

RETHINKING THE PRODUCTION OF SPACE:  
THE CASE OF ISTANBUL'S BEYOĞLU

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2019

RETHINKING THE PRODUCTION OF SPACE:  
THE CASE OF ISTANBUL'S BEYOĞLU

Thesis submitted to the  
Institute for Graduate Studies in Social Sciences  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts  
in  
Political Science and International Relations

by  
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Boğaziçi University

2019

## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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## ABSTRACT

### Rethinking the Production of Space: The Case of Istanbul's Beyoğlu

Istanbul's Beyoğlu district has been undergoing a massive transformation since the 2013 as other parts of the city. While various state-led projects have been reshaping both the physical and non-physical elements of space in Beyoğlu, the production of space reappears as an analytical question. Analyzing the case of Beyoğlu, this thesis focuses on this question. The literature provides different approaches regarding how to study space and space-making. While some of the scholars argue for the vital role of planetary processes, others emphasize the significance of area-specific factors. One of the main implications of the planetary understanding of space and space production is the tendency to explain spatial processes with globalizing capitalism. Such understanding often undermines the important role of the locally situated ideological factors and framings in the production of space. Moreover, as these discussions often remain at the theoretical level, they do not provide analytical tools to explore on-the-ground manifestations of space and space-making as a praxis. Particularly focusing on how space is produced, through which factors and by whom, this study analyzes different layers, framings, actors and processes of the production of space focusing on the case of Beyoğlu focusing on the everyday life implications of space production. This thesis argues that the production of space is a multilayered process characterized by the strategic instrumentalization of space by the state and its collaborators through not only globally circulating economic factors but also locally situated and historically contingent ideological factors and framings.

## ÖZET

### Mekân Üretimini Yeniden Düşünmek: İstanbul'da Beyoğlu Örneği

Şehrin diğer ilçeleri gibi İstanbul'un Beyoğlu ilçesi de 2013'ten beri büyük bir dönüşüm geçirmektedir. Bir yandan devlet eliyle yapılan projeler mekânın hem fiziksel hem de fiziksel olmayan özelliklerini yeniden şekillendirirken mekân üretimi analitik bir soru olarak yeniden karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Bu tez, Beyoğlu'ndan hareketle bu soruya odaklanmaktadır. Mekân ve mekânın üretimi hakkındaki literatür bu kavramların nasıl çalışılması gerektiğine dair farklı yaklaşımlar sunmaktadır. Bazı araştırmacılar mekânın ve mekân üretiminin küresel süreçler bağlamında incelemesi gerektiğini savunurken diğerleri yerel faktörlerin önemine vurgu yapmaktadır. Küreselci yaklaşımın en önemli sonuçlarından bir tanesi de mekânsal süreçleri küresel kapitalizm ile açıklama eğilimidir. Bu anlayış sıklıkla yerelde oluşan ideolojik faktör ve çerçevelerin mekân üretimi üzerindeki etkisini yadsımaktadır. Dahası, bu tartışmalar çoğunlukla teorik bir düzeyde kaldığından mekânı ve bir pratik olarak mekânın üretimini sahada incelemek için gereken analitik araçları bize sağlamamaktadır. Mekânın nasıl ve kim tarafından üretildiğine ve bu süreçte hangi faktörlerin etkili olduğuna odaklanarak ve bu soruları günlük hayat üzerinden sorarak, bu tez, Beyoğlu'nda mekân üretiminin farklı katmanlarını, çerçevelerini, aktörlerini ve süreçlerini incelemektedir. Bu tez, mekân üretiminin, devletin ve onunla beraber çalışan başka aktörlerin mekânı stratejik bir biçimde araştırmalarına dayanan çok katmanlı bir süreç olduğunu ve bu süreçte sadece küresel ekonomik faktörlerin değil yerelin tarihsel bütünlüğü içinde oluşan ve şekillenen ideolojik faktör ve çerçevelerin de etkili olduğunu savunmaktadır.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to express my deep gratitude to my excellent advisor Prof. Mine Eder who has always been more than a thesis advisor to me. I was lucky enough to take various courses from her which enabled me to gain insight into various theoretical issues from a critical and analytical perspective. I could not be able to pursue my dream of studying space and space-production without her presence in my academic life. Nor could I be able to write this thesis without her enlightening answers for my endless questions. Beyond her academic role, I cannot remember how many times I have enjoyed her consultancy and support in my life and found courage, confidence and refreshment in her words, smile and energy. Thanks to her academic and emotional support belief in me, you are reading these lines.

I also would like to express my gratitude to Assist. Prof. Mert Arslanalp and Assoc. Prof. Begüm Özden Fırat for accepting to taking part in my jury. In my thesis defense, they not only provided me with several valuable comments but also showed me how a student might be guided in a highly informative and enlightening way without sparing smile and encouragement.

I owe everything to my beautiful family which has thought me fighting for the truth against injustice and being critical. I also owe them as they have put up with my extreme talkativeness since my childhood. My mother, Naciye, the most powerful woman I have ever met, has thought me everything, but most importantly being strong and positive in life. My father, Şevki, has always been there for me with his confidence in me as well as his limitless support and joy. He has been the main reason why I have studied political science. My brother, Özden, has been the first in our big family who made his way to university has laid the foundations for this

academic study by always being a role model for me and teaching me how to make citation in my primary school projects. My second sister, Gülcan, has always supported me and guided me in life like a sister since my undergraduate years.

Special thanks go to my sister, Özlem. I cannot explain how much she helped me and supported me during my whole life. She raised me even though she was just a small kid herself. She has been the one who showed me the most intimate love with her place in my life not only as a sister but also as a close friend. She has always been there for me even my thesis defense day with her energy. And, my second brother, Timur who has been a real brother to me since my undergraduate times has always enlightened me with his wisdom, listened to me with patience and never spared his support from me during this thesis.

I also owe Yiğit Gümüşok, my closest friend and my soul in this life. He has always been there for me. He has supported me with his love, time and energy, listened to my each and every word with patience and believed in me with his heart.

I am also indebted to my friends who have always supported me and encouraged me to write this thesis. I have discussed and shared a lot with my half-brothers Ömer Naim Küçük and Erdem Selvin. İdil Ceylan Soyseçkin provided me with a generous support for not only this thesis but also for life. Lastly, I am deeply thankful to my family in Gaziantep, Ali Cin, Rezzan Kurt and Elif Berdo, for not only giving me all the support and love in my hard times without asking anything in return but also showing everybody how differences can come together, live together and have fun.

Finally, I would like to thank my interviewees for their valuable help and collaboration during my fieldwork and everybody who supported me throughout this process.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 Theoretical framework .....	2
1.2 Beyoğlu as a case study .....	9
1.3 Methodology of this thesis .....	11
1.4 Structure of this thesis .....	16
CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .....	20
2.1 Mediating the planetary and area-specific approaches to urban space .....	23
2.2. Going beyond the neoliberal capitalism .....	32
2.3 The production of space .....	36
2.4 Locating the theoretical framework in the case of Beyoğlu .....	48
CHAPTER 3: OVERVIEW OF THE AKP’S ECONOMIC AND IDEOLOGICAL SPACE-MAKING .....	59
CHAPTER 4: CONTENTIOUS HISTORY OF SPACE-MAKING AND THE AKP’S URBAN TRANSFORMATION PROJECTS IN BEYOĞLU .....	77
4.1 A brief history: diversity, conviviality and everyday life in Beyoğlu .....	78
4.2 Claiming space, display of power and political contestation in Beyoğlu .....	83
4.3 AKP’s Beyoğlu: Beyoğlu under construction .....	96

CHAPTER 5: THE AKP’S ECONOMIC AND IDEOLOGICAL PRODUCTION OF SPACE IN BEYOĞLU .....	125
5.1 Economic framing of space and neoliberal production of Beyoğlu .....	128
5.2 Ideological framing of space and the Islamist neo-Ottomanist production of Beyoğlu .....	157
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION .....	199
6.1 The summary of this thesis .....	199
6.2 Important remarks on the field .....	204
6.3 Theoretical contributions and future research .....	213
REFERENCES .....	216
APPENDIX .....	227

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Historical map of Beyoğlu .....	76
Figure 2. An ordinary day in Tarlabası before the renewal project .....	95
Figure 3. Tarlabası Renewal Project Area .....	96
Figure 4. Demolitions in Tarlabası .....	101
Figure 5. Simulations of Taksim 360 Project .....	103
Figure 6. Taksim 360 Project simulation and a municipality banner covering demolished buildings in Tarlabası .....	105
Figure 7. Before (on the left) and after (on the right) the outdoor seating ban in Asmalımescit .....	110
Figure 8. Banners read from left to right: “Don’t sleep İstanbul, save Taksim” and “Emek is ours, İstanbul hours”, from the protests against the demolition of Emek Theatre .....	111
Figure 9. Pedestrianized Taksim Square on 1st of May, 2018 .....	114
Figure 10. Women were confronted with police in March 8, 2019 Feminist Night March .....	118
Figure 11. Old (on the left) and new (on the right) AKM buildings .....	120
Figure 12. Taksim Mosque .....	121

## ABBREVIATIONS

AKM	<i>Atatürk Kültür Merkezi</i> Atatürk Cultural Center
AKP	<i>Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi</i> Justice and Development Party
ANAP	<i>Anavatan Partisi</i> Motherland Party
CMP	Capitalist Mode of Production
DP	<i>Demokrat Parti</i> Democrat Party
PKK	<i>Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan</i> Kurdish Workers' Party
RP	<i>Refah Partisi</i> Welfare Party
SMP	State Mode of Production
TASKA	<i>Türk-Arap Ekonomi ve Stratejik İş birliği Derneği</i> Association of Turkish-Arabic Economic and Strategic Partnership
TOKI	<i>Toplu Konut İdaresi Başkanlığı</i> The Mass Housing Administration of Turkey
UNESCO	<i>Birleşmiş Milletler Eğitim, Bilim ve Kültür Örgütü</i> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

*To all those who defend living together and  
differential spaces  
against exclusion, discrimination and hatred*

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the production of space in Beyoğlu particularly focusing on different factors, framings, layers and actors of this process. Analyzing Beyoğlu as a case, this study first demonstrates that space is not an empty container but rather a dynamic entity which is composed of physical, mental and social layers and produced through their transformations and interrelationalities with one another. Secondly, it shows that although the production of space as such is a globally valid phenomenon as all spaces are social products, the production of space as a praxis is a multilayered process which is shaped through both planetary and area-specific factors as well as economic and non-economic motivations. Thirdly, this study proposes that the transformation of Beyoğlu can be best explained as a state-led production of space which is a multilayered process built upon not only economic but also ideological motivations of the ruling party which has been treated as the main state actor in the context of this thesis.

In the case of Beyoğlu, this study takes the current Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP in Turkish) government, which has been ruling the country since 2002 as the sole party without coalition thereby often becomes a subject to discussions on the merging of the state and government in Turkey, as the main state-actor. Based on the review of the literature and the analysis of Beyoğlu, this study focuses on both economic and ideological elements of the AKP's politics. In order to further discuss the spatialization of the AKP's politics, the study takes neoliberal economy as the main indicator of the global economic factor impacting the production of space in Turkey. As for the ideological elements,

among others, this thesis focuses on Islamism and neo-Ottomanism as the main pillars of the AKP's politics, arguing that economic and ideological factors are among the main elements which guide the government's spatial strategy in Beyoğlu. It is crucial to note that although these two ideologies are deeply interconnected and complementary to one another which makes it highly difficult to differentiate them, this thesis uses these concepts separately for analytical purposes without undermining their overlapping aspects. Based on all these, this thesis also suggests that the analysis of the Beyoğlu case not only showcases the multilayered character of the production of space but also shows how space is strategically produced as an instrument to serve the state's economic/capitalist and political/ideological purposes which is crystallized in the AKP government's neoliberal economic policies which are shaped through the country's integration into the global neoliberal market economy on the one hand and its historically and locally contingent Islamist neo-Ottomanist agenda wrapped in a populist discourse on the other.

### 1.1 Theoretical framework

Analyzing different framings of the production of space in Beyoğlu, this thesis argues that the case of Beyoğlu is one of the most emblematic examples of the production of space in Turkey. It shows not only how the politics of the AKP government is solidified in the policies and projects which have been transforming the space and everyday life in Beyoğlu but also how multilayered and multidimensional the process of space-making is.

In so doing, the analysis of the production of space in Beyoğlu first serves to illuminate two important debates on how to study space and space-making in the existing literature. The first one is planetary vs. context-specific approaches to urban

condition. The second one is the theory of neoliberal urbanism as an economic account of space vis a vis other site-specific forces which affect urban processes. The importance of these discussions mainly lies in the fact that they propose different viewpoints for the analysis of not only space and its production but also its underlying dynamics and layers stemming from global or local characteristics of a given space. In Turkey, even though neoliberalism has been an important force in the state-led making of space since the 1980s as in the rest of the world, ideological leanings of specific political actors have always had significant role in the ways space is produced, framed and instrumentalized. Thus, following those who argue for a middle ground perspective between the abovementioned camps, this thesis asserts that it is important to equally recognize the vital role of both local dynamics and non-economic factors and the parts played by global processes and economic factors in deciphering the spatial phenomenon (Mcfarlane, 2010; McCann and Ward; 2010; Ren and Luger, 2015; Robinson; 2011, 2016; Walton and Massoti, 1976). Moreover, demonstrating how these different factors and dynamics are translated into real-life setting through the analysis of the space-making process in Beyoğlu, this thesis contributes to the theoretical discussions on space and space-making.

Although the abovementioned discussions are enlightening to explore the multilayered and multiscalar processes ingrained in the understanding and analysis of the spatial phenomenon as well as to ground the methodological framework on which this thesis is built, the given theories do not explain what these layers, dynamics and framings might be and how they operate on the ground. In other words, they provide us with questions such as “how and by whom these models are developed in a global-relational context and are set in motion through scaled circuits of policy knowledge and how the mobilization of these models are conditioned by

their territorialization in specific spatial and political economic contexts” (McCann and Ward, 2010, p. 175). However, it does not provide us with the answers.

To fill this gap, I use Henri Lefebvre’s theory of production of space in reference to his two groundbreaking works “*The Production of Space*” (1991) where Lefebvre theorizes space and its production and the “*State, Space, World: Selected Essays*” (2009). Building on the question that McCann and Ward directs, I analyze Lefebvre’s theory focusing on the questions of how, by whom and through which motives space is produced in a specific context to gain a deeper insight into the multiple layers, dynamics and framings of space production. To detail, firstly, following Lefebvre’s process-based understanding of space, I argue that such historicity embedded in space is manifested in the case of Beyoğlu as well showing that Beyoğlu is a space which has been produced through conflicting and overlapping relations and imaginations of different actors, changing state forms and daily life styles and various other historically-bounded and contextually-determined factors throughout the centuries.

Secondly, to provide more insight into the mentioned purposes and actors of space-making, I elaborate on Lefebvre’s concepts of the “Capitalist mode of production (CMP)” and the “State mode of production (SMP)” (Lefebvre, 2009, p. 241-242) where he explains how space is strategically produced and instrumentalized for both economic and ideological purposes of the state in congruent with the global capitalist system on the one hand and state actors’ ideologies on the other. These two concepts provide significant insights into the analysis of the production of space in Beyoğlu in terms of both actors and motivations.

Concerning the actors, As Lefebvre’s (1991) triad suggests, production of space is a multilayered and multi-actor process into which not only the state but also

other people try to intervene. Nevertheless, as he also underlines, the key actor in the production of space is the state (Lefebvre, 2003). However, for Lefebvre, the state manages the production of space with the help of its collaborators (e.g. local authorities, urbanists, corporations, investors, ordinary people). Accordingly, this thesis takes the state as the main agent of the spatial transformation in Beyoğlu and particularly the AKP government since it is the main responsible actor in the process as the ruling party in the parliament without a coalition for more than seventeen years. Yet, it also recognizes the vital role played by the municipality, national and international companies and tourists all of whom have significant impacts on the transformation of Beyoğlu space.

When it comes to motivations, Lefebvre's concepts of the CMP and the SMP highlights not only the multilayered and multidimensional character of space-making but also the central role of the state actors, their motivations and diverse framings in the production of space. According to Lefebvre (2009, p. 242), the state, together with other local political actors and national/international capitalists, produces and instrumentalizes space as a means to produce and reproduce “the productive forces (e.g. agglomeration economies)”, “the relations of production and of property (as space can be bought and sold)” and “surplus value (e.g. exploitation of space, organization of urban consumption and everyday life)” on the one hand and “ideology and the instruments of political power” on the other hand. As this thesis argues, such production and instrumentalization is valid for the case of Beyoğlu as well. As will be detailed in the next sections, the transformation of Beyoğlu is characterized by the integration of not only global and local capital into the space and everyday life of the district through the commodification of land, property, entertainment and consumption but also of Islamist and neo-Ottomanist symbols into

the district scape through diverse interventions of the government into the built environment (e.g. construction of a mosque in the Taksim Square). Thus, as argued by Lefebvre, at the local level, Beyoğlu is instrumentalized by the state as a means to not only create capital, thereby for economic purposes, but also to propagate its own ideologies, authority and power through space and everyday life, thereby for political purposes.

Lastly, in line with Lefebvre's (1991) concept of everyday life and its direct link with the production of space, this thesis pays particular attention to the changing dynamics of everyday life in the examination of the spatial production in Beyoğlu. According to Lefebvre, while space is produced, everyday life is also produced in a way that it embraces new symbols, meanings, functions and even memories which redraw the contours of everyday life and daily practices culminated in it. Considering the dialectical relationship between space and everyday life, this thesis suggests that the reproduction of Beyoğlu is not only facilitated through changing places and space but also through changing everyday life practices which used to exist with these places. Based on all these, this thesis also contributes to the literature on Lefebvrian studies which apply the theory of space in specific cases while adding a one more case for a larger sample of comparative analysis.

Additionally, to further ground Lefebvre's spatial triad, this thesis benefits from Pierce and Martin's (2015) relational place-making concept which suggests that places are also co-constitutive parts of spatial production with their physical, social and affective components. Thus, in Beyoğlu, the production of space can be best observed in its places, their physical qualities, social and emotional meanings and space users' memories attached to these places. That is why, this study analyzes the production of Beyoğlu through the deconstruction and reconstruction of built

environment by the government and reproduction and/or reappropriation of places imbued with social and affective meanings. Demonstrating the production of space and place as well as their relational processes in Beyoğlu, this thesis also makes a theory-testing through the concrete examples of the transformation in the district.

Last but not least, as understood so far, this thesis elaborates on different framings, actors and processes of the production of space in Beyoğlu. In order to scale up the process of spatial production in Beyoğlu, this thesis also focuses on the local dynamics of macro and micro politics in Turkey, the relationalities between them and the main actors who play a role in the operational level of the space-making. Based on the case of Beyoğlu, this thesis argues that the main actors of the production of space are the AKP government, the Beyoğlu Municipality, various international and national corporate entities which involve in the process merely as investors, business keepers and tourists who contribute to the transformation of space and everyday life by experiencing the state-produced space in the district.

Furthermore, as the review of the literature shows, the AKP's politics is built upon both economic and ideological elements (neoliberalism refers to the global economic framing and Islamist neo-Ottomanism refers to the ideological framing) which are intertwined one another and often incorporate into the AKP's highly populist discourse also constitute the main founding blocks of the spatial transformation in Beyoğlu.

This thesis treats these concepts not as mere definitive elements from a normative perspective but as analytical tools to show different layers and framings of the AKP government's production of space and the interrelations between them. The existing studies on the AKP's politics show that while the neoliberal policies of the government have been shaped in parallel to the globalizing neoliberal economic

premises prevailing in the rest of the world, its Islamist neo-Ottomanist ideology have historically situated, context-specific political references which are manifested in different state actors' political rivalries and hegemonic claims over space and society throughout the years. In the scope of this study, following the world literature on neoliberalism, the AKP's neoliberalism is operationalized as the commodification and commercialization of space and everyday life through tourism-led upgrading and city-branding strategies of the central and local government (Eder & Öz, 2015; Harvey, 1989; Smith, 1996). Based on the analysis of the Beyoğlu case, this thesis take Islamism and neo-Ottomanism as two important components of the AKP's locally situated space-making strategy and treats them as a reflection of not only the government's conservatism, its populist reaction to secular, intellectual, and political character of space and everyday life (Batuman, 2015; Yilmaz & Bashirov, 2018) and its hegemonic contestation and rivalry with the Kemalist legacy (Ongur, 2016; Yavuz, 2016).

Furthermore, the multilayered spatial transformation in Beyoğlu is also a case in point to explore how these different economic and ideological aspirations of the government interact with one another and are translated into the production of space. As various scholars demonstrate, the AKP's space-making agenda is a multifaceted one in terms of not only its diverse framings on the ground but also its abstract foundations. This multidimensionality is manifested in studies focusing on different combinations of three main elements of the AKP's politics including neoliberal Islamism (Batuman, 2018; Lovering & Türkmen, 2011), neoliberal neo-Ottomanism (Bilgiç, 2018) and Islamist neo-Ottomanism (Yavuz, 2016). As a contribution to this growing body of literature, this thesis not only reasserts that the AKP's spatial politics relies on the combination of both economic and ideological stances under the

party's increasingly centralized governance (Lovering & Türkmen, 2011) but also proposes a study which concretizes the functions and interrelations between these different orientations through the state-led spatial reconfiguration in Beyoğlu where the government's commodification-based neoliberal transformation and Islamist neo-Ottomanist spatial changes and symbolisms which function as complementary parts of the overall transformation of space.

The analysis also shows that even though neoliberal city-branding tactics of the government sometimes seem to contradict the party's conservative society imaginations and neo-Ottomanist nostalgia, inspired by Tuğal's (2009, p. 55) concept of "molecular Islamization" this thesis argues that the government's spatial moves characterized by its abovementioned economic and ideological motivations are implemented as molecular pieces of its overall transformation project in such way that one piece cannot threaten the success of others. Having shown the co-constitution of these different ways of space-making strategies of the government as well as the dialectical relations between them through the case of Beyoğlu, this thesis also contributes to the literature on the multifaceted politics of the AKP government and its spatialization.

## 1.2 Beyoğlu as a case study

In order to analyze the production of space in Turkey, this thesis takes Beyoğlu as a case for three main reasons. First of all, Beyoğlu, mostly known as the area stretching along the Haliç (Golden Horn) and Boğaz (Bosporus) and centered around İstiklal Street (also known as Grand Rue de Pera) from Taksim Square to Galata (also known as Pera or Tünel) (Ergun, 2004), is among the most historic places of İstanbul. Having witnessed two great empires and the birth of one nation

state, Beyoğlu is a living witness of the history, a “*lieu de memoire*” (Nora, 1989) which mirrors the lived experiences of diverse populations and spatialities ever-produced and developed in Istanbul. With its historically loaded texture, Beyoğlu provides a solid example for an analysis of a production of space from a process-based perspective.

In line with this, secondly, Beyoğlu also showcases diverse moments of strategic instrumentalization of space and space-making by different actors with diverse framings as it has always been a politically symbolic, contested area. Under the rule of Byzantine Empire, the district used to be a vibrant commercial area which in turn made Beyoğlu a central place for cultural and social activities and a “multinational microcosm” in the city of İstanbul (Mansel, 2011). Being a window to the western world under the effect of its non-Muslim residents and visitors, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the district witnessed the modernization attempts of the Ottoman Empire, which can be read in the huge flamboyant arcades and European embassy buildings still standing in the İstiklal Street (Ortaylı, 2012). With the foundation of the Republic, Beyoğlu was designed as a showcase of westernization and modernization process of the new Turkish state and became a locale for modern life style that they aimed at spreading across the country (Batuman, 2015).

The end of the single-party period in 1950, also the first Republican Party period, brought another flow of spatial transformation to Beyoğlu which was, this time, aimed at eradicating the legacy of the single-party regime. Meanwhile, having started to host various civil political activities during the 1960s and 1970s, the district also became a symbolic site for spatialization of mass politization through which the function and meaning of the space defined by state actors were subverted by different civil groups (Batuman, 2015). In the 1980s, Beyoğlu was shaped under

neoliberal policies of the right-wing Özal government which embarked on urban renewal projects in the surrounding neighborhoods “to clean up Beyoğlu” (Tuominen, 2016: 42). The Islamist Welfare Party’s (Refah Partisi, RP in Turkish) taking over Istanbul’s municipality in the 1994 local elections has started the ongoing process of the Islamist neo-Ottomanist production in Beyoğlu. As this thesis shows, today, Beyoğlu has been undergoing another space-making process characterized by the AKP’s neoliberal, Islamist and neo-Ottomanist imageries.

The third important reason lying behind the selection of Beyoğlu as a case study is its radical transformation under the AKP rule. Even though the government’s politics has had important spatial ramifications in different parts of the city as well, Beyoğlu has been among the most affected. Although the transformation of Beyoğlu dates back to 2005, the 2013 onwards have been marked by the government’s more systematic and subsequent interventions in space. Thus, despite having analyzed the events and steps taken before the 2013, this thesis mainly focuses on the period between 2013 to present time. Furthermore, instead of analyzing Beyoğlu district as a whole, this thesis focuses on three areas in Beyoğlu, namely Tarlabası, İstiklal Street and Taksim Square which have become the main sites for transformation through different projects and policies of the local and central government.

### 1.3 Methodology of this thesis

This study uses a qualitative method to explore different layers and framings of the production of space in Beyoğlu. Having embraced an experimental approach to cities which purports that multifold layers and dynamics of spatial phenomenon can best be studied through the researcher’s and city users’ natural experimentation with on-the-

ground manifestations of spatial practice (Ren and Luger, 2015), this thesis is built on a fieldwork based on interviews conducted with 32 people in Beyoğlu in a two-month period from June to July 2018, inclusive. Besides, it also benefits from news, reports, political statements, and other documents on the transformation of Beyoğlu. This thesis is based on the review of the literature on space and the production of space and the economic and ideological analyses of the current government in order to ground this thesis' questions of how and why the space and everyday life in Beyoğlu has been (re)produced. In that sense, while the fieldwork based on the interviews is used to locate the theoretical framework within the case study in an empirically-grounded way, other resources (e.g. news, reports) are employed as supportive documents to provide further information regarding the spatial transformation of Beyoğlu not only from public perspective but also from the eyes of the related political actors.

For the purposes of this thesis, I prefer to apply semi-structured interviews meaning that the general scope of the interviews was set in advance, yet the questions and the flow of the interviews were arranged in a way that allowed interviewees to speak about their experiences and make their comments regarding spatial processes in Beyoğlu. The preferred design of the interviews was also useful to get more detailed information on certain issues when necessary as it gave some space to me as well to make necessary changes during the interview to evaluate new approaches or dig deeper into some issues. Especially, at the beginning of the interviews, the flexibility of the design also helped me restructure the interview couple of times according to the first interviewees answers and comments, which improved the content and the implementation of the interview during the fieldwork.

Furthermore, except one phone interview, the interviews were conducted face to face. In most of the cases, interviews were conducted through my stepping into a business place in Beyoğlu to interview with people working there or sitting as customers. Only three expert interviews were conducted through arrangement beforehand. Six of the interviews were conducted in groups (i.e. with more than one person) as, in one occasion, the interview started with my involvement in a street conversation with coffee and tea among neighboring business keepers and residents. In others, the main reason was that when I stepped into a place, there were more than one person who wanted to talk, and it turned into a group interview. The average duration of the interviews changed from thirty minutes to one hour. In the field, the interviews were tape-recorded within the knowledge and permission of the interviewees to get more accurate data, except two interviews which were conducted in a relatively tense atmosphere after a municipal police raid in one of the places. I recorded these two interviews by taking notes. Despite most of the interviewees allowed me to take voice records of the interviews, they mostly did this on the condition of keeping their names anonymous as the current political trajectory in Turkey made most of the interviewees concerned about the possible consequences of expressing their opinions and feelings. Therefore, during the thesis, the interviewees are called with pseudo names as shown in Appendix.

This thesis uses a mixed method in sampling. Interviewees were selected mostly randomly from a sampling composed of those who do business and reside in Beyoğlu. However, I conducted some of the interviews by using a snowball sampling thereby with the referrals of my previous interviewees mainly because it was difficult to get in touch without any contact. This group was composed of Kurdish business keepers and residents who have close relations with each other yet relatively more

cautious about establishing relations with outsiders. Thus, asking them to make interview with me was easier when I reached them through my previous interviewee.

Moreover, as this thesis focuses on Tarlabaşı, İstiklal Street and Taksim Square as three main sites of transformation, the interviewees were selected in regard to the balanced representation of people who experience the transformation in these three sites. In İstiklal Street, the interviewees were selected in such a way that at least one interview could be conducted in each backstreet of the İstiklal to have a balanced view towards the transformation. It is important to note that as Taksim Square is neither a residential nor a business area, the interviewees were concentrated in İstiklal Street and Tarlabaşı. Moreover, there were some overlaps among the interviewees in terms of their representations as some of them are the people who run a business in İstiklal Street and used to live in Tarlabaşı. Another important point is that as most of the residents of Tarlabaşı were displaced from the area due to the government's renewal project, interviewees from Tarlabaşı were relatively less in number compared to those who are in İstiklal Street.

The interviews were mainly composed of questions which aim to understand the main lines of the spatial transformation in Beyoğlu, its different layers, actors and processes as well as its reflections on the everyday lives of people in the district. More specifically, the first part of the interview was about the transformation itself, mostly referring to the changing physical qualities of built environment, trying to understand how people in Beyoğlu perceive the transformation in the district and since when. The following questions were more about the spatial, economic and political particularities of the transformation such as the perceived goals, means, actors and consequences of the transformation in Beyoğlu. The last part of the questions was concerned with the spill-over effect of the transformation in different

areas of life in Beyoğlu, which mainly refers to the questions of how interviewees experience the physical changes in space, how they are affected by these changes socially and emotionally and how they deal with it. Apart from these, some of the questions in the interviews varied depending on the person with whom interviewed. This means that while people live or used to live in Tarlabası were asked more about the renewal project in Tarlabası, for others, the questions focused more on transformation processes in İstiklal Street and Taksim Square.

As mentioned, in addition to the business keepers and residents in Beyoğlu, I also conducted three expert interviews with one urban activist and architect from İstanbul Chamber of Architects, one urban activist and a Tarlabası resident from Beyoğlu City Defense and one recycling activist, Tarlabası resident and a Beyoğlu City Council member. I benefited from these interviews not only as a source for technical information regarding the transformation process but also as people who have experienced the transformation personally. Furthermore, at the design stage of the fieldwork, I had planned to make interviews with municipal actors who involved in the decision-making and implementation processes of the Beyoğlu transformation project or, at least, who have firsthand information regarding the process. Nevertheless, despite my efforts to get in touch, I could not achieve to reach any of these people. That is why, this thesis uses news and official statements made by government and municipal officials as the main sources to gain deeper insight into the central and local government side of the transformation.

Regarding the profile of the interviews, as mentioned, most of the interviewees are either business keepers or residents of Beyoğlu or both. The business keeper interviewees vary in sector ranging from textile and culture to eating and entertainment. Among the total of 32 interviewees, only 5 of them were female

and 27 of them were male. The main reason for this was the concentration of businesses at the hands of man in the district. Although I did not ask all the interviewees their ages, the ages of the interviewees ranged from 18 to 78. During the selection of the interviewees, I paid attention to reflect on Beyoğlu's diverse population composition. Thus, among the interviewees, there were Turks, Kurds and Arabs. They vary in their education levels. How long they have been in Beyoğlu ranged from 1 year to three-generation İstanbulites.

#### 1.4 Structure of this thesis

In Chapter 2, I engage into the literature on space and the production of space and go over two main debates. First, I focus on planetary vs. context-specific approaches to space giving reference to the literatures such as neoliberal urbanism (Brenner & Schmid, 2015), post-colonial theory (Ong, 2011; Ananya Roy, 2016b, 2016a) and comparative urbanism (Ren & Luger, 2015; Robinson, 2016). Secondly, I go deeper into neoliberal urbanism as a generalizing perspective to urban and urbanization. I close this discussion by arguing that the production of space is a multilayered process which is shaped through both global and local and economic and non-economic factors. Lastly, in order to provide necessary analytical framework and means to scale up the process of space-making, I propose Lefebvre's (1991) production of space as a grounding theory which not only recognizes the multi-dimensional and multilayered, process-based and everyday life-embedded character of space-making process but also provides further insights into its different layers, actors and motivations. Furthermore, I benefit from the work of Pierce and Martin (2015) to operationalize space by bringing the concept into a dialectical conversation

with the concept of place while rendering Lefebvre's theory more applicable to contemporary real life setting.

In Chapter 3, I present the economic and ideological pillars of the AKP's politics by focusing on the neoliberal economic, Islamist and neo-Ottomanist political strategies in line with the AKP's space-making agenda which has been shaped through these different factors to provide a background for the analysis of the Beyoğlu case.

In Chapter 4, I aim to present the overall historical process of space-making in Beyoğlu to provide a holistic understanding to and a ground for the AKP's recent production of space. Thus, I focus on the historical background of Beyoğlu, its spatial production and political, spatial and social contestations throughout this history as well as different actors who involved in these processes with a focus on the questions of why Beyoğlu matters and what makes Beyoğlu a special place and a unique showcase for the production of space. Particularly, the chapter first examines the history of the district with emphasis on the with the production of diversity, conviviality and everyday life in and through Beyoğlu space. Then, focusing on the political dimension of the space-making in Beyoğlu, I reflect on the processes of claiming space, instrumentalizing space for political power and spatial contestations in Beyoğlu which has always been a symbolic site for not only art and culture, diversity but also political and spatial contestation and competition among varying actors. In the second part of the chapter, I move onto the presentation of the AKP's production of space in Beyoğlu with reference to three main components of the transformation in the district, namely the renewal project in Tarlabaşı, transformation of İstiklal Street and that of Taksim Square. This part is aimed to present the main lines of transformation prior to the analysis.

In Chapter 5, I analyze the ongoing urban transformation in Beyoğlu with a focus on the AKP as the dominant actor in the production of space in Beyoğlu. The analysis is built on the AKP officials' statements and legal changes made by the government to grasp the mental background of the projects from the state aspect and the interviews conducted in the transformation area and my field observations in order to understand the social implications of the physical changes in terms of changing perceptions and everyday life practices of users of Beyoğlu space. By juxtaposing the economic and ideological space-making policies of the AKP government with Lefebvre's spatial triad, namely the representations of space (conceived), spatial practice (lived) and representational space (perceived), I highlight not only the multilayered nature of the production of space but also investigate these layers in detail. Moreover, while analyzing the neoliberal, Islamist and neo-Ottomanist components of the projects in Beyoğlu and juxtaposing them with the Lefebvre's spatial triad, I operationalize the triad by benefiting from Pierce and Martin's (2015) relational place-making conception. In so doing, I explicate the globally inherited economic and locally situated ideological space-making strategies of the AKP through 1) physical/material elements of place (e.g. roads, asphalts, buildings), 2) social elements of place (e.g. people's interactions with each other and their surroundings), and 3) affective elements of place (e.g. visceral, experiential and emotive components of space). Analyzing the neoliberal and Islamist neo-Ottomanist motivations of the AKP in making space and translations of these different political and economic factors into space and everyday life, I demonstrate different framings of space and space production in Beyoğlu.

In Chapter 6, I first provide a brief summary of this research and its findings. Then I mention the study's contributions to the existing literature. I also point out the

recent situation in Beyoğlu focusing on the newly emerging spatialities in the district and the concomitant counter reproduction of space and everyday life in Beyoğlu based on the narratives of Beyoğlu people.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I set the theoretical ground for the analysis of the production of space, its different layers, dynamics and framings in Beyoğlu. In order to achieve this, in the first section, I present the existing theoretical debates on how to empirically work space and its production focusing on studies which question how to understand and theorize space and through which factors, dynamics and mechanisms space is produced. Particularly focusing on the debates on planetary vs. area-specific and economic vs. non-economic approaches to space, I critically examine what constitutes different layers and framings of space (e.g. global and/or local dynamics, economic and/or non-economic factors) and how these can be located in a case study. After this, following those who argue for a middle ground perspective between the abovementioned camps, I argue that it is important to equally recognize the vital role of both local dynamics and non-economic factors and the parts played by global processes and economic factors in deciphering the spatial phenomenon (Mcfarlane, 2010; McCann and Ward; 2010; Ren and Luger, 2015; Robinson; 2011, 2016; Walton and Massoti, 1976). Moreover, from a methodological perspective, following Ren and Luger's (2015) experimental approach to cities, I argue that multifold layers and dynamics of spatial phenomenon can best be studied through the researcher's natural experimentation with on-the-ground manifestations of spatial practice.

Although these discussions inform us about the multilayered and multiscalar processes embedded in spatial phenomenon and provide a solid methodological understanding regarding how to explore these processes, they do not explain what

these layers, dynamics and framings might be and how they operate on the ground. In other words, the literature provides us with questions such as “how and by whom these models are developed in a global-relational context and are set in motion through scaled circuits of policy knowledge and how the mobilization of these models are conditioned by their territorialization in specific spatial and political economic contexts” (McCann and Ward, 2010, p. 175). However, it comes short of showing a way for answering these questions.

To fill this gap, in the second section, I present Henri Lefebvre’s theory of production of space in reference to his two groundbreaking works “*The Production of Space*” (1991) where Lefebvre theorizes space and its production and the “*State, Space, World: Selected Essays*” (2009) which is composed of Lefebvre’s essays on the relationship between the state and space. Building on the question that McCann and Ward directs, I review Lefebvre’s theory focusing on the questions of how, by whom and through which motives space is produced in a specific context to gain a deeper insight into the multiple layers, dynamics and framings of space production. To answer these questions, I first examine Lefebvre’s genealogical understanding of space and its production. Building on the premise that (social) space is a (social) product (Lefebvre, 1991: 26) and emphasizing the process-based character of and historicity embedded in the production of space, I argue that Beyoğlu is a social product which has become what it is today through diverse space-making processes that it has witnessed throughout its long history.

Secondly, I focus on Lefebvre’s spatial triad where he deconstructs space into three co-constitutive layers, namely representations of space, spatial practice and spaces of representations, which grounds the idea that space is continuously produced through the interplay between political, economic and social relations in

everyday life for various purposes by various actors. In order to dig deeper into these purposes and actors, thirdly, I elaborate on Lefebvre's concepts of "Capitalist mode of production" and "State mode of production" (Lefebvre, 2009, p. 241-242) where he explains how space is strategically produced and instrumentalized for both economic and ideological purposes in congruent with the global capitalist system and nation state actors' ideologies and power aspirations.

Lastly, in order to understand where these different factors and actors operate to produce space, I benefit from Lefebvre's concept of "everyday life" which, for Lefebvre, functions as a site for production of space while being produced by new spatial codes produced and transmitted from the mental to the social layer in such a way that transforms how people interact with the space they use and with each other through that space (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 233). Apart from its theoretical value, I use the concept of everyday life also to reaffirm the necessity of analyzing the production of space by looking at not only its implications in terms of the physical qualities of space but also on-the-ground implications manifested in the ways users of space experience these physical transformations in their everyday lives.

In addition to Lefebvre's theory of production of space, I also benefit from Pierce and Martin's (2015) work "*Placing Lefebvre*" where they operationalize space by bringing the concept into a dialectical conversation with the concept of place through the concept of "relational place making". As they suggest, although Lefebvrian understanding of space and production of space provide us with a well-grounded theoretical framework to analyze the case of Beyoğlu as a case of production of space, it does not properly equip us with the necessary methodological tools to analyze real life cases. Thus, "to address the latent epistemological challenges of operationalizing Lefebvre's triad" (p. 1279) and make the theory more

applicable to contemporary real-life setting, in that case to Beyoğlu, I juxtapose Lefebvre's spatial triad with Pierce and Martin's place-oriented approach to the city.

Even though Lefebvre's theory of space provides us with a solid theoretical framework to analyze the production of space, its motives and actors, the analysis of the case of Beyoğlu requires to elaborate on the contextual characteristics of the production process as well. Therefore, in the third section, I locate the existing theoretical framework within the case of Beyoğlu by investigating the contextual features of the production of space in Turkey. Particularly, focusing on the specific actors involving in space-making in Turkey and the observable ways the space is instrumentalized for certain purposes, I try to scale down the production of space within the case of Beyoğlu. Building on the existing literature on the instrumentalization of space on the one hand and the economic and ideological nodes of the current governance practices in Turkey on the other, I argue that there are two main motivations which are translated from the current government's political character and way of making politics to its space-making agenda, namely, neoliberalism as a global economic factor and Islamist neo-Ottomanist ideology as an area specific factor. In order to operationalize these concepts, I discuss the literature on the politics of the AKP government (see: Tuğal, 2009; Lovering & Türkmen, 2011; Bilgiç, 2018; Yavuz, 2016; Yilmaz & Bashirov, 2018).

## 2.1 Mediating the planetary and area-specific approaches to urban space

A review of the literature examining how to understand, and study urban space/city shows that most scholars tend to consider and analyze urban space and its production process from a planetary perspective. Indeed, the rivalry between planetary and area-specific approaches to urban space is not a new phenomenon. Rather, it has long

been an ardent debate on which urban scholars have yet to reach a consensus, and the substance and the range of this discussion beg for further clarification for the purposes of this thesis as well as of the future agenda of the urban research.

As Luger (2018) insistently puts forward,

(...) there is disagreement about how to encapsulate hybrid and emergent forms of global urbanization into broader urban theory. A key tension and question for debate is whether urban processes can be understood through a 'planetary' lens, or whether such a mondial approach occludes and obscures important patterns and generative forces that are highly localized and site-specific (p. 2).

For those who run for the former option, the mere motivation is the need for a "coherent concept of the city as an object of theoretical inquiry" (Scott & Storper, 2015). As one of the pioneers of such stance, Scott and Storper (2015) assert that even though there are certain characteristics that make each case and place unique, it is possible and indeed fundamental to form a unitary lens to determine and evaluate urban processes by way of their shared aspects which lead us to the "nature of cities". They base their arguments on the criticism that privileging of particularities in individual urban cases obscures the comparative value of the observable data extracted from those cases whereas pre-set conceptual abstractions and taxonomies help researchers empirically elaborate on the "*meaningful* levels of diversity and difference" among cases (Scott and Storper, 2015, p. 11, emphasis in original). Thus, Scott and Storper determine their position as defenders of a universalizing theory of urban on the ground that it is healthier for a comparative researcher to first focus on the shared features of an observed phenomenon and then to analyze the diverging aspects.

Despite their reservation of the idea that "urban can no longer be understood as a universal *form* (2015, p. 165, emphasis in original) based on the variegated, dynamic and evolving nature of urban space, in a similar manner to Scott and

Storper, Brenner and Schmid (2015) also believe the need for a “new epistemology of urban” from a planetary approach and comes up with the concept of “planetary urbanization” which:

(...) offers no more than an epistemological orientation through which to begin to decipher such struggles, their interconnections across places, territories and landscapes, and the urban potentials they are claiming, articulating and constantly transforming. Such an investigation remains to be undertaken, but the epistemological perspective proposed here requires that it be framed in a manner that attempts to overcome the compartmentalization and fragmentation not only of urban spaces, but of urban struggles themselves, no matter where they are situated (p. 178).

For Brenner and Schmid (2015), what makes urbanization processes planetary despite certain particularities is the “context of context” which “represents a constitutive formation—a self-forming, internally contradictory and constantly evolving whole—in and through which the ‘geo-positionality’ of local places is inscribed and mediated” (p. 161) or more briefly “the contemporary forms of neoliberal capitalist urbanization” (p. 162). This context shaping the sub-contexts of diverse urbanizations, for them, substantiates their search for macro-trends that can be found in all cases.

On the other hand, there are various other scholars who are highly skeptical about epistemological and comparative merits of planetary turn in urban studies. Among others, one of the most powerful critiques to planetary emphasis of urban space comes from the post-colonial theorists, Ananya Roy and Aihwa Ong being the most prominent ones. According to Roy (2016a, 2016b), claims suggesting universalization of urban theory not only misinterpret the historical differences and social relations embedded in the variegations of diverse urbanization processes in different parts of the world but also reproduces the eurocentrism which lies in the paradigmatic urbanization assumptions of liberal historiography and ideology.

Paying a specific attention to the “planetary urbanization” concept of Brenner and Schmid, she also questions:

(...) even if we are to concede the urbanization of everything, everywhere, we have to analytically and empirically explain the processes through which the urban is made, lived, and contested—as a circuit of capital accumulation, as a governmental category, as a historical conjuncture (Roy, 2016a, p. 816).

In so doing, Roy (2016a) reemphasizes the importance of deciphering not only whether specific urban processes that make up the planetary phenomena occur in different contexts but also how differently they are realized and experienced in these individual examples. Drawing on this, she also brings the urbanization experiences of small towns in the global South into conversation to re-warrant her critique of the notion that urbanization is everywhere and to show why even the urbanization stories of such small towns matter to make sense of what urban and urbanization really are (Ananya Roy, 2016a).

Similarly, Ong (2011) purports that “the vagaries of urban fate cannot be reduced to the workings of universal laws” (p. 1). According to her, with their particular histories, national cravings and idiosyncratic cultural vitalities, cities have always been the main sites launching global projects instead of being subjects of them. Emphasizing the taken-for-grantedness of globalization and neoliberal capitalism that are supposed to shape localized urban processes, Ong (2011) shows how such understanding puts variations among distinct cases at the mercy of global forces and discredits the comprehension of particular problems and solutions on the ground. In other words, “by studying situated phenomena through a lens that understands them as singular moments in a unified and integrated global process, analysts lose sight of complex urban situations as particular engagements with the global” (Ong, 2011, p. 2).

As an alternative, Ong proposes the term “worlding” as “situated everyday practices identifies ambitious practices that creatively imagine and shape alternative social visions and configurations – that is, “worlds” – than what already exists in a given context” (p. 12). Worlding signifies the multiplicity of worlding projects which shape political, economic and social relations at different scales and localities and refers to the fact that each city has its own process of worlding which coalesces into one another and make the global projects instead of being made by them.

Leitner and Sheppard (2016) forward the emphasis on particularities to the extent of re-theorizing the critical urban theory by provincializing it. Reverting the question of whether there is a possibility to form a universalizing theory of urban/urbanization, they bring the notion that “no single theory suffices to account for the variegated nature of urbanization and cities across the world, without asserting the necessity of distinct theories for different contexts” to the table (p. 230). According to Leitner and Sheppard (2016), such understanding has significant implications as it allows researchers to gain deeper insight into the local origins and production processes of space. Furthermore, regarding the risks of locally situated knowledge especially when it comes to comparison, Leitner and Sheppard (2016) point out that context-based theories which reach the ability to create their own capacities to travel and extend across other contexts are more likely to stand out amongst others. By advocating such methodology, as opposed to Scott and Storper’s (2015) prioritization of de-contextualization, they suggest to privilege the contextuality of individual cases and juxtapose them with knowledges of other contexts with respect to their diverging characteristics in order for a context-based theory to communicate with other cases (Leitner & Sheppard, 2016).

As understood, there are mainly two camps regarding how to approach theoretically urban and urban processes, one of which focuses on the need for a universally valid definition and accordingly set methodological tools and the other insisting on the impossibility of achieving this. In addition to these two, there is also a third group of scholars who argue that there are still blind spots and analytical defects in the existing literature due to the theoretical and “the methodological dangers of overgeneralizing from one or a few examples and the danger of overemphasizing particular spaces, senses of time and partial representations within the city” (Amin & Graham, 1997).

One of the earliest calls for an alternative way of thinking towards particularistic and generalizing tendencies in the literature comes from Walton and Massoti (1976). According to them, both to consider that the explanation of each case is unique and try to apply prefabricated theories and methodological tools emanated from one context to another are different forms of parochialism and deficient in their ways of understanding cities, and researchers should be aware of the “myopia of parochialism” existing in both ways (Walton & Massoti, 1976). Searching for the reasons underlying such myopia, McFarlane (2010) points out that the tendencies to order cities from a developmentalist perspective, attempt to compare similar cases, epitomize certain cities for others, and the resulting search for universal narratives lead to the distortion of comparative impetus for urban studies. To overcome these deficits, McFarlane (Mcfarlane, 2010) suggests a relational approach where urban theory is regarded as a “discrete set of practices”, within diverse “theory cultures” often characterized by “differences and disagreements” (p. 732), urban learning is conceived not as a linear and static but as a “complex process that is at once social, relational, material and contestable” (p. 733), and urban politics

is seen as a response to “strong internationalization” in a way that decolonizes cities and brings their very “ethico-political” (p. 736) elements into conversation. In so doing, in a sense, McFarlane approaches towards a mediation between universalizing and parochial tendencies in the literature and comes up with a middle way by emphasizing the importance of analyzing both divergences and convergences in different cases with respect to global and local trends from a comparative perspective.

With the same token, Robinson (2011, 2016) shows how the discourse of incommensurability of different cities resulting from the urban literature’s close alignment with the ideas of modernity and developmentalism frustrates the cultivation of generalizing theories and methodological tools which recognize the site-specific insights that can be learned from experiences of individual cases. For her “such a more interconnected field of research could draw both inspiration and method from the cities that form its objects of study” (p. 19). Based on these, similar to the relational perspective of McFarlane (2010), Robinson (2011) proposes that

An urban theory on a world scale could, then, potentially draw more cities into shared fields of analysis, and be characterized by multiple, frequently unsettled and hopefully unsettling conversations about the nature and the futures of cities in the world. This style of theorizing would be neither a parochial universalism nor a uniform global analytical field but a rich and fragmented array of ongoing conversations across the world of cities (p. 19).

Relational perspective is among the main themes in the works of Ward and McCann as well. Departing from the point of comparison of cities, Ward (2008, 2010) also criticizes the binary thinking underpinning the traditional approaches to urban processes. He argues that the existing scholarship on comparative urban research suffers from three weaknesses (Ward, 2010, p. 478). The first one lies in the ways it recognizes the geographical scales as fixed instead of fluid, unexpected and always in motion. Second weakness is its treatment of cities “as discrete, self-

enclosed and analytically separate objects” (p. 479), which undermines the relational dynamics producing cities and limits their ontologies to physical boundaries. The last problem with the literature “rests primarily on generalization, on producing law-like explanation” (p. 480). This implies that insisting that general statements and eventually a universal theory can be drawn from the empirically observable features of cities is at odds with true nature of cities as much as discrediting that cities are bound up with the vigorous movements of and interrelations between different scales. According to McCann and Ward (2010), the solution for these problems is:

(...) to develop a conceptualization that is equally sensitive to the role of relational and territorial geographies, of fixity and flow, of global contexts and place-specificities (and vice versa), of structural imperatives and embodied practices, in the production of cities (p. 175).

Furthermore, for McCann and Ward (2010), it is fundamental to go beyond the usual theoretical concerns and determine the questions which are necessary to apply such a “relational/territorial” framework to real life settings. To achieve this, they suggest a set of questions which recognize diverse mechanisms and dynamics which are at play in the making of urban space: “how and by whom these models are developed in a global-relational context and are set in motion through scaled circuits of policy knowledge and how the mobilization of these models are conditioned by their territorialization in specific spatial and political economic contexts” (McCann and Ward, 2010, p. 175). Such understanding can be understood as a midway which acknowledges cities as assemblages characterized by the interplay between overlapping and clashing globally mobile and locally situated dynamics and practices.

Lastly, in their study aiming to relocate Asian cities in the discussion on comparative urbanism, Ren and Luger (2015) put emphasis on the similar problems that previous scholars specify and try to find a new perspective which assumes the

merits of both planetary and area-specific approaches. For them, the existing scholarship is mostly built upon “categories, groupings and classifications” (Ren and Luger, 2015, p. 146). These global rankings, economic, political and regional categories and classifications which are entrenched into comparative research and the ways analysts understand cities serve the deterministic, parochial and limiting interpretations of urban processes (Ren and Luger, 2015). Opposing both approaches that consider cities as units entrapped within territorial boundaries and that totally isolate them from their material existences and historicity, connections and practices tied to this materiality, Ren and Luger (2015) seek for a novel approach which resists categorizing cities “as an exotic ‘other’, elevating it onto a mythical pedestal, yet appreciates its differences, localisms and unique ‘cosmopolitan vernacular’” (p. 145). Based on the works of Diamond and Robinson (2010), Ong (2011) and others, they suggest scholars to engage in natural experimentation of cities, where mundane, everyday interactions of human body with multilayered spatialities interweave into globally circulating forces. Despite the theoretical and methodological challenges, they argue, “the space for experimentation offers researchers the opportunity to explore—an exciting academic invitation” (Ren and Luger, 2015, p. 155).

Such perspective to cities and urban processes with attention to relationalities making them appear helpful in going beyond the binary and categorical understandings of spatial phenomenon and understanding as products of coalescing local and global forces. It is important to note that even though comparative urbanism makes most of the debate, what can be drawn from it, the problems they underline and the way they discuss solutions, is also fruitful for case studies given that the city itself is a site of “assemblage, multiplicity and connectivity” (Robinson, 2011, p. 13) which creates its own ontology through blending uniform conditions of

globalization (Brenner & Schmid, 2015) and daily produced, historically infused and locally practiced ethnographies in its own worlding (Ong, 2011; Ananya Roy, 2016b, 2016a). That is why, the city itself is a locale for natural experiments and empirical observations which tell us a lot about the degrees to which it is planetary and/or contextual.

## 2.2 Going beyond the neoliberal capitalism

As the reviewed literature also shows, one of the most important ramifications of planetary approaches to space and urbanism lies in the fact that urban processes are often tended to be explained by scholars through globalizing capitalism and/or planetary neoliberalism (Brenner, 2004; Swyngedouw, 2000). As Bunnell and Maringanti (2010, p.417) note, however, “ostensibly ‘global’ research is paradoxically parochial in failing to extend beyond world-city financial-enclave spaces” as in the case of those who interpret urban processes exclusively from a planetary perspective.

Even though, in most cases, neoliberalism is not attributed by the scholars a merely economic meaning, the way they explain the spatial processes and practices based on the concepts and phenomena that are so laden with economic meaning (e.g. global capitalist relations, neoliberal logic of urbanism) as well as the way they see the interconnection between the two often undermine the importance of non-economic aspects of space-making. This, in turn, wittingly or unwittingly leads to a reductionist understanding of the production of space as a purely economic process or at least an interpretation of it as a manifestation of complex economic processes operating at different scales without any reference to different, contextual factors.

It is possible to see such treatment, for instance, in Brenner and Schmid (2015) arguing that “planetary urbanization is the cumulative product of the earlier *longue durée* cycles of urbanization that have forged, differentiated and continually reshaped the worldwide geographies of capitalism since the mid-19th century” (p. 176). Such understanding not only equates the planetary with neoliberal capitalism but also subject production of cities to the development and movements of a global economic regime. Based on the idea that everything happens at everywhere under capitalism, scholars fail to go beyond paying lip service to the roles of other factors (e.g. historical, geographical, social, political) in making of cities. That is why Brenner and Schmid (2015) argue that:

Under capitalism, urbanization is always articulated in contextually embedded sociospatial formations, since it is precisely in relation to, and through collisions with, inherited structures of uneven spatial development that its specific patterns and pathways are forged and fought out. In this way, the abstract, universalizing processes of capitalist industrialization are materialized in historically and geographically specific urban configurations, which are in turn relentlessly transformed through the interplay of accumulation strategies, regulatory projects and sociopolitical struggles at various spatial scales (p. 175).

This is not a coincidence that similar economism is at work in the works of Scott and Storper (2015). The scholars build their definition of urbanization mainly on “urban land nexus” which, in modern society, significantly corresponds to the land-based, market-structured behaviors of firms and households (p. 8). Even though they argue that they give credit to the role of social and political variables along with economic ones in the process of urbanization in elsewhere (Storper & Scott, 2016), as Roy (2016b, p. 205) notes, their “crude” economism stays in their understanding of urban due to their “ways in which the urban economy is taken for granted as a foundational and bounded reality rather than in the Polanyian sense of a historical process through which markets are constructed and organized”. Such dominantly

economic definition of urban inevitably leads non-economic variables to fall out of attention in their studies.

Not surprisingly, such economism underpinning much of the literature on urban studies, particularly the ways neoliberalism and capitalism are engaged into the discussion, is criticized by various scholars who intend to reawaken the interest in context-specificities of cities. For instance, by arguing that “while capitalism is undeniably global, the universality of such processes is another matter”, Roy (2016b, p. 203) draws attention to the different ways capitalism is realized in changing contexts and the significance of historically embedded accompanying factors. Nevertheless, it is not enough to accept that spatial processes are temporal, conjunctural, contextual and provincial. It is also vital to notice that

(...) this conjunctural approach is not reducible to the uneven geographical urbanising imprint of globalising capitalism, modified by context; it takes seriously more than capitalist processes: those of colonialism, racialisation, gendering, etc. These are presences that mark capitalism’s edges and failures to deliver, as well as potential sources for disrupting capitalism from below (Sheppard et al., 2015).

Likewise, extending her critique beyond the global interpretations of urbanism, Ong also underscores the risks of infusing so much economism into the urban research. For her, subjugating the vitality and complexity of the city into “a singular causality (global capitalism)” means subjecting them to economic reductionism (Ong, 2011, p. 2). As Ong (2011) repeats, this not only maliciously nurtures the hierarchies invested in the nature of cities and the confinement of them into the global status quo but also conceals the ways cities can be understood as made up of more complex and disparate connections and multi-scaled forces playing on the ground.

As shown, economist perspective molded to neoliberal capitalism combined with a discourse of globalization make the most of the work in the literature on urban

research. And, as several scholars argue, this prevents the development of more comprehensive and reliable theorizations and methodological toolkits to find out the challenges and solutions about cities by obscuring the important role of non-economic factors in the production of cities as in the case of site-specific ones.

Based on two discussions presented above, in the scope of this thesis, the juxtaposition of planetary and area-specific approaches to space and urban process is extremely important in terms of the analysis of the spatial processes in Beyoğlu both from a theoretical and a methodological perspective. For the former, following those who analyze spatial condition as a product of both globally circulating and locally situated dynamics, this thesis examines the produced spatiality in Beyoğlu as a multilayered and multiscalar process which needs to be elaborated on not only through uniform urban conditions (e.g. global capitalism) which gives Beyoğlu its similarities with other urban areas but also through area-specific dynamics, imaginations and framings produced by local actors and conditions which gives Beyoğlu its peculiarities and differentiating features. Recognizing the locally situated conditions' transforming impacts on the ways the global processes are realized and experienced at the local scale, this thesis also argues that global processes, particularly capitalist economy in this scope, might also be accommodate in different forms in changing settings. For the later, in order to analyze blended implications of both global and local dynamics in the given research area, this thesis is built on a field study in Beyoğlu where spatial processes are analyzed based on the observable spatial processes and the narratives of those who experience these processes.

### 2.3 The production of space

Even though the existing studies highlight the multilayered and multiscalar nature of space and space-making and provide us with a significant theoretical lens which shows the importance of global and local dynamics in the urban processes, they do not explain what these layers, dynamics and framings might be, how they operate on the ground and by whom they are produced and transformed into praxis. In order to answer these questions, Lefebvre's theory of space (1991) where he not only challenges the taken-for-grantedness of space and theorizes it as a product but also provides us with analytical tools to explore how space is produced, through which mechanisms, for what purposes and by whom.

Traditionally, space used to be treated as a neutral backdrop of social activities and processes (Brenner, 2004). From the late 1960s onwards, however, it has been reconceptualized as "both socially constituted and socially constitutive" (Wilson, 2011: 375). No doubt, one of the pioneers of such intervention is Henri Lefebvre. In his pathbreaking work *The Production of Space* (1991), building on the premise that (social) space is a (social) product (Lefebvre, 1991: 26), Lefebvre (1991, 2009) mainly seeks to illustrate how space is continuously produced through the interplay between political, economic and social relations in everyday life for multifold purposes by various actors while producing these relations and daily practices in return.

Firstly, one of the most important contributions of Lefebvre relies in the fact that he replaces the Cartesian notion of "space-as-thing or space-as-platform" with the dialectical notion of "space-as-process" (Brenner, 2004, p.32) which finds its best manifestation in the concept of the production of space. The concept is not only imbued with the historical embeddedness of ongoing "act of producing" (Lefebvre,

1991, p.15) but also simultaneously embodies “various kinds of space and the modalities of their genesis” (Lefebvre, 1991, p.16). The historicity embedded in the concept refers to the fact that even though the produced space is reflected in the present time, the process of production itself can only be observed and examined through a retrospective analysis of the production process. For Lefebvre (1991), these two, the product and the production process are the two inseparable, co-constitutive aspects of space. Furthermore, as the production of space encapsulates diverse forms and origins of space, it also concerns with not only what kind of space is produced but also through which framings, in what processes and by whom this specific form of space is produced within a given time frame.

From that perspective that this thesis treats Beyoğlu as a spatial product which has been created through the interplay between social, economic and political relations, mentalities and processes that the district has been hosting for centuries and examines it as a place which has a certain present-time spatiality with a certain historicity of its own. As will be detailed in the coming chapters, this is deeply congruent with the fact that Beyoğlu is among the most historic places of İstanbul. Having witnessed the fall of two great empires and the birth of one nation state, Beyoğlu is a living witness of the history, a “*lieu de memoire*” (Nora, 1989) which mirrors the lived experiences of diverse populations and spatialities ever-produced and developed by varying actors in Istanbul. Thus, the historicity and process-based understanding Lefebvre suggests is not only well manifested in the long spatial production history of Beyoğlu but also signifies why the district is among the best areas where one can observe and examine different layers, actors and motives of the production of space.

Another important point is that Lefebvre's theory of production of space offers a highly systematic and open-minded theoretical toolkit to deconstruct the intermingling relationalities and processes embedded in the production of space. Lefebvre's comprehensive account of space can be best recognized in his spatial triad which refers to the perceived, conceived and lived dimensions of space (Lefebvre, 1991, p.40). In spatial terms, these respectively correspond to:

- 1 *Spatial practice*, which embraces production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation. Spatial practice ensures continuity and some degree of cohesion. In terms of social space, and of each member of a given society's relationship to that space, this cohesion implies a guaranteed level of competence and a specific level of performance
- 2 *Representations of space*, which are tied to the relations of production and to the 'order' which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to 'frontal' relations
- 3 *Representational spaces*, embodying complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life, as also to art (which may come eventually to be defined less as a code of space than as a code of representational spaces) (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 33, emphasis in original).

Through his triad, Lefebvre combines social, mental and physical spaces within his theory and shows us how space is produced through the interplay between everyday interactions and experiences of the individuals mediated through space, representations of the power predicated on the state mentality instilled on space, and the imaginary and symbols articulated by the users of space (Henri Lefebvre, 1991, 2009). In this sense, Lefebvre's triad not only suggests a multi-layered and multi-actor process for the production of space but also explains how space is produced on the ground through the transformations in different layers of space.

As this thesis argues, Lefebvre's triad is well manifested in the production of space in Beyoğlu which has been produced through overlapping and conflicting imageries and spatial interventions of diverse actors into physical, social and mental layers of space with various mentalities and modalities. As will be detailed in the

next chapters, Beyoğlu is a space produced through various flows during its history from the modernization attempts of the Ottoman Empire and the Republican's projects designed to instill modern values in space (Batuman, 2015) to the civil actors' mass politization activities, the neoliberal imageries of the right-wing Özal government in the 1980s (Tuominen, 2016: 42) and the RP's Islamist aspirations. In the scope of this thesis, the current production of space in Beyoğlu is also analyzed from a process-based perspective, accepting it as a continuation of the already existing production-process manifested in the physical, social and mental layers of space. Thus, instead of underestimating the previous production processes in Beyoğlu, this thesis analyzes the recent space-making in Beyoğlu with a focus on the changing dynamics, motives and actors involving in the process vis a vis the previous ones. Furthermore, the multilayered nature of the space-production is unfolded in the above-summarized contentious history of Beyoğlu space as different actors and factors produce different spatialities. Hence, going beyond the historical dimension of the spatial production, this thesis treats the recent production of Beyoğlu space as an attempt to transform the existing spatial codes which had already been instilled in Beyoğlu space thereby investigates the current mode of space-making as a part of this spatial contestation produced in and through space between diverse actors.

Secondly, Lefebvre's theory of space not only provides us with a set of tools to understand how space is produced and in which layers this spatial production is realized but also informs us about different actors and motives through which different framings of space come to existence. In his theory, Lefebvre (2009, p. 240-242) argues that there are mainly two modes of production which shape and transform space in collaboration with one another, namely the "Capitalist mode of

production” (CMP) and the “State mode of production” (SMP). Through these two concepts, Lefebvre (2009, p. 240) goes beyond how space is produced. Defining space not only as a social product but also as a “privileged instrument” which is strategically produced and used in the service of specific purposes of different actors, he proposes a more precise conceptualization for the production of space.

To detail, according to Lefebvre (2009, p. 240-241), space is not produced randomly; instead, it is produced for certain purposes through a certain modality characterized by the strategic partnership between the CMP which refers to the production of “capitalist space” and the SMP which refers to the production of “political space”. For Lefebvre, the CMP produces its own space in such a way that “the socialization of the productive forces, of production, of society, of the product, is accomplished” (p. 241). Yet, once a certain level is achieved in the establishment and the maintenance of capitalist relations, of capitalist space, “the socialization and the nationalization took the form of stratification, of political space” where the CMP is transformed into the SMP which functions to reproduce and manage old spaces (p. 241).

This strategic partnership has important implications for the understanding of the production of space. On the one hand, it reaffirms that space is produced in a multilayered and multiscale manner through the combined forces of global capitalism and other dynamics situated at the local level as discussed above in the global and local dynamics coalescing into one another in space-making process. On the other hand, it vividly illustrates how, in the production and management of space, the state appears as the main actor which facilitates the strategic instrumentalization of space for both capitalist and political purposes.

Indeed, despite his emphasis on the significant role of civil groups' role in space-making in his spatial triad, Lefebvre (2003) always underlines the key role of the state in the production of space. For Lefebvre, the conceived space, the representations of space, is the one which dominates others as "this modern state promotes and imposes itself as the stable centre - definitively - of (national) societies and spaces" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 23). Thus, the state, for Lefebvre, is the main locus of power:

Whether or not it is constitutional, whether or not it is disseminated through institutions and bureaucracies, power can in no wise be decoded. For power has no code. The state has control of all existing codes. It may on occasion invent new codes and impose them, but it is not itself bound by them, and can shift from one to another at will. The state manipulates codes. Power never allows itself to be confined within a single logic. Power has only strategies - and their complexity is in proportion to power's resources (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 162).

And, it assumes a god-like role through this power.

This vicious circle accounts for the ever more severe character of political authority, wherever exercised, for it gives rise to the sequence force-repression-oppression. This is the form under which state-political power becomes omnipresent: it is everywhere, but its presence varies in intensity; in some places it is diffuse, in others concentrated. In this respect it resembles divine power in religions and theologies (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 321).

Therefore, as highlighted by Kipfer (2008, p. 200), Lefebvre is convinced that "if it is true that space can no longer be treated as the passive locus of social relations, the production of space serves hegemony" of the state. To note that although the state functions as the main actor in the production of space, it works on space with the support of local national actors, its specialists (e.g. urbanists, architects and planners) and various capitalist actors (e.g. businesspeople) so that it can ensure the production of space as a means to both certain capitalist and political purposes. As Lefebvre (2009, p. 241) argues, beyond these classes, even the users of

space can contribute to the capitalist and political production of space. However, it would not be wrong to say that, in this multi-actor environment, the state as the main agent, functions to coordinate the relations and facilitate the production process through its authority and power.

When it comes to the purposes, differently from other scholars who theorize space and its production, Lefebvre also provides us with an analytical framework to understand diverse mentalities and framings which determine the ways space is produced at the grassroots level. According to Lefebvre (2009, p. 242), the state, together with other local political actors and national/international capitalists, produces and instrumentalizes space as a means to produce and reproduce “the productive forces (e.g. agglomeration economies)”, “the relations of production and of property (as space can be bought and sold)” and “surplus value (e.g. exploitation of space, organization of urban consumption and everyday life)” on the one hand and “ideology and the instruments of political power” on the other hand.

At this point, it is particularly important to mention the political function of the production of space in the understanding of Lefebvre as this thesis argues that space is produced through not only globally prevailing economic factors like capitalism but also historically and locally contingent dynamics, to be precise, certain state ideologies. According to Lefebvre, the produced space functions as “a political instrument” which is appropriated by the state in order to ensure control over places in such a way that homogeneity, hierarchy and segregation can be inserted into space and as a tool to keep class struggle under control so that class struggle fails to overthrow the abstract space, abolish the spatial domination and produce a counter-space (Lefebvre, 2009, p. 188). For him, political function of space manifests itself not only in its relation to capitalist system but also its relation

to ideology, discourse and power. To explain the role of ideology in the production of space, Lefebvre (1991) gives an example of religious ideology:

What is an ideology without a space to which it refers, a space which it describes, whose vocabulary and links it makes use of, and whose code it embodies? What would remain of a religious ideology - the Judeo-Christian one, say - if it were not based on places and their names: church, confessional, altar, sanctuary, tabernacle? What would remain of the Church if there were no churches? The Christian ideology, carrier of a recognizable if disregarded Judaism (God the Father, etc.), has created the spaces which guarantee that it endures. More generally speaking, what we call ideology only achieves consistency by intervening in social space and in its production, and by thus taking on body therein. Ideology per se might well be said to consist primarily in a discourse upon social space (p. 44).

“Representations of space have at times combined ideology and knowledge within a (social-spatial) practice” (Lefebvre, 1991, p.45). Thus, the produced space per se is not only the capitalist space but also the “space of discourse” where “this unconsidered leap from the mental to the social and back again effectively transfers the properties of space proper onto the level of discourse -and particularly onto the level of discourse upon space”. In other words, the state produces space with a certain ideology and knowledge which is embodied in social practices and reflected on the ongoing production of space. Therefore, the analysis of the production of space not only requires us to understand the “circulation and exchange of material goods” but also “the circulation and exchange of signs (language, discourse)” which are two elements of social space “distinct but not separate from” each other (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 100). Hence, it is extremely important to comprehend that, in the production of space, economic forces get woven into non-economic forces such as state ideology and discourse which are, along with economic mentality, inserted into the physical, mental, and social layers of space. Such understanding helps us not only recognize the important role of non-economic factors in the production of space but also further understand that space-making is realized in diverse contexts in different

ways due to the site-specific ideological stances reflected on different space-making processes.

Based on the above discussion, this thesis argues that the recent spatial transformation in Beyoğlu validates not only the multilayered and multidimensional character of space-making but also the central role of the state actors and their ideological aspirations and imaginations in the production of space. As will be detailed in the next sections, the transformation of Beyoğlu is characterized by the integration of not only global and local capital into the space and everyday life of the district through the commodification of land, property, entertainment and consumption but also of Islamist and neo-Ottomanist symbols into the district scape through diverse interventions of the government into the built environment and everyday life (e.g. construction of a mosque in the Taksim Square, restrictions on alcohol consumption). Thus, as argued by Lefebvre, at the local level, Beyoğlu is instrumentalized by the state as a means to not only create capital, thereby for economic purposes, but also to propagate its own ideologies, thereby for political purposes. Furthermore, even though the whole process of transformation is facilitated with the hands of different actors and the relationships between them (e.g. municipalities, private companies, investors, tourists), the central state appears as the one which facilitates the involvement of these groups into the process and allows them to operate on the ground through various means (e.g. legal regulations, media discourse).

Last but not least, everyday life has a critical role in Lefebvre's spatial thinking. Indeed, the concept of everyday life has long been invested with a hopeful meaning and an emancipatory function. Various Scholars have rightly described and analyzed everyday life as a site of spontaneity, escape from authority (Blanchot &

Hanson, 1987), encounter with diversity (Amin, 2012) and tactics that enable new forms of resistance (de Michel, 1984). Despite his belief in the revolutionary possibilities of everyday life, Lefebvre has always been skeptical about the autonomous organization of everyday life as much as that of space. For Lefebvre, while space is strategically produced, everyday life is also produced such that the produced space, filled with new symbolisms and equipped with new functions, is redrawing the borders of everyday life experienced in and through that space as well, which, in turn, shapes daily practice of people in line with the new spatial codes transmitted from the mental to the social layer (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 233).

Hence, the production of space also means the transformation of how people interact with the space they use and with each other through that space. This shows that the notion of everyday life and its production in line with that of space also affirms the methodological approach of this thesis in analyzing the production of space in Beyoğlu such that it explains why this thesis analyzes the production of space in Beyoğlu through not only the analysis of spatial planning papers, architectural changes, and the expert interviews but also the experiences and observations of those who are in physically, mentally, and socially contact with the space on daily basis.

Considering all these, from a Lefebvrian perspective, the production of space, both as a concept and as a theoretical framework, appears to encapsulate the whole process of space-making combined with the motivations behind and consequences of this process by helping understand how not only space but also everyday life is produced dialectically by both global and local forces and how this serves not only economic but also ideological purposes. In the case of Beyoğlu, that framework is used to analyze how Beyoğlu has been (re)produced through various global and local

actors and mechanisms and turned out to be a contested space between contradicting and overlapping purposes of these actors over the years; and how it has been continued to be reproduced over the last ten years by the state, its specialists and other capitalist actors not only as a means to attract capital but also as a way to keep spatial planning under control while reproducing the present power relations on the ground.

It is important to note that although Lefebvrian understanding of space and production of space provide us with a well-grounded theoretical framework to analyze the case of Beyoğlu as a showcase of production of space, it does not properly equip us with the necessary methodological tools to analyze real life cases. “To address the latent epistemological challenges of operationalizing Lefebvre’s triad”, Pierce and Martin (2015, p. 1279) comes up with a new approach called “relational place making” by juxtaposing Lefebvre’s spatial triad with their place-oriented approach of the city.

According to Pierce and Martin (2015, p. 1283), Lefebvre tries to “define how to know and examine (social) space but to posit just what, ontologically, (social) space is”. This treatment of Lefebvre, for them, leaves the dialectical relationship between space and place out of discussion which is indeed fundamental to identify and measure social space. Even though Merrifield endeavors to bring space and place into a dialectical conversation which posits space as flows and processes holding fixations in certain places, he does not provide us with an articulated way of understanding towards the phenomenological elements of this “fixity and flow” (Pierce and Martin, 2015, p. 1284). After all, for Pierce and Martin (2015), it is also not so appropriate to treat place as fixed and distinct from the production process of space as place, as space, is also contingent on individual experience thereby

characterized by not only fixations but also unstable, provisional interrelationalities.

Therefore:

Similarly, place-making is an affective experience of individuals which is co-constituted through social interaction. But these affective experiences, comprised of individuals' sensations of joy, sorrow, fear, and belonging, cannot be known through the same means that their social actions are made knowable. They are simply different kinds of real thing(s) (Pierce and Martin, 2015, p. 1289).

Departing from the limited epistemological frame of space and emphasizing the processuality and relationality embedded in place, Pierce and Martin's relational place making aims to create a both epistemologically and methodologically applicable tool to analyze the production of space in the real sense of place. To achieve this, they provide us with three categories which correspond to the elements of Lefebvre's spatial triad to be able to further analyze the relationally co-constitutive parts of place, namely physical/material (water, organic matter, asphalt roads, aluminum bicycles etc.), social (interactions and expectations about potential interactions, as understood by conscious, sentient actors), and affective (experiential and interior; they may or may not rise to the level of consciousness) (Pierce and Martin, 2015, p. 1288). For them, all these elements which are interpreted by different people with different ends and refer to "simultaneous but not absolutely congruent place-bundles" co-constitute what we call city agonistically (Pierce and Martin, 2015, p. 1291). In so doing, Pierce and Martin propose a framework which juxtaposes both human and ahuman physical, economic, political, social and experiential dynamics of space and place in a given setting to observe, analyze and measure the dialectically relating components of production of space/place.

Accordingly, in this thesis, space and place are treated as complementary parts of the production of Beyoğlu. Beyoğlu has been reproduced by not only the conflicting claims of varying human actors over space but also by the interaction

between these human actors and ahuman physical objects and processes crystallized in the places located in the district as well as through the meanings attached to that places. Thus, the production of space in Beyoğlu is not only read from the representations injected to place and the experiences of people who produce its places through their interactions but also from ahuman physical processes manifested in the buildings, roads and other material components of the production of place.

#### 2.4 Locating the theoretical framework in the case of Beyoğlu

Lastly, in order to analyze the production of space in Beyoğlu, it is important to locate the theoretical framework within the context of Turkey with a focus on which actors through which motivations produce space and how global and local processes and economic and non-economic factors which discussed at the theoretical level are situated at the real-life setting in the case of Beyoğlu.

##### 2.4.1 Introducing different actors in the production of space in Beyoğlu

Following Lefebvre's theorization of the state mode of production, this thesis takes the state as the main actor in the production of space which, in the context of Turkey, refers to the central government ruled by the AKP, the ruling party in the parliament, over the last fifteen years. However, in line with what Lefebvre (2009, p. 241) argues, this thesis also recognizes that the AKP produces space with the help of its specialists, local authorities, other capitalist actors, and sometimes even users (of space) and this is also valid for the case of Beyoğlu where from the central government to the municipality, from corporate actors to local businesses and tourists, various parties have been involved in the space-making process.

To detail, during its rule, firstly, the AKP government has taken various steps to establish a web of alliances to facilitate the administrative and operational processes of space-making on the ground. One of these steps has been the strengthening of local governments and various government institutions (Candan & Kolluoglu, 2008). One of the most emblematic examples of this, in the process has been the Mass Housing Administration of Turkey (TOKI) which has been equipped with an extraordinary power with 14 bills legislated by the government so that it can “implement urban plans, grant building permits, nationalize land and determine the price of building over slums, and all without being required to get permission from the local authorities or being subject to the control of any other specific legislations” under the direct supervision of Prime Minister’s Office (Balaban, 2009 as cited in Moudouros, 2014, p. 187). With this move, TOKI has soon become the key organ which puts the government’s urban transformation missions into practice.

Other important actors emerged in the process are municipalities. The first step to reform the local governments was set in 2004 by the AKP government. With this reform, although the discretion given to municipalities was supposed to improve decentralization and accountability, it did not achieve this goal. In 2012, the second generation reforms brought further strengthening of municipalities yet in a more centralized, top-down manner along with an increasing party dependency, diminishing citizen participation and loss of accountability (Güner & Yılmaz, 2017). Such “centralized decentralization” (Arikboğa 2013) has led to the concentration of decision-making and authority at the hands of the central government while increasing its supervision over urban processes through its close collaboration with municipalities which have become more powerful with the delegated authority of the central government.

Secondly, the party has extended public-private partnerships at both national and international scales, which has multiplied the number of actors involved in the process of space-making. At the local level, the party has established strong bonds with various Islamic capital groups which have grown to be the main building blocks of Turkish economy, particularly in the construction sector, by replacing the urban bourgeoisie over the years. Particularly facilitated by the TOKI's increasing authority, the AKP-affiliated Islamic business groups have soon become the key private actors in the urban processes (Karatepe, 2016; Sarfati, 2017). In addition to this, having opened the Turkish economy into the global capitalist actors, the party has also facilitated the integration of various international actors (e.g. foreign companies, funds) to the space-making processes mostly as investors.

Lastly, in the process, ordinary people have also become actors who have contributed to the production of space. From tourists to local people, those who experience and practice space in harmony with the imageries and framings defined by the AKP also produce it as they, in a sense, recognize and reproduce the given meanings and functions of the produced space through their spatial practices while reproducing it in the form of a state space.

As will be analyzed in the next chapters, these actors have also been present in the case of Beyoğlu. While the central government has laid the foundations for the spatial transformation in the district politically and legally, during the transformation, the Beyoğlu Municipality has functioned as the main operating agency particularly in the confiscation of the existing settlements in the Tarlabaşı Renewal Project and the application of the legal regulations regarding the alcohol and other restrictions in the İstiklal Street. In the process, TOKİ also emerged as an important actor in the transformation of Tarlabaşı as the agent which speeds up the process of displacement

by providing the displaced inhabitants with houses located in the peripheries of İstanbul. Besides, various local and foreign companies have been involved in the process of transformation in the district including the demolition and construction operations in Tarlabası and Taksim Square and opening of the shopping malls and chain stores in the place of local shops (Uysal & Korostoff, 2015). Ordinary people, particularly Arab tourists, have also contributed to the making of space in Beyoğlu by using the space configured by the state instilling their own values and cultures in the produced space while leading to the erosion of the existing ones.

#### 2.4.2 Unfolding multifold framings of the production of space in Beyoğlu

This thesis builds its claim that the production of space is a multilayered process which combines both global economic and local non-economic factors on Lefebvre's (2009, p. 242) argument that space is produced by the state as an instrument serving both economic/capitalist and political/ideological purposes. To locate this framework within the context of Turkey, I focus on how political, economic and ideological characteristics of the AKP rule are defined in the existing literature arguing that the AKP's economic and ideological orientations are also the main constitutive elements of its space-making agenda. Based on this, I argue that, in the case of Beyoğlu, the mentioned dual functioning of space characterized by the state's economic/capitalist and political/ideological purposes is crystallized in the party's neoliberal economic policies which are shaped through the country's integration into the global neoliberal market economy on the one hand and its historically and locally contingent Islamist and neo-Ottomanist agenda wrapped in a populist discourse on the other. In so doing, for the purposes of this thesis, I use the concepts of neoliberalism, Islamism and neo-

Ottomanism as the main analytical tools to examine different layers and framings of the AKP's production of space in Beyoğlu.

To begin with neoliberalism, this thesis treats neoliberal economic policies of the government as the main global factor which shapes the space and space production in Turkey. To detail, as various scholars suggest, one of the most important features of the AKP's politics and its spatial agenda is neoliberalism. In the global literature, neoliberal urbanism is defined as an entrepreneurial approach to the production of space mediated through "public-private partnership" and "speculative construction of place" (Harvey, 1989, p. 8). This entrepreneurial regime (vis a vis the managerial one) entails the emergence of competitive economies and "revanchist cities" where not only space but also social and economic relations are commodified and commercialized (MacLeod, 2002). This implies that space is reproduced and commodified under the neoliberal/entrepreneurial control of the state to upscale the urban landscape and improve the "imageability of the city" for the sake of playing a part in the interurban competition (MacLeod, 2002, p. 604). This process in turn brings about the reproduction and commodification of everyday life practices so that the way people experience the space can also accommodate and maintain the entrepreneurial image and function of the given space.

Such globalizing urban strategies are today typical to many countries and Turkey is not exception to this (Candan & Kolluoglu, 2008; Dinçer, 2011; Islam, 2010; Karaman, 2013; T. Kuyucu & Ünsal, 2010; Uzun, 2003). Indeed, Turkey first met neoliberalism in the 1980s under the leadership of Turgut Özal who was counterpart of Thatcher in the United Kingdom and Reagan in the United States, symbol names of globalization of free-market ideology (Harvey, 2005; Öniş, 2004). However, since the 2005, the major cities, Istanbul being the most emblematic, has

been witnessing even more tenacious and relentless neoliberalization process under the increasing influence of the highly-centralized state machine run by the AKP government (Lovering and Türkmen, 2011).

As this thesis argues, one of the places where these strategies of the government have been manifested is Beyoğlu. Due to the AKP government's envisioning of Istanbul as a globally competitive city (Sassen, 1991) and the concomitant imagination of Beyoğlu as a valuable asset to achieve this goal by the local and the central government, Beyoğlu has been undergoing a massive urban transformation which serves the neoliberal valorization of the district. In Beyoğlu, the process of neoliberalization entails a wide range of urban transformation strategies mobilized by the state and its national and international partners. One of the most common is the commodification and commercialization of space and everyday life, which serve the "tourism and business development purposes" (Eder and Öz, 2015, p. 285). In the district, this process has been facilitated not only through gentrification and upscaling projects as in the case of Tarlabaşı (Candan and Kolluoglu, 2008; Kuyucu and Ünsal, 2010; Smith, 1979, 1987) but also the introduction of new consumption scapes (e.g. entertainment) and a consumer profile through the influx of tourists, which embed the neoliberal profit-making strategies of the state in the very flow of everyday life as in the transformation of İstiklal Street (Eder and Öz, 2015; Zukin, 2008).

Accordingly, in this thesis, the AKP's neoliberalism is treated as one of the layers/framings which has been reflected on the Beyoğlu's production of space and examined through three main indicators which have become observable in the changing physical, social and affective components of place in the district, namely i) the commodification of space and everyday life, ii) the commercialization of land,

entertainment and consumption, and iii) the touristic appropriation of space and everyday life.

As discussed during the chapter, the production of space is a multilayered process characterized by not only global economic aspirations but also locally framed ideological orientations of the state actors. In the case of Turkey, and particularly in Beyoğlu, this implies that the AKP government produces and strategically instrumentalizes space not only for the purposes of engaging into the global economy by playing a part in the worldwide interurban competition but also for certain political ideologies which are, in the scope of this thesis, treated as daily produced, historically infused and locally practiced elements of space making (Ong, 2011; Ananya Roy, 2016b, 2016a).

When it comes to Islamism and neo-Ottomanism, this thesis takes these ideologies as the main analytical tools referring to locally situated historically contingent ideological factors impacting space-making process. To give more detail, as the reviewed literature shows, among other, one of the most important characteristics of the AKP government's politics is its Islamist neo-Ottomanist ideology. Indeed, similar to neoliberalism, neither Islamism nor -neo-Ottomanism is new to politics in Turkey. For a long time, Turkey had a state form orbited by Kemalist ideology characterized by a radical break with the Ottoman past and a new era shaped through Turkish nationalism, secularization and western modernization. Nevertheless, religious right which had just been a faction within the mainstream center-right politics prior to that year emerged as a separate movement called *Milli Görüş* (National Outlook) in 1970 under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan and started to grow into a political flow which sought to replace the western Kemalist

state model with a traditional Islamic-Ottoman state form (Rabasa and Larrabee, 2008).

Since then, despite periodical ruptures, Turkey witnessed the continuing ascendancy of Islamist and neo-Ottomanist ideologies in both political, economic and social spheres, from the rise of a new class of entrepreneurs and capitalists “who were religiously motivated, socially conservative, and carried a more positive perspective of the suppressed Ottoman history” to the increasing visibility of Islamist-Ottomanist cultural elements and values to the everyday life (Şen, 2010; Yavuz, 2016, p. 452). Although the AKP which was founded by the reformist younger followers of the Milli Görüş tradition came to power claiming to leave their Islamist and Ottomanist baggage for a more moderate religious rhetoric, EU oriented agenda and an inclusionary vision (Öniş, 2015; Rabasa & Larrabee, 2008), it did not long for the party to lose its commitments to these modernist values and reembrace its ideological roots which, since then, has continued to shape the AKP’s politics (Esen & Gumuscu, 2016; Öniş, 2015). Beyond being important linchpins in the AKP’s policies, this thesis argues that both Islamism and neo-Ottomanism appear as the main building blocks of the AKP’s strategic production and instrumentalization of space as in the case of Beyoğlu. In order to analyze these ideologies in terms of their on-the-ground spatial manifestations, however, it is crucial to understand the underlying symbolisms, meanings and functions of these ideologies.

Firstly, according to scholars, one of the most important characteristics of the AKP’s Islamist neo-Ottomanist ideology is its reliance on the critique of Kemalist ideology and its symbols which have often been associated with the idea of modernization and westernization by the government in reference to the Republican state formation period (Bilgiç, 2018; Yavuz, 2016). This trait is often combined with

the AKP's powerful populist rhetoric which the party has embraced as a justification for its governance and developed it as a strand of its Islamic neo-Ottomanist identity (Yilmaz and Bashirov, 2018). This discourse of the AKP is reflected on the claim that we are the true representatives of the people of this country, the people referring to the practicing Muslims of the country oppressed and excluded from the ruling positions by the secular Kemalist elites until the AKP rule. In so doing, "the regime divided the society into 'us' and 'them' based on the distinction between its conservative and nationalist allies and secular, leftist, Alevi, non-Muslim" segments of the society (Yilmaz & Bashirov, 2018, p. 10).

This exclusionary understanding of the AKP which is concretized in its us/them approach and the anti-elitist discourse is also manifested in the antagonism concentrated on leftist groups who produce opposition against the AKP government's policies, which often becomes visible in the depiction of the dissident groups by the government as the "enemies of the nation" (Kocamaner, 2015).

Furthermore, for various scholars, the AKP's Islamist neo-Ottomanist ideological framework is highly interconnected with its neoliberal economic vision. According to Tuğal (2009), the AKP's Islamism is not only about instilling Islamic values in the minds and everyday life practices of people but it is also produced and maintained as a discourse which pragmatically align with the government's multifold aims including the integration into global markets, boosting of the competition and neoliberalization of cities, all of which require to secularize the overall city landscape. Thus, Tuğal (2009, p. 55) defines the Islamism of the AKP as "molecular Islamization" where "(...) the emphasis further shifted to creating the proper urban infrastructure and culture that would attract investment. The overall appearance of cities was secularized, but cities also became more Islamic through the integration of

Islamic businesses, consumers, and lifestyles”. This implies that, on the one hand, the AKP’s Islamism refers to the party’s anti-secularism which is manifested in “the rise of conservatism in everyday life” and the increasing pressure over secular segments of society (Şen, 2010, p. 77). On the other hand, it emphasizes the neoliberal dimension of the AKP’s Islamist ideology where neoliberal economy is deemed compatible with piety (Batuman, 2018; Lovering & Türkmen, 2011).

Although Tuğal directs his attention to Islamism, as Çavdar (2016) argues, the AKP’s neo-Ottomanism is so deeply interconnected to its Islamist identity that they often complement each other and function as pretexts to one another, which is evident in the historical trajectory of these ideologies particularly in terms of the rise of political Islam in Turkey. Thus, in this thesis, the AKP’s Islamism and neo-Ottomanism are treated as co-constitutive elements of a single ideological framework which had been produced over the years by the right-wing politics of Turkey and has been taken over by the AKP government.

Similar to the molecular Islamism notion, the AKP’s neo-Ottomanism does not contradict its neoliberal policies. Rather, it often coincides with the way neoliberalism subsumes the discourse of multiculturalism under its economic conduct while instrumentalizes the city’s authenticity and historicity. In this reciprocal relationality, neo-Ottomanist agenda of the government not only functions as a means to negotiate conservative nationalist crowd through the Ottomanist nostalgia (Cavdar, 2016) but also serves the neoliberal policies of the government, such as in the form of tourist attraction.

As various scholars put forward, the AKP’s economic and ideological framings are not unidimensional. Rather, they all have different layers which are manifested in diverse political, economic and social gestures of the government.

Similarly, these different framings should not be considered as separate components of the AKP politics as they often intermingle, overlap and/or conflict with one another as well. As elaborated below, in Beyoğlu too, the relations between and within these different economic and ideological framings which have been reflected on the government's space-making agenda are the main elements which constitute the multilayeredness embedded in the production of space as such.

## CHAPTER 3

### OVERVIEW OF THE AKP'S ECONOMIC AND IDEOLOGICAL SPACE- MAKING

The AKP was founded in the very same year as the major 2001 crisis burst out by the reformist younger members of the RP who claimed to have changed their positions from the mainstream Islamism of *Milli Görüş* tradition to a more pro-western and democratic stance. Having taken advantage of the economic crisis and the political vacuum generated in the 1990s, the party came to power in the 2002 general elections by winning over a third of the votes and almost two-thirds of the seats in the parliament.

The party “presented itself not as an Islamist but as a conservative democratic party and successfully built a coalition that includes not only the hard-core Islamists but also various shades of conservative and nationalist voters” (Özbudun, 2014, p. 155).

(...) the Milli Görüş tradition was fundamentally authoritarian and anti-democratic; it espoused economic thinking that was becoming outdated; it was anti-European and anti-Western; and it was anti-Semitic, basing its worldview to a considerable extent on belief in a Jewish world conspiracy. The AKP then rebranded itself to rid itself of that baggage (Edelman et al., 2015, p.33).

With its moderate religious rhetoric, EU oriented agenda and an inclusionary vision (Öniş, 2015; Rabasa & Larrabee, 2008), the party was hailed by many national and international commentators as a correction to inherent authoritarian leanings of Kemalism and seen by the groups that were traditionally excluded from political decision-making processes as a remedy for the rooted political, economic and social

problems in the country (Ongur, 2016). In the face of the representational and identity crisis of the 1990s, the inclusive rhetoric of the party helped it attract a wide popular support from different segments of society, including liberals, religious conservatives, Kurds, Anatolian bourgeoisie, and even leftists (Ongur, 2016). The party's economic success was as impressive as its political commitments. The achieved economic growth combined with the party's commitment to democracy, despite its Islamic background, was applauded by both national and international commentators in the following years<sup>1</sup> which brought Turkey both political and economic popularity and prestige.

Although the first years of the AKP was in harmony with its promises, the period from the 2007 onwards has been characterized by not only the party's loss of commitment to democratization, modernization and westernization (Esen & Gumuscu, 2016; Öniş, 2015) but also its return to its ideological roots which had been produced over the years by the right wing parties in the country. Thus, similar to its predecessors, the AKP's politics has been evolved around, among others, its neoliberal economic policies and Islamist neo-Ottomanist ideology over the last years.

One of the main areas where the AKP's economic and ideological politics has revealed itself is the spatial restructuring of major cities, particularly that of Istanbul, the largest city of turkey. Over the last years, the city has been undergoing a massive spatial, economic and social transformation which is utterly visible in not only the changing landscape of the city but also the growing feeling of entrapment and different forms of exclusion experienced by the secular and marginalized inhabitants of the city. Not surprisingly, there are various parallelisms between the way the AKP

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<sup>1</sup> Retrieved 25 November 2018 from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/oct/02/turkey.eu>

design its spatial projects in Istanbul and the way it structures its style of making politics. Among others, three main themes are easily recognizable: neoliberalism, Islamism and neo-Ottomanism.

Neoliberalization of space can be argued to be the most salient feature of the AKP's politics of space. Turkey first met capitalist urban management in the 1980s which represent the neoliberal turn in Turkey under the leadership of Turgut Özal who was counterpart of Thatcher in the United Kingdom and Reagan in the United States, symbol names of globalization of free-market ideology (Harvey, 2005; Öniş, 2004). The first steps towards the production of space in Istanbul comprised of a set of legal and institutional changes, starting with the Tourism Encouragement Law of 1982. The law was intended to allocate certain areas for tourism, render them exempt from intervention of local authorities and reduce bureaucratic processes to promote private investment in the specified areas which were redesigned and decorated with high-rise buildings and business centers (Turan, 2010). This law was followed by the enactment of the Mass Housing Law in 1984 which opened the path for further involvement of central government in mass housing projects and strengthening of public-private partnership. These legislative changes were complemented with the newly emerging institutions such as Privatization Administration, Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Mass Housing Administration (Kayasü & Yetişkul, 2014).

Besides these changes which created an impetus for central government to engage in a strategic urban governance agenda, several other legal changes were made to empower local authorities. Among them, the Municipality Law of 1984 brought financial and administrative changes to local governments by introducing a two-tier system in which power over urban decision-making and resources, formerly had been under the authority and jurisdiction of ministries, devolved downwards to

mayor's office (Candan & Kolluoglu, 2008). The law also increased financial resources and enhanced political status of metropolitan municipalities. This set of changes which led to decentralization of power allowed the privatization of municipal services such as transportation, housing and natural gas and enabled Istanbul metropolitan mayor Bedrettin Dalan, belonged to the center-right Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi, ANAP in Turkish), to embark on a series of urban restructuring projects in the late 1980s. Transformation projects resulted in the relocation of industrial complexes from inner city to peripheries thereby exclusion of working-class from the city center.

Furthermore, to reserve the central government's right to intervene in the urban processes at its discretion, the Urban Planning Law was enacted in 1985. With the law, certain areas in metropolitan cities have identified as conservation and urban development zones and become direct intervention areas of central government (Kayasü & Yetişkul, 2014). All these changes which had significant implications for the urban landscape and livelihoods of city dwellers initiated not only the capitalist transformation of the city but also gave way to the implementation of authoritarian urban policies and hampered the emanation of democratic processes in urban governance in Istanbul (Elicin, 2014).

The 2000s, starting with the AKP's rise to power, have witnessed a more tenacious and relentless urban governance agenda. From 2002 to 2010, the already existing administrative structures were reinforced and the legal foundations for more systematized urban transformation movement was laid. In the period, local governments and various government institutions have been strengthened with a broad authority in decision making processes (Candan & Kolluoglu, 2008). Among these, particularly Mass Housing Administration of Turkey (TOKİ) has been

equipped with an extraordinary power with 14 bills legislated by the government so that it can “implement urban plans, grant building permits, nationalize land and determine the price of building over slums, and all without being required to get permission from the local authorities or being subject to the control of any other specific legislations” under the direct supervision of Prime Minister’s Office (Balaban, 2009 as cited in Moudouros, 2014, p. 187). With this move, TOKI has soon become the key organ which puts the government’s urban transformation mission into practice.

Furthermore, with a set of laws including the Law for the Protection of Dilapidated Historical and Cultural Real Estate Through Protection by Renewal and the 2010 European Cultural Capital Law approved in 2005 and 2007 respectively, the legal barriers for undertaking a massive, city-wide urban restructuring program have been overridden. From 2010 onwards, the imprints of globalizing neoliberalism in government’s urban planning approach have become even more pronounced. The head of TOKI declared the year of 2011 as the country’s year of urban transformation (Bayraktar, 2011a, cited in Karaman, 2013, p:715). The Urban Transformation Act for the Areas under Disaster Risk published in 2012, which has been the first and foremost step towards the strategic transformation of space to put into effect as it has provided the central and local governments with a sound justification for engaging in a full-fledged urban transformation process in Istanbul. In 2013, the Investment Support and Promotion Agency of Turkey (2013) declared the country’s short and long-term targets and plans regarding metropolitan cities as to boost land value, increase foreign capital investment, expand real estate market, enhance tourism revenues and ease doing of business.

Concomitant to these developments, Istanbul has become a gigantic

construction site in this five-year timespan. On the one hand, the government has embarked on a large-scale transformation in the city characterized by urban renewal projects aiming to build tourist attractions, luxury housing and business complexes, and shopping malls in historical districts and low-income, marginalized neighborhoods (Candan & Kolluoglu, 2008; Dinçer, 2011; Islam, 2010; Karaman, 2013; T. Kuyucu & Ünsal, 2010; Uzun, 2003). These projects which have solidified the AKP's new neoliberal urban governance characterized by local governments' entrepreneurial role and partnerships with private actors changed the cityscape of Istanbul at a considerable level. On the other hand, various mega projects have been launched by the government, including the Third Bosphorus Bridge, an artificial canal (Kanal Istanbul), a new international airport, and touristic seaports.<sup>2</sup> These larger-scale projects have not only facilitated the opening up of highly lucrative spaces into investment mostly through direct state action but also signaled the enlargement of the AKP government's neoliberal urbanism scheme from neighborhood- to city-scale transformation (T. Kuyucu & Ünsal, 2010). Due to all these, Istanbul has been reconstructed through various space-making strategies for the sake of capital accumulation.

In this process, the city has turned into not only a "growth machine" (Molotch, 1976) and a profit-making tool for the AKP government and its private partners but also a massive exclusion zone for the inhabitants. The gentrification-led commodification of space and everyday life in the restructuring areas has inevitably augmented the vulnerability of the already vulnerable urbanites of Istanbul as it has allowed the wealthy to enclose several former *gecekondu* areas which used to be populated and produced as living spaces by the urban poor. This has also marked the

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<sup>2</sup> Retrieved 8 December, 2018 from [megaprojeleristanbul.com](http://megaprojeleristanbul.com)

migration of poor and marginal bodies from city center to peripheries which appear as relatively affordable options at least for a while. Thus, the government's renewal projects which have been claimed to be intended as a means to rehabilitate inner city space have caused city dwellers to suffer not only from physical and economic displacement due to the vanishing affordable housing and local habitus (Erensi & Karaman, 2017; N. B. Sakizlioglu & Uitermark, 2014) but also fear and pressure of displacement due to the ongoing expansion of scale and scope of the transformation across the city (Lovering & Türkmen, 2011; Marcuse, 1985).

Moreover, to mask the ugly face of urban projects and create an illusionary consensus at the public level, the AKP has mobilized multifold means. On the one hand, the party created a set of discourses through partisan media outlets and municipalities. While "development as a discursive tool was liberally used as a shield against critiques" (Erensi and Karaman, 2017, p.25), pro-AKP news agencies circulated news about high earthquake risk in Istanbul<sup>3</sup> and unfettered urban decay in demolished neighborhoods such as in Sulukule and Tarlabaşı where mostly low-income Romani people and Kurds used to live (Candan & Kolluoglu, 2008). The projects were also exalted through news reports, interviews and advertisements decorated with carefully selected words such as revitalization, economic dynamism, employment, modernization, quality of life and protection of historical and cultural values.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, when such ideological means were not successful, authorities did not hesitate to silence the rule of law and use coercive means against people. Displaced neighborhood dwellers, NGOs and activists filed multiple suits against the AKP for stay of execution and organized public demonstrations yet

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<sup>3</sup> Retrieved 8 December, 2018 from <https://www.dailysabah.com/business/2017/08/18/minister-turkeys-mega-projects-resistant-to-high-magnitude-earthquakes>

<sup>4</sup> Retrieved 8 December, 2018 from <https://www.dailysabah.com/real-estate/2017/03/14/calik-gayrimenkul-builds-europes-best-urban-renewal-project-taksim-360>

authorities have preferred to ignore court decisions (Erbil, 2014) and suppressed people's voice by any means including political pressure and police force instead of forming a participatory platform (Elicin, 2014).

At the end of the day, the increasing unaffordability of basic needs like housing and exclusionary codification of public space and everyday life in the city overlapped with the preclusion of participatory mechanisms and silencing of the public voice have aggravated not only physical displacement and fear of being displaced but also the feeling of "everyday displacement" engrained in city users who have confronted with "the ongoing loss of agency, freedom and security" (Stabrowski, 2014, p. 796).

In addition to this, AKP's Islamist neo-Ottomanist ideology has also become an effective force in its space-making agenda. Regarding the Islamist wing, as discussed above, despite its claims to leave the previous rightist parties' Islamist legacy behind, the AKP has soon embraced an Islamist line which has been reflected on the government's spatial reorganization project throughout the country. The AKP's Islamist discourse on space has been mainly mobilized through the instrumentalization of Islamist architecture and the replacement of secular values by the Islamist ones in public space and everyday life, which in turn serves the reorganization of wider society under the non-participatory conduct of the AKP.

One of the most emblematic examples of the government's Islamist production of space can be found in the mushrooming mosques across the country and the AKP's mosque construction projects in symbolic areas of İstanbul (Batuman, 2013; Cavdar, 2016; Hussain, 2017; Yavuz, 2016). No doubt, mosque is not an empty signifier in the political history of Turkey. Rather, it embodies two important meanings in terms of the building's function and symbolism. On the one hand,

mosque has a religious function as a place of worship for Muslims. They are places where Muslim crowds gather to pray in harmony with each other at certain periods of the day. As mentioned above, in spatial terms, a mosque's symbolic importance can be best grasped in relation to Lefebvre's (2004) concept of "rhythmanalysis" where he examines the organization of everyday life and social relations through the interaction between time and space, energy consumption and the repetitive cycles that form the rhythm of life. Mosque is an essential element which reconfigures the rhythm of a space and thereby redefines the social relations and everyday dynamics culminated in that space. In harmony with its function, mosque has become one of the most effective instruments for the Islamist identity project of the AKP. While the number of mosques in the country rose from 78.608 to 90.000 between 2016 and 2011 showing an increase rate more than that of population, the head of Directorate of Religious Affairs explained this trend by saying that "mosques are not only praying places but also places where small children get religious education since early ages. Thus, no neighborhood in our city should leave without mosque<sup>5</sup>". This shows that the unprecedented increase in the number of mosques in a sense serves the government's imagined new Islamist identity that it desires to disseminate across the country (Batuman, 2018).

On the other hand, beyond its function, mosque has a symbolic importance as it is an architectural expression of Islam in public space. Facilitated by the visibility and encounter embedded in the public space, mosques function as bearers of certain political messages. "The minarets are our bayonets, the domes our helmets/ The mosques our barracks and the faithful our army" (Batuman, 2013, p. 1098). These

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<sup>5</sup> Retrieved May 1, 2019 from <https://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/cami-sayisindaki-artist-nufus-artist-hizini-gecti-198305.html>

verses that had cost Erdoğan a short jail time and a life-long political ban in 1998 have become a motto during the Erdoğan rule and a signifier of the AKP's political Islamist instrumentalization of religion and its symbols. The most emblematic of these is the Çamlıca Mosque which was constructed in the Çamlıca Hill located in İstanbul's Üsküdar district. The mosque in a sense serves as the most visible symbol of the AKP's Islamist identity and its injection to the cityscape.

In addition to the spatial instrumentalization of mosques, the government's legal interventions in alcohol sale and consumption has created significant consequences in terms of everyday life and space. In 2013, the government took various steps regarding the alcohol sale and consumption. The government's first moves were to increase alcohol and entertainment taxes and ban the alcohol sale between 10:00pm and 6:00am.<sup>6</sup> While alcohol sale became also forbidden in teachers' houses which were founded in 1981 to serve teachers as socialization and organization places,<sup>7</sup> in the process, advertisements and websites of alcohol brands were also banned.<sup>8</sup> In line with the government's alcohol interventions, mayor's offices in several cities completely forbade the alcohol consumption in public spaces.<sup>9</sup> Most recently, the new alcohol law was enacted to ban alcohol sale and consumption within 100 meters of mosques and educational institutions.<sup>10</sup>

With all these changes, not only spatial diversity but also population compositions have changed in various cities especially in the ones which are known

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<sup>6</sup> Retrieved March 23, 2019 from <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/turkey/10079245/Turkey-to-restrict-sale-and-advertising-of-alcohol.html>

<sup>7</sup> Retrieved May 1, 2019 from <https://www.haberturk.com/polemik/haber/882368-ogretmenevlerinde-ickili-dugun-devri-bitiyor>

<sup>8</sup> Retrieved May 1, 2019 from <https://www.haberturk.com/ekonomi/teknoloji/haber/851950-icki-markalarina-net-kesik>

<sup>9</sup> Retrieved May 1, 2019 from <https://www.haberturk.com/yasam/haber/827320-ispartada-sokakta-alkol-icilmeyecek>

<sup>10</sup> Retrieved March 23, 2019 from <https://www.politico.eu/article/erdogan-beer-home-brew-hits-the-bottle/>

as the main tourism arteries of Turkey such as İstanbul and Antalya. One reason for this has been the fact that most of the people who pursue secular lifestyles have stopped drinking alcohol outside due to both rising prices and growing anti-alcohol discourse on the street. Another reason which paralleled to this is that businesses which cater those who drink alcohol have faced with serious economic hardships due to the decreasing customer base, which led some of them to shut down at the end of the day. All these have resulted in significant changes in the number of places with alcohol and people who use such places. Thus, the regulations also functioned as an intimidation on the side of seculars and thus sparked debates on the increasing influence of the AKP's Islamist tendencies in public space and everyday life in Turkey.

Lastly, the AKP government's attempts to create a new Islamic culture and intellectuality as well as new forms of socialization has also affected the spatial configuration of cities and the everyday life habits of city users. One of the best spatial manifestation of this is the growing number of lodge-kind-of culture and conversation houses opened by local governments. These places which mostly serve as meeting points for Muslim intellectuals and ordinary people to discuss Islamic, cultural and intellectual issues in daily or weekly seminars not only redefines the intellectual production in urban setting but also shows the AKP's aim to reappropriate secular art and culture realm in the city from an Islamist perspective. Similarly, the government's nation houses where people can read books and socialize with one another while eating cake and drinking tea for free can also be interpreted as the government's move towards the reproduction of socialization, encounter and everyday life through creating new spaces as alternative to streets and other socialization places which embody and facilitate interaction of people with each

other and with space.

In its urban agenda, the AKP government has also benefited from the symbolic meaning of neo-Ottomanist tradition which has always been an important element of its Islamist ideology. The neo-Ottomanist discourse has been instrumentalized by the government mainly in two ways. The first one concerns the party's search for reviving the Ottoman legacy, greatness and glory in its rule and making its power visible in the eyes of people through the presentation of powerful images of Ottoman past in everyday life spaces. In the AKP's political use of neo-Ottomanism, architecture appears as an important tool which is mainly constituted by the "incompetent and senseless imitations of occidental aesthetics or simple eclectic revivalist experiments" (Çeler, 2018, p. 17) and characterized by the totalization of "the past into a single image of the Ottoman" (p. 19).

Neo-Ottomanist understanding of the AKP has been best manifested in the architectural instrumentalization of mosques. In addition to its Islamic symbolism as mentioned above, mosque is also a significant symbol in terms of its political role in the Ottomanist heritage such that sultans had famous architectures build mosques on their names to celebrate their victories and create a lasting legacy for their rules<sup>11</sup>. Indeed, mosque has always been an important signifier of power and authority in the right-wing politics in Turkey. The AKP which started a mosque movement all around the country by building Ottoman-style mosques designed not only as praying places but also as an art and culture centers and socialization areas in several corners of cities continued this tradition in a more relentless manner. From the construction of new Ottoman style Presidential Palace in the capital city Ankara to traditional sultan mosque in Çamlıca built on behalf of Erdoğan, from Ottoman style decoration

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<sup>11</sup> Retrieved April 23, 2019 from <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-turkey-mosque/in-istanbul-a-mosque-fit-for-a-sultan-idUSLNE8AS01320121129>

of metro stations to the building of spectacular mosques in symbolic places such as Taksim Square, the AKP government instilled its Ottomanist identity in space and everyday life.

As discussed, the most emblematic example of this is the Çamlıca Mosque which was constructed in the Çamlıca Hill located in İstanbul's Üsküdar district. While the mosque which can be observable from various locations of İstanbul due to its high, mountain-like position has been interpreted by various commentators as a move which symbolizes Erdoğan's desire to "leave his own mark on the cityscape" of İstanbul,<sup>12</sup> it has also become an important example of the AKP's neo-Ottomanist power politics spatialized in the city.<sup>13</sup> Another important example of the AKP's strategic mosque construction is the one that has been built in Beyoğlu's Taksim Square, a well-known place for its embodiment of leftist mass politics and secular identity and lifestyles, which will be discussed later in detail. Beyond being central occasions for Muslim communities to gather for worship, therefore, these mosques also function as the AKP's way of glorifying the Ottoman past not only to cement and justify its power and authority in the public eyes but also to "interact with citizens' historical sensitivities and political values" for the sake of electoral success (Bakiner, 2013, p. 692).

In addition to the mosque, another important example is the Presidential Palace in Ankara. The palace was built as a residential complex for Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on more than 150,000 sq m (1.6m sq ft) of land in the place of historical Atatürk Forest Farm which had declared as "natural and historical protected area" in Ankara. The palace, also known as White Palace (Ak Saray in Turkish) costed nearly

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<sup>12</sup> Retrieved April 23, 2019 from <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-turkey-mosque/in-istanbul-a-mosque-fit-for-a-sultan-idUSLNE8AS01320121129>

<sup>13</sup> Retrieved April 23, 2019 from <https://www.dailysabah.com/istanbul/2019/02/20/turkeys-biggest-mosque-complex-counts-down-to-opening>

1,5 billion Turkish liras.<sup>14</sup> Erdoğan introduced the palace with the following words:

Our aim, just like our ancestors, is to leave a lasting work of art in our country. Regarding the project, I told what kind of building we wanted. That was this: There must be Seljukian architecture which we see in Ankara in the exterior façade of the building. There must be that spaciousness we see in the Ottoman-style rooms with a distance between the ground and the ceiling. In terms of equipment, it must be a smart building where modern technology is used. Thanks to friends, they did good job.<sup>15</sup>

As Erdoğan's words show, the building designed with an Ottoman-Seljukian architectural features also signifies the AKP government's embodiment of this historical past as well as the power symbolized by this history. In that sense, the palace serves the AKP's revival of Ottoman legacy in its own rule by claiming the spatial symbols of the Empire and making it visible by making them parts of the everyday built environment.

It is important to note that the AKP's incorporation with the ideologies has always been a multi-folded project like in the party's political and economic strategies discussed above. On the one hand, based on the idea that "market inequalities and the accumulation of private wealth are deemed to be compatible with piety, as well as being essential to 'economic growth'" (Lovering & Türkmen, 2011), the AKP has used its Islamist and neo-Ottomanist ideologies as tools to strengthen its political and economic power through space. One example for this might be the mounting power of Islamic capital in banking sector and various other activities, prominently the construction sector, in parallel to that of the AKP and the AKP's strengthening patronage relations with Islamic bourgeoisie.

Another example of the AKP's instrumentalization of Islamic and neo-Ottomanist ideologies through space for the sake of economic growth has been the

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<sup>14</sup> Retrieved April 23, 2019 from <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-europe-29932148/erdogan-presidential-palace-in-60-seconds>

<sup>15</sup> Retrieved April 23, 2019 from <http://www.diken.com.tr/9-soruda-ak-saray-2/>

marketization of Ottoman-Islamic heritage as a touristic product. As Öncü (2007) suggests, “transformations of metropolitan space and urban culture are currently driven by the deliberate creation of cultural-historical packages and marketable pastiches that offer 'entertainment value’”. In the case of Istanbul, with various national and international projects and advertisements, the city has been promoted by the AKP as a city of history and culture in the international markets to attract tourists and foreign capital (Bozkuş, 2013; Moudouros, 2014). The rising interest particularly in the Ottoman nostalgia presented to tourists in the city’s historical landscape has in turn evoked the investors to expand the marketability of the neo-Ottomanism. The discovery of the exchange value of such exoticism has resulted in not only an increase in “spectacles and events celebrating Istanbul's unique historical heritage and cultural attractions” (Öncü, 2007) but also mushrooming of highly expensive five-star hotels, fancy restaurants and coffee shops across the city, which contributes to the further exclusion of the city users from the public spaces and everyday life in the city.

At this point, one more issue needs to be emphasized. As mentioned above, the AKP’s Islamist-neo-Ottomanist project poses a considerable threat to not only secular life styles but also entertainment and tourism sectors particularly in Istanbul<sup>16</sup> where night life is an important source of income and in cities like Antalya which is known as the capital of tourism in Turkey. Given the contradiction between the AKP’s Islamization and neo-Ottomanization project deemed not to harm the party’s neoliberal capitalist programme and the adverse impacts of this project on the most income generating and tourist attracting sectors, it becomes even more critical to understand the role of the brand-new tourism current of the AKP characterized by

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<sup>16</sup> Retrieved 9 December, 2018 from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/may/31/turkey-alcohol-laws-istanbul-nightlife>

not only the abovementioned commodification of Islamic/Ottoman past but also the party's changing strategy to lure Arab tourists rather than Europeans. The AKP's campaign to attract Arab tourists which started with the party's aim to compensate the tourism downturn after the terrorist attacks in 2016 continued with the party's deliberate efforts culminated in the city in the form of rapid increase in Ottoman-Arabic decorated nargile cafes and restaurants,<sup>17</sup> five-star hotels, luxury shopping venues and halal holiday facilities. This turn in the AKP's tourism investments shows a more general trend in the party's political, economic and social conduct signifying how the party recalibrates its neoliberal economic strategy in harmony with its ideologically guided social transformation project to impose certain values to society without wrecking the economic trajectory.

Such framework based on the amalgamation of economic and ideological agendas of the government has also manifested itself in the government's aim to reorganize society and everyday life in harmony with the party's Islamist and neo-Ottomanist vision "to the extent that the economic relations allow" (Batuman, 2013). During its rule, the government has made several interventions into the most private spheres of life to shape the societal codes in tandem with a conservative neo-Ottomanist life style. Such policy of the party at the social level has been reinforced by the promotion of Islamic order and Ottoman values at the spatial level. While launching a large-scale mosque construction movement across the country including the small mosques becoming compulsory in theatre and opera houses and university campuses and the building of big mosques in the well-known secular districts of Istanbul, the AKP has also promoted a form of urban transformation characterized by "*Ottoman mahalle* (neighborhood in English) [which] is mobilized in the media to

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<sup>17</sup> Retrieved 10 December, 2018 from <https://www.ft.com/content/21c0f6d0-864b-11e7-8bb1-5ba57d47eff7>

depict the community life of honest citizens, which would again populate the mosques in the area” (as cited in Cavuşoğlu and Strutz, 2014, p. 139).<sup>18</sup> All this coupled with a set of regulations such as the restrictions on sale, acquisition of license, advertising and public consumption of alcohol<sup>19</sup> and the pious government officials and ordinary people’s growing outrage over secular strands of society (e.g. attacks on art gallery visitors drinking alcoholic beverages,<sup>20</sup> critiques for those celebrating new year)<sup>21</sup> has solidified the AKP’s pressure on everyday spaces and life styles of secular stands.

All in all, neoliberalism and Islamist neo-Ottomanist ideology are among the main features of not only the AKP’s politics but also its space-making agenda. The AKP’s economic ideological agenda is crystalized in various symbolic gestures from tourism boosting strategies of the government to the increasing number of mosques in the country. As mentioned, this agenda which has been realized through the strategic instrumentalization of space not only transforms the physical qualities of places but also has significant influences on the society whose members are socially and emotionally affected by the spatial changes through their everyday life practices. The way this agenda is applied to real life setting also draws attention to the intermingling relations between the economic and ideological framings of the AKP and different ways they interact with each other. In this sense, the case of Beyoğlu

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<sup>18</sup> The online sources for this citation are unreachable through internet as the news agency has been shut down in the scope of the operations against the Gülen Movement. For the links to the sources, [http://www.zaman.com.tr/cuma\\_iste-eski-istanbul-dedirten-sokaklar\\_1072105.html](http://www.zaman.com.tr/cuma_iste-eski-istanbul-dedirten-sokaklar_1072105.html); [http://www.zaman.com.tr/mehmet-niyazi/suleymaniyе-bos-kalmasin\\_2005539.html](http://www.zaman.com.tr/mehmet-niyazi/suleymaniyе-bos-kalmasin_2005539.html)

<sup>19</sup> Retrieved 9 December, 2018 from <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/turkey/10079245/Turkey-to-restrict-sale-and-advertising-of-alcohol.html>

<sup>20</sup> Retrieved 10 December, 2018 from <https://bianet.org/english/society/179251-attack-on-gallery-opening-in-toplane-again>

<sup>21</sup> Retrieved 10 December, 2018 from [https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2017/01/03/secular-citizens-of-turkey-have-never-felt-so-alone/?utm\\_term=.f9c41d144403](https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2017/01/03/secular-citizens-of-turkey-have-never-felt-so-alone/?utm_term=.f9c41d144403)

which will be analyzed later in detail provides a closer look at these framings, their on-the-ground manifestations and the relationalities between them.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONTENTIOUS HISTORY OF SPACE-MAKING AND THE AKP'S URBAN TRANSFORMATION PROJECTS IN BEYOĞLU

In this chapter, I focus on the questions of why Beyoğlu matters and what makes Beyoğlu a special place and a unique showcase for production of space by shedding light on the district's history and political contestations which have been ever produced by both civil groups and political actors who aspire to put their conflicting and overlapping imaginaries into reality by transforming the space of Beyoğlu.

According to Lefebvre, space has always been a product. What changes is who/what produces it and the ways it is produced. In that sense, Beyoğlu is a space which has been produced through the interplay between locally shaped social, economic and political relations, mentalities and processes that the district has been hosting for centuries. Thus, I first briefly look at the history of Beyoğlu to introduce the overall story of the district. In the second section, I focus on the contentious history of space making in Beyoğlu to unfold the different manifestations of the space-making in the district by various actors and mechanisms coalescing into space and everyday life. Based on the analysis, I argue that, during its history, Beyoğlu has been produced through different representations of varying state actors, that of Republicans being the most dominant and influential since the 2000s. It is important to note that, in this process, with the interventions of civil groups, perceived and lived components of Beyoğlu have achieved to subvert the top-down symbols of space and reproduce it, which gave Beyoğlu its unique character. This also explains

why Beyoğlu has always been a site for political contention where varying political groups seek to leave their marks.

After examining Beyoğlu's main features and the reasons for its being a strategic place for changing political actors throughout the years, I move onto the analysis of the AKP's spatial project in Beyoğlu with attention to three main sites in the district, namely, Tarlabaşı neighborhood, İstiklal Street and Taksim Square where the government has embarked on large-scale urban transformation through diverse spatial projects, each of which aims to change the political, economic and social texture of Beyoğlu in line with the AKP's economic and ideological imageries. The analysis is based on both the media and academic coverages of the AKP's projects in the mentioned sites and the interviews of Beyoğlu residents, business keepers and experts to not only understand the ways the government transforms the space in Beyoğlu but also how these transformative actions are manifested in everyday lives of people. Demonstrating both the macro political aspirations of the government lying behind its urban projects and their micro consequences at the local level, this chapter shows how the AKP government produces and instrumentalizes space to reinforce its economic and ideological purposes which have been evolved around the party's neoliberal, Islamist and neo-Ottomanist ideas.

#### 4.1 A brief history: diversity, conviviality and everyday life in Beyoğlu

*If space is produced, if there is a productive process,  
then we are dealing with history  
(Lefebvre, 1991, p.46)*

Beyoğlu is one of the most distinctive residential and recreational areas of the historical part of Istanbul, mostly known as the area stretching along

the Haliç (Golden Horn) and Boğaz (Bosporus) and centered around İstiklal Street (also known as Grand Rue de Pera) from Taksim Square to Galata (also known as Pera or Tünel) (Ergun, 2004), as shown in Figure 1 below. Bearing witness to fall of two great empires and the birth of one nation state, as well as serving as a center of cultural, commercial and social life in Istanbul for centuries, Beyoğlu is a living witness of the history, a “*lieu de memoire*” (Nora, 1989) that mirrors the lived experiences of diverse populations and spatialities ever-produced in İstanbul.



Figure 1. Historical map of Beyoğlu<sup>22</sup>

Beyoğlu has a long history that can be traced back to the Greek Antiquity (Batur, 2001). During the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the area, especially Galata and its vicinity, had been used by trading colonies, particularly the Venetians and the Genovese, with special privileges from the Byzantine Empire (Batur, 2001). In these years, thanks to the harbor and large number of merchants from different parts of the world, Beyoğlu grew into a strategic center for commerce (Özakın, 2011). Furthermore, the strong Italian presence combined with vigorous mercantile relations

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<sup>22</sup> Retrieved 9 December, 2018 from <https://bizansconstantin.wordpress.com/2013/01/29/pera-haritalari/>

and socio-spatial life developed around these relations turned Beyoğlu into a vibrant commercial place resembling a Mediterranean city (Batur, 2001; Mansel, 2011). Beyoğlu had always been a “multinational microcosm” (Mansel, 2011). The ottoman conquest did not change this trajectory so much despite the moving of the Muslim community and the outflow of Islamic identity into the area by the Empire (Eldem, 1992). As David Porter (Porter, 1835, p. 106), a 19<sup>th</sup> century European traveler, observed, “Pera inhabited by people from nearly all the nations of the earth; and as many different languages are spoken, as there are different nations existing in it. It is the modern Babel, without its stateliness and splendor”. Thanks to this diversity, Beyoğlu whose population composed of Muslim and Non-Muslim communities including Levantines, Armenians, Greeks and Jews along with Russians, Bulgarians, Circassians and other Western Europeans continued to be a place where people lived side by side in peace (Mansel, 2011; Tekin & Akgün Gültekin, 2017).

Under the Ottoman rule, Beyoğlu burgeoned into a more strategic space with a set of economic, social and spatial changes. The 19<sup>th</sup> century was the turning point in terms of the increasing interaction between Ottoman and Western cultures (Bayram, 2016). As a result, by the middle of the century, Beyoğlu became a focal point for diplomatic circles with the establishment of embassies and diplomatic mansions in Pera (Özakın, 2011; Porter, 1835). As Galata had been enlarging as a mercantile zone thanks to the commercial capitulations given to the Western traders, Pera started hosting more and more restaurants and hotels while İstiklal Street became a major hub for shopping and entertainment with its shopping stores, dancing halls and beer houses (Ciritci, 2019; Freitag, 2014; Tekin & Akgün Gültekin, 2017). The economic and social transformations not only had significant

ramifications in quotidian everyday life practices of Beyoğlu inhabitants but also gave rise to important changes in the spatial formation of the district which have still been observed in the Western style theatre buildings, opera houses, arcades, passages, and café shops populating the district (Bayram, 2016). All these in turn cultivated a form of modern urbanity, conviviality and cosmopolitan public sphere in Beyoğlu while making it a live witness as well as a showcase of modernization and westernization of the Ottoman Empire.

The foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, however, changed this trajectory dramatically. Declaration of Ankara as new capital city combined with the concomitant moving of embassies and diplomatic missions from Istanbul has deprived the city of its bureaucratic importance (Yıldırım, 2008) which affected Beyoğlu as well. This was followed by the moving of minorities from the district as a result of the state's anti-minority policies (Tekin & Akgün Gültekin, 2017). The language campaigns of 1930 imposing Turkish as the only public language, the Wealth Tax of 1942 levied on non-Muslims and the 6-7 September incidents of 1955 resulting in plundering of non-Muslim-owned places led to decrease in non-Muslim population while wrecking the cosmopolitan structure of Beyoğlu (A. T. Kuyucu, 2005; Sandıkcı, 2015). By the 1960s and onwards, the fleeing of merchant and artisan classes from Beyoğlu coupled with the influx of Anatolian migrants to the region further changed the economic, social and demographic texture.

While the artisan stores of İstiklal Street were replaced by local manufacturing places, abandoned settlements have become home to new migrants and other ethnically and sexually marginalized groups (e.g. Roma and Kurdish people, transsexuals, transvestites) (Sandıkcı, 2015; Tekin & Akgün Gültekin, 2017).

Even though Beyoğlu was started to be perceived as an insecure place during the 1970s and 1980s because of the adult entertainment facilities run by underground actors and drug dealing and pickpocketing incidents increasing in number (Eder & Öz, 2015; Tekin & Akgün Gültekin, 2017), it did not take long for Beyoğlu to transform itself into a hub again in line with the new demographic, economic, cultural and social morphology. On the one hand, the 1980s and 1990s saw the rise of “globalizing city” trend demanding commercialization and commodification of space.

This was manifested in Beyoğlu in the form of a set of urban transformation projects and emergence of high-end bars, fancy nightclubs and luxury hotels and restaurants in the area (Eder & Öz, 2015) which threatened the historical and inclusive texture of Beyoğlu. On the other hand, the arrival of Kurdish migrants and the existing diversity combined with the newly emerging middle-income intellectual classes and political activists started frequenting the area have helped the reinvigoration of “the former multi-cultural and multi-layered tolerant structure” of Beyoğlu (Tekin and Akgün Gültekin, 2017, p. 160)

In the face of these conflicting dynamics which shaped Beyoğlu in different ways, however, Beyoğlu preserved “its diversity and inclusive nature” while continuing to be the most important shopping and entertainment locale in İstanbul until the 2000s (Öz and Özkaracalar, 2010; Eder and Öz, 2015, p. 293). With its wide range of entertainment locales from türkü bars (places with folk music) and jazz clubs to bars and cafes with alternative Kurdish music, Beyoğlu has managed to mediate cultural vernacular and entertainment habits of diverse groups while enduring the İstanbul-wide commodification of the entertainment sector (Eder & Öz, 2015). In the process, it has also become an emblematic space for

political activism and transgression of gendered character of public space (Rief, 2009, p. 52). This diversity symbolized by Beyoğlu has opened a room for various subcultures to gain visibility in the public sphere including that of Kurdish people and LGBTI+ groups (Çetin, 2016).

Furthermore, with its historical shopping venues characterized by arcades, passages, khans and small boutiques as well as vintage and second-hand shops (Özkan, 2008), Beyoğlu has become an exceptional shopping center. Neoliberalization process experienced in the 1980s did not leave consumption scape of the district untouched yet, similarly to the entertainment sector, İstiklal Street managed to resist the commodification of space and daily life vis a vis other districts which turned into high-end consumption locales not only because the consumption patterns in Beyoğlu have been dominated by counter-cultural and anti-corporatist views and lifestyles of young, educated consumers of the district (Sözen, 2010) but also because it has never stopped serving the needs of the lower classes with its small shops, bazaars and low-priced eating places (Aras, 2013). All in all, despite political, socio-economic and spatial transformations, with its vibrant night- and day-time, Beyoğlu continued to exist as a space of encounter and freedom, a space where people from different segments of society could make room for their subcultures, entertainment and shopping habits until the 2000s.

#### 4.2 Claiming space, display of power and political contestation in Beyoğlu

*(...) we should have to look at history itself in a new light. We should have to study not only the history of space, but also the history of representations, along with that of their relationships - with each other, with practice, and with ideology (Lefebvre, 1991, p.42)*

As Lefebvre argues, space is composed of co-functioning layers that produce it (1991). It is produced through the juxtaposition of social and political actions of

ordinary people and political actors, their overlapping and conflicting claims and contestations over space. In that sense, on the one hand, space acts as a living platform for escaping from authority, appearance, encounter, politization and resistance for ordinary people to the point where even the most mundane everyday activities might be turned into political actions and generate new meanings and symbols out of spatial practices of people (Amin, 2012; Blanchot & Hanson, 1987; de Michel, 1984; Harvey, 2000, 2012; Henri Lefebvre, 1991). On the other hand, this very same representational function is valid for power groups as they also aspire to transform the physical, social and mental elements of space in order to make their own goals achieved and their powers visible in the public eye. Moreover, the above-mentioned lived nature of space along with its potential to get political embedded in everyday lives and mundane spatial practices of people is exactly what makes “the intervention of state power in its (re)production” inevitable (Batuman, 2015, p. 3).

With its historically loaded texture, Beyoğlu has been a symbolic space for displaying power and political contestation between different groups since the Ottoman era. Even though it was preserved as a multicultural hub for a long time, the area also witnessed the Empire’s Turkification and Islamization strategies to control the European/Christian identity of Beyoğlu (Eldem, 1992; Özgüleş, 2017). According to Eldem (1992), the rising number of mosques and other buildings (e.g. bathhouses, fountains) which could be associated with Muslim identity and lifestyle together with the decreasing number of churches and the expansion of Muslim settlements to the close vicinity of Beyoğlu’s non-Muslim residents could be accepted as the main indicators of the Empire’s Ottomanization efforts in Beyoğlu during the 15th and 16th centuries.

The Empire's technological and economic backwardness since the 17th century and the concomitant political and social reforms deemed necessary for catching up with the Western world, however, changed the Ottoman's relationship to the Europeans. Until the foundation of Republic, Beyoğlu remained as a strategic site for the Empire yet this time to implement its westernization and modernization project and became "the locomotive of urban modernization" (Topal, 2016, p. 6). The process of reconfiguration found its best spatial manifestation in the proliferation of embassy buildings, western-style entertainment venues, buildings such as museums and banks which were counted as symbols of a modern city (Ortaylı, 2012; Tökmeçi, 2015; Topal, 2016). Among all, the construction of Taksim Artillery Barracks on the site of the Great Cemetery with the aim of the modernization of the Ottoman army in a European style could be seen as one of the most emblematic spatial configurations of the period as it not only symbolized "the substitution of religious with political realms" but also contributed to the emergence of Taksim Square as a center for political contestation and spatial meaning production in the coming years (Topal, 2016, p. 7).

With the foundation of the Republic, the transformation of Beyoğlu gained momentum. This time, the area was redesigned as a symbol of the closure of the Ottoman period and as a means to the Republican nation-building process (Batuman, 2015; Topal, 2016). The spatial planning of the period was mainly aimed to strip the space of its symbolism and meaning inimical to the new state's nationalist and modernist mindset. As a part of its modern nation-building agenda, the new state first transformed Taksim Square into a monumental space hailing the birth of new Republic by defining the area as the republican square, erecting the Republic

Monument in the middle of the area and declaring the square as the site for official marches and celebrations (Batuman, 2015; Gül, 2017).

Moreover, with the 1937 Prost Plan, a master plan developed by the French city planner Henri Prost, Taksim was rebuilt as a cultural and recreational zone composed of promenade routes, a public park, a stadium, a theatre, exhibition halls and an opera house (Akpınar, 2014, p. 34-35). It was also in this period that the Taksim Artillery Barracks, symbolizing the Ottoman modernization, was demolished and transformed into the Gezi Parkı and the foundations for the Atatürk Cultural Center (Atatürk Kültür Merkezi, AKM in Turkish) were laid in the Taksim Square. In a sense, these places were expected to give Beyoğlu a “pedagogical” function as they were aimed to instill certain social and culture values in people through shaping their everyday life practices (Batuman, 2015, p. 8). At the end of the day, with this new form of city planning resembling that of Paris, space in Beyoğlu was reproduced as a showcase of modern-nation-building project of the new Turkish state and became a locale for modern life style that Republicans aimed at spreading across the country (Batuman, 2015).

It is important to note that, however, as Batuman (2015, p. 6) suggests, even though each nation-building project intertwined with the notion of modernization has its own contradictions and tensions at the societal level, this process was much more problematic in the case of Beyoğlu where “the non-Muslim bourgeoisie was still present as a modern(izing) agent, and was seen as a threat to the nation-building project”. As a result, while eliminating the threat of foreigners through various anti-minority policies such as language campaigns demanding citizens to speak only Turkish and the infamous Wealth Tax levied on non-Muslims, the new state

impaired one of the most essential elements of what made Beyoğlu the main engine of modernization for centuries, namely its diversity.

The end of the first Republican Party period in 1950 brought another flow of spatial transformation to Beyoğlu. During the 1950s, the Democrat Party (Demokrat Parti, DP in Turkish) which won the 1950 general election expressed its modernist aspirations guided by a conservative liberal ideology wrapped in a populist rhetoric through a relentless demolition and rebuilding process in Beyoğlu as much as in Istanbul. In line with the wave of liberalization across the world, the DP abandoned the interventionist state policies of the Republican period and established a liberal economy (Keyder, 1979). The resulting import substitution policies, rapid industrialization, increase in rural-to-urban migration, emergence of an industrial working class and the rise in urban consumerism were translated into a full-fledged transformation in Istanbul (Aksoylu & Ate, 2014; Rodriguez & Azenha, 2014). While the modernization project of the DP was reflected in the city in the form of widening of boulevards, intersections and main arteries, cleaning of square surroundings and settlement areas, and creation of recreational areas, the party's religious conservatism and populist policies also became observable in their spatial imageries, which found its best manifestation in the conservation policies of the government towards mosques and other religious buildings (Aksoylu and Ate, 2014, p. 20).

In this process, Beyoğlu was imagined as an economic space purified from its political meaning associated with the Republican era's nation-building representations. In an attempt to eradicate the political legacy of the Taksim Square and its association with the single-party rule, the Democrat party government first ordered the moving of official parades from Taksim Square to the newly opened

Vatan Street in Fatih, a district in İstanbul known with the concentration of religious communities and their monastery kind of places (Batuman, 2015). The second important intervention which undermined the political-military memory emplaced in Beyoğlu by the Republicans was the construction of five-star hotels in the close vicinity of Taksim, most emblematically Hilton Hotel and Divan Hotel (Akpınar, 2014). These new structures opened a path for the transformation of Beyoğlu into a site for consumption and tourist attraction which would be precipitated in the following years with the growing influence of free-market economy in Turkey.

Even though the Democrats' spatial project served to erase the Republican history, their populism overlapped well with the Republican's crude nationalism. In the 6-7 September 1955, the government under the prime minister Adnan Menderes incited a pogrom targeting the minorities in Beyoğlu especially Greeks, resulting in the plundering of non-Muslim properties. The incidents forcing minorities to flee the country worsened the situation in Beyoğlu by eliminating the historically rooted cosmopolitan culture of the district which had already been endangered by the Republican's anti-minority policies in the 1940s. At the end of the 1950s, while the Democrat Party's political and economic symbols erected into the layout of Beyoğlu contested the spatio-political representations of the Republican era and produced new meanings in line with the liberal economic regime of the government, its nationalist-populist policies further stripped the district of its vibrancy and conviviality.

Although the state actors have always had an important role in the making of Beyoğlu, they have never been the only ones who shape the space. As Lefebvre (1991) argues, space is a product of not only the representations of the state but also lived experiences of ordinary people who appropriate the space through their practices and social interactions. In the case of Beyoğlu, such appropriation of space

by different social groups first occurred in the 1950s. While Taksim Square had already been used for mass rallies and celebrations by political parties, civil organizations also started performing political demonstrations in the square (Batuman, 2015). One of the first and most striking examples was the public meeting organized by the Democrat Workers' Party to protest the then-mayor's decision to forbid the pre-planned unionists' march (Çelik, 2014). Since then, Beyoğlu, particularly Taksim Square, became a stage for mass politization, while the defined use and meaning of the space started to be subverted by different groups with various lines of political ideologies in the following years (Batuman, 2015).

Among others, socialist movement which gained impetus in Turkey during the 1960s was the most significant political current of the period which would give Beyoğlu its politically symbolic meaning and deviant character, demonstrating that “mass politicization was growing beyond the control of the state” (Batuman, 2015, p. 12). In the 1960s and 1970s, Taksim was marked by two major events and their political consequences which later shaped the political identity of Beyoğlu in a greater extent. In 1969, anti-imperialist university students who marched to Taksim to protest the U.S Sixth Fleet visiting İstanbul were attacked by an anti-communist group. The violent confrontation of the two opposite groups which left two students dead and more than hundreds of them wounded in front of the police staring at the protestors without intervention went down in history as “Bloody Sunday” (Kural, 2013). The 1969 socialist riot was followed by other mass demonstrations performed in Taksim including the infamous 1977 May Day celebrations where 36 people died, hundreds were wounded and 453 people were arrested right after the chaos following the gunshots fired on the crowd of 500.000 people (İkinci, 2003). While the bloody May Day and the following ban on political demonstrations in 1978 had grave

repercussions in Turkey in terms of political freedom, they also emboldened the spatialization of mass politics in Beyoğlu. From then on, Taksim turned out to be a strategic area for grassroots mobilization as well as a battleground where the state and different non-state actors pitch against one another by occupying, re-shaping, re-framing and re-defining space.

The military coup of 1980 constituted an institutionalized state control over all political activities in the country while playing a foundational role in Turkey's transition to neoliberal economy under the leadership of Turgut Özal (Öniş, 2010). Neoliberalization of economy has been rapidly translated into spatial policies and major urban reconstruction projects in Istanbul in concord with the state's new agenda designated to transform the city into an instrument for profit-making and capital accumulation (Harvey, 1978; Brenner et al., 2012). In line with this, between 1984 and 1989 under the mayorship of Bedrettin Dalan, Beyoğlu was imagined as a global-scale tourist attraction and experienced a massive transformation through two major interventions. The first one was the opening of Tarlabaşı Boulevard in 1986 which resulted in the demolition of many historical buildings, including Levantine houses, in the area (Yersen, 2015). The project which was legitimized as a means to clean up the area from crime-related and illegal activities (e.g. prostitution, drug-dealing) has generated a "socio-spatial barrier between the impoverished Tarlabaşı and the affluent part of Beyoğlu" and deeply shaped the socio-cultural mold of the area (Sakizlioglu, 2014, p. 166; Tuominen, 2016).

The second step was the pedestrianization of İstiklal Street which led to the moving of various well-rooted small shops from the street and opening of new cultural and entertainment facilities for touristic purposes (e.g. art galleries, cinema halls, hotels, cafes and shopping facilities) (Tekin & Akgün Gültekin, 2017; Yersen,

2015). As a result of these, by the 1980s, Beyoğlu was transformed into a space attracting people not for politization but for consumption and entertainment through the reinvention of its nostalgic cosmopolitan texture, reproduction of its everyday life spaces and the introduction of a new spatio-moral morphology by “removing the undesired” from its public space (Blomley, 2004, p. 76; Maessen, 2017).

Meanwhile, similar to the 1970s’ grassroots political groups changing the meaning and function of Beyoğlu by appropriating space, the 1990s’ massive immigration flow has created a new wave of change in the area. Following the mounting armed conflict between the Turkish army and Kurdish Workers’ Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan, PKK) which resulted in the forced migration of many Kurdish people from their homelands, Tarlabası has become home to the Kurdish immigrants along with its already existing Romani population due to its low-cost housing opportunities in dilapidated buildings (Çetin, 2016; Yersen, 2015). The Kurdish migration flow was followed by the arrival of international migrants from Africa, Middle East, Balkans and the former Soviet countries seeking informal employment in Turkey and of other marginalized groups such as transvestites, sex workers and recyclers displaced from adjacent gentrifying neighborhoods to Tarlabası (B. Sakizlioglu, 2014).

Despite the concentrated poverty and the state-sponsored stigmatization in Tarlabası, it did not take long for the neighborhood to become a popular recreational and residential center for highly paid professionals, creative classes of artistic and occupational groups and university students (B. Sakizlioglu, 2014; Yersen, 2015). On the one hand, this radical population change in Tarlabası has reshaped and, in a sense, reinvented the cosmopolitan structure and enriched the socio-cultural loci of Beyoğlu and the neighborhood has become a junction point for communities with

different class, ethnic, religious, racial, national and gender features thereby a unique space for encounter and interaction with difference (Amin, 2012). On the other hand, having associated with the deviant, immoral and illicit, Tarlabası has soon turned out to be a living symbol of defying the state's role as a homogenous nation-building agency (Lefebvre, 2009) and the diversity inherent in the everyday life of Tarlabası paved the way for new forms of everyday politics, which would be materialized in the resistance against the gentrification of the neighborhood in the 2000s.

Apart from the bottom-up transformations, the 1990s also witnessed the beginning of Islamists' long march in İstanbul. In 1994, the Islamist RP won the local elections and took over most of the major cities in Turkey including İstanbul. While Recep Tayyip Erdoğan became the mayor of İstanbul, Beyoğlu started to be ruled by an overtly Islamic municipality. In this period, WP municipalities imposed an Islamic agenda by banning alcohol sale in kiosks and campaigning against brothels in several Anatolian cities (Akinci, 1999). Islamist governance of the period was also reflected in Beyoğlu through different projects among which the building of a mosque in the Taksim Square was the most symbolic one for Beyoğlu as well as the provocative one for the secularists. İstanbul and Beyoğlu were not affected so much by this process due to the wide-spread resistance and secularist interventions to the municipalities' Islamist projects including the planned construction of mosque which was abandoned in 1994 following the shutdown of the party with a National Security Council decree (Waldman & Çalışkan, 2017). Yet the WP period opened a path for the Islamists to realize their Islamic and neo-Ottomanist ambitions by reproducing space and gave a guiding spirit for its successor AKP to achieve the ongoing production of space in Beyoğlu.

Indeed, the main factor affected Beyoğlu in this period was rather the rising financial liberalization through the “market-supporting reforms” of the 1990s’ governments (Cizre-Sakallıoğlu and Yeldan, 2000, p. 483). This economic trajectory was rapidly translated into Istanbul through the escalating tourism and the branding urbanism which went hand in hand with the corporatization of touristic industries and the changing consumption patterns especially following the proliferation of credit cards (Cizre-Sakallıoğlu & Yeldan, 2000; Eder & Öz, 2015). All these helped the commodification and diversification of entertainment landscapes and industry in Istanbul and the city saw a rapid increase in the number of hotels catering to a wide range of clientele as well as the mushrooming of coffee shops, bars and night clubs frequented by “the financial elite and yuppies” (Eder and Öz, 2015, p. 292).

Considering its role in the state’s imagination as an instrument to a globalizing city since the 1980s, in the period between the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, Beyoğlu’s historical cosmopolitan texture was re-polished and its touristic potential was restored by different stakeholders. This time corporate investors were the biggest actors in the making of Beyoğlu space. Yet, despite the unprecedented boom in urban lifestyles characterized by “extravagant expenditure in nightclubs” and the proliferation of high-end consumption places across Istanbul, as Eder and Öz (2015, p. 4) puts forward, Beyoğlu preserved its diversity and inclusive nature which relatively immunized the district from the adverse impacts of commercialization and commodification of space and everyday life.

This process has been reflected on Beyoğlu in the form of proliferation and diversification of entertainment, shopping, culture and art locales instead of monopolization and homogenization of all consumption scape. As mentioned above, with its wide range of entertainment locales, for instance, from türkü bars (places

with folk music), rock and jazz bars to places with Kurdish music (Eder & Öz, 2015). Beyoğlu has managed to appeal diverse groups' entertainment habits while helping the transgression of traditional male character of public space by offering places for all genders (Rief, 2009, p. 52). This diversity crystallized in the space of Beyoğlu has also opened a room for various subcultures to gain visibility in the public space including that of Kurdish people and LGBTI+ groups (Çetin, 2016).

Furthermore, with its historical shopping venues characterized by arcades, passages, khans and small boutiques as well as vintage and second-hand shops (Özkan, 2008), Beyoğlu has also become an exceptional shopping center. Similarly to the entertainment sector, the district's shopping landscape managed to remain relatively consumer-friendly not only because the consumption patterns in Beyoğlu have been dominated by counter-cultural and anti-corporatist views and lifestyles of young, educated consumers of the district (Sözen, 2010) but also because it has never stopped serving the needs of the lower classes with its small shops, bazaars and low-priced eating places (Aras, 2013). Thanks to all these, with its vibrant night- and day-time, by the 1990s, Beyoğlu became a central place where people from different segments of society could make room for their subcultures, entertainment and shopping habits.

Lastly, the strengthening political presence of diverse groups has reinforced the unique character of Beyoğlu as well. Particularly, since the beginning of the 2000s, the district has started to become a stage for various protests, demonstrations and marches more often. From May 1<sup>st</sup> celebrations to Women's Day parades and LGBTI+ Pride marches, İstiklal Street and Taksim Square has been appropriated by groups subverting the meaning of space and politicizing the everyday life in Beyoğlu. Among all, the most influential one was the Gezi Park Movement which

started as a peaceful sit-in protest against the demolition of the Gezi Park to build a shopping mall instead. In a short time, the sit-in turned into a country-wide social movement. The reaction was not only about the transformation project in the Gezi Park but the overall space-making of the AKP government (Elicin, 2014).

Symbolized by the occupation of Taksim Square and its conversion to an alternative urban livelihood by the protestors, Gezi Park Movement became a turning point in social movement history of Turkey as well as the memories of the younger generations. With the police forces seizing control over the occupation site after the eighteen-day occupation, the movement came to an end, yet its legacy has remained in the square.

All in all, Beyoğlu has always been a symbolic site for political contestation and competition. More importantly, in the process, the ones claiming space have not only been the state actors but also the civil groups politicizing space and everyday life and challenging the status quo produced through their spatial practices wittingly or unwittingly. Being a window to the western world under the effect of its non-Muslim residents and visitors, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the district witnessed the modernization attempts of the Ottoman Empire, which can be read in the huge flamboyant arcades and European embassy buildings still standing in the Istiklal Street. With the foundation of the Republic, Beyoğlu was designed as a showcase of westernization and modernization process of the new Turkish state and became a locale for modern life style while the Taksim Square was built as a political space. The end of the single-party period in 1950, also the first Republican Party period, brought another flow of spatial transformation to Beyoğlu which was aimed at eradicating the legacy of the single-party regime. The 1970s' political groups'

reappropriated the Beyoğlu space especially the Taksim Square which turned out to be a site for mass politization subverting the representations of the state.

In the 1980s, Beyoğlu was shaped under neoliberal policies of the right-wing Özal government which embarked on urban renewal projects in the surrounding neighborhoods “to clean up Beyoğlu”. The 1990s saw not only the corporate capital’s expansion to the space and everyday life of Beyoğlu but also the production of new urbanities by the subsequent migration flows to the district, which has reinvented the cosmopolitan structure of Tarlabası while making İstiklal Street an unconventional center for entertainment, shopping and intellectual production. At the beginning of the 2000s, while Beyoğlu has been preserving its diverse populations and entertainment culture, it has also become a stage for political activism with the demonstrations and marches organized by different groups.

Today, Beyoğlu has been undergoing another space-making process characterized by the AKP’s neoliberal, Islamist and neo-Ottomanist imageries, which can be traced back to the Islamist RP’s taking over Istanbul’s municipality in the 1994. Before moving into the next chapter where the AKP’s space-making project would be analyzed in detail, in the next section, I present the AKP’s projects in Beyoğlu focusing on three main transformation areas in the district, namely Tarlabası, İstiklal Street and Taksim Square.

#### 4.3 AKP’s Beyoğlu: Beyoğlu under construction

Before moving into the analysis of the AKP’s spatial production in Beyoğlu in line with the party’s neoliberal agenda and ideological desires, in this section, I first present the AKP’s projects in Beyoğlu by also touching upon the spatial formation and everyday life in the district before the projects. Building on the interviews, I

also provide an overview of not only the physical change in space but also the sense of change experienced by the people. I analyze these processes focusing on three main transformation sites in Beyoğlu, namely Tarlabası, İstiklal Street and Taksim Square. Particularly, I focus on the gentrification process in Tarlabası which had been a spatial symbol of cosmopolitan fabric and diverse population composition in Beyoğlu, the transformation of the İstiklal Street which used to be characterized by diverse entertainment and relatively commodification-free consumption locales, and the transformation of Taksim Square which has long been a main site for grassroots political activism in Istanbul.

#### 4.3.1 Tarlabası Renewal Project

As discussed above, having hosted people from different class, ethnic, religious and gender groups, Tarlabası was a unique space characterized by diversity and living together. Characterized by extreme poverty and known as home to several marginalized and stigmatized groups including Kurdish, Romani and transvestite communities (shown in Figure 2), Tarlabası was considered as a major obstacle for not only the neoliberal urban imageries but also moral engineering of the AKP and it became one of the main targets of the government in the way to the great transformation plan in Beyoğlu.



Figure 2. An ordinary day in Tarlabası before the renewal project

Tarlabası renewal project was planned in a 20,000 square meters area located in between Bülbül, Çukur and Şehit Muhtar neighborhoods as demonstrated in Figure 3, aiming to renew 278 building within nine blocks. Despite the government’s promises regarding the preservation of the original architecture, the plan envisioned to make changes in the historical structure of the area and the residing buildings by merging the narrow plots, creating larger buildings, developing a uniform shape for both interior and exterior design and adding some extra facilities to the buildings such as parking lots (Arredondo et al., 2014, p. 154).

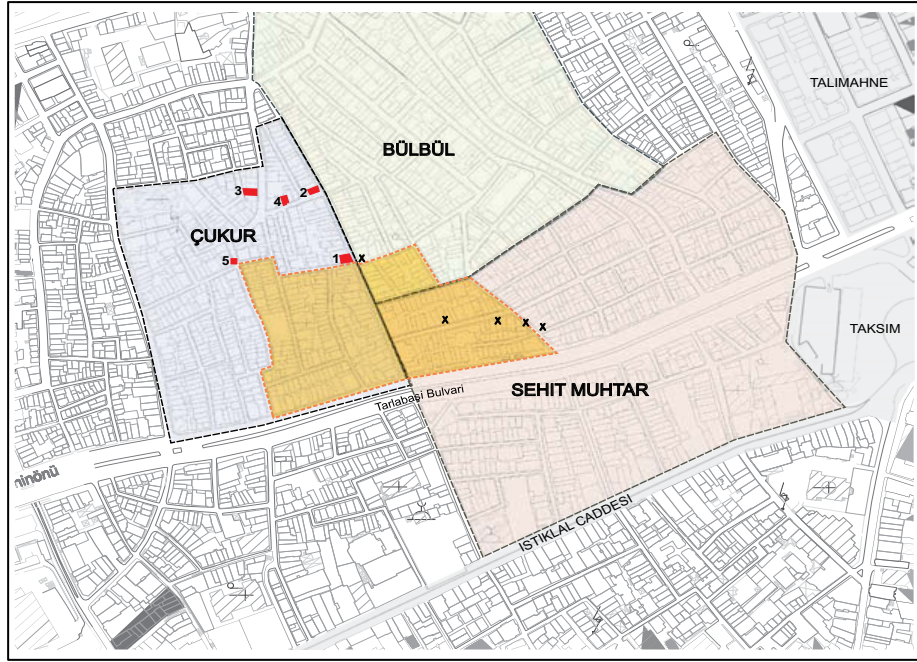


Figure 3. Tarlabası Renewal Project Area (Arredondo et al., 2014)

With the active role of the Beyoğlu Municipality and thanks to the cooperation between the central and local governments, legal barriers for the revitalization project were easily surpassed and the Law for the Protection of Dilapidated Historical and Cultural Real Estate Through Protection by Renewal and Use by Maintenance, also known as “Tarlabası law” was enacted in 2005 (B.

Sakizlioglu, 2014).<sup>23</sup> The law not only laid the legal foundations of the project but also opened a way for the demolition of 18 historical buildings where “even banging a nail into wall was forbidden”.<sup>24</sup> Based on the law, Tarlabası was first declared as “renewal site” and then included in the scope of “urgent expropriation” (Uysal & Korostoff, 2015) in the same year. In 2007, the project which suffered from lack of transparency and local participation in the decision-making processes (T. Kuyucu & Ünsal, 2010) was approved. Having designed as a public-private partnership project, it was tendered to the GAP Construction Company operating under the Çalık Holding which is known as a private partner of the municipality as well as one of the important financial supporters of the AKP government (B. Sakizlioglu, 2014; Uysal & Korostoff, 2015).

Meanwhile, the government started producing pretty successful rhetoric wrapped in a language that not only presents gecekondu neighborhoods like Tarlabası as the sole responsible agencies of irregular urbanization in the city but also stigmatizes them as the centers of crime and terror. For instance, Erdoğan Bayraktar, the chief of the Mass Housing Administration of the period legitimated gentrification by saying that:

Today, the gecekondu is one of the most important two or three problems that Turkey faces. It is well known that such things as terror, drugs, warped attitude towards the state, psychological negativity, health problems and oppositional views all come out of gecekondu zones and irregular areas (Unsal, 2013: 83; Lelandais, 2015).<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Retrieved March 21, 2019 from [https://www.mimarist.org/calisma\\_raporlari/39Donem/html/6.17.htm](https://www.mimarist.org/calisma_raporlari/39Donem/html/6.17.htm)

<sup>24</sup> Retrieved March 21, 2019 from [http://www.arkitera.com/haber/22197/civi-bile-cakilamayan-tarlabasi-nasil-yikildi\\_](http://www.arkitera.com/haber/22197/civi-bile-cakilamayan-tarlabasi-nasil-yikildi_)

<sup>25</sup> Retrieved March 21, 2019 from [http://researchturkey.org/urbanisation-under-neoliberal-conservatism-in-turkey/#\\_edn6](http://researchturkey.org/urbanisation-under-neoliberal-conservatism-in-turkey/#_edn6)

Similarly, in Tarlabası, legitimizing stigma was produced through the criminalization of residents who could easily be turned into hate figures in the public eye, building on the people's existing, historically embedded, nationalist and conservative reactions towards Kurdish people, transvestite communities and sex workers residing in the neighborhood. Thus, one of the main promises of the planned transformation project was to eradicate the illegal activities, drug and prostitution in the area. In the process, news media emerged as an important tool for the government to continue the criminalization of Tarlabası. The promises of the project such as "to transform Tarlabası into Champs-Élysées"<sup>26</sup> were used to cover the real impacts of the project on the lives of Tarlabası residents and shape the public opinion to the extent that "the injustices that inhabitants have experienced during the project have been ignored" (Can, 2018).

In 2008, the forced displacement started in Tarlabası. The Municipality and the GAP construction treated residents of the neighborhood preferentially. As Sakizlioglu (2014) explains:

Property owners are presented with three options: 1) they can receive the current value of their property; 2) they can receive 42 percent of the current floor space of their properties in the renewed area and an underground parking space; or 3) they can claim the right to buy a house at a MHA mass housing estate, which is in Kayabaşı, 35 kilometers away on the periphery of Istanbul". The renters are provided with fewer options. The formal renters (i.e., those with a formal contract) are offered the right to buy a house at the Kayabaşı mass housing estate. The informal occupants (approximately five percent of the households) and renters with no formal contract (almost 75 percent of the renters, amounting to around 55 percent of all households) are not taken into consideration at all (p. 194).

Such preferential treatment was important especially in terms of determining the fates of people living in Tarlabası since different parties were classified and treated according to degree to which the project management was willing to keep these

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<sup>26</sup> Retrieved March 21, 2019 from <http://ekonomi.haber7.com/ekonomi/haber/473843-tarlabasi-champs-elyseesye-donusecek>

groups in the area. No doubt, the property class was the most wanted group in the project yet in varying degrees. Among them, while property owners were treated as the most desired group to be kept in the area, among which the non-Muslim minority foundations were given the highest priority, commercial property owners were offered to be included in the project on the condition that they would only launch a restaurant or a café (and not a bakery or a teashop) (Sakizlioglu, 2014, p. 195). Apart from the property groups, both the poor property owners and the tenants became the undesired groups of the project and were offered different options to leave the neighborhood. One may argue that this strategy of GAP was not a random move in the process of reconciliation as the company later made more specific, singular arrangements with, for instance, non-Muslim property owners to the degree that allows some changes to be made in the project in line with the demands of the given local stakeholder. As Sakizlioglu argues (2014):

By aligning the interests of the commercial owners with the project priorities, the GAP was not only able to break the resistance of these residents but could also determine what is acceptable and what not in the commercial space of the future Tarlabası, thus determining who the new users of Tarlabası would be (p. 195).

Both the classification of the Municipality and GAP undermining the rights of those who do not have formal contracts and the options offered to the property owners created discussions in Tarlabası. Although Mayor Demircan presented the project to public as a “transformation without sufferers”,<sup>27</sup> both tenants and property owners were discontent with the situation. While the property owners did not find fair to receive “65 m<sup>2</sup> shop in return for an 8-floor business complex and 40 m<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Retrieved March 21, 2019 from <http://beyoglubuyukdonusum.com/basin/haberler-detay/Magduru-Olmayan-Donusum-Tarlabasi/42/203/0>

apartment in return for a 3-floor detached house”,<sup>28</sup> most of the tenants were anxious about becoming homeless people over a night, which was among the possibilities as Demircan stated in an interview:

If I do not want the residents to be harmed, I provide rent allowance, and we will. But there is a mechanism for this too. Otherwise, the state does not give money to ordinary people. How you came here and settled here from scratch, you will similarly continue from different place.<sup>29</sup>

As a response to such attitude of the Municipality and GAP Construction, in 2008, the Association for Solidarity with Tarlabası Property Owners and Tenants was established to defend the rights of the local people and resist the forced displacement in the project zone. Mobilizing together with the Chamber of Industry, other civil organizations and volunteers in the residents’ search for their rights, the association became one of the main actors in the process. While the lack of financial compensation and public transparency of the project resulted in a number of criticisms from various circles and various neighborhood residents were resisting to leave their properties, in 2009, the first contracts were signed between the developers and the owners (Arredondo et al., 2014).

It is important to note that such disintegrations among the residents could be understood not only with the GAP’s abovementioned classifying strategy and one-to-one bargains with different interest groups. It could also be related to the fear, hopelessness and abstention of some residents who have collective memories and confrontational histories with the state combined with the Municipality’s pressure and threat to expropriate the residents’ properties (B. Sakizlioglu, 2014). For

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<sup>28</sup> Retrieved March 21, 2019 from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/tarlabasi-nda-yenilenme-sancisi-9942311>

<sup>29</sup> Retrieved March 21, 2019 from <https://m.bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/114481-tarlabasi-nda-rantsal-kusatma>. Translated from: “Oturanların zarar görmesini istemiyorsam da kira yardımı yaparım, yapacağız da. Ama bunun mekanizması var. Devlet yoksa sıradan vatandaşa para vermez. Biz illa yer göstermek zorunda değiliz, kent büyük. Nasıl buraya sıfırdan gelip yerleştirdiysek, aynen başka bir yerde devam edeceksiniz”

instance, according to Ayşe (personal communication, June 10, 2019), this was the main reason for why some Kurdish residents stopped resisting the transformation:

As Kurds have always been afraid of the state, they did not resist so much. Some of them did not involve much saying that there is already an association (doing this for them)... The Municipality came to us and said we can expropriate this place so fast without paying you. When they said so, people got scared and had to sell their houses for nothing.<sup>30</sup>

In 2010, demolitions began in Tarlabası, which turned the neighborhood into a big construction site as shown in Figure 4. This move further ignited the resistance. In the same year, the association applied to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to stop the project implementation<sup>31</sup> and the Chamber of Architects filed a lawsuit.<sup>32</sup> Additionally, various demonstrations organized by the collectives, residents and activists to draw public attention to the unlawful demolitions in the neighborhood. Despite the decisions for the stay of execution, demolitions continued without any legal basis.<sup>33</sup> In 2011, the project kept going with the forced evictions of the residents. Although the Municipality claimed that people moved to their new homes in the promised mass housing complexes, different sources show that most of the displaced residents had to either return to their hometowns<sup>34</sup> or move to different neighborhoods with their own means (Arredondo et al., 2014).

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<sup>30</sup> Translated from: “Kürtler zaten her zaman devletten korktuğu için direnmedi, kimisi dernek var diye çok karışmadı. İşte belediye bize geldi ve dedi ki biz burayı çok hızlıca kamulaştırabiliriz, hiç para ödemedem. Öyle deyince insanlar da korktu, yok pahasına evlerini satmak zorunda kaldılar.

<sup>31</sup> Retrieved March 21, 2019 from <http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/tarlabasinin-son-umudu-unesco-1012999/>

<sup>32</sup> Retrieved March 21, 2019 from <http://www.arkitera.com/haber/29454/tarlabasi-yenileme-projeleri-yargi-karariyla-iptal-edildi>

<sup>33</sup> Retrieved March 21, 2019 from <https://bianet.org/1/138/192010-tarlabasi-ndaki-kentsel-donusumun-12-yillik-hikayesi>

<sup>34</sup> Retrieved March 21, 2019 from <https://m.bianet.org/bianet/toplum/131543-tarlabasi-ndaki-tahliyeleri-durdurun>



Figure 4. Demolitions in Tarlabası<sup>35</sup>

Moreover, the situation led some of the residents to leave the neighborhood and find a new living in another place while others had to watch their family members, friends and acquaintances leaving their homes and loved ones behind. All this process of separation and uncertainty combined with the residents' despair and precarity as well as fear from displacement for those had to wait for their turns and fear from future for those had to establish new lives from scratch somewhere else caused the neighborhood dwellers to suffer not only from physical and economic displacement due to the reasons such as vanishing affordable housing and local habitus (N. B. Sakizlioglu & Uitermark, 2014) but also fear and pressure of displacement (Lovering & Türkmen, 2011; Marcuse, 1985). This combined with the silencing of the public voice through the government's ignorance of the legal decisions and its smear campaign run on the news media deepened the feeling of

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<sup>35</sup> Retrieved March 21, 2019 from <https://emlakkulisi.com/tarlabasinda-fiili-donusum-6-yilinda/465375>

“everyday displacement” among the residents who have confronted with “the ongoing loss of agency, freedom and security” (Stabrowski, 2014).

In the aftermath of the demolitions, the silhouette of Tarlabası started to change with the establishment of construction site for the Taksim 360 project. The 500-million-dollar project was planned as a huge complex comprising residence and office areas along with exclusive cafes and restaurants, world famous brands and stores, entertainment, leisure and cultural and art centers”,<sup>36</sup> which is shown in Figure 5. The complex was designed to cater luxury demands of the customers equipped with a wide range of facilities such as valet and concierge services, indoor pools, fitness, spa, yoga and pilates centers and sauna and steam baths.<sup>37</sup>



Figure 5. Simulations of Taksim 360 Project

Even though in 2017, office and residence were put on sale for the prices ranging from 490.000 to 2 million USD,<sup>38</sup> today Tarlabası was still under construction and the project which was declared to finish in 2017 has still been continuing.<sup>39</sup> According to recycler, activist and CHP Beyoğlu council member Ali Mendillioğlu (personal communication, June 12, 2018), the most important reasons lying behind the failure of the project are the municipality’s high financial

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<sup>36</sup> Retrieved March 21, 2019 from <http://www.taksim360.com.tr/en/>

<sup>37</sup> Retrieved March 21, 2019 from <http://www.taksim360.com.tr/uploads/katalog/rezidans.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> Retrieved March 21, 2019 from <http://emlakhaber.club/taksim-360-konut-projesi-beyoglundu/>

<sup>39</sup> Retrieved March 21, 2019 from <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/turkiye/2019/02/11/fuhusla-polis-karakolu-arasinda-40-metre-var/>

expectation in the marketing of Tarlabası and the investors' reluctance to invest in Tarlabası because of the low market value and of overall Beyoğlu space. With his words:

Tarlabası is a place deeply connected to İstiklal Street. Thus, in order for middle- and high-income classes to live in Tarlabası, there needs to be a habitus for such people in İstiklal Street as well yet İstiklal, with its current state, is not a place like that. The first point is this. The second one is that the property owner municipality is trying to sell here (Tarlabası) for extremely high prices but this place is not a center of attraction for the investors and they find prices so high. Therefore, this project has yet been finished for 10 years.<sup>40</sup>

In addition to the project's own adverse impacts on Tarlabası such as loss of diversity, rising precarity, fear of displacement, fragmented families and friendships, broken neighborhood relations, and loss of everyday life, its long-time under-construction state has also influenced the neighborhood. While the situation resulted in the worsening of the physical space as the buildings have been left to deprive without any living inside, the resulting loss of social life and liveliness in the environment created foreignness and insecurity in Tarlabası. For Tarlabası resident Fatih (personal communication, June 12, 2018) who still lives in Tarlabası and gains his life by paper recycling, the neighborhood is as insecure as it has never been before. He explains the change in the neighborhood as follows:

There was no such thing as prostitution here before.<sup>41</sup> Now, everywhere is prostitution ... There is always a fight, conflict. All these have just come out. We cannot go out of houses. For example, look, now it is 8pm. Go there and

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<sup>40</sup> Translated from: "Tarlabası istiklal caddesine eklenmiş bir yerdir dolayısıyla Tarlabası'nda orta – üst gelirli bir insanın yaşayabilmesi için İstiklal Caddesi'nde onun için bir yaşam alanı olmak zorunda, bu haliyle istiklal caddesi böyle bir yaşam alanı değil. Birincisi bu, ikincisi ise, mülkiyet sahibi olan belediye burayı yatırımcılara yüksek fiyatlardan satmaya çalışıyor ama burası yatırımcılar için de bir cazibe merkezi değil çünkü yatırımcılar buradaki arsa maliyetlerini yüksek buluyorlar, bu yüzden 10 yıldır bu proje hala tamamlanamadı".

<sup>41</sup> One news source (see: <https://t24.com.tr/yazarlar/bilinmeyen/tarlabasindaki-kentsel-donusum-fuhusa-yaradi,5490>) also says that abandoned houses have been used for prostitution in Tarlabası since the demolition. Yet, here it is beneficial to make separation between sex workers used to live in Tarlabası and the newcomers Fatih talks about. For Fatih, these people were strangers to the neighborhood, and they do not know the ways things work in Tarlabası as they are not known to anybody and do not do their jobs in the way the sex workers of the neighborhood used to do.

they ask whatever you have in your pocket, do not allow you to pass through the street, take whatever you have. I have five kids. They all used to work with me. Now, I do not let them work. I do not trust. I have three grandchildren, I sent them back to hometown”. Theft, sinister... They pull either a knife or a gun. I have been here for 20 years but never seen such thing before.<sup>42</sup>

When I asked Fatih who these people are, he said he did not know the people, but they are coming from everywhere saying that “wherever there are scums come here”.<sup>43</sup>

All in all, Tarlabası renewal project announced by the municipality and GAP as “not just a restoration but a revolution”<sup>44</sup> have worsened the problems of Tarlabası while generating various other problems. Having started and continued with a series of unlawful action, the project resulted in not only the destruction of historical heritage in the neighborhood but also the displacement of thousands of Tarlabası dwellers without any compensation. For those who still lives in the project area, things have got even worse as they have been suffering from the loss of contacts with their loved ones and fear of displacement on the one hand and dealing with the deprivation, corrosion and the resulting estrangement and insecurity on the other. As shown in Figure 6, what is left in the neighborhood today is streets full of construction dirt and more deprived buildings covered by fancy photographs of the project simulations and municipality banners hailing the renewal.

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<sup>42</sup> Translated from: “Eskiden böyle fuhuş falan yoktu buralarda. Şimdi her yerde fuhuş var ... Sürekli bir kavga gürültü. Bunlar daha yeni türedi. Evden çıkamıyoruz. Mesela bak şimdi saat oldu sekiz. Git şimdi, cebinde ne var sorarlar, geçirmezler sokaktan. Ne varsa alırlar. 5 tane çocuğum var, eskiden hepsi benle çalışırlardı. Şimdi çıkartmıyorum artık onları, güvenemiyorum. 3 tane torunum var memlekete yolladım. Hırsızı, uğursuzu...Ya bıçak çekiyorlar ya silah. Ben 20 senedir buradayım, böyle bir şey görmedim”

<sup>43</sup> Translated from: “Nerede ipsiz sapsız birileri varsa buraya geliyor”.

<sup>44</sup> Retrieved March 21, 2019 from <https://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1014582-tarlabasinda-restorasyon-degil-devrim-yapiyoruz>



Figure 6. Taksim 360 Project simulation and a municipality banner covering demolished buildings in Tarlabası<sup>45</sup>

#### 4.3.2 Transformation of İstiklal Street

İstiklal Street, lying between the Pera and Taksim Square in parallel to the Tarlabası Boulevard, has always been imbued with distinctively colorful urban lifestyle and everyday life. With its Parisian arcades furnished with movie theatres, opera houses, entertainment and shopping places built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Bayram, 2016), As discussed above, İstiklal has always been among the most important entertainment and shopping locales of Istanbul (Öz & Özkarcalar, 2010). Thanks to its wide range of entertainment locales from türkü bars (places with folk music), rock and jazz clubs to bars with alternative Kurdish music (Eder & Öz, 2015), shopping venues characterized by arcades, passages, khans, bazaars, small boutiques, vintage and second-hand shops (Özkan, 2008) and eating and drinking places serving the needs of low-income groups as well (Aras, 2013), İstiklal Street has been a space enabling various subcultures and low class Istanbulites to gain visibility and make room for their subcultures, entertainment and shopping habits in the public space including that of Kurdish people and LGBTI+ groups (Çetin, 2016).

<sup>45</sup> Retrieved March 23, 2019 from <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/turkiye/2019/02/11/fuhusla-polis-karakolu-arasinda-40-metre-var/>

With its distinctive features contradicting the AKP's economic, social political city vision, İstiklal Street is another site which has been included the scope of the AKP's spatial engineering in Beyoğlu. The transformation of İstiklal Street can be traced back the removal of the 400-year-old trees from the street in 2005. While explaining the reason for the removal with an upcoming restoration in the street saying that "there is no tree in the concept of İstiklal Street", perhaps the municipality was signaling their intentions for a bigger transformation in the street.<sup>46</sup> The transformation process continued with the launching of the first Mango in the street in 2007 which has been the turning point for the rapid spatial change in the façade of İstiklal. In 2011, the first shopping mall of İstiklal, Demirören AVM, was opened by the Demirören Group which is a business conglomerate known with its close relations with the AKP and its sectoral enlargement especially in the media sector during the AKP rule.<sup>47</sup>

The AVM which officially opened still under construction was later introduced to public with the participation of famous football player Ronaldo. While the opening of an AVM in the street created various criticisms, the corruptions and illegal doings of the Group during the construction of the AVM soon went public even though most news media remained silent.<sup>48</sup> Another attention-grabbing point about the new shopping mall was that the historical building's first passing into Demirören Group was overlapped with the neoliberalization process in Turkey. Moreover, in 1980, the building was sold to the group despite its conservation status

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<sup>46</sup> Retrieved March 23, 2019 from <http://v3.arkitera.com/arsgratiaartis.php?action=displayNewsItem&ID=5392>

<sup>47</sup> Retrieved March 23, 2019 from <https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-43501280>

<sup>48</sup> Retrieved March 23, 2019 from <https://www.evrensel.net/haber/8287/hukuksuzlugun-mesrulastigiyer-demiroren-avm>

and left to decay for 15 years by the group.<sup>49</sup> As Atasoy explains in her news article:<sup>50</sup>

The historical Sin-Em Han (large commercial building) which later took the name Deveaux Buildings in 1890 after the manager of Ottoman Bank Emile Deveaux used to host Lüks Cinema (Luxury Cinema) and Saray Cinema (Palace Cinema) in the 1930s. After a fire broke out in the 1950s, the Sin-Em Han was transformed into a passage and office complex and hosted traditional Saray Muhallebicisi (Saray Pudding Shop). The whole building was bought by Demirören Group in the 1980 and remained idle after the closure of most of the shops, offices and Saray Cinema. Finally, in 2011, controversial Demirören AVM was opened.<sup>51</sup>

The process of transformation gained momentum in 2011 onwards. One of the biggest changes has been the proliferation of chain stores in the street. The news media presented the moving of world-wide brands to the street with the title of “giants walked to Beyoğlu” while announcing that “Zara and H&M are also coming to the street which has gained importance in terms of competition after the opening of Mango”.<sup>52</sup>

Meanwhile, in 2011, starting from Asmalı Mescit (a popular night-life hub in Istiklal harboring bars, pubs, restaurants and concert venues such as Bronx İstanbul, Küçük Otto, Babylon, Jolly Joker, the municipality banned outdoor seating in some of the backstreets of Istiklal<sup>53</sup> including other two well-known drinking and entertainment locales Bekar and Mis Streets. There has not been any official statement yet for some observers the main reason for this unexpected ban is an

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<sup>49</sup> Retrieved March 23, 2019 from <https://www.evrensel.net/haber/8287/hukuksuzlugun-mesrulastigi-yer-demiroren-avm>

<sup>50</sup> Retrieved March 23, 2019 from [http://www.arkitera.com/haber/5327/1890larin-deveaux-apartmanlari-ile-demiroren-avm-ayni-binalar-mi\\_](http://www.arkitera.com/haber/5327/1890larin-deveaux-apartmanlari-ile-demiroren-avm-ayni-binalar-mi_)

<sup>51</sup> Retrieved March 23, 2019 from [http://www.arkitera.com/haber/5327/1890larin-deveaux-apartmanlari-ile-demiroren-avm-ayni-binalar-mi\\_](http://www.arkitera.com/haber/5327/1890larin-deveaux-apartmanlari-ile-demiroren-avm-ayni-binalar-mi_)

<sup>52</sup> Retrieved March 23, 2019 from <https://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/753968-devler-beyogluna-cikti>

<sup>53</sup> Retrieved March 23, 2019 from <https://www.citylab.com/equity/2017/06/terrorism-and-the-de-gentrification-of-istanbul/529230/>

incident happened the day before. According to this, then-Prime minister Erdoğan had to pass through Asmalımescit in his way back from the Galata Mevlevi Lodge he visited on the occasion of the Night of Repentance (Beraat Kandili). In the way, his car got stuck in traffic and when he was passing by a bar, people drinking at the bar proposed a toast for him. Although there are also others thinking that the ban and the following operation for removing the tables and chairs were pre-planned, for various place-owners, this would not be a coincidence as they had paid the toll for using the outer space to the municipality as usual.<sup>54</sup> In the following days, the operations continued. Tables and chairs of various places were removed by the police by force while customers were sitting outside. In some cases, restaurant and café owners reported police insulting them.<sup>55</sup> Both the ban itself and the way it was implemented drew great public criticism. Selective implementation of the ban was another point criticized by business owners as it “caused unfair competition” between the businesses located in the streets where the ban is implemented and those not.<sup>56</sup>

Following the outdoor-seating ban, İstiklal Street was shaken by the increase in alcohol and entertainment taxes and the restrictions on alcohol sale<sup>57</sup> in 2013. Regulations were protested in different parts of the city including Beyoğlu. Despite the researches showing no decrease in alcohol consumption and the shop keepers’ resulting demands to relax the legal hours for alcohol sale,<sup>58</sup> the government did not make any changes in the law. On the contrary, the new alcohol law was enacted to

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<sup>54</sup> Retrieved March 23, 2019 from <https://m.bianet.org/biamag/genclik/131742-beyoglu-cok-sikiliyor>

<sup>55</sup> Retrieved March 23, 2019 from <https://m.bianet.org/bianet/insan-haklari/156069-mekan-in-sahibi-beyoglu-ndaki-polis-zabita-operasyonunu-anlatiyor>

<sup>56</sup> Retrieved March 23, 2019 from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/taksimde-masa-sandalye-yasagi-protesto-edildi-23781389>

<sup>57</sup> Retrieved March 23, 2019 from <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/turkey/10079245/Turkey-to-restrict-sale-and-advertising-of-alcohol.html>

<sup>58</sup> Retrieved March 23, 2019 from <https://tr.sputniknews.com/ekonomi/201803281032812128-esnaf-alkol-yasagi-iki-saat-erteleme-istemi/>

forbid alcohol sale and consumption within 100 meters of mosques and educational institutions<sup>59</sup> which was the real finishing touch in İstiklal Street particularly for the entertainment industry in Beyoğlu such that a newspaper announced the news with the title of “death warrant for drinking places”.<sup>60</sup> As a result, while various entertainment places such as Nupera, Babylon, Otto, Hayal Kahvesi, İndigo had to shut down or move to other districts like Kadıköy and Beşiktaş, once vibrant and colorful day- and night-time locales of İstiklal Street have turned into ghostlike empty spaces, as comparatively demonstrated in Figure 7.



Figure 7. Before (on the left) and after (on the right) the outdoor seating ban in Asmalımescit

In 2013, one of the most important historic and memory places of Beyoğlu which signifies not only the golden ages of cinema in Turkey but also the night-time entertainment clusters in İstiklal, Emek Theatre, was demolished. The process started with the closure of the Cercle d’Orient, a building complex hosted one of the oldest theatre halls Emek and famous 68-year-old İnci Pastry so that the building could be converted to an upscale shopping mall. In 2012, first İnci had to move from the building. This was followed by the demolition of Emek which had been amongst the oldest memory places in İstiklal Street with its long history dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Retrieved March 23, 2019 from <https://www.politico.eu/article/erdogan-beer-home-brew-hits-the-bottle/>

<sup>60</sup> Retrieved March 23, 2019 from <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/yazarlar/mehves-evin/ickili-mek-nlarin-olum-fermani-1709160/>

century (Günel & Çelikkan, 2019). The project which aimed to construct a shopping mall in the place of the historical building and emplace a replica of Emek Theatre on the top floor set off a tremendous reaction from different circles including famous faces from cinema industry as seen in Figure 8. Despite the protests, Emek Theatre was demolished.



Figure 8. Banners read from left to right: “Don’t sleep İstanbul, save Taksim” and “Emek is ours, İstanbul hours”. From the protests against the demolition of Emek Theatre<sup>61</sup>

After all these, the government’s plan to transform the Gezi Park located in Taksim Square into a shopping mall was the final straw that spurred a huge public outrage, yet it was not the end of the crude transformation of Beyoğlu. In the aftermath of the protests, space and everyday life in İstiklal has been transformed even faster. First, the street has been extensively securitized with the police forces watching the street 7/24 and riot-control vehicles setting up a camp in each corner of the street. Second, the Code of Obligations was changed in 2014, enabling property

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<sup>61</sup> Retrieved March 23, 2019 from <http://fotogaleri.hurriyet.com.tr/galeridetay/67659/2/20/emek-sineması-protostusunda-olaylar-cikti>

owners to terminate rental agreements of their 10- or more-year-tenants without any excuse.<sup>62</sup> This move of the government accelerated the process of handover in the street, resulting in the replacement of small shops embedded in the street's historical façade by retail stores. As a result, various places including Reboul Eczanesi (Pharmacy) opened by French pharmacist Jean Cesar Reboul and 80-year-old Kelebek Korse (corset) had to shut down or move to other districts.<sup>63</sup>

In addition to these, the country's political agenda and the following conjuncture in 2015 onwards has also affected the spatial structure and everyday life in İstiklal street. The bombing in the street on March 19, 2016 combined with other violent attacks in other strategic districts of the city including İstanbul's Vezneciler district and Atatürk Airport have soon created a crisis environment characterized by feeling of insecurity in the country for both local visitors and tourists used to frequent Beyoğlu. The failed coup of June 15, 2016 and the declared state of emergency right after the event aggravated the existing situation. The process ended up with the moving of various international stores from the district<sup>64</sup> while severely decreasing the number of tourists coming to Turkey in general and Beyoğlu in particular. All these combined with the municipality's ongoing restoration projects which attracted criticisms for the buildings lost original architectures and the landscaping project which transformed the street into a giant construction site for the last 2 years<sup>65</sup> deterred people from coming to İstiklal while put business keepers into economic hardships due to the lack of customers.

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<sup>62</sup> Retrieved March 23, 2019 from <https://m.bianet.org/bianet/toplum/174599-yargitay-dan-10-yillik-kiraci-karari>

<sup>63</sup> Retrieved March 23, 2019 from <https://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1166342-tarihi-mekanlar-bir-bir-tarih-oluyor>

<sup>64</sup> Retrieved March 23, 2019 from <https://t24.com.tr/haber/iste-son-1-yilda-istiklal-caddesinde-kapanan-dev-markalarin-listesi,353783>

<sup>65</sup> Retrieved March 23, 2019 <https://emlakkulisi.com/istiklal-caddesi-santiye-alanina-dondu/535125>

In the meantime, a new tourist profile started to emerge in Beyoğlu with the increasing number of people coming from Middle East and Gulf countries. This change in the people has transformed the landscape of the street as well. From the Arabic signboards in the shops to new restaurants, cafes and entertainment places designed to cater Arab tourists,<sup>66</sup> not only spatial structure but also use of space have been reshaped with this new wave of tourists arrived İstiklal. Nowadays, while the construction and the restoration of some of the buildings in the street has been still going on, the most common visitors of İstiklal are Arab tourists who do shopping in retail stores, eat in the restaurants serving traditional eastern cuisine to their customers and have fun in the cafes decorated with Arabic ornaments and serving nargile and tea.

#### 4.3.3 Remaking the Taksim Square

With its symbolic meaning and politically contentious history produced since the Ottoman era, Taksim Square has been the third site which has been undergoing a radical change under the AKP rule. The spatial transformation process in the square has materialized in five projects: 1) the pedestrianization of the square area with the moving of the vehicular traffic to the underground, 2) the reconstruction plan of the Ottoman Artillery Barracks in the place of Gezi Park, 3) Democracy Watches and the state of emergence after the July 15<sup>th</sup> coup attempt 4) the demolition of the AKM and 4) the building of a mosque in the form of a religious, culture and art complex.

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<sup>66</sup> Retrieved March 26, 2019 from <https://www.haberler.com/beyoglu-nda-arap-bahari-8477763-haberi/>

The first project of the government was the pedestrianization of the Taksim Square. Erdoğan announced the plan in his election speech in 2011.<sup>67</sup> Within four months, the Greater Municipality accepted the project envisioning the reorganization of the vehicular traffic with “seven different underground tunnels with ten-meter height and at least one hundred meter length, which cut through the main arteries arriving into the Square” (Batuman, 2015, p. 16) and the project was rapidly approved in 2012. The project raised a wide public opposition as it would paralyze the pedestrian access to the square and destroy trees around the square. The lack of transparency and the absence of participatory processes in the decision making were also criticized by various commentators. Despite the objections and the Chamber of Architect’s ongoing lawsuit, in the same year with the approval, first the tender process for the project<sup>68</sup> and then the construction for the pedestrianization were started. In the process, the opposition grew into Taksim Solidarity forum established with the participation of various civil society organizations and political parties.<sup>69</sup> In 2014, state council canceled the project. However, then-mayor Kadir Topbaş responded the cancellation by saying that “we do not see this as an obstacle” and the pedestrianization of the square continued without slowing down.<sup>70</sup> While the P-pedestrianization of the square was completed by the 2014, which gave the square a look like a colossal concrete mass as shown in Figure 9.

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<sup>67</sup> Retrieved March 26, 2019 from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ekonomi/taksim-meydani-tamamen-yenileniyor-trafik-yer-altina-aliniyor-17930327>

<sup>68</sup> Retrieved March 26, 2019 from <https://t24.com.tr/haber/taksimi-yayalastirma-projesinde-ihale-sureci-basladi,207351>

<sup>69</sup> Retrieved March 26, 2019 from <http://www.arkitera.com/haber/7014/taksim-icin-dayanisma>

<sup>70</sup> Retrieved March 26, 2019 from <https://bianet.org/bianet/toplum/155574-danistay-in-taksim-karari-engel-degil>



Figure 9. Pedestrianized Taksim Square on 1st of May, 2018<sup>71</sup>

The second project which Erdoğan declared during his election campaign was the reconstruction of the historical Ottoman Artillery barracks that “would serve as a shopping mall or a residential facility”<sup>72</sup> in the place of Gezi Park. In the backstage of the project, the No.2 Regional Directorate for the Conservation of Cultural Heritage decided to reject the plan on the ground that “Gezi Park was a witness to history” yet the government was taken the decision to the High Commission in Ankara which overturned the decision and gave approval to the Barracks.<sup>73</sup> The approval of the construction plan ignited a huge public opposition across the country yet despite the lack of consensus, in 2013, the demolition machines were sent to the park to uproot the trees. In the following days, the contention between the government and the people who defended the park grew into a battle with the rising police violence against the protestors keeping watch at the park. In a short time, the resistance turned into a county-wide movement against the government.

Although the resistance was broken by the police with a violent attack after eighteen days from its start, it achieved to stop the demolition. Having alarmed by

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<sup>71</sup> Retrieved March 27, 2019 <https://www.aksam.com.tr/guncel/taksim-meydani-havadan-goruntulendi-taksim-ve-meydana-cikan-yollar-bombos-kaldi/haber-731140>

<sup>72</sup> Retrieved March 27, 2019 <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ekonomi/gezi-parki-ndaki-kavganin-sebebi-avm-plani-23405125>

<sup>73</sup> Retrieved March 26, 2019 from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ekonomi/gezi-parki-ndaki-kavganin-sebebi-avm-plani-23405125>

the magnitude of the opposition, in the following days, the government closed off both Taksim Square and the park to public in the anniversaries of the Gezi Park movement and May1 celebrations and over-securitized the area by establishing police presence at every corner. Most recently, a new expert report which was demanded by the State Council to be presented to the court attested to the protection of the Gezi Park on the grounds of protecting the Republican heritage in the square and keeping the park functioning as a green space.<sup>74</sup> As a response, Erdoğan continued his insistence on constructing the Ottoman Barracks and expressed his intention on every occasion. In his last statement in January 2019, he spoke about the ongoing preparations for the original architectural design of the Barracks hailing the project with the words of “if you see the original of this artillery barracks, you say shame on you to those who demolished this place”.<sup>75</sup>

The third move of the government came about in 2016. On July 15, Turkey underwent a coup attempt which Fethullah Gülen Movement is still being seen accountable. At the coup night, upon the call of the president Erdoğan, AKP supporters took the streets to defend the country against the coup makers in company with the subsequent knells from the minarets. In the aftermath of the failed coup, Erdoğan asked his supporters not to leave the streets and continue democracy watches. In the following days, democracy watches were continued spreading across the country. In Istanbul, people were called out to gather in certain locations for the watches. Among others, one of the symbolic locations for the watches was Kısıklı where President Erdoğan’s personal residence is located. Another main spot for the gatherings was Taksim Square which was the flashpoint of the Gezi Park resistance

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<sup>74</sup> Retrieved March 27, 2019 from <http://www.diken.com.tr/bilirkisi-gezi-parki-cumhuriyet-mirasi-dedi-topcu-kislasi-yapilirsa-park-islevini-kaybeder/>

<sup>75</sup> Retrieved March 27, 2019 from <https://tr.sputniknews.com/turkiye/201901251037290535-cumhurbaskani-erdogan-topcu-kislasi/>

one year ago. During the watches, a mobile kiosk was established, a huge screen was set up to play video clips and anthems and a stage was built for the speeches in the square.<sup>76</sup> Istanbul district mayors of the AKP met with watchers in Taksim as well.<sup>77</sup> In the following years, Erdoğan continued to summon crowds to the democracy watches in the anniversaries of the failed coup with the knells at midnight.<sup>78</sup> In addition to the annual watches, from exhibitions to remembrances, the day was memorialized, and the victory of democracy was celebrated with various activities across the city. In the process, Taksim Square was used actively for the organizations. Most recently, the square hosted a 5-day 15 July commemoration ceremony<sup>79</sup> and a photograph exhibition<sup>80</sup> in 2018.

Furthermore, the state of emergency that the government declared right after the coup attempt has also gave birth to significant ramifications especially for the political character of the Taksim Square as the government illegalized almost all meetings, commemorations, marches, protests and even festivals in public spaces. Following the decision, from LGBT+ pride and Women's Day marches to May Day and Christmas Celebrations, various events which have been identified with Taksim either could not be performed or blocked by the police using force. More importantly, lifting of the state of emergency which lasted for 2 years did not change this trajectory. While LGBTI+ Pride March organized despite the ban imposed by

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<sup>76</sup> Retrieved March 27, 2019 from <https://www.karar.com/istanbul/on-binler-dun-gece-de-demokrasi-nobeti-icin-taksimdeydi-202979?p=6>

<sup>77</sup> Retrieved March 27, 2019 from <https://www.mynet.com/ak-partili-belediye-baskanlari-taksim-meydaninda-demokrasi-nobeti-tutan-vatandaslarla-bir-araya-geldi-3859314-myvideo>

<sup>78</sup> Retrieved March 27, 2019 from <https://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2017/07/13/erdogan-16-temmuzda-demokrasi-nobetini-ilan-edecegiz>

<sup>79</sup> Retrieved March 27, 2019 from <https://www.takvim.com.tr/guncel/2018/07/15/15-temmuz-sehitlerine-taksimde-5-gun-anma>

<sup>80</sup> Retrieved March 27, 2019 from <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/15-temmuz-darbe-girisimi/15-temmuz-fotograf-sergisi-taksim-meydaninda-acildi/1202478>

the mayor's office was attacked by the police<sup>81</sup> in 2018, one year later, March 8<sup>th</sup> Feminist Night March was marked by the intervention of the police using tear gas and plastic bullets on women as photographed in Figure 10. Later, women in the march were also allegedly blamed for protesting *ezan* (call to prayer) by a journalist of a news media outlet known with its open support for the AKP.<sup>82</sup>



Figure 10. Women were confronted with police in March 8, 2019 Feminist Night March<sup>83</sup>

The AKP's transformation plan for the Taksim Square was continued with the demolition of the AKM. As discussed earlier, the AKM was designed as an opera house with a modern architectural perspective and started to be constructed by the municipality in 1946. With the recognition of the municipality's inability to finish the project, it was handed over to the Ministry of Public Works in 1953. The building was first opened as İstanbul Cultural Center in 1969. After an unfortunate fire in 1970, it was renovated and reopened in 1978 this time with the name of AKM. Being

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<sup>81</sup> Retrieved March 27, 2019 from <https://www.dw.com/tr/onur-y%C3%BCr%C3%BCy%C3%BC%C5%9F%C3%BCne-polis-m%C3%BCdahalesi/a-44484410>

<sup>82</sup> Retrieved March 27, 2019 from <https://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/fotograflarla-feminist-gece-yuruyusune-polis-saldirisi.html>

<sup>83</sup> Retrieved March 27, 2019 from <https://t24.com.tr/haber/bir-8-mart-vakasi-ezan-isliklandi-iddiasi-teyitlenmeli-miydi-teyit-org-bu-iddiayi-neden-inceledi-neden-elestirildiler-uzerlerine-vazife-miydi,812899>

among the first examples of Republican architecture and symbolizing a westernized country, the AKM was seen as an important historical heritage that needs to be preserved. For the first time, the Ministry of Culture of the first Erdoğan government vocalized the idea of demolishing the AKM yet the attempt was prevented by the Conservation Board with the registration of the building as cultural heritage (Batuman, 2015). In the aftermath of the Gezi Protests, Erdoğan resurrected the idea by saying that the AKM would be demolished and replaced with another cultural center.

In 2017, new building planned to be constructed in the place of the demolished AKM was introduced to public in a crowded ceremony. It was presented by the designer of the project Murat Tabanlıoğlu, son of the AKM's architect Hayati Tabanlıoğlu. According to this, the building would have an opera house with 2,500 people and a concert hall with 800 people capacity along with theatre halls, libraries, cafes and restaurants. Tabanlıoğlu also mentioned the façade of the building which would also function as a huge screen to display the bales and operas played inside so that everybody can see the show. He particularly emphasized the importance of this dual-purpose design by saying that “operas were places where generally rich families go but now operas and bales should be places where we all go”.<sup>84</sup>

The AKM project, shown comparatively with the old one in Figure 11, was criticized by various circles and led to the filling of lawsuits demanding the cancellation of the demolition. With a press conference, the chamber of Architects vocalized the fallacy of the project by drawing attention to the unauthenticity of the

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<sup>84</sup> Retrieved March 27, 2019 from <http://www.arkitera.com/haber/29478/ataturk-kultur-merkezinin-yeni-projesi-tanitildi>

new building and the ignorance of the legal processes by the government.<sup>85</sup> Similar to the previous projects, the public reaction against the project could not stop the demolition of the AKM and in 2018 the building was completely toppled. Erdoğan announced the demolition with the following words: “yell, burst as much as you want, we knocked out AKM”.<sup>86</sup>

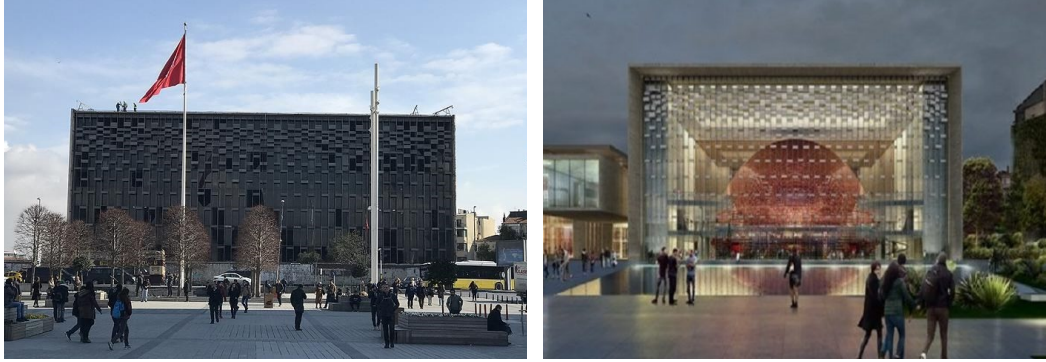


Figure 11. Old (on the left) and new (on the right) AKM buildings

While the public resistance to the demolition of Gezi Park was continuing, on June 2, 2013, Erdoğan made the following statement about his plan for the Taksim Square:

AKM will be demolished inşallah (God willing). We will also build it as an amazing opera (house), a culture center... Yes, we will build a mosque too. I am not going to ask for CHP's (Republican People's Party), couple of looters' (*çapulcu*) permission for this. Those who voted us have already given the authority for this.<sup>87</sup>

This statement was signaling the final piece of the AKP's spatial plan for the Taksim Square. Indeed, the construction of a mosque in Taksim has been an idea vocalized by the right-wing parties in Turkey since the 1950s. The idea resurfaced in the period starting with the RP's taking over the municipality of İstanbul in the 1990s

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<sup>85</sup> Retrieved March 27, 2019 from <https://www.cnnturk.com/turkiye/mimarlar-odasindan-yeni-akm-projesine-tepki>

<sup>86</sup> Retrieved March 27, 2019 from <https://tr.sputniknews.com/turkiye/201803311032859825-erdogan-istanbul-yeditepe-bienali/>

<sup>87</sup> Retrieved March 27, 2019 from <https://bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/147142-erdogan-taksim-e-cami-de-yapacagiz>. Translated from: “AKM inşallah yıkılacak. Muhteşem bir opera olarak kültür merkezi olarak onu da yapacağız...Evet cami de yapacağız. Ben bunun iznini gidip de CHP genel başkanından alacak değilim, birkaç çapulcudan alacak değilim. Bize oy verenler bunun yetkisini verdi zaten.

(Büyüksaraç, 2007). However, it has never been realized as the attempts were blocked by the secularist wing of the state bureaucracy. With the words of Erdoğan, in 2013, the discussion on building a mosque in Taksim was reignited. In 2017, the project for the mosque planned to be built in a 2482 square meters area was approved by the No.2 Regional Directorate for the Conservation of Cultural Heritage.<sup>88</sup> The foundations for the mosque was laid in a ceremony participated by some AKP officials and İstanbul mufti with prayers. The project was designed as a cultural center with a parking lot and a conference room along with a prayer.<sup>89</sup> The planned mosque along with other religious places and education institutions located in the area caused worry among the businesses selling and/or serving alcohol due to the law banning the alcohol sell and consumption at a 100 meters distance to such place.<sup>90</sup> In 2018, rough construction work for the mosque was completed, which led the mosque to take its current appearance as shown in Figure 12. The project has still been proceeding with the elaborate ornaments of the interior design.<sup>91</sup>



Figure 12. Taksim Mosque

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<sup>88</sup> Retrieved March 27, 2019 from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ekonomi/taksim-camii-icin-kuruldandan-onay-cikti-40357301>

<sup>89</sup> Retrieved March 27, 2019 from <https://140journos.com/taksim-meydan%C4%B1naya-yap%C4%B1lacak-cami-projesi-onayland%C4%B1-430700d69b6f>

<sup>90</sup> Retrieved March 27, 2019 from <http://www.medyafaresi.com/haber/2019da-istiklal-caddesinde-alkol-satan-pek-cok-mekan-kapanacak/840290>

<sup>91</sup> Retrieved March 27, 2019 from <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/taksimdeki-caminin-betonarmesibitti-ince-iscilik-basladi/1310068>

As shown, starting from 2005, the AKP has embarked on a full-fledged transformation in Beyoğlu which has been materialized in a set of projects implemented in three main sites of the district, namely Tarlabası, İstiklal Street and Taksim Square. As this thesis argues, the projects which have had significant socio-spatial ramifications in the given places have signified a grander vision and larger agenda according to which the AKP instrumentalizes and transforms space. In the next chapter, I analyze the projects covered above in the light of Henri Lefebvre's theory of production of space trying to show how they serve neoliberal, Islamist and neo-Ottomanist imageries and framings of the AKP.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE AKP'S ECONOMIC AND IDEOLOGICAL PRODUCTION OF SPACE IN BEYOĞLU

As discussed in the previous chapter, since the 2013 Gezi Park Protests, Beyoğlu has been undergoing a massive urban transformation characterized by the changing physical space in the district through the demolition of the built elements of space and the replacement of them with the ones designed in harmony with the AKP's political, economic and social vision. As this thesis argues, however, this transformation which has been analyzed above through the spatial changes in Tarlabası, İstiklal Street and Taksim Square is not a unilayered process. Nor is it comprised of the changes on landscape and physical structure of space only. Rather, as Lefebvre (1991, 2009) argues, space is produced by different actors through the interplay between different layers only one of which is physical. Similarly, neither the ways different actors perceive and shape the space nor the motivations lying behind the actors' interactions with each other and the world around them can be explained with a unidimensional approach. Thus, when we talk about production of space, we always need to refer to varying perceptions, diverse mechanisms and multiple political, economic and social processes.

Furthermore, as Lefebvre (1991, 2009) emphasizes, the state and its representations constitute the dominant force in the production of space which is manifested in the instrumentalization of space and the penetration of the state power into the physical, mental and social structure of space to transform the existing built forms, embedded economic, social and political meanings, and everyday social relations established in the existing space.

Accordingly, in this chapter, I analyze the ongoing urban transformation in Beyoğlu with a focus on the AKP as the key actor which manages the process of production of space. By juxtaposing the economic and ideological space-making policies of the AKP government with Lefebvre's spatial triad, namely the representations of space (conceived), spatial practice (lived) and representational space (perceived), I highlight not only the multilayered nature of the production of space but also investigate these layers in line with different framings of space in detail. To achieve this, I benefit from the AKP officials' statements and legal changes made by the government to grasp the mental background of the projects from the state aspect. I also build my analysis on the interviews I conducted in the main transformation areas and my field observations in order to understand the social implications of the physical changes in terms of changing perceptions and everyday life practices of users of Beyoğlu space.

In detail, I focus on the instrumentalization of space by the AKP government. Particularly referring to Lefebvre's (2009, p. 242) concept of the "state mode of production (SMP)" where he explicates the economic and political functions of space for the state, I first shed light on the AKP's representations of space which are fed by its neoliberal, Islamist and neo-Ottomanist imageries and framings. Then, I decode the AKP's production of space by sorting out the economic and political functions of the AKP's space. According to Lefebvre (2009, p. 242), space is organized by the state as a means to produce and reproduce "the productive forces (e.g. agglomeration economies)", "the relations of production and of property (since space can be bought and sold)" and "surplus value (e.g. exploitation of space, organization of urban consumption and everyday life)" on the one hand and "ideology and the instruments of political power" on the other hand. Such dual functioning of space can be

observed in the case of Beyoğlu as well. From economic perspective, this corresponds to the AKP's neoliberal urban policies which have been manifested especially in the Tarlabası renewal project and the changing economic morphology of İstiklal Street. In terms of political function, this refers to the AKP's Islamist neo-Ottomanist ideology which have been reflected on particularly the reconfiguration of Taksim Square and the transformation of everyday life in the district.

While analyzing the neoliberal and Islamist neo-Ottomanist components of the projects in Beyoğlu and juxtaposing them with the Lefebvre's spatial triad, I operationalize the triad by benefiting from Pierce and Martin's (2015) relational place-making conception. In so doing, I explicate the neoliberal, Islamist and neo-Ottomanist space-making of the AKP through 1) physical/material elements of place (e.g. roads, asphalts, buildings), 2) social elements of place (e.g. people's interactions with each other and their surroundings), and 3) affective elements of place (e.g. visceral, experiential and emotive components of space). Based on this analysis, while showing how the AKP's production of space is a multilayered and multidimensional process which can be observed within a single district, I argue that neoliberal, Islamic and neo-Ottomanist transformations in the physical components of the Beyoğlu space has also been reconfiguring and rearticulating the social (everyday life flow and practices of the space users) and affective (symbolic meaning and memory flourished through space) components of the given space. In the next sections, I further analyze this multilayered structure of the production of Beyoğlu based on the narratives of the interviewees.

Elaborating on different layers of the AKP's production of space, I also reflect on the mechanisms through which the AKP's space-making operation is unfolded. Thus, I touch upon the state's role as a guarantor of the maintenance of the

produced spatiality, in addition to its role as a producer of that spatiality. I do so by building on Lefebvre's idea that modern state also organizes space in order to homogenize differences, "break up oppositions", "hierarchize places" and "control the entire system" (Henri Lefebvre, 1991, 2009). Thus, examining the ways the government applies its economic and ideological projects (e.g. instrumentalization of media, use of municipal police) in Tarlabası, İstiklal Street and Taksim from this perspective, I note that the AKP uses its state power not only to produce its own space but also to sustain its spatial conduct in Beyoğlu.

### 5.1 Economic framing of space and neoliberal production of Beyoğlu

One of the main elements of the AKP's production of Beyoğlu has been the neoliberalization of space. As detailed in the previous chapters, neoliberalism is a global phenomenon which shapes urban condition in a considerable degree across the world cities. Similar to other cities, in Beyoğlu, the process of neoliberalization of space has shown itself in the commodification and corporatization of not only the built environment but also the spatial relations and everyday life through an entrepreneurial approach to cities (Harvey, 1989). In line with the AKP government's envisioning of İstanbul as a globally competitive city (Sassen, 1991), Beyoğlu has been imagined by the local and the central government as a valuable asset to achieve this goal. As mayor Demircan states, the specific mission of Beyoğlu has been specified as "being the vision of Turkey with its tourism",<sup>92</sup> which brought Beyoğlu a massive wave of spatial restructuring aiming to gentrify and upgrade the landscape of the district in such a way that attracts foreign capital to Beyoğlu.

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<sup>92</sup> Retrieved March 30, 2019 from <http://beyoglu.bel.tr/haber/beyoglu-yatirimci-icin-cazibe-merkezi-4758.html>

### 5.1.1 Commodifying space and everyday life in Tarlabası

As former Tarlabası resident Ayşe (personal communication, July 10, 2019) stated in the interview, the first and foremost step towards this end has been the Tarlabası Renewal Project which aims to “transform Tarlabası into Champs-Élysées”:<sup>93</sup>

The transformation in Beyoğlu started with the transformation of Tarlabası. I was living in Tarlabası. The first transformation unfortunately started in the street where we resided. We had a five-floor building there. The houses in there were bought very cheap, the people in there had to move to somewhere else. It was that kind of process.<sup>94</sup>

Transformation of Tarlabası is often defined as a gentrification project. As Smith (1979, 1987) argues, gentrification is more likely to occur in places where the gap between potential and actual economic returns from a plot of land is big. This gap which results from uneven development of cities ends up with the devalorization of inner city. This, in turn, offers a low-cost opportunity to investors for restructuring the neglected inner-city lands for the sake of capital accumulation. In Tarlabası, the devalorization of the neighborhood land can be traced back to the construction of Tarlabası Boulevard which has operated since then as an “urban frontier” (Smith, 1996) by generating “a socio-spatial barrier between the impoverished Tarlabası and the affluent part of Beyoğlu” (Sakizlioglu, 2014, p. 166). This barrier combined with the existing renewal projects in the city in general and the adjacent neighborhoods in Beyoğlu led Tarlabası to appear as an “island of decay in seas of renewal” (Elvin K & Daniel J, 1999).

According to architect Mücella Yapıcı (personal communication, July 13, 2019), the concept of urban decay has been produced and circulated in the process to

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<sup>93</sup> Retrieved March 21, 2019 from <http://ekonomi.haber7.com/ekonomi/haber/473843-tarlabasi-champs-elyseesye-donusecek>

<sup>94</sup> Translated from: “Beyoğlu’ndaki ilk dönüşüm Tarlabası’ndaki kentsel dönüşüm ile oldu, ben Tarlabası’nda oturuyordum. İlk dönüşüm de maalesef bizim oturduğumuz sokakta başladı. Bizim orada 5 katlı bir evimiz vardı. Oradaki evler çok ucuza alındı, oradaki insanlar, başka yerlere gitmek zorunda kaldı. Böyle bir süreçti”.

the point that “gentrification is treated as the only conceivable remedy for pathological urban dereliction and decay” (Slater, 2009, p. 297). In Tarlabası, urban decay discourse has been revealed in the words of the then-chief Mass Housing Administration Erdoğan Bayraktar as in the following:

Today, the gecekondü is one of the most important two or three problems that Turkey faces. It is well known that such things as terror, drugs, warped attitude towards the state, psychological negativity, health problems and oppositional views all come out of gecekondü zones and irregular areas (Unsal, 2013: 83; Lelandais, 2015).<sup>95</sup>

According to recycler, activist, CHP Beyoğlu council member and Tarlabası resident Ali Mendillioğlu (personal communication, June 12, 2018), however, urban decay is more than a discourse; it is rather a strategy embedded in the nature of urban transformation:

This is the nature of urban transformation. If there is a space eligible for rent... Indeed, this is a strategy which functions to send the existing residents away from that space... For instance, when the lawsuit was filed in Beyoğlu (against the project), the municipality showed the crime reports of the police as a proof, claiming that the crime rates decreased with the transformation. And something like this happened too. There were reports for a certain period. Then, the police stopped keeping reports. For the period there were no reports, the police presented opinion like, according to our observations crimes rates decreased.<sup>96</sup>

This devalorization process combined with the urban decay discourse and strategy not only opened the way for Tarlabası to become a site for neoliberal urban transformation but also caused the forced displacement of many people who made Tarlabası home to themselves. As Ayşe’s (personal communication, July 10, 2019)

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<sup>95</sup> Retrieved March 21, 2019 from [http://researchturkey.org/urbanisation-under-neoliberal-conservatism-in-turkey/#\\_edn6](http://researchturkey.org/urbanisation-under-neoliberal-conservatism-in-turkey/#_edn6)

<sup>96</sup> Translated from: “Kentsel dönüşüm işinin doğası budur zaten. Eğer ranta uygun bir alan varsa... Aslında bu mevcut orada kalanları oradan uzaklaştırmak için bir strateji. Mesela Beyoğlu’nda dava açıldığında Beyoğlu Belediyesi kanıt olarak emniyetin suç raporunu göstermişti ve şunu diyor: Beyoğlu’nda kentsel dönüşüm ile birlikte suç oranları azaldı. Bir de şöyle bir şey oldu. Belli bir döneme kadar rapor tutulmuş, bir süreden sonra bırakılmış, bu dönem için emniyet görüş bildiriyor, gözlemlerimize göre suç oranları azalmıştır diye”.

experience shows, this process is not only related to the commodification of space in Tarlabası but also the moving of the poor from center to periphery:

Tarlabası transformation project made such a thing that... Now think, you live here. You have 5 children all married and they live here too. After the project, you do not have a chance to buy home for all here anymore. What happened? You all have to leave here for father districts. And what did it do? It moved the center to periphery. You become unable to live in the center, migrate to periphery and buy house in there. We did so too. We bought a house in Bağcılar, for example. There were those who returned to hereabouts as well by working hard because when you go too far, you get isolated from society.<sup>97</sup>

Such interwoven relationship between displacement and capital accumulation through urban redevelopment that we observe in Tarlabası is also emphasized by Harvey (2008) as follows:

A process of displacement and what I call “accumulation by dispossession” also lies at the core of the urban process under capitalism. It is the mirror image of capital absorption through urban redevelopment and is giving rise to all manner of conflicts over the capture of high value land from low income populations that may have lived there for many years (p. 34).

In the following years, the process in Tarlabası has continued with the reconstruction of low-cost land acquired from the residents in the form of expansive luxury residences, office and leisure spaces with the Taksim 360 project. The project which was designed to represent a distinctive spatial bundle with new opportunities and a lifestyle catering to the taste of a new “alternative clientele” has been marketed through the “fabrication of an aura of authenticity based on the history of the area” (Zukin, 2008, p. 724).

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<sup>97</sup> Translated from: “Tarlabası dönüşüm projesi öyle bir şey yaptı ki... Şimdi düşün, sen oturuyorsun burada. 5 tane de çocuğun var hepsi evli ve onlar da burada yaşıyor. Projeden sonra hepsine ev alma şansın yok buradan artık. Ne oldu? Hepiniz buradan gitmek zorunda kaldınız daha uzak semtlere. Bu da ne yaptı? Merkezi dışarı doğru taşıdı. Artık merkezde oturamayacak hale geliyorsun, تنها yerlere gidiyorsun ve oralardan ev alıyorsun. Biz de öyle yaptık. Bağcılardan ev aldık mesela. Dönen de çok oldu buralara çalışıp çabalayıp çünkü o kadar uzağa gidince tamamen soyutlanmış oluyorsun toplumdand.

One of the most important outcomes of the project has been the complete commodification of the neighborhood, the replacement of use value of the space by exchange value and the resulting increase in affordability. To detail, the project which started right after the demolition of old settlements in the neighborhood led the land values in Tarlabası to fifty times increase<sup>98</sup> such that while the cheapest residence has been put on market for 300.000 USD, an average cost of an office place has been 500.000 USD.<sup>99</sup> In addition to the rising land prices which have made living in Tarlabası impossible for ordinary people, the transformation in the area also introduced new consumption patterns characterized by the replacement of small need-driven consumption by the corporate luxury one (Zukin, 2008). Even though the project has not finished yet, the wave of gentrification in the neighborhood already started to affect the shopping venues in various streets of Tarlabası, including the ones located outside of the project area. As Elçin (personal communication, June 27, 2018) describes:

There was a shop (*bakkal*) right across our place, a small shop. I was very close to that shop. They were our neighbors at the same time. In time, the shop moved, had to move because the building was reconstructed as a hostel. I mean, in the period from 2006 to 2012, various hostels were built in our surroundings, hostels attracting tourists, kind of luxury places, not like the ones affordable for student kind of people. Such places with illuminated interior design, touristic booklets at the entrance, spectacularly decorated with flowers emerged in the neighborhood. So, I witnessed the demolition of that shop day by day and the construction of a hostel on its place.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Retrieved March 30, 2019 from <https://emlakkulisi.com/tarlabasinda-arsa-ve-ev-fiyatlari-50-kat-artti/453068>

<sup>99</sup> Retrieved March 30, 2019 from <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr/haber/tarlabasi-360da-rezidans-ve-ofis-fiyatlari-65643.html>

<sup>100</sup> Translated from: “Karşımızda bir tane bakkal vardı. Ben o bakkal ile çok samimiydim, hatta küçük bir bakkal, komşularımızdı aynı zamanda. Yıllar içinde o bakkal, taşındı, taşınmak zorunda kaldı. Çünkü yerine hostel yapıldı. Yani 2006’dan 2012’ye kadar geçen sürede birçok hostel yapıldı etrafa. İşte turistleri çeken, böyle biraz da lüks hosteller. Bizim bildiğimiz gibi daha öğrenci tarz insanların gidip üç kuruşa kalmaya çalıştığı yerler değil. İş i ışıklandırılmalı, önünde içeri girdiğinde bir sürü turist kitapçığı gibi kitapları var, böyle çiçeklendirmelerle göz alıcı hale getirilmiş mekanlar türedi orada. Yani o bakkalın aşama aşama yıkılıp yerine hostel yapılmasına edilmesine birebir şahit oldum”.

Due to all these changes, Tarlabası has become a center for not only capital accumulation and investment but also luxury consumption and tourism with the transformation of low-cost houses and traditional small shops catering to needs of the poor into residential and office spaces, high-end shopping and touristic facilities which are designed to serve the wealthy.

Furthermore, the spatial change in Tarlabası not only increased the profit-making capacity of the space by defining new consumption landscapes and producing a surplus value through the exploitation of the land but also changed the dominant signification of everyday life spaces of the neighborhood from use value to exchange value (Henri Lefebvre, 1991). Beyond being a home for low-income marginalized groups, Tarlabası used to serve as a spatial ground for social dynamics of everyday life. In that sense, the space in the neighborhood was being constantly (re)produced by the dwellers as a social space. For instance, according to Ayşe (personal communication, July 10, 2019), one of the main elements of everyday life in Tarlabası was the vibrant street culture and the neighborhood relations maintained through random everyday life interactions:

There was a street culture. In these times, like 4-5pm, they laid the rugs on the street. Those who took the sunflower seeds and teas came down to the street and it was very normal for us. We had never found it strange. Now, we may find it strange, but it was not back then. <sup>101</sup>

The street culture in Tarlabası facilitated not only socialization processes among neighbors but also encounter with difference thereby generated a space for understanding and tolerance:

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<sup>101</sup> Translated from: “Bir sokak kültürü vardı. Şu saatlerde işte saat 4-5 gibi kilim kurarlardı sokağa, çekirdeğini çayını alan sokağa gelirdi ve bu çok normaldi bizim için. Hiç garipse miyorduk. Şimdi belki garipse rız ama o zaman çok normaldi”.

There (Tarlabaşı) people learned to tolerate each other because think you come from a place like Batman and for the first time see a transsexual individual, a black person. I, for example, remember the reactions of these old women, aunts, my own mother, that they had first found it very strange and later said that they are just like us (Ayşe, personal communication, July 10, 2019).<sup>102</sup>

The fact that the street was used for not only coming together and chatting but also households which is often associated with private space further complicated the use value of space in Tarlabaşı by blurring the barrier between public and private space. This intermingling structure and function of space further increased the frequency and chances of spatial encounter with the different through the visibility of spatial practice and the possibilities of cooperation embedded in the nature of domestic work:

There was a sister (older female neighbor) from Mardin, Midyat. She was pregnant. One day, she was washing her carpets. Transsexuals walked down to the street saying that how do you do it like this and washed her carpets. This incident, for example, this relationship changed the perspectives of the neighborhood residents a lot (Ayşe, personal communication, July 10, 2019).<sup>103</sup>

As shown, space in Tarlabaşı was used for not only sheltering and other basic needs of the low-income residents through low-cost housing opportunities and small shopping venues but also appropriated by them as a site for socialization and encounter with difference. However, with the neoliberal transformation following the renewal project, the land and house values in the neighborhood have increased to such a degree that the old residents would never afford. This change in the value and function of space has influenced the consumption patterns and everyday life

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<sup>102</sup> Translated from: “Orada insanlar birbirilerini tolere etmeyi öğrenmişlerdi. Çünkü düşün, sen Batman gibi bir yerden geliyorsun ve ömründe ilk defa trans birini görüyorsun, siyahi birini görüyorsun. Ben işte o yaşlı kadınların, teyzelerin, kendi annemin tepkilerini hatırlıyorum, ilk önce nasıl garipseyip sonra aaa bak işte o da bizim gibi dediklerini”.

<sup>103</sup> Translated from: “Bir abla vardı, Mardin Midyat’tan gelmiş. Hamileydi. Sokakta halı yıkıyor bir gün. Translar indiler aşağı, ayy, sen bunu böyle nasıl yıkıyorsun deyip kızın halısını yıkadılar. Bu olay mesela, o ilişki mahallelilerin bakış açısını çok fazla değiştirdi”.

practices as well in such way that the new spatial configuration characterized by the dominance of use value by exchange value and need-based consumption by luxury consumption. The commodification of space has also destroyed the socio-spatial ecosystem and the organically mobilized ways of living together in the neighborhood which were cultivated through the spatial practices and interactions of the residents for the sake of remaking Tarlabası as a place congruent with the government's competitive Beyoğlu image.

#### 5.1.2 Commercialization of land, entertainment and consumption in İstiklal Street

Another site playing a crucial role in the neoliberalizing image-making process in Beyoğlu has been the İstiklal Street. Lying between Pera and Taksim Square, İstiklal Street has always been the commercial, entertainment, culture and art center of Beyoğlu. With its diversity and inclusive structure which allow different groups including marginalized and low-class Istanbulites to experience Beyoğlu through their own vernacular practices in entertainment, shopping and intellectual life, İstiklal Street has always been different from the places of the same kind (Eder & Öz, 2015). As one of the most symbolic places in Beyoğlu, İstiklal Street has also become a part of the neoliberal dreams of the AKP government and the municipality in Beyoğlu.

According to interviewees, one of the main features of the transformation in İstiklal Street has been the disappearance of small shops and the parallel proliferation of chain stores and shopping malls. Among others, the most significant factor which opened a way for this replacement was the neoliberal policies of the government and the resulting public-private partnerships between the AKP government and corporate investors including foreign companies and funds (Uysal & Korostoff, 2015). The

partnership has revealed itself in the construction of two shopping malls on the one hand and in the mushrooming of transnational brands with their department stores on the other. In the process, while the local and central governments hailed the launching of Demirören and Grand Pera shopping malls which caused the demolition of various historical locales embedded in the collective memory of Beyoğlu such as Emek Theatre, several chain stores such as Mango, H&M and Zara started to enlarge their spaces from ground-floors to the department stores by buying the whole building they resided. The concomitant mushrooming of the department stores in the street has reached to such a degree that, according to the study conducted by Tekin and Akgün Gültekin (2017, p. 164), in the 10-year period between 2004 and 2014, spaces occupied by small commercial/shopping businesses shrank by 16.6 percent while those used by department stores and shopping malls of the same kind increased by 323.4 percent.

As mentioned above, the regulations in the Code of Obligations in 2014 which allowed the property owners to terminate rental agreements of their 10- or more-year-tenants without any excuse precipitated the land handover process in İstiklal Street. According to Metin who works in a tavern (personal communication, July 11, 2018), the change in the law resulted in either shutting down or migration of various businesses including his:

I was running a business. When this 10-year thing popped out -it had not official yet, but it was going to be- I had a customer, a lawyer. He warned me beforehand saying that such thing will happen and if this includes you too, your property owner throws you out, so sell it out. And I did so. But this law hit many places. İnci Pasty was closed because of this. They threw them out. Then, their place was demolished, and they moved out. That place was a symbol here. Good places are all gone to periphery now. <sup>104</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Translated from: “Benim bir mekan vardı. Bu 10 yıl sonra çıkma işi olunca -daha yasa çıkmadan ama çıkacakmış tabi o zaman- bir avukat vardı benim müşterim. Beni önceden uyardı, dedi böyle bir şey çıkacak seni de vuruyorsa, mal sahibi buradan atar seni, burayı elden çıkar. Ben de öyle yaptım.

Furthermore, the regulation has increased the rent-seeking behavior in the İstiklal Street as it left the decision to enforce the law to property owners. The arbitrariness in the implementation of the law deepened the vulnerability of the tenants in the face of rising competition and profit-seeking among the property owners. As a result:

Some of them (property owners) throw them out, some of them increase the rent. There are lawsuits going on. It might result in eviction or it might not. It is up to the conscience of the property owner. People are powerless (financially). Those who are fed up stop fighting (Kamil, personal communication, July 9, 2018).<sup>105</sup>

The arbitrariness and the rent-seeking of the property owners and the resulting increase in the cost of renting has further escalated the situation for tenants in the street. What is interesting here is that this trait which has become common among the local property owners shows how ordinary people can also become actors of the production of space by reproducing the state-led neoliberal policies on the ground and contributing to the maintenance of the capital accumulation strategy to benefit from the trend.

Another important point is the way the rental market mechanism works in İstiklal Street. As understood from the interviews, this has been a circular process starting with a growth and then continuing with a decrease in the rental prices. To detail, as Bülent (personal communication, July 9, 2018) explains, “most of the commercial rentals are empty now. Property owners deserve this though as they were renting their places for dollar or euro. Except the corporate ones, small shops were

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Ama epey bir yeri vurdu tabi bu yasa. İnci Pastanesi'nin yeri böyle oldu. Onları çıkarttılar. Sonra onun yeri yıkıldı. Onlar da taşındılar. Orası bir semboldü burada. İyi yerler şimdi hep kenara köşeye gittiler”.

<sup>105</sup> Translated from: “Kimisi direk çıkartıyor, kimisi kiraya zam yapıyor. Davalar var işte. Tahliye çıkabilir de çıkmayabilir de. Mal sahibinin vicdanına kalmış bir şey. İnsanlarda güç yok zaten, bezen bırakıp gidiyor”.

all closed”.<sup>106</sup> The process of increase in rents has continued with a decrease. As Yusuf (personal communication, July 4, 2018) describes, “rents are decreasing right now because tenants cannot pay their rents properly. The rents were extremely high, which coupled with the fact that people could not do well in their businesses...”. Ali Mendillioğlu interprets this circular process by saying that (personal communication, June 12, 2018), “there is a process here in which the places providing affordable services are frustrated and closed, devalued and handed over and then reconstructed and resold for higher prices”.<sup>107</sup>

This process provides an explanation for not only the closure of small-scale businesses due to the rising prices, which surged the rental market by leading up the handover processes but also the replacement of them by the “corporate ones” thanks to the decreasing prices following a period of stagnation in the rental market. In other words, the business owners’ observations show how space has been commodified through the emerging competition in rental market and how corporate actors have replaced the small-scale local actors and transform the established small shops into lucrative investment commodities. This trend is also unfolded in the growing presence of real estate companies and foreign funds such as Dutch Vast-Ned and British Fund which bought several historical buildings in the street (Tekin and Akgün Gültekin, 2017) as well as in the strategic marketization and commodification

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<sup>106</sup> Translated from: “Beyoğlu’nda dükkanların çoğu boş şu anda. Gerçi o dükkân sahipleri de hak ediyor bunu. Dolar, Euro üzerinden kiraya veriyorlardı yerlerini. Kurumsal olanlar hariç, küçük dükkanların hepsi kapandı”.

<sup>107</sup> Translated from: “Burada daha ucuz hizmet sunan yerleri yıldırarak kapatıp buraların fiyatını düşürüp elden çıkarmak ve sonrasında buraları dönüştürerek daha yüksek fiyata yeniden satmak üzerinden işleyen bir süreç var”.

of Beyoğlu by the municipality<sup>108</sup> and the increasing attention of international investors to the district<sup>109</sup> in the last years.

In addition, the increasing domination of department stores in the street has impacted the intellectual, culture and art environment of Beyoğlu as well. As indicated by Tekin and Akgün Gültekin (2017, p. 164), the commodification of consumption space and scape of İstiklal by corporate brands was coincided with a decrease in the space used by intellectual facilities such that, in the period between 2004 and 2014, the space occupied by bookstores shrank by 44.6 percent. Similar trend is also observable in the contraction of the space occupied by manufacturing and crafts shops by 29.5 percent. As Mert (personal communication, July 12, 2018) who works in a bookstore for a long time explains, the increasing presence of department stores combined with the bookstores' unwillingness to use similar neoliberal marketing strategies as shopping decreases the interest in such places considerably. For him, in the face of the dominant corporatization of consumption venues, boutique shops also share the same fate with bookstores:

Beyoğlu started to be a shopping place. Newly emerging shopping malls can be an example of this. Theatre halls are gone too, for instance. Beyoğlu is not preferred for movies anymore. People come here generally for eating, drinking and shopping. Boutique stores mostly shut down, stores which are small, designs and sews on their own. These places replaced by chain stores. It is easier for them of course. As they have mass production, they can sell their products cheaper, gain more and afford the rents. Of course, the demand for boutique taste and places is decreasing too (...) To be honest, we do not want the book (book sell) to get so brutal. We do not want to establish that retailing mentality. The book is not something that we can regard like a Topkek (small packaged cake sold in shopping centers). I mean, the book's being bought just for a discount, its being sold just for money is not something that we prefer.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Retrieved March 31, 2019 from <http://beyoglu.bel.tr/haber/beyoglu-25-proje-ile-yatirimcilarin-gozdesi-oldu-4672.html>

<sup>109</sup> Retrieved March 31, 2019 from <https://www.sabah.com.tr/ekonomi/2018/03/23/yabanci-yatirimcilar-beyoglundun-projelerine-buyuk-ilgi-gosterdi>

<sup>110</sup> Translated from: "Beyoğlu böyle daha çok alışveriş mekanı olmaya başladı. Yeni yeni açılan AVM'ler bunun bir göstergesi olabilir. Sinema da kalmadı mesela, sinema için artık çok tercih

This commodification of space led by the rising department stores and corporate investments which have resulted in the displacement of various historical boutique shops of the İstiklal is not the only outcome of the neoliberalization process in Beyoğlu. According to various interviewees, the intensity of the spatial occupation of department stores and the concomitant disappearance of small shops which used to be the inseparable elements of consumption scape in İstiklal Street have been threatening for the historically ingrained aura and authenticity of shopping culture in the district. This means that the transformation in the street's physical qualities are accompanied by changes in affective components of space which refers to the perception of originality, authenticity and Beyoğlu culture in the minds and memories of Beyoğlu residents. For stationery owner Burak (personal communication, June 22, 2018) who runs the 80-year-old business with his father, the proliferation of department stores decreased the quality of the service provided by businesses and damaged the originality of İstiklal:

There has been a change here that you can observe even in the clothing, attitudes of the people. You can see this in the newly opening places as well. Here, quantity is much more cared than quality now. In the past, Beyoğlu used to be a place where there were good shops provided quality service and product. Now, we do not have this. Big clothing stores can be given as example to that... This situation affects us badly... People were not coming to İstiklal for the stores that they could find everywhere. İstiklal Street used to have a distinctive standing, a history. Now, it is gone too.<sup>111</sup>

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edilmiyor da burası. Daha ziyade yeme içme ve kıyafet alışverişi için geliyorlar. Butik mekanlar kapandı çoğunlukla, böyle kendi tasarımlarını yapan, diken, küçük mekanlar. Yerlerini zincir mekanlar aldı. Onlar için daha kolay tabi, çünkü onlar da seri üretim olduğundan daha uygun fiyata satabiliyor ürettiğini, daha çok kazanıyor, kiraları da onlar karşılayabiliyor. Butik zevk ve mekanlara olan talep de azalıyor tabi, bu insanlar azınlık artık burada. Biz kitabın bu kadar vahşileşmesini istemiyoruz açıkçası. O mağazacılık anlayışını yerleştirmek istemiyoruz. Kitap bizim marketteki Topkek gibi bakabileceğimiz bir şey değil yani onun sırf indirim için satın alınması, sadece para için satılması çok bizim tercih ettiğimiz bir şey değil.

<sup>111</sup> Translated from: "Burada insanların giyimlerinde davranışlarında bile görebileceğiniz bir değişim var. Açılan mekanlardan falan da görebilirsiniz hatta bu değişimi. Kaliteden ziyade artık niceliğe önem veriliyor burada. Kaliteli hizmet ve ürün sunulan güzel dükkanların olduğu bir yerdi eskiden Beyoğlu. Artık bunu göremiyoruz. Buna büyük mağazaları örnek verebiliriz... Bu durum bizi çok

Similarly, Mert (personal communication, July 12, 2018) emphasized the loss of authenticity in the shops of İstiklal:

In Beyoğlu, there were people who do their jobs good in the past. These people were the ones who gave here (Beyoğlu) an idiosyncratic culture. These places did not have many branches. There was only one branch and that was in Beyoğlu. And people too preferred to see such places instead of a McDonalds.<sup>112</sup>

For Berat (personal communication, July 4, 2018) who runs a café/bar in the street, shopping malls also spoiled the spirit of İstiklal because they are not parts of the Beyoğlu culture:

Now, there are two places (shopping malls) in İstiklal. One is Demirören. The other is the one constructed in the place of historical Emek Theatre. As far as I know, people of Beyoğlu normally do not go to shopping malls because there is no shopping mall in the culture of Beyoğlu. There is passage culture, han culture. Shopping mall is unrequited in this culture. That's why people do not prefer. Speaking for myself, I never do shopping from a shopping mall. I know, those who live here do not as well. They know Atlas Passage, Atlı Han.<sup>113</sup>

As understood, the commodification of space in the İstiklal Street has not only caused the displacement of various small-scale shops as a result of the increasing competition in the rental market, the resulting rise in the renting prices and the growing presence of foreign investment in the overall property market of the street but also deteriorated the historical fabric of consumption scape İstiklal Street by diminishing spatial authenticity and diversity. This in turn shows that neoliberal transformation of İstiklal is not limited to the changes in built environment but rather

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kötü etkiliyor. Buraya gelen müşteri kalitesini düşüyor. Zaten her yerde olan mağazalar için buraya gelmiyorlardı insanlar. İstiklal caddesinin bir ağırlığı, bir tarihi vardı. O da yok oldu şimdi”.

<sup>112</sup> Translated from: “Eskiden Beyoğlu’nda işini yapan insanlar vardı. Bu insanlar buraya kendine has bir kültür veren insanlardı. Bu mekanların bir sürü şubesi yoktu. Bir tane vardı, o da Beyoğlu’ndaydı. Bir McDonalds görmektense onu görmeyi tercih ediyorlardı insanlar da”.

<sup>113</sup> Translated from: “Şuan iki yer var İstiklal’de. Biri Demirören. Diğeri de eski Emek Sineması’nın yerine yapılan. Benim bildiğim Beyoğlu insanı kolay kolay AVM’ye girmez. Çünkü Beyoğlu’nun ruhunda AVM kültürü yoktur; pasaj kültürü, han kültürü vardır. AVM’nin bu kültürde karşılığı yoktur. Bu yüzden insanlar tercih etmez. Kendi adıma söylüyorum, ben bir AVM’den alışveriş yapmam. Biliyorum, burada oturan biri de yapmaz. Bir Atlas Pasajı’nı bilir, bir Atlı Han’ı bilir.

it has significant ramifications in affective components of space characterized by the idea of authenticity or other related qualities which are associated with Beyoğlu by the residents.

The commercial gentrification and upscaling in the İstiklal Street is observable in the transformation of the street's entertainment venues as well (Eder & Öz, 2015). One of the strategic moves of the local government which has accelerated this transformation was the outdoor seating ban implemented in some of the well-known entertainment venues in the street. As mentioned before, in 2011, municipal police started to remove the tables on some of the streets, starting from Asmalımescit area which used to be known for its relatively upper-class entertainment locales with live music and dancing halls. According to Tahir Berrakkarasu, the co-president of Beyoğlu Eğlence Yerleri Derneği (the Association for Beyoğlu Entertainment Locales), as a result of the ban, Asmalımescit lost the half of its visitors and the turnover rates of the entertainment locales drop by 70-80 percent during the week and around 40 percent on weekends. This process inevitably resulted in various popular places to either shut down or to move to other districts like Beşiktaş and Kadıköy. As the owner of Leblon, one of the closed places in Asmalımescit, explained:

The decision regarding the removal of the tables on the street started to thinly slice not only Leblon's but all the venues' businesses, popularities and capacities to endure the conditions every passing day like a salami.<sup>114</sup>

For Berrakkarasu, the dramatic decrease in the number of customers and the growing debts led by the removal of the tables pushed most of the place owners to hand over their properties, which in turn caused a 50-percent decrease in the property

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<sup>114</sup> Retrieved March 31, 2019 from <https://www.haberturk.com/ekonomi/is-yasam/haber/919868-beyoglunda-yaprak-dokumu>

prices in the area.<sup>115</sup> One of the pub owners in Asmalımescit who still tries to resist the outflow migration trend in this popular entertainment venue explains the shrinking customer base and its impacts on his business as follows:

Beyoğlu is experiencing a downfall and we are paying the price for this especially economically. Think, today I couldn't have the turnover that I used to have 5-6 years ago. A lot of times passed since then, but my turnover declined instead of increase. I used to employ 12 people, now I employ 4 people (Bülent, personal communication, June 9, 2018).<sup>116</sup>

Indeed, the transformation in Asmalımescit had already started before the imposition of the outdoor seating ban as seen in the real estate news about the area's becoming the "new base for investment" for several national and international investors planning to build hotels and residences<sup>117</sup> as well as in the government incentives for the new investments in the area. These could be counted as the first moves towards the commodification of Asmalımescit. Therefore, the ban and the resulting decrease in the cost of investment in Asmalımescit can be seen as the continuum of an already started process.

Particularly, thanks to the increasing government support (e.g. vat exemption) for the tourism investments<sup>118</sup> and the corporate investors' tourism-based restructuring plans,<sup>119</sup> the transformation in Asmalımescit gained momentum in the following years. According to Ali Mendillioğlu (personal communication, June 12, 2018), there has been a strategy lying behind the whole process and that was the

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<sup>115</sup> Retrieved March 31, 2019 from <https://www.haberturk.com/ekonomi/is-yasam/haber/919868-beyoglunda-yaprak-dokumu>

<sup>116</sup> Translated from: "Beyoğlu gerçekten çöküşe geçti ve biz özellikle ekonomik olarak bunun faturasını çok ağır ödüyoruz. Düşün, ben bundan 5-6 yıl önce çektiğim günlük ciroyu bugün çekemiyorum. Aradan bir sürü zamlar geçti ama benim cirom yükselmek yerine düştü. 12 eleman çalıştıran dükkan şuan 4 kişi ile dönüyor".

<sup>117</sup> Retrieved March 31, 2019 from <https://www.emlaktasondakika.com/haber/sektorden-haberler/asmalimescit-unlulerin-yeni-yatirim-ussu-oldu/9539>

<sup>118</sup> Retrieved March 31, 2019 from [www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2008/11/20081124-2.xls](http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2008/11/20081124-2.xls)

<sup>119</sup> Retrieved March 31, 2019 from [http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/ekonomi/988330/11\\_milyon\\_dolarlik\\_butik\\_yatirim.html](http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/ekonomi/988330/11_milyon_dolarlik_butik_yatirim.html)

reason why the main implementation area of the outdoor seating ban was comprised of the streets where “they do not want people to consume for less”:<sup>120</sup>

Here, the places where there is luxury consumption and the ones where you can drink tea or beer interlace with one another. This in turn brings impatience. The fact that there are still the poor together with the rich, that they have a habitus is an obstacle for the desired transformation of this place.<sup>121</sup>

This is overlapped with what Eder and Öz (2015, p. 298) argues in their article which demonstrates that the motivation behind the removal of the street tables was in fact “to clean up the streets, make them more hygienic and thereby attract upper-class residents to the upper-floors, a typical example of what we call vertical commodification”. Considering all this, the ban on tables on the street appeared to function both to clean Asmalımescit from the places which were not so lucrative and decrease the exchange value of the land to make more room for more profitable investments in the area.

What is more striking is that while most of the entertainment venues had already left the area, there are still those trying to resist this transformation in Asmalımescit despite the lost customer base; however, according to Bülent (personal communication, July 9, 2018) who is one of the resisters in Asmalımescit, intimidation continues:

Nobody tells me that you cannot be here; rather, it makes me pay the price for being here, (such as) the municipality’s noise fines, the Ministry of Health’s I don’t know what fines... Even if they cannot find anything, they find something and fine it anyway. The pressure on us is more like this. In the past, they controlled your kitchen, hygiene etc. Now, they control nothing. They find a pretext and fine it, that’s it. For example, the Ministry of Finance

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<sup>120</sup> Translated from: “İnsanların ucuza tüketim yapılması istenmeyen yerler bu yasağın uygulandığı yerler”,

<sup>121</sup> Translated from: “Bir yandan lüks tüketimin olduğu alanlarla birlikte bir yandan da hala ucuza çay, bira içilebilecek alanlar burada üst üste geçmiş vaziyette. Bu da beraberinde bir tahammülsüzlüğü getiriyor. Burada hala zenginin yanında yoksulların da var olması, onların yaşam alanlarının olması buranın istenilen şekilde dönüştürülmesinin önünde engel”.

does this as well. They come and ask whether we investigate your older files, or you just give us a 10.000 TRY and we leave.<sup>122</sup>

As the example Bülent gave shows, the “cleaning” in İstiklal Street still continues against those who do not want to move their businesses to somewhere else through various other means of intimidation. And, as Bülent explains above, given the dire trajectory of the turnovers and the changing consumption scape in the area, it is unknown how much longer Bülent and others can survive this competition.

To note that even though some of the entertainment locales owned by private actors have not been affected by the outdoor seating ban so much, according to one interview, their businesses have been largely influenced by the 2012 smoking ban (Aytar, 2014). Metin who works in one of the most popular entertainment venues in İstiklal Street explains his discontent with the smoking ban as follows:

In the past, customers got in line to have a seat in here. Now, nobody enters into the door because of this smoking thing. It is none of your business if one smokes. Let everybody think their own health. I am not an idiot. I am aware. If this is bad for my health, my children, then I do not. What is it to you?<sup>123</sup>

Not only entertainment sector but also various other business owners and keepers in the street are discontent with the ban on outdoor seating for several reasons. One of the discomfoting points for them is the way the ban has been implemented by the municipal police. For instance, Yılmaz (personal communication, July 12, 2018) who owns a small restaurant selling rice in the backstreet describes his own experience with the ban as follows: “I pay 140 TRY for

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<sup>122</sup> Translated from: “Kimse bana burada kalamazsın demiyor. Ama burada olmanın bir bedeli var diyor. İşte, belediyenin gürültü cezası, Sağlık Bakanlığı’nın bilmem ne cezası gibi. Hiçbir şey bulamazlarsa bile bir şey bulup kesiyorlar cezayı. Bize baskı daha ziyade bu şekilde. Eskiden, mutfağına, temizliğine bakarlardı. Şimdi hiçbir şeyi kontrol etmiyorlar; bir bahane bulup kesiyorlar cezayı. Mesela Ekonomi Bakanlığı da yapıyor bunu. Geliyorlar, dosyalarına mı bakalım yoksa bize bir 10.000 TL ver biz de gidelim diyorlar”.

<sup>123</sup> Translated from: “Eskiden müşteriler masa kapabilmek için sıraya girerlerdi burada. Şimdi, şu sigara işi yüzünden kimse kapıdan içeri bile girmiyor. Sigarasını içen içsin size ne! Bırak herkes kendi sağlığını düşünsün. Ben salak değilim. Farkındayım. Bu benim sağlığım için kötüyse, benim çocuğum çocuğum için içmem zaten. Sana ne!”

a 60x60 table. They come and take all away with their cars. On top of it, they priggishly come and ask for papers or something like this”.<sup>124</sup> Other interviewees think that the ban is an extreme way to solve the problems. As patisserie employee Kamil (personal communication, July 9, 2018) maintains:

Everything needs to have a balance. The state, the municipality has this power. If somebody puts here four tables, let him/her do but if s/he throws the bottle away, then fine it. Here the municipality does everything it wants with the decision of the council. It says to increase the estate rate 10 times, they do it. As you can do whatever you want, then you can do this too. The ban came out of nowhere. The municipal police come here like mafia. Customers sit there while they are doing this. They remove the tables in front of the customers and take them away with cars...They even threw away the flowers we have put in front of the tables.<sup>125</sup>

Similar to those who find the changing consumption landscape with the chain stores and shopping malls detrimental to the social fabric of Beyoğlu in general, various interviewees also think that the ban has distorted the street culture of İstiklal and the positive impacts of this culture on everyday life of Beyoğlu. For instance, according to Kemal, in Beyoğlu, it is a necessity for various locales to use outdoor space as most of the historical buildings do not have enough indoor space and sitting outside of a place gives much more energy to people. Similarly, for Mert (personal communication, July 12, 2018) who saw lack of outdoor seating as a loss for Beyoğlu:

The street both socializes and liberates a person. Today, there is a difference between being stuck in a place and sitting on a table with a street view. I think this thing in that way. The removal of these tables is something affects

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<sup>124</sup> Translated from: “60X60 bir masaya 140 TL para veriyorum ben. Geliyorlar alıp alıp götürüyorlar hepsini arabaya doldurup. Bir de ukala ukala gelip belge göster diyorlar, bir şeyler diyorlar”.

<sup>125</sup> Translated from: “Her şeyin kontrollü olması gerek. Devletin, belediyenin buna gücü var. Buraya dört masa mı koymuş adam, koysun bırak, ama burada içtiği şişeyi yere mi attı, o zaman yaz cezayı...Burada belediye encümen kararıyla istediğini yapıyor, emlak vergisini 10 kat arttırın diyor, onu yapıyorlar. Madem sen istediğini yapabiliyorsun, bunu da yapabilirsin. Yasak hiç habersiz geldi. Çete gibi geliyor buraya zabıta. Müşteri de orada oturuyor bunu yaparken. İnsanın önünden masayı alıp, atıp arabaya götürüyorlar”.

the socialization of people. Outdoor rather than indoor is something that opens one's mind, helps free thinking. These bans took this from Beyoğlu.<sup>126</sup>

For others, the resulting deterioration of the existing ecosystem of İstiklal where different businesses complement and feed each other and its adverse impacts on entertainment scape of İstiklal Street have spilled over into other businesses in the street as well. As Burak (personal communication, June 22, 2018) explains:

The table-ban in Asmalımescit has also affected us badly. It made people stop going here. It was what made this place Asmalımescit, a colorful environment where people socialize with each other, there is nothing wrong, there is no problem, a liberating environment. But now it is just the opposite. This adversely affected us too.<sup>127</sup>

All this shows that Beyoğlu has been undergoing a major neoliberal transformation through the commodification of not only space but also everyday life. From a spatial triad perspective, this suggests that the central and local governments' interventions into the physical elements of space (e.g. transition from small one-floor boutique shops to departments stores) in collaboration with the private sector actors and particularly local property owners have also impacted social and affective components of space considerably as seen in the changing everyday life dynamics and meaning of Beyoğlu in the eyes of the users of that space.

### 5.1.3 Investing in Beyoğlu: Arabic appropriation of space and everyday life

Based on the fieldwork, the last point that needs to be discussed among the main factors reinforcing the neoliberalization of Beyoğlu is the dramatic increase in the

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<sup>126</sup> Translated from: "Sokak insanı hem sosyalleştirir hem özgürleştirir. Bugün bir mekânın içinde tıkalı kalmakla sokağa bakan bir masada oturmak arasında fark vardı. Ben olaya biraz böyle bakıyorum. O masa sandalyenin sokaktan kaldırılması insanların sosyalliğini etkileyen bir şey. Kapalıdansa açık mekân insanın zihnini bile açan bir şey, özgür düşünmeye yardım eden bir şey. O yasaklar bunu aldı Beyoğlu'ndan.

<sup>127</sup> Translated from: "Asmalı Mescit'te falan uygulanan masa sandalye yasağı falan da kötü etkiledi bizi. İnsanların ayağını kesen bir şey oldu. Oranın zaten olayı o, cıvıl cıvıl bir ortam, insanlar birbirileriyle sosyalleşiyor, bir sorun yok, bir şey yok, özgür bir ortam. Ama şimdi tam tersi. Bu da kötü etkiledi bizi".

number of Arab tourists and investors in the district. According to the report prepared by the Hotel Association of Turkey (Türkiye Otelciler birliği), the share of Arab tourists which refers to the 10 percent of the total number of tourists in 2010 set a record in 2017 by growing up to 24.3. In 2017, the total number of Arab tourists came to Turkey was 3.6 million. In the first quarter of the 2018, this figure increased by 45 percent.<sup>128</sup> What is more important is that, in the same period, Turkey saw a decrease in the number of European tourists in parallel to the influx of Arabs.

Concerning the reasons for this change of profile in the tourism sector, the rising security issues in Turkey in the aftermath of the street bombings, July 15 failed coup attempt and the following state of emergency in 2016 have adversely affected European tourist numbers in Turkey. The situation has been aggravated with Turkey's conflictual relationships with various European countries. The government's policies have also played an important role in the enlarging Arab tourism in the country. As "The Report: Turkey 2012" (Oxford Business Group, 2012) shows, while Turkey's foreign policy outlined by then-Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu combined with Erdoğan's personal prestige as the leader of the Muslim world have improved political and economic ties with Arab countries, Turkey's elimination of visa requirements for Syria, Qatar, Lebanon, Yemen and Jordan eased the mobility between Turkey and Arab countries. All these have in turn helped lure more Arab tourists to Turkey in the face of decreasing European population arriving the country.

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<sup>128</sup> Retrieved April 2, 2019 from <http://www.turob.com/tr/bilgi-merkezi/basin-bultenleri/ortadogu-pazari-istanbulda-turizmin-lokomotifi-istanbula-gelen-her-4-turistten-1i-arap>

As understood from the following news headline of Sabah news media “İstiklal is the favorite street of the Arab world”,<sup>129</sup> this change in the tourist profile has affected Beyoğlu as well. As the interviews show, in addition to the rising capital investment and the changing spatial structure, the influx of Arab tourists has also contributed to the neoliberal transformation of Beyoğlu through not only the further commodification of consumption scape and entertainment sector but also the integration of Arab capital into the investment frenzy in the district.

For the former, according to the interviewees, Arab tourists’ transformative impact revealed itself most in the changing consumption patterns in the district. Here, it is important to note that, when talking about increasing Arab population, most of the interviewees also mentioned about the diminishing European tourists in the district. For them, the negative impacts of the increasing Arab tourists have been aggravated with the absence of European tourists. According to interviews, one of the main problems with the Arab flow is the fact that

This is not only about the moving of Arabs to here but about the reconfiguration of Beyoğlu according to this new mass. This is a crude transformation, even an intervention, which undermines the local people and the things that belong to here (Deniz Özgür, personal communication, July 11, 2018).<sup>130</sup>

Café owner Berat (personal communication, July 4, 2018), explains this process of reshaping as follows:

While there was a dominance of local and European tourists, now the majority is Middle Eastern. And, this, whether you want it or not, changes the

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<sup>129</sup> Retrieved April 2, 2019 from <https://www.sabah.com.tr/pazar/2015/04/19/arap-dunyasinin-gozde-caddesi-istiklal>

<sup>130</sup> Translated from: “Burada sadece Arapların buraya taşınması değil aynı zamanda buranın bu yeni kitleye göre şekillenmesi söz konusu. Buradaki yerel halkı, buraya ait olanı yok sayan nobran bir dönüşüm bu”.

supply-demand dynamics of the businesses here. Now, the places are mostly shaped according to Arab tourists.<sup>131</sup>

No doubt, one of the most emblematic of these changes is the mushrooming of shisha cafes in İstiklal. According to Salih (personal communication, July 11, 2018) who runs a bookstore café in one of the historical passages of the İstiklal, these cafes symbolize the penetration of Arab capital to Beyoğlu: “there are concrete changes, of course, especially from economic aspect. Look at İstiklal Street now. What happened? Everywhere is shisha café. All of them are full of people. Arab capital penetrated into the market here”. The popularity and profitability of shisha business have reached to such a degree that there are some business owners who plan to switch their places to shisha cafes in the street. Berk (personal communication, July 12, 2018), who runs a café/bar in the street is one of them:

I am done with alcohol. I will switch the place to shisha-coffee-tea business. Now, they are the ones who have the best turnovers. The cost of shisha is 3 TRY. If you say tea, it has almost no cost. It is a very lucrative business.<sup>132</sup>

Similarly, Berat shares his own experience with this transformation and emphasizes that this change has been undergone not only in the function but also social qualities of places in such a way that deteriorates the established taste and socialization atmosphere mediated through such places in Beyoğlu:

This street, for instance, Küçük Parmakkapı street. It was the street I liked spending time most. I sat 5-6 hours, had a dinner, drunk a beer and left. At these times, there were beautiful places here. Now, they are gone. It is all shisha café. For example, this café located at the beginning of the street, Café K was a beautiful café serving alcohol. Now, it is a bad shisha café without alcohol. Such places change the people coming here as well (...) There has been significant investment for Arabs, especially those we can call upper

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<sup>131</sup> Translated from: “Yerli ve Avrupalı çok baskınken şu anda çoğunluk Ortadoğulu turist. Bu da ister istemez buradaki esnafın arz talep şeklini değiştiriyor. Şu anda mekanlar genelde Arap turistlere göre şekilleniyor”.

<sup>132</sup> Translated from: “Bırakıyorum alkolü, nargile, çay, kahve işine çevireceğim mekânı. Şu an en iyi ayakta duranlar onlar. Nargilenin masrafı 3 TRY Çay desen masrafı yok neredeyse, Çok karlı iş”.

class. Larger, more comfortable armchairs, larger places etc. However, what is more Beyoğlu spirit is what you see here now. This is what a qualified Beyoğlu customer asks for. S/he does not want more than this. S/he seeks for quality, a friendly conversation. This group has left after the Gezi though.

The increasing visibility of Arab presence in İstiklal Street is disturbing for the established businesses of Beyoğlu also because of its deteriorating impacts on the relative equality, diversity and inclusive nature of the district reflected on its everyday life spaces as well as the preferential treatment of the central government. Yusuf (personal communication, July 4, 2018) who runs a hotel in the street explain the way Arabs become more dominant and visible than the rest of other non-Turkish components of Beyoğlu as follows:

Just look at the signboards, they are either Arabic or Persian. There was no such thing before 2013. There are a lot of Kurdish businesses here. Have a look! Have you even seen a Kurdish signboard? You cannot. 6-7 million Kurd live in İstanbul but there is no single Kurdish signboard. Those of Arabs are everywhere.<sup>133</sup>

For Yusuf, such preferential treatment is valid for the implementation of the outdoor seating ban as well: “it (outdoor seating) is forbidden in this street too, for example. I do not put tables on the street but the doorsteps of shisha cafes are full of tables and chairs”.<sup>134</sup> It seems that while this attitude of the government is consistent with its tourism policies aiming to attract more tourists to Beyoğlu, according to the interviewees, it is detrimental to the existing networks in Beyoğlu flourished in years.

While increasing shisha cafes have been reconfiguring the physical space in Beyoğlu, Arab tourists also brought a new consumption style to the district

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<sup>133</sup> Translated from: “Şöyle bakın tabelalara ya Arapçadır ya Farsçadır. 2013’ten önce böyle bir şey yoktu. Burada bir sürü Kürtçe iş yeri var. Bakın! Hiç Kürtçe tabela gördünüz mü? Göremezsiniz. İstanbul’da 6-7 milyon Kürt yaşar. Bir tane Kürtçe tabela yok ama. Araplarınkiler her yerde”.

<sup>134</sup> Translated from: “Bu sokakta da yasak mesela. Ben atmıyorum. Ama nargilecilerin önü masa sandalye dolu”.

characterized by doing shopping in department stores and eating at places serving Middle Eastern food, which, for most of the interviewees, is directly linked to the current degradation of service quality in Beyoğlu. Kemal (personal communication, July 12, 2018) who works in a café-bar explains this relationality as follows:

Arab tourists bring new things here. For example, with their influence, shisha cafes started to increase, a food culture dominated by Middle Eastern cuisine has been disseminating and so on. On the other hand, this situation gives rise to the fact that people do not care how the things they have done. They just worry about how to make more money. And this, in turn, detract people who want to do good job here and those who demand for it from here.<sup>135</sup>

According to interviewees, one of the most important consequences of Beyoğlu's changing consumption scape in favor of eating and shopping has been the decreasing interest in the places representing the historically ingrained intellectual facet of Beyoğlu. Similar decrease has also been valid for the boutique manufacturing culture inherited from the Armenians and Greeks of the district. Mert (personal communication, July 12, 2018) describes the situation based on the decreasing book sales following the replacement of Europeans by Arabs:

One of the important reasons for the closure of many culture and art places in the street is the disappearance of European tourists. They were the ones who read, came here for books. Now, books do not attract the people recently coming here (...) The fact that European tourists who used to come Turkey have not come anymore has also affected our businesses. I am not saying to generalize but European tourists read more, which is already something known with numbers. You probably know, there used to be even performance theatres with subtitles here. Arab tourists who come here right now have no such reading habits. The number of people who come here and ask for an Arabic book is not even one per day. It is not preferred. Indeed, we have here, we have even an Arabic newspaper but there is no demand.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Translated from: "Arap turistler buraya yeni şeyler getiriyorlar. Mesela onların etkisiyle nargile kafeler artmaya başlıyor, orta doğu mutfağı ağırlıklı bir yemek anlayışı yaygınlaşıyor falan. Bu durum öte yandan da şeyi doğuruyor, artık insanlar yaptıklarının nasıl olduğuna bakmıyorlar, sadece nasıl daha çok para kazanırım kaygısı oluyor. Bu da burada güzel işler yapmak isteyen ve bunu talep eden insanları buradan uzaklaştırıyor".

<sup>136</sup> Translated from: "Caddedeki birçok kültür sanat mekanının kapatılmasının önemli nedenlerinden biri de Avrupalı turistlerin artık gelmiyor olması. Kitap okuyan, buraya kitap için genel onlardı, şu an gelenlerin ilgisini çekmiyor kitaplar (...) Türkiye'ye gelen Avrupalı turist gelmemesi de çok etkiledi bizim işleri. Genellemek için söylemiyorum ama Avrupalı turist daha çok okuyor, sayılarla bilinen bir

Similarly, for Ercüment (personal communication, July 9, 2018) who owns an ethnic clothing shop in one of the passages of İstiklal, the businesses which do not cater to the tastes of Arab customers have economic hardships. For them, considering the absence of European tourists, local people are the main source of income for now:

My best and most loyal customers are still the local people, not Syrians, Persians or Iranians. Iranians sometimes buy things, I have no objection to that but, for example, we sell colorful cloths. This is not something that Arabs could understand. They generally wear taller, black or dark brown staff. We are cheerful, breezy people here as you probably saw when you enter into the place, shalwars, rosy dresses etc. (...) If we do not have Turkish customers, we would be in trouble. European customers are very rare, three people once in two months.<sup>137</sup>

The new consumption patterns shaped by the Arab tourist flow to Beyoğlu did not remain entertainment sector untouched such that while the local entertainment venues catering to local and European tourists for a relatively affordable prices have disappeared, new expensive entertainment places serving first-class Arab customers started to emerge in İstiklal Street. These places are generally like bars or taverns with alcohol yet decorated with gold leaves and crown lodges. The main elements of entertainment in these places are DJs playing Arabic pop and belly dance shows. Moreover, the content of the shows is mostly designed to make customers pay more money. For Beyoğlu residents, these places which have been

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şey bu zaten. Biliyorsunuzdur, cadde üzerinde altyazılı tiyatrolar bile vardı burada. Buraya şimdi gelen Arap turist kitlesinin öyle bir okuma alışkanlığı yok. Buraya gelip Arapça kitap soran insanların sayısı günde bir bile değil, tercih edilmiyor yani. Aslında var burada, Arapça gazetemiz bile var ama talep yok”

<sup>137</sup> Translated from: “İstiklal'in enteresan bir ruhu vardır, ölmez öyle kolay kolay. Yine bizim yerlilerimiz sağolsun geliyorlar, Suriyeli, Faslı ya da İranlı değil. İranlılar bir nebze yine sağolsunlar para verip bir şeyler alıyorlar, pek itiraz etmiyorum. Ama mesela biz renkli giyim satıyoruz, Arabın anlayacağı bir şey değil renkli giyinmek. Onlar daha uzun, koyu siyah ya da koyu kahverengi şeyler giyiyorlar genelde. Biz çünkü hakikaten nepar ruhlu insanlarımız burada, görmüşsündür girer girmez. Şalvarlar olsun, güllü müllü elbiseler olsun falan yani (...) Türk müşterilerimiz olmasa yine yandık. Kırk yılın başı hakikaten yani, iki ayda bir gelen 3 tane Avrupa'lı müşteri falan oluyor”.

replacing the rooted night life destinations in Beyoğlu one by one are the symbols of bad quality entertainment as Serdar (personal communication, June 22, 2018)

explains:

Is Beyoğlu an entertainment center? Yes, it is. But entertainment had a soul here in the past. Now, it does not. Dirty places opened. For example, there was Kemancı. It moved not because of competition but because of the disappearance of these groups or the degeneration of the groups coming here.<sup>138</sup>

This increase in the first-class Arab night life destinations can be interpreted as an example of not only spatial but also cultural commodification of entertainment as these places not only caused the existing entertainment venues and their customers' migration from the district by increasing the market value of leisure space and consumption but also defined new entertainment codes motivated by making more money out of customers, which contradicts the human-scale, inclusive and diverse nature of night life in Beyoğlu in the eyes of Beyoğlu locals.

Furthermore, according to the interviews, in addition to their integration into the spatial transformation and everyday life of Beyoğlu as tourists, Arabs have also become a part of the reproduction of Beyoğlu in the role of investors as Yusuf (personal communication, July 4, 2018) explains: "Arabs also bought the ownership of the next door business. They are not just customers anymore".<sup>139</sup> For Kamil (personal communication, July 9, 2018), these places are "very luxury places". According to café owner Mehmet (personal communication, July 10, 2018), this is a state-led transformation:

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<sup>138</sup> Translated from: "Burası bir eğlence mekânı mı, evet öyle, ama eskiden bir ruhu var da burada eğlenenin. Şimdi öyle değil, bel altı mekanlar açıldı. Mesela bir kemancı vardı, kemancı taşındı. Rekabetten dolayı taşınmadı, kitlesini kaybettiği için taşındı buradan ya da buraya gelen kitle dejenere olduğu için taşındı".

<sup>139</sup> Translated from: "Yan taraftaki mekânın işletmesini de Araplar aldı şimdi. Sadece müşteri değişiler artık".

In this process (of transformation), the absence of (European) tourists led to a decrease in revenues here. What happened? Arabs took their places. Their shops increased. Arabs started to work everywhere. This is not because I am uncomfortable with that, but this transformation happened with the lead and hand of the state.<sup>140</sup>

Indeed, Mehmet's words seem consistent with the government's tourism and investment policy which aims to attract Arab capital to Turkey. To exemplify, in 2015, the Beyoğlu Municipality, Çalık Holding (same firm with the GAP Construction undertaken the Tarlabası Renewal Project) and Association of Turkish-Arabic Economic and Strategic Partnership (TASKA) organized the Real Estate Investment Forum where the partners gave the message that "the world will get to know Arab culture in Beyoğlu".<sup>141</sup> In 2016, Mayor Demircan who participated in the Cityscape Fair organized in Dubai said that "we are going to protect our investors in each nail banged on Beyoğlu".<sup>142</sup> In 2017, a similar event was organized with the participation of Turkish and Arab businesspeople in Aydın. In the event, Deputy Minister Mehmet Daniş invited Arab businesspeople to invest in Turkey. These efforts of the government have soon brought results which has deeply affected Beyoğlu.

As the fieldwork shows, Arab investment in Beyoğlu has both deepened the spatial inequalities and rendered local businesses more vulnerable in the face of rising segregation and aggravating financial hardships in Beyoğlu. For Ayşe (personal communication, July 10, 2018) who runs a bar with her husband in İstiklal Street for 12 years, most of the places left by the local businesses as a result of the

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<sup>140</sup> Translated from: "Bu süreçte turistlerin ayağının buradan kesilmesi buranın ekonomik gelirinin kesilmesine sebep oldu. Ne oldu? Onların yerini Araplar aldı. Onların dükkanları arttı. Arap çalışanlar geldi, her yere. Bundan rahatsız olduğumdan değil ama bu dönüşüm devletin yolunu açtığı, onun eliyle yapılan bir dönüşüm oldu".

<sup>141</sup> Retrieved April 4, 2019 from <https://www.aksam.com.tr/ekonomi/dunya-arap-kulturunu-beyoglunda-taniyacak/haber-438356>

<sup>142</sup> Retrieved April 4, 2019 from <http://beyoglu.bel.tr/haber/baskan-demircandan-yabanci-yatirimcilara-davet-630.html>

bans, increasing prices and changing customer profile were filled by Arabs, which sped up the handover process in Beyoğlu:

There are a lot of Arabs now. The locals have already gone (...) There are few places, people left behind like us who stay and try to resist here thinking about what would happen if we leave too. Many moved their businesses to Kadıköy or Beşiktaş. Their places were first taken by Arab clothing stores. Then, restaurants, bars and luxury perfume shops opened. Places were handed over in that way a lot.<sup>143</sup>

Furthermore, for various interviewees, Arab's becoming property owners in the district signifies not only the growing economic gaps and inequalities between the local and foreign businesses but also the "Arabization of Beyoğlu" which also indicates a diminish in the sense of belonging on the side of the Beyoğlu residents as Kamil maintains: "Arabs come and buy their own shops here, open their own businesses. They pay one-year rent in cash. They employ their own people. Beyoğlu is getting Arabized".<sup>144</sup>

As shown, the boom in the number of Arab tourists combined with the disappearance of Europeans has transformed not only the spatial formation but also social components embedded in this spatiality in Beyoğlu. Particularly, the concentration of tourism revenues in the hands of Arab tourists and the resulting reshuffling of supply-demand relations have pushed some of the businesses which have already tried to survive the existing upgrading in the district to integrate into the newly emerging neoliberal market while making the cost of endurance higher for others who choose to resist. Arab tourists' integration into Beyoğlu market as property owners has fastened the existing neoliberal transformation in the district by

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<sup>143</sup> Translated from: "Çok fazla Arap var artık. Buranın asıl yerlilerinin çoğu taşındı zaten (...) Bizim gibi burada kalan ve biz gidersek meydan kime kalacak diye direnmeye çalışan birkaç kişi, mekân kaldı. Mekanımı Kadıköy'e ya da Beşiktaş'a taşıyan çok oldu. Kapanan barların yerlerini ilk önce Arap kıyafetçiler aldı. Sonra yemek yerleri, barlar ve lüks parfümcüler açıldı. Mekanlar çok el değiştirdi bu şekilde".

<sup>144</sup> Translated from: "Araplar gelip kendi dükkanlarını alıyorlar buradan, kendi iş yerlerini açıyorlar. 1 yıllık peşin veriyorlar parayı. Kendi işçilerini çalıştırıyorlar. Araplaşıyor Beyoğlu".

letting foreign capital enclose the space formerly used by boutique consumption and relatively affordable entertainment places embedded in the everyday life of Beyoğlu and transform it into an instrument for profit-making in line well with the government's touristic imagery and discourse on Beyoğlu.

All in all, one of the main motivations lying behind the production of space in Beyoğlu is the neoliberalization strategy of the AKP government. Having instrumentalized the physical space of the district in partnership with the local government as well as domestic and international investment networks, the government has produced and reproduced not only relations of production and property by facilitating the domination of exchange value over use value of space and handover of land from the existing Beyoğlu residents and businesses to capitalists but also surplus value by reorganizing the consumption patterns and everyday life dynamics in the district by opening the way for deconstruction and reconstruction of the existing space, breaking the existing social networks established and flourished through the everyday interaction and spatial practice and encouraging a new consumer profile.

## 5.2 Ideological framing of space and the Islamist neo-Ottomanist production of Beyoğlu

According to Lefebvre, state not only functions as a guarantor of the maintenance of capitalist system but also instrumentalizes space for its political and ideological purposes. Similarly, under the AKP's rule, cities have not only played a role in the realization of the government's neoliberal economic programme based on tourism and urban investment, but they have also become instruments for the party to exercise their conservative Islamist and neo-Ottomanist identity and politics at the

grassroots level. Thus, in this section, I focus on the ideological production of space as the second layer of space-making process. It is important to note that although I treat Islamism and neo-Ottomanism as complementary facets of one single ideological framing in the scope of this thesis, I analyze the on-the-ground spatial manifestations of these ideologies in Beyoğlu separately to be able to explore the processes more clearly without undermining the deep connection between the two.

To begin with, as mentioned, Islamism of the AKP is not only about instilling Islamic values in the minds and everyday life practices of people. It is also produced and maintained as a discourse which pragmatically align with the government's aims to integrate into global markets, boost competition and neoliberalize cities, all of which require to secularize the overall city landscape (Tuğal, 2009). This understanding which makes neoliberal economy deemed compatible with piety (Lovering & Türkmen, 2011) is visible in the strategic engineering of the social realm in Beyoğlu where the AKP imposes restrictions on alcohol instead of banning its sale and consumption completely, implements the outdoor seating ban preferentially and allows Arab tourists' expensive night life habits to mushroom (Tuğal, 2009). According to Tuğal (2009, p. 55) who calls this process as "molecular Islamization", under the AKP rule, "(...) the emphasis further shifted to creating the proper urban infrastructure and culture that would attract investment. The overall appearance of cities was secularized, but cities also became more Islamic through the integration of Islamic businesses, consumers, and lifestyles".

In the case of Beyoğlu, this molecular Islamization which has been spatialized through the removal of tables on the street, alcohol policies, construction of the Taksim mosque and the influx of Arab tourists is also highly related to the social reorganization of Beyoğlu which has been crystallized in 1) the vanishing of

secular symbols, lifestyles and groups from public sphere and everyday flow of Beyoğlu in such a way that subverts the social and affective components embedded in the meaning, function and memories of Beyoğlu space while avoiding any impairment in the degree of secularism which is necessitated by the neoliberal conduct, 2) the disappearance of culture and art places (e.g. bookstores) on the one hand and in the alienation of educated and intellectual classes from Beyoğlu and replacement of these with new Islamic culture and conservative groups on the other, and 3) the deterioration of politically oppositional meaning of space and exile of activist groups from the district. As Deniz Özgür explains:

Actually, this is a taming. There is a group of people who are excluded from here, people having more leftist ideas, secular viewpoints and practices, portrayed as marginals by them, students, those who are interested in culture and art, writers, painters, intellectuals etc. These people were part of the sociology and publicness here. These people were wanted to be excluded from here. The cinema halls, theatres, bookstores were closed. This (exclusion) was done in the streets, where this publicness is produced, through table and alcohol bans. This group was wanted to be exiled from here.<sup>145</sup>

### 5.2.1 Islamizing the secular while secularizing Islam for the wealthy

Indeed, secular and religious components of space and everyday life have always managed to coexist in Beyoğlu without any complain from the users of space.

According to Metin (personal communication, July 11, 2018) this coexistence is not only normal but also something peculiar to Beyoğlu:

People live here together. Nobody complains one another. Some sell beer under this small mosque (Mescit), nobody says a word. On weekends, tables

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<sup>145</sup> Translated from: “Bu bir ehlileştirme durumu aslında. Şuanda buradan dışlanan bir grup var, daha ziyade sol görüşlü, daha seküler bir hayat görüşü ve pratikleri olan, onlar tarafından marjinal diye kodlanan, öğrenciler, kültür sanatla ilgileneler, yazar çizerler, aydınlar vs. Bu insanlar buranın sosyolojisinin ve kamusallığının bir parçasıydı. Bu insanlar buradan dışlanmak istendi. Bu insanların gittiği sinemalar, tiyatrolar, kitap evleri kapatıldı. O kamusallığın üretildiği alanlardan biri olan sokaklarda masa sandalye ve alkol yasaklarıyla yapıldı bu. Bu kitle buralardan sürülmek istendi”.

are put close to the church. There is no harm done. This is indigenous to here.<sup>146</sup>

However, as Metin continues “Tayyip says what he says, does not ask much, he says artillery barracks and constructs it, says mosque and constructs it. He is strong-willed”.<sup>147</sup> Under such authoritarian conduct, one of the main strategic moves of the government to implement its Islamist agenda in Beyoğlu was the removal of tables and chairs on the street and restrictions on alcohol consumption which Erdoğan defended with the following words:

Wars are not only waged in the battlefield. The real war is the one that is waged in the spiritual and social areas. This is what dissolves the society and collapses the state... You defeat the nation that has no sacred values worth fighting for not once but always. For this reason, in 1920, occupation forces hand out free alcohol to our youngsters from their ships anchored in İstanbul harbor. Even if they would leave the city one day, they knew that the most permanent damage would be the spiritual one.<sup>148</sup>

The construction of a mosque in Taksim Square together with the law which forbids alcohol sale and consumption in the 100-meter vicinity of religious places has also played an important role in the concretization of the AKP’s Islamism in Beyoğlu. The process started even before the building of the mosque with a smear campaign launched by the government officials and partisan media organs against the places selling alcohol in Beyoğlu. One example of this is the news published by Yeniakit with the title of “Tavern next to mosque”.<sup>149</sup> The news which pointed one bar as a target and criminalized the bar owner as selling alcohol next to a mosque narrated the

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<sup>146</sup> Translated from: “İnsanlar burada beraber yaşayıp gidiyorlar. Kimsenin kimseye bir şey dediği yok. Adamlar şu mescidin altında bira satıyor, kimse bir şey demiyor. Haftasonları kilisenin oraya masa atılıyor, kimseye zararı yok. Buraya özgür bir şey bu”.

<sup>147</sup> Translated from: “Tayyip ne diyorsa yapıyor. Pek sormuyor yani. Kışla diyor, kışla yapıyor. Cami diyor, cami yapıyor. Tayyip dediğim dedik yani”.

<sup>148</sup> Retrieved April 10, 2019 from <http://haber.sol.org.tr/toplum/erdogandan-alkol-aciklamasi-biz-teblig-gorevimizi-yaptik-187612>

<sup>149</sup> Retrieved April 10, 2019 from <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr/haber/camiye-bitisik-meyhane-519195.html>

situation as follows “the siege of bars around the historical mosques in Beyoğlu district of İstanbul has been continuing, intensifying its effect”. The news explained the inappropriateness of the situation by emphasizing Beyoğlu’s symbolic meaning stemming from its being one of the districts “marked by the seal of conquest”. It also gave place to an interview with a person who calls officials for duty to immediately stop this trajectory, arguing that “(Beyoğlu) was not exposed to such thing even in the occupation of İstanbul”.

According to interviews, in addition to the outdoor seating ban and other intimidating measures regarding the alcohol consumption and sale in Beyoğlu, the government’s fight against places selling alcohol has also become visible in the problems experienced with renewal of the alcohol licenses as Serdar (personal communication, June 22, 2018) describes: “here, the entertainment sector has come to stop. I think this is deliberately done because many of my friends who used to have an alcohol license failed to renew their licenses”.<sup>150</sup> Similarly, for Metin (personal communication, July 11, 2018) who emphasizes the importance of having a license in Beyoğlu, the law which forbids the alcohol consumption and sale in the close vicinity of religious and educational institutions will adversely affect those who want to have license for selling alcohol:

In Beyoğlu, license issue is very critical. For example, if we hand over this place, it would be very difficult for us to have license again. Now they have new criteria for the license that it should be distant to religious places, schools and churches. Ours does not fit that description. What can you do?<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Translated from: “Burada eğlence sektörü sekteye uğradı. Bu planlı yapılan bir şey gibi geliyor bana. Çünkü daha önceden içki ruhsatı olan pek çok arkadaşımın işletmelerine ruhsat yenileme sırasında ruhsat verilmemeye başlandı”.

<sup>151</sup> Translated from: “Beyoğlu’nda ruhsat meselesi çok önemli. Mesela biz şimdi burayı devretsek yeni ruhsatı çok zor alırız. Şimdi yeni kısıt koydular ruhsat için, ibadethanelere, okullara, kiliselere uzak olacak diye. E bizim yetişmiyor mesafe. Ne yapacaksın?”

Furthermore, as interviews show, despite the AKP government's discourse justifying the intervention on alcohol in Beyoğlu solely on the basis of protecting Islamic values, as discussed above, one motivation lying behind this policy has been to clean the Beyoğlu for more lucrative investments and reconfigure the entertainment sector in a way that caters to wealthier customers, which is evident in the proliferation of Arabic night clubs in the district for the last years. For some interviewees, the government's policies targeting to restrict the alcohol consumption seems contradictory considering its aim to stimulate a consumption-based economy in the district as Berat (personal communication, July 4, 2018) states:

There is a serious contradiction here. On the one hand, the tax on alcohol is one of the main sources of income and there is a state which feeds on alcohol taxes. On the other hand, there is a state which leaves a place like Beyoğlu with a 200-year entertainment culture without alcohol. This is a big contradiction.<sup>152</sup>

However, based on the findings of the fieldwork, one can argue that these Islamist moves of the government also served the social engineering of Beyoğlu, which, for Deniz Özgür (personal communication, July 11, 2018), has been one of the main goals of the government's Beyoğlu project from the beginning. According to Özgür, social transformation of the district has two seemingly contradictory yet practically interwoven pillars such that it builds on the deterrence of a certain group of people from frequenting Beyoğlu on the one hand and the replacement of them with middle- and upper-middle class Islamic groups on the other hand. And, despite it is still not achieved completely, Beyoğlu is aimed to attract the latter group which is associated with luxury places and consumption-based everyday life habits in such

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<sup>152</sup> Translated from: "Ortada çok ciddi bir çelişki var. Bir yandan alkolden alınan vergi en önemli gelirlerden biriyken, alkol vergisinden beslenen bir devlet varken ondan sonra kalkıp da rahat 200 yıllık bir eğlence kültürüne sahip Beyoğlu gibi bir yeri alkolsüz bırakmak çok büyük bir çelişki. Burası bir kendini ifade etme yeridir buraya gelenler için. Öte yandan da devlet için de bu böyle, şunu diyor: bak biz beyoğlunu bitirdik".

a way that the neoliberal economy established through the Arab tourists' secular consumption habits flourished in Beyoğlu is not contrasted and harmed by the Islamist agenda imposed by the government to the local secular people of Beyoğlu.

The spatial change led by the outside seating and alcohol policies of the government caused the habitual Beyoğlu people who used to hang out in entertainment places and enjoy socializing with each other on the street to migrate to other districts where they feel more comfortable and freer (Mert, personal communication, July 12, 2018). This process of outflow in Beyoğlu was managed on the one hand through the rising unaffordability of hanging out and drinking as Yılmaz (personal communication, July 12, 2018) explains “taxes influenced here a lot, even I started to drink at home. When it is that much expensive, how can you drink outside?”<sup>153</sup> and through the decreasing quality of people as Metin says “now it is tinpot here, very poor quality. It is not insecurity but lack of quality. Everybody is mucking around”<sup>154</sup> on the other.

According to interviewees, one of the most important consequences of this spatial and populational transformation in Beyoğlu has been the vanishing secular lifestyles embedded in the social and affective texture of the district as well as the everyday flow of life since the late Ottoman era. For instance, Mert exemplifies this situation through his experience:

People don't feel comfortable in Beyoğlu anymore. I don't want to compare but Kadıköy is freer than here now. I cannot find the freedom here that I find there anymore. Kadıköy is like, more openminded. It does not intervene in your life. It might be because more conservative people prefer here now. Power, money might make people come here, especially money. There is a

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<sup>153</sup> Translated from: “Vergiler çok etkiledi burayı. Ben bile evde içmeye başladım. Bu kadar pahalıyken nasıl içeceksin ki dışarıda?”

<sup>154</sup> Translated from: “Artık buranın içi boş, çok kalitesiz. Güvensizlik falan değil de kalitesizlik var burada. Herkes boş boş dolanıyor”.

new crowd here these new places without alcohol and culture brought here. This changes here.<sup>155</sup>

It is important to note that, as various interviewees mention, secular environment of Beyoğlu and the resulting freedom from social judgements and community pressure was a valuable asset for not only those who have secular worldviews but also more conservative people as café owner Mehmet (personal communication, July 10, 2018) explains:

Conservative people came here as well. They felt comfortable here because, just think, s/he is with his/her boyfriend or girlfriend. They are not comfortable in their own environment. What did they do? They came to Beyoğlu. Here nobody says anything when you hug somebody or hold someone's hand. Nobody intervenes. In that sense, Beyoğlu was a place everybody felt free.<sup>156</sup>

Similarly, pub owner Bülent (personal communication, July 9, 2018) mentioned about his conservative customers. For him, there is no problem between seculars and conservatives, they can share same space in Beyoğlu but such divide is constructed to sow discord:

Look, I have headscarfed customers as well. She drinks alcohol in a different glass, or she does not drink at all, just sit. Whether she drinks or not, I do not care. It is her responsibility. A conservative person can come to this place and drink. We do not say anything. They have right to go any place they want. They do not have to drink just because they come to here. We say nothing. But what happens? They separate us.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Translated from: “İnsanların kendilerini çok özgür hissetmiyorlar artık Beyoğlu’nda. Kıyaslama yapmak istemiyorum ama Kadıköy artık buradan daha özgür. Oradaki özgürlüğü burada bulamıyorum artık. Kadıköy daha açık görüşlü, senin hayatına müdahale etmeyen bir yapıda sanki. Artık daha muhafazakâr insanların burayı tercih etmesinden olabilir belki. Güç, iktidar, para insanların buraya gelmesini sağlayabiliyor. Özellikle para. Bu yeni alkolüz, kültür-sanatsız mekanların buraya getirdiği başka bir kitle var, burayı değiştiriyor bu durum”.

<sup>156</sup> Translated from: “Muhafazakar insanlar da geliyordu buraya. Burada kendilerini rahat hissediyorlardı. Çünkü, düşünsene, erkek arkadaşı kadın arkadaşı var yanında. Kendi ortamlarından rahat değiller. Ne yapıyorlardı? Beyoğlu’na geliyorlardı. Burada kimse birine sarıldın diye, elini tuttu diye sana bir şey demez, karışmaz. Burası o anlamda herkesin kendini özgür hissettiği bir yerd”.

<sup>157</sup> Translated from: “Bakın, benim türbanlı müşterilerim de var. Alkol alıyor ama farklı bardakta içiyor ya da içmiyor oturuyor. İçsin, bana ne, onun sorumluluğu. Muhafazakar da olsa biri bu mekana girebilir, içkisini de içebilir, biz onlara hiçbir şey demiyoruz. Onlar da istediği yere girebilmeli.

It is also significant to mention that, for the Beyoğlu residents, secularism does not mean drinking alcohol. Rather, for them, what makes Beyoğlu unique has been its culture accompanying secular everyday life practices of people. Emre's (personal communication, July 4, 2018) critiques of the recent transformation in Beyoğlu's places and entertainment life explains this clearly:

Nevizade and its surroundings have been changed so badly. In the past, there were beautiful taverns there. Now, there are several poor-quality bars. Everybody is drunk. It is full of people who do not know how to drink (alcohol) at nights. That place lost its culture too.<sup>158</sup>

Although it is early to be conclusive regarding the impacts of the mosque as it has yet started to serve, most of the Beyoğlu residents think that the mosque project is also a part of the government's Beyoğlu transformation. Here, it is significant to mention that Beyoğlu residents is not a homogenous group. As a reflection of this, interviewees vary in their opinions and interpretations regarding the transformation in Beyoğlu. Among others, the construction of a mosque was the most controversial issue during the interviews. For instance, one interviewee stated that a mosque has always been needed in Beyoğlu as the existing one is not big enough to serve the people (Yusuf, personal communication, July 4, 2018). While Kemal interpreted the mosque as a good symbol of coexistence of differences as it is built next to churches (personal communication, July 12, 2018), Metin (personal communication, July 11, 2018) and Ercüment (personal communication, July 11, 2018) stated that a mosque cannot be that much powerful to affect the secular character of Beyoğlu. Despite few different perspectives, however, most of the interviewees stated that a mosque in the Taksim Square is just another symbolic gesture of the government like outdoor

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Buraya geldi diye alkol alması da şart değil. Biz bir şey demiyoruz. Ama ne oluyor? Bizi ayrıştırıyorlar”.

<sup>158</sup> Translated from: “Nevizade'nin oralar çok kötü şekilde değişti. Çok güzel meyhaneler vardı eskiden. Şimdi bir sürü kötü bar açıldı. Herkes zilzurna sarhoş. İçmeyi bilmeyen insanlarla dolu oralar geceleri. Kültürünü kaybetti orası da”.

seating ban and alcohol restriction as pub owner Bülent (personal communication, July 9, 2018) who considers the mosque project as a threat to the secular life practices in Beyoğlu: “this is not about religion; this is to destroy our living spaces, nothing more”.<sup>159</sup>

For Deniz Özgür (personal communication, July 7, 2018) and Ali Mendillioğlu (personal communication, June 12, 2018), the construction of a mosque has particular significance in terms of the government’s aim to conservatize the secular atmosphere of Beyoğlu as it not only has a symbolic meaning as a religious place but also works as a strategic tool by its very nature. This refers to the fact that mosque as a gathering place for a conservative crowd will facilitate the spreading of this crowd to Taksim Square and İstiklal Street after the prayers and wittingly or unwittingly reappropriate the space:

By constructing a mosque in Taksim Square, they in a sense make here a showcase for the conservatization because, with this mosque, 1) Taksim Square will become a courtyard for the mosque and the church next to it will not be used, which Artillery Barracks also aims and 2) the mosque will transform the surrounding places as well. There will be no alcohol sale around it. There is now 100-meter rule. It will expand too. Thus, it is obvious that such transformation is aimed, and Taksim Square and Beyoğlu will become its showcase.<sup>160</sup>

According to Mehmet (personal communication, July 10, 2018), the mosque will function as a transformative instrument in Beyoğlu also because it is an institutional form of religion under the authority of the state:

Here, what matters is not the religion itself. It is the institutionalization of religion and the resulting othering. Mosque also means the religious speeches

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<sup>159</sup> Translated from: “Mesele din değil. Bu bizim yaşam alanımızı yok etmek için yapılan bir şey. Başka bir şey değil”.

<sup>160</sup> Translated from: “Taksim meydanına cami yapmakla bir anlamda burayı muhafazakarlaştırma için bir vitrin haline getirmiş oluyorlar. Çünkü bu cami ile 1) Taksim Meydanı bir cami avlusu haline gelecek. Yanındaki kilise kullanılmayacak ki kışla da bunu hedefliyordu ve 2) cami etraftaki mekanları da dönüştürecek. Etrafında içki satılmayacak. Şuan 100 metre kuralı var, o da genişleyecek. Dolayısıyla böyle bir dönüşümün hedeflendiği aşkar ve Taksim Meydanı ve Beyoğlu bunun bir vitrini haline gelecek.

(*fetvas*) and conversation which otherizes those who do not fit the Sunni Muslim description. Thus, I respect the mosques, yes, but how much do they respect one who is not one of them?<sup>161</sup>

Last but not least, according to interviewees, in the process of Islamization of secular lifestyles and the concomitant disappearance of secular groups in Beyoğlu, Arab tourist flows have also played an important role as Ayşe (personal communication, July 10, 2018) maintains: “they try to create a more conservative Beyoğlu. Indeed, this is a secular place but now, with the Arabs, conservatization starts”.<sup>162</sup> For various interviewees, Arab crowds changing the landscape and everyday life of Beyoğlu has transformed not only the spatial organization and functionality of Beyoğlu but also the very meaning of the district, which has been crystallized in Cem’s (personal communication, June 22, 2018) words describing the İstiklal Street as “an ordinary street in the Middle East”.<sup>163</sup>

It is important to underline that the increasing Arab populations has been transforming the district in terms of not only the Islamization of the overall appearance of district scape but also the commodification of everyday life by keeping the neoliberal consumption intact through the flourishing Arabic nightlife and other everyday places in Beyoğlu. This can be understood as a dual mechanism which has been aimed to be established in Beyoğlu, characterized by the transformation of the district into the flagship of conservatism in its appearance but at a certain point (Deniz Özgür, personal communication, July 11, 2018).

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<sup>161</sup> Translated from: “Zaten mesele inancın kendisi değil burada. İnancın kurumsallaşması ve kurumsallaşırken de oluşan ötekileştirme. Cami demek aynı zamanda orada verilen Sünni, Müslüman, bunun dışında kalanları ötekileştirici fetvalar demek, sohbetler demek. Dolayısıyla ben saygı duyuyorum camiye evet ama onlar kendilerinden olmayana ne kadar saygı duyuyorlar”.

<sup>162</sup> Translated from: “Daha muhafazakâr bir Beyoğlu yaratmaya çalışıyorlar. Burası seküler bir yer aslında. Ama şimdi Araplarla beraber bir muhafazakarlaşma başlıyor”.

<sup>163</sup> Translated from: “Şuan burası Orta Doğu’daki sıradan bir cadde gibi.

As understood from above, the government's alcohol restrictions, outdoor seating ban, the construction of a mosque in Taksim Square and the Arab tourist flow appear to serve more than just the literal Islamization of Beyoğlu as they leave a room for the (re)production of neoliberal practices in the district crystallized in the mushrooming secular entertainment venues catering to Arab tourists. As argued by Tuğal, these might rather be understood as the molecular Islamization moves of the government in Beyoğlu where the transformation has affected most the local people of Beyoğlu who embrace secular everyday life practices and (re)appropriate Beyoğlu space through their spatial practices (e.g. consuming alcohol, sitting on the streets and socializing with each other).

### 5.2.2 Islamism as a populist reappropriation of art, culture and space in Beyoğlu

As detailed in the previous chapters, the government actors have embraced a powerful populist rhetoric as a justification for their top-down spatial governance during its rule and developed it as a strand of its Islamic identity. This populist Islamism of the AKP is mainly situated at the claim that we are the true representative of the people of this country, the people referring to the practicing Muslims of the country oppressed and excluded from the ruling positions by the secular Kemalists until the AKP rule (Yilmaz & Bashirov, 2018).

Furthermore, such understanding redefines being Muslim based on an us/them division, as Yilmaz and Bashirov argues, “the regime divided the society into ‘us’ and ‘them’ based on the distinction between its conservative and nationalist allies and secular, leftist, Alevi, non-Muslim” (2018). This gesture also explains the appropriation of Islamic values and practices by the government which is observable

in Beyoğlu as well. Deniz Özgür exemplifies this with the collective fast-breaking meals organized in Beyoğlu:

In Ramadan, Ramadan tents are set up but not like in the past. In the past, people got in line, get food. You could eat when you had no money. There were earth tables. They were fast-breaking tents too. They were humble places where everybody brought something as much as they could for the fast-breaking. They do not allow earth tables anymore. This is about that both of them are fast-breaking, but they marginalize the other and say that theirs is true.<sup>164</sup>

This marriage of populism and Islamism characterized by the us/them binary produced by the government has often been crystallized in Erdoğan's and other party members' statements targeting educated and intellectual classes (e.g. academicians, students) who are defined as them and often associated with the west as opposed to the East referring to us, as observed in the following words of Bilal Erdoğan: "occupying forces which could not occupy us occupied the minds of our intellectuals. In this country, for years, educated groups, so-called intellectuals assumed that attacking on the values of this nation is modernization and progressiveness".<sup>165</sup> For these reasons, several times, the intellectual and educated classes were declared as enemies of the nation and the greatest threats to the cultural development of the country as Erdoğan himself says: the biggest problem of our country is that a group belittling its own country has virtually possessed our art and culture world for a long time. Thanks god, this captivity is coming to an end slowly".<sup>166</sup> While the government and its supporters have blamed the existing

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<sup>164</sup> Translated from: "Ramazan'da iftar çadırları falan kuruluyor ama eskisi gibi değil. Eskiden o çadırlarda sıraya girip yemek yenirdi, paranız yokken karnınızı doyururdunuz. Yeryüzü sofraları kurulurdu. Onlar da iftar çadırıydı, herkesin elinden geldiğince bir şeyler getirip yediği mütevazı yerlerdi. Artık yeryüzü çadırlarına izin vermiyorlar. Bu şey meselesi, ikisi de iftar ama onlar diğerini ötekileştirip kendilerinin olanın doğru olduğunu söylüyorlar".

<sup>165</sup> Retrieved April 18, 2019 from <https://www.haberler.com/tugva-yukse-istisare-kurulu-uyesi-bilal-erdogan-10942660-haberi/>

<sup>166</sup> Retrieved April 18, 2019 from <https://tr.sputniknews.com/turkiye/201812191036709550-cumhurbaskani-erdogan-kultursanat-odulleri/>

cultural capital classes of Turkey, they also self-criticize themselves as not doing much in the areas of culture and art during their rule.<sup>167</sup> This reprimand of Erdoğan combined with his antagonistic stance against the secular intellectual circles of the country tells a lot about the government's Islamist production of space in Beyoğlu as well such that:

Here (Beyoğlu) is the place where culture is produced and also is the space of living, socialization and everyday life for the people within this production. Here is the center of art and culture. If you remember what Erdoğan said (...) Here, Beyoğlu, with its people, intellectual production and space, represents the art and culture that the government could not appropriate.<sup>168</sup>

During the interviews, one of the most repeated comments regarding the transformation of Beyoğlu was “Beyoğlu is getting uncultured”. For various Beyoğlu residents, this is something that the government has made on purpose as Serdar (personal communication, June 22, 2018) maintains: “they try to create a culture, a place as they wish”.<sup>169</sup> As the fieldwork shows, one of the most critical steps to the cultural transformation of Beyoğlu has been the changing spatial formation and composition of Beyoğlu.

The fieldwork shows that this was achieved on the one hand through the closure of various art and culture venues which were historically ingrained in the intellectual life of Beyoğlu. For Halil and his friends (personal communication, July 4, 2018), thanks to such places, Beyoğlu was an opportunity for many people to improve themselves culturally as in the case of Ayşe (personal communication, July 10, 2018) who states that various people who had never been in a concert before first

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<sup>167</sup> Retrieved April 18, 2019 from [http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/kultur-sanat/1197315/Erdogan\\_dan\\_kultur-sanat\\_ozelestirisi.html](http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/kultur-sanat/1197315/Erdogan_dan_kultur-sanat_ozelestirisi.html)

<sup>168</sup> Translated from: “Burası kültür sanatın üretildiği yer ve bu üretimin içindeki insanların yaşama, sosyalleşme, günlük hayat mekanı. Kültür sanatın merkezi burası. Hatırlarsanız ne demişti Erdoğan (...) İşte Beyoğlu iktidarın ele geçiremediği bu kültür sanatı temsil ediyor, insanıyla, entelektüel üretimiyle ve mekanıyla”.

<sup>169</sup> Translated from: “Kendi kafalarına göre bir kültür, bir semt oluşturmaya çalışıyorlar”.

met opera and ballet in AKM (...) My acquaintance with cinema when I first got İstanbul was thanks to Emek Theatre. Now we lost both<sup>170</sup> and Kamil (personal communication, July 9, 2018) who explains his own experience as: “in the past, there were cinemas, theatres here. We used to go and see them. Now there were no such places. We got uncultured”.<sup>171</sup>

Furthermore, as these places were deeply incorporated into the everyday life in the district as well as the memories of the residents, for the interviewees, the loss of them one by one is not only indicates the degradation of intellectual culture and life in Beyoğlu but also symbolizes the critical place of such places in the social and affective layers of space and everyday life in Beyoğlu. Serdar explains this intermingling relationship through his own experience:

There was a place called Naregatsi, for example. It was a place which was run by an Armenian citizen, decorated completely with seashells. You would take books from nets to read. Now, there is Demirören on its place. It is terrible. There was Arion Bookstore. Now, there is Simit Sarayı on its place. How many of my girlfriends did I meet in Arion? How many tears did I shed? How many times did I get excited? But now, it is Simit Saray. This is terrible. I feel so bad. I am so sorry.<sup>172</sup>

On the other hand, the disappearance of other places apart from art and culture venues has also played a crucial role in the vanishing intellectual atmosphere of the district. The main reason for this was the historically rooted symbiotic relationship between different places which has stemmed from and produced through the lifestyles and spatial practices of people who see and experience space and its

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<sup>170</sup> Translated from: “Hayatında hiç konsere gitmemiş insanlar opera ile baleyle AKM’de tanıştı (...) Benim İstanbul’a ilk geldiğimde sinemayla tanışmam Emek Sineması ile olmuştu. İkisini de kaybettik”.

<sup>171</sup> Translated from: “Eskiden buralarda hep sinemalar, tiyatrolar vardı. Giderdik izlerdik. Şimdi kalmadı böyle yerler. Cahilleştik”.

<sup>172</sup> Translated from: “Naregatsi vardı mesela. Bu bir Ermeni vatandaşın işlettiği, içerisi tamamen deniz dekorlarıyla döşenmiş bir mekandı. Filelerden alırdınız kitapları okumak için. Şimdi yerinde Demirören var. Korkunç bir şey. Arion kitabevi vardı. Şimdi yerinde Simit Sarayı var. Arion kitabevinde kaç kız arkadaşımın buluştum, kaç gözyaşı döktüm, kaç kez heyecan duydum. Ama şimdi Simit Sarayı. Bu korkunç bir şey. Çok kötü oldum, çok özür dilerim”.

components as a whole. This not only explains why an intervention in one group of places which represents a particular lifestyle directly affects the others but also reveals the government's motivation lying behind its molecular transformative moves targeting different components of space as Deniz Özgür also maintains:

The government wiped out the culture and art here. It broke Beyoğlu's connection with culture and art. I mean it disconnected café and bookstore, bookstore and theatre, theatre and cinema. In return, we see that people also lost touch with these. People distanced from here, they were removed. In short, it wanted the identity created through culture and art to wipe out because as long as Beyoğlu continues to exist, the culture and art production and identity that it could not possess will be more visible.<sup>173</sup>

One example of this is the café Halil works. According to Halil (personal communication, July 4, 2018), even the café he works used to be a sort of culture center thanks to the intellectual people who used to frequent the place but now these people are gone:

Different groups came here, organized book discussions, reading circles. They read Kurdish, Turkish, English, Persian books. They read books, made discussions and assessments on them. They organized poetry activities.<sup>174</sup>

Another example is that of Mert (personal communication, July 12, 2018). For him, the oppressions on places selling alcohol and the resulting disappearance of secular groups from Beyoğlu have adversely impacted the customer base of the bookstore he works since those who read books were the same people with those who hang out in these places:

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<sup>173</sup> Translated from: "İktidar buradaki kültür ve sanatı yok etti. Buranın kültür ve sanatla ilişkisini kopardı. İşte kafe ile kitapçının, kitapçı ile tiyatronun, tiyatro ile sinemanın bağı kopardı. Dolayısıyla buradaki insanların da bunlarla olan bağının koptuğunu görüyoruz. İnsanlar buradan uzaklaştı, uzaklaştırıldı. Özetle buradaki kültür ve sanatla var olan kimliğin yok olmasını istedi. Çünkü burası var olmaya devam ettikçe kendi sahip olmadığı ve ele geçiremediği bu kültür sanat üretimi ve kimliği daha görünür olacaktı".

<sup>174</sup> Translated from: "Farklı gruplar gelirdi buraya, kitap günleri yaparlardı, okuma günleri yaparlardı. Kürtçe, Türkçe, İngilizce, Farsça kitaplar okurlardı. Kitap okur, üzerine tartışır, değerlendirme yaparlardı. Şiir günleri yaparlardı".

Recently, people do not go to theatres. They do not buy books but they eat somehow. In parallel to this, there is an increase in the number of eating-drinking places. These places are generally alcohol-free places. There is a serious pressure on places selling alcohol, they are not allowed to put tables on the street, alcohol prices, taxes etc. I do not necessarily relate culture and art to alcohol, but these places were the main sources of the circulation here. There was a certain group of people which used to come here. The link comes from here.<sup>175</sup>

These examples also concretize what Lefebvre means by the multilayered nature of space-making as it reveals the dialectical relationship between the way the people use space and various functions and meanings space embraces as a result of interactions and encounter of these people as well as their relations with space and vice versa. This relationality also explains why even the government's spatial intervention in entertainment venues has also resonated with the leisure preferences of people as well as the situation of art and culture places in Beyoğlu. Halil's (personal communication, July 4, 2018) words unfold how these interwoven dynamics are so embedded in the everyday life of the district and how complicated they are clearly:

Intellectual groups are now leaving Beyoğlu. There has already been a process of ruralization here. Beyoğlu started falling down after the Gezi Movement. There were many theatres, alternative stages here. Now, their number dropped off dramatically. This is not limited to culture and art. This has also reflected on entertainment sector.<sup>176</sup>

According to interviews, even the general appearance and physical features of space has adversely affected the intellectual atmosphere of Beyoğlu and led

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<sup>175</sup> Translated from: "Son dönemlerde insanlar artık tiyatroya gitmiyorlar, çok fazla kitap almıyorlar ama bir şekilde yemek yiyorlar, buna paralel olarak Beyoğlu'nda da yeme içme yerlerinde bir artış var. Geneli alkolsüz mekanlar bunlar ki alkollü mekanlara da ciddi bir baskı var, masa atmaları engelleniyor sokağa, alkol fiyatları, vergiler vs. Burada kültür sanatı illa alkole bağlamıyorum ama buradaki insan sirkülasyonunun büyük bir kısmını bu mekanlar oluşturuyordu. Buraya gelen belli bir kitle vardı. Bağlantı buradan geliyor".

<sup>176</sup> Translated from: "Entelektüel kitle Beyoğlu'ndan gidiyor artık, burada zaten bir taşralaşma süreci vardı, Gezi olaylarından sonra bir çöküşe uğradı Beyoğlu. Bir sürü tiyatro sahnesi alternatif sahneler vardı. Şimdi sayıları o kadar azaldı ki. Bu sadece kültür sanatla da sınırlı değil. Eğlence sektörüne de yansdı".

people to stop coming to the district in their leisure times. For instance, for Elçin, even the latest reorganization of Taksim Square with a grey concrete on the ground by the government has something to do with the deculturation in Beyoğlu:

There is a certain way of living he wants to create here. He tries to create uncultured people, people who do not think, only concerns about having a tea in a concrete structure. I mean, he wants to concretize. As we always think that spaces affect minds, this is indeed true. Space affects people a lot.<sup>177</sup>

Similarly, for Emre (personal communication, July 4, 2018), who works in the same café with Halil, the new landscape of Beyoğlu characterized by concrete not only contradicts with the old cultural and artful appearance of the İstiklal Street but also covers its historical beauty: “for example, in the past, there were trees in here, İstiklal Street. Now, you cannot see them. Everywhere is concrete. When you looked around, you would have seen something cultural, artistic. They were replaced by concrete now”.<sup>178</sup>

Lastly, according to the interviews, the disappearance of intellectual people and diminishing artistic and cultural features of everyday life has paralleled the emergence of a new bundle of cultural production and consumption in Beyoğlu. According to Ali Mendillioğlu who defines this as the ideological pillar of transformation in Beyoğlu, this process has been directly managed by the local government:

For example, The Municipality of Beyoğlu has a Directorate of Library with a 9 million TRY budget. If you think that what a directorate of library does with that much money, it organizes festivals. There are district mansions of the municipality. It organizes sofa chats in these places, forms Ottoman

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<sup>177</sup> Translated from: “Yani yaratmak istediği bir yaşam stili var onun. Kültürsüz insanlar yaratmaya çalışıyor, düşünmeyen insanlar. Bir betonun içinde çay içmekten başka derdi olmayan insanlar yaratmak istiyor. Betonlaştırmak istiyor yani. Kafaları da mekan etkiliyor diye düşünüyoruz ya hep gerçekten öyle. Mekan insanı çok etkiliyor.

<sup>178</sup> Translated from: “Mesela eskiden burada İstiklal Caddesi’nde ağaçlar vardı. Şimdi göremezsin onları. Her yer beton. Kültürel sanatsal bir şeyler görürdün baktığında. Şimdi onların yerini de beton aldı.

military bands from children, makes publications etc. So, this budget serves the ideological purposes.<sup>179</sup>

Such top-down transformation of art and culture can be observed in the second-hand book festivals annually organized in Beyoğlu. For instance, Salih who is one of the local founders of the festival explains the appropriation of the festival and his own retreat from the festival as follows:

We started second-hand book festivals in Beyoğlu together with the municipality. However, I have not participated in the festival for the last two years. The reason is politics. Of course, the Municipality of Üsküdar etc. is much stricter in this issue. They make eliminations, let this come, other not. Beyoğlu is still relatively comfortable but it gets political.<sup>180</sup>

Other example of such government-sponsored intellectuality produced in Beyoğlu has been the transformation of Taksim Square into a permanent festival area through gastronomy and traditional handicraft festivals. These festivals have transformed the square space to serve the production of a new set of cultural images, symbols and meanings defined by the government vis a vis the ones embedded in the texture of Beyoğlu. As Demircan explains, these festivals serve the production of the idea that: “with its architecture, traditional music, cuisine, traditional handicrafts and antiques, Beyoğlu is the name of the place where not only İstanbul but also Anatolia lives and is lived”.<sup>181</sup> This shows that while the government’s perception of culture is formed in line with its populist Islamist identity which has been crystallized in what we call Anatolian culture, this new culture is situated at the extreme opposite of

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<sup>179</sup> Translated from: “Örneğin, Beyoğlu Belediyesi’nin bir Kütüphane Müdürlüğü vardır, bütçesi 9 milyon TL’dir. Bir kütüphane müdürlüğü bu kadar parayla ne yapar diye düşünürsen, festivaller yapıyor, semt konakları var belediyenin, buralarda sedir sohbetleri, mehteran çocuk takımı etkinlikleri, yayınlar vs. yapıyor. Yani aslında bu parayla ideolojik dediğimiz alana hizmet eden harcamalar yapıyorlar”.

<sup>180</sup> Translated from: “Beyoğlu sahaf festivalini biz belediyeye beraber başlattık. Ama mesela ben son 2 yıldır katılmıyorum, sebebi de siyaset. Bu konuda Üsküdar belediyesi falan daha sert tabi, onlar birtakım elemeler yapıyorlar, o gelsin bu gelmesin falan. Beyoğlu daha rahat ama yine de çok siyasileşti”.

<sup>181</sup> Retrieved April 20, 2019 from <https://www.haberler.com/beyoglu-13-altin-eller-festivali-basladi-11223205-haberi/>

Western sense of culture and Kemalist understanding of modern intellectual life which have been rooted in Beyoğlu for years and organically become part of everyday life.

The most recently, Erdoğan declared their intention to launch a millet kıraathanesi (nation coffee house) and a millet bahçesi (nation garden) in Beyoğlu through which, for him, the district will make a big leap in culture, art and tourism.<sup>182</sup> This move of the government also reveals how the government tries to reproduce a new Beyoğlu by replacing the existing art and culture components ingrained in space and everyday life of the district with their own places and meanings, which is manifested in the replacement of Emek Theatre and other socialization venues with millet kıraathanesi and of Gezi Park with millet bahçesi.

All in all, according to the fieldwork, the Islamist production of Beyoğlu has also shown itself in the degeneration of intellectual life, art and culture in the district. While the government's transformation projects which ended up with the demolition of various art and culture places ingrained in the collective memory wiped out the spatial and social backbones of intellectual production in Beyoğlu, the interventions in lifestyles of people through the alcohol restrictions and outdoor seating ban have caused the people who cultivated the intellectual environment through their daily life practices to leave Beyoğlu. For the interviewees, this dual process not only destroyed the spatial and social ecosystem upon which the art and culture production had been built and maintained but also opened a path for the government to fill the gap left by the exile of existing intellectual groups and places with its own understanding and elements of culture. As shown, recently, Beyoğlu's intellectual meaning has also been reproduced along with its space and everyday life in line with the AKP

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<sup>182</sup> Retrieved April 20, 2019 from <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/haberler/410/94647/-biz-ozgurluklerin-hareketiyiz->

government's Islamist populist ideology manifested in İstanbul/Anatolia and West/East divides produced through Beyoğlu.

### 5.2.3 Islamism as a populist takeover of political space in Beyoğlu

The last pillar of the AKP government's populist Islamization in Beyoğlu is the takeover of political dynamism which has been originated from the abovementioned leftist memory and socialization channels embedded in the history of Beyoğlu. As discussed above, one of the main dynamics of the AKP's us and them approach is the antagonism created between nationalist, conservative AKP supporters and leftist dissident groups, which has been best observed in the context of Beyoğlu as Berat explains:

The state plays to the crowd through Beyoğlu. There is a government with Islamic tradition and Beyoğlu is symbolic for them. They give their messages through here because when you go talk to them about these issues such as alcohol, sin etc. they say their words out of Beyoğlu. Beyoğlu is their sin place. In fact, socialist groups also give their messages through here, so does the government. Beyoğlu is a motherless kid. It is a place where everybody confesses their sins. Now the government tries to produce its Islamist identity through here.<sup>183</sup>

As the fieldwork shows, both the spatial transformation in Tarlabaşı, İstiklal Street and Taksim Square have something to do with the government's desire to create a more docile Beyoğlu along with its economic projects. This is also congruent with Lefebvre's (1991, 2009) argument that state also functions to homogenize differences and break up oppositions.

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<sup>183</sup> Translated from: "Devlet Beyoğlu üzerinden tribünlere oynuyor. İslami gelenekten gelen bir iktidar var ve onlar için Beyoğlu çok sembolik. Burası üzerinden mesajlarını veriyorlar. Çünkü onlarla gidip bu meseleleri konuştuğun zaman, alkol, günah vs. burası üzerinden söylerler diyeceklerini. Burası onların günah yeri. Aslında sol sosyalist kesim de burası üzerinden verir mesajını, iktidar da öyle yapıyor. Annesiz velettir burası, herkesin günah çıkardığı bir yerdir. Şimdi iktidar da İslamcı kimliğini burası üzerinden var etmeye çalışıyor".

Dissident political identity of Beyoğlu has always been an important component of space and everyday life in the district. According to interviewees, one of the main sources of the politically vibrant and active environment of Beyoğlu has been political identities of its residents which has also been the reason why the government has embarked on such a relentless transformation process in the district. One of the most emblematic examples of this is the transformation of Tarlabaşı. As mentioned before, from the beginning, the government produced an urban decay rhetoric and criminalized the neighborhood presenting it as the nest of “warped attitude towards the state” and “oppositional views” to justify its top-down demolition in Tarlabaşı while transforming Tarlabaşı into a luxury residential, business and leisure area for upper classes. However, for various interviewees including Deniz Özgür, there is another dimension to this transformation process apart from the commodification of Tarlabaşı:

There is of course another dimension to this capitalist commodification process. The others of this country lives in Tarlabaşı. It is a place where dissident or potentially dissident identities which makes the government uncomfortable live. On the other hand, it is a very idiosyncratic, multicultural place. With its transvestites, refugees, lesbians, Kurdish, gypsies, Doms, Armenians and Greeks, it is a very special place. It is as valuable as it needs to be protected like a museum, but it is a living place. Hence, this place has that kind of importance for the government as well apart from profit-making. For them, this place is uncanny, dangerous. That is why, they made a 10-floor police station there, in a sense, tried to restrain it.<sup>184</sup>

Similarly, for Ayşe who sees the renewal project of Tarlabaşı as a product of the government’s “grudge” against its residents, the main motivation lying behind

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<sup>184</sup> Translated from: “Tabi bu sermayeye açılma sürecinin bir de öbür boyutu var. Tarlabaşı’nda bu ülkenin ötekileri yaşıyor. İktidarı rahatsız eden, muhalif olan veya muhalefet potansiyeli yüksek olan kimliklerin yaşadığı bir yer. Öte yandan çok kendine özgü, çok kültürlü de bir yer. Yani transı, göçmeni, lezbiyeni, Kürdü, Çingenesi, Dom’uyla, işte Ermeni’si Rum’uyla çok özel bir yer. Müzelik korunması gerekecek kadar önemli bir değer ama tabi canlı yaşayan bir yer. Dolayısıyla bu bölgenin kar elde etmenin dışında iktidar için böyle daha farklı bir de önemi var. Onlara göre burası tehlikesiz, tehlikeli bir yer. Bu yüzden zaten 10 katlı bir karakol yaptılar buraya. Bir anlamda orayı zapt etmeye çalıştılar”.

the project is not only making profit out of Tarlabası land but also wiping out the neighborhood's political identity perceived by the government as a threat to their authority:

This grudge is against the people in Beyoğlu because people of Beyoğlu were different. Cihangir was the place of intellectuals. Tarlabası was place of transvestites, Kurdish people etc. Beyoğlu was a place where people are rebellious, go against the state, disagree with them; it was a place of dissidence. They did not want to leave here to these people. Now, their supporters will come here.<sup>185</sup>

The other important source of the political dynamism in Beyoğlu is the district's historically rooted role in the spatialization of mass politics. As mentioned before, city squares often function as the key junction points where everyday life and spatial practices of city users coincide with politics. As they become the nodes of repetitive political actions of crowds, they transform the meaning and function of everyday practices and politicize even the mundane flow of life. While the political character of the square is constantly (re)produced through the repetitive actions of different groups vested with various political messages and symbols, this, "in return, inevitably results in the intervention of state power in its (re)production" (Batuman, 2015, p. 3).

In the case of Beyoğlu, this signifies the critical role of Taksim Square in the production of the political identity of Beyoğlu. As previously discussed in detail, Taksim Square has long been a natural gathering place for political groups who want to make themselves heard in the wider society thereby the main locus for political mobilization. The square which was marked by the bloody May Day celebrations in 1977 and the country's largest political movement, Gezi Park Protests, has become

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<sup>185</sup> Translated from: "Bu kin Beyoğlu'ndaki insanlara karşı bir kin aslında. Çünkü Beyoğlu'ndaki insanlar çok farklı insanlardı. Cihangir dediğin hep yazar çizerlerin olduğu kısımdı, Tarlabası dediğin travestilerin, Kürtlerin falan olduğu bir yerdı. Hep asi, devletin yanında olmayan, onlarla aynı fikri paylaşmayan insanların olduğu bir yerdı Beyoğlu, muhalif bir yerdı. Burayı da bu insanlara bırakmak istemediler. Buraya kendi yandaşları gelecek şimdi".

the main area for several protests and marches in recent years as well, women's annual night marches and LGBTİ+ pride marches being the most emblematic ones. Through all these political events, Taksim Square has been (re)produced by people as a spatial symbol of oppositional politics in Turkey. Particularly, the Gezi Park Protests where the square was marked by the millions gathered to raise voice against the AKP government's authoritarian politics and the following protests which spatialized various marginalized groups' solidarity and seek for rights in the face of rising authoritarianism of the government have transformed the square into a spatial expression of anti-AKP stance.

According to interviews, such spatial embodiment of oppositional politics in Taksim Square was one of the most important reasons for the government's full-fledged transformation in the Square as Mehmet explains:

When you make a protest in Beyoğlu, Turkey hears, world hears (...) Cities have squares. It is Kızılay in Ankara, for instance. In İstanbul, it is Taksim Square. Taksim is the center of political activism. It is an area people come together and make protests. That is why, Beyoğlu is a chosen area. When one says May 1, this place comes to mind. Saturday Mothers gather here, worker resistances are organized in here. What they want to do is to wipe out this dynamism, these memories (...) Thus, the government's true aim, true policy which it has been implementing under the cover of urban transformation is to remove the oppressed from city spaces, city squares.<sup>186</sup>

One pillar of this strategic remaking of Taksim Square by the government was the reproduction of physical space through the reorganization of vehicle traffic and the covering of the ground with concrete. As Kemal (personal communication, July 12, 2018) states, the new physical form of the Square not only spoiled the

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<sup>186</sup> Translated from: "Beyoğlu'nda bir eylem yaptığımızda, Türkiye duyar, dünya duyar (...) Şehirlerin meydanları vardır. Ankara'nınki Kızılay'dır mesela, İstanbul'da da o Taksim Meydanı'dır. Eylemselliğin merkezidir burası. İnsanların bir araya geldiği ve eylem yaptığı bir alandır. O yüzden seçilmiş bir bölge Beyoğlu. 1 Mayıs deyince akla burası gelir. Cumartesi anneleri burada toplanır. İşçi direnişleri burada örgütlenir. Zaten yapmak istedikleri de bu dinamizmi, bu anıları yok etmek (...) Dolayısıyla devletin kentsel dönüşüm adı altında uyguladığı asıl politika, güttüğü amaç ezilenleri kent alanlarından, kent meydanlarından ötelemek"

general appearance of the square but also degenerated its political memory and stripped off the feeling of freedom embedded in the square by definition:

I think, Taksim Square has lost most of its meaning both symbolically and visually. While it was the place we know for May 1, as the heart of İstanbul, not confined, not blockaded, not oppressed, now it is just the opposite. When you go there, it feels like you enter into a prison. Squares are places evoking freedom, surrounded by nothing, big areas etc. But now, when you look at Taksim, it feels like there are restrictions everywhere, confined, security forces are in each corner. I do not feel like I am in a free space.<sup>187</sup>

Another symbolic move of the government regarding the Taksim Square's dissident political character was the democracy watches organized by the AKP government just after the July 15 failed coup attempt. As discussed, in the aftermath of the coup, Erdoğan had called for people to take the streets and watch for the country against any follow-up coup attempts. One of the main spots people gathered to "watch democracy" upon Erdoğan's call was Taksim Square. During the watches, the area was occupied by a crowd carrying posters and images mimicking those used during the Gezi Protests in a subversive way. Having reappropriated the square space and organized a political performance based on the "mimetic reversal" of Gezi Protests' symbols through their replacement with Islamic and nationalist versions on the one hand and populist othering of Gezi protestors and the West on the other, the government in a sense "attempt to erase and rewrite the spatial memory of the Taksim Square" (Küçük & Türkmen, 2018, p. 12). In the following years, Taksim Square has continued to be the central area for the government's July 15 memorials and exhibitions All this contributed to the reproduction of a new political meaning and memory in the square space. Elçin (personal communication, June 27, 2018)

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<sup>187</sup> Translated from: "Taksim Meydanı'nın hem simgesel hem de görüntüsel anlamda çok bir anlamı kalmadı bence. 1 Mayıs'la bildiğimiz, İstanbul'un kalbi olarak bilinen, çevrelenmemiş, ablukaya alınmamış, baskılanmamış alanken şimdi tam tersi. Oraya girdiğinde bir hapisaneye giriyormuşsun gibi bir his oluyor. Meydanlar zaten insana bir özgürlük çağrışımı yapan yerlerdir, etrafı açık, büyük alanlar vs. Ama şimdi Taksim'e bakıyorsun, her tarafında bir yasak sanki. Etrafı çevrili, güvenlik güçleri dört bir yandan, özgür bir alandayım gibi hissetmiyorum ben yani".

explains how disturbing to see the Taksim Square marked by the Gezi uprising and its memories occupied by Erdoğan symbols:

Democracy watches... It was disgusting for me. I mean, one day, I really cried. You know, there is Taksim metro. It was full of people whom the AKP brought to the demonstration in the square. If you are alone in the metro, you say, God, where am I (...). Slogans started within the metro, Erdoğan slogans. When you come out, there is a huge crowd, a space completely occupied by them. It is wrong to say them indeed but, I mean, there are two groups at the end. This space is memorialized with May 1. After that, it witnessed a movement like Gezi and various other protests in between, became the center of several demonstrations, became the space of resistance. But after that, a totally different thing happened. It became a space where this time the resistance is against itself.<sup>188</sup>

It is important to note that the state of emergency declared in the aftermath of the July 15 failed coup has also affected the political mobility in Beyoğlu adversely. While the government has banned all sorts of marches and protests in the process except the ones organized by themselves, in the process, Beyoğlu has witnessed a boom in the security measures which had already been put into practice after the Gezi Protests (Serdar, personal communication, June 22, 2018). The securitization of the area with increasing police presence, check points, patrols, random criminal record checks and riot control vehicles parked at certain points of Taksim Square and İstiklal Street and, has not only eroded the feeling of security and safety in Beyoğlu but also led political groups who used to frequent Beyoğlu to stop coming to the district as they have often been the main targets of security controls such as random identity checks (Ercüment, personal communication, July 11, 2018). All these

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<sup>188</sup> Translated from: “Demokrasi nöbetleri. O zaman da çok iğrençti benim için. Yani bir gün ağladım. Taksim metrosu var biliyorsun. Metronun içi zaten tıklım tıklım, AKP'nin meydandaki mitinge getirdiği insanlar ile doluydu. Yani hiçbirinin benim ile uzaktan yakından alakası yok (...). Metroda başlıyor sloganlar, metronun içinde Recep Tayyip Erdoğan sloganları, çıkıyorsun yukarı, kocaman bir kalabalık, tamamen onların işgal ettiği bir alan. Onlar demek de kötü bir yandan aslında. Ama, yani sonuçta iki grup var. 1 Mayıs ile hatırlanan ardından Gezi gibi bir olay var, daha arada bir sürü eyleme sahne olmuş. Bir sürü eylemin ana merkezi olmuş. Direnişin mekânı olmuş. Ama ardından tabi bu sefer bambaşka bir şey olmuş. Kendisine karşı direnilen bir yer olmuş”.

combined with the government's attempts to reappropriate the political memory of space in Beyoğlu has adversely impacted the political atmosphere of Beyoğlu. Furthermore, as the fieldwork demonstrates, the AKP's grudge against the political dissidence of Beyoğlu is not limited to the spatial reorganization and reappropriation of Taksim Square. One of the areas where the government's spatial and social interventions into the habitual flow of life and daily practices of people has been İstiklal Street as it has always been the bridge which spatially bears and mediates the circulation of people and practices in Beyoğlu. Apart from its role in the political marches and protests as the extension of Taksim Square, İstiklal Street has always played a significant role in the maintenance of everyday political dynamism of Beyoğlu.

For the interviewees, this was facilitated, on the one hand, through the spatial presences and social relations of political groups. As Mehmet (personal communication, July 12, 2018) explains, these places and groups were deeply connected to the daily life in Beyoğlu through not only the socialization places they frequent and interact with other political people but also their daily interactions with ordinary Beyoğlu residents. For him, these people, their social relations and interactions with their surroundings were the main source of social and political dynamism in Beyoğlu:

Every political organization used to have their own groups here, their own areas, cafes etc. When they left, the dynamism here was gone as well. Here, there was a transformative effect of these people and their relations with other people. Be it business keepers, be it a conservative nationalist person, their ideas and relations, even to be here, was transformative.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Translated from: "Her örgütün filosu vardı burada, kendi alanları, kafeleri vardı. Onlar gidince, burada dinamizm de kayboldu. Burada bu insanların ve onların başka insanlarla kurdukları ilişkilerin dönüştürücü bir etkisi vardı, esnafla olsun, muhafazakâr milliyetçi biriyle olsun, bu insanların fikirleri ve onların başkalarıyla kurdukları ilişki hatta burada olmak bile dönüştürücüydü".

Perhaps, this transformative effect culminated in not only political activities but also everyday interactions of political groups with each other and the space they use was the reason why, especially after the Gezi Movement, various places associated with political groups, activities and symbols have faced with serious pressures in İstiklal. Mehmet explains the rising oppression through his own experiences:

There is pressure on places, especially if there are posters on the wall about women rights, workers, Kurdish posters etc. For example, this police station was not there. It opened later. Ones, they always attacked our fellows coming to here with heavy weapons, made criminal record check. They came and asked: “are you going to give us tea?” Here, we give tea neither cops nor undercover cops. We have such common attitude and they put pressure on us like this.<sup>190</sup>

On the other hand, it was also an important element of the political dynamism in Beyoğlu that politics was deeply ingrained in even the most mundane daily practices of ordinary residents and everyday dynamics of life in the district. According to Mehmet, social relations and political awareness have been so organically connected to each other in Beyoğlu that politically conscious people were the ones who kept neighborhood level socialization channels thereby the interactive cultural production alive in Beyoğlu:

In the past, for instance, when we first come here, there were not that much cafes in this street. There were more settlements. Every evening, people living here come down to the street, in front of their buildings. There were nice conversations about politics etc. Sometimes, they watched a movie. If there was a game, they watched it together. Most of them were political,

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<sup>190</sup> Translated from: “Mekanlara baskı var, hele ki duvarlarda kadın haklarına dair, işçilere dair, Kürtçe vs. afişler varsa. Mesela bizim hemen şuradaki karakol yoktu aslında, sonradan açıldı. Bir dönem buraya gelen yoldaşlarımıza ellerinde ağır silahlarla saldırıyorlardı sürekli, GBT bakıyorlardı. Geliyorlardı, çay veriyor musun, vermiyor musun? Biz de burada ne sivillere ne polislere çay vermiyoruz. Öyle bir ortak tutumumuz var. Onlar da bize bu şekilde baskı yapıyorlardı”.

conscious people. Now these people are gone. It turned into a sum of people who even do not even say hi to each other.<sup>191</sup>

In addition to political conversations integrated into the neighborhood relations in the doorsteps, as the fieldwork shows, even the entertainment venues of İstiklal were important elements of political socialization in Beyoğlu. Therefore, as Berat describes, the pressures on entertainment venues and regular eating-drinking places are not only about the government's economic motivations or its desire to instill an Islamic lifestyle in the district but also about erasing the political identity of Beyoğlu which has been produced through the interactions and encounters of people frequenting these places:

There is something political here. People not only eat and drink in these places but also make conversations and get organized. And the government breaks any opposition that can be formed against itself through economic sanctions like taxes, laws, pressure etc. Now, except the Arabic clubs, there is a serious pressure on every place in Beyoğlu, particularly on the dissident ones. They are trying to turn here into a terrible place. They do not care as long as there is no opposition against them.<sup>192</sup>

For various interviewees, there was an organic connection between the political and intellectual identities and environments of Beyoğlu as the politically conscious groups of Beyoğlu were also the ones who made the intellectual production as Halil (personal communication, July 4, 2018) summarizes: “Gezi failed. After the Gezi, control over places increased. They are building a mosque in the square etc. Through all this, indeed, revolutionary posture of Beyoğlu was tried

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<sup>191</sup> Translated from: “Eskiden mesela, bizim ilk zamanlarımızda bu sokakta bu kadar kafe yoktu, evler daha çoktu. Her akşam, burada oturan insanlar aşağı inerlerdi apartmanın önüne. Güzel sohbetler olurdu, siyasi sohbetler falan. Bazen film izlenirdi. Maç varsa beraber maç izlenirdi. Politik insanlardı çoğu, etrafa duyarlılardı. Şimdi bu insanlar gittiler buradan, birbirine selam dahi vermeyen insanlar topluluğu oldu burası”.

<sup>192</sup> Translated from: “Burada politik bir şey var. İnsanlar buralarda sadece yiyip içmiyor buralarda sohbet ediyor örgütleniyor. İktidar da kendisine karşı oluşabilecek herhangi bir muhalefeti ekonomik olarak işte vergilerle, yasalarla, baskıyla vs. bu şekilde kırıyor. Şu anda Arap mekanları ve onların gittiği club’lar hariç bütün mekanlara, özellikle muhalif olanlara ciddi bir baskı var. Burayı berbat bir yer haline getirmeye çalışıyorlar. Önemsemiyorlar baka bir şeyi, yeter ki kendilerine karşı bir muhalefet olmasın”.

to be obstructed. When this was the case, intellectuals left Beyoğlu”.<sup>193</sup> According to Serdar who also considers socialist groups as the essential elements of intellectual and ideational production in Beyoğlu, the government’s intimidating policies inevitably resulted in a radical population change in Beyoğlu characterized by the replacement of socialists with conservatives:

They create their own elites here. I call them as sloth elites. They appear as elites from outside but are hollow inside. A new conservative elite class is emerging here (...) By this way, the demography of the Beyoğlu is also changing. In the past, there were socialist elites here. They did not have money but ideas. They were ideational elites. The minds were updated. Culture was renewed but not degenerated. They would come, share their ideas in places. There were places which embraced them. None of this is here now.<sup>194</sup>

As understood, Beyoğlu has always been a place where politization is facilitated through not only gathering in political events but also daily interactions and encounters of people using the district space. Political identities and stances of the residents as well as of those used to frequent the district have also played a significant role in the production and maintenance of political atmosphere and dynamism in Beyoğlu. Nevertheless, the fact that politics has been so ingrained in the very heart of space and everyday life in Beyoğlu has also made the top-down state intervention into Beyoğlu inevitable. From pressures on politically affiliated places to ban on demonstrations and securitization of space and political bodies, the government not only eroded the spaces of politization in Beyoğlu but also banished those who facilitated the political dynamism through their spatial practices from the

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<sup>193</sup> Translated from: “Gezi başarıya ulaşmadı. Geziden sonra mekanların denetimleri fazlaştı. Meydana cami yapıyorlar vs. Bunlarla aslında Beyoğlu’nun devrimci duruşu iktidar tarafından engellenmeye çalışıldı. Böyle olunca entelektüel kitle de burayı terk etti”.

<sup>194</sup> Translated from: “Burada kendi elitlerini oluşturuyorlar. Ben ona hımbıl elit diyorum, dıştan elit ama içten kof. Muhafazakâr bir elit kesim oluşuyor burada (...) Böylece buranın demografisi de değişiyor aslında. Eskiden burada sosyalist elitler vardı. Onların paraları yoktu ama fikirleri vardı. Düşünsel elitlerdi onlar. Beyinler günceldi. Kültür yenileniyordu ama yozlaşmıyordu. Gelirlerdi, mekanlarda düşüncelerini paylaşırlardı, onlara kucak açan mekanlar vardı. Hiçbiri yok artık”.

district. As shown, the government's political events crystallized in the July 15 activities organized in Taksim Square aimed to both fill the vacuum left by the leftist social movements habitually organized in the district by the Islamist and nationalist discourses and practices and rebuild the state power and authority in Beyoğlu.

#### 5.2.4 “Conquest Beyoğlu”: production of space as a neo-Ottomanist Challenge to the Kemalist legacy in Beyoğlu

As repeated before, the other pillar of the AKP's ideological space-making agenda is neo-Ottomanism. As the fieldwork shows, neo-Ottomanist facet of the AKP's ideology has been mainly crystallized in its “conquest Beyoğlu” understanding (Deniz Özgür, personal communication, July 11, 2018). Among others, the anti-Kemalism of the AKP which has often been associated with the idea of westernization by the government (Bilgiç, 2018; Yavuz, 2016) is amongst the main elements of this facet of the AKP's ideological framing. The political instrumentalization of architecture which relies on the “incompetent and senseless imitations of occidental aesthetics or simple eclectic revivalist experiments” (Çeler, 2018, p. 17) and characterized by the totalization of “the past into a single image of the Ottoman” (p. 19) appears as the main strategy in the government's neo-Ottomanist (re)production of space. In the case of Beyoğlu, such understanding of rewriting and/or reviving Ottomanist history is manifested in the rebuilding of the Ottoman Artillery Barracks in the place of Gezi Park, the reconstruction of the AKM, the construction of a mosque and replacement of Europeans by Arabic tourists and residents in Beyoğlu.

There are two important points that need to be emphasized here before moving into the analysis of neo-Ottoman space-making of the AKP in Beyoğlu.

First, as mentioned, neo-Ottomanist nostalgia of the government is so deeply interconnected to its Islamist identity that they often complement each other and function as pretexts to one another based on the context at hand:

Islamism is a very dominant character in the government. What is important here is that the government has already broke its ties with Islam. What we talk about here is Islamism. On the other hand, Ottomanism is a source that can absorb all the symbolism the government needs and cover its superficial Islamism. It uses the Ottoman Empire as a source to both reckon with the (Kemalist) regime and consolidate its own support base. Associating its own doings with the events it extracts from the history, it builds an invented narrative (Deniz Özgür, personal communication, July 11, 2018).<sup>195</sup>

Secondly, similar to its Islamism, the AKP's neo-Ottomanism does not necessarily contradicts its neoliberal policies. Rather, it often coincides with the way neoliberalism subsumes the discourse of multiculturalism under its economic conduct while instrumentalizes the city's authenticity and historicity. In this reciprocal relationality, neo-Ottomanist agenda of the government not only functions as a means to negotiate conservative nationalist crowd through the Ottomanist nostalgia's promises of wealth and glory (Cavdar, 2016) but also serves to justify the neoliberal policies, rant-seeking behavior, and clientelistic relations of the party elites for the sake of economic growth.

Hence, in Beyoğlu, it is also possible to mention such dual functioning of neo-Ottomanism such that while the government reproduces anti-Kemalist and anti-Western discourses and sentiments through changing physical, social and affective components of space in Beyoğlu, it not only incorporates various Islamic means and

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<sup>195</sup> Translated from: "İslamcılık çok belirleyici bir karakter iktidarda. Şu önemli burada, iktidar İslamiyet'le bağıni çoktan koparttı, bu bahsettiğimiz İslamcılık. Öte yandan, Osmanlılık iktidarın ihtiyaç duyduğu bütün sembolizmi taşıyabilecek, onun bu derinliksiz İslamcılığını örtebilecek bir memba, havza. Hem rejimle hesaplaşmak anlamında hem de kendi kitesini konsolide etmek için Osmanlı'yı bir kaynak olarak kullanıyor. Kendi attığı adımları o tarihin içinden çıkardığı olaylarla vs. birleştirip kendince uyduruk bir anlatı inşa ediyor".

symbols to bolster the impact of and justify the reasoning lying behind its spatial project but also keeps the economic mentality established through the projects intact.

One of the most important signifiers of the AKP's neo-Ottomanist space-making in Beyoğlu is its projects which aim to replace the spatial symbols of Republican era which has often been put into a comparison with the AKP period by Erdoğan and its supporters. The first move to appropriate the Republican memory in Beyoğlu was the government's decision to build the historical Ottoman Artillery Barracks in the place of Gezi Park which was built in the place of the barracks under the Prost Plan in the Republican period. The decision to demolish the Gezi Park was first declared by Erdoğan as a necessity to revive the Ottoman memory by rebuilding the Barracks yet it soon sparked a huge public opposition and delayed with the growing Gezi Park uprisings. Despite the delay, Erdoğan is still keen on building the Barracks as he recently declared that they are working on the design.

During the fieldwork, even though they vary in their reasons, all the interviewees, including conservative ones, expressed their opposition against the demolition of the Gezi Park. Some of the interviewees criticize the demolition plans saying that it is the only green area in the close vicinity of İstiklal Street where their businesses are located and it is actively used by people for relaxation:

Mosque, Atatürk Cultural Center... I have no objection. But I want the Gezi Park to stay as it is. Let them not to build something else there. There is at least a green area there. When we get bored, we walk up there and come back or sit down and drink tea. I still go there. It is good for it to remain green. It is good for the shopkeepers here, too (Yusuf, personal communication, July 4, 2018).<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Translated from: "Cami, AKM lafım yok ama Gezi parkı olduğu gibi kalsın istiyorum. Bir şey yapılmasın oraya. Orada en azından bir yeşillik alan var. Canımız sıkıldığında, oraya kadar yürüyüp geliriz ya da oturup çay içeriz biz. Hala da gidiyorum. Oranın yeşil kalması güzel. Esnaf için de güzel olur".

As various other interviewees suggest, Gezi Park is a memory place which makes it a symbolic place for particularly those who were born and raised in Beyoğlu. Having witnessed the history, raised generations and penetrated into the childhood and youth memories of Beyoğlu residents, the park's demolition means the demolition of people's memories spatialized in the park as Serdar (personal communication, June 22, 2018) explains:

In the 70s, when my late father brought us to there, we chased squirrels in the trees of Gezi. Now, if they want to build there something, they need to make a referendum or something like this. A person who came to İstanbul 10 years, 20 years before cannot harass my beauty. He cannot have a saying in this. He cannot decide it. A person who does not have any memories in Gezi Park cannot come and say this will be made here, that will be made here. Gezi Park will stay.<sup>197</sup>

For others who oppose the demolition of Park, above all, the park has a politically symbolic meaning as it was built as a signifier of a break from the Ottoman past in the scope of the Kemalist reorganization of public space during the Republican era. Therefore, the decision to reconstruct the historical barracks in its place is about nothing but replacing the Kemalist legacy in the Taksim Square with that of Ottomans:

The issue with the Artillery Barracks is indeed the collision of Kemalism and today's government' ideology. The government needs to do this. If it does not, it cannot survive. Republicans did the same thing (...) Therefore, here, we are talking about a radical regime change. They try to impose their own regimes instead of that of Kemalism (Mehmet, personal communication, July 10, 2018).<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Translated from: "70li yıllarda, rahmetli babam bizi götürdüğünde, biz sincap kovalardık Gezi'nin ağaçlarında. Şimdi eğer oraya bir şey yapmak istiyorsa, referandum falan yapması gerekiyor. 10 yıl önceki 20 yıl önce İstanbul'a gelen bir kişi benim güzelliğime tecavüz edemez. Bunda söz hakkı olamaz. Buna karar veremez. Gezi Parkı'nda anısı olmayan bir kişi gelip buraya şu yapılacak, bu yapılacak diyemez. Gezi parkı kalacak".

<sup>198</sup> Translated from: "Topçu kışlası meselesi aslında Kemalizm ile bugünkü iktidarın ideolojisinin çarpışması. Amaç var olan alanı yok edip oraya kendi kültürünü inşa etmek. İktidar bunu yapmak zorunda, yapamazsa ayakta kalamaz. Aynısını Cumhuriyetçiler de yaptı (...) Bu yüzden, burada sert bir rejim değişikliğinden bahsediyoruz aslında. Kemalizm yerine kendi rejimlerini dayatmaya çalışıyorlar".

As all this shows, the demolition of the Gezi Park does not serve the needs of the people in Beyoğlu since, for many residents, it must be rather preserved as a park so that people do not lose the only place they see and enjoy green and spend some time under the trees while relaxing. Nor can it be explained by the motivation to protect the historical values or spatial memory as Gezi Park has been a witness of history and a bearer of memories of Beyoğlu residents. In that sense, the Gezi Park's replacement with the old Ottoman Artillery Barracks can be best explained through the government's aim to bring the Ottoman history back in town in the Taksim Square. Furthermore, as Serdar's words indicate, the idea to blow down the Gezi Park was not a product of a participatory and transparent decision-making process despite its significance as a historical memory place in Beyoğlu, which has made the project rather a product of the strategic urban governance agenda of the AKP government.

The second spatial step in the neo-Ottomanist production of space in Beyoğlu characterized by the party's anti-Kemalist discourse was the demolition and refurbishment of the AKM. Despite its delayed opening due to the financial hardships, the AKM was among the most important projects of the first Republican government as it was aimed to instill modern western values in the imagined ideal society of new Turkey. Having built as an art and culture center, the AKM has become not only the main symbol of western-style intellectual production but also an important spatial signifier of the Republican reconfiguration of space, society and everyday life in Beyoğlu.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Retrieved April 23, 2019 from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/22/world/europe/in-istanbul-erdogan-remakes-taksim-square-a-symbol-of-secular-turkey.html>

In his speech in the presentation day of the new AKM, Erdoğan not only talked about the main qualifications of the new building but also gave critical messages particularly regarding the differences between their own perception of art and culture which they aimed to concretize in the new design and function of the AKM and those of the Republican era.<sup>200</sup> In the speech, Erdoğan not only criticized the Western approach which had been embraced to catch up with the contemporary world's civilizational level during the first years of the nation-state by defining the Republican understanding of intellectual production and civilizational development as being the replica of the West but also blamed the Republicans for failing to raise worldwide artists, intellectuals, thinkers and inventors. This speech of Erdoğan in a sense has shown not only the way the AKP government conceives and imagines art and culture but also the anti-Kemalist motivation lying behind its new AKM project. Regarding the demolition of the AKM where generations of people not only from Beyoğlu but other parts of İstanbul attended seminars, concerts, theatres and operas, various interviews think that, despite its controversial architecture, the building should have been preserved as it was mainly due to its historical value and memory:

I am not a person against the change. Emek Theatre, for instance, of course, it needed a change, a refurbishment but one should preserve the history of that place when s/he makes a change. For instance, the AKM has never been a warm building. We always said that what a cold building, full of glasses etc. but you know what, that building was carrying memories from the past. Yes, you can renew something, but you cannot do this by wiping out all the marks of that place (Ayşe, personal communication, July 10, 2019).<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Retrieved April 23, 2019 from <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/konusmalar/353/87229/yeni-akm-projesi-tanitim-toplantisinda-yaptiklari-konusma>

<sup>201</sup> Translated from: "Ben değişime karşı bir insan değilim, Emek sineması, mesela, tabi ki değişime ihtiyacı vardı, yenilenmeye ama değişim yaparken de bir yerin tarihini bırakmalı insan. Mesela AKM hiçbir zaman çok sıcak bir bina değildi. Hep derdik, işte ya ne kadar soğuk bir bina, her yeri cam vs. Ama neydi, eskiden anılar taşıyordu o bina. Evet, yenileyebilirsiniz ama bunu o mekânın bütün izlerini kaybettirerek yapamazsın bunu".

Even though some of the facts about the new AKM are relieving such as that the name of the building will remain the same and it has been designed by son of the first AKM's architecture, particularly the new design of the building which carries some fragmentary elements of Islamic-Ottoman architecture, also contradicting the modernist symbolism embedded in the Republican version, is inappropriate for most of the interviewees as Serdar (personal communication, June 22, 2018) explains:

The new architecture of the AKM is son of the architecture of the old one. The name will stay the same too as it should be. But, for example, they are putting a dome in the middle of the glass block in the new version, which is aimed as a reference to Islamic, Ottomanist elements, I guess.<sup>202</sup>

In addition to its exotic architectural design which does not overlap with that of the original AKM building, interviewees are also concerned about the fact that the new facility will not serve the intellectual needs of Beyoğlu. Thus, the real problem is not the refurbishment itself as it was never a secret that the building needed to be beautified but the way it has been done and the motivation lying behind it:

The AKM has been demolished now. Its architecture has always been controversial, for instance. Now, could it be possible to build a better one instead? Yes, it could but the concern is different. They made the design of the new building. They made it public. There are domes, flying things, bridges etc. Instead, there is still not any city museum in this city. There is no place for amateur theatre stages. The plays are performed in very small places which already very few of them still survive (...) That space was very adequate for all this.<sup>203</sup>

It is important to note that, as drawn from the fieldwork, the AKP's projects function as not only the ideological instruments of the spatialization of its neo-

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<sup>202</sup> Translated from: "AKM'nin yeni mimarı eski AKM mimarının oğlu. İsmi de aynı kalıyor AKM olarak, tabi ki kalacak. Ama mesela ortasına bir kümbet yapılıyor yenisinde, cam bloğun içerisinde ki sanırım İslami, Osmanlı öğelerine bir gönderme olarak düşünülmüş".

<sup>203</sup> Translated from: "AKM yıkılıyor şimdi. AKM'nin mimarisi hep tartışmıştır mesela. Şimdi yerine daha iyisi yapılabilir mi yapılabilir tabi ama iş başka. Yeni binayı çizdirmişler. Açıkladılar. Böyle kubbeler var, uçan kaçan şeyler, köprüler falan. Onun yerine, bu şehirde hala bir tane şehir müzesi yok. Amatör tiyatro sahneleri için yer yok. Küçük yerlerde oynanıyor oyunlar, o da hala kalanlarda (...) O alan bunlar için çok yeterli bir alandı".

Ottomanism but also investment opportunities which serve the commodification of space, production and consumption, including that of intellectual and cultural elements, in Beyoğlu. Thus, one of the most debated details of the new AKM has been the cafes, restaurants and shopping venues which have been planned to add in the new design of the building. While Erdoğan had presented the new AKM's restaurant as an unrepresented place with a Bosphorus view where Turkish cuisine will be presented to guests, saying that it will also be a gravity center, particularly the shopping places in the new plan have been criticized by various commentators as the AKM's transformation into an AVM (or shoppingmallization of the AKM).<sup>204</sup> Based on this, one can argue that the motivation lying behind the demolition of the AKM can be explained not only through the government's anti-Kemalist neo-Ottomanism but also through its commodification of the space for the sake of profit-making:

I think the demolition of the AKM is about interest, I mean, the valorization of that land and making money out of it. The AKM had also a symbolic meaning related to the Republic of course but, I think, here, there is actually a motivation like I can make huge money out of this place.<sup>205</sup>

The third component of the AKP's neo-Ottomanist transformation in Beyoğlu is the Erdoğan's mosque project in the square. Apart from its role in the district's transformation from a secular place to a more conservative one through its religiously and spatially symbolic meaning, mosque has always been an important signifier of power and authority in the right-wing politics in Turkey as well as in the vernacular of the AKP government. Even though politization of mosque dates back to the times long before the Ottoman Empire, in the AKP discourse, it is mostly associated with the Ottoman period when it was a common tradition that sultans had

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<sup>204</sup> Retrieved April 23, 2019 from <http://politeknik.org.tr/erdogan-akm-projesini-acikladi-gitti-akm-geldi-avm/>

<sup>205</sup> Translated from: "AKM'nin yıkılması bence bir çıkar ilişkisi. Yani o arazinin değerlendirilmesi ve oradan para kazanılması ile ilgili bir durum. AKM'nin cumhuriyetle ilgili bir simgesel anlamı vardı tabi ama burada aslında buradan inanılmaz para kaldırım gibi bir motivasyon var bence".

famous architectures build mosques on their names to celebrate their victories and create a lasting legacy for their rules.<sup>206</sup> Designed as the Turkey’s biggest mosque complex and built as a successor of the famous Ottoman mosques like the well-known Blue Mosque, Çamlıca Mosque which has been built in the Çamlıca Hill located in one of İstanbul’s well-known conservative districts, Üsküdar is one of the most emblematic examples of the AKP’s neo-Ottomanist power politics spatialized in İstanbul.<sup>207</sup> For various commentators, the mosque serves Erdoğan’s desire to “leave his own mark on the cityscape” of İstanbul.<sup>208</sup>

In that sense, Taksim Mosque can be seen as a mirror image of the AKP’s Çamlıca Mosque yet with much more meaning attached to it as it has been built not in a conservative district but in an area known as the western face of İstanbul, marked by the first modernization and westernization attempts of the Ottoman Empire as well as the Republicans. As discussed above, for various interviewees, the Taksim Mosque has not been built out of a need or religious motivations. Rather, it has been built as a political move:

I love my religion and I care too. For instance, maybe mosque was needed in Beyoğlu. There is one in the street and one down there, though. But it was not needed in there. The historical texture of here could not be ruined. I see this as a political move. They are doing this saying that I am a conservative party but this same party does not recognize a Cem House (Cemevi) or a church. Our prophet was respectful of all religions, embraced all of them. But they are doing such things that, because of them, there are people who distance themselves from religion, disparages it.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> Retrieved April 23, 2019 from <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-turkey-mosque/in-istanbul-a-mosque-fit-for-a-sultan-idUSLNE8AS01320121129>

<sup>207</sup> Retrieved April 23, 2019 from <https://www.dailysabah.com/istanbul/2019/02/20/turkeys-biggest-mosque-complex-counts-down-to-opening>

<sup>208</sup> Retrieved April 23, 2019 from <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-turkey-mosque/in-istanbul-a-mosque-fit-for-a-sultan-idUSLNE8AS01320121129>

<sup>209</sup> Translated from: “Ben dinimi seviyorum, önemiştir da. Mesela cami gerekliydi belki de Beyoğlu’nda. Gerçi caddede var, aşağıda da var. Ama oraya hiç gerekli değildi. Eski dokusunu bozmamak lazımdı buranın. Ben bunu siyasi bir hamle olarak görüyorum. Muhafazakâr bir partiyim diyerek yapıyorlar bunu ama bu aynı parti bir cem evini tanımiyor bir kiliseyi tanımiyor. Peygamber

Similarly, for Serdar (personal communication, June 22, 2018) who shares the opinion that the mosque was not needed in Beyoğlu, this is more about ideological purposes of the government and taking revenge on Beyoğlu:

Nobody is against the mosque. Look, I am a leftist person and from İstanbul for three generations. Nobody is against the mosque. But it was not needed here. For example, there is a need for a mosque in Şirinevler. People perform their prayers outside there. They even collected signatures once. They did not build a mosque there, but they are doing it here. Your mosque here is political, ideological. A mosque built here is an attempt to take revenge on here.<sup>210</sup>

For various other interviewees, therefore, the Taksim Mosque not only is a spatialization of the government's revenge on the Republican history which has lived in Beyoğlu but also serves its intention to stamp its conservative Ottomanist identity on the square and build its own legacy in the district as bookstore worker Cem (personal communication, June 22, 2018) comments: "this is actually his revenge. He built a huge mosque in Çamlıca. And now he is building one in here. This is indeed his desire to put a mosque here, leave something, a mark here".<sup>211</sup> For Ali Mendillioğlu (personal communication, June 12, 2018), such intention is not unique to the AKP government as it is rather a common fascistic trait: "all fascists aim one thing: to be lasting, to leave a mark, to be immortal. They want this. Beyoğlu is a perfect place to do this. With this mosque, his legacy will always live".

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efendimiz her dine saygılıydı, kucak açardı hepsine. Ama bunlar öyle yapıyorlar ki bunlar yüzünden sevdiği inandığı halde dinden uzaklaşan, dini kötüleyenler var".

<sup>210</sup> Translated from: "Camiye kimse karşı değil. Bakın, sol görüşlü bir insanım, 3 kuşak İstanbulluyum. Camiye kimse karşı değil. Ama buraya cami gerekli değil. İhtiyaç değil burada. Şirinevler'e gerekiyor mesela cami. Orada insanlar dışarıda kılıyor namazlarını. İnsanlar imza toplamışlar zamanında hatta. Oraya yapmıyorlar ama buraya yapıyorlar. Buraya yaptığım cami senin ideolojiktir, politiktir. Buraya yapılan cami buradan intikam çabasıdır".

<sup>211</sup> Translated from: "Bu cami onun intikamı aslında. Çamlıca'ya kocaman bir cami yaptı. Buraya yapıyor şimdi de (...) Aslında bu onun buraya bir cami konurma isteği, burada bir şey, bir iz bırakma isteği.

Considering this revengeful trait of the government in line with its aforementioned Islamist interventions in Beyoğlu, in a sense, the AKP government's, particularly Erdoğan's, persistence in constructing a mosque in Taksim Square also illustrates the contestation between Kemalist and Erdoğanist imaginations of an ideal nation and a society, which has been produced through space in Beyoğlu. Berat's (personal communication, July 4, 2018) example about the timing of the demolition of the AKM and the rise of the mosque clearly manifests the spatialization of this ideological contestation:

The AKM was a place which is connected to Beyoğlu one way or another. It had a totally political dimension. That was already the reason for its ejection. As a matter of fact, the mosque and the AKM synchronously (happened). While the latter was being demolished, the former has been rising. That was a message. When the minaret of the mosque appeared, the AKM was completely blown down.<sup>212</sup>

As the interviews demonstrate, the AKP's neo-Ottomanism which incorporates Islamic and conservative elements at both discursive and spatial levels has been instrumentalized not only to challenge the Kemalist legacy embedded in the Republican organization of the space in Beyoğlu but also to replace the existing imageries and symbols of the Republicans' modernization and westernization trajectories with the ones characterized by the government's conservative modernization and appreciation for the East. Through its projects, all of which carry certain architectural elements and traditional gestures from the Ottoman Empire, the AKP also appears to increase the visibility of its hegemonic power and authority in the public space by using the symbolic importance of Taksim Square while making its legacy lasting as Ottoman Sultans did.

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<sup>212</sup> Translated from: "AKM burayla öyle ya da böyle bağı olan bir yerdi. Tamamen politik bir yönü vardı. Bu sebeplerden dolayı zaten ortadan kaldırıldı. Hatta cami ve AKM eş zamanlı olarak (oldu), biri yıkılırken diğeri de yükseldi, bu bir mesajdı. Caminin minaresi görüldüğünde AKM de tamamen yerle bir olmuştu artık".

All in all, the analysis of the production of space in Beyoğlu demonstrates that, as argued by Lefebvre, space-making is a multilayered process based on the instrumentalization of space for different economic, political and ideological purposes. Even though space is produced by various actors and their overlapping and conflicting relations as well as everyday spatial practices, the state is often the actor which not only produces the dominant discourse on space and but also manages the production process itself by incorporating various other national and international actors and mobilizing multifold means. Furthermore, as space is produced through not only the reconfigurations in physical but also in social and affective components of space, changes in the physical characteristics of space has also resonances in other components of space, all of which in turn makes the reproduction of space possible. In the case of Beyoğlu, the AKP government's strategic interventions in different layers of space has resulted in a massive transformation in the district. As discussed during the thesis, the AKP's production of space is a solid reflection of its neoliberal, Islamist and neo-Ottomanist policies. Under the guidance of these seemingly contradicting yet practically overlapping ideologies, the government has pursued a relentless spatial-production in Beyoğlu which has been crystallized in the changing meaning, functions, symbols and images of space and everyday life in the district. Based on these, in turn, I argue that the case of Beyoğlu shows not only different framings and layers of space and space production but also how this process is a context-dependent and a historically-contingent process which may vary in actors, motivations and consequences on the one hand and in the ways ideological and political instruments are functionalized on the other hand.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

#### 6.1 The summary of this thesis

This thesis examined the production of space in Beyoğlu particularly focusing on different factors, framings, layers and actors of this process. Based on the critical analysis of, first, the literature which discusses planetary and area-specific approaches to space and space-making and then Henri Lefebvre's theory of space, this thesis questioned how, by whom and through which motives space is produced in a specific context and searched for the answers of these questions in the case of Beyoğlu. Following scholars who argue for a middle-ground understanding for the theoretical investigation of space and space production and using Lefebvre's analytical tools such as spatial triad, the capitalist mode of production and the state mode of production, this thesis analyzed the spatial transformation of Istanbul's Beyoğlu district, focusing three main sites namely Tarlabası, İstiklal Street and Taksim Square as a showcase of a production of space. Through a field research which is composed of personal observations and qualitative semi-structured interviews in the district, multifold layers and actors of spatial production as well as diverse framings of space which are produced through globally pervasive economic and locally situated ideological dynamics were scrutinized.

In order to analyze the case of Beyoğlu, this thesis grounded the theoretical framework in the given context. Firstly, this study treated the AKP government as the main state actor as it has been ruling the country for the last seventeen years as the single party. Yet, it also analyzed other actors involved in the process as partners of the state. In Beyoğlu, both the central and the local governments are the main

actors which manage the transformation of Beyoğlu and coordinate the overall process. In addition, various national and international actors have been involved in the process as investors, funders and operational facilitators of the transformation in partnership with the state actors. In the process, ordinary people have also become a part of the production of space in Beyoğlu through their everyday life experiences and practices which shape/reproduce space in line with their imaginations.

Secondly, this thesis located the production of space as a multilayered phenomenon characterized by the state's strategic instrumentalization of space for multifold economic, political and ideological purposes. In order to explore these multifold dynamics and motivations in Beyoğlu, this thesis delved into the main economic and ideological nodes of AKP government by reviewing the related literature. Based on this, neoliberal economic mentality and Islamist neo-Ottomanist ideology were identified as the main characteristics of the AKP politics.

Hypothesizing that these economic and ideological orientations also constitute the baselines of the government's space-making agenda, this thesis benefited from these concepts as analytical tools to indicate the on-the-ground manifestations of the AKP's different framings of space and space-making. Based on the literature, during the analysis, the AKP's neoliberalism was located as one of the layers/framings which has been reflected on the Beyoğlu's production of space and examined through three main indicators, namely the commodification space and everyday life, commercialization of land, entertainment and consumption, and touristic appropriation of space and everyday life. The AKP's Islamist neo-Ottomanist ideology was analyzed mainly through the government's neoliberal Islamist and populist anti-elitist sentiments and its anti-Kemalist, anti-western and anti-modernist political agenda.

Thirdly, this thesis treated space as a product composed of different layers and the production of space as a multilayered process which comes to practice through transformations in these layers. Accordingly, the study analyzed the neoliberal economic and Islamist neo-Ottomanist ideological space-making of the AKP through the 1) physical/material elements of place (e.g. roads, asphalts, buildings), 2) social elements of place (e.g. people's interactions with each other and their surroundings), and 3) affective elements of place (e.g. visceral, experiential and emotive components of space) and the transformations in these layers.

After locating these, this thesis showed that Beyoğlu is a living space which has been produced through conflicting and overlapping relations and imaginations of different actors, changing state forms and daily life styles and various other historically-bounded and contextually-determined factors throughout the centuries. Highlighting the historical evolution of the district from a production of space perspective and elaborating on different actors and motivations which involved in the making of space in Beyoğlu until today, the study demonstrated how the recent production of space in Beyoğlu under the rule of the AKP government is the continuation of an ongoing process and how there is a dialectical relationship between the previous and current transformations in Beyoğlu as the contestation over space is embedded in the spatial production itself.

The analysis of the Beyoğlu case provided significant insights into the production of space not only as a theoretical phenomenon but also as a praxis. Firstly, the analysis showed that in Turkey one of the main factors which has affected the space production is neoliberalism. Even though Turkey first met neoliberalism in the 1980s, the country has integrated into the global urban competition in a more relentless way under the AKP government for the last

seventeen years. As a reflection of this on the space-making process in Beyoğlu, the district has been undergoing a massive neoliberal transformation which has been best observed in the gentrification of Tarlabaşı, replacement of small shops with chain stores owned by global capital in İstiklal Street and the recent tourism flow which led to the introduction of new consumption and entertainment places launched in the district.

Moreover, as the analysis showed, the production of space is not limited to the transformations in the built environment. In Beyoğlu, the central and local governments' spatial interventions into the physical elements of space (e.g. transition from small one-floor boutique shops to departments stores) in collaboration with the private sector actors have also transformed social and affective components of space considerably which are observable in the changing everyday life dynamics and meaning of Beyoğlu in the eyes of the users of that space (e.g. neighborhood relations, socialization patterns). As the case study showed, the transformations in different layers of space and the interplay between them has constituted the main sources of the commodification of space and everyday life and made the neoliberal production of space possible in Beyoğlu.

Secondly, the case study demonstrated that the AKP's Islamist neo-Ottomanist ideology has also been an important factor in the production of space in Beyoğlu, and it is reflected on the government's space-making in different forms. Firstly, the government's Islamist framing of space is manifested in the alcohol restrictions, outdoor seating ban, the construction of a mosque in Taksim Square and the Arab tourist flow in Beyoğlu. For the interviewees, this, on the one hand, serves the Islamization of Beyoğlu in line with the government's conservative imagination of the society yet it also leaves a room for the (re)production of neoliberal practices

in the district crystallized in the mushrooming secular entertainment venues catering to Arab tourists. Secondly, the Islamist production of Beyoğlu has also shown itself in the vanishing of intellectual life, art and culture in the district. While the government's projects which led to the demolition of various art and culture places embedded in the collective memory eroded the spatial and social backbones of intellectual production in Beyoğlu, the interventions in everyday lives of people through the alcohol restrictions and outdoor seating ban have contributed to the disappearance of the people who kept the intellectual production intact in Beyoğlu.

Lastly, the government's Islamism which has been concretized in the populist anti-elitism of the party has also been produced through the loss of political dynamism in Beyoğlu where the government put pressure on politically affiliated places and banned on demonstrations, securitized space and political bodies and instilled new political meanings in space. Through all these transformations in the physical, social and affective layers of space, the government produced a new space which has been imagined in line with its own Islamic identity.

As the fourth point, the AKP's neo-Ottomanism has also been constituting a crucial component of the production of space in Beyoğlu. According to the fieldwork, through its projects, all of which carry certain architectural elements and traditional gestures from the Ottoman Empire, the government has instrumentalized space not only to erase the Kemalist legacy ingrained in the spatial texture of Beyoğlu but also to replace the existing imageries and symbols of the Republicans' modernization and westernization ideas with the ones characterized by the government's conservative modernization and appreciation for the East. The narratives of the interviewees also showed that the AKP's neo-Ottomanist framing of space also appears to serve the increased public visibility of the party's hegemony.

## 6.2 Important remarks on the field

There are important remarks and conclusions which might be deduced from the above summarized findings of this thesis. In this section, I focus on these remarks by presenting a discussion on different components of space, different layers and framings of space and diverse roles of ordinary people in the production of space in Beyoğlu.

### 6.2.1 Physical, social and affective components of space and their relations

As mentioned, the interviews show that the production of space is more than the production of physical components of space. Rather, as Lefebvre argues (1991, 2001), it is a multicomponent process where the transformation in the built elements of space also leads to the reconfigurations in its social and affective components. In Beyoğlu, this is evident, for instance, in the gentrification of Tarlabası where the demolition of the old settlements in the neighborhood and the resulting displacement of the inhabitants has inevitably harmed the existing street culture in Tarlabası which facilitated not only socialization processes among neighbors but also chances for encounter with difference, understanding and tolerance. This process of transformation has also reshaped the memory and symbolic meaning of Tarlabası which has often been associated with the marginalized, politically dissident people with anti-state sentiments. With the new project, a more homogenous group of people with certain personal backgrounds, everyday life habits and political affiliations is expected to populate the neighborhood, which might be interpreted as an important change in the affective component of Tarlabası space.

Similar process has also been experienced in İstiklal Street where the disappearance of habituated local shops and entertainment venues has led to not only

the migration of usual frequenters of the street but also reshaped the socialization patterns (e.g. politization, entertainment styles) which had been cultivated through these spaces. This in turn leads Beyoğlu residents to experience a growing loss of sense of authenticity and vibrancy. This feeling has aggravated with the loss of political vibrancy in the street due to the ban on mass mobilization, which has resulted in the vanishing of the political meaning and function of street space in the eyes and minds of the people in Beyoğlu. In line with these, another important emotive implication of the transformations in İstiklal Street's places is the rising sense of insecurity and loss of the sense of freedom. This is mainly due to the way the transformation has been realized by the government rather than the transformation itself as in most cases the process of physical change happens in a top-down, non-participatory and forced manner. These examples concretely demonstrate how the production of space is a process which is realized through the transformations in different components of space, how this process is a multicomponent and how complicated the relationalities between different components of space, as argued by this thesis.

Here, there are three important points that need to be emphasized. The first one is about the way different components of space interact with each other. Although neither Lefebvre nor Pierce and Martin provides a certain path in terms of which component changes first and which component affects most the other others, the case of Beyoğlu shows that the production of space often starts with the production of physical space which then reconfigures the social and affective components of space. Furthermore, as the transformation in Beyoğlu is still an ongoing process, in some cases, it is difficult to observe the transformations in social and affective components of space which might be expected to become observable

later. One example of this is the construction of a mosque in Taksim Square.

Although there are also certain physical changes in the square which brought with the mosque and people have certain assumptions regarding the possible outcomes of this new construction in terms of the social configuration and emotive elements of Beyoğlu, it is still hard to reach certain conclusions regarding the social and affective implications of this change from the fieldwork.

Secondly, the interrelationalities between different components of space are also deeply related to the symbiotic relationship between different places and the whole ecosystem composed of these different places and the people use them. This is perhaps best manifested in the bookstores and stationaries adversely impacted by the closure of entertainment venues, table bans and alcohol restrictions despite their lack of direct connection with these transformative actions of the government. This also shows that places all together, regardless of their functions, co-constitute the space and their reproduction inevitably influences the production of the space which hosts these places. This interrelationality between places and the way they all together make the production of space possible through micro transformations in different components is also congruent with the reconceptualization of Pierce and Martin (2015) who calls this process as relational place-making.

Lastly, although the fieldwork tells a lot about the changes in the affective components of space along with the physical and social ones, it is crucial to be aware of the element of nostalgia here. As the fieldwork shows, at some points, the affective component of space comes closer to the space users' nostalgia characterized by the users' longing for the past regardless of whether it was better than today or not. Thus, the findings of this study should be read keeping the element of nostalgia which might infiltrate into the interviewees' perceptions of change in

mind. This is evident in some of the interviewees' memories about the more upper-class, fancy periods of İstiklal Street when everybody is used to wear a tie in the İstiklal Street or their praises for the European tourists who are often considered as just the opposite of the Arab tourists, which is used by the interviewees to emphasize how good Beyoğlu was with the Europeans and how bad it is now with the Arabs.

### 6.2.2 Multilayeredness of space: different framings and their relations

As discussed, this study shows that the production of space is a multilayered process which is affected by both economic and ideological factors and framings. Although the thesis uses some categorizations and specific conceptualizations to provide a more analytical framework and a clearer understanding regarding the production of space, the fieldwork shows that the multilayeredness of the spatial phenomenon as well as the relationalities between different layers and framings is more complicated than it is put forward.

First of all, as the fieldwork shows despite their seemingly contradictory stances, economic and ideological framings of space often overlaps with one another and sometimes even functions as complementary pieces of a single space-making project. One of the most enlightening examples in Beyoğlu is perhaps the Arab tourists and their role in the production of space in the district. As the fieldwork shows, Arab tourists<sup>213</sup> are amongst the main actors who contribute to the production of the state-led neoliberal space in Beyoğlu with their engagement into the emergence of a new luxury entertainment sector and brand-new consumption

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<sup>213</sup> At this point, it is important to clarify that despite their differences in terms of the roles they play in the space making process due to their country of origins, economic situations and so on, in the fieldwork, most of the interviewees used Arab tourist as a catch-all term by mainly referring to the wealthy Arab tourists without recognizing their differences.

bundles based on shopping and eating. As the analysis shows, however, this new tourist flow combined with the decreasing number of European tourists also helps the increasing visibility of Islam in Beyoğlu streets particularly in daytime thereby considerably changes Beyoğlu's commonly known symbolisms as the western and modernized face of Istanbul despite the ongoing non-Islamic practices in these new entertainment places with alcohol at nights. This situation might be interpreted as a showcase of overlapping economic and ideological space-making strategies of the government in Beyoğlu.

Despite some concrete examples of overlapping economic and ideological framings of space in Beyoğlu, in most cases, it is difficult to be conclusive about whether there is an overlap or contradiction between different framings of the AKP. One example of this kind might be the closure of several local alcohol-selling places as a result of the central and local governments' different interventions and the continuing intimidations against the remaining ones. As stated by one of the interviewees, at first sight, this seems to be contradictory with the government's neoliberal vision of Beyoğlu and in harmony with its conservative policies considering that alcohol is among the most important revenue sources for the government and it is normally expected to encourage the alcohol consumption instead of discouraging it. Yet, this incongruity between spatial framings and actions of the government can also be interpreted as a pragmatic gesture which aims to serve both economic and ideological preservations of the government. One concrete explanation might be the replacement of local entertainment locales which catered not only to upper but also middle- and lower-class secular groups with touristic venues which caters to wealthier customers. As mentioned, particularly in the case of tourists coming from Gulf countries, this policy of the government serves

not only its neoliberal framing due to the increasing revenues out of luxury consumption habits (including alcohol) of the tourists but also its ideological framing thanks to the Muslim tourists' rising visibility in Beyoğlu.

Similarly, the government's ban on mass mobilization events in Beyoğlu might be interpreted as a gesture which serves both economic and ideological concerns of the government by some commentators, yet it might also be seen as a contradiction. According to the analysis, the most straightforward explanation of the ban might be the AKP government's aim to degenerate the political identity of Beyoğlu and reduce the visibility of public opposition against the Erdoğan rule. In addition, for some, the political events such as gatherings and marches which have become habitual in the everyday flow of Beyoğlu were detrimental to consumption scape of the district as the political crowds and the resulting police presence generated a sense of insecurity for the visitors and led them to stop frequenting Beyoğlu. This shows that the ban is also helpful for the realization of the neoliberal vision of Beyoğlu. Although these two interpretations of the ban on political activism in Beyoğlu signify an harmony between economic and ideological framings of the government, the recent state-led securitization of Beyoğlu and the increasing visibility police forces across the most touristic sites of the district seems to contradict the neoliberal aspirations of the government given the fact the police forces are among the reasons for the tourists not to come to Beyoğlu.

To sum up, the most precise conclusion which might be reached from these examples is that the economic and ideological framings of space often overlaps with one another in the case of Beyoğlu. However, it is also important to be aware of the fact that the multilayeredness of the space-making and its realization on the ground complicates the ways different framings and factors interact with each other.

### 6.2.3 Multilayeredness is more than what it seems

While discussing the multilayeredness of space-making in line with different economic and ideological framings of space in Beyoğlu, it is also important to mention the fact that these different framings are also multilayered within themselves. Although this study does not particularly focus on different layers of the framings elaborated in the case of Beyoğlu as it treats these framings as mere analytical tools, as the analysis shows, even the framings themselves are produced, implemented and experienced in real life setting in a multilayered manner, which also reemphasizes the multilayeredness of the production of space.

This multilayeredness of framings are evident in both the economic and ideological framings of space in Beyoğlu yet one of the most important examples of this is different layers of Islamist production of space. As already discussed in detail, the government's Islamism has different meanings and varying transformative impacts in terms of the transformation project in Beyoğlu. As the fieldwork shows, to some extent, Islamist projects of the government serves the dissemination and visibility of the conservative norms across the physical, social and affective components of space. Yet, they are also related to the AKP's other political and ideological framings (e.g. populism, anti-Kemalism, anti-elitism). Such multilayeredness embedded in the framings themselves could also be seen as important to understand why the production of space is a multilayered process.

In line with this, the differentiations between the ways different actors perceive and experience these framings is also important to understand the multilayeredness of space production in Beyoğlu. As mentioned, the users of space is not a homogenous group. Therefore, the ways they make sense of the spatial

processes and the framings and factors getting involved in these processes vary as well. One example of this is the different perceptions of the interviewees towards the mosque which has been constructed in Taksim Square. Although most Beyoğlu residents interpret the mosque project as an embodiment of the government's Islamist neo-Ottomanist ideology and concern about its possible transformative impacts on the everyday life of Beyoğlu. There are some others who see it as a source of religious tolerance and diversity in the district or simply as a response to a public need. Such variations among the perceptions of the interviewees who are also among the actors who contribute to the production of space show that the multilayered structure of space and space-making is not only about the manifoldness of the government's framings and of the factors which affect the production of space but also about the space users' interpretations regarding these framings and their ways of experiencing and practicing the resulting spatial product in their everyday lives.

#### 6.2.4 Users of space as the actors of the production of space in Beyoğlu

The last point that needs to be elaborated on in this chapter is the important role of space users in the production of Beyoğlu space. This thesis has already argued that, despite its dominant role, the state is not the sole agent which produces space; rather, it often collaborates with other actors such as local governments, corporate actors and even ordinary people, particularly tourists in the case of Beyoğlu. Yet, the analysis of the transformation in Beyoğlu provides more information regarding the role of the space users by further showing the heterogenous structure of the users of space and, more importantly, highlighting the variations in the parts played by different space users in the production of space in the district.

As stated during this thesis, one of the most important actors of the neoliberal space making in Beyoğlu is wealthy tourists coming from rich Gulf countries (Arab tourists with the words of the interviewees). However, the analysis shows that the ordinary people which contribute to the reproduction of neoliberal space in Beyoğlu is not limited to tourists. One of most significant indicators of this is the increasing rent-seeking and the pragmatism of the local property owners following the 10-year law which allows the property owners to remove their tenants after a 10-year without any excuse. This behavior of those who benefit from this law for the sake of making profit out of rising rental market value in Beyoğlu has not only precipitated the property handovers and resulted in various established local businesses to close down but also contributed to the neoliberal transformation of space in Beyoğlu.

On the other hand, as mentioned, the fieldwork also shows that there are also others who resist the both economic and ideological transformation of Beyoğlu. Among them, business keepers who do not want to move to other more profitable districts despite their loss of customer base and decreasing profits can be given as example. According the interviews, recently there is a resurgence of interest in Beyoğlu by the habitual users of space. These, combined with the continuing demonstrations and mass political events organized in Beyoğlu despite the harsh police interventions, show that although the state and its collaborators are the main actors producing space in Beyoğlu for a long time, this trajectory might change in the following days with a new flow of transformation which is brought by the leftist groups which restart to organize in Beyoğlu, business owners which move back their places to Beyoğlu and European tourists who recently restarted to visit Istanbul.

All in all, all these show that there are different factors which makes the production of space in Beyoğlu a multilayered process. From the interactions

between physical, social and affective components of space to the multidimensionality in the relations between different framings of space; from the multilayeredness embedded within the framings themselves to the to the varying perceptions of different space users, various factors have important impacts on the generation of multiple layers in the space formation.

### 6.3 Theoretical contributions and future research

Shedding light on all these different framings and their production through the strategic making and instrumentalization of space, this case study provides a nuanced analysis of the both global and local factors' role in the production of space and their diverse manifestations in a real setting. In so doing, this study has not only contributed to the theoretical discussions on how to study space and the production of space but also the case-based examinations of spatial processes in the field. As this study incorporated into the literature on the area-specific characteristics of politics and space in the context of Turkey, it also contributes to this literature by explicating how different locally situated ideologies can come together with global factors and be translated into the production of space.

I recommend two follow up studies which can be built on the findings of the present study. Firstly, as occasionally touched upon during the thesis, the AKP's economic and ideological politics as well as its spatial agenda has been developed under the increasingly authoritarian governance of the AKP government (Lovering & Türkmen, 2011). As one of the manifestations of this, in the literature, both the AKP's politics and its urban governance agenda are often associated with the government's authoritarian strategies (Ozden, Akca, & Bekmen, 2013). Although, this thesis does not directly focus on the authoritarian dimension of spatial processes

in Beyoğlu, the analysis of the case showed that the government's authoritarianism is also an important factor which shapes diverse framings of space and space-making in Beyoğlu. Based on the developing theoretical concerns over the relationship between authoritarianism, space and space-making across the world (Luger, 2018; Planel, 2015), the production of space in Beyoğlu can also be analyzed as an example of an authoritarian space-making where the coercive, repressive, top-down, non-participatory and non-inclusive urban strategies are incorporated into the production process of space (Han, 2017; Zunino, 2006).

Secondly, as repeated during the thesis, the present study aimed to examine the production of space in the case of Beyoğlu focusing on its different layers, framings, actors and motivations. Thus, this study limited its scope with the case of Beyoğlu and drew some conclusions regarding how space is produced in this given context. However, in order to gain deeper insights into the concepts of space and the production of space, their multifold layers and on-the-ground manifestations, a comparative research would provide a more enlightening understanding. Such comparative agenda would be particularly useful to explore varying ways global factors are experienced in different settings, multifold area-specific dynamics through which the space is produced in a certain way and the degrees to which these diverse factors are involved in the production of space. Comparing different cases would also help researchers discover the impacts of changing actors and their motivations on different space-making contexts. In addition, such line of study would also contribute to the discussion on how to study space and its production as Leitner and Sheppard (2016) point out, comparing individual cases would help scholars explore diverse contextualities and juxtapose them with knowledges of other

contexts with respect to their diverging characteristics so that a context-based theory can communicate with other cases.

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APPENDIX  
LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

<b>Nickname</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Resided / worked in Beyoğlu for (years)</b>	<b>Date of Interview</b>
Ali	Second-hand bookseller	20	22.06.2018
Serdar	Jewelry and gift shop owner	Born and raised	22.06.2018
Burak	Stationery owner	15	22.06.2018
Cem	Bookstore staff	17	22.06.2018
Nazım	Bookstore staff	15	22.06.2018
Elçin	Student	7	27.06.2018
Halil	Waiter (café)	5	04.07.2018
Emre	Waiter (café)	2	04.07.2018
Oktay	Waiter (café)	13	04.07.2018
Yusuf	Hotel owner	16	04.07.2018
Necla	Hotel staff	8	04.07.2018
Berat	Café/bar owner	8	04.07.2018
Rıza	Locksmith	40	09.07.2018

<b>Nickname</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Resided / worked in Beyoğlu for (years)</b>	<b>Date of Interview</b>
Kerem	Second-hand bookseller	40	09.07.2018
Şevki	Retired	Born and raised	09.07.2018
Baran	Student	25	09.07.2018
Bülent	Pub owner	18	09.07.2018
Ercüment	Clothing shop owner	34	09.07.2018
Kamil	Patisserie staff	55	09.07.2018
Mehmet	Café owner	10	10.07.2018
Ayşe	Bar owner	25	10.07.2018
Zozan	Homemaker	25	10.07.2018
Metin	Waiter (Tavern)	42	11.07.2018
Deniz Özgür	Urban activist	-	11.07.2018
Salih	Second-hand bookstore/café owner	49	11.07.2018
Yılmaz	Restaurant owner	50	12.07.2018
Mert	Bookstore staff	8	12.07.2018

<b>Nickname</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Resided / worked in Beyoğlu for (years)</b>	<b>Date of Interview</b>
Ali Mendillioğlu	Former recycling worker / activist / Beyoğlu municipality council member	10	12.07.2018
Faik	Recycling worker	20	12.07.2018
Kemal	Waiter (café/bar)	5	12.07.2018
Ünal	Café/bar owner	30	12.07.2018
Mücella Yapıcı	Architect / urban activist	-	13.07.2018