

How can we syntactically explain the segregated landscape in the very center of İstanbul?:

Taksim Gezi Parkı Case

January 17, 2012

How can we syntactically explain the segregated landscape in the very center of İstanbul?:Taksim Gezi Parkı Case

Harun EKİNOĞLU

502102805/harun.ekinoglu@gmail.com

How can we syntactically explain the segregated landscape in the very center of Istanbul?:

Taksim Gezi Parki Case

January 17, 2012



The unique and neglected heart of the city, Taksim...

How can we syntactically explain the segregated marginalized piece of landscape in the very center of the city?:Taksim Gezi Parki Case

In the very intersecting boundaries of the districts of besiktas, beyoglu and sisli, Taksim organically and functionally is still the heart of the city. However taksim is far marginalized and segregated in the meaning of both its physical and social setting. Within the scope of this research, we operated a field work for pedestrian counting activity in 64 different gates by a group of students. This field work has happened to explain the movement tendencies of the pedestrians in 8 different sub-areas in the taksim square. Since I counted the pedestrians and observed the walkers' behaviours in Taksim Gezi Park, I could have noticed the segregation and marginality in gezi park.



Figure_1: Taksim Gezi Park in the exact place of the old Military Base Building of "Topcu Kislati"

The extremeness about Gezi park is like an utopia since the contrasting realities are not likely to work together in dense and central urban areas. When the spatial segregation is to happen in the very center of the city, obviously it is time to question and discuss about the self of the space whole what

generates such a fragmentation in itself. We need to understand the place based reasons behind the fact of "**why gezi park is noone's land?**" and "**what the space-based reasons are that making gezi park silent and insecure?**"

Motivation behind the research question

Pedestrian movements observation results are clearly showing that Gezi Park is somehow highly segregated when compared with the high pedestrian and car traffic in the surrounding paths and sidewalks of the Taksim Area. Space generates the movement and an emotional impact and a system of behaviours led by the emotional impacts of the space . Regarding the fact that space creates movement and shapes the human being's perception, one can immediately or gradually develop his/her attitudes in a "place" accordingly.

Hillier suggests that on the face of it, the city is essentially two things: a physical sub-system, made up of buildings linked by streets, roads and infrastructure; and a human sub-system made up of movement, interaction and activity - the physical city and the social city^{iv}. It is argued that the disciplines associated with both notions of the city - that is, the spatial sciences on one hand and the social sciences on the other- take an asymmetric view and foreground one city while back grounding the other. Based on a large number of research projects, Hillier and Vaughan suggest that there are good reasons why in principle we might expect the city to actually be one thing: "the social city is either side of the physical city: it brings it into existence, and then acts within the constraints it imposes". As such, cities can be thought of as socio-spatial systems. Theories of urban complexity continuously face the challenge and the need to link the social and spatial sub-systems to each other.

Since the thesis of "city as a one thing" clarifying the question of spatial segregation clearly, yet we are standing on the need for an explanation of what reason really makes one piece away or forgotten while other pieces of the whole are properly and lively working? Space syntax methodology is promising to be a dedicated and systematic way of thinking to face this problem. Space syntax has a potential to point some cross-sectional problems that is being associated with a particular space in this research.

Urban Design is a transdisciplinary approach what centers the human being with all his behaviours, needs and comfort in urban space. Comfort here has a broad meaning. Psychological comfort, physical comfort, cultural comfort, and civic comfort are all what matters to urban design. In the scope of this research question a landscape in the heart of urban central square is somehow segregated, insecure, marginalized and not working at all. İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality has recently decided to make an urban design for all Taksim square. There is a concrete perception that Taksim square is not properly working because the square is under a heavy traffic burden and the existing traffic should be by-passed under the ground level. Another proposal is reconstruction of the Historic Topcu Kisla Building (see figure_2). However this is a quite controversial topic nowadays. The contrasting ideas are all about why reconstructing a historic building if the purpose in regeneration of the square.



Figure_2: The old (and non-existing today) military base structure “Topcu Kislasi” in today’s Gezi Park.

Within the frame of this research, we assume that existing (today’s) setting of the square will continue and we will be considering the existing morphological and physical situation while looking through a syntactic point of view for a solution concerning the segregation issue of the Gezi Park.



Figure_3: Connectivity map of Central Istanbul

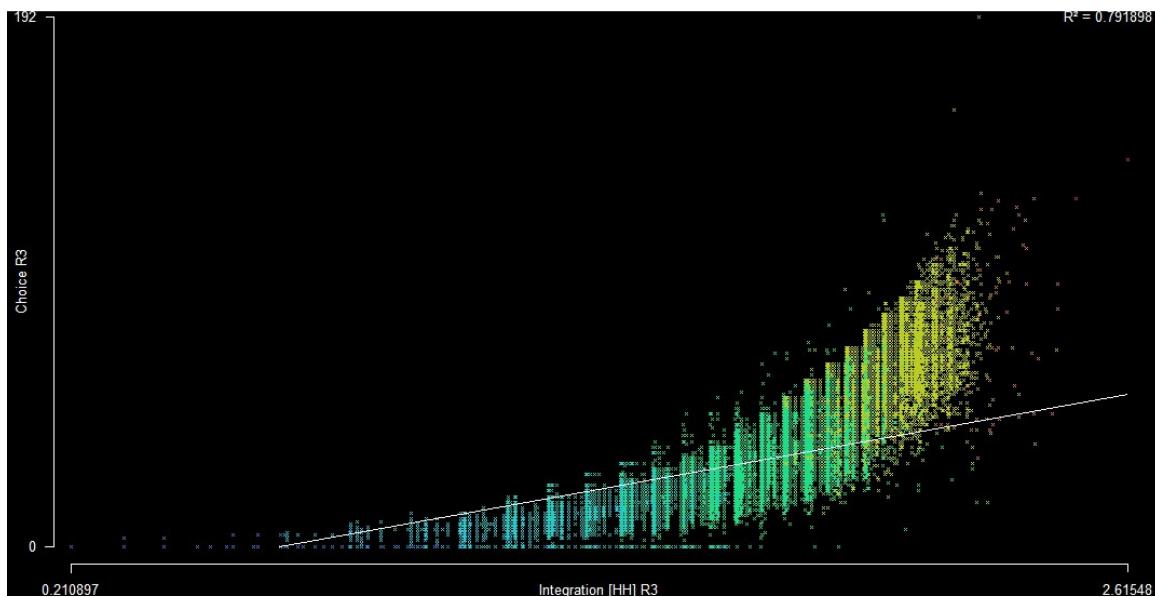
Connectivity map of the central Istanbul in the above implies that the distribution of the immediate neighbours which are directly connected has a self and organic hierarchy within the city wide. (See Figure_3) Connectivity of the urban morpho-setting in the above map gives us a static local measure.

While the integration is a static global measure to describe the average depth of a space via considering all other spaces in the system. The spaces in the system are ranked from the most integrated to the most segregated. The integration map in the figure below is the r3 integration map of Istanbul, (see the figure_4), the value "3" is a step depth value as a dynamic local measure. It measures the degree to which a space controls access to the immediate neighborhoods taking into account the number of alternative connections that each of these neighborhoods has. The r3 local integration map of the central part of Istanbul is still visibly in accordance with the connectivity in terms of distribution and persistence of the local integration.

It is possible to say that our research area Taksim and specifically Taksim Gezi Park area is physically out of the boundaries of a more and locally integrated zone which is a bit in the upward northern direction.



Figure_4: r3 integration map of Istanbul

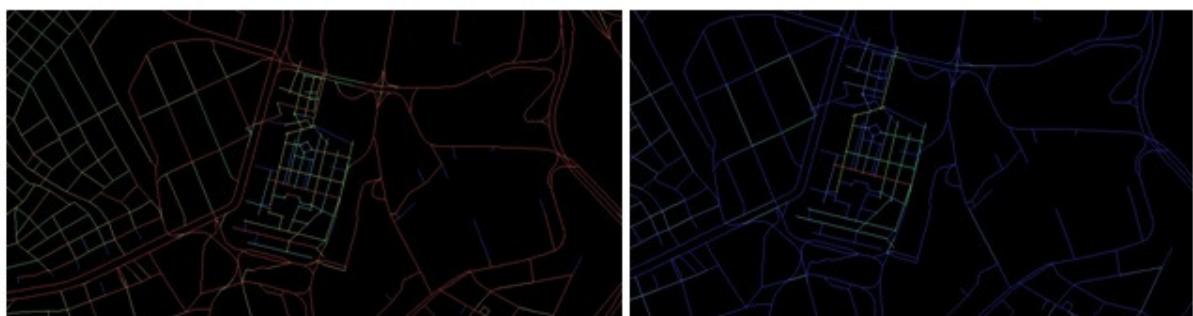


Figure_5: All Istanbul's choice step3 and r3 local integration scatter gram analysis and its correlation value of r:0.7

The correlation value of r:0.7 is consistent on the idea of people are familiar with tend to use the locally integrated neighborhouud environment. People has a cognition of neighborhouud while navigating around. The correlation value of 0,7 supports this logic when we consider and scatter plot all Istanbul's r3 integration and choice step3 in the scatter gram analysis above.

Analysing Gezi Park: Is Gezi Park Segregated?

Figure_6: r3 Local integration and choice step3 integration analysis of the Gezi Park

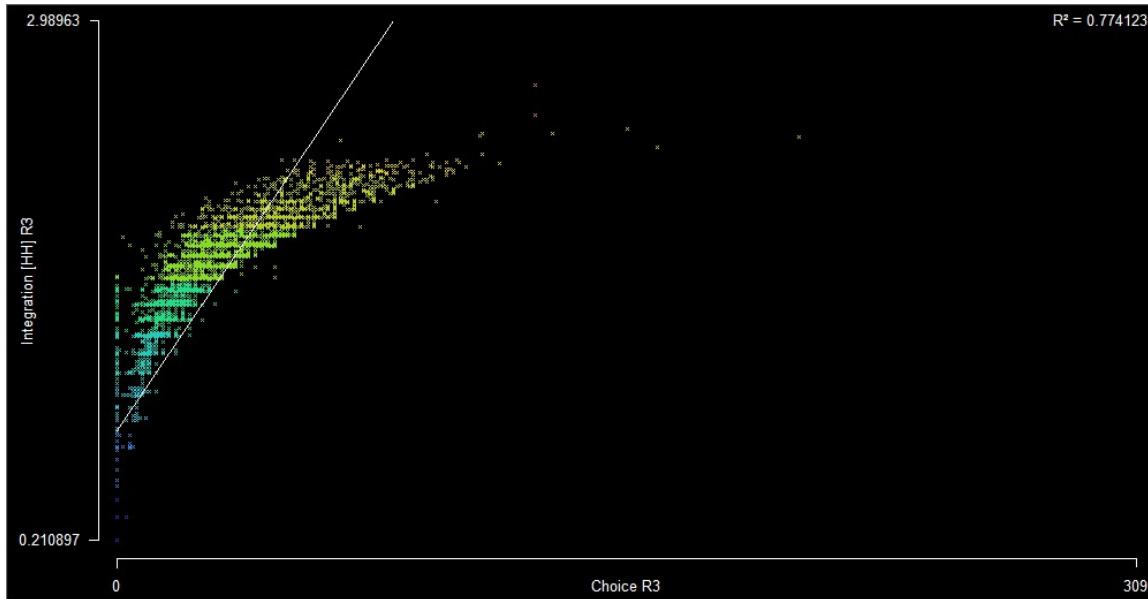


R3 Local integration

choice step3

Considering the centrality and being a cross-road character of Taksim, the square is hosting a big number of visitors. pedestrian observation has also proved that most people uses Taksim square as a transit pass space. Although the land values around the square are remarkably high, it is not possible to say that taksim is the place of the highest land values in istanbul. So this fact makes us compare the r3 local intregration and the choice step 3 integration and see the syntactic map of the Gezi Park in a

3kmx3km wide area. Since the landscape design of the park is simply a land of basic geometric forms, it has lots of meaningless pedestrian axis in itself. The comparison between r3 local integration and choice step3 integration is stressing a single axis. This axis is the main “alley” of the Park enabling pedestrians, who prefers using park, to transit pass through the park. Scatter gram analyse is again proving and supporting a consistent correlation with a r:0,7 value between r3 and choice step3 as in the scatter gram in the local boundry of 3kmx3km area.. (see the figure below)



Figure_7: Scatter gram between r3 local integration and choice step3 with a correlation value r:0.7

Poor relationship between choice and global integration

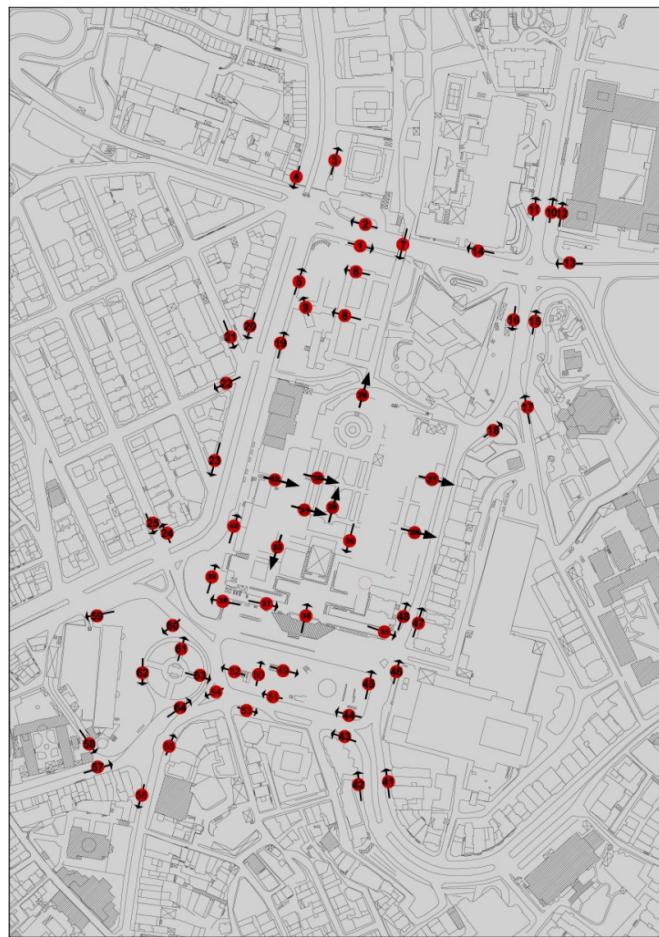
The research question of “how can we syntactically explain the segregation of the Gezi Park in the very heart of İstanbul?” is quite a lot subject to syntactically analyse and interpret the Taksim Square and its surrounding context in a holistic way. Thus, we need to analyse and compare the relationship between the global integration and choice analysis. It is quite possible to say that there is a poor relationship between global and choice. The more shallow areas are not likely to happen in or around taksim but in the upward North such as elmadag and Dolapdere while the choice integration is not intersecting with Gezi Park at all.(see figure_8) This poor relationship reminds us that there might be some obstacles that are preventing the pedestrians to access to the Gezi Park and make their transit movement as a through-movement even if not as a to-movement. Because as a result of the field work in Gezi Park we know that the number of people gathering and spending time in Gezi Park is comparatively low. In the following parts of this paper we will be considering the potentials what may create obstacles or barriers in terms of peoples’ accesses to the Gezi Park. Those visitors who have not been informed about the park before can’t easily notice the park while walking in the square since the park has no defined Gates inviting people and connecting with the square. Scatter gram explain the poor relationship between choice and global integration with a r:0.01 in figure_9.

How can we syntactically explain the segregated landscape in the very center of Istanbul?:
Taksim Gezi Park Case

January 17, 2012



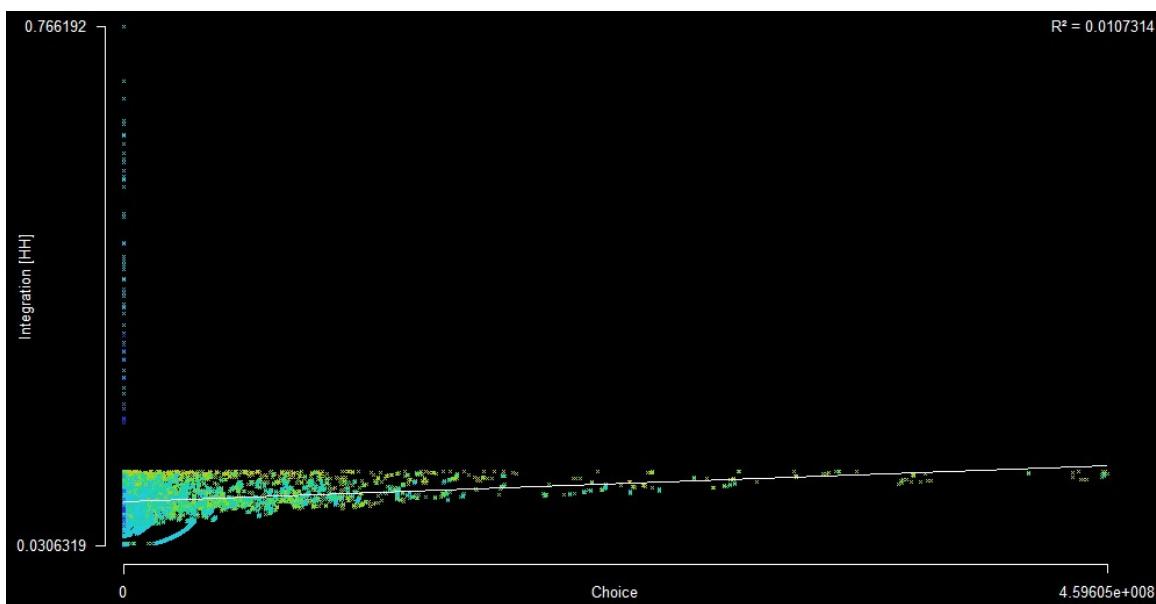
Gates as the Pedestrian Counting Points in the Gezi Park



Gates as the Pedestrian Counting Points in all Taksim Square



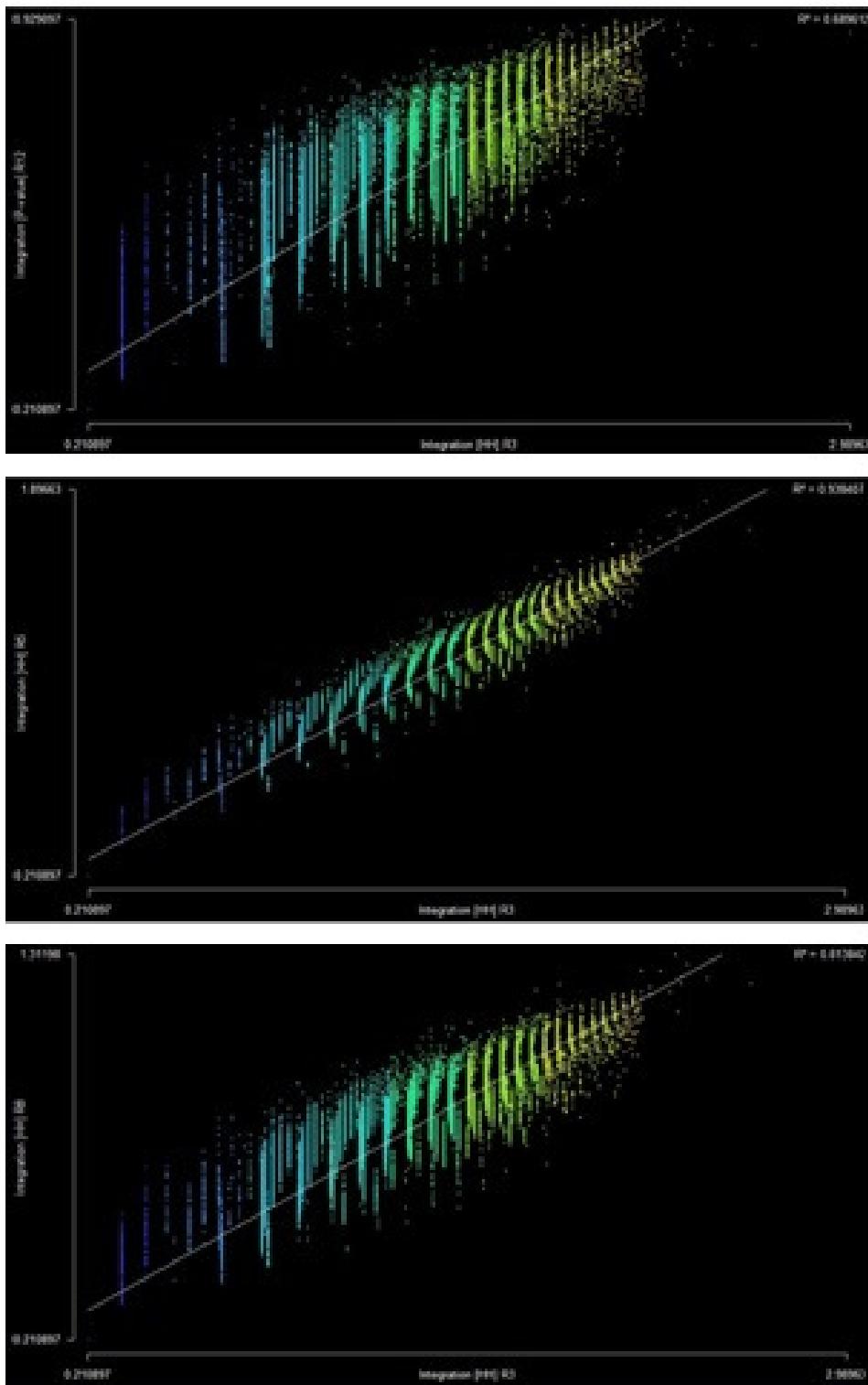
Figure_8: Explain the poor relationship between choice and global integration.



Figure_9: Scatter gram explain the poor relationship between choice and global integration with a r:0.01

Examining the Taksim Square's Local Integration

Following three scatter gram analysis are to see the correlations in local scale. Correlation value of the r3-r5 scatter gram is r:0,9, Correlation value of the r8-r3 scatter gram in r:0,8 and the Correlation value of the r12-r3 scatter gram is r:0,6(figure_9). It is clear to say that as the number of the step increases, the correlation values decrease because of the poor global integration concerning the Taksim square, Taksim Gezi Park and its surrounding areas. This is also a prove to say that the intelligibility rate of Istanbul is low. The more gap between local and global integration is the smaller value of intelligibility rate.



Figure_9: r3-r5 (r:0,9), r8-r3 (r:0,8) and r12-r3 (r:0,)6 scatter grams

What can we Spatially do?

"A Landscape Design Proposal to Re-integrate Gezi Park with the Square"

Local integration and choice step3 integration analysis of the Gezi Park and It has been stated that one single axis in the park is comparatively integrated due to the pedestrian transit movement. However the axis is short and has no connection with its immediate environment.



Figure_10:r3 integration of the Gezi Park

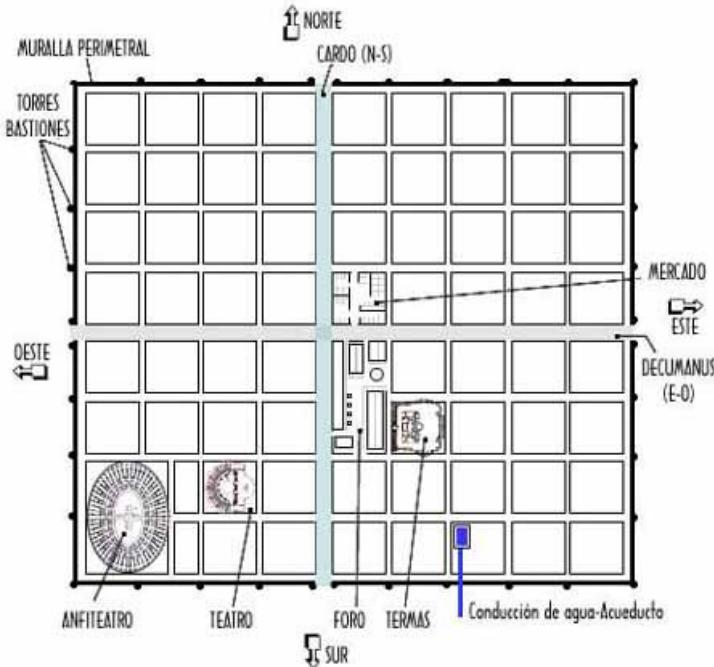
The Design proposal for the re-integration of the gezi park with its surrounding and immediate environment is a very simple and very applicable landscape operation. The landscape design in the Gezi Park is pretty similar with a perfectly geometric roman city setting. As the primary axis of the roman city, Cardo and Decumanus increase the integration of the grid urban layout and strengthens the accessibility (see the figure_10 below). Here in the Gezi Park I am proposing a similar structure what will work together and increase the accessibility of the park from its surroundings. I am proposing to extend and strength the existing east-west and North-south axis. The extention of the axis until to the streets will create new Gates for an easier accessibility and a feeling of a better alternative routes while moving around the Taksim.(see figure_12 and 13)

The proposal of a perpendicularly intersecting two axis along the park will not only create an easier accesibility to the park from the surrounding environment, but also will increase the perception of the park via visible and inviting Gates (see figure_11). There is also an opportunity of grading the terraced-

How can we syntactically explain the segregated landscape in the very center of Istanbul?:
Taksim Gezi Park Case

January 17, 2012

like landscape of the park entrance from Taksim square side. From now on, an effective and intelligent landscape design proposal will increase the success of this proposal.



Figure_10: Cardo-Decumanus Position in the Model for the plan of a roman city



Figure_11:r3 integration in the Gezi Park after the Design Proposal.

How can we syntactically explain the segregated landscape in the very center of Istanbul?:
Taksim Gezi Parki Case

January 17, 2012

Illustrations for the design proposals to re-integrate the Gezi Park



Figure_12. Proposal for extending the existing axis until intersecting with the surrounding streets.

How can we syntactically explain the segregated landscape in the very center of Istanbul?:
Taksim Gezi Parki Case

January 17, 2012



Figure_13. Proposal for extending the existing axis until intersecting with the surrounding streets.

To Conclude;

Accessibility matters in urban design. Our design proposals have to be considered through a syntactic point of analysis to understand the basic issues on accessibility problems as I tried to do in this research question. The proposals for extending the existing axis until intersecting with the surrounding streets will barely create a new interest and motivation to visit the Gezi Park for the people. This proposal is promising to increase the local integration and thus the intelligibility level in all Taksim square.

Reference:

Hillier, B. and Vaughan, L. The city as one thing. *Progress in Planning*, 67(3), 2007, pp. 205–230.

Pena, S. “Recent developments in urban marginality along Mexico’s northern border”, 2002, TX, USA, 2002

Charalambous, N. “Understanding segregation: the relationship between urban form and social exclusion” North Cyprus, 2009

Casey, E. How to get from space to place in a fairly short stretch of time, in Feld, S. and Basso, K. *Senses of Place*. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research, 1996.

Franzen, M. Matters of Urban Segregation. Proceedings of the 7th international Space Syntax Symposium, 2009, pp.105:1–105:2.