitated a sense of place, where balconies emerged as places of celebration.

The data analyzed in terms of placemaking has shown that under exceptional circumstances, citizens were able to sustain sense of community and sense of place in the digital and physical realm, through their autonomous social interactions and practices. Relatedly, placemaking does not have to be realized through deliberate practices and places. Placemaking can happen in places where collective practices of communicates can be accommodated, and citizens can generate a shared meaning and sense of place. Thus, conceptually, placemaking can lead to the creation of public places, in rather unconventional in-between places.

Here, some remarks should be done. First and foremost, even though the digital place has acted as a public sphere during the pandemic, compared to its physical part, it's not as accessible to everyone as the physical public place due to the digital divide. This may be caused by citizens who are not yet have possibilities for internet access, and is also related with the demographics and the familiarity of the platform for the users. However, the organization held within the digital platforms have various other means

of sharing, through different networks of communication that may not have to be social media based. Furthermore, the urban context within which the balconies are located have had an effect on how they are practiced as well. For instance, the experience of neighborhoods that consist of various different apartments is different to a neighborhood that predominantly has detached houses, or gated communities and building complexes.

The limitations related with the thesis should be mentioned as well. During the data gathering stage, some technical limitations related with the API and the Postman software were faced. Such technical limitations included the API only drawing tweets from profiles that are public at the time of collection and the language filter applied to refine the data set sometimes fails to recognize some tweets even though they are written in Turkish, causing loss of data. Another issue related with the technical limitations is that since Twitter –and any social media platform- is an informal and fast channel of communication, typos are common when tweeting, and such tweets are not recognized by the API. However, these limitations did not result in lack of data, since a sufficient amount of tweets were obtained from even a one-hour period. As for the context and the related query of the thesis, it should be acknowledged that for the case of Turkey, holiday celebrations are deeply rooted in and influenced by nationalism and an influential portion of Turkish citizens are nationalist. Thus, studying placemaking in relation to practices other than national holiday celebrations can provide new understanding and approaches towards placemaking and how places were made during the pandemic.

To conclude, the discussion of the empirical study reveals that balconies, which are generally handled as a part of the house, can be rethought as places which can sustain communities. The placemaking of the pandemic has shown that places are made through the collective practice and experience of the people. Here, the liminality of balconies was an important factor for the citizens to be able to experience them as places of collectivity. Relatedly, by continuing to celebrate national holidays, citizens have participated in the making of their own public places, within the borders of their private homes. As a result, the borders between the realms of public and private life - that was challenged by the pandemic- were made fluid with the placemaking practices realized in the balconies and in the digital place. In relation to the discussions held in the thesis, the following questions may be posed for further studies:

- What implications does the conceptually approached placemaking have on the design of public places?
- Should places that can support communal practices become a fundamental element in residential architecture?
- How does the context within which the balconies are located influence the interactions within communities and relatedly placemaking?
- Should providing visual connection and allowing communication with neighbors be a concern in designing balconies?
- Can balconies be handled as communal places in relation to them being able to accommodate communities after the effects of the pandemic are lifted?
- What opportunities can thinking privacy through surfaces provide in terms of placemaking?

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

FIGURES

What Makes a Great Place?

Project
for Public
Spaces

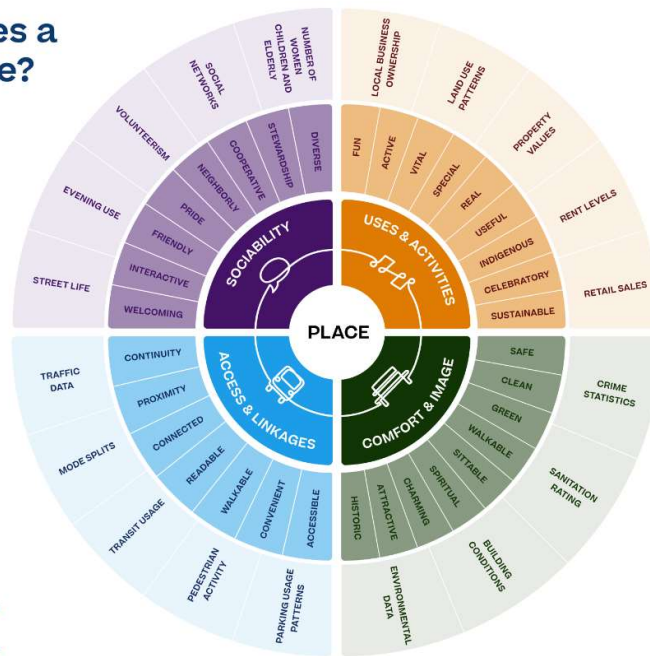


Figure A1 The Place Diagram established by Project for Public Spaces



Figure A2 Movie Nights organized every Monday for the duration of summer in Bryant Park (Source: <https://bryantpark.org/activities/movie-nights>)



Figure A3 Example of game events, organized Daily in Bryant Park (Source: <https://bryantpark.org/activities/bingo>)



Figure A4 Example of yoga classes, organized twice a week in Bryant Park (Source: <https://bryantpark.org/activities/yoga>)



Figure A5 A Park(ing) Day example, from Minneapolis, MN, 2018 (Source: <https://www.myparkingday.org/about>)



Figure A6 A Park(ing) Day example from Montreal, 2015 (Source: <https://theconversation.com/a-day-for-turning-parking-spaces-into-pop-up-parks>)



Figure A7 Stockholm Culture Festival (Source: <https://kulturfestivalen.stockholm.se>)



Figure A8 The final creative and collective product of the r/place event (Source: https://www.reddit.com/r/place/comments/twft1q/full_screenshot_of_rplace_2022/)



Figure A9 Kalamış Park Collective Transformation Project (Source: <https://www.onaranlarkulubu.com/proje/kalamis-parki-kolektif-donusum-projesi/>)



Figure A10 Aerial view of Gezi Park during Occupy movements (Source: <https://www.publicspace.org/works/-/project/h312-occupy-gezi>)

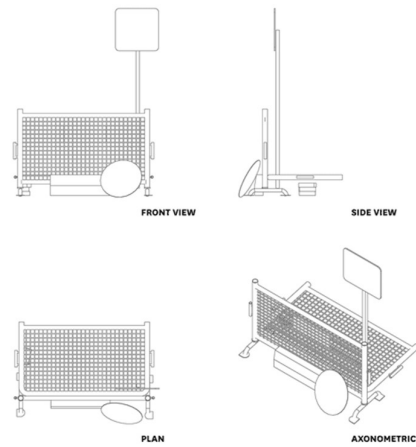


Figure A11 Speaker's corner, and its technical drawing documented by Architecture for All (Source: <https://www.dezeen.com/2013/06/24/occupygezi-architecture-by-architecture-for-all/>)



Figure A12 Victory Day, Walk from Tünel Square to Galatasaray Square, İstanbul, 2016 (Source: <https://www.sozcu.com.tr/2016/gundem/30-agustos-zafer-bayrami-bagdat-caddesinde-kutlaniliyor-1371287/>)



Figure A13 Republic Day, walk from Cumhuriyet Square to Gündoğdu Square, İzmir, 2018 (Source: <https://www.egedesonsoz.com/haber/Cumhuriyet-coskusu-Izmir-i-saracak-Iste-29-Ekim-programi/994194>)



Figure A14 Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day, Cumhuriyet Anıtı, Taksim Square, İstanbul, 2019 (Source: <https://www.sozcu.com.tr/2019/gundem/yurtta-19-mayis-ataturku-anma-genclik-ve-spor-bayrami-coskusu-4856005/>)



Figure A15 Children's Day, Cumhuriyet Meydanı, İzmir, 2018 (Source: <https://www.yeniasir.com.tr/gundem/2018/04/23/izmirde-23-nisana-coskulu-kutlama>)

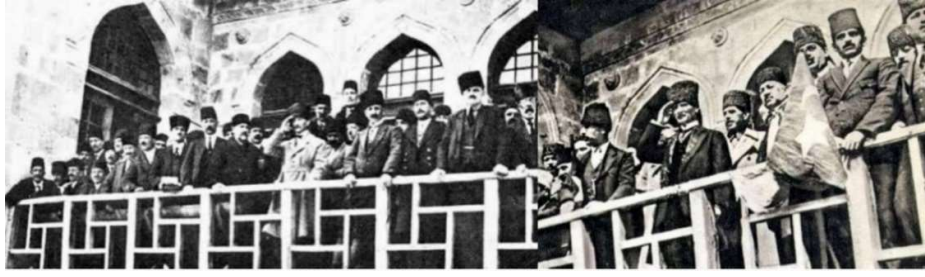


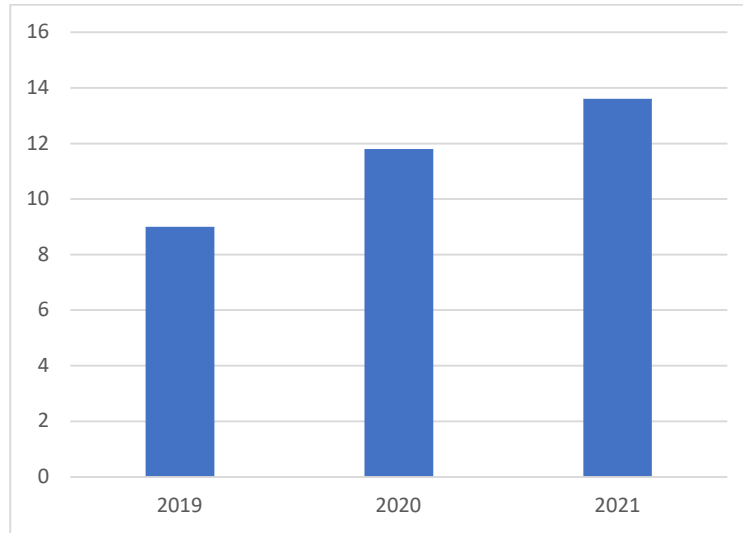
Figure A16 Balcony of the 1st National Grand Assembly Building used within the data set

APPENDIX B

ADDITIONAL TABLES & GRAPHS

Table B1 Celebrations realized in Turkey, and corresponding lockdowns

23 rd of April National Sovereignty and Children's Day	23 rd – 26 th of April 2020 23 rd – 25 th of April 2021
19 th of May Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day	18 th of May – 1 st of June 2020 19 th of May 2021 -No lockdown
30 th of August Victory Day	30 th of August 2020 – No lockdown 30 th of August 2021 – No lockdown
29 th of October Republic Day	29 th of October 2020 – No lockdown 29 th of October 2021 – No lockdown
Feast of Ramadan	23 rd – 26 th of May 2020 (24 th of May) 29 th of April – 16 th of May 2021 (13 th of May)
Feast of Sacrifice	31 st of July 2020 -No lockdown 20 th of July 2021 -No lockdown



Graph B1 Distribution of active Twitter users in millions for Turkey, from 2019 to 2021
(Source: We Are Social Digital Reports)

Table B2 The predominant hashtags used during the pandemic for collective celebrations

Hashtags	Time-frame	During Celebration Periods	Relevance
#23Nisan	773572	702819	90,85%
#19Mayıs1919	533858	500305	93,71%
#23NisanKutluOlsun	516659	497692	96,33%
#19Mayıs	423903	383146	90,39%
#23NisanUlusalEgemenlikveCocukBayramı	164135	150824	91,89%
#100YıllıkEgemenlik ⁷²	97931	91344	93,27%
#19MayısGençlikveSporBayramı	91037	85214	93,60%
#EvdeBayramVar	83868	75938	90,54%
#YüzyıllarYaşa23Nisan	81729	65134	79,70%
#23Nisan2020	75954	71901	94,66%
#TBMM100Yasında	71129	59296	83,36%
#yergökdinlesin	61778	60240	97,51%
#23Nisan1920	43454	41646	95,84%
#23Nisan100Yasında	31720	25111	79,16%
#23NisanMutluOlsun	27710	25512	92,07%
#Evde23Nisan	26327	15872	60,29%
#VideonuYOLLACoskuyuYASA	24005	14352	59,79%
#genclikvesporbayrami	23049	21875	94,91%
#CoşkunuEVDEYaşa	21551	16324	75,75%
#UlusalEgemenlikveCocukBayramı	19481	17390	89,27%
#23NisanSaat21	18124	13781	76,04%
#19MayısAtaturkuAnmaGenclikVeSporB....	15926	15440	96,95%
#AsırlıkGurur	15926	15657	98,31%
#CumhurunSesiÇocuklarımız	13713	13054	95,19%
#19MayısRuhuyla	11886	11393	95,85%
#cocukbayramı	11043	9993	90,49%
#TBMM101Yaşında	10742	10360	96,44%
#AynıBalkondayız	10657	10558	99,07%
#AtatürküAnmaGençlikVeSporBayramı	10461	9607	91,84%
#halkınmeclisi	9711	9506	97,89%
#EvlerSenlikDolu	9348	5159	55,19%
#19Mayıskutluolsun	8935	8635	96,64%
#Yaşasın23Nisan	8077	7296	90,33%
#19MayısKurtuluşDestanı	6869	6477	94,29%
#19MayısGenclikveSporBayramımız	5076	4942	97,36%
#19Mayıs2020	4928	4438	90,06%
#1919daBalkonlardayız	4662	4613	98,95%
#23NisanÇocukBayramı	4469	4098	91,70%

⁷² The hashtag has been eliminated since it only refers to the 23rd of April celebrations in 2020

Table B3 The matrix constructed, and some of the related keywords identified under the components in English and Turkish

ENGAGEMENT	COMMUNITY	PLACE				
		MATERIALITY		MEANING		PRACTICE
		public place	location	shared meaning	individual meaning	
Come on / Haydi	83 million people one heart / 83 milyon tek yürek	Neighborhood / Mahalle	İstanbul	Atatürk	Very nice / Çok güzeldi	Singing marches / Marş söylemek
Are you ready? / Hazır mısınız?	In unison, with one voice / Hep bir ağızdan	Street / Sokak, Cadde	Ankara	National holiday / Milli bayram	Unforgettable / Unutulmaz	Going out / Çıkmak
Are you out in your balconies? / Çıktınız mı?	All, whole / Bütün, tüm	Square / Meydan	İzmir	Enthusiasm / Coşku	Being touched / Duygulanmak	Celebrating / Kutlamak
We are calling, inviting... / Çağırıyoruz, Davet ediyoruz	Together / Hep birlikte	Building complex, apartment / Site, Apartman	Çorum	Pride / Gurur	The most beautiful / En güzel...	Clapping / Alkışlamak

dataset	#	author id	conversation id	created_at	id	like	quote	reply	retweet	text	ENGAGEMENT	public	location	MATERIALITY TOTAL	shared meaning	individual meaning	MEANING TOTAL	PRACTICE	COMMUNITY
23 nisan 2020	890	295604	125338659386	2020-04-23T18:15:11.000Z	125 0	0	0	0	0	23 Nisan Ulusal Egemenlik ve Çocuk Bayramımız kutlu olsun 🇹🇷🇹🇷 Bu gece bayramımızı balkon ve caddelerden kutlayarak iniletiyoruz İstanbul caddelerini... nice nicelerine hep birlikte inşallah. #UlusalEgemenlikveCocukBayrami 18	+	street		+				celebrating	+
23 nisan 2020	1667	711881	125338629547	2020-04-23T17:48:43.000Z	125 2	0	1	0	0	Balkonda bayrak sallayan çocuklar ve onlara alkış tutan büyükler nedeniyle ağlamak üzerim. Ne güzel bir şey bayramı?!					national holiday	being touched	+	waving flag / clapping	
23 nisan 2020	1967	125250	125338645774	2020-04-23T18:21:09.000Z	125 0	0	0	0	0	Balkondan istiklal marşı okumak acıydı güzeldi...sonradı kutlamalarda devam edilecek çok güzel olur...marşımızı harika						positive feelings	+	national anthem	
23 nisan 2020	2288	937458	125337611827	2020-04-23T17:32:07.000Z	125 11	0	0	0	0	Bedeller balkonda, kalpler meydanlarda. #23Nisan #EvdeBayramVar		square		+					
23 nisan 2020	4388	591697	125338594848	2020-04-23T18:11:11.000Z	125 0	0	0	0	0	Kuşadası'nda balkonlar çok canlıydı. Duygulanmak elde değil. Nice 100 yıllara inşallah			Kuşadası	+		being touched	+	+	
23 nisan 2020	4451	502385	125338110105	2020-04-23T17:51:55.000Z	125 7	0	1	0	0	Mahallecekte öldükler camılardan balkonlardan 10. Yı marşını söylüyoruz. Ortakoy'u iniletiyoruz Hah, Adamin sesini de duyduğum, geyişim ptt, alkışlar pat. #23NisanKutluOlusun #23Nisan2020		neighborhood	Ortaköy / İstanbul	+	atatürk	being touched	+	march	
23 nisan 2020	4493	122478	125338234521	2020-04-23T17:56:52.000Z	125 1	0	0	0	0	Mahallede herkes balkonlara çıkmış istiklal marşını okumak için... duygu dolu anlar...		neighborhood		+		being touched	+	going out / national anthem	everyone
23 nisan 2020	4550	759677	125338505744	2020-04-23T18:07:39.000Z	125 3	0	0	1	0	Meydanlara çıkmıyorsa balkonlara çıkart. Her köpüde bayramımızı kutlantz. 18		square		+	national holiday		+	going out / celebrating	
23 nisan 2020	4593	123954	125338719654	2020-04-23T18:16:09.000Z	125 186	1	3	51	0	Türkleri dünya üzerindeki başka herhangi bir millettten ayrılan şey için bu ruhlu. Ne kadar gururlansak azdır. 18🇹🇷					enthusiasm	+	+	national anthem	millions
23 nisan 2020	4605	709700	125338483368	2020-04-23T18:06:45.000Z	125 41	0	0	3	0	Muhtemelen bir çokkuvvetli...Herkes balkonda ... Herkes salkta, siren sesleri her yerde ...istiklal marşı sanki evrende yankılanıyor...mehiş bir neşe ve kutlama halli, bin yıldır bu günümüzüz...🇹🇷🇹🇷Selam olsun 19 enişinece 🇹🇷🇹🇷					enthusiasm	positive feelings	+	going out / whistling / national anthem / celebrating	everyone
23 nisan 2020	4800	312556	125338621415	2020-04-23T18:12:14.000Z	125 4	0	0	0	0	Özel günler bu yüzden güzel, unuttuğumuz duyguları hatırlatıyor bize. Aynı ayrı evlerimizde otururken balkonlarımızdan tek yürek, egemenliğimizin 100.yılına kutladık! Tüm zorluklara rağmen birlik olabileceğimizi hatırladık. Ne mutlu Türküm diyene!					national holiday		+	national anthem / celebrating	together
23 nisan 2020	5416	161947	125338659938	2020-04-23T18:13:46.000Z	125 1	0	0	0	0	Şu zor günlerde,biz yine balkonlardan, camılardan birleşirdin Ata'mızı'nı Yaza 23 Nisan , Yaza Yüz Yıllarca 🇹🇷					atatürk		+	+	
23 nisan 2020	5447	546910	125338484504	2020-04-23T18:21:16.000Z	125 2	0	0	0	0	Tam saatinde tüm mahalle gerek balkon gerek kapılarda istiklal marşını okuduk tıyler üperitci bi andı		neighborhood		+	+	being touched	+	national anthem	all neighborhood
23 nisan 2020	5585	815002	125339056336	2020-04-23T18:29:31.000Z	125 6	0	0	0	0	Tüm Türkiye balkonlardan istiklal Marşı'nı hep birlikte okudu 18		square		+				national anthem	all of Turkey / together
23 nisan 2020	7695	195513	126344462790	2020-06-18T18:07:09.000Z	125 9	0	0	5	0	Rabbim bu millete tüm kadroyla meydanlardan okuyup çocuklarımızın neşeli oyunlarıyla keyiflendirmeyi de nasip etsin		square celebration		+	enthusiasm		+	celebrating	

Graph B2 Excerpt from the Excel sheet where the data set was coded into the matrix