Old City Walls as Public Spaces in Istanbul

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Throughout history, city walls have consistently been important urban components expressing both power and existence of cities. Whether natural or man-made, securing defensible boundaries was a vital requirement in the formation of early settlements. While the natural advantages of hilltops or rivers assisted in the defense of early towns, man-made walls were also built to guard settlements from external dangers. As Nijenhuis states, »[...] location, city walls and gates are the result not of mythic but of military thinking [...]« (Nijenhuis 1994: 15). However, walls did not only function as defense elements, they also became important components in shaping and controlling cities' physical, symbolic, political, and economic territories. Furthermore, city walls served to define where these symbolic, political, and economic activities could take place, thus generating two conflicting spatial milieu: inside and outside the city wall. Between this inside and outside a flow of people, goods, capital and even information passed on a regular basis.

Today, city walls no longer hold the same symbolic value as they have in the past. Particularly in cities where the traditional urban fabric has been destroyed, city walls have grown as obsolete monuments, no longer referring to the existing urban structure. Since walls, ditches, and water defenses are wide edges covering larger areas of land, the redefinition of these structures became an important urban planning concern in the nineteenth century. In many cases, obsolete walled edges, viewed as problematic urban components, were demolished as a result of urban modernization in the mid 1800s. During this time, some cities' walls reappeared as public spaces, urban parks and boulevards such as Vienna

Ring Strasse (Ring Street) and Parisian Boulevards. Similarly, as Kostof argues, a Wall Street or Linien Strasse (Line Street) can be found in almost in every city, illustrating how city walls are incorporated into cities as they continued to grow (Kostof 1991). Instead of demolishing city walls, other cities absorbed old walls into their changing urban fabric. This new coexistence of walls with developing spatial structures posed challenges in terms of circulation and use of and around the walls. Whether destroyed or preserved, however, areas in which city walls once existed, have generally been transformed into urban spaces serving the public.

Istanbul illustrates exciting examples of both preservation and destruction of the old city walls. As in Vienna and Paris, walls in the neighborhood Galata were destroyed and new streets and buildings were constructed in their place. On the other hand, in the case of Istanbul´s Historic Peninsula, the old city walls were preserved and enclosed with expansive green spaces, serving several public uses. In cases, Galata and the Historic Peninsula, remains or traces of old city walls have become incorporated into the ordinary daily Istanbul life. In this context addressing only archaeological significance, preservation concerns, restoration processes or conservation problems of Istanbul's old city walls is not sufficient for understanding the significance and importance of walls. Contrary to usual interpretations of old city walls as historic heritages, this study intends to reveal Istanbul's walls as public spaces in the contemporary urban context by evaluating two cases: Galata and the Historic Peninsula. Before analyzing the selected cases, a historic and conceptual evaluation of walls is presented in order to clarify the study's main argument. This essay is therefore developed in three parts: first, evaluation of generic characteristics of old city walls and secondly, an examination of the Historic Peninsula and Galata in Istanbul followed by an analytical discussion of these two cases.

Generic characteristics of »Old City Walls«

Istanbul is a unique case that exposes two different ways in which defense walls were treated in the same city. Although, every city has its own specific evolution pattern, a general discussion describing the significance of city walls is useful for this paper. This part of the study therefore examines old city walls and evaluates the conceptual and Historic growth of city walls.

Conceptual evaluation of »Old City Walls«

In order to discuss the problems of walled edges in contemporary cities, it is first necessary to analyze their characteristics. For example, are walls barriers or lines of exchange and interaction? How do walls built in ancient times now serve contemporary cities? Do they create problems or offer opportunities in the restructuring of modern cities? These are some of the questions that will be discussed in this part of the study. In the first part however some general terms such as edge, border, boundary, and interface that directly refer to city walls will be defined; and in the second part of the paper some conceptual theories about city walls and their incorporation into cities will be evaluated.

By defining a rigid outer line away from a city's centre or in deteriorated parts of cities, walls can be identified as »urban edges« where non conforming communities and activities usually settled. As Ashworth describes: »Outside the walls of medieval cities could generally be found those trades too dangerous or noxious to be permitted within« (Ashworth 1991: 130).

»The edge of a city is a philosophical region, where city and natural landscape overlap, existing without choice and expectation. […] In the middle zone between landscape and city, there is a hope for a new synthesis urban life and urban form.« (Holl 1994: 87)

In the past, walls not only defined city limits, but also functioned as »borders« between spaces in opposition to one another such as the city center and countryside, old town versus new town, urban versus rural, life versus death, controlled versus uncontrolled, closed versus open, and defensive versus non-defensive. Moreover, Deleuze and Guattari's »smooth space« and »striated space« also describe city walls as a confrontation line between smooth and striated. Bonta and Protevi define smooth space as an uncontrollable, non-metric, accentuated and directional space where various landscape features exist. It is a »space of intensive process« (Bonta/Protevi 2004: 143). Whether desert, steppe, sea, or ice, all are types of smooth spaces (Deleuze/Guattari 1987: 534). On the other hand, striated space can be defined as places »that are controlled from some central place above« (Bonta/Protevi 2004: 9) and also »that can be owned, held as stock, distributed, rented, made to produce, and be taxed« (Bonta/Protevi 2004: 80). This conceptual discussion underlines the challenging character of walled zone:

»Smooth space and striated space – nomad space and sedentary space – are not of the same nature. […] the two spaces exist only in mixture […] but the two spaces do not communicate with each other in the same way. […] the simple opposition between the two spaces; the complex differences, the passage from one to another […] entirely different movements.« (Deleuze/Guattari 1987: 524)

Furthermore, the city wall can be defined as a »boundary«. The term boundary is defined by Bonta and Protevi as »the line between an interior and exterior, or between two states of being, that is in some way fixed rather than fluctuating or in free play« (Bonta/Protevi 2004: 65). This definition emphasizes the hard and rigid qualities of walls. Although walls were constructed around cities to control and sometimes block the circulation of people, money and goods, walls also served interactivity too. In fact, they were the most vital urban elements of old cities, places were cities connected to the external world and interacted with other cultures. The term »interface«, therefore refers to a flexible and transparent edge which is more convenient, but also unusual for the definition of a city wall. Several meanings of the concept can be revealed in the following way:

»[…] the first meaning of the word as 'surface forming a common boundary between two bodies, space or phases'. The second meaning is ›the place where independent systems meet and act on, communicate with each other'; broadly, 'an area where diverse things interact‹. The third meaning of the term is rather contemporary; interface is referred as the screen of a televised screen. What is common in all these different usages is the concept of interactive boundary: in physical, virtual or metaphoric sense.« (Erkal 2001: 18)

Besides these terms that directly refer to wall there are also some basic and contemporary conceptual arguments that emphasize the challenging position of walls in urban context. In a very general term, existence of walls in cities can be discussed based on Kevin Lynch's definitions that he describes in his book *The Image of the City*. Although, as stated by Etlin, »[…] the image of the city can not be entirely explained by the notion of topological ›legibility‹ outlined by Kevin Lynch, in terms of paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks« (Etlin 1994: 2), a brief review of these terms helps to underline the complex nature of walls. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, walls can be described as »edges«; »Edges […] are the boundaries between two phases, linear breaks in continuity: shores, railroad cuts, walls. […] Such edges may be barriers […] which close one region off from another; or they may be seams, lines along which two regions are related and joined together« (Lynch

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2000: 47). Being an edge between the inner and outer city, walls often define the historic inner city center in contemporary cities, that can be called »districts«. »Districts are the relatively large city areas which the observer can mentally go inside of, and which have some common character. They can be recognized internally, and occasionally can be used as external reference as a person goes by or toward them« (Lynch 2000: 66). In this context, gates built into city walls are critical elements that facilitate access between the inner district and outer zone. Besides their functional role, gates had also symbolic meanings in the urban life. As Baker describes in the case of Istanbul

»*Top Kapoussi* […] and in the gateway you may see signs of commercial enterprise, small booths and stalls doing trade in a dignified and oriental way [...]. From sunrise to sunset, this place is full of the sounds and sights that travelers in the East are wont to enjoy, but at night it is given over to haunting memories.« (Baker 1975: 195-196)

The significance of gates is still relevant in contemporary cities. Access between the inner Historic city and outer districts is possible only through the gates. Gates can be identified as urban »nodes« as well. »Nodes are points, the strategic spots in a city into which an observer can enter, and which are the intensive foci to and from which he is traveling. They may be primarily junctions, a crossing or convergence of paths, moments of shift from one structure to another.« (Lynch 2000: 47). On the other hand, walls also function as »landmarks« in both Historic and contemporary urban contexts by being one of the most dominant and significant elements of cities. Lynch describes landmarks as »[…] another type of point reference […] the observer does not enter within them, they are external. They are usually rather simply defined physical objects […]« (Lynch 2000: 48), while Yenen, Erkan Biçer & Yücetürk elaborate: »City walls with towers, gates and walls are distinguished by their construction from the general landscape of a town. […] Monumental characteristics of city walls cause them to function as references (landmarks)« (Yenen/Biçer/Yücetürk 2004: 28). Finally, in most contemporary cities, both existing and destroyed city walls became a reference for a linear circulation system in cities – »paths« – as seen in the case of the walls in Istanbul's Historic Peninsula and Galata. »Paths are the channels along which the observer customarily, occasionally, or potentially moves. They may be streets, walkways, transit lines, canals, railroads« (Lynch 2000: 47).

Another way of conceiving city walls is by »territory«. This term does not refer directly to individual walls, but it identifies an area de-

fined by wall. For Deleuze and Guattari people need to mark their territory in some way (1987). Sack's definition« of territoriality clarifies this idea: »[…] Territoriality in humans supposes a control over an area or space that must be conceived of and communicated […] Territoriality in humans is best understood as spatial strategy to affect, influence, or control resources and people, by controlling area […]« (Sack 1986: 1). Based on these definitions, walls define territory »city« that contains various physical, social, and economic elements that function together.

Sack discusses the term »territory« as an important determinant not only in the definition of ancient cities, but also in the configuration of space too. For him, there are several abstract reasons in the formation of territory:

»Territoriality, then, forms the backcloth to human spatial relations and conceptions of space. […] People do not just interact in space and move through space like billiard balls. Rather, human interaction, movement and contact are also matter of transmitting energy and information in order to affect, influence and control the ideas and actions of others and their access to resources. Human spatial relations are the result of influence and power. Territoriality is the primary spatial form power takes.« (Sack 1986: 26)

So, in ancient cities, walls embodied the physical configuration of territoriality. But, according to Sack, there is also a social construction of territoriality. Walls can be perceived as the physical emergence of social concerns in ancient cities as well: »[…] territoriality is always socially or humanly constructed in a way that physical distance is not. […] Territoriality does not exist unless there is an attempt by individuals or groups to affect the interactions of others« (Sack 1986: 30). In this context, territory is an important concept in the production of culture and habits of the city.

Based on these concepts and definitions, some directly referring to walls themselves, (edge, landmark, boundary, interface) while others indicating an urban space defined by wall (district, path, territory), it can be stated that walled edges are among the most challenging and distinctive urban spaces in cities.

Historic Evaluation of »Old City Walls«

The changing position of walls in the urban context is also critical in the representation of contemporary city walls. Throughout history, walls manifested themselves in cities in diverse ways. Like the ever-changing dynamics of the city, the meanings of the city walls also changed: for-

mer symbols and proud of cities turned into obsolete urban spaces. To-
day, it is hard to understand the significance of walls in the foundation
and development of early cities. But, in ancient times, as the need for
protection and defense was the most vital necessity for settlers, city
walls were among the most important settlement components. Even in
the Paleolithic period, men aimed to guard entrance of their caves
against external dangers. With the development of a more settled way of
life, primitive and temporary defense methods of the Paleolithic period
shifted to more systematic structures and early fortifications began to be
constructed. These permanent defense structures became important de-
terminants of the size, shape, form, and also culture of early cities. For
example, in the pre-classical antiquity »The great importance which
Mesopotamians attached to the walls of their cities is reflected in the
long and propitious names they gave to them and the fact that they were
placed under the protection of deities« (De La Croix 1972: 15). Al-
though development in the technology of weaponry caused modifica-
tions in fortification systems, the need to protect cities with walls re-
mained until the modern era.

In fact, defense was not the only function of city walls. Their exis-
tence in the urban context exposes various political and symbolic mean-
ings. Politically there was a tendency to provide social control over the
limited inner walled city area. »In New York, for example, when the
gate was locked for the night and in other cities when the gate was
closed, a sense of civic belonging may have been generated, similar to
that described by Mumford as one of the advantages of the medieval
city.« (Nelson 1961: 21) On the other hand, the presence of walls also
had a symbolic significance for cities and citizens as well. They func-
tioned as significant monuments which could impress visitors. As size
and design of walls were determined by the wealth and power of the
city, some cities were constructed with double or triple wall circuits. As
described by Etlin:

»The first requirement for a city's magnificence was to present the approach-
ing visitor with the image of a distinct physical entity. […] At mid-century,
the abbé Marc-Antoine Laugier suggested establishing numerous barriers
around Paris. These gateways would be placed at regular distances to trans-
form the perimeters of the city into a regular polygon. Beyond this boundary
the city would not permitted to extend.« (Etlin 1994: 3)

Besides their symbolic, political, and defensive value, walls were also an
essential component to the development of urban structure. »The tradi-
tional Chinese words for city and the wall are identical […] The English

word »town« comes from a teutonic word that means hedge or enclosure« (Kostof 1992: 11). As stated by Ashworth, »[…] the wall becomes in many cultures essential to the definition of a city and the very symbol of urbanism itself« (Ashworth 1991: 13). Defense walls limited and marked the boundaries of cities. They emphasized and affected urban form. »Robert Dickinson, in speaking of the relation of the wall to the present ›townscape‹ of European cities, emphasizes that the lie of the streets and the arrangement of the blocks show close adjustment to the wall, even when it has disappeared.« (Nelson 1961: 21) Consequently, old city walls defined, shaped, and also monumentalized the urban structure.

This significance of walls – defensive, political, symbolic and physical – remained approximately until the nineteenth century. With the development of new military technologies, walls lost their significance first in defense and later in other aspects too. At that time, the challenging condition of walls for cities began to emerge. Changing physical, social, and economic structures of cities turned walled edges into obsolete and indefinite borders. In contrast to the restricted form of medieval cities, modernization introduced a new open city model. Haussman's destruction of nineteenth century Paris was the most significant case of such development. Sanitarization and beautification were the two leading concepts of these modernization attempts. So, at that time, by functioning as barriers in expanding cities and also by creating unsanitary urban conditions, city walls turned into unwanted monuments. As mentioned by Nijenhuis »Modernity was characterized by the systematic demolition of strongholds and increasing dysfunctionality of fortresses, city walls and city gates« (Nijenhuis 1994: 13). Therefore, in the nineteenth century, the demolition of walls emerged as the major concern of urban planning in most cities.

After that period, city walls were dealt with in two different ways. In the first case, walls were destroyed as a result of the construction of new boulevards, streets, and parks in their place. In fact, destruction of city walls offered great potentials for modern cities; during this process, new urban components, such as boulevard[1] and esplanade[2], were introduced.

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1   The term boulevard »derived through a French corruption of the Dutch word bolwerk, or artillery bastion« (Ashworth 1991: 170), »originally meant the horizontal portion of a rampart, and eventually the promenade, usually tree lined, laid out on the space made available by a demolished fortification. It is a common feature of many European Cities. Rampart street in New Orleans, Oglethorn Avenue in Savannah […]« (Nelson 1961: 21).

2   Esplanade refers to a »military-engineering term for the open space in front of fortification« (Ashworth 1991: 170).

The boulevard started as a boundary between city and country. Its structure rests on the defensive wall. […] In 1670, with the destruction of the medieval walls of Paris and filling of the old moats, these sites were transformed into broad elevated promenades, planted with double rows of trees and accessible to carriages and pedestrians. These tree-lined ramparts eventually became a system of connected public promenades, »a recreational zone at the edge of the city« (Kostof 1991: 249).

Vienna, a city developed within a ring of roman walls, is one of the most remarkable examples of transformed walled edges. In the eighteenth century, the city began to enlarge and expanded outside of its walls. In order to connect the old city with newly developing suburbs, a competition was held in 1859 for the design of empty space left behind by the demolition of the city walls. »The key to the physical reorganization of the city was clearly the removal of the fortifications.« (Sutcliffe 1980: 35) The winning project proposed to construct a »Ring Strasse« (a ring road) lined with theaters, museums, a concert hall, law courts, university buildings, parliamentary buildings, dwellings and parks in the place of old city walls. »Ring Strasse« was a unique case that became a model for other world cities.

In the second case, walls were not demolished, but preserved and continued to exist in the urban context. Today, there are many towns, cities, and even metropolises such as Istanbul that still preserve their former defense walls. For a long period of time, former defense structures remained obsolete and walls that were not destroyed became challenging urban components for many cities. In twentieth century cities, walls lost their symbolic and conceptual representations as well. Once being an interactive boundary, city walls and their surrounding urban spaces are still interactive today? Or, by defining new territories in old cities, are current conditions of walls still forming controlled, civilized urban districts?

These challenging conditions of defense walls in cities today can be identified through the changes in the meaning of territoriality that was the main *raison d'être* of walls in cities. According to Sack, »Territoriality is a primary geographical expression of social power. It is the means by which space and society are interrelated. Territoriality's changing functions helps us to understand the Historic relationships between society, space, and time.« (Sack 1986: 5) As mentioned before, the limited closed form of cities was no longer adequate for current urban development. Although the concept of territory is still valid in contemporary societies, it does not express itself as an architectural monument in the urban structure. So, today, many old city walls exist in cities today without their original physical, social, or symbolic functions.

Further challenging issues are the changing urban concepts that have, in part, lead the development of contemporary cities. Most of the terms describing former urban developments and their possible relationships with surrounding walls lost their significance. As contemporary urban development is produced mostly under the dominance of global relations, attraction of international investment became one of the most determining factors in the development of cities. In this context, transformation, regeneration, revitalization, redevelopment, and renewal of existing deteriorated or obsolete urban lands in city centers emerged as one of the most significant attempts in the redefinition of the cities' image. »Large areas of the city appear to be uncared for, forming an entropic landscape returning to a condition of nature. The contradictions in the contemporary cityscape are creating new fields of action for architects and planners.« (Woodroffe/Papa/Macburnie 1994: 8) These spaces, empty in terms of function and meaning, create an ambiguous setting. On the other hand, existence of obsolete and ruined urban lands cause problems in the social, cultural, and physical analysis of the city as well. They are obsolete but at the same time they are dynamic. In most cases, obsolete spaces generate various urban processes which are generally unsafe and marginal. Furthermore, due to the increasing urbanization in the second half of twentieth century, obsolete buildings and lands became potential urban areas in the development of cities. These vacant structures encourage urban transformation processes:

»How do we read and interpret the tangle of overlapping and intertwined stories that this collection of people, objects and events offers? As we walk down what seems to be an endless labyrinth, we may wonder about change in this urban scene. We may be conscious of a constant transformation of this landscape, or rather cityscape, around us, a mutation that we have come to associate with livelihood. Without movement and change, we have learnt, there is no life.« (Madanipour 1996: ix)

But, different from the other vacant urban structures, old city walls are generating unusual processes in cities. Their architectural structure is not suitable for a functional transformation and on the other hand they still function as boundaries in current cities. Hence, old city walls are challenging obsolete structures, even without transforming, revitalizing, regenerating, or redeveloping contemporary cities.

Old city walls of Istanbul

Romance and history of walled cities are inseparable. We have not felt this to be so at the sight of hoary ruins lichen-clad and ivy-mantled, that proudly rear their battered crests despite the ravages of time and man's destructive instincts. It is within walled cities that the life of civilized man began: the walls guarded him against barbarian foes, behind their shelter he found the security necessary to his cultural development, in their defense he showed his finest qualities. And such a city and such a history is that of Ancient Byzantium, the City of Constantine, the Castle of Caesar (Baker 1975: vii).

Throughout history defense structures have always been significant components of Istanbul. They were urban elements that shaped and dominated the physical and social structures of the city. Even today, both existing walls and traces of disappeared walls have led to Istanbul's urban configuration. As mentioned before, Istanbul is one of the unique cities with two typical cases in the evolution of walls; »demolished walls« of Galata and »preserved walls« of the Historic Peninsula. Although the Historic Peninsula and Galata area situated on the opposite sides of Golden Horn, close to each other, their urban development differed greatly from one another (figure 1).
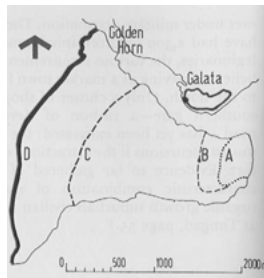

Figure 1: Historic Peninsula's and Galata's walls (Morris 1979: 64)

City walls in the Historic Peninsula experienced a different evolution than the walls of Galata (table 1). In Galata, the old settlement walls were destroyed and redesigned as urban streets. In that case, the emergence of walls in the city context as public space is very apparent. On the other hand, in the case of the Historic Peninsula, old city walls still exist within the urban fabric. But in this case too, walls define a zone in which various public activities take place. In this context, in the following part of the study, these two opposing cases will be analyzed.
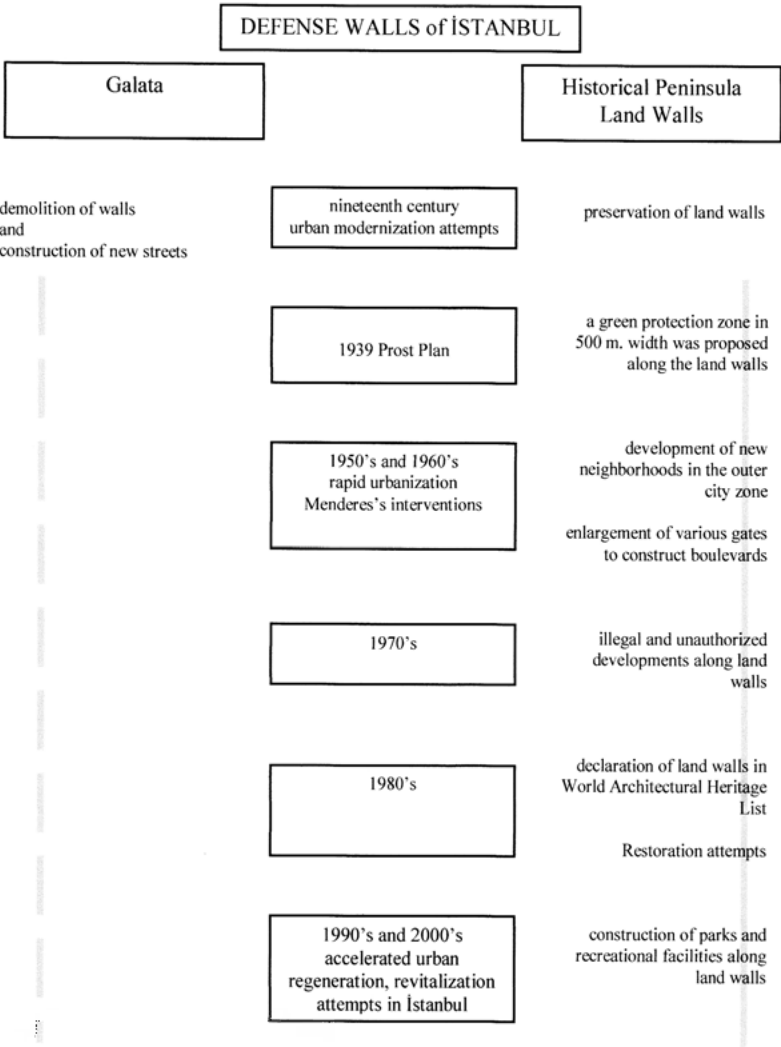
DEFENSE WALLS of İSTANBUL

Galata		Historical Peninsula Land Walls
demolition of walls and construction of new streets	nineteenth century urban modernization attempts	preservation of land walls
	1939 Prost Plan	a green protection zone in 500 m. width was proposed along the land walls
	1950's and 1960's rapid urbanization Menderes's interventions	development of new neighborhoods in the outer city zone enlargement of various gates to construct boulevards
	1970's	illegal and unauthorized developments along land walls
	1980's	declaration of land walls in World Architectural Heritage List Restoration attempts
	1990's and 2000's accelerated urban regeneration, revitalization attempts in İstanbul	construction of parks and recreational facilities along land walls

Table 1: Historic evolution of Galata's defense walls and Historic Peninsula walls (made by the author)

From wall to urban street: The case of Galata

Similar to Vienna, walls in nineteenth century Ottoman cities also underwent significant transformations. Ottoman ambassadors, who lived in Europe, described boulevards, parks, squares and grid plans of European cities with great enthusiasm when they returned to Istanbul. At that period, a desire to restructure Ottoman cities after Western models followed. The nineteenth century is a period of Westernization not only within the city scale, but also in many other fields of the Empire. Within this scope, the Tanzimat Decree of May 1939 caused radical changes in the structure of the Ottoman Empire. As mentioned by Yerasimos, the existing condition of Ottoman cities was totally rejected by the statement of the Decree. With the declaration of the Tanzimat Decree the term »modern« became a key word in almost all of the Empire's urban attempts. Galata was the first settlement in the Empire that experienced such modernization process. Throughout history, Galata, being situated at the opposite site of the Golden Horn, had been always a significant settlement and port in the history of Istanbul. Like the other port cities, various ethnic and religious groups settled in Galata. In fifteenth century, Italians, Jews, Armenians, and Turks were living in Galata, each in their own neighborhood separated by walls.

Figure 2: Former walls of Galata

Figure 3: Renewed streets of Galata in 19th century (Çelik 1998: 10)

The nineteenth century was the most critical period in the history of Galata's settlement. Many new urban standards and ideas were implemented for the first time in Galata. Among the most remarkable was the demolition of the old walls and construction of new streets in their place in 1860's (figure 2-3). As mentioned by Akın, Galata's walls were two meters wide and 2,8 kilometers length, enclosing an area of 37 hectors. There was a ditch 15 meters wide on the northern side of the wall (Akin

1998). The demolition of Galata's walls therefore offered great potentials in the formation of a new street network. This new wide, linear, paved, and planted streets were constructed based on European models, still largely unfamiliar to Ottoman cities at the time. In this regard, former defense walls of the district turned into urban streets and facilitated public access between the Karaköy waterfront and inner neighborhoods such as Pera. As Galata was Istanbul's business and commercial district, the new streets strongly influenced public life. Today, more than a century later, these streets still exist, while the traces of old city walls of Galata are still visible in the contemporary street pattern of the district.

From walled edges to green zones: The case of the Historic Peninsula

During the evolution of the city, various city walls were constructed in the Historic Peninsula including Byzantion Wall, Septemius Wall, Constantin Wall and Theodosius Wall. In particular Theodosius Wall is of great significance in terms of size, strength, and construction technique. Land walls are the most important part of this system. They are composed of three parts, including a ditch, a front wall and a great wall. These walls therefore cover a large area of land in the city. Their immense size makes these walls among the most remarkable urban spaces, even in contemporary Istanbul.

At the end of nineteenth century, similar to the plans for Galata, authorities planned to destroy the walls in the Historic Peninsula and to sell the lands obtained through the demolition. This attempt was highly criticized, and subsequently the walls remained. The presence of the walls, however, lends the Historic Peninsula a more distinctive character since it is home to one of the few remains of Constantinople's city walls.

The history of land walls can be evaluated in four main periods (table 2). As in many other cities, walls were the most dominant and significant architectural monuments of Constantinople. Not only did walls facilitate the interaction of the city with its surrounding regions, but the walls also hosted diverse urban events. Besides their defense and territorial control capacities, walls also served cultural and symbolic meanings in the life of the city and citizens. Gates situated along the walls produced memorable moments in the history of the city. Moreover, they also served for both military and public uses. The gates became a major focus of stories and legends of the city. As described by Baker: »This is the Golden Gate, the ›Porta Aurea‹ of so many glorious moments in the life of Constantine's great city« (Baker 1975: 126). So, walls of this early period can be identified as the symbol and proud of the city:

»[…] Nearby three centuries later another Emperor, Heraclius, entered in triumph through this gateway, on his return from the Persian wars. One hundred years later Constantine Copronymus followed through these golden arches, after defeating the Bulgarians. Then came Theophilus in the middle of the ninth century, to celebrate his hard-won victories over the Saracens.« (Baker 1975: 141)
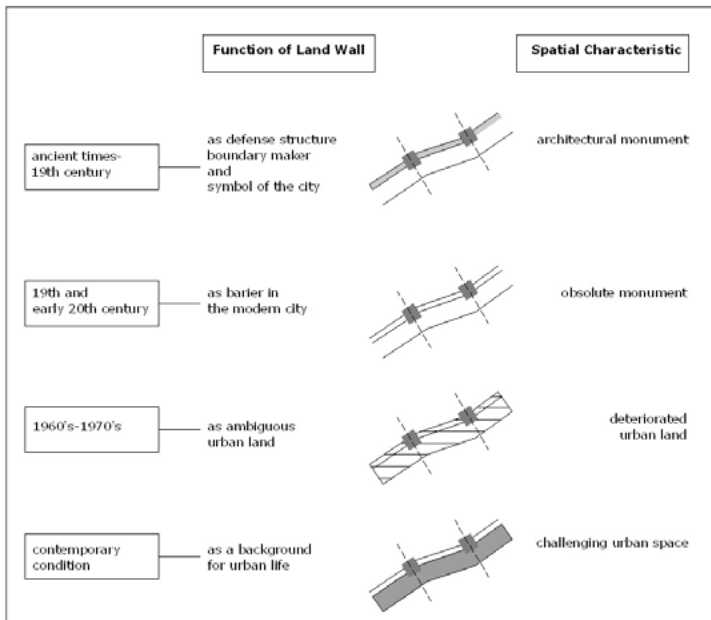

Table 2: Evolution model of the Historic Peninsula land walls (made by the author)

But, the glorious image of the city walls began to decline in nineteenth century due to the development of new defense technologies and the emergence of urban modernization that caused various changes in the life of citizens. Although for most of the citizens and authorities, demolition of walls was a significant practice in the development of a modern and well organized city, others were opposed to their demolition. They argued that with the destruction a great amount of Historic value would be erased from the urban fabric. Differing from the Galata case, land walls in the Historic Peninsula were preserved. However, at that time, the walls began to function as obsolete monuments as described by Baker:

»Climbing a bank, we reach a little Turkish Cemetery, its weird and tumbling tombstones shaded by those solemn, watchful cypress-trees. Now look towards the walls: between us and them is a deep fosse, where fig trees grow and throw out their twisted branches as if to protect these ancient ramparts from crumbling further to decay.« (Baker 1975: 126)

It is after this period that the challenging and problematic condition of walls in the city began. These monumental structures and their surrounding urban lands became potential locations for many legal and illegal activities; activities that differed greatly from traditional functions of the wall. Due to the increasing population from the 1950 onwards, new neighborhoods began to expand outwards. Obsolete walled zones became places of uncontrollable and unauthorized developments. Small-scale manufacturing, warehouses, and illegal houses existed on the ruins of walls. At that time, city walls gained a poor reputation, known for their lack of safety.

In 1980's a new period began in the history of landwalls. With the addition of city walls to the World Architectural Heritage list in 1985, the preservation of walls arose as the major concern for the Istanbul Municipality and government. Between 1985 and 1989, the Istanbul Municipality restored walls in the Historic Peninsula. Murat Belge describes this attempt: »Maybe, Turks were the only nation in the world who constructs walls in twentieth century« (Belge 2000, translated by the author).

As previously mentioned, besides their architectural values, walls consume space due to their triple defense system. Conservation of land that was shaped by ditches and ramparts therefore became the main planning concern in the Historic Peninsula district, where a green zone was constructed along the walls. This green zone enhanced by various recreational activities, such as sport fields, playgrounds, and tea-gardens. Through this process, the former land walls - Constantinople's ancient defense structure - today serve as a background for various public uses. The transformation of the walls into a green zone can be understood through various planning attempts that took place during the twentieth century. In 1939 Henri Prost urban developed a plan for the city of Istanbul. Until then the walls were ignored for many years due to wars and economical recessions. The main intention of Prost's plan was to modernize the city without destroying its archaeological and architectural values. So, conservation of the land walls was proposed and construction of new buildings was restricted in an area of 500m from the walls. Although Prost's plan was not totally implemented, it became a guide for future planning attempts.

In the second half of twentieth century, several conservation plans were also proposed for the Historic Peninsula. But, at that period, changing urban conditions of the city generated various undesirable developments. The city's population increased and new neighborhoods were constructed to keep up with the growth. In order to facilitate access to new suburbs in the growing city, transportation became the main concern. In an effort to ease traffic congestion, the Historic Peninsula's traditional structure was destroyed; existing narrow streets were widened and new transportation axes were constructed.

These infrastructural changes also affected the condition of the land walls. Some gates were enlarged. Moreover, due to rapid urbanization caused by migration, walls also served as illegal residential and working places too. Illegal housing units, warehouses, and small-scale manufacturers set up in deteriorated areas near land walls. To prevent these unauthorized developments, similar to Prost's plan, regulations requiring a continuous green zone within 500 meters of the wall's edge were proposed as part of the 1964 Historic Peninsula inner wall plan. The green zone included cemeteries and *bostan*[3] and was intended to isolate and protect the wall. Despite these regulations, however, the undesirable condition of the area did not change.

Another planning approach that emphasized the potentials of walls as urban space is Istanbul's 1990 Conservation Plan. The main object of the plan was to develop the Historic Peninsula as a tourist, culture, and recreation area. In this scope, various recreational activities were proposed along the walls and their surroundings. Consequently, land walls were defined within a protected green zone in all subsequent plans developed for the district. However, such planning and design approaches are not appropriate for the development of these lands. Land walls continued to serve – and are still serving – as a boundary, border, edge, or urban interface. Vehicular and human traffic between the Historic Peninsula and outer districts is still passing through gates. This controversial fact is in conflict with the contemporary planning concepts and Istanbul's urban condition:

»For people who live within the area surrounded by walls, city walls are border elements, both physically and visually. For instance, the highway and open space left to the west of the land walls in the Historic peninsula strengthened this peculiarity; city walls define a specified area for settlement and control

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3   *Bostan* is a Turkish word that means vegetable garden. Throughout the history *bostan* has been always an important element of the city. Due to the rapid urbanization in 1960's most of them were destroyed and new buildings were constructed in the place of *bostan*.

access in and out through the gates and harbors.« (Yenen/Biçer/Yücetürk 2004: 28)

Lastly, in 2005, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality approved a new Conservation Master Plan for Historic Peninsula. This plan involved several principles for the development of land walls and their surrounding areas as well. According to the plan, the use of land walls, ramparts and ditches for cultural purposes is essential. Moreover, parks, recreational areas and open spaces for the exhibition of archeological relics will be also constructed along the land walls (İBB Planlama ve İmar Daire Başkanlığı 2003).

Consequently, the city of Istanbul is experiencing various remarkable transformation processes. Former decayed and abandoned urban areas – especially old industrial zones in the Golden Horn district – were developed as new cultural and recreational centers. Such projects became important instruments in the remaking of Istanbul's urban image and also for the city's marketing in the global network. In this context, urban lands that cannot be transformed, revitalized, or regenerated become challenging spaces. Former defense zones of Constantinople became public spaces hosting uses and activities such as *bostan*, sport fields, and parks all placed in a green line parallel to the land walls. Today, walls serve entirely different purposes than they did in ancient times. »Standing on the ramparts of this ancient stronghold it is difficult to realize the old days of stress and storm. In the clear air and sunshine life seems too serene for the fierce passions that drove a swarm of Saracens in repeated attacks against the grey walls.« (Baker 1975: 149) In spite of their calm appearance, there is a hidden complexity in the contemporary walls and their surrounding urban spaces.

Conclusion

In contemporary cities, meanings and perceptions of ancient defense walls have entirely changed. By defining two different environments – inside and outside – city walls were places of exchanges in ancient times. Walls marked urban peripheries; they defined important edges, boundaries, borders, and territories in the city. But, in nineteenth century these principal characteristics of walls changed. Being situated in city centers, they became obstacles between the old center and newly developing peripheral districts. The development of city walls thereafter emerged in two diverse ways; some city walls were destroyed and others were conserved. In both cases walls underwent various transformations:

they were transformed from edges to paths, from celebrated urban symbols to dull urban spaces, from hard edges to loose historic monuments. Therefore, besides being important historic heritage, city walls exist in contemporary urban contexts in a new way as public spaces. The city of Istanbul is a remarkable example of this argument. Although Galata and the Historic Peninsula experienced different urban evolutions, walls or traces of walls reappeared as public spaces in both cases.

»In Europe today a number of boulevards and other streets follow the lines of former walls [...]. Are open spaces present or is there land in public use as the result of the location of former fortifications? Are there any other features present in today's urban landscape that reflect the presence of earlier walls?« (Nelson 1961: 2)

These questions can be asked in the case of Galata. Situated on a sloping terrain, Galata has a dense urban pattern. In late eighteenth century, new districts outside the walls on the north side of Galata were built. After some time, however, the presence of the wall restricted accessibility from the waterfront to upper neighborhoods. In an effort to redevelop and facilitate circulation, patterns based on western cities, led to the destruction of Galata's walls. Although, Galata's old city walls do not exist in the contemporary city, their traces can be easily recognized in the street pattern of the district. In the case of Galata's, the old walls were transformed into urban spaces including both public and private uses. Moreover, as Galata was divided into several districts by walls, after the demolition, streets that were constructed in the place of walls formed a street network that facilitates public access.

On the other hand, the condition in the Historic Peninsula is very different, and more challenging, than Galata. Land walls in the Historic Peninsula defined a strict edge between the inner and outer zones of the city. Although settlements began to grow outwards in twentieth century, their control within the urban formation continued. Today, the linear and continuous character of the walls remains a remarkable sight within this urban context. Historic Peninsula's land walls form a different type of urban space. Unlike those in Galata, the walls in the Historic Peninsula do not form a network, but exist in the city as one singular urban element defining an urban zone. This zone serves a variety of public uses. Sport fields, parks, *bostan* and also some illegal uses such as guards who control the vehicular traffic on the gate of walls all take place in the area along the walls. Moreover, land walls play both physically and conceptually complex role in the daily life of citizens. They still serve as barriers, as interaction nodes (through gates), as historic landmarks, as ve-

hicular and pedestrian paths or as unsafe districts. Despite the challenging nature of the activities around the wall, all recent planning attempts protect city walls as historic monuments and preserve a green zone around them. This approach has defined the development of several public spaces and uses along walls; however, largely ambiguous, unsafe and mostly problematic public spaces have emerged.

By evaluating two opposing cases – Galata and the Historic Peninsula this study sets out to analyze new interpretations of old city walls as public spaces. Today, Istanbul's old defense walls are rarely evaluated as urban components in academic researches and studies. Most of the time, walls are revealed as an issue of restoration, urban conservation, or within the context of historic studies. But, existence of old city walls in contemporary Istanbul is also an issue of urban planning and design. Therefore they have to be discussed in the scope of landscape architecture, urban design, and urban planning disciplines as well.

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