

METU, URBAN POLICY PLANNING and LOCAL GOVERNMENTS GRADUATE PROGRAM
UPL 601, **URBAN SPACE and POLITICS**, 2015 Spring Semester,
Prof. Dr. Çağatay KESKİNOK

The course focuses on the issues of urban politics and space, political actors, civil society and capital in shaping the urban space, state policies, political mobilization and urban social movements, etc.

(Urban) space is socially produced. It is produced in/via a dialectical relationship between space as a context and the space as a *focus of the actors*. However, this social production is not realized autonomously. Space is (re)structured, (re)produced and transformed by the conscious and unconscious efforts and activities of the actors, under certain structural and historical circumstances. Both objective and subjective experiences of the actors, classes give a meaning to and define and (re)produce the space. Urban space is an active moment of social development. In this process, the relationship of structure-agency is a dialectical one. In contrast to functionalist, determinist and reductionist approaches which de-emphasize the role of the agents in (re)production of space and the voluntaristic approaches over-emphasizing this role, there are continuous determinations between structures and the agents.

Political thought on urban spatial structuring has evolved on the critiques of the non-political urban determinist explanations of classical urban determinist thought comprising urban ecological theories of Chicago School and theories and models of urban geography. All these are characterized by analytically non-existence of the role of the state or the role of the political level in production of space.

The aim of this course is to introduce the students to an alternative approach which problematize (urban) space as a political issue.

Grading and evaluation: i) Readings/book reviews, class discussions and seminar presentation on term-paper topics (40%), ii) Term-paper on one of the issues elaborated during the class discussions: (60%).

COURSE OUTLINE

Space and causality: The relation of political level to urban spatial development.

Abolishing the dichotomy between *space and politics/ideology* and between *structure and action*. The question of *contingency* in spatial organization.

(Re)production of (urban) space

Locus-focus dialectic of space.

Capital accumulation processes and (re)production of urban space.

Contradictions embedded in space.

The state and the (re)production of (urban) space

State activity on/in (urban) space- indirect means: public services, taxation, financial instruments.

State intervention into spatialization of labor processes and capital accumulation

Political processes and spatial organization.

Political processes around urban space: Class struggle and other forms of struggle/urban social movements around/in/on space and the (re)production of space

Spatialization of class struggle

Struggle around the land and the built environment.

A strategic point of view: Urban Praxis

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