



The Research Group

Cosmopolis Centre for Urban Research

has the honor to invite you to the public defense of the PhD thesis of

R. Gökçe SANUL

to obtain the degree of Doctor of Sciences

Title of the PhD thesis:

*Towards Spaces of Openness: Cultural Infrastructures
and New Forms of Publicness in Istanbul*

Promotor:

Prof. dr. Bas van Heur

The defence will take place on

Tuesday October 22 2019 at 15.00h

in Auditorium D.2.01 at the Campus Humanities, Sciences and Engineering of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Pleinlaan 2 - 1050 Elsene, and will be followed by a reception.

Members of the jury:

Prof. dr. David Bassens (chair)
Dr. Tatiana Debroux (secretary)
Prof. dr. Lucas Melgaço
Prof. Asu Aksoy (Istanbul Bilgi University)
Prof. Fran Tonkiss
(The London School of Economics and Political Science)

Curriculum vitae

Graduated from International Relations at Koç University, Gökçe Sanul received her master's degree in Cultural Management from Istanbul Bilgi University in 2012.

Her doctoral research started in 2013 at the Geography Department of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, with funding from the TurkPetrol Foundation.

Gökce Sanul has presented her work at several international conferences and has published her research in peer-reviewed journals.

Abstract of the PhD research

One of the world's mega cities, Istanbul continues to change drastically with its increasing population, skyscrapers as well as mega projects transforming its public spaces and sociocultural fabric in contested ways. These changes require stimulating reflections on the formation of new public spheres. This dissertation approaches this problematic through a focus on the ways in which cultural infrastructures in Beyoğlu - the cultural hub of Istanbul - institute practices that contribute to the emergence of new forms of publicness. These cultural infrastructures can be understood as spaces of openness, embracing the diversity of urban population and enabling practices of common life.

Drawing on an interdisciplinary body of literature, the empirical findings of the dissertation offer evidence of various dimensions of spaces of openness. Cultural infrastructures play a key role in sharing space with a diverse set of urban actors, making visible the invisible stories of urban communities, and acting as an important node in local and translocal networks of engagement. Spaces of openness can thus be understood and conceptualized as characterized by networked, solidary and experimental forms of publicness. At the same time, the dissertation also points to the limits of spaces of openness, shaped as they are by a multiscalar cultural governance context and broader socio-spatial transformations.