

# Cosmopolitan Mirage in Post-Ottoman Cities: Istanbul's Beyođlu, Beirut, and Alexandria

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## Abstract

“Cosmopolitan Mirage in Post-Ottoman Cities: Istanbul’s Beyoğlu, Beirut and Alexandria”

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Istanbul’s historically cosmopolitan center Beyoğlu, went into a silent era in the twentieth century. Globalization in late 1990s triggered a nostalgic revival. Beyoğlu was home of a cultural renaissance. By mid 2000s, Istanbul was one of the most visited cities in Europe and Beyoğlu was its most inspiring neighborhood. I call this period the golden age of neo-liberal cosmopolitanism in Beyoğlu. This golden age was a brief one however. With the destructive effects of neo-liberal development and rising political tension in Turkey; the district lost its cosmopolitan soul, particularly from the perspective of the disillusioned groups. These circles relate this outcome to AKP’s authoritarian turn. In this thesis –while recognizing the significance of political factors- I point out the inherent deficiencies of the neo-liberal revival. Gentrification and unauthenticity of the revival was already harming Beyoğlu’s soul. The neo-liberal revival of the 2000s consisted of a consumption of nostalgia, commodification of history and cosmopolitanism. This was not a true renaissance of Istanbul’s past cosmopolitanism. It was a mirage, a brief illusion. Even though this era was a cosmopolitan mirage; its social and cultural achievements are unparalleled in the Republic’s history. This thesis is an attempt to understand the true nature of the past golden age and inspire a more sustainable future cosmopolitan golden age for Beyoğlu.

## Özet

“Osmanlı Sonrası Şehirlerde Kozmopolitlik Serabı: İstanbul Beyoğlu, Beyrut ve İskenderiye”

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Doçent Umut Z. Türem

İstanbul’da kozmopolit hayatın tarihsel merkezi olan Beyoğlu 20’nci yüzyılda sessiz bir döneme girdi. 1990’ların sonunda küreselleşme nostaljik bir canlanmayı tetikledi. Beyoğlu kültürel bir rönesansın merkezi oldu. 2000’li yılların ortalarına gelindiğinde İstanbul Avrupa’nın en çok ziyaret edilen şehirlerinden biri, Beyoğlu da en ilham verici semtiydi. Semtin bu dönemini “neo-liberal kozmopolit altın çağ” olarak tanımlıyorum. Bu altın çağ kısa sürdü. Neo-liberal kalkınmanın ve artan siyasi gerilimin yıkıcı etkileri –hayal kırıklığı yaşayan çevrelere göre- Beyoğlu’nun kozmopolit ruhunu bir kez daha kaybetmesine sebep oldu. Bu çevreler bu sonucu AK Parti’nin otoriterliğe yönelmesine bağladı. Bu tezde -siyasi faktörlerin belirleyiciliğini kabul ederek- neo-liberal canlanmadaki kalıcı ve kaçınılmaz eksikliklere dikkat çekiyorum. Soylulaştırma sorunları ve canlanmanın otantik olmaması Beyoğlu’nun ruhuna zaten hasar vermişti. 2000’lerdeki neo-liberal canlanma, nostaljinin tüketimi, tarihin ve kozmopolitliğin metalaştırılması odaklıydı. Bu, İstanbul’un geçmişindeki kozmopolitliğin hayata dönmesi değildi. Kısa süren bir yanılsama, bir seraptı. Fakat Beyoğlu’nun bu dönemi bir serap bile olsa, toplumsal ve kültürel kazanımlar Cumhuriyet tarihinde görülmemiş ölçekteydi. Bu tez 2000’lerdeki altın çağın özelliklerini tüm boyutlarıyla ele almayı ve gelecekte daha kalıcı ve sürdürülebilir bir altın çağ için ilham vermeyi amaçlıyor.

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## Introduction

Istanbul's district of Beyoğlu became one of the most vivid cultural and entertainment urban centers in Europe during the first decade of the millennium. It was the center of a cultural explosion and an urban miracle that left unforgettable traces in a generation's memory. During this era, I will call "golden age of Beyoğlu" in this thesis; the district sparked a nostalgic revival of Istanbul's cosmopolitan past. However, it has gone through a dramatic transformation after the first decade; especially after 2013 Gezi Protests. The district that was the liberal, progressive, vibrant face of a thriving city "lost its soul", according to circles that once filled its streets.

Beyoğlu has historically been the multi-cultural, cosmopolitan neighborhood of Istanbul. It represented the European, Western minded character of the city since the days it came into existence. It shined during times of global cosmopolitanism and political liberalization of the Ottoman Empire. With the end of empire, and the establishment of nation-states throughout the post-Ottoman geography, in the twentieth century, it lost its cosmopolitanism.

During the Republic that was built on Turkish nationalism; multi-ethnic, multi-religious colors of Beyoğlu started to fade. It was not the meeting point of the imperial city's cosmopolites anymore; but a desolate neighborhood.

With the rise of neo-liberalism and globalization starting with 1980's, and especially in late 1990's; the district started to remember its cosmopolitan

roots. This was a liberal cosmopolitan moment that was boosted by the amelioration of Turkey's relations with the European Union (EU). Between late 1990's and the end of the millennium's first decade; Beyoğlu prospered as the epicenter of the rising city once more. Istanbul was now a creative, vibrant, "cool" city and became one of the most visited, admired, fashionable cities in Europe. It attracted Western tourists and became the cultural hub of millions of local Istanbulites from different backgrounds. After decades of isolation, it appeared to regain its cosmopolitan aura of bygone times.

However, this "golden age" that touched the lives of many Istanbulites who had built a deep connection with this dynamic new cosmopolitan potential, did not last long. When the heyday of global neo-liberalism and Turkey's path towards the EU lost their momentum; so did Beyoğlu's golden years of cosmopolitanism. The destructive effects of neo-liberal development, combined with political polarization and the authoritarian turn in the country, changed the district's soul. With the rising tension in the city after Gezi protests and various terror attacks in Istanbul throughout following years, Beyoğlu found itself once more as a neglected, isolated neighborhood. For some time, it resembled a ghost town, since its streets were now empty, and its many shops and institutions were leaving the district.

Eventually, Beyoğlu started to see a new guest willing to replace the masses that created the neoliberal golden age. Middle Eastern tourists started to fill its streets. The district's European character was now in question. The people who created and cherished the golden age of the 2000's, now abandoned it. For these circles, Beyoğlu "collapsed"; it "lost its soul" or simply "ended". Now, the brief golden age of 2000s is a source of nostalgia for the once champions of that neo-liberal cosmopolitan moment. These groups primarily blame Justice and Development Party's (AKP) government's authoritarian and Islamist policies for the "loss" of their beloved "cosmopolitan" neighborhood. These groups are now in a confused state of nostalgia, mainly blaming the AKP's recent conservative, authoritarian policies for the loss of their Beyoğlu. Even though this outlook is accurate in multiple aspects; it is incomplete in its evaluation of historical processes and true nature of this golden age.

When we analyze the golden age; it is important to describe the political and economic background Istanbul and Turkey was rising upon. The Golden

Age of Beyoğlu corresponds to a positive trends in Turkish economy. Rising GDP and foreign investment intensified the neo-liberalization of the AKP government. Vali Nasr states:

The AKP wisely privatized many industries, promoted globalization, and particularly deepened Turkey’s economic and political ties to Europe. Between 2002 and 2007, thanks to fiscal discipline and wise macroeconomic management, GDP nearly tripled, going from \$230 billion to \$660 billion and raising Turkey to number 7 in the size rankings of European economies and number 16 in the world. Over the same period, exports went from \$30 billion to \$125 billion while Foreign Direct Investment grew at mind-boggling rates, sky rocketing from just \$1 billion to \$42 billion by the end of 2007.<sup>1</sup>

Turkey was a trendsetter of neo-liberalism and with its path towards the EU, it was considered as an example to the countries of the region. Cihan Tuğal explains the Turkish model of the era:

Islamic liberalism: Marriage of formal democracy, free market capitalism and (a toned down) conservative Islam. Global business circles trumpeted it. International media celebrated it. And regional and national elites embraced it. This, in a nutshell, was how these circles perceived the Turkey of the 2000’s: It was not only a successful, growing free market economy, but also (unlike the similar free market success Malaysia, for instances) a liberalizing democracy.<sup>2</sup>

Ümit Akçay points out the “adroit” political maneuvering of the AKP during that heyday of Turkish economic growth. Historically blocked and curtailed by Kemalist regime’s supervision; the AKP positioned itself as a champion of democracy. During the golden age, the AKP maintained a liberal attitude towards liberal lifestyles, supported flourishing of arts, culture and allied itself with the neo-liberal Istanbul bourgeoisie. This atmosphere made Beyoğlu’s

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1 Nasr, V. 2009 *The Rise of Islamic Capitalism* Page 238 New York: Free Press

2 Tuğal, C. 2016 *The Fall of The Turkish Model* Page 4 London and New York: Verso

golden age a possibility. In 2007, with a landslide victory, the AKP increased its vote from 34.3 percent in 2002 to 46.6 percent in 2007.<sup>3</sup>

We should remember that Beyoğlu’s cosmopolitan revival as well as Turkey’s political liberalization materialized at the peak of the global and national neo-liberal moment. Ümit Akçay explains:

The AKP’s brand of neoliberalism has depended on the continuation of Turkey’s strong economic growth. During Erdoğan’s first term, from 2002 to 2007, the economy remained relatively strong which continued under AKP governments until 2012, despite being impacted by the effects of the global financial crisis of 2008-2009. In the post-2012 period, though there was a slowdown, with the economic growth rate decreasing by an average of 3.4 percent between 2012 and 2017.<sup>4</sup>

The AKP government in a 2010 referendum, with a 58 percent “yes” vote was able to change the structure of the judiciary in Turkey. All these victories in addition to the fading out of the neo-liberal moment in the world were indicative of the authoritarian turn of the AKP in Turkey. This had ramifications for Beyoğlu’s golden age as well. The removal of the tables from Beyoğlu streets, signs of intolerance to nightlife and alcohol consumption, and increased destructive neo-liberal construction projects -with the goal of changing Beyoğlu’s character-, took place after this period and the peak to this illiberal trend was the process of Gezi Protests in 2013. This trend is not independent of Turkey’s global economic standing, and the money flow from the West. Akçay writes:

One of the main international components of the declaration of economic growth in Turkey has been related to the developments in the US economy in the context of the policy response of the US to the 2008 financial crisis. After former US Federal Reserve chairman Ben Bernanke announced that the Fed would scale back its easy money

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3 Akçay, Ü. 2018 The Turkish Quagmire Page 198 in *Catalyst: A Journal of Theory and Strategy* Winter 2018 New York: Jacobin Foundation

4 *ibid*, 199

policy, alongside an interest rate hike, much of the Global South witnessed significant outflows of capital as investors once again flocked to American markets. Turkey was no exception, and this has considerable importance for Erdogan's political fate. He had benefited greatly from the boost in growth rates caused by an inflow of capital during his first years, while he was battling the Kemalist establishment. But now as money streamed out of the country and towards American markets, it put downward pressure on domestic growth, which narrowed his support as the second round of battles within the elite unfolded.<sup>5</sup>

### § 1.1 Scope

This thesis -while discussing the recent political factors of Beyoğlu's transformation- will underline the significance of neo-liberal economic processes, political and cultural layers. It will examine the character of the brief golden age, testing the authenticity of its reclaim to the city's past cosmopolitanism. I will try to point out the temporary and illusory state of neo-liberal cosmopolitanism and how it employed cosmopolitanist nostalgia as a commodity. I will analyze how cosmopolitanism was reinvented, reimagined and then commodified by neo-liberal market forces for the consumption of history.

Despite the illusionary and superficial nature of the city's cosmopolitanism; I must express that this brief liberal cosmopolitan moment created inspiring flashbacks and an emancipatory, progressive experience for Istanbulites. The cultural and social experiment was one that belonged to a true golden age in many aspects. However, this bright period only lasted for a little more than a decade. In this thesis I will consider the time frame to be between 1999 and 2013. From the opening of Beyoğlu's symbolic institution Babylon until Gezi Protests. I will call this short golden age a "cosmopolitan mirage" due to its brief duration and illusionary quality.

This research will also examine cosmopolitan experiences of two other post-Ottoman cities: Beirut and Alexandria. This is an attempt to put the research in a comparative historical perspective. Western urban pockets of these

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5 *ibid*, 200

cities similar to Beyoğlu will be studied. Alexandria's Fuad Street that has been renamed Horreya (Freedom) Street by the Nationalist Egyptian regime and Rue Hamra in Beirut as well Downtown Beirut will be compared to Beyoğlu's Grand Rue de Pera or Istiklal Street with its changed name during the Turkish Republic. Cosmopolitan nostalgia of these cities will be reviewed as well as their neo-liberal revival processes. Dramatic similarities as well as some differences will be explained in detail.

The neo-liberal mechanisms of gentrification will be evaluated in light of works on Western cities such as New York, Paris, and London as well. I have discovered dramatic similarities with Beyoğlu's neo-liberal development and all other cities involved. They go through an almost identical process of "golden years" followed by a dramatic loss of the "soul of the city".

Public opinion in Turkey about Beyoğlu's transformation seems to place more emphasis on political factors. These were undeniably critical but they have accelerated a process that was already in the making. Our research will attempt to demonstrate the detrimental effects of neo-liberal development in the district. I will analyze how politically revanchist urbanization also took its toll at this stage, using neo-liberal instruments.

This thesis claims that this brief liberal, "cosmopolitan moment" was a "mirage" of times past. It was a reinvented, reimagined version of a glorious, multicultural Istanbul of the Ottoman era. It did not consist of a real social cohesion or heterogeneity that recreated the past. It was a residue of a cosmopolitan heritage that one feels, but cannot truly grasp. When the neo-liberal transformation of the district was at its mature phases and AKP's authoritarian political turn took place, the district lost its reinvented, superficial cosmopolitan aura in the blink of an eye. The final chapter will focus on the mirage-like effect of the golden age cosmopolitanism.

## § 1.2 Methodology

I will discuss the idea of cosmopolitanism on the theoretical level, reflect on how it is commodified by neo-liberalism and how the feeling of nostalgia is employed throughout this process. Consumption of history and gentrification theory will be among the theoretical focus of our work.

Intensive field work was conducted, first in 2017 for a report at *Hürriyet* newspaper. This report was published as a series of articles in July 2017. 25 people were interviewed. Limited segments were published but the bulk of that work was used for this work. The interviews include the ex mayor of Beyoğlu Ahmet Misbah Demircan who was a staunch executive of AKP's neo-liberal agenda. I also took part in a field trip with him visiting nostalgic revival projects such as Taksim 360 in Tarlabası. Owners and founders of symbolic institutions of the golden age were among the interviewees. Cem Yegül and Ahmet Uluğ of Babylon, Mehmet Gürs of Mikla, small shop owners of Galata, Mis Sokak; urban activists, architects were also interviewed. I added a talk with Lebanese architect and urban activist Mona Hallak to get an insight about Beirut's neo-liberal revival and I conducted new interviews with the owners of Babylon recently to get their most updated views on Beyoğlu's transformation.

To determine various stages of Beyoğlu's golden age and the following decline, newspaper articles were examined. Most of the relevant material was available on weekend supplements of *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Sabah* and *Radikal*.

It is interesting to see of the optimism of the era in press reviews and newspaper columns. The peak of the neo-liberal boom is also visible on these papers. There are complaints about big crowds, extreme interest, and warning by some authors even at the heyday of the golden age. The alarming press stories start immediately with the removal of chairs and tables from Beyoğlu's streets by the municipality. The clear warnings and requests to fix the problem show that this was a deliberate act by local officials to change the profile of the district. Beyoğlu losing its big crowds was not a surprise to anyone.

### § 1.3 Chapter Outline

After the introduction, there is the theoretical review especially of cosmopolitanism in political and philosophical context. Neo-liberalism, gentrification, consumption of history, nostalgic revival are our key terms in this research and they will be discussed at this chapter. Finally, the term I employ to describe the temporary and illusionary effect of Beyoğlu's neo-liberal golden age, "the mirage" will be explained through appropriate contexts.

In the historical chapter, I will focus on port-cities mainly in light of Çağlar Keyder's works, then go on a historical review of the Levant with Philip Mansel and study Lebanese and Egyptian historians' accounts of their cities history from ancient times until today. The structures of empire and nation-state will be evaluated in the ways they effect cosmopolitanism in the respective countries.

The third chapter will be about the rise of Beyoğlu, the golden age. I will remember the epoch in a chronological order and support our argument with theoretical notes and witness interviews. Statistical data will demonstrate the rising tourist numbers during the golden age. I will compare Western tourist numbers of the time with later years and compare them with the number of tourists from Middle Eastern countries. Numbers of culture and arts activities during the golden era and authoritarian turn of the AKP will also be demonstrated. Opinion of Western press will be another subject of this chapter. Our focus will be the Newsweek cover story that declared Istanbul as the Hippest City of Europe, calling it "Cool Istanbul", a term used by academic works and conferences about the city at the time.

The fourth chapter will bring the reader to the decline. Various reasons of the decline will be studied in detail. Gentrification, a typical aspect of neo-liberal urban development will be deeply discussed. Examples of Western cities like New York, Paris and London will provide the reader with material to compare and contrast with Istanbul's neo-liberal experience. We will discover striking similarities created by capitalist processes. The thesis will also define the period around 2013 as AKP's authoritarian turn. Islamic liberalism of the previous period leaves its place to a neo/liberal authoritarianism orchestrated mainly by then Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. After this stage, Islamic leaning urban policies targeting to please the AKP's base become dominant in Beyoğlu. This process that ends with the symbolic step of building a mosque in Taksim Square will be closely studied. In this chapter, the authenticity of Beyoğlu's nostalgic revival will be questioned. The commodifying techniques of cosmopolitan images and ideas will be demonstrated in order to better understand the mirage like state of the golden age.

Finally, this thesis will claim that the only way to restore the city's "soul", to realize its "cosmopolitan" potential, is to build truly democratic, new urban decision mechanisms inspired by an emphasis on the notion of "right to city".

David Harvey's approach will be mentioned within the context of reclaiming cosmopolitanism in the cities we analyze. I will point out the shortcomings of golden ages we have overseen, and try to figure out how to create a true golden age with an authentic cosmopolitan revival. First, we start with a theoretical review that will introduce us to the key concepts and terms of our research.

## Cosmopolitan Mirage in Istanbul's Beyoğlu: A Brief History and Theory

### § 2.1 What is Cosmopolitanism?

Cosmopolitanism is an old idea that can be rooted as far as the stoics of Ancient Greece.<sup>1</sup> The term was brought back to modern philosophical thought with Enlightenment thinkers, primarily by Immanuel Kant. Kant's basic idea of cosmopolitanism could be summarized as the conceptualization

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- 1 In the article "Four Cosmopolitan Moments" In *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: theory, context and practice* Oxford University Press, (p. 137-62) Robert Fine and Robin Cohen determine four historical moments for the use of cosmopolitanism: 1 Zeno's Moment: The term was created in Ancient Greece, mostly Athens. Etymologically *kosmos* means the World and *polis* the city in Ancient Greek. Cynics Antisthenes and Diogenes used the term but the stoic Zeno elaborated on it: "All people embody the divine spark, all are capable of logos, divine reason. This challenged the idea that Athenians were inherently superior to all barbarians. Diogenes who was in Exile in *Sinope* in Pontus suggested that "all wise man constitute a single moral community- a city of the World". It was Diogenes who employed the term "cosmopolitan" for citizen of the World. 2- Kant's moment (discussed in above text) 3- Arendt's moment: "Cosmopolitan jews" were the main target of Nazi onslaught. "Cosmopolitans" in Stalin's Soviet Union added Anglo-American imperialists to this usage. The Nuremberg trials with a cosmopolitan spirit of law and justice was crowned with the concept of "crimes against humanity" during Hannah Arendt's moment. 4- Nussbaum's moment: American philosopher Martha Nussbaum's emphasis on Americanness' inherent inclination towards world citizenship.

of “citizen of the world”.<sup>2</sup> He championed the social unification of people from all over the world and the idea of a universal humanity. In the *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose*, he looked for ways to reach “a civil society which can administer justice universally”.<sup>3</sup> He defended that cosmopolitanism could “provide a moral compass towards a matrix within which all the original capacities of the human race may be developed”.<sup>4</sup> His ultimate goal was to establish a “cosmopolitan order”, and he claimed that such was also “the highest purpose of nature”.<sup>5</sup> With the scientific and philosophical optimism of the Enlightenment, he was confident that humanity was in the process of developing capacities for his idealized cosmopolitan union.<sup>6</sup> These ideas have inspired the thinkers of the cosmopolitan ideal who share the same “allegiance” to people in the whole world.<sup>7</sup>

### 2.1.1 *Cosmopolitanism in the context of globalization*

At the height of the globalization wave, about 150 years after the publication of *The Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Ulrich Beck wrote an article titled: *The Cosmopolitan Manifesto*. This was the dawn of a new era in Beck’s eyes, and he proposed a paradigm shift; “a cosmopolitan

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- 2 Mills, A. 2018. Cosmopolitanism as Situated Knowledge: Reading Istanbul with David Harvey. Page 98 in *Istanbul, Living with Difference in a Global City*: New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press
  - 3 Wallace, G., and D. Held 2010. Kant and Contemporary Cosmopolitanism Page 15 in *Cosmopolitanism Reader*: Cambridge: Polity Press
  - 4 *ibid*, 15
  - 5 Kant, I., *Idea of a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose* Page 25 in *Cosmopolitanism Reader*: Cambridge: Polity Press
  - 6 Wallace, G., and D. Held 2010. Introduction Page 20 in *Cosmopolitanism Reader*: Cambridge: Polity Press
  - 7 *ibid*, 8 (*additional note*: Though some of Kant’s comments of race in other sources contradict the cosmopolitan ideal described in this chapter. There are mentions of “The supremacy of the White Race”, the negative portrayal of Native Americans, Javanese etc. The content of these are not relevant to our thesis. But for details, the reader can look into David Harvey’s review of Kant’s notes at ‘Cosmopolitanism and the Geographies of Freedom’.

consciousness” for a “global civil society and democracy.”<sup>8</sup> At the beginning of the millennium, neoliberal globalization has brought cosmopolitanism back into public discussion. Beck claimed, “A new kind of capitalism, a new kind of economy, a new kind of global order, a new kind of society, and a new kind of personal life are coming into being, all of which defer from earlier phases of social development.”<sup>9</sup> Inspired by *The Communist Manifesto* that defined the Industrial Age, his *Cosmopolitan Manifesto* called on the people of globalization: “Citizens of the world, unite!”<sup>10</sup>

The creation of the European Union, United Nations, and other supranational organizations were built on cosmopolitan values. They were the major players of establishment in post World War era.

#### 2.1.1.1 Principles of Cosmopolitanism

British political scientist David Held carried the concept to a new level declaring the ‘8 Principles of Cosmopolitanism’:

- 1 Equal worth and dignity (basic units of the World comprising persons as free and equal beings)
- 2 Active agency (the ability not just to accept but shape human community)
- 3 Personal responsibility and accountability (differences should be accepted and welcomed)
- 4 Consent (basis of non-coercive collective agreement and governance)
- 5 Collective decision- making about public matters through voting procedures
- 6 Inclusiveness and subsidiarity (those affected by public decisions should *ceteris paribus* have an equal opportunity, directly or indirectly through elected representatives, to influence and shape them.
- 7 Avoidance of serious harm (leadeng principle of social justice)

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8 Beck, U., *The Cosmopolitan Manifesto* Page 225 in *Cosmopolitanism Reader*: Cambridge: Polity Press

9 *ibid*, 218

10 *ibid*, 228

- 8 Sustainability (all economic and social development should be consistent with world's core resources)<sup>11</sup>

## BETWEEN GLOBAL AND LOCAL

Even though, cosmopolitanism has not been a formal set of principles for a concrete political organization -the way Held proposed-, it has been an essential idea of the globalization process in late twentieth century. Within the literature of globalization, it has gained various definitions and uses mainly around the idea of openness. Ulf Hannerz defined it as “an orientation, a willingness to engage with the other... [Entailing] an intellectual and aesthetic stance toward divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrast rather than uniformity”.<sup>12</sup> Çağlar Keyder states that contemporary cosmopolitanism is “an orientation and a willingness to engage with divergent cultural experiences, rooted in ‘a detachment from the local’”.<sup>13</sup> He wrote that cosmopolitanism implies “a common commitment to public openness in a society, to make a society on whatever scale- a city, a country, the world- work through communication, debate, and interaction between projects.” He also underlines that “cosmopolitanism is a stance against assimilation into homogeneity, but also an attempt to overcome the mutually isolated existence of multiple communities and cultures”.<sup>14</sup>

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- 11 Held, D. Principles of Cosmopolitan Order Page 231-2 in *Cosmopolitanism Reader*: Cambridge: Polity Press
- 12 Binnie, J., J. Holloway and S. Millington and C. Young. 2006. *Introduction: grounding cosmopolitan urbanism: Approaches, practices an policies* Page 7 in *Cosmopolitan Urbanism*: New York: Routledge
- 13 Kolluoğlu, B. and M. Toksöz 2010. Mapping Out the Eastern Mediteranean: Toward a Cartography of Cities of Commerce Page 4 in *Cities of the Mediterranean: From the Ottomans to the Present Day* London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd
- 14 Keyder, Ç. 2018. *Imperial, National, and Global Istanbul: Three Istanbul Moments from the Nineteenth to Twenty-First Centuries* Page 25 in *Istanbul: Living with Difference in a Global City* Edited by Nora Fisher-Onar, Susan C. Pearce, and E. Fuat Keyman: New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press (BUNU Bir check et sayfasını)

There is also some criticism of cosmopolitanist theories. David Harvey claimed that the concept is inherently unequal, in a way “reinforcing the production of inequality and (...) being formulated without reference to the realities of geography, ecology, and anthropology”.<sup>15</sup> Harvey emphasized the need to consider “space-times – the specific, emplaced histories-geographies-of cosmopolitanisms” instead.<sup>16</sup> He objects to the idea of a universal understanding of cosmopolitanism, pointing out the importance of “history or local particularity”.<sup>17</sup> Harvey has strong objections to neo-liberal cosmopolitanism since he is a staunch critic of the neo-liberal vision of globalization:

(..) everyone has to embrace contemporary bourgeois virtues and a neo liberal work ethic if they and the countries they inhabit are to succeed in today’s competitive environment. As with Kant’s cosmopolitanism, we all have to become the same everywhere in order to qualify for admission to the regime of universal (in this case neo-liberal) rights and benefits.<sup>18</sup>

David Harvey also warns about neo-liberalism’s inclination towards an “absolute fetish of property”, he mentions “the commodification of everything” and how “wherever neo-liberalization has occurred, (...) social inequality has burgeoned”. He concludes: “neo-liberalization has created a flat world for the multinational corporations and for the billionaire entrepreneur and investor class, but a rough, jagged, and uneven world for everyone else.”<sup>19</sup> He recognizes

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15 Mills, A. 2018. Cosmopolitanism as Situated Knowledge: Reading Istanbul with David Harvey. Page 98-9 in *Istanbul, Living with Difference in a Global City*: New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press

16 *ibid*, 98

17 *ibid*, 99

18 Harvey, D. 2009 *Cosmopolitanism and the Geographies of Freedom* Page 52 New York: Columbia University Press

19 *ibid*, 58

that the “intermingling” of various “cultural and ethnic mixing”, but emphasizes that the cosmopolitanist neo-liberalism still reproduces unequal class relations.<sup>20</sup>

Harvey’s findings are relevant for the golden age we study. He explains the end of the neo-liberal cosmopolitan moment in the world; first referring to Ulrich Beck and Jürgen Habermas who consider the European Union to be a “kind of Kantian cosmopolitan construction”. This cosmopolitanist outlook according to Harvey “obscures the kind of union that has actually been created” which “has always been primarily economic and a neo-liberal rather than a cosmopolitan construction”.<sup>21</sup> According to Harvey, the rejection of the EU Constitution in the referendum of 2005 was against this “neo-liberal character”.<sup>22</sup> This referendum was a turning point for EU- Turkey relations as well. It signaled the beginning of the end for Europe’s neo-liberal expansion at the peak of Beyoğlu’s golden age. The cosmopolitanist revival in Beyoğlu did carry elements of class domination and elite influence that Harvey warns. But looking at the current situation of Beyoğlu, the “intermingling” (that Harvey recognizes too as an achievement), the urban cultural explosion, social vibrancy and interaction of diverse social and economic groups were still there. Harvey refers to Beck who claims that “true cosmopolitanism arises out of, but is quite different from, both neo-liberalism and globalization”.<sup>23</sup> The solution would be not the globalization of the multi-national corporations and economic elite. Not an “ethical and humanitarian mask for hegemonic neo-liberal practices of class domination and financial and militaristic imperialism”<sup>24</sup> but “a globalization from below”.<sup>25</sup>

David Harvey’s objection to the idea of a universal cosmopolitanism is shared by other critics. They warn that contemporary cosmopolitanism stands

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20 *ibid*, 80-1

21 *ibid*, 83

22 *ibid*, 83

23 *ibid*, 84

24 *ibid*, 84

25 *ibid*, 95-6

on “a vision of one world”, meaning “the first world”. For them, cosmopolitanism at this stage is “a practice yet to come, something awaiting realization”.<sup>26</sup> This approach is comprehensible. It would be accurate to state that cosmopolitanism as an idea favours a Western, liberal orientation against other cultural and political inclinations. In a rooted analysis, the reader would easily detect this nature of the cosmopolitan debate. On the historical and political level though, it is possible to also highlight political, economic, even cultural possibilities and liberalizing features of this unequal relation. If we are discussing the modern city and its democratic possibilities, the aspirations will be leaning towards the European narrative. This does not mean by any means that the unequal, exploitative features of a merely eurocentric cosmopolitanism should be overlooked. Especially since these inherent attributes of injustice in eurocentric cosmopolitanism eventually brought about its demise and opened way to more destructive reactionary processes, as seen in post-imperial Ottoman geography.

For a better grasp of this delicate balance, we will overview the history of cosmopolitanism in the Middle East and Ottoman geography.

## § 2.2 Cosmopolitan Spaces in Ottoman Empire: The Port-Cities

Even though, cosmopolitanism is usually attributed to Western cultural influence; it was witnessed in Arab and Muslim cultures throughout history:

The Abbasid Court established such a high level of cosmopolitan cultural mixing; the sharia law based on scripture and firm religious rules were in a way a reaction to the cosmopolitanization of Arab culture that was mixed with Persian culture.<sup>27</sup>

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26 Kolluoğlu, B. and M. Toksöz 2010. Notes- footnote 9 Page 208 *Cities of the Mediterranean: From the Ottomans to the Present Day* London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd

27 Zubaida, S. 2002 Middle Eastern Experiences of Cosmopolitanism Page 32 in *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Context, and Practice* edited by Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen: New York: Oxford University Press

Al Andalus between 8th and 15th Century Spain was also a beacon of cosmopolitan Muslim civilization, a golden age of Islam that was eventually defeated by Christian kings of Iberian peninsula. Sami Zubaida calls these mixed, progressive, welcoming and versatile places “cosmopolitan milieux”. He underlines that Muslim civilization hosted cosmopolitan milieux at different points in history.<sup>28</sup> Istanbul was similar according to him: “Urban pockets of higher echelons of Istanbul society or other centres in the Empire like Thessaloniki, where cortiers, merchants, diplomats created a cosmopolitan milieu.”<sup>29</sup> He attributes this to the “European impact” that was so dominant in nineteenth century; the elites in the Empire, influenced by Europe’s superiority in military and economic field, started to establish cosmopolitan milieux in their cities. However, he argues that this creation of cosmopolitan spaces and also culture was in fact from the beginning, a mixture of Western and Muslim cultures. It was not a primarily European one but a culture that is imperial to its core, a definite mix of local and European, Muslim and Christian. This lifestyle was visible mostly in cosmopolitan enclaves in Ottoman Empire, the Levantine cities and Mehmed Ali’s Egypt. Zubaida calls Alexandria of the times of Durrell’s famous *Alexandria Quartet* the “golden age of Middle Eastern cosmopolitanism”.<sup>30</sup> There are common aspects that connect these milieux: Contact between the East and the West, an imperial framework and being “port-cities”, central to world trade.

Çağlar Keyder makes this link by pointing out “the provocative parallels between global cities of the contemporary world and port and merchant cities of the nineteenth century and earlier”.<sup>31</sup> According to Keyder, these port cities are the cradle of “capitalism as a global enterprise”, he states that “current fascination with capitalism’s globalization and global cities seems naïve in the

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28 *ibid*, 33

29 *ibid*, 33

30 *ibid*, 37

31 Kolluoğlu, B. and M. Toksöz 2010. Mapping Out the Eastern Mediteranean: Toward a Cartography of Cities of Commerce Page 4 in *Cities of the Mediterranean: From the Ottomans to the Present Day* London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd.

face of historical patterns”.<sup>32</sup> These trade cities were remarkably autonomous spaces from central empires with diverse, multi-cultural populations.<sup>33</sup> Port cities were the first cosmopolitan spaces. Just like globalization of modern age is essentially a Western led phenomenon, the port cities of the Eastern Mediterranean have been Western cosmopolitan enclaves. Keyder emphasizes the critical role they played for the West: “Without port cities, there would be no civilizational project associated with nineteenth-century liberalism”.<sup>34</sup> But this liberal atmosphere created a completely new way of life and a harmonious urban *modus vivendi*:

These port cities were “models of co-existence” where le doux commerce would patch over ethnic suspicion and bring together imperial populations who were once a patchwork separated in communities. Now they lived in proximity and had to devise modes of multi-cultural tolerance in joint adherence to the global network of cosmopolitan traders”.<sup>35</sup>

#### 2.2.1 *Post-imperial cosmopolitan cities in the Ottoman geography: Alexandria, Beirut, Istanbul*

I identified three cities as major examples of cosmopolitanism in post-Ottoman geography. Keyder considers Beirut and Alexandria as typical port cities. One of the distinguishing features was that they both hosted a merchant class with significant autonomy and power to direct the economy: “Their culture and taste dominated, their lifestyles and consumption patterns would be emulated. Their choices and habits of work, modes of dwelling and leisure would impinge the evolving urban space of rapidly growing cities”.<sup>36</sup> Keyder

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32 Kolluoğlu, B. and M. Toksöz 2010. Mapping Out the Eastern Mediterranean: Toward a Cartography of Cities of Commerce Page 4 in *Cities of the Mediterranean: From the Ottomans to the Present Day* London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd

33 *ibid*, 4

34 Keyder, Ç. 2010. *Port-Cities in the Belle Epoque* Page 14 in *Cities of the Mediterranean: From the Ottomans to the Present Day* London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd

35 *ibid*, 15

36 *ibid*, 15

indicates that “none of this was possible in a city like Istanbul where the imperial presence would easily outweigh, and could chose to hamper, the release of such potential implicit in the development of a merchant class”.<sup>37</sup> While taking into account Keyder’s exclusion of Istanbul from the group of Eastern Mediterranean port-cities; I will consider the district of Beyoğlu as an entity that demonstrates the characteristics of a port-city independently of the city it is a part of.

Keyder states that port-cities “came to exhibit an alternative universe to the rest of the realm (...) as places of a different cultural practice”.<sup>38</sup> He mentions “paved streets, department stores, European style hotels, and cafes”; he acknowledges that “the triumph of the nineteenth-century European bourgeois lay in imprinting the cities with their material and cultural needs; in doing so, they invented a new urban life. (...) the glamour of the Western lifestyle, its freedom and glitter, (...) its consumption patterns.”<sup>39</sup> This cosmopolitan, liberal way of life was evidently observable in Pera, the Western name for Beyoğlu during the Ottoman Empire. It was one of the modern cities that constituted global cosmopolitanism:

The nineteenth century expansion of the world economy in terms of flows of goods, capital, and especially people, imbued what had been termed port cities with clear-cut examples of cosmopolitan potential (...) Given their orientation to trade and their heterogeneous business population, these cities also were inclined to be “liberal” in their governance. (...) Port city populations were oriented to a global modernity, made concrete in the extension of European modes of material and intellectual life”.<sup>40</sup>

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37 *ibid*, 15

38 *ibid*, 16

39 *ibid*, 16

40 Keyder, Ç. 2018. *Imperial, National, and Global Istanbul: Three Istanbul Moments from the Nineteenth to Twenty-First Centuries* Page 27 in *Istanbul: Living with Difference in a Global City* Edited by Nora Fisher-Onar, Susan C. Pearce, and E. Fuat Keyman: New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press

The cosmopolitanism that flourished in these cities had to do with a particular spatial quality. They were mediators between the West and the East, the global and the local:

Cosmopolitanism should not be conceptualized merely as an intellectual, aesthetic, or cultural stance but as a spatial phenomenon that mediates between the local and the global. (...) It is the different lingual, confessional and ethnic communities' attachment and belonging to these cities which contribute to their connectedness. These terrains are conceptualized as cosmopolitan not simply because of their multi-confessional, multi-ethnic, and multi-lingual populations and dense and variegated cityscapes, but also because they occupied relatively autonomous spaces that mediated between different worlds".<sup>41</sup>

Çağlar Keyder states that cosmopolitanism is only possible "when the state can be persuaded to allow the institutions within which a cosmopolitan arena may flourish".<sup>42</sup> Empires provide this framework for "the comfortable existence of cosmopolitan individuals and cosmopolitanism".<sup>43</sup> Multi-ethnic empires have presented "a comfortable framework for containing diversity".<sup>44</sup>

These territorial entities are established by the unification of many different territories and peoples, usually, by military invasion. In order to operate in a stable, healthy framework, empires do not attempt to create social homogeneity within their territories. Different communities, peoples and cultures find suitable terrain for an undisturbed existence.<sup>45</sup> The birth of the nation-state and the end of the of Empire were going to change this framework.

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41 Kolluoğlu, B. and M. Toksöz 2010. Mapping Out the Eastern Mediterranean: Toward a Cartography of Cities of Commerce Page 8 in *Cities of the Mediterranean: From the Ottomans to the Present Day* London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd

42 Keyder, Ç. 2018. Imperial, National, and Global Istanbul: Three Istanbul Moments from the Nineteenth to Twenty-First Centuries Page 25 in *Istanbul: Living with Difference in a Global City* Edited by Nora Fisher-Onar, Susan C. Pearce, and E. Fuat Keyman: New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press

43 *ibid*, 26

44 *ibid*, 26

45 *ibid*, 26

### 2.2.2 *Nationalism in Port-Cities & End of Empire and Cosmopolitanism*

Cosmopolitanism in Ottoman cities existed due to their solid ties with European liberal economic and political structures. It should be noted that the cosmopolitan coexistence has been attainable during imperial and colonial periods when the Ottoman Empire or local powers have had the lower hand in face of stronger Western nations. This inherent unequal balance did have ramifications eventually. With the birth of nation-states, the milieu that made cosmopolitanism possible has disappeared: “The twentieth century saw the dominance of nationalism, rendering cosmopolitanism a foolish chimera”.<sup>46</sup>

Nationalism has been a disaster for cosmopolitanism in multi-cultural empires. According to Çağlar Keyder, “The counterpart of cosmopolitanism that is most familiar in historical experience is nationalism. Within the national society, difference is reluctantly tolerated, but certainly not celebrated.” He adds: “The very premise of nation-building has excluded considerations of cosmopolitan orientation from our analytical agenda”.<sup>47</sup>

The homogenizing efforts after the First World War have primarily hurt the minorities in post-Ottoman geography. Istanbul, Alexandria were highly effected and somehow lost their cosmopolitan social fabric. According to Keyder, in the post-Ottoman territories, the only country that could escape this process was Lebanon. This was due to the presence of the port city of Beirut; a city that could “maintain its intricate confessional balances in the new world of nation states”.<sup>48</sup> With the tide turning, the young nation-states have developed suspicion of the heritage of empires they have been replacing. “Port cities

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46 Kolluoğlu, B. and M. Toksöz 2010. Mapping Out the Eastern Mediterranean: Toward a Cartography of Cities of Commerce Page 4 in *Cities of the Mediterranean: From the Ottomans to the Present Day* London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd

47 Keyder, Ç. 2018. Imperial, National, and Global Istanbul: Three Istanbul Moments from the Nineteenth to Twenty-First Centuries Page 26 in *Istanbul: Living with Difference in a Global City* Edited by Nora Fisher-Onar, Susan C. Pearce, and E. Fuat Keyman: New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press

48 Keyder, Ç. 2010. Port-Cities in the Belle Epoque Page 19 in *Cities of the Mediterranean: From the Ottomans to the Present Day* London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd

and their inhabitants were now regarded with deep distrust and accused of belonging to a different universe<sup>49</sup>. This was the end of the cosmopolitan era: “along with the empires themselves, (...) port cities were also added to the wreckage contemplated by the angel of history<sup>50</sup>”.

Cosmopolitan consciousness and heritage were now considered as menaces to the state. This was a concept to be erased from the urban spirit:

Cosmopolitanism was castigated for positing an overly sophisticated social architecture, with layers of belonging entailing divided commitments and loyalty. It thus was regarded with suspicion as was often equated with betrayal<sup>51</sup>.

Mid-20th century was going to prove disastrous for the remnants of the cosmopolitan, multi-cultural empire. Cities like Istanbul, Alexandria, Beirut were “symbolically cordoned off from the national entity and conquered by the true owners of the country: The natives whom nationalist regimes sought to turn into nationals.”<sup>52</sup> There have been similar incidents in all these cities that have carried the same characteristics of nation building processes, including attacks toward minorities: “Such conquests culminated in plunder, foreign or ‘non-national’ properties were nationalized, the very spaces reminiscent of cosmopolitan co-existence seized by locals.”<sup>53</sup>

Beyoğlu was now in the most isolated period since its foundation. Alexandria lost its cosmopolitan golden age forever; and Beirut too eventually found itself in sectarian violence and civil war. The three have gone into a homogeneous, intraverted period for decades until the emergence of globalization in the 1980s.

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49 *ibid*, 21

50 *ibid*, 21

51 Keyder, Ç. 2018. Imperial, National, and Global Istanbul: Three Istanbul Moments from the Nineteenth to Twenty-First Centuries Page 28 in *Istanbul: Living with Difference in a Global City* Edited by Nora Fisher-Onar, Susan C. Pearce, and E. Fuat Keyman: New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press

52 *ibid*, 28

53 *ibid*, 28

### § 2.3 Globalization and Revival of Cosmopolitanism in Post-Ottoman Cities

The port cities of the Ottoman Empire were the predecessors of globalization. Keyder highlights the link between cities of commerce and present day global cities:

These cities of commerce presented themselves as terrains of multiplicity, both in terms of space and population. They attracted the social scientist with their potential to mirror contemporary urban formations with increasingly heterogeneous and in most cases segregated populations. Put differently, with the rise of discussions on globalization with capitalism and culture in the last decade of the 20th century, the cosmopolitanisms of these cities of commerce became a model that could both articulate and perhaps even present remedies to the new global condition.<sup>54</sup>

With the trend of globalization in the world, cities closed off from international markets, networks and culture during the nationalist periods now had the opportunity to open up to the world one more time. The new neo-liberal economic system after the Cold War has changed the development models of the cities of the Global South. Keyder indicates that there was no more “isolated capitalist development by third world countries”.<sup>55</sup> These big, old cities were now to compete in the race to be a global city. They have also attracted and created their own global citizens that were to become “new cosmopolitans” of the new era. These were the spiritual descendants of past cosmopolitan times. Just like “port city elites had done well under the weak umbrella of

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54 Kolluoğlu, B. and M. Toksöz 2010. Mapping Out the Eastern Mediterranean: Toward a Cartography of Cities of Commerce Page 4 in *Cities of the Mediterranean: From the Ottomans to the Present Day* London: I.B. Tauris & Co Lt

55 Keyder, Ç. 2018. Imperial, National, and Global Istanbul: Three Istanbul Moments from the Nineteenth to Twenty-First Centuries Page 29 in *Istanbul: Living with Difference in a Global City* Edited by Nora Fisher-Onar, Susan C. Pearce, and E. Fuat Keyman: New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press

empires”;<sup>56</sup> globalization has allowed a new cosmopolitan urban class to flourish. As their predecessors were “agents of change” who have contributed in the modernization and Westernization of these cities;<sup>57</sup> this new urban class was to the champion of a new golden age of liberal cosmopolitanism.

### 2.3.1 *Istanbul’s neo-liberal revival*

With the rise of neo-liberalism and emergence of global cities, there has been a cosmopolitanist revival in post-imperial port cities, especially observable in their Westernized urban pockets: “As globalization reveals the limits and pitfalls of nationalist thinking, the past experience of Levantine cities like Istanbul has attracted attention as a cosmopolitan model”.<sup>58</sup> Istanbul was becoming an increasingly global city separated from the rest of the country by “the growing visibility of cultural industries, a thriving art scene, a large variety of cultural and entertainment venues, and an accelerated process of gentrification”.<sup>59</sup> Istanbul’s history has been mobilized by neo-liberal globalization as part of a branding effort: “As in Cape Town, Mumbai, Beirut or Shanghai, in Istanbul-cum-Constantinople, neo-Imperial nostalgia meshes happily with globalism”.<sup>60</sup> The process started in 1980’s was fastened in the 1990’s. The new millennium gave it a whole new boost with neo-liberal Islamism. The rise of pro-Islamic AKP in 2002 has coincided with the neo-liberal boom and added a two sided integration model to rebranding the city’s history:

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56 *ibid*, 29

57 Keyder, Ç. 2010. Port-Cities in the Belle Epoque Page 14 in *Cities of the Mediterranean: From the Ottomans to the Present Day* London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd

58 Baban, F. The Past is a Different City 2018. P 62 in *Istanbul: Living with Difference in a Global City* Edited by Nora Fisher-Onar, Susan C. Pearce, and E. Fuat Keyman: New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press

59 Keyder, Ç. 2018. Imperial, National, and Global Istanbul: Three Istanbul Moments from the Nineteenth to Twenty-First Centuries Page 34 in *Istanbul: Living with Difference in a Global City* Edited by Nora Fisher-Onar, Susan C. Pearce, and E. Fuat Keyman: New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press

60 Onar, N.F. 2018. Between Neo-Ottomanism and Neoliberalism: The Politics of Imagining Istanbul Page 5 in *Istanbul: Living with Difference in a Global City* Edited by Nora Fisher-Onar, Susan C. Pearce, and E. Fuat Keyman: New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press

Neo-liberalization of the past initially worked for both social bases in Turkey. The Belle Époque story appeals to liberal business people and intellectuals, relatively influential offshoots of a pro-secular ruling class that has been eclipsed during AKP rule. Rising pro-religious business interest and intellectuals, on the other hand tend to endorse the neo-Ottoman – Islamic narrative. Nevertheless, both camps are winners from globalization. They may cooperate or (...) work independently toward the common goal of consolidating the cities status as a hub of global neo-liberalism.<sup>61</sup>

The highest product of this neo-liberal alliance was the project of ‘2010 Istanbul-European Capital of Culture’ program that “implicitly trumpeted both the Belle Époque and Ottoman-Islamic stories”.<sup>62</sup> All the market forces and champions of globalization have ignored dividing effects of neo-liberal development and pushed through the new cosmopolitan agenda during those years. Çağlar Keyder emphasizes that this rhetoric could become “a much more deliberate evocation of cosmopolitan consciousness than in imperial times”; global world cities could even overshadow imperial cities of the past in their common goal of “creation of a new order in the whole world”.<sup>63</sup>

If the cities of this new era had an ideology perhaps it would be “Cosmopolitan liberalism”. Cosmopolitanism was both in line with and useful for globalization. It also defined a new way of life and culture for the champions and bearers of the new era. The Golden Age of Istanbul’s new cosmopolitan moment is best embodied by the term “Cool Istanbul”. This term was the subject of academic conferences, research, as well as providing the headline of a cover story for international *Newsweek* Magazine in 2005: ‘Cool Istanbul: Europe’s Hippest City May Not Need it After All’.

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61 *ibid*, 6-7

62 *ibid*, 7

63 Keyder, Ç. 2018. Imperial, National, and Global Istanbul: Three Istanbul Moments from the Nineteenth to Twenty-First Centuries Page 29 in *Istanbul: Living with Difference in a Global City* Edited by Nora Fisher-Onar, Susan C. Pearce, and E. Fuat Keyman: New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press

## § 2.4 Aesthetic Consumption

‘Cool Istanbul’ and Beyoğlu’s neo-liberal cosmopolitan moment was based on the riches and potential of this historical, multi-cultural city. The new global cities employed their cosmopolitan past in order to make their cities as natural forebearers of glorious global cities of world history. Istanbul was Turkey’s natural candidate in this competition. To market the city, the city needed to be reconnected to its glorious, cosmopolitan past. These connections had to be or be perceived as authentic to attract tourism as well as investment and foreign capital. The problem is that sometimes authenticity is hard to find. Therefore, it needs to be produced. For Sharon Zukin “reinventing authenticity” is a critical neoliberal mechanism. This process begins “with creating an image to connect an aesthetic view of origins and a social view of new beginnings”.<sup>64</sup> This brings us to the concept of “experience of origins”. Zukin refers to Walter Benjamin, Jean Baudrillard in this subject:

Through technology, imitation of novelty, and the normal hype of consumer culture, experience is increasingly seduced by appearances. Viewed through either of these lenses, a city is authentic if it can create the *experience* of origins. This is done by preserving historic building and districts, encouraging the development of small-scale boutiques and cafes, and branding neighborhoods in terms of distinctive cultural identities.<sup>65</sup>

### 2.4.1 *Living the past and the present at once: Consuming history*

There are various mechanisms modern life and capitalism employs in order to capture the modern city dweller looking for authentic experiences. Zukin uses the term “kairological images”, which are images that are “reminders of an alternative time that doesn’t make the present look like the culmination of the past”.<sup>66</sup> The etymological origin of this term goes back to Ancient Greece,

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64 Zukin, S. 2011. *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places* Page 234 Oxford: Oxford University Press

65 *ibid*, 3

66 *ibid*, 101

*kairos*: “a sense of the past that intrudes into and challenges the present. It’s different from *chronos*, our usual sense of time as a simple, unending arrow of progress from yesterday to today and onto tomorrow”.<sup>67</sup> The kairological images instead “create a sense of authentic origin and justification for present hopes”. These images:

(..) make you feel you’re re-creating a unique story of origin, and the store fronts and tenements give material form to the comfort you take on living in an old neighborhood with a history of artistic energy and resisting authority. You sense that in this space you could be living in any time and you could take on any of these roles: Artist, poet, rebel, *flaneur*. Or maybe you could take on all these roles at once”.<sup>68</sup>

Zukin illustrates this mechanism within the context of New York City. The neighborhoods like Harlem and East Village that in our context are very similar to Beyoğlu “challenge the homogenizing forces of modernism and redevelopment”.<sup>69</sup> These neighborhoods according to Zukin also “offer kairological images of living simultaneously in the past and the present and in contrasting class worlds of poverty and privilege”.<sup>70</sup> Zukin reminds us that these *kairos* trigger a “desire to consume a particular kind of authenticity”.<sup>71</sup> A tricky mechanism takes place when one is in these neighborhoods: “and suddenly you see that this projection of your own self-image on the shabby chic streets is exactly what the marketing theorists expect authenticity to be: A sympathetic vibe between consumers and the objects of their desire”.<sup>72</sup> Now the city dweller is involved in a mechanism Zukin defines as “the consumption of history”.

Esra Özyürek underlines the use of the past and nostalgia for this neoliberal process:

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67 *ibid*, 101

68 *ibid*, 101

69 *ibid*, 122

70 *ibid*, 122

71 *ibid*, 101

72 *ibid*, 101

In the late stage of capitalism we live in, the biggest challenge is to constantly create new commodities for consumption. Nostalgia, in this context becomes a convenient desire that can transform public concepts such as the national past or identity into personal commodities.”<sup>73</sup>

Neo-liberal forces can get creative in shaping history and putting it into the public sphere and to various uses of the market. Özyürek gives the example of Japan, referring to Marilyn Ivy, who studied the use of nostalgia by Japanese neoliberalism in “creating the desire necessary for consumption”:

a nostalgia for a Japan that is kept on the verge of vanishing, stable yet endangered (and thus open for commodifiable desire). At the turn of the twenty-first century, nostalgia privatizes and by doing so, commodifies images and concepts once seen as public and thus nonmarketable by previous capitalists around the world.<sup>74</sup>

## § 2.5 Nostalgia’s Role in Neo-liberal Istanbul

Neo-liberalism provides the mechanisms through which nostalgia can be commodified for consumption. Özyürek argues that: “nostalgia and privatization are amongst the powerful driving forces behind neoliberal ideology, which turns objects, relations and concepts into commodities and transforms political expression by converting it into an issue of personal interest.”<sup>75</sup>

There is also a powerful political role nostalgia can play in shaping a country’s politics. History can become a powerful tool in shaping the present. Esra Özyürek explains how people disenchanted by modernization and have lost hope for the future, are looking for their utopias in the past rather than in the future.<sup>76</sup> She explains how nostalgia has been employed for political agendas

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73 Özyürek, E. 2006. *Nostalgia for the Modern: State Secularism and Everyday Politics in Turkey* Page 9-10 Durham and London: Duke University Press

74 *ibid* 9-10

75 *ibid* 8

76 *ibid*, 17

and visions throughout Turkey's history and how it has always been a part of the present rather than the past.<sup>77</sup> She underlines this function of nostalgia on disillusioned groups:

large groups of people yearn for bygone days and imagine a pristine past in which each individual society united around a common goal... A widely held view about nostalgia is that because modernity could not fulfill its promises for a better and freer life, people marginalized during the modernization process now look back at the past fondly. According to Andreas Huyssen (1995), modernity ended with the hope for tomorrow. Since then, people have looked for their utopias in the past rather than in the future.<sup>78</sup>

Özyürek concludes: "dissatisfaction with modernization projects that did not deliver on their promises could serve as a viable explanation for the spread of nostalgia around the globe".<sup>79</sup> Turkish Republic's nationalist, homogenous imagination of social life failed to satisfy a rapidly modernizing population, especially the new cosmopolitans of the globalizing world who were culturally, economically and to a great extent politically the spiritual descendents of the imperial Istanbul's lost cosmopolites. Ethnically, they were mostly Turkish of Sunni descent, but their aspirations surpassed the limitations of the nation-state. The liberalization of 1990's was based on this demand.

#### 2.5.1 *Two kinds of nostalgia: Belle Epoque and Ottoman cosmopolitanism*

One of the carriers of cosmopolitanist nostalgia in Istanbul in 1990's were members of the new urban elite since the 1990's. This group was "composed of well educated, secular, left-leaning, and Europeanist democrats, who can

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77 *ibid*, 31

78 *ibid*, 9

79 *ibid* 9

master several languages. This elite fosters a city identity or an Istanbulite consciousness that is based on the belief that old, cosmopolitan Istanbul was a much more civilized place.”<sup>80</sup>

With the end of Ottoman Empire, Ankara was declared as the new capital of the Republic. The rulers of the new Republic wanted to distance themselves from the specter of the cosmopolitan imperial city. Istanbul, now forgotten, has been a favorite subject for artistic expressions of nostalgia: “Like Venice, Istanbul became a fading if alluring hologram of an eclipsed world. This image of the city was immortalized in the melancholic ruminations of writers like Orhan Veli and Orhan Pamuk and in the gritty photography of Ara Guler.”<sup>81</sup>

Orhan Pamuk, in *Istanbul: Memories of a City*, describes a post-Ottoman republican city full of “hüzün”, a feeling of nostalgia and melancholy, “a city looking inward, cut off from the global flows that had fed Istanbul’s identity over the course of centuries.”<sup>82</sup> In Pamuk’s Republican Istanbul, the harmonious co-existence of diverse religious and ethnic groups was long gone. He describes the city as “a place of amnesia where the past lingered but was disconnected from current residents’ lives, its architecture delinked from a delicate social fabric that had developed over centuries.”<sup>83</sup>

Feyzi Baban makes a dramatic remark: “Perhaps, for the first time in its long history, post-1923 Istanbul was neither connected to the global flow of goods, ideas, and people nor hospitable to multi-culturalism.”<sup>84</sup>

The elite who was not in peace with the limitations of the nationalist narrative and also was anxious about the rise of conservative Islam, found refuge

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80 Örs, İ.R. 2018. Cosmopolitanist Istanbul: A Relic to be Revitalized? Page 83 in *Istanbul: Living with Difference in a Global City* Edited by Nora Fisher-Onar, Susan C. Pearce, and E. Fuat Keyman: New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press

81 Onar, N.F. 2018. Between Neo-Ottomanism and Neoliberalism: The Politics of Imagining Istanbul Page 2 in *Istanbul: Living with Difference in a Global City* Edited by Nora Fisher-Onar, Susan C. Pearce, and E. Fuat Keyman: New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press

82 Baban, F. The Past is a Different City 2018. P 55 in *Istanbul: Living with Difference in a Global City* Edited by Nora Fisher-Onar, Susan C. Pearce, and E. Fuat Keyman: New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press

83 *ibid*, 55

84 *ibid*, 55

in a cosmopolitan Istanbul nostalgia. İlay Romain Örs points out that this nostalgia intensified as a reaction to massive migration from Anatolia since in the 1960's: "The urban elite, feeling that their value systems and lifestyles are threatened, have turned to the past for assurance that a different future is possible".<sup>85</sup> This assurance was a cosmopolitan past with a significant Western, European impact. For them, the solution and hope was in Europe:

A future in a multi-cultural European community by packaging Istanbul as a cosmopolitan center, secular urban cohorts mark their ability to embrace diversity at home, conforming to EU standards by displaying tolerance as a sign of European civility. Such attempts at political marketing experienced their heyday in the early 2000's, especially when Istanbul was being designated as 2010 'European Capital of Culture'.<sup>86</sup>

For the pro-Western, secular segments of Turkish society, nostalgia of a cosmopolitan Istanbul was a political tool to avoid a hardline conservative-Islamic political path. It allowed a middle ground with the neo-Ottoman outlook since they too were yearning for the long gone, multicultural, imperial Istanbul.

#### 2.5.1.1 Ottoman cosmopolitanism

Nostalgia was used simultaneously by conservative-Islamist segments of society, but with a difference. Theirs did not focus on cosmopolitan, multicultural, multi-religious days of Constantinople but on the "Ottoman-Islamic glory days" Istanbul:

This neo-Ottoman imaginary begins in earnest with the life and times of Mehmet the Conqueror (1432-1481) – so named for his capture of the city – through the period of Suleiman the Magnificent (or 'law

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85 Örs, İ.R. 2018. Cosmopolitanist Istanbul: A Relic to be Revitalized Page 83 in *Istanbul: Living with Difference in a Global City* Edited by Nora Fisher-Onar, Susan C. Pearce, and E. Fuat Keyman: New Brunswick: Rutgers University

86 *ibid*, 83-4

giver'; 1494 – 1566). It was during this period that many of the minarets and domes of the golden horns famed skyline were built".<sup>87</sup>

Ottoman cosmopolitanism had a “communitarian” orientation that favoured Sunni Muslims of the Empire:

a major inspiration is the millet system of higher hierarchal relationships between religious communities, which was used to manage diversity during the Ottoman golden era until its abrogation in the nineteenth century. In this framework, Sunni Muslim's enjoyed preeminence regardless of their ethnic origin (e.g., Slav, Albanian, Laz, Circassia, Tatar, Kurdish, or Arab as well as Turkish)".<sup>88</sup>

In this context Ottoman multi-culturalism was hardly a true cosmopolitanism where social and ethnic barriers disappeared:

The millet system affirmed rather than ignored religious difference. Minorities thrived to the extent that the benign paternalism of the state-embodied in the person of the Sultan-was indeed benign. By ensuring through differentiation that everyone knew their proper place, the framework was said to enable “harmonious relations in society”".<sup>89</sup>

We will see how this hierarchical outlook of Ottoman cosmopolitanism deviated and found its way through modern policies in Turkey and in Beyoğlu, in following chapters. The exclusionary character of the millet model, in AKP's Turkey, included seculars along with ethnic and religious minorities. With political victories in 2010's, Erdoğan, feeling that it was time, did not hide this vision. When he spoke in his party's Beyoğlu Convention on March 22nd 2018, he commented:

Some of our universities are became action fields by some marginal organizations. These marginal that we sometimes see in Beyoğlu can

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87 Onar, N.F. 2018. Between Neo-Ottomanism and Neoliberalism: The Politics of Imagining Istanbul Page 4 in *Istanbul: Living with Difference in a Global City* Edited by Nora Fisher-Onar, Susan C. Pearce, and E. Fuat Keyman: New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press

88 *ibid*, 9

89 *ibid*, 9

remain here as one of the colours of this country as long as they behave. But if they start pressure, intolerance, aggressiveness and vilence, we will hold them from their ears and throw them to where they came from.

## § 2.6 Cosmopolitan Mirage

In light of these inherent deficiencies of golden age cosmopolitanism in 1995-2010 Beyoğlu, we comment that this cosmopolitan moment was a “mirage” like, temporary and illusionary stage. Everything looked and felt like an authentic revival of the city’s past cosmopolitanism. But beneath the surface, the authenticity of this cosmopolitan revival was questionable. This was not a cosmopolitanism -in the ideal sense- that abolished ethnic or class differences. It was led by and mostly benefited the cultural, economic elite and urban middle classes. The golden age of Beyoğlu, the cultural achievements of the liberal moment were enjoyed only partially by the disadvantaged classes of Istanbul. Even though an aura of free spirit and a mood of the *flaneur* was felt in the streets; socio-economic frontiers drawn by neo-liberalism were there. This cosmopolitan revival also lacked a strong coming to terms of past atrocities and tragedies against ethnic minorities. The appearance created a cosmopolitan aura, but it was merely an appearance, a representation of a forgotten past. The new owner of Viktor Levi, an old Jewish winehouse of Constantinople, was in fact a person from central Anatolia. The Greek and Armenian population of the district was nowhere to be seen except in the names of new restaurants or cafes. This was a reinvention that felt real, almost like the real thing, it provided the joy and emotions for sometime but in fact it was a mirage.

<sup>90</sup>This mirage was an illusion masterfully created by neo-liberalism. Like David Harvey said: “the cosmopolitan urbanism begins to intersect with neo-

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90 Cambridge dictionary *definition*: An image produced by very hot air, of something that seems to be far away but does not really exist.

liberal forms or entrepreneurial forms of urban governance”<sup>91</sup> Cosmopolitanism was being commodified as something to be reinvented first, then marketed and sold. This commercialized cosmopolitanism was not authentic but “sanitized or superficial”<sup>92</sup>

Even though there really has been a sense of liberal, newly free cosmopolitan aura at that stage, in a closer analysis, one would discover the superficiality of its socio-economic perspective. We will now review what made the golden age a mirage of times past due to its economic, social and ethnic shortcomings.

### 2.6.1 *Elite based cosmopolitanism*

Cosmopolitan revivals are engineered by “transnational elites” and they typically take place in “occidental cultural enclaves” such as Beyoglu:

We see here how the apparent stateless and almost free-floating cosmopolite is actually grounded in quite specific sites and places wherein encounters with diversity and the development of a cosmopolitan attitude are seemingly contained and limited. The question then arises of whether such people or class formations are in fact cosmopolitan at all, in that they simply encounter and interact with other ‘cosmopolitans’ sharing the same cultural and aesthetic values.<sup>93</sup>

Sharon Zukin states that this new community’s “openness to otherness is more a kind of aesthetic of consumption rather than any genuine sense of encounter and alterity”<sup>94</sup> In these cosmopolitan enclaves “those who can perform the ‘right’ kind of cultural capital can indulge in a superficial encounter

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91 Binnie, J., J. Holloway and S. Millington and C. Young. 2006. Introduction: Grounding cosmopolitan urbanism: Approaches, practices and policies Page 28 in *Cosmopolitan Urbanism* edited by Binnie, J., J. Holloway and S. Millington and C. Young: New York: Routledge

92 *ibid*, 29

93 *ibid*, 17

94 Bridge, G. 2006. The Paradox of Cosmopolitan Urbanism: Rationality, Difference and the Circuits of Cultural Capital Page 58-9 in *Cosmopolitan Urbanism* edited by Binnie, J., J. Holloway and S. Millington and C. Young. New York: Routledge

with difference and the ‘other’ through shopping, the café-bar culture of ‘ethnic’ restaurants without actually knowing the ‘other’ in anyway”.<sup>95</sup>

This cosmopolitan aesthetic can eventually result in a homogenization and “exclusions of difference”.<sup>96</sup> In order to qualify as a new cosmopolite, one should have a set of skills or qualifications<sup>97</sup>, which made it “an intrinsically classed phenomenon” since “being worldly, being able to navigate between and within different cultures, requires confidence, skill and money”.<sup>98</sup>

The neo-liberal cosmopolitan moment in Beyoğlu during 2000s therefore is the mirage of a new privileged urban class. They were empowered by the tools and the culture of neo-liberalism and for sometime truly created and enjoyed an open progressive liberal cultural explosion. However, this moment was a somehow exclusive one and it too ended with the second stage of neo-liberal development that was shaped by various destructive processes of gentrification. Is another kind of cosmopolitanism possible? Rather than a Eurocentric, Western-led phenomenon, what other cosmopolitan potentials are there in the cities we study?

İlham Khuri-Makdisi in her book *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism, 1860-1914* explains a link of people and ideas in Beirut, Alexandria and Cairo. She challenges the eurocentric outlook to global connectivity and discusses an alternative vision of a world order that originates from the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean.

Is such cosmopolitanism possible in Istanbul today? We can argue that there is even a higher intensity of cosmopolitan interaction than 2000s when we look at the streets of Beyoğlu, Tarlabaşı and Taksim today. Iranian, Syrian, Iraqi Kurds are asserting themselves even more strongly than local Turks ever did. Taksim Square is filled by Iranian and Arab street musicians, the corresponding crowds demonstrate a high interest in these performances. Several languages are heard in Beyoğlu today, as opposed to more homogenous recent

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95 Binnie, J., J. Holloway and S. Millington and C. Young. 2006. *Introduction: grounding cosmopolitan urbanism: Approaches, practices an policies* Page 25 in *Cosmopolitan Urbanism*: New York: Routledge

96 *ibid*, 25

97 *ibid*, 8

98 *ibid*, 9

past. In the past golden age of the Ottoman Empire, many languages were spoken everyday on İstiklal Street: Greek, Ladino, Armenian, French, Italian as well as Turkish. Nowadays, the dominant languages besides Turkish are Arabic of different dialects, Farsi and Kurdish. A very diverse and colourful life is still taking place in many shantytowns that are still in Tarlabaşı, Kasımpaşa etc. Refugees live side by side with Kurdish immigrants; Syrians are neighbors of merchants from Central Anatolia, the Roma etc. This is also a profound, cosmopolitan life. But this cosmopolitanism too is under threat of neo-liberal displacement and extinction. Also, its potential to contribute to cultural, social and artistic development of the city is more limited for two reasons. Primarily, these are disadvantaged individuals who are trying to survive in a hard, competitive world. Their livelihood does not give them opportunity to live their lives fully to inspire cultural progress. Secondly, most of these diverse groups are Muslim. Even though there are huge differences between them in every level, the range of cosmopolitan diversity in lifestyle is limited. But still, this is a cosmopolitan potential that is new to Beyoğlu and Istanbul. Its results are yet to be seen.

### 2.6.2 *Failure to deal with ethnic homogeneity*

The second aspect that was lacking in the liberal cosmopolitan moment was the failure to deal with the real reasons of the loss of ethnic heterogeneity. The classes of Beyoğlu's golden age, enjoyed the rebranding and the attractive aspects of multi-cultural Ottoman past, such as renovated Russian restaurants, Greek taverns, Jewish winehouses... The old neighborhoods that used to be inhabited by Greek, Armenian, Jewish minorities were also sites of attraction during the golden age: "Upon their rediscovery by the urban elite, neighborhoods like Galata, Fener, Ortaköy or Cihangir began to be restored with EU or UNESCO funding and reclaimed as representations of a lost but retrievable cosmopolitan urban past"<sup>99</sup> However, these were merely "cosmetic modifications" that did not deal with the essence of historical problems:

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99 Örs, İ.R. 2018. Cosmopolitanist Istanbul: A Relic to be Revitalized? Page 84 in *Istanbul: Living with Difference in a Global City* Edited by Nora Fisher-Onar, Susan C. Pearce, and E. Fuat Keyman: New Brunswick: Rutgers University

(...) questions of how these houses changed hands, when property rights were transferred overnight by the imposition of unconstitutional laws, remain unresolved. The construction of the cosmopolitan image of the city, based on a polished reimagination of historic cosmopolitanism, is advanced to capitalize on multiculturalism as a form of commercial and political marketing. Debates on preserving the physical surroundings or architectural landmarks in the city constitute visible manifestations of cosmopolitanist nostalgia and competing ideological narratives”.<sup>100</sup>

Nobody demonstrated a real willingness to recuperate the loss of Beyoğlu’s multi-ethnic, multi-cultural social fabric:

By glossing over the historical processes by which the city lost its non-Muslim minorities, the cosmopolitanist narrative works to deny the lived histories of state and social violence. The reasons that Greeks, Jews and Armenians almost completely disappeared from the city, while their properties became available for development, are obscured. Although this Istanbulite cosmopolitanism appears, on the surface, to hold the inclusionary values of Kantian cosmopolitanism, in actuality it redraws ethnic and economic boundaries and thus forecloses possibilities for contemporary pluralistic belonging.<sup>101</sup>

The mirage like state of the golden age in 2000’s does not mean that this was a liberating, culturally progressive, fertile and joyful time for a generation. To the contrary, the mechanisms of cosmopolitanism, openness, -even if they are temporary or not completely authentic- can be truly transforming experiences. People interact with these ideas, enjoy a vibrant urban social life, and in between -the beginning and recognition of the mirage- authentic freedom and high human spirit can rise. These did rise in Beyoğlu’s golden age in the field of arts, culture. Young Turkish people felt that they were a part of the global

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100 *ibid*, 84-85

101 Mills, A. 2018. *Cosmopolitanism as Situated Knowledge: Reading Istanbul with David Harvey*. Page 105-6 in *Istanbul, Living with Difference in a Global City*: New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press

life and that they lived in one of the most spectacular and colourful cities in Europe. They experienced a city on the rise with their peers, women enjoyed the city's streets freely in a way they never did before. Istanbul, after decades, was once more a global center, a European city. Even if the dynamics of the process was mirage- like; these sensations and feelings were real. And their sights and sounds will not disappear. While explaining the sudden appearance and disappearance of white Russians in Istanbul, Feyzi Baban points out:

a key feature of Istanbul, namely that it is not a city of records, deep memories, and firmly grounded lives, but rather a place of moments that come and go, more or less noisily, leaving a residue. These echoes are something one feels, but one is never quite sure of their source. Today for example, there is hardly any physical evidence of the presence of a large Russian community, which existed with a distinctive culture in the city center only 100 years ago. Nevertheless, quiet remnants of this presence appear in unexpected names on buildings, in life stories, in books, in restaurants, and in other venues (...).<sup>102</sup>

The residue of all cosmopolitan experiences builds urban memory of Istanbul. The experiences of the neo-liberal golden age too made a permanent impact on Istanbul's modern history. One day, when a new and more sustainable golden era arises; the residue of the 2000s will guide Istanbulites through a different path.

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102 Baban, F. The Past is a Different City 2018. Page 55 in *Istanbul: Living with Difference in a Global City* Edited by Nora Fisher-Onar, Susan C. Pearce, and E. Fuat Keyman: New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press

## A Comparative Historical Sketch: The Rise, Fall and the Recent Revivals in Three Post-Ottoman Cities

In our study of cosmopolitanism in Beyoğlu and post-Ottoman geography; we will examine historical port-cities of Eastern Mediterranean for a comparative evaluation. Cities like Beirut, Alexandria, Smyrna and Thessaloniki were pioneers of cosmopolitan co-existence in the region. They were the nexus of East and West. Commerce was the mutual objective and empire was the enabling umbrella. Imperial port-cities were organized around a commercial mechanism, employing people from various ethnic and religious backgrounds. Economic cooperation allowed a peaceful social existence and created the foundations of cosmopolitanism. These cities thrived thanks to a heterogeneous population and free exchange of goods and ideas. Eventually they gained an identity that is a mix of various cultures, distinct from their immediate surrounding. They had their “golden ages” and their collapses.

This chapter will underline their common historical trends. In order to better understand Beyoğlu’s golden age and its various collapses, I will examine two symbols of cosmopolitanism in Ottoman geography: Alexandria and Beirut. These cities were all part of Ottoman Empire; and have predominantly Muslim populations. We will discover similarities and common patterns and try to understand the structures and circumstances effecting cosmopolitanism in these cities.

## § 3.1 History and Geography

Three cities I analyze in this chapter are all historical cities of Antiquity. They have been centers of empires and meeting points of different cultures throughout history. They have all thrived during Ottoman rule, had their peaks as cosmopolitan centers of the Mediterranean at various times and with the end of empire, eventually lost their primary position in the region and history. In addition to the parallels in their historical evolution, the neo-liberal revival stages of these cities demonstrate dramatic similarities. I will analyze these common points and differences.

### 3.1.1 *Ancient heritage*

A common trait in all three cities is their ancient roots and the rich symbolism they provide. Istanbul's history goes back to the Ancient city of Byzantium that gave its name to the later Eastern Roman Empire. As the New Rome, this was one of the most powerful and important cities of the Ancient world. Istanbul's real golden ages came during the Byzantine and later Ottoman empires. The two other cities I focus on have a stronger link to ancient glory. Alexandria was the most famous one.

#### 3.1.1.1 Alexander's city

Egypt's Alexandria is viewed as the first cosmopolitan city in the world. Built in 331 BC, its founder Alexander the Great "aspired to harmonize the world by the mingling of races, the symbiosis of religions, the cross-breeding of cultures. (...) He wanted to marry the East and the West."<sup>1</sup>

The city was built as "a model of pluralism and inter-cultural exchange. (...) Successive Ptolemaic rulers during three centuries, developed it to become the cultural capital of Antiquity."<sup>2</sup> The legendary lighthouse, The Pharos of Alexandria became the "symbol of enlightenment". Three bright centuries

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- 1 Balta, P. 2005. *The Cosmopolitanism of Alexandria* Page 266 Paris: Centre d'Etudes de l'Orient Contemporain
  - 2 Sahar, H. 2007 *It was Another Alexandria: An Oral Narrative of a Cosmopolitan City* Page 11 WLIC Durban Meeting script, 18 May 2007

of Ptolemaic rule, the ancient golden age, ended with Cleopatra and Mark Antony's defeat to Roman Emperor Caesar Augustus in 30 BC.<sup>3</sup>

With the Arab Muslim invasion in 642, and Cairo becoming the new capital, Alexandria lost its primary position. The following millennia was a long silent era. When Napoleon invaded Egypt in 1798, he "found a small fishing town of some 7000 souls" in Alexandria <sup>4</sup> But the roots of cosmopolitanism had already integrated in these cities' identity.

### 3.1.1.2 Beirut of the Phoenicians

The ancestors of the Lebanese are the Phoenicians (1500 BC-300 BC) a trading, maritime civilization with significant achievements for human progress such as the invention of the alphabet. They built commercial colonies like the Carthage; their cultural traces can be found today in all parts of the Mediterranean. Phoenician past is used for Beirut's identity as a tool to reinvent an "eternal" image of the city, a city with a claim of universality, a city for all of humanity, with cosmopolitan possibilities.

This image of "ancient heritage" is still a part of these cities' identity. Another aspect that is common is the Western influence.

### 3.1.2 Western enclaves and the European City

Istanbul, capital of empires for three thousand years, emerged in the scene of history as a meeting place of cultures. Although it was a port connecting continents and the Black Sea to the Mediterranean; it differed from other Levantine port-cities because it was the center of imperial political power. During the Ottoman Empire, the grasp of an Ottoman-Islamic rule was felt in the districts of Istanbul considerably more than in Levantine cities like Smyrna, Alexandria, and Thessaloniki. Yet there was a district in Istanbul that has always been able to enjoy a relative autonomy in the empire: Galata and later day Pera. During the Byzantine era, Galata was a cosmopolitan trade center ruled by the

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3 *ibid*, 11 - and Veronica Della Dora 2006 *The Rhetoric of Nostalgia: Postcolonial Alexandria between Uncanny Memories and Global Geographies* Page 208 Sage Publications

4 Dora, D.V. 2006. *The Rhetoric of Nostalgia: Postcolonial Alexandria between Uncanny Memories and Global Geographies (207-238)* Page 208 Sage Publications

Genoese. The area including Galata, and the higher ground surrounding it, was called Pera by the Greeks who inhabited the historical center of Byzantium and Constantinople. In Greek, *pera* means “the other side”, implying the other side of the Golden Horn, across the sea from the empire’s political center.<sup>5</sup> Even though Pera was under Genoese control, it was an independent cosmopolitan city with a diverse but predominantly European population. Arab historian and traveler Ibn-i Battuta portrays Galata in 1334:

Galata is reserved for the Frankish [European] Christians who dwelled there. They are of different kinds, including the Genoese, Venetians, Romans [Byzantines, i.e., Greeks] and Franks; they are subject to the King of Constantinople.<sup>6</sup>

When Turks sieged Constantinople in 1453, the Genoese of Galata did not officially interfere. In return, Mehmet the Conqueror allowed them a favourable deal protecting political, religious and economic freedoms in that part of the city. This Christian district of the city maintained autonomy under an organ called “Magnifica Communita di Pera” until 1682.<sup>7</sup> This was the birth of Pera, later day Beyoğlu, the historically cosmopolitan center and European enclave of Istanbul throughout centuries.

Istanbul’s Beyoğlu was a Western enclave in a Muslim Empire. This contributed to its development as a cosmopolitan center. Similarly, Beirut and Alexandria were trade centers with a mixed demography and culture. They were also located in territories controlled by local- mainly Muslim- rulers but were multicultural urban centers open to Western influence. They were all Western enclaves, with social and cultural properties that dramatically separated them from their immediate surroundings and native populations. Also to a certain extent, they were away from the firm hands of rulers.

Modernization increased Western influence in all three cities. The pioneer was the center of the empire, Istanbul. From there it spread to other cosmopolitan cities of the empire. With European cultural and economic relations,

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5 Freely, B. - John Freely 2016. *Galata, Pera, Beyoğlu: A Biography* Page 11 Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları

6 *ibid*, 14

7 *ibid*, 14-5

the cities we analyze that were first Western enclaves, were now becoming European cities.

### 3.1.2.1 Birth of Pera

In the sixteenth and seventeenth century, foreign trading families and then governments started to build homes and large European style embassies in Pera on the hills over Galata. These embassies mostly operated as separate entities with their own legal jurisdiction and commercial rights. This “high road” on top of the initial Genoese district of Galata was going to become Grand Rue de Pera, today’s İstiklal Street, still the main avenue of current day Istanbul. The street became an urban sensation: “Through its middle runs a broad way full of houses, gardens and vineyards. This is the most pleasant part of town”; this is how historian Petrus Gyllius who studied the city between 1544-50 recalls the high ground in the Genoese district that would later become Grand Rue de Pera.<sup>8</sup> The urban development that followed throughout centuries gave the district an irrevocable European mark. The “labyrinthine street patterns” reminding of cities of Europe in the Middle Age, the monuments from the Genoese as well as Byzantine and Ottoman eras, and the emerging vibrant life of hedonism with many of its taverns and restaurants, gave Pera a European look, as a city of its own in the heart of the empire.

In the nineteenth century, with the international era of liberalism and globalization, Istanbul became a true *cosmopolis*. This period was crowned by the modernizing reforms of Tanzimat and the liberal cosmopolitan days of the *Belle Époque*.<sup>9</sup> *Belle Époque* Istanbul acquired novelties of European city life. Interacting with people from different affiliations as well as the possibility of “anonymity” to those who frequented the neighborhood, especially on Grand

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8 *ibid*, 17

9 *Belle Époque* is the period of relative peace and prosperity before the First World War (1914-1918). The liberal cosmopolitanism that was the result of the Ottoman Empire’s modernization and Westernization was most intensely visible in Pera, the cosmopolitan heart of Istanbul. It was a product of the economic and political rapprochement with Europe. Near the *fin de siècle* period of the late nineteenth century, half of the population consisted of Greeks and Armenians, fifteen percent were foreigners and the Muslim population was probably a minority.

Rue de Pera, was making Pera a modern European city.<sup>10</sup> Paris as the most sophisticated one and prototype of a modern city, has had tremendous influence:

This newly developing space was defined by apartment buildings, paved pedestrian streets, shops, cafes and entertainment venues – the amenities of nineteenth-century bourgeois life in imitation of Paris – which had not until this juncture been part of the urban scene in Istanbul.<sup>11</sup>

Cosmopolitanism in the city spiked during the nineteenth century and the tide of modernization was facilitated by political reforms undertaken by the Palace. The peak of these reforms and of “Ottoman modernization and cosmopolitanism” is considered to have occurred during the rule of Sultan Abdülmecit. (1839-1861).<sup>12</sup> This was the era of Tanzimat that brought about equality for people of different religious backgrounds as well as “cultural flourishing and mixing”.<sup>13</sup> The liberalizing effects of Tanzimat were felt all over the Empire, including Alexandria and Beirut.

### 3.1.2.2 Beirut: Paris of the East

Ottoman influence was a modernizing force in the province of Beirut. Evidently, the empire itself was in the process of modernization. Beirut “was also very much a city of the Tanzimat. The spirit of reform inspired governors, local officials, and notables, all of whom were convinced that modernization was the soul road to salvation”.<sup>14</sup> The city was receiving special consideration from Istanbul.<sup>15</sup> Its fate went hand in hand with Istanbul.

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10 Zubaida, S. 2018. *The Past is a Different City; Istanbul, Memoirs and Multiculturalism* Page 39 in *Istanbul: Living with Difference in a Global City* Edited by Nora Fisher-Onar, Susan C. Pearce, and E. Fuat Keyman New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press

11 *ibid*, 31

12 *ibid*, 41

13 *ibid*, 41

14 Kassir, S. *Beirut* 2010. Page 131 Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press

15 *ibid*, 131

Lebanese historian Mas'ud Dahir states that Beirut owes its cosmopolitanism to Ottoman times:

The Ottoman provincial mission shared many features of a French *mission civilisatrice*. (...) Hamidian bureaucrats were generally driven by the 'burden' that their imperial mission placed on them to civilize distant provincial peripheries.<sup>16</sup>

The urban development of Beirut was so related to Istanbul that "In 1868, Beirut was duly constituted as a municipality, almost entirely on the model of Pera, now known as Beyoglu, which had been established as a separate district of Istanbul in 1856".<sup>17</sup> The city was developed according to European physical and administrative urban structures. Even during the time of Abdülhamit II, the spirit of Western urbanization had not halted.<sup>18 19</sup>

After the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire in World War I, the territories of Syria and Lebanon were given to the Mandate of France in 1923. This was not a colonial framework but a temporary rule until the establishment of the new nation-state of Lebanon in 1943. The French Mandate period fastened Beirut's Westernization. Now, it was becoming a truly European city, attracting tourists and new inhabitants from all over Europe. A tourism explosion was followed by a cosmopolitan golden age. French poet Alphonse de Lamartine called it "Switzerland of the Levant".<sup>20</sup> The urban fabric was changing.

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16 Hanssen, J. 2005 *Fin de Siecle Beirut: The Making of an Ottoman Provincial Capital* Page 14 New York: Oxford University Press

17 Kassir, S. *Beirut* 2010. Page 133 Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press

18 *ibid*, 139 - also see note below from *Istanbul: Living with Difference in a Global City* page 46: (...) even though there were periods that political reforms were at a standstill, especially during the reign of Abdulhamit II (1876 – 1909); "The underlying processes of reform and secularization continued under the exigencies of socioeconomic pressures and transformation of class, occupational structure, and education". The era of Abdulhamit II emphasized a pan-Islamic empire. However, the reality was that the economy "was settling more firmly into the hands of European bankers". At the same time, the educated middle classes were getting bigger and the interest in science literature and mass communication was growing everyday. New horizons were appearing for the modernizing Ottoman society.

20 Kassir, S. 2010 *Beirut* Page 305 Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press

“The image of bourgeois Mediterranean city that the nineteenth century had begun to fashion for Beirut” was visible in the architecture and urban effects that were brought by the Mandate.<sup>21</sup> Samir Kassir explains the Europeanization of the city: “The grand designs in the manner of Haussmann were softened by an Italianate vocabulary and Baroque decorative touches, themselves combined with other cosmopolitan influences to form a uniquely Levantine composition.<sup>22</sup> The city was compared to Nice, the main holiday attraction in Southern France but not all Beirutis were content with the comparison since some “saw their world as the Switzerland of the East or, better still, as a sort of smaller overseas version of Paris”.<sup>23</sup>

### 3.1.2.3 Alexandria: The European City

Alexandria became a prosperous, developing city thanks to its international ties and commercial relations with the West. It was a cosmopolitan enclave with endless possibilities and social and cultural riches in the age of empire.

Reminding of the original ancient glory of Alexandria, a general from mainland Greece, Mohammad Ali Pasha (1805-1847), on the footsteps of Alexander the Great who had come from Macedonia, resurrected Alexandria’s imperial glory and cosmopolitan soul in the nineteenth century.<sup>24</sup>

Muhammad Ali “who in the early nineteenth century turned Alexandria from a wasteland into a cosmopolis, and whose grandson Khedive Ismail declared Egypt was part of Europe began a process of imperial openness. This is when the city was in an intense process of Europeanization, simultaneously with the country’s modernization. This approach started to change the dynamics of life in the city and had physically visible consequences. It triggered a “Europeanization” and modernization of the city’s architecture as well as a

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21 *ibid*, 287

22 *ibid*, 287

23 *ibid*, 301

24 Hamouda, S. 2007. *It was Another Alexandria: an Oral Narrative of a Cosmopolitan City* WLIC Durban Meeting script, 18 May 2007

grid street plan.<sup>25</sup> Similarly to Istanbul and Beirut, Paris was the biggest influence in this new modern Alexandria. The main attractions in the city even had French names; such as Rue de Rosette; just like Grand Rue de Pera in Beyoğlu. Squares, streets and buildings made Alexandria look like a European city that was to host a truly cosmopolitan life.

### § 3.2 Common structures and narratives: Empires, elites, their golden ages and falls

One of the main goals of our research is to compare and contrast the three cities of the post-Ottoman Empire in order to find out commonalities and differences. An indispensable structure for cosmopolitanism is the rule of empire. An imperial framework was necessary for people from different ethnicities to coexist. We see that with the end of empire, all three cities lost their cosmopolitan elements, at different paces. Another pattern in cosmopolitan cities is the vital role of a Western or Westernizing elite. This elite, usually in a coalition with the Western powers and the rulers, are the creators of liberal cosmopolitanism. It is intriguing to see that in the three cities' collective memory as well as recent history, periods of rise and falls are mentioned often. The concepts of "a golden age"; "fall" and "losing the soul", losing its "authenticity" and "cosmopolitanism" are employed by academic and informal accounts in all of the three cities. In this segment, I will analyze the use of these terms in different contexts and try to discover what triggers these negative and positive periods. First, I will try to underline the common denominator of all cosmopolitan cities: Umbrella of empire.

#### 3.2.1 *Cosmopolitan spirit of empires*

As discussed in the previous chapter, cosmopolitanism is a product of empires. Alexandria's cosmopolitanism started with the Hellenistic Empire and the mixture of cultures made possible by it. In Deborah Starr's book *Remembering Cosmopolitan Egypt*, a more precise claim that cosmopolitanism is the product

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25 Jasanoff, M. 2005. *Cosmopolitan: A Tale of Identity from Ottoman Alexandria*. *Common Knowledge* 11(3): 393-409 Page 396 Digital Archive of Harvard Library

of “metropolitan philosophers’ intellectual reckoning with imperial expansion” is made.<sup>26</sup> Amanda Anderson too attributes the birth of cosmopolitanism to the cultural exchange that is necessary with imperial conquest. This started with Alexander’s world conquests and his “program of cultural fusion”:

Through the expansion and perpetuation of empire that the cosmopolitan retains significance in cultural or philosophical discourse. One could even go so far as to say that cosmopolitan philosophy cannot exist without empire.”<sup>27</sup>

This vital relation between empire and cosmopolitanism that started in Antiquity, was also an integral part of modern empires. Cosmopolitanism became an instrument: “The success of empire rested on the production of cosmopolitan knowledge in the metropole.”<sup>28</sup> Thus, empires practically needed the spirit of cosmopolitanism in order to operate: “empire provides a necessary condition for the rise of cosmopolitanism as a critical discourse, and, in turn cosmopolitanism as a concept provides a means of engaging with the implications of empire and its lasting legacy.”<sup>29</sup>

The Ottoman Empire used the imperial framework masterfully to control the Eastern Mediterranean for centuries. Istanbul was the heart of the empire, and Beyoğlu, its cosmopolitan jewel. Mohammed Ali Pasha, an Ottoman general from Kavala in Greek mainland, maintained the imperial framework he inherited from the Ottomans. Cosmopolitanism “remained part of the dynasty’s ethos”.<sup>30</sup> After four hundred years of Ptolemaic rule, Alexandria had lost almost all traces from its ancient cosmopolitan glory. The city was revived with the Europeanization of the Mohammad Ali dynasty. The Alexandrians,

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26 Starr, D. 2009 *Remembering Cosmopolitan Egypt: Literature, Culture, and Empire* Page 10-12 Oxon: Routledge

27 *ibid*, 11-12

28 *ibid*, 11

29 *ibid*, 13

30 Mansel, P. 2010. *Levant: Splendour and Catastrophe on the Mediterranean* Page 129 Edinburgh: Clays Ltd

“through some strange kind of ‘metempsychosis,’ felt themselves to be reliving the cosmopolitan life of the Ptolemy era.”<sup>31</sup>

The imperial tradition was transferred to Mohammed Ali’s Alexandria, and later maintained by European powers:

Rather than looking at empire only as a force of division and control, segregating cultures according to ethnic and racial hierarchies, the history of Alexandria invites us to look at how empire may provide an umbrella of common security for people from a range of cultures to coexist, and at times even intermingle.<sup>32</sup>

### 3.2.2 *Special interests of the rulers and the elite as cosmopolites*

A common social aspect of cosmopolitanism in post-Ottoman geography is the support mechanisms of rulers and the economic and cultural elite. Beyoğlu, and cosmopolitan districts of Alexandria and Beirut were favoured spaces of the wealthy and powerful and Western circles. The cities were of vital importance to the sultans and Ottoman governments. Istanbul was the center but the province of Beirut was also significant for the Porte. Istanbul conducted many urban projects in Beirut. Mohammed Ali Pasha favoured Alexandria as the center of his imperial ambitions and cosmopolitan vision.

This continued during the modernization era. Western influence was the catalyst of elite formation in Ottoman Empire. Cosmopolitan milieus were created by “combined processes of modernity and capitalism”. Life in these spaces was changing. Societal urban novelties like print media and public opinion, made communal differences less visible especially among the Westernized elites.<sup>33</sup> This was a cultural reform if not a revolution for the local inhabitants of these urban centers:

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- 31 Dora, D.V. 2006. *The Rhetoric of Nostalgia: Postcolonial Alexandria between Uncanny Memories and Global Geographies* Page 209 Sage Publications
- 32 Jasanoff, M. 2005. *Cosmopolitan: A Tale of Identity from Ottoman Alexandria*. *Common Knowledge* Page 408 Digital Archive of Harvard Library
- 33 Zubaida, S. 2018. The Past is a Different City; Istanbul, Memoirs and Multiculturalism in *Istanbul: Living with Difference in a Global City* Edited by Nora Fisher-Onar, Susan C. Pearce, and E. Fuat Keyman Page 39 New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, Istanbul, Cairo, Alexandria, and Beirut became places where economic and cultural modernity flourished. While some intellectuals and statesmen were ideologically attached to older Islamic and Ottoman formulas, many adopted new lifestyles and associations, stimulated partly by the painful realization of European superiority in wealth and arms.<sup>34</sup>

These were people from different communities of the empire who were now adopting “the ideas and aspirations of the Enlightenment to reject “backward” religious and communal authority”.<sup>35</sup> These were “the cosmopolitans” of their eras. They were Europeanized, if not European, non-Muslim or secular Muslim who were pro-Western modernizers. The cosmopolitans of Ottoman port-cities had a special relationship with the West. They were intermediaries between the upper-handed Western powers and the local imperial political center, as well as with the masses. These elites enjoyed their heydays during international liberal moments, such as the Belle Époque, and at various other stages when contact with the West intensified.

It is no coincidence that Istanbul had a cosmopolitan golden age during the occupation after World War I. Non-Muslim traders were the economic elite of the empire due to their close relations with and cultural association to Western Christian powers. Muslims who wanted to enjoy the benefits of this interaction adopted Western culture and habits. This was necessary to become part of the cosmopolitan elite. The city too was being pushed to a fast pace of Europeanization to satisfy the needs of this new bourgeois lifestyle.

French Mandate in Beirut favoured Christian members of Lebanon, whether Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic or Maronite.<sup>36</sup> This visibly changed the balance of privilege in Beirut. Since the city was now more and more a European city and local Christians had better ties to officials of the Mandate, the urban culture was shifting, including for Muslims from upper classes:

If this *petit Paris* was for all intents and purposes the monopoly of the Christian elite, other classes of society more or less readily followed its

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34 *ibid*, 40

35 *ibid*, 40

36 Kassir, S. 2010 *Beirut* Page 314 Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press

example. Parisian life was imitated so successfully by the city's expanding middle class that the adoption of an imported way of life became one of its chief characteristics, indeed one of the main sources of its cohesion.<sup>37</sup>

### 3.2.3 *Dolce Vita and the golden age*

The changing, dynamic life in the cosmopolitan cities made them centers of culture, entertainment and hedonism. The cosmopolitan lifestyle was about interacting, intermingling, experimenting culture and different social prospects. Beyoğlu, Beirut and Alexandria were famous entertainment centers of the world during their golden ages. In Istanbul, the ever Europeanizing life style was visible mainly in Galata and Pera, considered “the European quarters”. These neighborhoods hosted “cafes, bars, brothels and salons with Parisian aspirations”. Moreover, this rapid wave of change in the city was most dramatically expressed in the hedonistic habits and the new drinking culture. With the Muslim elite and intellectuals in the city being modernized and Westernized, the consumption of alcohol became an indicator of cultural affiliation in the city. With the current of Westernization of Ottoman cities, “public male drinking cultures became respectable and open sign of modernity and “civilization” or “*medeniyet*”<sup>38</sup> The ruling elite championed this cultural change too. Sultan Mahmut II (1808-1839) started the offering of alcohol during state dinners and receptions.<sup>39</sup> Then it spread from top to the lower ranks of society. At the end of the nineteenth century, “a new type of refined and opulent tavern or *meyhane*” was born.<sup>40</sup> This was the new urban attraction for the new drinking classes. As expected, the home to this new culture of Western hedonism with a slight Ottoman touch embodied in the local favorite drink rakı, was Pera. Drinking was an integral part of Beyoğlu's various golden ages.

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37 *ibid*, 318

38 Zubaida, S. 2018. *The Past is a Different City; Istanbul, Memoirs and Multiculturalism in Istanbul: Living with Difference in a Global City* Edited by Nora Fisher-Onar, Susan C. Pearce, and E. Fuat Keyman New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, Page 45

39 *ibid*, 45

40 *ibid*, 45

The Egyptian city of Alexandria, due to its mixed population, its huge numbers of European inhabitants, French, Italian, English and Greek influence had a legendary cosmopolitan golden age between 1861-1960. It has become a symbol of cosmopolitanism. The period before the Egyptian nationalism is remembered as a true golden age. This period has its own literature, cinema, even music. In the mid 1950's, following Egypt's process of nationalization, Beirut started to replace Alexandria as the cosmopolitan cultural and economic center of the Arab World:

The cosmopolitanism was visible in every domain, from cars to clothing, to say nothing of the rapid adoption of European and American musical fashions (...), it was validated by the presence of the foreigners who had come to live permanently in Beirut. Foreigners have never been absent since the beginning of its rise in the nineteenth century, off course, and both the mandate and Second World War had a multiplying affect in this regard. But the city's charms were never more seductive than during the three decades of rapid economic growth following the war. The extinguishing of Alexandria's flame only revealed Beirut's cosmopolitanism to greater advantage (...) <sup>41</sup>

It became the attraction center for Arab economic and cultural elites who were having difficulties with increasingly authoritarian regimes in their countries: "with the decline of Alexandria, Beirut became the favorite set of Egyptian directors filming tales of escape from everyday life."<sup>42</sup>

Another facet of Beirut was its success in tourism. It had natural and cultural beauty in addition to a liberal, hedonistic approach towards life.

In addition to being the new home of Arab intelligentsia and political exiles; Beirut offered its people and visitors the Dolce Vita of the early 1960's.<sup>43</sup> With these numerous advantages, it played the role of the new cosmopolis in the Middle East as a liberal bridge between the region and the West: "an Arab city that was nonetheless foreign; a foreign city that was nonetheless Arab"<sup>44</sup>

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41 Kassir, S. 2010. *Beirut* Page 403 Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press

42 *ibid*, 11

43 *ibid*, 12

44 *ibid*, 12

In the golden age of the 1960's, the style of Paris and Rome's "Via Veneto café fashion" was visible in the streets of Beirut. Rue Hamra and its surrounding was the epicenter of this trend just like Pera used to be in İstanbul. Like Rue de Rosette (later Fuad Street) of Alexandria and Grand Rue de Pera, Beirut had its Rue Hamra as the center of its Western orientation.

During this first golden age of modern era, there was a revival of the city's ancient cosmopolitan golden age. The symbol of this period was Hotel Phoenicia, a reminder of the city's glorious past.<sup>45</sup> Symbolic institutions like Horseshoe, Café de Paris, Wimpy Bar, Moda, L'Express were social centers of intellectual and social life emerging from golden age Beirut.<sup>46</sup> Restaurants such as the "*Grenier des Artistes* which attracted a new clientele intoxicated with its atmosphere of Paris intellectualism" were opening up and attracting the cosmopolitan intellectuals of the city. This new Parisian style urbanization was identical to Beyoğlu and Alexandria.

The symbolism of this era was a reminder of past golden ages. Rue Hamra's "hamra" in Arabic had a "resonance as the "Alhambra of Granada". This was the epoch of the golden age and cosmopolitan miracle of Islam in Spain during 8th-14th centuries:

Beyond the Andalusian analogy, laden with all the many senses of pleasure, some variations on the name, deliberate or not, made such meanings even more explicit. Thus "Hamra night" could be confused with "red nights" – a phrase that conjured up an entire universe of lasciviousness in the Arab imagination. "<sup>47</sup>

The golden age and hedonism always accompany each other in these cosmopolitan cities urban imagination. When things go wrong and the cities lose their joy; they are considered to have lost their soul; thus their golden ages end.

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45 *ibid*, 347

46 *ibid*, 388

47 *ibid*, 390-1

### 3.2.4 *Fall and nostalgia*

Another common narrative in the cities we study, is the notion of “loss” and nostalgia. Periods of disaster and loss of soul is mentioned in all of them and the feeling of nostalgia is among the main elements of these cities’ inhabitants’ psyche. In Alexandria, the loss of cosmopolitanism in the mid-twentieth century, created nostalgia for those who left and stayed alike. This was the theme for many Alexandrian writers and became a genre of its own. Nobel laureate Naguib Mahfouz wrote about this transformation in *Miramar*:

Many of those who left, however, still yearn for an idyllic Alexandria, the golden age they remember in their nostalgic memoirs and semi-autobiographical novels. Those who stayed share the same sentiments. They too live with their memories.<sup>48</sup>

During the neo-liberal years of the 1980’s and 1990’s, the reflective nostalgia gave fruits to many literary works such as Andre Aciman’s *Out of Egypt* (1996) and Hares Tzalas’s *Alexandria and Egyptian* (1997). In these works of “nostalgic writing”, the city is usually depicted as “forever lost”, only remembered in exile; away or in the city of the current times.<sup>49</sup>

This resembles the exile literature of Greek diaspora of Istanbul.<sup>50</sup> Even though the sense of loss in Istanbul is not as strong as the Alexandrian melancholia; Beyoğlu’s old, lost days has always been a major theme for political and social consciousness in modern Turkey. The cliché symbolism for his feeling is the narrative of a lost Beyoğlu that people used to frequent dressed fashionably in ties and jackets. This nostalgia demonstrated itself more visibly in the neo-liberal golden age in various forms.

Romantic nostalgia also became the subject of culture, literature, music as well as a popular subject of Beirut’s collective memory. After the civil war of

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48 *Voices from Cosmopolitan Alexandria Volume 1* 2006 Edited by Mohamed Awad and Sahar Hamouda: Bibliotheca Alexandrina: The Alexandria and Mediterranean Research Center

49 Dora, D.V 2006 *The Rhetoric of Nostalgia: Postcolonial Alexandria between Uncanny Memories and Global Geographies* Page 210 Sage Publications

50 Köksal, Ö. 2016. *Aesthetics of Displacement: Turkey and its Minorities on Screen: Chapter 4* New York: Bloomsbury Publishing

1975-1990, according to Robert Fisk, “Beirut’s many masks converged to create the image of an idyllic place – an image now converted by nostalgia into the memory of a lost golden age.”<sup>51</sup> Palestinian poet Mahmud Darwish who lived in the city for 10 years, called the city “Beirut, our tent” after having to leave it during the war. In many melancholic poems, Beirut was compared to “lost Andalusia”. In more hopeful ones, such as Lebanese poet Nadia Tuwayni’s poem, there was the spirit of eternal potential for revival: “a thousand times died, a thousand times reborn.”<sup>52</sup>

The city in ruins, buildings with bullet holes on their walls, were constant reminders of the lost city. The Phoenicia Hotel that was the symbol of the golden age now became the symbol of a “lost paradise.”<sup>53</sup>

### § 3.3 Collapse: Age of the nation-state

*Uncertainly rehabilitated, cosmopolitanism tiptoes back into history from whence it had been banished. Simply by pronouncing the word, so artificially loaded with a pejorative sense, one gives it a second wind. This scales of time are removed, it is polished and one can search again for those last survivors of a human adventure – the witnesses of a planet swept by the revolutions of the second half of the twentieth century.*<sup>54</sup>

Twentieth century was the era of nation-states. Ottoman Empire dissolved into several independent nations. These new states were based on ethnic homogeneity. Ilios Yannakakis in his article *The Death of Cosmopolitanism* writes: “Cosmopolitanism was the product of a limited period and a singular

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51 Kassir, S. 2010. *Beirut* Page 8 Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press

52 *ibid*, 25

53 *ibid*, 450

54 *Alexandria 1860-1960: The Brief Life of a Cosmopolitan Community* 1997 edited by Robert Ilbert and Ilios Yannakakis with Jacques Hassoun Page 191 Alexandria: Harpocrates Publishing

history-that of the crumbling Ottoman Empire. It lived to the age of a sturdy human being, before disappearing for ever".<sup>55</sup> He wrote: "Cosmopolitanism and a strong national sentiment are incompatible."<sup>56</sup> He points out the case of Thessaloniki, one of the most cosmopolitan cities of the Mediterranean was now a homogenous Greek city, just like Smyrna that had become a Turkish town after the Greeks were run out after the Turkish War of Independence.

The most dramatic case of loss of cosmopolitanism was in Alexandria. The Alexandria of 1950's disappeared almost completely after the nationalist turn in Egypt. It is possible to track the record of cosmopolitanism in Alexandria by clear dates. Yannakakis states that the two dates that affected life in Alexandria are "1869 and 1956, the inauguration and nationalization of the Suez Canal".<sup>57</sup> One corresponds to opening of the city to the world; the prosperity that resulted from it; the latter to nationalist isolation of the new Egyptian state. Istanbul and Alexandria experienced total collapse of cosmopolitanism almost simultaneously in the 1950's, whereas Beirut was more resistant to the dynamics of the twentieth century thanks to its balanced demography between Christians and Muslims. However, Beirut too lost its role as a cosmopolitan haven due to sectarian violence and the civil war of 1975-1990.

### 3.3.1 *Ankara, not Istanbul*

A new Turkish state was founded at the end of the Turkish Independence War (1919-1923). This was a secular Republic based on Turkish nationalism replacing the heterogeneous social fabric of the Ottoman Empire. As emphasized in this thesis, cosmopolitanism needs an imperial framework and nation-states are not good terrains for a cosmopolitan society. In early twentieth century, Armenian and Greek minorities left the country in mass in a wave that lasted until 1960's. This was a huge loss of cosmopolitanism. In 1950's, there were nationalist riots over Cyprus targeting the Greek minority of Istanbul. The incidents on September 6-7 in 1955 had catastrophic results for Beyoğlu's non-

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55 *ibid*, 194

56 *ibid*, 194

57 *ibid*, 192

Muslim community. It was the final blow to Istanbul's imperial heritage. Eventually, poor Anatolian migrants replaced the cosmopolites who left the city never to return. This was the death of Beyoğlu's cosmopolitan existence. New Turkey was secular and Western oriented, but ideal citizens were still the Turkish Sunnis. Istanbul's old cosmopolitan spirit was not compatible with nation building efforts:

The republican elite pursued European lifestyles, including dancing the tango at the balls they held, with men in European formal suits with tails and women in décolleté ball gowns. Paradoxically then, a Western-inflected cosmopolitan veneer was adopted as an ideological performance, while the population and the culture of the republic, including Istanbul, was being driven toward a pure vision of national uniformity.<sup>58</sup>

Ankara became the new capital in 1923; Beyoğlu entered a dark era of isolation. The Republic did not create an alternative; so the cosmopolitan center of the city was in a deep sleep from 1950s until 1980s. : “In this period of physical and spatial expansion of the city, (1950's) there was hardly any attempt by the authorities to develop “public space” to provide for and accommodate any potential dynamics of urban interaction”.<sup>59</sup>

### 3.3.2 *Cairo, not Alexandria*

In the golden age of Alexandrian cosmopolitanism, a very influential community emerged in the city with famous international writers and artists such as Lawrence Durrell, Constantine Cavafy, Georges Moustaki and historian Eric Hobsbawm. They were all Alexandrians. The city hosted a truly cosmopolitan community of Greeks, Jews, Armenians, Europeans and Muslims. The golden age lasted longer than most post-Ottoman port cities such as Smyrna, Thessaloniki and Istanbul. In 1952, with the departure of Muhammad Ali's “great-

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58 Zubaida, S. 2018. The Past is a Different City; Istanbul, Memoirs and Multiculturalism Page 50 in *Istanbul: Living with Difference in a Global City* Edited by Nora Fisher-Onar, Susan C. Pearce, and E. Fuat Keyman New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press

59 *ibid*, 32

great-grandson King Farouk”, from Alexandria <sup>60</sup> and the following Egyptian nationalization steps<sup>61</sup>, members of the non-Egyptian communities started to leave. By the 1970’s it had lost its cosmopolitan character and the name Alexandria became synonymous to nostalgia, a lost city, in a considerably more dramatic way than the other cities analyzed in this research. The city lost its cosmopolitan soul; “the intolerant but legitimate, post-war nationalism Egyptianized it to its foundations”.<sup>62</sup> Nasser era erased the last remaining traces of imperial heritage. By mid 1960’s, according to Starr, “Egypt’s so called cosmopolitan era had come to an end.”<sup>63</sup> Those “who remained behind sank from being the elites and notables of the city to small group of marginalized old eccentrics, living on the edge of a Moslem Arab society.”<sup>64</sup>

Only Beirut saved its cosmopolitanism throughout later years. Its advantage was the balanced demographics and the political system guaranteeing its maintenance. Christians had some *de facto* advantages in Beirut:

Maronites had preeminence in every domain of public life, since the main levers of power – notably the command of the army, military intelligence services (the Deuxieme Bureau), police, and the general secretariat of the ministry of foreign affairs, as well as the rectorate of the

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- 60 Mansel, P. 2010. *Levant: Splendour and Catastrophe on the Mediterranean* Page 61 Edinburgh: Clays Ltd
- 61 The 1952 coup d’état by Free Officers had not immediately affect the minorities of Egypt. Gamal Abdel Nasser became president in 1954. In 1956, after the conflict over the Suez Canal, Israel in alliance with Britain and France invaded Egyptian territories in the Sinai Peninsula. Nasser in return, decided to expel the French and British citizens of Egypt. The Egyptian Jews also found it difficult to stay in Egypt any longer and immigrated to Israel and other countries in the West. With further steps of nationalization of businesses between 1958 and 1961 and the increasing reactions against foreign nationals and Westernized minorities, an exodus from cosmopolitan Alexandria started to take place. Within a few years, Alexandria lost its ethnic and cultural diversity and cosmopolitan character.
- 62 *Alexandria 1860-1960: The Brief Life of a Cosmopolitan Community* 1997 edited by Robert Ilbert and İlios Yannakakis with Jacques Hassoun Page 194 Alexandria: Harpocrates Publishing
- 63 Starr, D. 2009. *Remembering Cosmopolitan Egypt: Literature, Culture, and Empire* Page 23 Oxon: Routledge
- 64 Hamouda, S. 2007. *It was Another Alexandria: an Oral Narrative of a Cosmopolitan City* Page 2 WLIC Durban Meeting script, 18 May 2007

Lebanese University and the governorship of the central bank (...) This vertical political power exercised a controlling influence over the horizontal urban mosaic by structuring the class relations that underlay it, in the same top – down manner”.<sup>65</sup>

The era of nationalism did not effect Lebanon as much as Turkey and Egypt. Even though it was freed of the French mandate and was an independent Republic, a solid Western link always remained:

A sentimental regard for France as the nation’s *doulce-mere* (al-umm al-hanūna) survived in the Maronite imagination (...) The foundational link with the West had lost none of its force in relation to political power. Commemoration of the legacy of French imperial rule, which is to say the creation of Greater Lebanon itself, remained for Maronites the badge of Lebanese distinctiveness as well as the solemn expression of their own dominant position”.<sup>66</sup>

Maronites were “honorary Westerners” while the Muslims stood at the opposite side of history still in a trauma of the fall of Islam against the West.

### 3.3.3 *Transformation of cosmopolitan spaces in Egypt and Turkey*

With the turn to nationalism, urban spaces in post-imperial cities were reorganized. Grand Rue de Pera was İstiklal Street; Alexandria’s cosmopolitan attraction Rue de Rosette and later Shari’Fu’ad was renamed Hurriya Street by the Egyptian state. The names are related to the nation building spirit of the day. Hurriya means freedom and “İstiklal” means “independence”.<sup>67</sup>

Grand Rue de Pera and Rue de Rosette of Alexandria were locations of cosmopolitan existence in their cities and a bit exclusive to some: “Egyptians

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65 Kassir, S. 2010. *Beirut* Page 445 Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press

66 *ibid*, 449

67 Hanley, W. 2017. *Identifying with Nationality: Europeans, Ottomans, and Egyptians in Alexandria* Page 33 New York: Columbia University Press

were a marginal presence on this street (Rue de Rosette), a long, straight line of urban grandeur.” There was “hardly one Egyptian shop” on it.<sup>68</sup>

Rue de Rosette opened to the Mohammed Ali Square, a “landmark of Alexandria’s golden cosmopolitanism”<sup>69</sup> just like Grand Rue de Pera ends with Taksim Square, the heart of Ottoman and later day Republican Istanbul.

### 3.3.3.1 Ideology

Nasser was looking into Pharaonic and Islamic past while Atatürk was interested in Hittite and Central Asian Turkishness. Cosmopolitanism had no use at the time; to the contrary: “for promoters of Egyptian national identity, the “hybrid” and Westernizing identity of cosmopolitan Alexandria has traditionally constituted a problem.”<sup>70</sup>

Turkish nationalism, discredited Byzantine and Christian influence while Egyptians attempted to erase non-Arab, non-Muslim culture in Egypt: “history teachers traditionally have skipped from the collapse of the Egyptian pharaohs to the Arab conquest in 642 AD, leaving nearly a thousand year of Greek, Roman and Christian culture in Egypt, unexplored.”<sup>71</sup>

Just like Istanbul had lost its status to Ankara; Alexandria “seemed inevitably cast into shadow by ‘Arab’ Cairo. From then on, its cosmopolitan heritage only survived in the minds of the exiles in and outside Egypt and on “memorative signs” on old buildings and “topographical names which escaped nationalist obliteration”<sup>72</sup>

### 3.3.4 *Lost star of the Ottoman era*

Among the countries we analyze; Lebanon was the least effected by homogenous nation-building. Its demographic structure allowed the city to have a cosmopolitan life until mid 1970s. Beirut’s rise as a cosmopolitan beacon

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68 ibid, 34

69 ibid, 35

70 Dora, D.V 2006 *The Rhetoric of Nostalgia: Postcolonial Alexandria between Uncanny Memories and Global Geographies* Page 227 Sage Publications

71 ibid, 227

72 ibid, 227

ended with sectarian problems in Lebanon. The cherished golden age came to a tragic end. Among the three cities studied in this thesis, Beirut is the only one that experienced a civil war. With an extreme amount of violence, Beirut lost its spirit of tolerance and coexistence. The city finally submitted to violence of the region it is situated at and “in doing this, it lost its soul”<sup>73</sup> Lebanese politician Elie Salem explained this process in front of the United Nations in 1976, stating; “Lebanon was a lost star of the Ottoman era.”<sup>74</sup> (???)

The war of 1975-1990 polarized the city irrevocably: “Despite attempts at reunification, it was no longer capable of seeing itself whole. In the place of Beirut there was West Beirut and East Beirut, two hemispheres, two separate worlds that turned their backs on each other.”<sup>75</sup> Beirut was “forgotten by the world”. The Westernized elite moved to Europe, Australia and Canada. There was nothing in Beirut to attract Westerners or the Arab intelligentsia anymore.<sup>76</sup> After a glamorous golden age, it went into a civil war and it too had finally lost its soul.

### § 3.4 Neo-liberal revival and nostalgia

Istanbul, Beirut and Alexandria were historical cosmopolitan centers for centuries. During the Ottoman Empire, they maintained their multicultural, open cultures. Their status as a bridge between the East and the West; their mixture of various cultures made them beacons of human dialogue and cultural interaction. These cities lost their cosmopolitanism in the twentieth century, with the new nation-states Egypt, Turkey and Lebanon. Beyoğlu and Alexandria lost their colourful life and social fabric at the second half of the twentieth century. Lebanon went into a civil war in 1975 and lost its golden age as an international attraction. Starting from 1980's but especially in 1990s globalization dominated the international political, economic and cultural scene. Urban centers were now in a neo-liberal race to attract as big of a share as possible from global capital. All three cities were now big assets at the hands of tired

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73 Kassir, S. 2010. *Beirut* Page 21 Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press

74 *ibid*, 21

75 *ibid*, 23

76 *ibid*, 24

homogenous nation-states. Globalization, opening markets and liberalizing economic policies allowed these cities to be opened to the world once again. This was the neo-liberal reinvention, revival of old cosmopolitan cities of post-Ottoman geography. Similarities in marketing techniques, construction projects, images and the feeling of nostalgia of all three cities are striking. They are almost identical. Nostalgic ideas, images, names, institutions have been used to revive an old golden age. These efforts gave the cities a boost in the race for neo-liberal development, for some time even helped these cities find some connection to their past cosmopolitanism. However, these neo-liberal cosmopolitan moments were short-lived, mirage-like periods. They consequently failed to bring about an authentic revival.

#### 3.4.1 *Istanbul as a global city*

The neo-liberal turn of 1980's meant the reemergence of Istanbul in Turkish economic and cultural scene. During the 1980's and 1990's, the city witnessed a tourism and real estate boom. With Turkey opening up to international markets, Istanbul rose as the major candidate of a global city. The AKP government in early 2000's aimed "to exploit fully the imperial capital's potential as a global city."<sup>77</sup> The secular elite or the Westernized "White Turks", "a colloquial term for upper-middle-class urban cohorts who embrace open lifestyles"<sup>78</sup> were AKP's allies in globalizing Istanbul.

Beyoğlu's neo-liberal revival started with a reinvention of its mainly European cosmopolitan past. What the city lacked in everyday reality was to be found in Istanbul's urban history. Çağlar Keyder reminds us that the roots of Istanbul's modern cosmopolitanism lies in the days of a first gold age:

Today, as Istanbul is gripped by the cosmopolitan aspirations of the global city, tribute is being paid to this earlier era: The old Grand Rue

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77 Keyder, Ç. 2018. Imperial, National, Global Istanbul: Three Istanbul "Moments" from the Nineteenth to Twenty-First Centuries Page 50 in *Istanbul: Living with Difference in a Global City* Edited by Nora Fisher-Onar, Susan C. Pearce, and E. Fuat Keyman New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press

78 *ibid*, 50

de Pera, the principle access of Beyoğlu, has regained its earlier status, with apartment buildings and public spaces lovingly restored, and side streets and the lower neighborhoods are being gentrified to serve the demands of a younger, prosperous, but Bohemian crowd.<sup>79</sup>

In a few years, Beyoğlu has become an urban sensation and one of the most attractive neighborhoods in Europe. Music, art and nightlife reached a level unseen during the Republic's history. Istanbul was one of the most visited cities in Europe, and Beyoğlu was its primary attraction. This was a new golden age for many, that only lasted for about a decade and a half. Today, it is a source of melancholic nostalgia. What is relevant to our research in this neo-liberal cycle is that it is almost identical to what took place in Beirut and Alexandria.

### 3.4.2 *Neo-Liberal Revival of Beirut*

With the end of Lebanese Civil War in the fall of 1990, Beirut that was associated with conflict and violence became a source of curiosity for Western traveler. The question was if the city would gain back its glamour of the golden age: "Beirut is like the Phoenix, forever reborn from its ashes, and therefore eternally one, if only by virtue of the ceaseless combat of life against death that has taken place there through the ages".<sup>80</sup>

First, the city that was in ruins, had to be reconstructed. A new institution with highly neo-liberal affiliation took this role. Solidere (Societe Libanaise pour le Developpement et la Reconstruction de Beyrouth) was the mastermind behind a newly launched neo-liberal development initiative.

Future Prime Minister Rafiq Al- Hariri, who was a "wealthy entrepreneur-who had made his fortune in Saudi Arabia in the 1970's" and was a close advisor to the King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, took a leading part in reconstruction projects.<sup>81</sup> Hariri's vision consisted of a gigantic Western city with skyscrapers, a world trade center on an artificial island, sophisticated highways and even

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79 *ibid*, 31

80 Kassir, S. 2010. *Beirut* Page 26 Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press

81 *ibid*, 530

the destruction of the city's past symbols in order to build a boulevard "specifically ordered to be wider than the Champs Elysees".<sup>82</sup> This vision was not compatible with the idea of renaissance, since it had nothing to do with the Beirut of the 1960's and 1970's. On the contrary, it consisted of the destruction of many past buildings and neighborhoods. This was neo-liberalism at its best: "For Hariri, everything was an object to be bought".<sup>83</sup> Hariri was in charge of the Solidere and tried to impose his neo-liberal agenda on the government and in 1992 became the prime minister, "by making himself the beneficiary of the privatization of Beirut".<sup>84</sup> The revival was in a dead end. The goal was to make Beirut a new business hub for the entire Middle East with little inspiration from its past:

Hariri's reconstruction scheme had the appearance of a plan for a new city, but one without any continuity with what had gone before – in other words, without memory. This memory was of several kinds. First, there was architectural memory, the heritage of Ottoman and French Beirut, dominated by the reddish sandstone and pastel colors of these periods, now totally faded or darkened by years of neglect and pollution. But there was also social memory, lost with the emptying of the neighborhoods composite imagination – largely a working – class, even populist impulse that joined the imagination of the republic of letters that Beirut had nurtured since the 1950's with a nascent national imagination that held out the prospect of finally transcending the old communal ways of thinking.<sup>85</sup>

These extreme neo-liberal urban projects of the Solidere eventually met strong opposition and they never came into completion. Eventually, the company changed its approach and language. Still with the goal of reinventing the lost city filled with the marketing of a nostalgia, the company adopted the slogan

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82 *ibid*, 531

83 *ibid*, 531

84 *ibid*, 531

85 *ibid*, 533

“Madina ‘ariqa li-l-mustaqbal” (An Ancient City for the Future)”<sup>86</sup> At this point, there was a bigger emphasis of the conservation of the past and “the pharaonic projects of the early days were now forgotten”<sup>87</sup>

This was made possible by a “growing sophistication of urban planners and the development of an architectural sensibility among the cities residence”<sup>88</sup> However, all these gains have not been sufficient to save the city. The damage was done and the neo-liberal mechanisms lacked authenticity needed for a true revival. The renovations looked fake, lacking substance and depth: “Downtown Beirut seems more pristine than the most pristine parts of Paris; you get the impression of a Levantine Disneyland. (...) The development certainly looks better than the rebel field it replaced, but most Beirutis feel a bit alienated by it”<sup>89</sup>

Another trend that was very similar to Istanbul’s neo-liberal development was the construction explosion: “Construction in Lebanon has reached an alarming stage where much of the architectural memory of a city like Beirut is being erased”<sup>90</sup> The transformation of the city was not limited in architecture alone. The social atmosphere was different from the earlier golden age between 1950’s and 1970’s. English replaced French as the most spoken foreign language, with the growing trends of globalization led mainly by the United States. This was the cosmopolitanism of neo-liberal globalization, not the cosmopolitanism of Beirut’s past.<sup>91</sup> There was a brief apparition of a second golden age, with rising numbers in visitors and interest of the international press in the city. The city regained its nightlife in addition to cultural prominence in the region. The new Hamra of this second Golden Age was Rue Monot that was the center of attention for all international travelers, with its

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86 *ibid* 536

87 *ibid*, 536

88 *ibid*, 538

89 Totten J.M. 2013 . *Can Beirut be Paris Again?* Page 9 New York: City Journal Summer 2013

90 *ibid*, 9

91 *ibid*, 10

vibrant nightlife.<sup>92</sup> But according to Kassir the alleged, “success of the downtown may seem to be incontestable but it is only an illusion”.<sup>93</sup> A trend similar to Beyoğlu’s brief cosmopolitan mirage... The revival in downtown Beirut was indicative of this lack: “Most of the area has been rebuilt stone buildings that delightfully blend Parisian and Ottoman styles have been lovingly restored. But the area feels antiseptic and fake, as though it had been built yesterday as an imitation of Beirut’s past”.<sup>94</sup>

### 3.4.3 *Alexandria’s neo-liberal revival*

Alexandria is also a historical cosmopolitan center, nationalized in 1950’s and is finally experiencing an unprecedented revival”.<sup>95</sup> With the rise of neo-liberalism, all post-Ottoman cities found themselves as contenders in a race of becoming new global cities. “Nostalgic revivals” according to Veronica Della Dora is a global trend mainly initiated by local governments.

Dora identifies two kinds of nostalgia<sup>96</sup> in action in Alexandria, the reflective one in *fin de siècle* buildings, on old pictures reminding visitors of the “old times”, and the restorative nostalgia in “overwhelming landmarks designed to resurrect Alexandria’s glorious past, of which Biblioteca Alexandrina is the best known.”<sup>97</sup> These resurrection projects were emphasized in the neoliberal Mubarak era. Egyptian government pushed forward urban “mega-projects” that focused on reviving the “cosmopolitan image” of the city,<sup>98</sup> which evidently was a result of common business sense, making the best of the city’s already existing cosmopolitan symbolic value.

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92 Kassir, S. 2010. *Beirut* Page 526 Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press

93 *ibid*, 530

94 Totten, J.M. *Can Beirut be Paris Again?* Page 9 New York: City Journal Summer 2013

95 Dora, D.V. 2006 *The Rhetoric of Nostalgia: Postcolonial Alexandria between Uncanny Memories and Global Geographies* Page 207 Sage Publications

96 “Reflective nostalgia lingers on ruins, on patina of time and history, on uncanny silences and absences and on dreams. Restorative nostalgia, by contrast, materializes in monumental constructions of the past, in mega- projects, theatrical presences and financial investments.”

97 *ibid*, 210

98 *ibid*, 227

The first and most notable project was the reconstruction of Bibliotheca Alexandrina. The attitude was one of resurrection: “No one talked about opening a new library but rather the resurrection of the “ancient library””. People referred to this ancient library as a treasure that was burnt some two thousand years ago even though there was no clear information about the real fate or the location of this legendary building.<sup>99</sup> It had to be re-invented in order to revive a cosmopolitanism that supposedly existed some two millenias ago.<sup>100</sup> Another project of revitalization of other “ghosts” of the city was the reconstruction of the ancient Pharos.<sup>101</sup> There was not even a drawing from the ancient Pharos but the dynamics of neo-liberal development immediately brought about some “creative” ideas. Among the proposed plans were projects of a revolving restaurant on the top of the Pharos, or lighting with lasers by French fashion designer Pierre Cardin.<sup>102</sup> This project never came to life.<sup>103</sup> Evidently these ideas carried no authenticity to the ancient Pharos but were perfect examples of neo-liberal reinvention of a cosmopolitan past. These projects were a result of Hosni Mubarak’s (1981 – 2011) neo-liberal turn and his attempt to establish close relations with the European Union.<sup>104</sup> The reestablishment of two spaces of universal symbolic value was instrumental for his political strategy.

The Ancient library built in 290 BC had a huge historical significance for human kind since it “for the first time made the dream of universalism a reality.”<sup>105</sup> For reasons unknown, this legendary library eventually disappeared.

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99 *ibid*, 227

100 *ibid*, 228

101 *ibid*, 228

102 *ibid*, 228

103 Ali, Amro. A Frightening Vision: On Plans to Rebuild the Alexandria Lighthouse, 7 July 2015 in [opendemocracy.com](http://opendemocracy.com)

104 *ibid*, 210

105 Balta, P. *The Cosmopolitanism of Alexandria* Page 267-8 Paris: Centre d’Etudes de l’Orient Contemporain

The Pharos of Alexandria built in the same period, 280 BC, was a guide for seamen and a symbol of human exploration.<sup>106</sup> This 135 meter long lighthouse made of white marble, was eventually destroyed by earthquakes in 1302. Through the reconstruction of these two symbolic monuments; the goal was to revive and create a new “cosmopolitan moment” just like in Beyoğlu of the 1990’s and 2000’s. A feeling of nostalgia built on a reinvented past had to be created. This was a quest for the lost “golden years”, an identical narrative to the golden years of Beyoğlu’s cosmopolitanism. There was genuine hope invested in these projects. Ismail Serageldin, the director of the resurrected Bibliotheca Alexandrina said in 2014 that the new library can “revive cultural activity in Alexandria and reverse the decline that had set in over the last sixty years.”<sup>107</sup>

Veronica Della Dora explains the business rationale behind this revivalism: “why awaken ancient ghosts? (...) In a globalized world dominated by image and high speed communication networks, cities have engaged in a competition for global centrality.”<sup>108</sup> She attributes the success of these attempts to “their ability to create evocative but at the same time easily readable icons. The city stands as a totalizing, almost ‘mythical landmark for socioeconomic and political strategies.’”<sup>109</sup> So the revival is not only reinvented; it is a fabricated one that does not necessarily have any ties to a past reality. This makes us consider the quality of our “mirage”. Is it some metaphysical feeling we have for our city that causes these images and perceptions? Is this a mirage triggered by historical accounts? Or are they merely impulses and desires created by the forces of the market? Dora answers these questions: “In all cases, what is (re)constructed is a utopia.”<sup>110</sup> Not only the Pharos and the library are utopian in the case of Alexandria, but also so is the “idealized cosmopolitanism” revived in the city.

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106 ibid, 267

107 Haag, M. 2014 *Alexandrian Cosmopolitanism: An Archive by Hala Halim in Journal of Modern Greek Studies* Washington DC: John Hopkins University Press

108 Dora, D.V. 2006 *The Rhetoric of Nostalgia: Postcolonial Alexandria between Uncanny Memories and Global Geographies* Page 231 Sage Publications

109 ibid, 231

110 ibid, 231

This chapter was a comparative historical setch of three cities of post-Ottoman geography. The reason we chose Beirut and Alexandria was the resemblance between these cities and Beyoğlu's Istanbul. Cultural proximity, imperial framework they shared and the later revival periods demonstrate patterns allowing us to determine certain common aspects and differences.

All three cities are historical, ancient powerhouses not only in their regions but for the world. Alexandria was the first cosmopolitan city built by Alexander the Great himself. Istanbul was the new Rome, capital of Eastern Roman Empire, greatest empire that ever was until that time. Beirut, even though was overshadowed by cities like Sur, Sidon and Byblos to a certain extent, was part of the Phoenician civilization, one of the most influential maritime powers in human history.

These cities were cradles of cosmopolitanism for thousands of years. During the Ottoman Empire, Istanbul was the center of political power but Beyoğlu was as cosmopolitan as any other Levantine city. Alexandria found its cosmopolitan roots during the time of Mohammed Ali Pasha and this cosmopolitanism reached its climax in modern times as a commercial center in Eastern Mediterranean. Beirut was one of the preferred provinces of Ottoman rulers and found its cosmopolitan aura due to its mixed demographics. In Ottoman period, it thrived as an imperial, modernizing city, The Mandate that came after, made it look like a European city and in the twentieth century, during its independence, it reached a golden age, they called it "Paris of the Middle East".

Nationalism in the second half of the twentieth century halted cosmopolitanism in Istanbul and Alexandria. Beirut kept it until 1970s thanks to its balanced political system between Christians and Muslims and the strong link they had with Europe especially France and later, England. But Lebanon too fell into civil war due to sectarian conflict in the new nation-state. These old cosmopolitan cities of the post-Ottoman geography had to wait until the heydays of global capitalism to be remembered by the world. In 1980s, and more so in 1990s neo-liberal ideology was victorious in the world. Turkey was put in a liberal, open market economic route after the coup of 1980. Egypt's Hosni Mubarak undertook many neo-liberal projects; just like Rafik Hariri did in Beirut. This gigantic neo-liberal development of these cities were supported

by an idea of revival. This was the revival of their ancient, historical glamour. This mechanism of nostalgic revival is a powerful example of how socio-psychologic tools, incapacitate inhabitants of cosmopolitan cities to revive their cities' former glories, even though these are perhaps mirages of a lost city or even sometimes of a past that never existed. This was done by the tools of neo-liberal consumption. The cosmopolitan past was emphasized to fit into the globalizing markets ideology. Many images, institutions, ideas were revived. But this nostalgic revival was about the commodification of the past. Cosmopolitanism and history were to be consumed by the inhabitants of these cities as well as by tourists and global investors. Strikingly, at earlier stages, these worked. There were benefits. Cultural and social life thrived in late 1990s, and early 2000's, especially in Beyoğlu and Beirut. Even though, Alexandria did not become the cosmopolitan city it once was, a legend like ancient Bibliotheca Alexandrina and the old cosmopolitan spirit was brought back to life by revival projects. I identify these period as neo-liberal cosmopolitan moments in this thesis. This main axis in neo-liberal revival and its the mirage-like status is the theme of our work. I also analyze why these neo-liberal moments did not last.

In addition to a lack of authenticity in neo-liberal revival processes, there was one hard truth. These cities were not main commerce and cultural centers they have once been. Lebanon, Egypt and Turkey did not have the power of ancient cities they inherited nor they had the relevance of the Ottoman Empire that ruled many countries on multiple continents. Alexandria had completely lost its old cosmopolitan aura. Istanbul, Beirut maintained their attraction for tourism and as regional urban stardom, but they were not equals of cities like New York, London or Paris, true cosmopolitan centers of the new, globalized world. Even in their region, they have been replaced by a more dynamic newcomer: Dubai. With an open approach to foreign professionals and migrants, Dubai replaced old cosmopolitan cities of post-Ottoman world. In the race of neo-liberal development, Dubai, with its vast financial resources and economic prospects, shone much brighter than a reinvented, revived Istanbul, Beirut or Alexandria. This was not a race of authentic cosmopolitanism; it was a race of neo-liberal development. United Arab Emirates, in the middle of the Arabian Desert, became the heart of trade and business in the region: "Shaykh

Muhammad bin Rashid al-Maktum, the crown prince of the Emirate, (made) no secret of the fact that he has taken Beirut as his model".<sup>111</sup> And eventually they surpassed it. Strikingly in 2019, Dubai was elected as the most cosmopolitan city not only in the region but the whole world.<sup>112</sup>

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111 Kassir, S. 2010. *Beirut* Page 546 Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press

112 McKinsey & Co.'s *Thriving amid turbulence: Imaging the cities of the future report- 2019*

## Beyoğlu's Neo-liberal Golden Age: A Nostalgic, Cosmopolitan Revival

This chapter will focus on the rise of Beyoğlu as a cosmopolitan success story in the first decade of the new millennium. I will examine this period as a new cosmopolitan golden age. Statistical data about tourist numbers will be analyzed. Trends from Western European countries, the United States and Japan will be compared with numbers from Middle Eastern countries in different periods in the following chapter. These numbers will be discussed concerning AKP government's pro-European Union path to neo-liberal Islamic inclination. Statistical information about culture and arts activities in Istanbul and data from Beyoğlu municipality will be presented to portray the golden age in the city. Beyoğlu's golden age and different stages of these periods will be reviewed in light of press reviews, articles and journalistic accounts of corresponding years. Pieces with symbolic value will be examined such as the Newsweek article "Cool Istanbul", in order to have a perspective about how global public perceived Beyoğlu's neo-liberal golden age, and what concepts and terminology they employed to define it. These accounts will be evaluated along with academic approaches on neo-liberal urbanism, nostalgic revival and gentrification.

Chapters will include segments of lengthy interviews with actors and witnesses in Beyoğlu's recent past. The story of symbolic spaces such as Babylon

that started the golden age will be analyzed through in-depth interviews with its founders and regulars from the cultural scene and academia.

Perspectives of political actors, urban planners, shopping mall and large business owners, Istanbul's top culture and art association director and small merchants of nightlife and entertainment will be explored.

#### § 4.1 Globalization and Neo-liberal Golden Age

Istanbul's Beyoğlu district experienced a bright period, a "golden age" in the first decade of the millennium. A "golden age" is defined as "a period of time, sometimes imaginary, when everyone was happy, or when a particular business etc. was very successful".<sup>1</sup> Another definition is: "an idyllic, often imaginary past time of peace, prosperity, and happiness" or "the period when a specified art or activity is at its peak".<sup>2</sup> In historical science, "within academic discourse, 'The Golden Age' is an accepted term for describing a historical period that witnessed the production of acclaimed artistic or cultural outputs, including the Spanish Golden Age of sixteenth century, or the Dutch Golden Age in the seventeenth century."<sup>3</sup> In this thesis, "golden age" of Beyoğlu is used as a happy, peaceful period, when the city fully realized its cosmopolitan potential. It is also used as a term for Istanbul reclaiming its historical significance and glamour, a return to "an era of perceived greatness" that is typical in "golden age narratives".<sup>4</sup> It is no coincidence that in the definitions of golden age, there is an emphasis on the imagined quality of the concept. This property of the term and of the idea and psychological dynamics behind the belief in a golden age, will bring us to the idea of "a mirage" in the following chapter.

The golden age we analyze, is the period between the end of 1990s until the early 2010s. Our analysis will start with 1990s when globalization is at its peak in the world. Beyoğlu's golden age was a period of neo-liberal revival. 2002, the year AKP came to power in Turkey gave this revival a boost since

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1 *definition of Cambridge dictionary*

2 *definition of Oxford English dictionary*

3 *The Golden Age: Nostalgia in Word and Image 2016* edited by Elizabeth Rogers, Jeffrey W. Smith, Chris Murray, Page xiii Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing

4 *ibid*, introduction xviii

AKP was fully integrated in neo-liberalization of the city and supported a cosmopolitanism in line with the Ottoman, pre-Turkish Republic roots of the city. This stance took a halt with AKP's neo-liberal authoritarianism that peaked during and after Gezi Protests of 2013. For the writer of this research, a suggested exact date for the golden age would be 1999-2013; the opening of Babylon in Asmalimescit and the authoritarian turn of the AKP following Gezi Protests. But I will not limit the period within exact dates; our golden age generally starts in early 2000s and ends in mid 2010s. This chapter focuses on that era.

#### 4.1.1 *Rise of the global city: A background*

The roots of Beyoğlu's neo-liberal development can be traced back to the global neo-liberal moment of the 1980's. The 1980 coup d'état and highly liberal Turgut Özal's Motherland Party government that followed, fully opened Turkey into international markets. Urban centers became fields of capitalist growth. Istanbul was Turkey's primary candidate of a global city attracting foreign capital, trade and tourism. To appeal to a global audience, the city could be marketed as a meeting point of civilizations and a historical cosmopolitan center. Until that time, Turkish Republic maintained a pro-Western and nationalist inclination and remained distant to its cosmopolitan, Ottoman-Islamic roots. With the globalization process, "the city has entered the global collective conscious as it never had since the Republic"<sup>5</sup> Pandora's box has been opened: "In the course of the 1980's, Istanbul emerged as the showcase and gateway for Turkey's new era of integration into the world scene"<sup>6</sup> The façade of Istanbul was changing in the 1980's: "Five-star hotels, constructed in choice locations overlooking the Bosphorus emerged alongside international banks and trading companies. Istanbul in the 1980's lived through

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5 Keyder, Ç. 1999 *Istanbul Between the Global and the Local*, Page 16 Lanham: Rowman&Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

6 *ibid*, 17

its own version of casino capitalism and yuppie exuberance”.<sup>7</sup> While the transition was an intensely neo-liberal one, the terrain for a cosmopolitan spirit also started to take roots in the urban development of Istanbul.

The big shock came in March 1994, during Istanbul’s municipality elections:

The victory of the RP’s Erdogan in the 1994 metropolitan municipal elections created both panic and euphoria in the city at the prospect that this Islamist urban *imaginaire* would be applied wholesale. In fact, the Islamist intellectuals were divided over their plans for urban development, and not least in their attitudes toward squatters. Some glorified the pious squatters as agents of retribution on the godless urban elite (...) but an influential section of the RP Leadership saw the sidelining of the secularist establishment as a way to integrate Istanbul more successfully into the world economy and exploit its rich Ottoman history to attract more tourists.<sup>8</sup>

The candidate of the social democratic, Republican People’s Party stated that these elections were “people choosing between making Istanbul a “Middle Eastern” city or a “European” one”, while the Welfare Party that is the predecessor of today’s AKP, had a different slogan: “conquest of the city the second time”. According to the Welfare Party, the city needed to be taken back by its “real owners”.<sup>9</sup> Tanil Bora writes:

The votes that brought victory to the WP Mayor originated in the margins of the district that the visitors to the entertainment centers, the *flâneurs of the grande rue*, and the cinema, theater, restaurant, and café goers hardly ever see, thus underlining the center-periphery conflict that underpins WP’s victory. Meanwhile, the WP Mayor has in fact left the bars, taverns, and other dens of entertainment alone, much in the spirit of the Conqueror who permitted the survival of the Genoese-

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7 *ibid*, 15

8 Tuğal, C. 2016 *The Fall of The Turkish Model* Page 71 London and New York: Verso

9 Bartu, A. *Who Owns the Old Quarters* Page 40 in *Istanbul Between the Global and the Local*

controlled district in the fifteenth century-one inference from this generosity being the implicit statement that the new Genoese, the infidels, are being tolerated.<sup>10</sup>

There was an aspect of the Welfare Party's neo-Ottomanism that gave boost to the city's neo-liberal revival however: The nostalgic Ottoman imperial vision that brought a wider range of marketable elements for a reimagined Istanbul:

The Byzantine city, the Ottoman city harboring many cultures or the Islamic city that was the dream of the pious, had to compete with the Turkish city of the Republic in order to get ahead. But the narrow frame of references Istanbul had -as the Turkish city of the Republic- clearly lacked the marketing potential. Thus, what overcame after a few years of competition was the all-embracing Ottomanism. This was an Ottomanism that was reimagined, including many different heritages that could make the city proud. The elite of Istanbul was glad to expose their mansions from the imperial period, their collections, etc. The mosques and other buildings were restored as well as churches and synagogues.<sup>11</sup>

This new wave of cultural revival continued with the AKP coming to power in Turkey in 2002. The period of opening as well as an intense approximation to the European Union triggered a new golden age in Beyoğlu at the end of the 1990's. The city's transformation was championed by a broad coalition between the AKP government and urban liberal circles.

#### 4.1.2 *The AKP's Neo-liberal Turn and marketing the city*

For an extended period of time, there was no confrontation involving lifestyles or urban spaces. There was a neoliberal-Islamic conservative coalition in the country and AKP's priorities were different:

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10 Bora, T. 1999 Istanbul of the Conqueror Page 54 in *Istanbul: Between the Global and the Local*

11 *İstanbul Nereye? Küresel Kent, Kültür, Avrupa* 2010 Edited by Deniz Göktürk, Levent Soysal, İpek Türeli, Page 52 Istanbul: Metis Yayınları

The attainment of power changed everything; the logic of economic rationality came to dominate and soon altered the new local governments' thinking about the city as a business enterprise".<sup>12</sup>

The economy as well as the global city of Istanbul was already in a successful process. The AKP allied itself with the local bourgeoisie. The Istanbul bourgeoisie played an essential role in these early years of Istanbul's rise. This cooperation was best visible in the private museums and cultural associations that were increasing in number. Istanbul was now becoming a city of culture with art exhibits; jazz, theater, classical music, and film festivals ran by non-profit organizations that were able to compete with any great European city.<sup>13</sup>

"The success in the marketing of the city completely satisfied the government's demands and wishes who considered Istanbul as a testing path for a successful integration to newly developing global markets (...) The main dominant force in the marketing of the city was this political transformation. When the central government dedicated itself to a leaning towards a global economy, the Istanbul bourgeoisie found itself in a position where it could directly contribute to this project. This segment is no longer in anxiety, suspicious of the central government's intentions. Thus, the marketing of the city moved rapidly thanks to the cooperation of the municipality, the central government and the urban elite".<sup>14</sup>

According to Çağlar Keyder, this progress was related to global economy; Istanbul took its share of the global spotlight. The city was marketed with its music, art and film festivals, museums, expositions, its historic riches, cuisine and nightlife.<sup>15</sup> Private foundation museums were introduced; non-profit groups organized events of arts and culture and made the city a strong global attraction center. During that time, the central political authority and the city

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12 Bora, T. 1999 Istanbul of the Conqueror Page 55 in *Istanbul: Between the Global and the Local*

13 Keyder, Ç. 2010 Yirmi Birinci Yüzyıla Girenken İstanbul Page 53 in *İstanbul Nereye? Küresel Kent, Kültür, Avrupa*

14 ibid, 53-54

15 ibid, 57

elite formed a successful and effective alliance.<sup>16</sup> The number of arts and culture activities skyrocketed during this period:

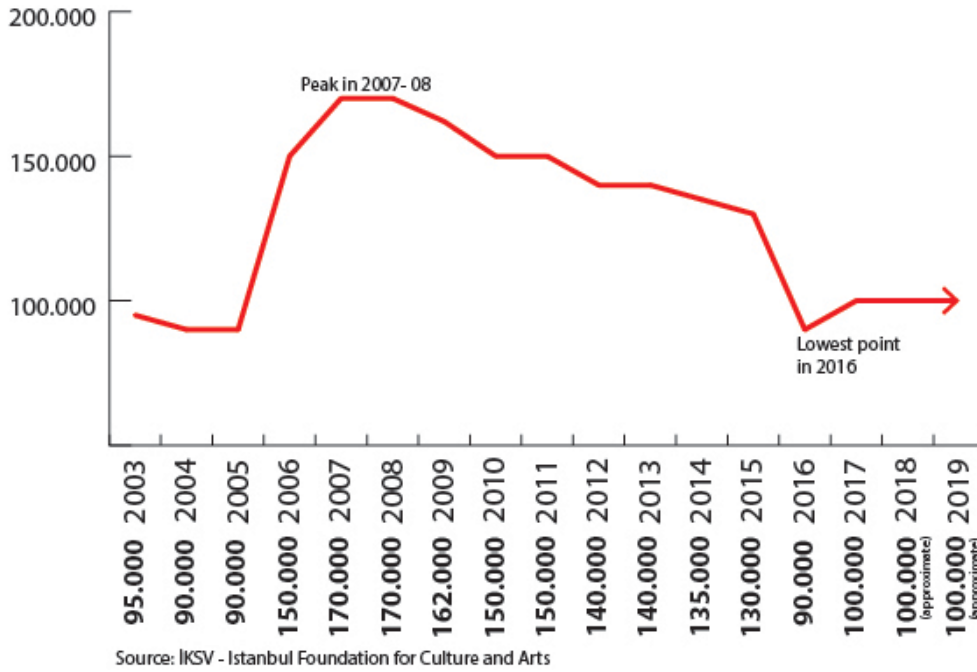


Table 4.1 Number of visitors to Istanbul Film Festival

The increase in number of cafés, restaurants, bars, art galleries eventually made it one of the most appealing neighborhoods in Europe. In the year 2010, Istanbul was the third most visited city in Europe after London and Paris.<sup>17</sup>

This was Turkey’s period of political liberalization accompanied by economic progress. Democratic reforms and membership negotiations with the European Union (EU) were on track. Istanbul was rediscovering its multicultural roots, in an optimistic domestic and international setting. Beyoğlu was directly influenced by this conjuncture and became the epicenter of a cultural explosion and civic creativity.

16 *ibid*, 53-4

17 Top 100 City Destination Ranking, [blog.euromonitor.com/2012/01/euromonitor-internationals-top-city-destinations-ranking1.html](http://blog.euromonitor.com/2012/01/euromonitor-internationals-top-city-destinations-ranking1.html)

## § 4.2 The Discovery of Cosmopolitanism: Nostalgic Revival and Golden Age Renaissance

The neo-liberal coalition presented the economic and political framework that made Beyoğlu's golden age possible. The growing economy and political liberalization that was pushed forward by the EU integration process created a new urban class of young, creative people. Their discovery of Beyoğlu was going to create an urban miracle. It was time for the rise of the district from its long forgotten cosmopolitan ashes.

### 4.2.1 *The New Cosmopolites and the Discovery*

The new cosmopolites emerged with economic prosperity and political liberalization in late 1990s. They triggered a new life in the city. There was a cultural boom, an unmatched nightlife and a constant demand for more in an ever more Europeanizing city, according to the expectations and taste of this new creative class of Istanbul.<sup>18</sup> This creative people, along with university students, young bohemians of Asmalımescit as well as Kurdish street musicians, small shop owners, and urban wanderers created a cosmopolitan urbanism unseen throughout Turkish Republic's history. These were still people from mostly Sunni Turkish families, but they were liberal in their life styles and social attitudes. These were the Westernized, globalized individuals, the spiritual descendants of Istanbul's past cosmopolitans.

These new cosmopolites were different from previous generations; they were ready to move and live in Beyoğlu, where they felt more at ease, relaxed and freed from social and cultural boundaries. They preferred bohemian neighborhoods of Galata, Tünel and Asmalımescit. These neighborhoods became their "creative terroir". Sharon Zukin used this terminology about neighborhoods of New York: "incubators for new and experimental culture" with its "beat poets, cheap cafes, avant-garde theaters, and eccentric performance

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18 Çağlar Keyder, later during Gezi Protests, identified this urban formation as a "new middle class". (*Yeni Orta Sınıf* [www.bilimakademisi.org](http://www.bilimakademisi.org))

spaces (that) created another kind of authenticity”.<sup>19</sup> “Getting loose” was the term used by Zukin for New York’s bohemian life style:

Looser lifestyle who moved into low-key urban neighborhoods where college students, artists and workers, including Latinos and Blacks would tolerate, exploit, or grudgingly coexist with their bohemian ways. Some ex-hippies became entrepreneurs selling drugs, psychedelic posters, and used clothing, and gradually the consumer products and spaces that went along with the hippies’ looser lifestyle became visible symbols not just of a more interesting way to live, but of a more interesting place to live”.<sup>20</sup>

#### 4.2.1.1 The Bohemian Aesthetic

Bohemian tendencies are typical of all big Western cities with a young bourgeois population demanding a more authentic urban experience. What was attractive about a newly discovered neighborhood of social diversity and cultural revival is mainly its authentic value. This is an urban tradition in modern Western cities. Naturally, mid-nineteenth century Paris, as the prototype of all modern cities was the main model. Poets and writers of that era were impassioned by this “la vie de boheme”. They admired this alternative lifestyle of the “authentic, lower-class urban life, especially the tenuous lives of the most marginalized groups, criminals and gypsies” while they despised “the overly comfortable, totally conformist lives of the rich.” They romanticized “the shabby and sordid, and often diseased, outcast lower-class, and this romantic image became a source of their artistic inspiration.”<sup>21</sup>

Zukin digs deeper into the bohemian aesthetic choices. She refers to Thorstein Veblen who said: “these quirky marks of distinction are cast into relief by the sameness of mass production”. She also quotes journalist David Brooks who states that “the “gentry” don’t want “opulent, luxurious,.. magnificent and extravagant,” they want “*authentic*, natural, warm, ... honest, organic,...

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19 Sharon, Z. 2011. *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places* Page 100

20 *ibid*, 15

21 *ibid*, 22

unique.”<sup>22</sup> The new urban classes had similar inclinations of global cosmopolites with open and liberal lifestyles. They were the free spirits that were empowered by attempts of democratic reforms, the hopes of EU membership, and the signs of peace with Turkey’s cosmopolitan heritage. This mental state and growing expectations found their expression in the nostalgic revival of the city, mainly in Beyoğlu.

#### 4.2.2 *Nostalgic Revival*

Veronica Della Dora in *The Rhetoric of Nostalgia* analyzes nostalgia in the case of Egypt’s nationalization period:

I consider nostalgia as a fluid, multifaceted, and performative force operating at different scales and levels: On one hand, an unconscious phenomenon in the year following Egyptian nationalization, intertwining with the uncanny and bringing to surface ‘unwanted’ memories; on the other, a powerful device increasingly exploited by urban developers and the state for the construction of a ‘cosmopolitan memory’. While the former kind of nostalgia presents itself as an effective counterpart to the colonial ‘cartographic gaze’, the latter responds to the logics of cultural consumption, and constitutes a strategy adopted in an increasing number of former cosmopolitan cities seeking to negotiate a position within the global capitalist economy.<sup>23</sup>

Beyoğlu’s golden age was built on a nostalgic revival spirit. It was the revival of an old, cosmopolitan Istanbul, with a heterogeneous social fabric and cultural versatility. Going to church for Easter mass, frequenting wine houses such as Viktor Levi or Pano with Jewish and Greek origins, eating at an old White Russian founded restaurant was now a favorite past time, allowing people to connect with Beyoğlu’s cosmopolitan roots.

It is critical to remember that the boom in Beyoğlu was triggered by reopening of old cosmopolitan institutions of Istanbul belonging to non-Muslim

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22 *ibid*, 22

23 Dora, D.V. 2006 *The Rhetoric of Nostalgia: Postcolonial Alexandria between Uncanny Memories and Global Geographies* Page 207 Sage Publications

minorities. Markiz Passage on İstiklal Street was one of the first locales to be restored during the revival process. Winehouse Viktor Levi and Pano were old winehouses of imperial Istanbul. They were the pioneer institutions putting Beyoğlu back to the picture as a fashionable entertainment center.

A newspaper article from the reopening of Markiz Passage describes the nostalgic mood of the day:

It is a duty to revive tradition and old customs in Markiz. Pearl necklaces and ear rings, hats, leather gloves, and embroidered handkerchief are among the respected accessories. If possible, women should be in a two piece suit. But since this one is above me, I only took my hat. (...) When I walk in, I freeze out of shock. The ghost of Markiz caresses my shoulders. I see women of 65-80 years old, with hats with cloth and flowers, red lips, and two piece suits; and men with white handkerchiefs in their houndstooth jackets, breastpins and wristpins.<sup>24</sup>

This nostalgic revival was about the consumption of history, a term I have mentioned in previous chapters. It is interesting to discover in another article written by the same journalist on the same topic about the new shop owners in Markiz Passage. The headline of the article is: ‘All the brands are in Passage Markiz: They will take Beyoğlu to a Higher Class’. The new shop owners are watch shop, a cigar shop, fashion boutiques “with other branches on Abdi İpekçi Street or Etiler”, posh, rich neighborhoods of Istanbul.<sup>25</sup>

Similarly, none of the owners of the other rediscovered institutions such as Viktor Levi and Pano were their original owners. The only thing that resembled the original versions was names, decorations and some elements in the menus. But they provided the cosmopolitan aura giving a boost to the renaissance in the district.

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24 Tuna, B. Hürriyet 9 ocak 2004

25 Tuna, B. *Markalar Pasaj Markiz’de: Beyoğlu’na Sınıf Atlatacak* September, 13 2003, Hürriyet

### 4.2.3 *The Boom*

The revival was a neo-liberal one, but it was different than the other rich neighborhoods of the city. A newspaper article on Sabah informs the public of the rise of a new hub with the headline ‘Entertainment Moved to Taksim’: “The day of the fancy meyhanes of Etiler are over. Now, entertainment is boiling in Taksim and with a difference: You have to be cool to be there.”<sup>26</sup>

We spoke to Mehmet Gürs is the owner and chef of Mikla, a restaurant that is ranked 51st best restaurant in the world despite the crisis Istanbul is currently experiencing. As the founder of Nupera in 1998, a landmark institution for the city’s thriving nightlife, he is considered as one of the instigators of Beyoğlu’s boom. He recalls how the neo-liberal cycle first started: “At that time people from upper class neighborhoods like Etiler and Nişantaşı were scared to come to Beyoğlu. When the richness of the area was discovered, Beyoğlu blossomed like a flower. It was a place uniting all kinds of people; the elite, the intelligentsia, the rightist the leftists...”

Large masses of Istanbul’s population that never frequented Beyoğlu, started to discover the long hidden magic of this historic entertainment district. The life in the city was changing drastically;

In the 1990’s, there were not many cafes, restaurants, taverns, global or local fast food chains in the city. To eat out was not a routine habit the way it is today; in order to go to a restaurant, people waited for a celebration or a special occasion. The streets of Istanbul did not host many festivals, carnivals or celebrations. However, at the end of the 1990’s and on, it is almost impossible not to see a festivity while you are passing through Taksim Square. One day a celebration with fireworks, the next day with a band, the following day a traditional arts and music festival, another day a rap/techno or pop party...<sup>27</sup>

The media that was traditionally prone to a neo-liberal outlook, and also in a period of liberalization, cherished this new urban boom. *Bizim Gazete* on

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26 Arna, S. *Eğlence Taksim’e Kaydı* Sabah November 5, 2000.

27 Soysal, L. Kentin Geleceği/Gelecekleri: Yeni Yüzyıla Uyumlu İstanbul Page 398 in *İstanbul Nereye? Küresel Kent, Kültür, Avrupa* Edited by Deniz Göktürk, Levent Soysal, İpek Türeli

April 2001, declared Istanbul as “the land of pluralism” in their article ‘Istanbul: The Capital of Culture’:

In our country, where cultural services have been provided by a single channel since the days our Republic was found, the increase in the number of cultural centers have positive roles in the curbing of monopoly in arts and spread of pluralism.<sup>28(???)</sup>

The introduction of the same article written in 2001 declares: “In the near future, Istanbul will save itself from the burden of being an industrial center and become a multi-cultural city where arts will reach the highest level.”<sup>29</sup> Ali Sirmen, a columnist in Republican *Cumhuriyet* wrote an article called the transformation in a revived neighborhood of Beyoğlu, Asmalımescit, “the Asmalı Renaissance”.<sup>30</sup> An article in *Hürriyet* on January 6, 2001 declares Beyoğlu as ‘Our Soho’, comparing it to cosmopolitan centers of London and New York.

The “outside” became a space of socialization and a place to develop intimacies”.<sup>31</sup> The streets were full, especially İstiklal Street became one of the busiest avenues in Europe, with millions frequenting it every day. The city became a “spectacle-city”, to be enjoyed as a spectacle, following the flaneur tradition of Baudelaire and Benjamin.<sup>32</sup> It was the new cosmopolitan heart of the city, bringing together people from all backgrounds and social classes, erasing all kinds of boundaries.

#### 4.2.3.1 Asmalımescit and the Case of Babylon

Sharon Zukin, in her analysis of urban spaces that suddenly become fashionable, describes these places as “edgy”, “hip”, “must – see itinerary(ies) for anyone who wanted to be in the know for new cultural trends”.<sup>33</sup> She underlines the importance of the the “buzz” around the neighborhood. These are the new

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28 Setenay, H. *İstanbul Kültür Başkenti*, Bizim Gazete 4 April 2001

29 ibid

30 Sirmen, A. *Asmalımescit Rönesansında Şehbender* Cumhuriyet, 29 February 2004

31 Soysal, L. Kentin Geleceği/Gelecekleri: Yeni Yüzyıla Uyumlu İstanbul Page 398 in *İstanbul Nereye? Küresel Kent, Kültür, Avrupa* Edited by Deniz Göktürk, Levent Soysal, İpek Türel

32 ibid, 395

33 Sharon, Z. 2011 *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places*

“spaces of social diversity and cultural experimentation”. Beyoğlu with its hinterland including Cihangir, Galata, Tünel, Karaköy and Asmalımescit defined what was “edgy” in the city. Istanbul of Beyoğlu’s golden age was called “Cool Istanbul” in many academic works and press reviews during that period. This concept will be discussed later in this chapter. Typically, in these “cool” cities like New York, London, Paris, artistic production creates the initial buzz. This was visible in neighborhoods like Çukurcuma, Asmalımescit, Cihangir, Galatasaray, all over Beyoğlu. The vivid music scene too materialized in live music venues around İstiklal Street. This was the “cool” sound of a thriving nightlife district. Places like Hayal Kahvesi, Kemancı, Balo Sokak, Peyote triggered a musical fashion that can be considered as the music of Beyoğlu’s golden age. Many famous Turkish rock musicians produced and performed music in these venues. The scene was not limited by local artists, there was a critical step for the neighborhood: The opening of Babylon Concert Hall in Asmalımescit in 1999. This place eventually became one of the best known concert halls in Europe and the symbol of Beyoğlu’s rise in early 2000’s. Countless internationally renowned artists performed in Babylon, making this the primary attraction of Beyoğlu’s golden age. It was almost like the holly site for the creative youth of Istanbul.

The owner of Lale Plak, a prestigious jazz and classical music shop in Tünel, Hakan Atala recalls these days: “It all started with Babylon... It was like a dream. It all happened so fast. You know who did it? It was a generation. A generation of creative youth. Mostly, people in the advertising business and in the media... They moved their offices here, brought entertainment, music and the rest with them...”

#### BABYLON

Many experts agree that Babylon was the first institution that attracted Istanbul intelligentsia and cultural circles to Beyoğlu. Babylon was the pioneer in Asmalımescit’s boom and the symbol of cosmopolitan revival in Beyoğlu. I interviewed two of Babylon’s founders for the thesis. It was striking to discover how they predicted the urban processes that took place before everything began. Cem Yegül states:

We could see in narrow streets that minorities could still live their culture. You feel this in old theaters, you can see it in churches. The Crimean Church was so intriguing to us. Saint Antoine blew our minds. İnci Patisserie, the shops all had traces of that past. The Greek minority's culture was visible and alive in *meyhanes*. The past was in a deep sleep, like in hybernation, but we knew this could be awakened, revived, and something big would erupt... All of this put a spark in our minds.

Yegül emphasizes the cosmopolitan residues still left in Istanbul. They have built on the city's cosmopolitan spirit. Even the name had cosmopolitan connotations. Ahmet Uluğ, the other founder, agrees:

We always thought that people would come and discover something mystical on this street. Tünel Square had an energy. We hosted our guests at Pera Palas Hotel. It was not renovated at the time. It was old, but beautiful and exotic. It was our home at the early stages. Istanbulites discovered layers of the city's past each time they came down to Beyoğlu. Many tourists as well as them, realized that this is not a place that only belongs to Istanbul, but part of the world's heritage.

Cosmopolitanism in Babylon did not consist of merely nostalgic revival but it attracted visitors from all over the world. Cem Yegül states: "Some nights, half of Babylon's customers were foreigners. The smallest percentage of foreigners would be 20 percent at the worst night. They were expats, tourists..." Yegül agrees that early 2000s was a golden age for the district:

There was an intense progress between 1999-2005. This absolutely was a golden age. I guess people had a similar feeling during the Renaissance. It felt as if something new has started. The darkness, dullness of the old is burried in history. There is no going back... This feeling gets deep into your spirit. Off course, we unders tood that this was not true later on."

Babylon symbolized the new cosmopolitan revival of Beyoğlu, and its music and crowd symbolized the cool city. Now, Istanbul was one of the most fashionable cities in Europe.

### § 4.3 The Cool City: Istanbul as Center of Global Cosmopolitanism

The internationalization of the city was accompanied by a perception of Istanbul as a bridge between continents, cultures, and a new cosmopolis in the global world. One of the most indicative cultural works signifying this stage was the documentary *Crossing The Bridge* in 2005. Rising German-Turkish director Fatih Akın first showed this film in Cannes Film Festival that year. The film was about a German musician's discovery of an incredibly rich and wide range of musical traditions hidden in Istanbul and Anatolia's history.

These voices were now being discovered by the opening of Turkey to the West. Film coincided with Turkey's rapprochement to the European Union that was at its peak. The role of "building bridges" is underlined as a valuable contribution to the cosmopolitans of both sides of the bridge: Turkey and the EU.<sup>34</sup> This was already a historical role for this city:

Istanbul throughout history... had been home to countless nations and cultures. This beautiful harmony that is ingrained in the roots and the branches of the family tree of the city is not only a nice memory of a past period. Istanbul still maintains its rich cosmopolitan character and the unmatched physical and cultural traces of this heritage. Sometimes hiding it and sometimes exposing it fully. The city is now a live example of a meeting of civilizations that is strongly desired in today's world. This meeting is something so desperately sought by the modern world, its quest seems almost utopian.<sup>35</sup>

The city was going through a rapid process of globalization. The transformation of Istanbul can be generally categorized as a civilizational process called "Europeanization":

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34 Deniz Göktürk *Çokseslilik Peşinde: Hareketli İmgeler, Seyyar Ezgiler in İstanbul Nereye? Küresel Kent, Kültür, Avrupa*, Page 237

35 *ibid*, 240

Turkey as a candidate country is accepting and applying formal structures defined by the EU in order to reach the civilizational status demanded by Europeanization. These range from changes that fastened revisions in law, economy, education and civilian life to frameworks of new codes determining the daily life in the city such as how the traffic lifts will be organized, what the street vendors will wear or how food will be served in restaurants”<sup>36</sup>

But this civilizational process is not merely a European one. It will be more accurate to perceive these changes as the dynamics of a total globalization process.<sup>37</sup> International attention like Newsweek cover: ‘Cool İstanbul- Hippest City of Europe’ in 29 August 2005, were one of the indicators of this turn.<sup>38</sup> During that optimistic era, Newsweek cover story stated: ‘Cool Istanbul: Europe’s Hippest City Might not Need Europe After All’.

#### 4.3.1 *Newsweek article and the cosmopolitan golden age*

Going back to the *Newsweek* cover story of 2005, the peak stage of Beyoğlu’s golden age, it is possible to discover how the West looked at the “Turkish model” at the time. In 2005, *Newsweek* was one of the top news magazines for the global public. The article’s headline, “Turkish Delight” was an expression of appreciation of the cosmopolitan rise rather than an orientalist cliché. Here is a passage about the nostalgic revival taking place in İstanbul during those days:

The sounds of today’s İstanbul convey something important. They’re evidence of a cultural revival that’s helping the city reclaim its heritage as a world-class crossroads. After decades of provincialism, decay and economic depression – not to mention the dreary nationalism mandated by a series of governments dominated by the military--İstanbul is re-emerging as one of Europe’s great metropolises.

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36 Soysal, L. Kentin Geleceği/Gelecekleri: Yeni Yüzyıla Uyumlu İstanbul Page 398 in *İstanbul Nereye? Küresel Kent, Kültür, Avrupa* Edited by Deniz Göktürk, Levent Soysal, İpek Türeli

37 ibid, 399

38 ibid, 389

The article also quotes Fatih Akin about his film ‘The Sound of Istanbul’, mentioning that he rediscovered his Turkish roots. Akin says, “There is such richness. So many people have crossed Istanbul and left their culture here”. The article underlines the cosmopolitan heritage of the city:

..that faded grandeur has recently been leavened with new energy. Stock markets are surging. Young, Western – educated Turks are returning home to start businesses. Foreigners are snapping up choice real estate. Turkish painters, writers, musicians, fashion designers and filmmakers are increasingly in the international spotlight. Two major new private museums devoted to Turkish art, the Istanbul Modern and The Pera Museum, have opened in the past year alone.

The author explains the revival: “The city’s renaissance is part and parcel of Turkey’s embrace of Europe”. There is also an emphasis on the revival of the cosmopolitan life of Istanbul’s past:

The Pozitif photo gallery in Galata is currently hosting a show of stark images from Imroz, a Turkish Aegean island with a tiny, and dying Greek population. It is a sad exhibit, says photographer Murat Yaykın, but ‘it is important to tell the story of how Greeks and Turks not so long ago lived side by side in harmony.’ A huge crowd also turned out last month when Greek singer Alike Kayaloglou performed poetry by Greek poets Elytis, Kavafis and Sappho as well as Turkish poet Nazım Hikmet, set to music by contemporary Greek composer Manos Hadjidakis. Greek contemporary pop sells well in the record shops on İstiklal.

But the cosmopolitanism underlined in the article is not limited to the old multi-cultural Istanbul. It describes the new neo-liberal cosmopolitanism of Istanbul’s golden age. In an interview with a Turkish investment banker who graduated from MIT, Columbia and The London School of Economics before returning to Istanbul, she states: “For the first time, living in Istanbul doesn’t mean that I am left out of the major social and financial networks. I can be part of all that from here”. The article also quotes Oya Eczacıbaşı, chairwoman of Istanbul Modern: “There’s a cultural shift. Both Turks and foreigners are

excited about the possibilities of the city, which has been a well kept secret for so long”.

The article ends on a positive note about Istanbul’s revived cosmopolitanism; “Europe may yet balk at admitting Turkey to its Union. Yet the world won’t end if it does. All signs suggest that Istanbul will continue to re-create itself, perhaps even more energetically. Remember the sounds of Istanbul’s streets--European and Turkish and Balkan and Middle Eastern, all coming together in a strange but beautiful harmony”.

Turkey was not admitted to the European Union but was moving up as a favorite tourist destination and in 2006, it was crowned as European Capital of Culture for the year 2010.<sup>39</sup> This was celebrated with big events in seven corners of the city. By the end of Beyoğlu’s golden age; there was not much discussion about Istanbul’s status as a European city and the government seemed content with this reality. Prime Minister Erdoğan spoke during these celebrations on January 15, 2010:

Istanbul is a European city. It is a city that has its face looking toward Europe with its past culture, civilization and people, with its past and future. Istanbul has integrated into European culture and shaped European culture. It will only hold the status of European capital of culture for one year but it will never lose its role as a cultural capital of Europe as long as it exists. Istanbul alone is proof enough that Turkey is a European country and that it is a natural member of the European Union.<sup>40</sup>

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39 Deniz Göktürk Çokseslilik Peşinde: Hareketli İmgeler, Seyyar Ezgiler Page 237 in *İstanbul Nereye? Küresel Kent, Kültür, Avrupa*

40 *İstanbul Nereye? Küresel Kent, Kültür, Avrupa* 2010 Edited by Deniz Göktürk, Levent Soysal, İpek Türeli Page 23 Istanbul: Metis Yayınları

## The Collapse of Cosmopolitan Mirage in Beyoğlu

**A**fter one and a half decade of cultural and artistic “golden age”, Beyoğlu of the present looks like a dramatically different place. Cafés, restaurants, small shops, night clubs that defined the past vivid period have closed down. Popular institutions that were symbols of that era either went out of business or moved elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

Western tourists have almost disappeared and are recently picking up only gradually. But most dramatically, the generation of people who created and enjoyed the boom in the district, abandoned it. The influx of refugees after the Arab Spring and the war in Syria in addition to the tourist explosion from the Arab World due to AKP’s cultural rapprochement with the region, made Istanbul a hub for the Middle East. Taksim and Beyoğlu are now filled with a predominantly Muslim tourist population, mostly from the Gulf countries, Iran and Syria. This demographic shift and changing consumption and socialization patterns of Beyoğlu’s new occupants changed the topography of the district.

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1 Iconic golden age clubs: Babylon, Nupera, Hayal Kahvesi, Mojo, Otto, Indigo; restaurants like Leblon, Flamm, Cuba Bar, Local, Gedikli Meyhane, Hacı Salih, House Cafe and many others were closed down. Decades old cosmopolitan and cultural institutions followed: İnci pastry shop, Kelebek Korse, Rebul Pharmacy, Robinson Crusoe Bookstore, Emek movie theater etc... The co-chairman of Beyoğlu Entertainment Centers Association (Beyoğlu Eğlence Yerleri Derneği) Tahir Berrakkarasu stated in February 2014 that 100 entertainment spots went out of business and another 250 moved elsewhere.

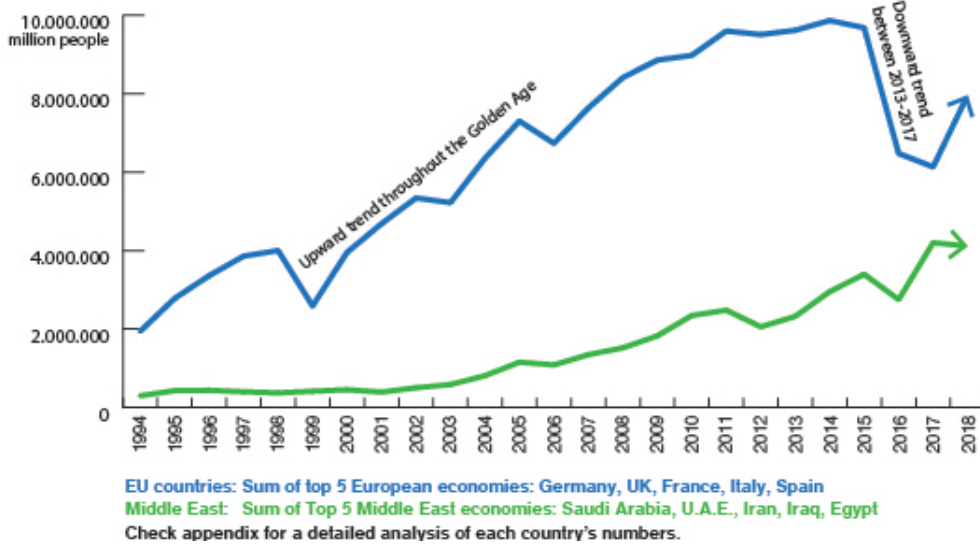


Table 5.1 Number of Tourists Between 1994-2018

Beyoğlu was traditionally the center of liberal, cosmopolitan life style in Istanbul. Traits like nightlife and entertainment were seen as elements of its free, cosmopolitan identity. This was an identity common to Ottoman and Ottoman port-cities that hosted Western and local lifestyles simultaneously. The closing of bars; replacement of meyhanes by nargile cafés and kebab restaurants, new street and shop signs in Arabic are considered by some as proof of a deliberate Middle Easternization process, threatening the liberal soul of the district. How did it this unexpected change take place in such a brief period of time? How did the golden age end up in the loss of the district's soul according to some? In this chapter we will analyze the collapse of cosmopolitanism in Beyoğlu expressed by many, under three topics: Dynamics of gentrification, the authoritarian turn of the AKP, and neo-liberal Islamic urban policies.

The sudden interest during the golden age brought about a speedy gentrification process in Beyoğlu which was detrimental for the physical and social fabric of the district. Places and people who gave the district its soul during the rise, were displaced. The creative and young people keeping Beyoğlu alive and dynamic, started to leave. The district was now defenseless to external influences like insatiable capitalist invasion and demographic changes. Big capital as well as local, profit hungry quasi-legitimate capital covered the neighborhood as soon as it became a hotspot for Istanbul's nightlife. Little shops,

bars and a taste of nightlife that was different from the original wave, repelled the original patrons of the 2000's.

During this process, authoritarian tendencies of the AKP government also surfaced stage by stage. Street culture that was the biggest attraction for crowds in a colourful and social urban setting, was now targeted by local municipality. Beyoğlu's AKP led municipality aggressively prevented all cafés and restaurants to host their guests in the outdoors. They forcefully removed tables on the streets. This did not seem to be a solely procedural or legal move, but rather a confrontational harassment of small businesses and their clients. Open-air seating was suddenly banned, which was a major blow to the aura of street socialization in Beyoğlu. These restrictions were in line with AKP's conservative and Islamic image of the city. The new authoritarian turn let loose the traditional Islamic urban agenda of the AKP circles, with the guidance of then Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. These restrictions were not only Islamic though. They were also motivated by neo-liberal quest for constant profit by big capital. There was a vision of a more conservative, but commercial Beyoğlu led by capital close to the government. The transformation of Western looking, liberal Beyoğlu that used to be an entertainment center was finally crowned by the building of a mosque in Taksim Square, an urban dream of Turkish Islamists throughout decades.<sup>2</sup> But first, we will examine the process of gentrification employed in Beyoğlu due to neo-liberal economic policies and development.

## § 5.1 Dynamics of Gentrification

During the rise of Beyoğlu, the district went through urban processes that are typically seen in Western cities like New York, London, Paris, San Fransisco... There are common traits in these cities' transformations after being subject to capitalist development. In these cities of neo-liberal development, there is an identical process in gentrified districts. Everything starts with the discovery of

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2 Gall, C. *In Istanbul, Erdogan Remakes Taksim Square, a Symbol of Secular Turkey*: The New York Times: March 22, 2019 – (Construction of the mosque started on February 17th 2017 and a great part is completed. Exact date of opening is unclear as of this writing)

bohemians and artists. A cultural vitalization takes place. Even though this first stage is innocent and genuinely inspiring in terms of rediscovering the hidden treasures of the city; it triggers a chain reaction. Sharon Zukin, an analyst of urban life in the United States, defines various stages of gentrification:

A group that imposes its own tastes on urban space – on the look of a street, say, or the feeling of a neighborhood – can make a claim to that space that displaces longtime residence. To be sure, a group that can afford to pay higher rents can also be reasonably sure their claim will win: Artists displace manufacturers in live-work lofts, and are displaced in turn by lawyers and media moguls who buy these lofts as luxury condos; a gourmet cheese store or quirky coffee bar replaces a check – cashing service or take-out food shop, and is in turn displaced by a chain store that pays many thousands of dollars each month for the location.<sup>3</sup>

#### 5.1.1 *Initial Gentrifiers*

Özgür Karaduman was the owner of the popular ‘Sokak Bar’ on Mis Sokak for 17 years. He eventually had to close it down due to loss of clients: “I do not believe that Gezi or terror attacks are the cause of Beyoğlu’s transformation” he says; “A big change that is beyond all of us is pushed by big capital.” According to Karaduman, to the contrary, Gezi delayed the planned urban transformation plans of the AKP. It was striking to see how his words affirmed the theoretical analysis we review on urban space, displacement and gentrification. Karaduman says he has witnessed three major shifts in Beyoğlu’s urban history. First was ex mayor Bedrettin Dalan’s gentrification project in Tarla-başı, where casinos, brothels and other clandestine businesses were pushed out and replaced by more legitimate businesses:

In early 1990s, there was a white van parked at the entrance of İstiklal Street. Men with bats in their hands would come out and assault people they did not like. I remember journalist Hıncal Uluç applauding this

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3 Sharon, Z. 2011 *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places*, Page 4 Oxford: Oxford University Press

practice, saying that Fifth Avenue in New York has been cleaned the same way and that people now could safely go to İstiklal Street with their lovers!

Karaduman says that there used to be a striptease bar (*pavyon*) right in front of the later fashionable Hayal Cafe: “Those guys probably moved to Aksaray. We too, unintentionally caused others to move away with our arrival”.

Hundreds of institutions like Karaduman’s Sokak Bar created and enjoyed the golden age in Beyoğlu. But while they were boosted and valued by the golden age; a storm that was eventually going to push them away too, was forming.

The blossoming in the golden age, attracted big capital and chains into Beyoğlu; forcing the older, more authentic small shops out. I interviewed Mehmet Çelik, a rug and gift shop owner in Galata, who remembers the boom years: “After 2009, the crowd started to get disturbing. Galata was losing its color; things were getting out of control. This lasted for two-three years. I think the problem was over-commercialization.” When I asked him how the neighborhood changed, he replied: “When I first came here, there were artists with no money in their pockets, sitting on the sidewalk in the evenings, making music, chatting... This was a bohemian and pleasant neighborhood.” He shows me a small café next to his rug shop: “This shop belonged to Yorgo, the carpenter of the neighborhood. Now, he moved to one of the Prince islands to be the bell ringer of the church there.”

I, the research conductor of this thesis was also an inhabitant of this neighborhood. I lived upstairs from Yorgo and finally realized that I did not even know he was a carpenter. I thought he was an ironclad. My friend Mehmet, the owner of the rugshop, told me that he realized that I did not know Yorgo’s profession, because that was not what I was interested in. I lived in Galata during the very early years of Beyoğlu’s gentrification in 2004-2005. And I was a gentrifier too. Zukin writes about declining authentic American neighborhoods:

The bourgeois bohemians” prefer to lead a comfortable life, (...) but don’t want to live like their parents do – (...) and don’t mind a little dirt of the streets as long as they feel safe. In the areas where hipsters

and gentrifies live, there is a new cosmopolitanism in the air; tolerant, hip, casual and that isn't bad. But little by little the old ethnic neighborhoods they have moved into are dying, along with the factories where long time residence plied their trades and the Irish bars, Latino bodegas, and black soul food restaurants where they made their home away from home. The people who seemed so rooted in these neighborhoods are disappearing"<sup>4</sup>

### 5.1.2 *Displacement of initial gentrifiers*

Even though I was among the initial gentrifiers of the district, by the end of 2005, my landowner asked me to leave his apartment because he wanted to sell it. This was a second wave, where big capital and increasing rents were already in motion. This was the inevitable process seen in every neo-liberal urban transformation:

We often call these changes gentrification because of the movement of rich, well-educated folks, the gentry, into lower-class neighborhoods and the higher property values that follow them, transforming a “declining” district into an expensive neighborhood with historic or hipster charm.”<sup>5</sup>

At the early stages gentrification does not seem very destructive but later on, it can get devastating. Processes like “super-gentrification” to quote British geographer Loretta Lees for instance happens when the upper middle class of these neighborhoods sell their restored homes to the super rich.<sup>6</sup> Neil Smith’s “gentrification generalized” materializes when small shops are replaced by big banks, trendy cafes and big chain restaurants and “urban renewal projects” start to destroy old but still vibrant neighborhoods and the state gets in “to help real estate developers to change the use of prime parcels or urban land in

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4 *ibid*, 7-8

5 *ibid*, 7-8

6 *ibid*, 10

order to make money”<sup>7</sup> Slowly the thriving district starts to fade and something else starts to replace it.

I interviewed Yaşar Adanalı, an urban studies expert and an activist who lived in and worked on Beyoğlu for years. He sees ‘2010 European Capital of Culture Project’ as a branding project and defines that period as ‘Cool Istanbul’ years: “There were academic works, conferences, meetings about this concept. The Newsweek cover was only an observation of an ongoing process.”<sup>8</sup> Istanbul according to Adanalı was to be the city of Biennale, big expositions, a “welcoming city that looked towards the West but also slowly turning to the East as well”. He adds: “While this ‘cool city’ image was so fashionable, I have been evicted from my apartment. Investors were profit hungry and insanely buying real estate. They were buying everything and displacing people who lived, loved and produced in Beyoğlu, such as myself.” He witnessed the grocery shop on his street become an art gallery; the hardware store a designer jewelry shop, and the fruit shop, a boutique hotel...

### 5.1.3 *Elements of sameness and loss of soul*

By the final stages of gentrification, all the shops and stores start to look the same. İstiklal Street at its height, was attracting chain stores like Koton, LC Waikiki, Kahve Dünyası, or Starbucks, an international sign or even agent of gentrification. This Beyoğlu was looking no different than a shopping mall in an Anatolian town. Zukin uses the term “elements of sameness” to describe this phenomenon. She says that every city wants to be part of a common global culture of consumption; they all want a “Mc Guggenheim”.<sup>9</sup>

Beyoğlu, aspired to this “Mc Guggenisation” at the highest level, in the literal sense, even in the hands of the old, refined bourgeoisie of Istanbul. Pera Museum initiated by İnan Kıracı, a business mogul of Koç Holding’s top management, tried to build a city museum in Beyoğlu, reportedly commissioning

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7 ibid, 10

8 On August 28, 2005, International Newsweek magazine had the cover: *Cool Istanbul: Europe’s Hippest City Might Not Need Europe After All*

9 Sharon, Z. 2011 *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places* Page 232-33

Frank Gehry, the architect of original Guggenheim museum in Bilbao.<sup>10</sup> This initial plan did not work due to interference from the local government. The planned building was not opened to Kıraç family for the use of Pera Museum.

This is an example showing the incomplete nature of Beyoğlu's gentrification compared to its Western counterparts. The capital did not completely invade it like in other Western cities, due to political tensions and instability, and at one point stopped investing in the neighborhood. Beyoğlu was never completely sacked by upscale residences, luxury shopping malls or hotels like Lower East Side Manhattan or London's Soho. It was an incomplete gentrification, yet it did cause enough damage to local merchants and small shop owners as well as residents who were at one point unable to afford inflated rents. Destructive effects of gentrification harmed the district's cosmopolitan and authentic elements. As Zukin states; "In the end, upscale development triumphs over authenticity, whether that is the authenticity of origins or of new beginnings".<sup>11</sup> This process displaced the liberal, cosmopolitan elements in the district. This is how a neighborhood or a city loses its character, through the disappearance of the people who gave it its soul.

The neo-liberal development, displacement caused by it is detrimental to a district's soul. The later stages of gentrification in a way destroys all gains during the boom era and leaves an empty and dull city in its place. It disconnects from the people from their origins. Zukin states that "origins" suggest:

a moral right to the city that enables people to put down roots. This is the right to inhabit a space, not just to consume it as an experience. Authenticity in this sense is not a stage set of historic buildings as in Soho or a performance of bright lights as at Times Square; it is a continuous process of living and working, a gradual build-up of everyday experience, the expectation that neighbors and buildings that are here today will be here tomorrow. A city loses its soul when this continuity is broken".<sup>12</sup>

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10 Gila Benmayor: *İnan Kıraç 'Suna Kıraç Kültür Merkezi Niye Olmadı' kitabını yazdı*: Hürriyet, 25 Aralık 2015

11 Sharon, Z. *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places*, Page 237

12 *ibid*, 6

## § 5.2 AKP's Authoritarian Turn and Cultural Policies in Beyoğlu

After the initial displacement and loss of authenticity in the neighborhood via neo-liberal processes; AKP government's pro European Union, liberal policies halted. Authoritarian tendencies were now accompanying neo-liberal policies and urban projects. These moves started to demonstrate signs of a conservative ideology. The first major move was the removal of the tables from Beyoğlu's streets. Mehmet Gürs, owner of Mikla restaurant, thinks that the forceful removal of tables and chairs from the streets was a turning point: "That didn't only mean they didn't want the shops there, but that they didn't want those customers either."

### 5.2.1 *Loss of joy on the street*

Newspaper articles and newsstories from the time mention the drastic change this move brought to Beyoğlu.<sup>13</sup> Istanbul Life magazine published a large dossier with the headline: 'Letter from Asmalımescit'; declaring that the neighborhoods streets are completely empty. Everybody, regulars and shop owners are waiting for the tables and chairs to be back. A shop owner states: "The District was Sick but the Municipality Pulled the Plug".<sup>14</sup> In following years, Asmalımescit did not overcome this problem and many bars, cafes and restaurants closed down.

Mehmet Gürs' restaurant Mikla was able to survive due to its international links and brand recognition. But he protests; "These small shops had to open way to big capital. They were not profitable enough. But when small-shop owners are displaced from a neighborhood, the whole fabric changes..." Gürs points out the constant construction noise we hear during our interview on the terrace of his restaurant: "If you are constantly building and destroying, you hurt the life and the trade of a neighborhood. People don't come, small merchants leave. If there is a small tequila bar with two bar stools and it can

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13 *Balkon Sokak*, 9 September, 2011 Melis Alphan; *Asmalımescit'i Terk Etmek*, Mehmet Tez; *Milliyet* 16 February, 2014; *Asmalı Ruhunu Dirilir mi?* Tolga Akyıldız *Milliyet* Cadde 30 September, 2013

14 'Asmalımescit'ten Mektup Var', *Istanbul Life*, Eylül 2011

survive, you must protect it. Beyoğlu used to make these places live.” He concludes: “Beyoğlu was the main reason Istanbul flourished in world stage. They came for the nightlife. Clubs and restaurants made them feel better. Why would they come to Istanbul for a shopping mall? They would rather go to Dubai.”

Owner of Sokak Bar Mehmet Karaduman says that in the first decade of the millennium, local AKP municipality supported Beyoğlu’s boom. But he claims: “I think that the new entertainment culture that flourished, eventually created a conflict with the values of the conservative government.”

The first floor of every building in Beyoğlu increased in value due to vivid social life around cafes and restaurants. But the other floors in these buildings did not benefit from this business. Karaduman recalls the municipality actively trying to convince landowners to turn these buildings into hotels and hostels: “When these places were rented to single young people and lovers after a long night out, the municipality did not like it.”

Gradually, things started to change. The conservative attitude was most apparent when municipal workers started to aggressively remove outdoor tables on the streets while the patrons were sitting at them. Karaduman says that this was done by a band of 20-30 men who wouldn’t even show their identification cards. The cigarette ban in closed spaces and high tax on alcohol also contributed to the closing of cafés and restaurants, according to Karaduman.

Finally, huge shopping mall projects started throughout the district. This changed the cultural fabric of the neighborhood and left not much reason for people to frequent Beyoğlu’s streets. Karaduman says his customers are now in Beşiktaş and Kadıköy instead.

### 5.2.2 *Loss of cosmopolitanism*

Alber Kohen is the owner of the oldest bookstore in Turkey. He too was faced with difficulties to survive in the changing dynamics of the Tünel neighborhood where his bookstore is located. In our interview he stated: “I think they want to end Beyoğlu as we know it. They want all shop owners to be replaced.” Kohen gives the example of the new huge Demirören shopping mall: “Beyoğlu

is already a shopping mall. Why build another one in it? Now they are restoring Narmanlı Yurdu. I am sure they will give it to a big company. A hundred families were being fed by that building, now everything will go to one.”

He underlines the ideological dimension in Beyoğlu’s transformation. “They want the locales serving alcohol to leave. They want a more Oriental Beyoğlu that would please their like-minded people. Now, everywhere you look, you see a kebab or nargile place.” Kohen looks at me and says “In the past, as a Jewish merchant, I was a minority. Now, you are a minority too.” Kohen says that his daughter probably will not continue the family business and that the oldest bookstore in the country will close down soon. When I ask him what he plans to do next, he says “I am a Sephardite jew, so Portugal gave us citizenship. I went to see it. The water is cold, the ocean is not for us. We grew up on the Bosphorus, on the islands. We will see...”

### 5.2.3 *Gezi Protests and politization of Beyoğlu*

We have seen how policies on the local level and neo-liberal projects affected the cosmopolitan revival in Beyoğlu. In 2013, the government’s statements about Taksim Square and plans to completely change the district’s shape, fueled tensions even further, eventually giving way to Gezi protests in June 2013:

The demonstrations had started as a challenge to a top – down decision to demolish a park and build a shopping mall in the main meydan or square of Istanbul. The initial protesters were middle – class university students and young graduates and professionals in precisely the corporate sectors that are the motors of globalization: Finance, law, advertising, consulting, and the like. They were joined by foreign students, non corporate expats, journalists, and itinerant artists, and were applauded by the “cosmopolitan” population of the city”.<sup>15</sup>

Erdoğan’s authoritarian attitude had triggered the biggest public uprising of the country’s history. Clashes between protesters and the police polarized and

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15 Bartu, A. *Who Owns the Old Quarters in Istanbul Between the Global and the Local*, Page 40

politicized Beyoğlu like never before. Gezi protests resulted in the militarization of urban life. Beyoğlu was no longer a space for socialization and entertainment but a highly tense urban area reflecting extreme polarization in the country. To understand how the mood in the city changed since then; one needs to remember how life was in Beyoğlu before 2013.

Urban activist Yaşar Adanalı underlines the dramatic shift “Do you remember the police and municipality cars in Taksim during the ‘Cool Istanbul’ years? They were mini coopers and segways! Now the streets are full of armored military vehicles.”

The day before Gezi Protests started, Babylon Concert Hall’s parent company ‘Pozitif’ was organizing a Rihanna concert in İnönü Stadium near Taksim. Those were the days when one of the most famous international stars in the world could safely come to Turkey for a concert. After Gezi protests and the deeply polarized atmosphere in the country, entertainment, sale of alcohol, public art and other aspects of Westernized secular culture started to fade away in Beyoğlu. In the end, the institution that started the golden age decided to leave its original location and move to Bomonti into an enclosed campus of restaurants and a concert hall. The case of Babylon is representative of the transformation of Beyoğlu. Its various stages are indicative of this thesis’ key aspects like nostalgic revival, the golden age, gentrification and the final decline.

The founders of Babylon both complain about the gentrification that took place with the boom. Ahmet Uluğ explains us:

When we first opened, there was nobody around. We were very careful about the noise, drinking on the street. The few other places that opened after us too were refined, pleasant spots. Then, little by little, the merchants from upper parts of Beyoğlu moved in. They started selling tequilas on the street, started to play music on the street with one speaker and a microphone. People who did not care about the noise they created... They started to put tables everywhere and invade the whole street. People could not even walk. I did not even now these shop owners. Frankly, they scared us a little. Then, all the galleries started to leave, all the books tores became bars. The antique shops,

small merchants all left. Only an aggressive profit hungry people dominated the neighborhood. This eventually effected the client profile. It was predominantly groups of men now, we even started hearing harassment stories.

When I asked Cem Yegül if there is a political reason for the end of the golden age, he replied:

100 percent! Beyoğlu is a jewel. The political power should have embraced the actors that nourished Beyoğlu. We did not see that. Eventually the political scene changed. An illusion of grandeur took place: I can do whatever I want! People started not to feel at ease. There was the feeling that even things got better in Beyoğlu, we were worried about Turkey. Most people and businesses were carried into a pessimistic tunnel. Then, we left. The departure of Babylon is a great sad story.

In the end, the club -that started and ended the golden age- was acquired by one of the biggest capital groups in Turkey: Doğu Holding, that had close relations with the government. The new location for the joint, guarded by security, X-Ray machines and secluded from the city, was like a symbolic representation of what happened in Istanbul urban life as a result of the neo-liberal Islamic process. Beyoğlu was now abandoned. Its old occupants have moved to protected ghettos. Entertainment districts and secular urban life were now pushed away from the heart of the city, away from the eyes of the public. The district was now completely open to forces of the capital and AKP's Islamic inclined aesthetics and social fabric.

### § 5.3 Neo-liberal Islamic City

Simten Coşar claims: "The main constant variable throughout the three AKP governments has been the party's strict adherence to neo-liberal policies preferences".<sup>16</sup> With their power consolidated, they started to exert their power on

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16 Coşar S, Yücesan-Özdemir Gamze. 2012 *Silent Violence, Neoliberalism, Islamist Politics and the AKP Years in Turkey* Page 88 Ottawa: Red Quill Books

the city's landscape. This trend was already in progress in places like Tarlabası and Sulukule. But, the authoritarian turn became more visible with the declaration of the Topçu Kışlası project in Gezi Park, Taksim. The AKP felt ready to change the city center's cultural space. The neo-liberal authoritarian shift was now fueled with the long lasting culture war in Turkey: Islam vs. secularism. AKP, according to Galip Yalman, employed "a skillful manipulation of neo-liberalization with Islamization in building its hegemonic opposition to the established Republican regime".<sup>17</sup>

### 5.3.1 *A champion of neo-liberal development: Beyoğlu's mayor*

After listening to people affected by Beyoğlu's transformation; we met one of the actors and biggest champions of neo-liberal policies in the district. We interviewed Beyoğlu's three-term mayor Ahmet Misbah Demircan, and have spent a full day with him, examining the huge neo-liberal urban projects he was overseeing in Tarlabası and Karaköy. Demircan seemed completely unaffected by critics who say that Beyoğlu lost its soul. He stated some statistics: "In 2014, we had 6.000 bed capacity, now we have 45.000. There were 4.500 small merchants, now there are 19.500. There were 50-70.000 registered labour force; now there are 180-190.000." He added: "If a building used to cost 1 lira in 2004; today it is valued at 50 liras."

He explains: "People are used to certain comforts. Buildings must have good infrastructure, electricity, wireless internet etc. What we need to do is to deliver these services. In that department, Beyoğlu is doing better than ever." He dismisses the link between AKP's actions and the dying social life: "Ortaköy, Beşiktaş, Karaköy, Asmalımescit... They all had their time. These are trends. They never last forever and economically are very insignificant. What is important is sustainable and right investments." He claims: "People are talking about Beyoğlu and Emek movie theaters. They closed down because they are unable to deliver the necessary comfort to their clients. People prefer shopping malls."

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17 Galip, Y. 2012 Politics and Discourse Under the AKP's Rule Page 21 in Simten Coşar, Gamze Yücesan-Özdemir *Silent Violence, Neoliberalism, Islamist Politics and the AKP Years in Turkey*

When I asked about the aggressive removal of tables from the streets, and if this had negative consequences, he accused me of getting stuck in the past and defended that this is a topic he stopped thinking about in 2010. Instead, he wanted to show us new projects in Tarlabası and the Galataport area.

Our first stop was ‘Taksim 360’ project on Tarlabası Street. This is a one-thousand apartment, office and residence complex. It is a renovation project of old buildings that belonged to the Armenian bourgeoisie in late Ottoman times. Mayor Demircan took us inside one of the buildings. At the entrance, the name plate of the building is written in Armenian alphabet. The original plate is kept along with the carving of a huge cross on the wall. Demircan takes pride in showing this proof of preservation. He also points out the parking lots under every one of those buildings, stating: “This is the key. To preserve the old, but conform to the modern.” This project has been undertaken by Çalık Group who was also in media business at one time as a huge supporter of the government.<sup>18</sup>

After Tarlabası, we drove down to Dolapdere, the Western frontier of Beyoğlu. We have seen a huge residence and office complex with shopping malls, parking lots, some green areas, called ‘Piyalepaşa’. The complex covers a vast land from Dolapdere all the way up to Tarlabası and is eventually going to change the whole landscape of Beyoğlu’s Western end. When showing us the high rising buildings, Demircan said “These are the things I am preoccupied with. I have been working on these for 10 years. Some cafes closing in Asmalımescit are not an issue for me. It is nonsense, a thing of the past.”

Demircan stroke me as a tireless worker and firm believer of capitalist development. His neo-liberal convictions and complete disregard of cultural and social issues was intriguing. He certainly seemed like he did not want to even

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18 Mehmet Penpecioglu in the book in *İnşaat Ya Resulullah* (p.174) explains this trend: A lifestyle that consists of an individualization via big scale urban projects, having the freedom of consumption and being free via consumption to have a safe life within protected residential sites being isolated from society is being pushed today. These projects that are products of the neo-liberal ideology are designed in closed spaces remote from the access of wide segments of society, they increase polarization and socio-spatial separation, increases the life costs of the low income groups and causes the displacement of these groups from their living spaces. (Page 174 of the same book)

deal with these topics, just like the spirit of the constant profit and capitalist growth system his vision consists of.

Two days after we interviewed the mayor, we have met Mücella Yapıcı, a prominent figure of Gezi protests as the spokeswoman of Taksim Solidarity platform. Yapıcı is a member of the Chamber of Architects, a long time opponent of neo-liberal policies of the AKP. She said: “If you look at the city with their eyes, meaning, with the logic of the capital, you too would choose Beyoğlu and the Historical Peninsula as a field of profit.” She added: “80 percent of the economy revolves around constructions projects. Finance, credits, energy sectors are all linked to these. In cities, construction is essential to make the wheel turn.”

Yapıcı points out the appearance of a new capital group. She calls them “capital of the Right”: “This is a strange, real-estate capital. Some grew so big they own major companies in energy, media etc. The “industry capital” groups like Koç, now find that they too have to get into this kind of speculative enterprises.” Mücella Yapıcı, claims that renovation projects like Taksim 360 in Tarlabaşı are a lousy imitation of the past. According to her, it is about a new socio-economic group taking over the property and a new and more inhumane way of life. She asked me “Have you realized what’s common in those buildings? There is no entrance from the street. You can only get in via the ground parking lot. Because, until Tarlabaşı is completely gentrified, they will not feel safe there...”

Mücella Yapıcı claimed that while neo-liberal policies are on full track; cultural memories of the city are being destroyed deliberately. The goal, according to her is to atomize individuals and make them lose their feelings of belonging for the city. She protested:

This is not only an urban transformation. Academia, public institutions are deprived of their ethic and professional principles too. They do everything the government and the capital wants. The universities do not teach these principles anymore. Their focus is to make money the easiest and fastest way possible. This is what students learn today. You know what is the most ironic? If they abided by what we recommended for the city, they could make more money too... Look at Rome! Istanbul is even older than Rome!

In early 2010s, especially by Gezi Protests 2013, the golden age of Beyoğlu as Istanbul's social and cultural heart halted abruptly. With the neo-liberal authoritarian policies of the government, the modern cosmopolites of Beyoğlu retreated to their own, smaller or more hospitable neighbourhoods such as Arnavutköy, Moda, Yeniköy, Kadıköy, Beşiktaş... They felt more secure in these places and stopped frequenting their regular spots in Beyoğlu. Various terror attacks in Istanbul, including one on İstiklal Street on March 19th, 2016, harmed European and American tourism even further. Many hotels, Airbnb flats, apart hotels, hostels, entertainment businesses appealing to the Western tourist disappeared. This void was filled with a mixed crowd of Middle Eastern tourists and refugees, Syrians, Egyptians and Iranians and from countries of the Persian Gulf who now stayed in Talimhane's hotels and other neighborhoods in the city.

With the demographic shift, physical construction projects and removal of iconic institutions that gave Beyoğlu its soul, Beyoğlu -maybe for the first time in its history- is no longer the heart of the city's culture and entertainment. The AKP style neo-liberal Islamic development is on track with various construction projects. And commerce almost entirely targets Middle Eastern tourists and their consumption preferences. This is a dramatic shift in Istanbul's urban history: A very rapid cultural and economic boom followed by a drastic collapse... A mirage-like golden age that lasted only for a decade.

## Conclusion

In this thesis, I analyze the cosmopolitan revival of Beyoğlu in 1999-2013. This period is considered a golden age for Beyoğlu when it became one of the most vibrant neighborhoods in Europe and revived the past cosmopolitanism of Istanbul. The way this golden age ended, its brief duration, was a shock to the urban classes that created and enjoyed this liberal cosmopolitan moment. The general tendency was to connect this drastic change to the government's deliberate policy of transforming urban space in Istanbul.

This thesis employs the term “mirage” -not only because of the short duration of the golden age- but its illusionary qualities. Public opinion seems to sideline the harming effects of neo-liberal development that took place long before the AKP's authoritarian turn in the district. Beyoğlu was already losing its authentic vibes and aura that triggered the rediscovery and revival of Istanbul's hidden cosmopolitanism. I analyzed the norms of gentrification processes that are universal to all cities that are planned and developed according to a neo-liberal model. Terms such as “loss of authenticity”, “loss of the soul”, “decline”, are frequently used in the analysis of Western metropolises, such as New York, London, and Paris. It is important to observe the harming effects of neo-liberal urbanism clearly for a thorough analysis of Beyoğlu's decline. An analysis of the cycle of capitalist urban development demonstrates the inevitability of the rise and decline in these cities. To understand how gentrifi-

cation works, similarly clarifies why Beyoğlu's golden age was doomed to expire eventually. This neo-liberal economic cycle as well as political and cultural obstacles were the causes of the mirage-like state of the era.

The buzz around Beyoğlu's golden age consisted of a nostalgic revival. This revival awakened the city's cosmopolitan past and aimed to bring the cosmopolitan aura back to the district's streets. Symbolic restaurants, shops and shopping centers reopened with their historic names. But this nostalgic revival was essentially formulated as a mechanism of consumption of history. The primary goal and the instruments to enjoy cosmopolitanism were to consume something. To buy goods in those shops, to dine in those restaurants that merely carried the historical names but in fact had no real connection to original owners. The customers were mostly Sunni Turks who felt like cosmopolites due to the new zeitgeist of globalization. This nostalgic revival did not consist of a sincere vision of facing past losses and tragedies concerning cosmopolitan Istanbul's departed minorities. To the contrary, it was about commodifying those images and ideas and creating the feeling, the illusion of regaining a cosmopolitanism that was in fact not there. This cosmopolitanism was a mirage.

Another problem caused by neo-liberal boom was the exclusionary nature of the golden age. It was a progressive, liberal, creative and inspiring historical moment for a large segment of Istanbul's population. However, it was created and championed by a new middle class, creative professionals, students, artists, bohemians, expats, tourists, business circles and the like. The golden age did not undertake the hard task of creating a truly egalitarian urban surrounding that is available to all. The losers of globalization included the conservative urban base of the AKP. These groups did not truly enjoy the benefits of cultural urban miracle that was taking place in Beyoğlu. With the neo-liberal dynamics getting stronger at every stage, this exclusion and polarization it has caused, intensified. The neo-liberal AKP government employed Islamic conservatism in order to manage this rift.

Despite the shortcomings and brief duration of the golden age; we should not underestimate the achievements of this urban phenomenon. It was a transforming experience for a generation. The cultural, artistic, and social life

in the district reached heights unseen during Turkish Republic's history. During this time, Istanbul was the third most visited city in Europe and Beyoğlu was its rising star. Now, with the hasty loss of this soul, it is necessary to examine the dynamics that created the golden age as well as what made it merely a mirage. It is critical to understand why it was so vulnerable to political and economic changes in the country. This thesis was an attempt to examine these dynamics.

## § 6.1 The harming effects of neo-liberal development

Beyoğlu's golden age is part of a historical trend in capitalist countries. There is a remarkable pattern since the beginning of modern cities. It is essential to reflect on the logic of capitalist urban development. Capitalism -by nature- has to constantly expand in order to make profit. It has to find new spaces, territories and turn these into profit generating commodities. Cities and especially central neighborhoods are extremely lucrative areas for capitalist growth. When a neighborhood in a city with its authenticity, artistic and cultural properties is discovered, it becomes an attractive target for the capital. This initial interest carries the potential to improve conditions, through investment, and growth. But eventually, inflating real estate prices, rent levels and displacement of the people and businesses that gave it its attractive qualities in the first place, will bring about its demise.

The deterioration of Beyoğlu is seen by some as a consequence of Gezi protests and ideological moves of the AKP government. Though, destructive effects of an ongoing neo-liberal invasion are also very critical. By the time authoritarian operations of the AKP took place, Beyoğlu was already at the mercy of the fragile capitalistic balance it was standing upon. It is important to understand the logic of capitalism that AKP government embraced, through a complete adoption of neo-liberal urban policies. David Harvey recalls Karl Marx who said "Capitalism rests upon the perpetual search for surplus value (profit)." He adds:

To produce surplus value, capitalists have to produce a surplus product. This means that capitalism is perpetually producing the surplus

product that urbanization requires. The reverse relation also holds. Capitalism needs urbanization to absorb the surplus products it perpetually produces. In this way an inner connection emerges between the development of capitalism and urbanization.<sup>1</sup>

The tense relation between the capital and the city is a historical phenomenon. It has its roots in the history of capitalist development. David Harvey takes it back to Second Empire Paris. After the Revolution of 1848, Louis Bonaparte who established dictatorial rule, understood the need to change the urban infrastructure of Paris in order to avoid protests and uprisings. Haussmann took charge of this endeavor. The solution was big construction projects. The scale of the city and the very fabric of urban life had to be changed. Capitalism and authoritarianism allied themselves in making Paris “the city of light, the great city of consumption. Tourism and pleasure – the cafés, department stores, fashion industry”...<sup>2</sup> In 1868, however, the inflated and speculative economic system collapsed. “One of the greatest revolutionary episodes in capitalist urban history, the Paris Commune took place”.<sup>3</sup> According to Harvey, “the commune was wrought in part out of a nostalgia for the urban world that Haussmann had destroyed and the desire to take back their city on the part of those dispossessed by Haussmann’s works”.<sup>4</sup>

A similar process is common in every urban uprising or discontent that materializes in contemporary world. According to Harvey, “The quality of urban life becomes a commodity for those with money, as has the city itself”.<sup>5</sup> Because of this system, he writes “We increasingly live in divided, fragmented

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1 Harvey, D. 2012. *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*: Page 5 London: Verso 2012

2 *ibid*, 8

3 *ibid*, 8

4 *ibid*, 8

5 *ibid*, 14

and conflict-prone cities.”<sup>6</sup> Harvey calls this capitalist assault, “creative destruction”. He adds that “violence is required to achieve the new urban world on the wreckage of the old”.<sup>7</sup>

In our time, the same clash has a more disguised form. Harvey observes “a far more insidious and cancerous process of transformation occurred through fiscal disciplining of democratic urban governments, land markets, property speculation, and the sorting of land to those uses that generated the highest possible financial rate of return under the land’s highest and best use”.<sup>8</sup> Harvey finds a theoretical reference in Friedrich Engels, who grasped this process in 1872:

The growth of the big modern cities gives the land in certain areas, particularly in those areas which are centrally situated, an artificially and colossally increasing value; the buildings erected on these areas depress this value instead of increasing it, because they no longer belong to the changed circumstances. They are pulled down and replaced by others. This takes place above all with workers houses which are situated centrally and whose rents, even with the greatest overcrowding, can never, or only very slowly, increase above a certain maximum. They are pulled down and in their stead shops, warehouses and public buildings are erected”.<sup>9</sup>

## § 6.2 AKP’s staunch neo-liberalism

Cihan Tuğal calls the time period that corresponds to Beyoğlu’s neo-liberal golden age, “the golden age of Islamic liberalism”.<sup>10</sup> This economic liberalism eventually turned into a capitalist profit mechanism explained above, based

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6 *ibid*, 15

7 *ibid*, 16

8 *ibid*, 17

9 *ibid*, 18

10 Tuğal, C. 2016 *The Fall of the Turkish Model* Page 91 London, Verso

on construction. Another reason for the transformation of Beyoğlu and displacement of small merchants and shops was the constant desire of profit for real estate in Turkey. This mechanism needed a constant reproduction of urban space. They even used a slogan “let Istanbul grow and stability continue” and cities were turned into construction sites.<sup>11</sup>

The speculative urban policies of the AKP boosted cities and rural areas as “construction sites”. Spaces that were normally beyond the reach of contractors were now available for the market. Despite major damage to the environment, the sources were successfully distributed to central and local governments. Çavuşoğlu defines this as a “construction cult”.<sup>12</sup>

This base was local to the AKP and was behind consecutive election victories throughout the years. They backed authoritarian and populist policies the government proposed including urban projects involving Taksim and Beyoğlu.

The debate about Taksim Square ended up in Gezi Protests that resulted in a deeply polarized society. Keyder concludes:

the prospects for cosmopolitanism are not great in Turkey or in any other country where the lexicon of the nation-state continues to carry sanctity and which authoritarian rulers can manipulate. There will certainly be more social movements mobilizing the new middle-classes in the future. But while movements such as the Gezi uprising of 2013 may seek to counter the hegemony of authoritarian national ism, their class base is too narrow and their ability to form cross-class coalitions is too weak to pose an enduring challenge. Their chances of success arguably diminish further as the world political and economic climate

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11 Ç. Erbatır, 2016 *İnşaat Ya Resulallah* Page 85 İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, Birikim Kitapları

12 From *İnşaat Ya Resulallah*, Page 78: “These profits were distributed to two segments of society in an uneven way. The AKP thereby gained industries relating to this, people who don’t have a guarantee of property and people who think that they are being modernized through new properties are the elements and loyal supporters of this historical block. The forestland that is called 2B being sold to invaders and being opened to construction is a typical example of this. Through these methods, for the historical block including all these actors such as the invaders, investors, construction industry, the public sector, a big construction cult has been created.”

grows less accommodating (...) Cosmopolitanism requires an accommodating environment; the prospects of a cosmopolitan ethos flourishing in Istanbul at present remain limited. When the global political and economic climate reaffirms the powers of the nation-state, populist politicians ready to mobilize nationalist resentment present an insurmountable barrier against cosmopolitans and cosmopolitan ventures.<sup>13</sup>

With rising populist tendencies of the AKP government; cultural and political revanchism started to take hold of urban politics. The Islamic tendencies were ever more visible at this stage.

### § 6.3 Rise of the Islamic City

Just like the Kemalist regime's emphasis on modernism in the city's visual structure, Islamists had an idealized image of the city too. The idea of a "re-conquest" lied deeply in political Islam's urban tradition in Turkey. Tanıl Bora states that "In the popular historical narrative of both political Islam and Turkish nationalism, Istanbul is 'Promised Land'. It is believed that had God wanted it, the Prophet would have conquered the city; but Mohammed actually did give the good news that a great commander and its soldiers would take the city for Islam. Istanbul is the jewel of the Islamic universe..."<sup>14</sup>

Istanbul is also believed to be "lost, divorced of its true essence because of its experience of Westernization. Westernization, according to this lament, has degenerated the city and has led to its forfeiting its soul and beauty."<sup>15</sup>

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan shared these ideological aspirations, early in his career. He said on March 30, 1994 to 'Yeni Zemin' magazine:

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13 Çağlar, K, 2018. *Istanbul: Living with Difference in a Global City* Edited by Nora Fisher-Onar, Susan C. Pearce, and E. Fuat Keyman Page 36 New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press

14 Bora, T. 1999 Istanbul of the Conqueror Page 48 in *Istanbul: Between the Global and the Local*

15 *ibid*, 48

Taksim is a crucial region for tourism in Istanbul. While visiting this area, one will have a sense of being in an Islamic city. When we gradually bring out the historical and cultural texture of our city, tourists who visit Istanbul will understand that they are in a city populated by Muslims.<sup>16</sup>

To revitalize the lost prideful Ottoman past is a priority in Turkey's Islamic tradition. Çağlar Keyder explains this Islamic imagination of İstanbul or “*Der-saadet*”:

a realm of happiness where the aesthetic taste of life which matured with time, made its inhabitants happy.... In this city, where each neighborhood had a different beauty, atmosphere and view, buildings and people made up a magical unity within the simplicity of daily life. The disturbing pressure of a geometric order made up of ground boulevards, large parks, monumental fountains, palaces, memorials and stone bridges laid out in the logic of urbanism, and shared by so many famous contemporary cities was absent in Istanbul (...) You will see in these photographs, Istanbul in its authentic beauty which survived until the beginning of the process of Westernization.<sup>17</sup>

This was a long lasting dream of Islamic movements in Turkey. Conquering Pera, Beyoğlu, and making it the old Ottoman-Islamic city it had once been.

Let us not forget that Pera symbolized the foreign, un-Islamic element of the city. The cosmopolitan lifestyle is seen differently in Islamic circles. Istanbul “is suspect because in its heritage is something ‘Byzantine’, with all the duplicity and conspiracy that implies. In the Islamic imagination this contamination is compounded because, as the premier locale of Ottoman modernization, Istanbul was the outpost of the West. As such it was the scene of dualities representing the modern traditional, east – west conflicts.”<sup>18</sup>

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16 Bartu, A. 1999 Who Owns the Old Quarters Page 41 in *Istanbul Between the Global and the Local*

17 *ibid*, 39

18 Bora, T. 1999 Istanbul of the Conqueror Page 52 in *Istanbul: Between the Global and the Local*

Bora provides some examples of conservative literature in which Beyoğlu was portrayed as a symbol of “cultural invasion and cosmopolitan degeneracy”: “Istanbul has been in the hands of the Turks since 1453 (...) [but] Beyoğlu has remained a tumor in the Empire’s brain, a syphilitic presence .... Beyoğlu is the entryway of western Imperialism... It is a dagger on its side that sucks the blood, the labor, the essence of the Turkish nation, of all Eastern nations...it is a disease that eats away at national unity”.<sup>19</sup>

According to Asu Aksoy, this attempt to “cultural jihad” has been curbed by the need to be in peace with the Istanbul’s capital circles and the desire to make the Islamic capital enjoy the benefits of a global city at the time.<sup>20</sup>

The AKP government, in the end, did not really make Beyoğlu look like a peaceful city with a high taste in Islamic aesthetics but rather opened way to a harmful trend employing big constructions, commercialization and even provincialization of this historic district. Dreams of an Islamic city did not materialize but the neo-liberal conservative city overcame the cosmopolitan city eventually.

The changing tourist profile that was encouraged by cultural and foreign policies of the government, also changed the cosmopolitan milieu in the district. Middle Eastern tourists, despite being from various countries brought a predominantly Muslim cultural code, even more conservative than the conservative segment of Turkey’s population. Even though Middle Eastern tourists consisted of people from many different countries, their way of interacting with the urban space was relatively in conformity. Jeremiah Moses, in his book on New York’s gentrification, *Vanishing New York*, refers to Paul Bowles’ *Sheltering Sky*: “An important difference between tourist and traveler is that the former accepts his own civilization without questions, not so the traveler, who compares it with the others, and rejects those elements he finds not to his liking”.<sup>21</sup>

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19 ibid, 54

20 Asu, A. 2014 İstanbul’un Neoliberalizm’le İmtihanı Page 39 in *Yeni İstanbul Çalışmaları: Sınırlar, Mücadeleler, Açılımlar*: edited by Ayfer Bartu Candan, Cenk Özbay, İstanbul: Metis Yayınları

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The dominance of nargile cafes, pastry shops and kebab restaurants in Beyoğlu today could be a reflection of Middle Eastern tourists' inclination towards "spending money only on the safe and the familiar, imports from their own civilization..."<sup>22</sup> This could be an indication of Middle Eastern countries tendency to be more conservative in general and the more central role of religion in daily life. Middle Eastern tourists today are enjoying Beyoğlu and contributing to the district's economy and filling its streets with joy and energy. But we must underline the fact that their relatively conservative cultural habits diminishes variety of cultural expression and experimentation in Beyoğlu, consequently harming cosmopolitan spirit of the district. Muslimness and Arabic culture took over local images and expressions. The conservative tourist profile contributed to the opening of candy stores, restaurants and the like but also to the closing of bars and alcohol serving joints. This demographic shift contributes to AKP's conservative policies in the district.

While all these factors were in play; the final signature of AKP has been the construction of Taksim Mosque in Taksim Square. This could be the proof of the symbolic completion of Beyoğlu's transformation. A new stage of a long political battle... Ayfer Bartu writes: "The choice of this square and the specific location of the mosque were not coincidental. It was to be located across from the Greek Orthodox Church and would also be competing with the Atatürk cultural center, a powerful marker of the Turkish nationalist ideology".<sup>23</sup>

In addition to the harming effects of neo-liberal urbanism and big construction projects, the authoritarian and Islamic inclined steps eliminated Beyoğlu's last cosmopolitan pockets. The people of the revival period were gone. Beyoğlu lost much of its cosmopolitan character and its modern and vibrant culture.

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22 Moss, J. 2017 *Vanishing New York* Page 252 New York: Harper Collins

23 Bartu, A. 1999 Who Owns the Old Quarters Page 41 in *Istanbul Between the Global and the Local*

## § 6.4 In search of lost cosmopolitanism in post-Ottoman cities

In this thesis, we have identified similar stages of cosmopolitanism in post-Ottoman cities. They went through resembling processes of rise and decline during empire and nationalism. It is also intriguing to assess the ramifications of their neo-liberal revivals. What happened to Alexandria and Beirut after their nostalgic revivals? Did they create a more authentic cosmopolitan experience than Beyoğlu? I interviewed Lebanese architect and urban activist Mona Hallak. She explained that Beirut's neo-liberal revival was a much more elitist and socially unequal project. It centered in Downtown Beirut where according to Hallak "90 percent of the historical buildings were dynamited to the ground". The city was much more defenseless in the face of neo-liberal interventions since there is no protection laws. During the 1990's, just like Asmalimescit in Beyoğlu, people "did not even have enough space to walk at night in downtown Beirut. You had hundreds of people, but it was not for the whole country. The city regained its cosmopolitanism but only for some people. We could feel that it was like a big compound for the rich. Even if you wanted to just sit on a bench and eat a sandwich, somebody would come and tell you "you can't do this here"". Halak expresses: "The whole Downtown is owned by one real estate private company, Solidere. This is totally unbelievable. The real estate speculation and the reconstruction of Downtown made people think this was a good way to make money. So they started to destroy heritage buildings which were really the soul of downtown, the soul of Beirut."

Solidere's reconstruction of Downtown Beirut was similar to the reconstruction of Grand Pera, Cercle d'Orient, Taksim 360 project I presented in chapter 5. Hallak explains:

They rebuilt things according to very strict urban rules. Number of the floors, what stone to use, the direction of the benches had to be built just like the original. But they also built underground parking and modernized the interiors. They destroyed the soul of the city and emptied its social layer. Downtown was destroyed twice, once by war, and once by reconstruction.

It is striking to hear Mona Hallak say: “There is no law that says that you cannot destroy a building. We are lobbying for a protection law but in 2007 it was blocked in the Parliament”. She relates the lack of protection law to the lack of stable executive and legislative power in the country. The state mechanisms are far from working efficiently. Corruption and patronage is widespread. However, strikingly Hallak states that there is no threat to the cosmopolitan social fabric of the city. This is related to the balanced demographic structure as well as the political system in the country: “The President has to be Christian, Prime Minister has to be a Sunni Muslim and the head of Parliament a Shiite. It is not by constitution but it is agreed upon. Everything is balanced”. Beirut’s main problem is the destructive capitalist development rather than threat of rising Islamic radicalism or authoritarianism. Hallak says that:

Islamic conservatism will never happen in Beirut because everybody knows it will never work. Beirut is cosmopolitan, you cannot tell people what to do in the streets. Even Hezbollah, no matter how strong they are, they know they will be strong on their own in their southern suburb, but not on a national scale. In Lebanon there are villages that are Christian, villages that are Muslim and villages that are mixed. It is based on an intersectarian balance. There are also Shiites who are very progressive. They would support Hezbollah against Israel but not to build an Islamist country. This is not even something we are worried about.

Beirut seems to have lost some of its cosmopolitan soul due to extreme neo-liberal development; but the cosmopolitan lifestyle that consists of nightlife, entertainment, public drinking, tourism and culture were maintained.

The other city I analyzed in this thesis, Alexandria, also undertook huge neo-liberal revival projects. Philip Mansel writes; “Alexandria also is reconnecting to the outside world (...) Mubarak passed the time by speaking about the renaissance of Alexandria – in English. An Arab Maritime University at Aboukir and a Japanese university are planned; the private Pharos University opened in 2006 (...) Alexandrinology is reviving. Since 1990 Franck Godidio and Jean-Yves Empereur, founder of the Centre d’Etudes Alexandrines, have

begun to excavate the worlds first cosmopolis, both on land and underwater. The archeological and touristic potential are enormous”<sup>24</sup>

Mansel underlines the most audacious nostalgic revival project; the Alexandrian Library:

The bibliotheca Alexandrina is intended, as the foundation plaque states, to be ‘a beacon of knowledge and a place for encounters and dialogue between peoples and cultures,’ linking Alexandria to both the outside world and its own past. In 2009, it hosted an international conference on Darwin – a bold move in an increasingly Muslim city. The bibliotheca also performs a vital human function: It is one of the few public spaces where young men and women meet, far from parents and neighbors eyes. Almost every chair in the enormous reading room is occupied.<sup>25</sup>

Mansel mentions an Alexandrian researcher, who told him in the new library: “in a Mediterranean city you never lose hope. The sea always brings something”<sup>26</sup>

Still, it is not easy to say that Alexandria is now the old Levantine cosmopolis it once was. It has never regained its old cosmopolitan aura. Beirut and Istanbul reclaimed their dominant position at least within their countries and regions. Alexandria did never again match Cairo’s influence in Egypt.

Mansel expresses a sad fact about all three cities:

The true heirs of the Levant are some of the richest cities of today: London, Paris and New York – Dubai, Bombay and Singapore. (...) Levantine cities are the future, as well as the past. Globalisation means we are all Levantines now”<sup>27</sup>

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24 Mansel, P. 2010 *Levant: Splendour and Catastrophe on the Mediterranean* Page 354 Edinburgh: Clays Ltd

25 *ibid*, 354

26 *ibid*, 355

27 *ibid*, 356

Istanbul was on the path of becoming one of the cities mentioned above, a global cosmopolis once more... But the political climate in the country destroyed its cosmopolitanism. Egypt and Lebanon too are suffering from political turmoil, authoritarianism, sectarianism, a lack of democracy. Nevertheless, hope for these cities will never expire. These cities are treasures of humanity, symbols of human contact, progress and civilization. One day they will rise again as they always have.

## Epilogue

In this thesis, we discussed the cosmopolitan revival of Beyoğlu in 1999-2013. When I defined this period as an illusionary mirage, I did not hesitate to use a critical approach for two reasons: I too was an active participant in the process and now carry the personal nostalgia of the golden age. As the writer of this thesis, I was a close witness to every stage of Beyoğlu's transformation at the time. As a journalist, with a liberal world view, I moved to Galata in 2004. After living in middle, upper middle and conservative neighborhoods of Kuruçeşme, Tarabya and Beşiktaş for some time; I decided to move to Galata in 2004. Galata at the time was being recently discovered by some art galleries and the bohemian intellectuals. When I first moved, it was still an uncanny neighborhood on its path towards gentrification. Of course, we were completely unaware of this at the time. We would hear stories about Eczacıbaşı buying a huge building in Galata one day, a famous movie director or a journalist moving to the district the other day... Almost every night there would be incidents of a car robbery. I remember several of my own guests had the windows of their cars shattered while visiting me. Women could still not walk in the streets confidently after dark. If we were too lazy to accompany them to their homes; we would make sure to be on on the cell phone with them until they arrived to a safer spot. But these were the most inspiring, most colourful days of the neighborhood. It changed in the years to come. Galata became a gentrified neighborhood with upscale fashion boutiques, ethnic restaurants,

cafés and chic renovated luxury hotels. Eventually, I was evicted from my apartment by my landlord with the pretext that he was going to live there himself. The truth was, the rent I was paying did not satisfy the landowner any longer, since prices skyrocketed in Galata and Beyoğlu as a whole. I often think that 2004 and 2005 as the best years of my youth in Istanbul. The excitement, curiosity, discovery of the neighborhood, of ourselves, of different social groups' cultural and artistic styles, changed our lives forever. I remember contemplating the high ceilings of my apartment with ceiling decorations typical to the Greek style. I would look for minutes at the gargoyle-like looking statues outside the windows. The building's name was *Patriki Apartment Building*, carrying the name of a Greek priest from old cosmopolitan Istanbul. When I looked from the window, I would see the paved streets of Galata that looked like an Italian city of the Middle Age. All of this cosmopolitan revival made me feel like I am part of a higher story, a higher belonging. I was on top of a city built by the Genoese, inhabited by people of all backgrounds for centuries and now we were all in a magical period of reviving this incredible heritage.

When writing an academic critique of neo-liberal cosmopolitanism today, it is possible to observe the inevitable decline of those golden years. I myself was a gentrifier who moved to the neighborhood due to the initial buzz and urban sensation that revolved around Beyoğlu at the time. I wanted to liberate myself from the monotonous superficial lifestyle that dominated neighborhoods that lacked Beyoğlu's liberating soul. We were changing, freeing ourselves from long established values and the lifestyle of our city, our nation. We could now be proud members of a cosmopolitan world that was in the making. The hopes of the European Union membership was the embodiment of this powerful desire.

After I was evicted from my Galata apartment, I managed to move to Cihangir, another neighborhood of the Beyoğlu district. I continued to frequent Beyoğlu's streets, meyhanes, concerts, beautiful terraces with the view of the imperial, historical city. Perhaps we did feel that the heydays of Beyoğlu were fading but we did not consider it as a big threat until the removal of the tables from the streets. That is when people understood that this was a direct targeting of Beyoğlu's cosmopolitan soul. All hope to fix the problems was lost with the catastrophic period after Gezi protests in 2013. In the year that followed,

Beyoğlu became a ghost town. The streets were empty, and the joy in the streets completely disappeared.

Very recently, in the past couple of years, Beyoğlu has been once again picking up large number of tourists. İstiklal Street is once again hosting hundreds of thousands of people everyday. There still is a different kind of cosmopolitan mixture on the streets. This new but different cosmopolitan life is a joyous opportunity for many people from Turkey's Middle Eastern neighbors. Evidently, for large groups of people from the Middle East -some not as fortunate politically as the citizens of relatively more stable Turkey-, Beyoğlu is today a space of freedom and cosmopolitan interaction. But for the young urban groups of Istanbul that lived and enjoyed Beyoğlu in 2000's, this new appearance and vibe in the district feels like a loss. This feeling of loss is an urban trauma for these groups. Their favourite urban meeting space almost evaporated into thin air, expired in a very short period of time. The golden age, the cosmopolitan possibilities it carried now look like a mirage to them. Knowing that this was a mirage - created by a neo-liberal nostalgic revival- does not diminish the genuine sense of personal growth and urban achievement. There is a gap that neo-liberal development allows, before its destructive dynamics dominate an urban space. I suggest that this period that starts with the initial buzz of a district until the peak of its gentrification can result in an inspiring urban experience. The achievements that neo-liberalism allows during this upward urban mobility, are not to be underestimated. Despite the incomplete nature of the revival, Beyoğlu's achievements during the golden age were real and as authentic as they could be. But I feel that it is still an intellectual task to understand why this golden age could not last longer and why the achievements could not be permanent. This thesis was an academic and personal effort to do so.

# Appendix A Tourist Numbers to Turkey

## VISITORS TO TURKEY BETWEEN 1994 - 2018

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
<b>VISITORS FROM THE EU</b>																										
GERMANY	964.301	1.656.387	2.141.778	2.338.528	2.233.740	1.988.787	2.277.502	2.884.051	3.481.671	3.332.451	3.963.889	4.243.584	3.762.775	4.149.805	4.415.525	4.488.350	4.385.263	4.826.315	5.028.745	5.041.323	5.250.036	5.560.792	3.890.074	3.584.653	4.512.360	
UK	568.284	734.721	758.433	915.337	996.512	814.889	915.285	845.536	1.037.507	1.031.404	1.387.808	1.757.843	1.678.845	1.915.130	2.169.924	2.426.749	2.673.605	2.458.519	2.509.357	2.600.360	2.512.139	1.711.481	1.658.715	2.254.871		
FRANCE	233.142	251.609	251.976	333.781	436.983	270.280	449.545	524.170	522.740	470.582	548.858	701.190	657.859	768.167	885.006	932.809	928.376	1.140.458	1.032.565	1.046.010	1.037.152	847.259	555.151	578.524	731.379	
ITALY	105.595	108.231	160.118	207.887	259.863	179.029	218.785	315.286	210.657	236.831	316.097	401.852	402.568	514.803	600.261	634.886	671.060	752.238	714.041	731.784	687.360	507.897	213.227	205.788	284.195	
SPAIN	39.687	28.787	47.617	61.809	74.681	61.809	35.453	93.105	116.067	88.811	92.326	115.764	198.462	234.334	288.358	342.104	376.215	300.084	278.164	290.422	283.928	236.063	106.582	106.757	178.018	
<b>VISITORS FROM THE MIDDLE EAST</b>																										
JAPAN	63.745	65.005	68.012	83.828	81.857	67.987	89.459	87.800	94.514	67.874	64.318	116.969	125.755	168.852	149.731	147.641	195.404	188.312	203.592	174.150	170.550	104.847	44.695	49.323	81.931	
USA	271.166	290.225	326.214	364.764	439.885	395.006	515.090	429.563	247.629	222.918	291.102	434.891	532.419	642.911	679.445	667.159	642.768	757.143	771.837	785.971	784.917	789.787	459.493	329.257	448.327	
<b>VISITORS FROM THE MIDDLE EAST</b>																										
IRAN	231.392	361.434	378.130	331.666	304.924	351.937	380.877	327.146	432.282	487.282	628.725	967.244	865.941	1.058.206	1.134.965	1.383.261	1.895.097	1.879.304	1.186.343	1.196.801	1.590.664	1.700.385	1.665.160	2.501.948	2.001.744	
MISIR	17.907	21.625	19.899	20.950	18.761	26.672	31.172	22.396	21.583	30.556	34.454	43.149	42.886	52.946	66.912	61.560	79.665	112.025	107.437	108.762	100.040	94.871	100.971	100.971	148.943	
SARABASTAN	27.869	24.457	21.775	22.858	22.724	13.890	15.521	20.612	25.657	23.676	25.197	36.328	38.890	41.480	55.636	66.938	84.934	116.711	175.467	234.220	341.786	450.674	530.410	651.170	747.233	
B.A. EMIRLIKLE	4.360	3.939	4.438	4.375	5.166	2.032	1.825	3.398	4.977	6.717	7.213	8.814	12.153	13.005	19.676	22.051	30.480	35.679	48.071	52.424	53.736	51.600	38.315	49.360	43.232	
IRAK	15.045	14.381	13.558	17.574	18.277	17.591	20.759	16.378	15.765	24.727	111.475	107.968	123.118	180.217	250.130	285.229	280.328	369.033	553.149	730.639	857.246	1.094.144	420.831	896.676	1.172.896	

2015-2017 YILLARINDA ULKEHIZE GELEN YABANCI EKSPATCULERIN MLLIYETLERINE GORE KARŞILAŞTIRILMASI (DOK-KARALIK)

MILLIYET	YILLAR										MILLIYET FAZINI	ULKEHIZEN OZAM	
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2017/2016	2018/2017	2018/2017	2018/2017					
Cezayir	178.253	213.333	288.267	0,13	0,06	0,13	21,05	38,10					
Fis	67.080	114.155	119.538	0,36	0,36	0,45	30,22	54,05					
Japya	72.014	69.365	198.312	0,28	0,31	0,48	30,02	86,46					
Fransa	100.185	111.697	142.972	0,40	0,34	0,38	11,62	21,54					
Tunis	41.935	59.442	77.075	0,16	0,19	0,20	43,22	20,08					
Bahreyn	39.315	49.390	43.320	0,15	0,15	0,11	28,83	12,39					
Birleik Arap Emirlikleri	420.831	668.076	1.172.866	1,68	2,77	2,67	113,12	30,78					
Irak	263.088	300.415	443.732	1,18	1,17	1,12	29,40	16,94					
Irakli	33.681	48.784	96.327	0,13	0,15	0,24	46,21	97,54					
Kuveyt	179.038	255.844	298.029	0,71	0,79	0,79	42,07	16,81					
Liban	191.642	237.476	338.837	0,78	0,73	0,88	23,92	42,08					
Arabiستان	530.410	651.170	747.233	2,09	2,01	1,89	22,77	14,75					
Urdun	203.179	277.729	406.499	0,80	0,86	1,03	36,69	46,35					
Yemen	25.325	26.691	39.545	0,10	0,09	0,10	12,59	30,00					
Yordaniya	171.114	216.114	319.114	0,71	0,71	0,71	25,00	35,00					
Pakistan	53.023	77.664	113.579	0,21	0,24	0,29	46,80	46,82					
Ahmeriya	3.800.074	3.934.653	4.932.390	15,34	11,06	11,43	7,05	25,08					
Avesturya	310.846	287.746	353.628	1,23	0,86	0,90	-7,48	22,00					
Belçika	431.014	419.988	511.559	1,63	1,30	1,30	1,54	21,80					
Danimarka	320.618	290.006	328.278	1,30	0,83	0,83	-18,38	21,28					
Almanya	1.050.000	1.050.000	1.050.000	4,19	4,19	4,19	4,19	4,19					
Fransya	165.135	429.524	721.939	2,19	1,79	1,86	21,21	26,42					
İspaniya	900.330	799.006	1.033.842	3,57	2,47	2,57	-11,84	20,88					
İngiltere	1.711.481	1.659.745	2.254.871	6,75	5,12	5,71	-3,08	36,94					
Kuwait	160.582	160.797	119.018	0,42	0,33	0,45	0,19	66,75					
İspanya	300.980	298.134	384.397	1,26	0,86	0,87	-0,81	33,06					
İsviçre	213.227	205.788	294.165	0,84	0,63	0,72	-3,49	38,10					
İtaliya	468.485	328.257	446.507	1,91	1,02	1,14	-26,34	36,16					
Avustralya	44.831	45.301	61.881	0,19	0,19	0,21	10,35	65,11					

(\*) Yillik pasaport.

Source: TÜİK – Turkish Statistical Institute

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