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Tarihi Kent Merkezlerinde Ticaretin Değişimi

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ÖZ:

Tarihi kent merkezlerindeki çöküş ve eskime ile başa çıkmak amacıyla, yerel yönetimler tarafından en benimsenen araçlardan biri yeniden canlandırma'dır. Bu aynı zamanda yerel yönetimlere yeni işyerlerinin alan çekilmesindeki rekabet güçlerini arttırmak, alana gelen ziyaretçi sayısının yükselmesi ve alandaki emlak değerlerinin artması yönünde yardımcı olmaktadır. Bu yeniden canlandırmanın en önemli araçlarından birisi de yayalaştırma'dır. Yayalaştırma, sağlık, çevre, ulaşım ve erişilebilirlik yönünden de faydalar sağlamaktadır. Yayalaştırma, aynı zamanda perakende ticari faaliyetlerin genişlemesine de ziyaretçi sayısının artışına yaptığı katkılar yoluyla yardımcı olmaktadır. Diğer yandan, yayalaştırma, istenilmeyen bir ticari soylulaşmaya da yol açabilir. Dolayısıyla, dönüşümün erken aşamalarında yerel yönetimlerin bu duruma geri bildirim mekanizmalarını oluşturmaları önemlidir. Bu açıdan İstanbul'un Kadıköy ilçesinde 2004 yılında başlayan yayalaştırma projesi önemlidir. Alanda, yayalaştırma sonrası önemli ölçüde ticari soylulaştırma meydana gelmiştir. Bu yazıda, 2004-2018 yılları arasında Kadıköy tarihi çarşıda meydana gelen küçük esnafın yerlerinden edilmesini incelenerek, nedenleri ortaya koyulacaktır.

ANAHTAR KELİMELER: yayalaştırma, tarihi kent merkezleri, yeniden canlandırma, perakende ticaretin değişimi, soylulaşma

ABSTRACT:

Regenerating the historic centres of cities has long been an important and widely used intervention for local authorities to fight urban decay and obsolescence. It also has helped administrations to increase their competitive power in attracting new businesses, increasing visitors' footfall, and to promote rising property values. Pedestrianization is one

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of these intervention tools used to regenerate historic city centres, providing benefits in such areas as health, environment, transportation and accessibility, and also economic and social prospects. Pedestrianization is also one of the most important contributors to the expansion of retail activities, since it increases visitors' footfall. On the other hand, pedestrianization might produce an unintentional commercial gentrification. Therefore, it is wise to note that feedback mechanisms should be established in the earlier phases of the regeneration plans formulated by municipalities. In this respect, the regeneration of the historic centre of the Istanbul's Kadıköy district, which started in 2004 and still continues, is important. In Kadıköy, after the implementation of the pedestrianization scheme, the area has witnessed an unintended commercial gentrification which led to the change of retail functions to a large extent. In this paper, the reasons behind this commercial change, and the displacement of small retailers between 2004 and 2018, is discussed.

KEYWORDS: Pedestrianisation, Historic Town Centres, Regeneration, Retail functions, Gentrification

Retail Change in Historic City Centres

INTRODUCTION:

Throughout history, all pre-industrial cities were pedestrian-dominated cities. Later in the 20th century, the Modernist approach to the urban planning turned this balance against pedestrians; their main approach was to give more freedom to vehicles, in favour of increased mobility for motorized vehicles (Carmona, et al, p.21). Conversely, this resulted in pedestrian-unfriendly cities and historic centres. There were also other reasons for this decline, such as the physical, economic and functional obsolescence of building stock, ageing buildings, and legal issues; and as demonstrated in many revitalization schemes, pedestrianisation has been used as a major tool (Tiesdell, et al 1996). In the second half of the 20th century, pedestrianisation schemes continued to be implemented in Europe, such as in Germany, the Netherlands, and the UK, etc. Among these cases, Copenhagen has turned out to be a success story, in which 100,000 m² of land in the city centre was pedestrianized between 1960 and 2000 (Gehl and Gemzoe, 2000). In the 2000s, European cities, particularly in the UK, saw new practices introduced in cities and the city centres.

The major goal of this article is to describe the outcomes of a pedestrianization scheme in the historical centre of Kadıköy district, on the Asian side of Istanbul. In the research a long period, from 2004 to 2018, is covered. The area was once a residential and commercial centre, however it has lost many of its residents in the course of time, and has become more of a commercial centre where pressures for retail expansion is evident. The area, as well as being a conservation area, is also an important node for the transit traffic of boats, buses, trams and taxis.

1. Pedestrianisation As a Means for Revitalising Historic Towns

1.1. Positive and Negative Aspects of Pedestrianisation Schemes

According to Wooller (et al, 2012) 'urban regeneration through pedestrianised spaces' helps to decrease car-dependency while increasing physical activity levels. Similar paths were also followed in the UK (Tallon, 2010). Through pedestrianisation, city centres were expected to regain their popularity, with an increase in the number of visitors, growing sales, and various opportunities for socialization (Gehl and Gemzoe, 2000; Monheim, 2013). As Sastre (et al, 2013) mentioned, to be successful in the pedestrianization of an area several requirements should be considered and met simultaneously, such as accessibility, traffic and parking in nearby streets, providing space for the service of the shops (loading/unloading), cleaning and security, etc. On the other hand, the success of such schemes may also drive gentrification, leading the displacement of current residents and businesses.

Pedestrianization has transportation benefits, such as improved mobility and accessibility, reduced congestion, accidents, increase in public transportation use. Social benefits include an increased sense of belonging, increase in safety, and heritage preservation. Environmental, economic, social and health benefits are summarized in Soni & Soni (2016, p.146). The study by Sandahl and Lindh (1995) on Sweden revealed that the attractiveness of the city centres significantly increased with pedestrianisation, which also contributed to increased accessibility. As the pedestrianised

city centres become more popular, local real estate prices rose as well. As mentioned by Litman (2014) traffic calming measures bring about safety, comfort, and decrease pollution while increasing real estate values. As well as positive aspects, pedestrianisation also has negative aspects. It is usually inevitable that small-scale businesses in the pedestrianised areas are displaced (commercial gentrification). The change to the trade in the area to meet the consumption requirements of the high-income group is called “commercial gentrification” (Rankin, 2008). If the pedestrianisation project achieves success, real estate prices rise, and small businesses may fail to keep up with this price boom. Thus, they are replaced by chain stores which can pay the increased rents. Despite increased sales, small businesses have to leave the area since they cannot afford the increased rental prices. This puts the shopkeepers in the area in a difficult situation. Consequently, losing their originality and authenticity, these areas become cloned/identical city centres. There have been criticisms that city centres have been turned into monotype cash machines. There is also pressures for the displacement of residential uses in favour of commercial expansion (Tan, 2008).

The efforts to revitalise the historic city centres might possibly end up with two interrelated threats; the first one is the displacement of local and authentic shops with chain stores or higher-end brands; the second is the loss of diversity and variety of city centres at the expense of chains which provide standardised services together with their standardised logo, colour, etc. (NEF Report 2005). After the popularisation of the area, the increases in shop rents cause the displacement of tenant retail premises. This is the case when the shop ownership pattern does not support ownership. Therefore, the small shops and stores owned by these groups are outcompeted by the big international retail chain stores and eventually shut down. In the literature, there is also research showing the economic value of pedestrianization, such as the volume of sales, number of visitors, property values etc. (Kumar and ross, 2006; Sinnett et al 2011; Cömertler, 2007; Hass-Klau 2015). There are also a few research papers analysing the relation between retail changes and commercial property rates (Hon-Yip 2014, Chau *et al* 2000).

2. Pedestrianisation of Kadıköy Historic Centre

Kadıköy is the largest retail concentration on the Asian side of the city. In the 19th century, the old marketplace was an important commercial node (see Figure 1). When the Kadıköy Municipality decided to implement the Regeneration of the Historical Centre project, there were serious economic, social, transportation, and conservation problems. In this context, an association of tradesmen in the historic centre was also established. In accordance with the decisions of the Board for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Properties, the Municipality of the County of Kadıköy and the ÇEKÜL Foundation became project partners on 6 October 2004. With the protocol signed upon this partnership, the Regeneration Project for the Historic Centre was launched. The overall purpose of the Regeneration Project for Kadıköy was to ‘regenerate’ the ‘Historic Centre which had gradually been losing its economic, physical and historic significance’. Although the pedestrianisation scheme was not welcomed by all tradesmen in the beginning, after observing its success it has been widely accepted by retail establishments in the area.



Figure 1: Kadıköy Historic Centre
Source: google earth map, prepared by authors

2.1. Research Method

One of the main goals of this research was to understand the advantages and disadvantages of the regeneration scheme, especially the effects of the pedestrianization. In the survey, questions regarding the economic, social and physical dimensions of the pedestrianization were asked. The pedestrianization project was completed in five years, from 2004 to 2009. The first part of our research was completed in 2014. In this period, the survey and the 2014-landuse was completed; and then in 2018, another land-use was made to understand the changes from 2014 to 2018. Also, national and international chains were identified on a map. In the research, both shopkeepers and visitors were interviewed in July 2014. The survey was made both on weekdays and at weekends. Considering that there are 317 retail units at the ground level, almost a third of the shopkeepers (100) were interviewed. Yazıcıoğlu and Erdoğan (2004, p.50) stated that when the size of the selected base is unknown, within ± 0.05 sampling error and 95% confidence interval there has to be at least 384 surveys completed. Therefore, 400 surveys were allocated, only 398 were answered.

2.2. The Results of the Surveys and Interviews

The results of our analysis showed that a great majority of the visitors (65.58%, 216 out of 298 people) were between 20 and 39 years old, i.e., young people. The age group between 40 and 49 is 13.32 % (53 people) and the youngest age group (10 and 19) is 11.31% (45 people) (See Table 1). As can be observed from the Table 1, a majority of the visitors (the sum of *agree* and *totally agree*) think that after pedestrianisation property prices increased (45,7%); foreign and

local visitors increased (50,1%); the area was visually and aesthetically embellished (47%); and eating and drinking places increased (55.6%). These are recognised as indications of the success of the scheme. The increase in property prices is a positive aspect of the pedestrianisation with respect to the owners. However, for the tenant retailers, this indicator of success turns has also become a threat; because shop rents also increase with the increase in visitors' footfall.

VISITORS' VIEWS POSITIVE ASPECTS	DISAGREE		SLIGHTLY AGREE		PARTIALLY AGREE		AGREE		TOTALLY AGREE	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Area became safer	94	23,9	44	11,2	110	27,9	81	20,6	65	16,5
Property prices increased	59	15,4	41	10,7	108	28,2	114	29,8	61	15,9
Cultural activities increased	64	16,7	42	11,0	119	31,1	94	24,5	64	16,7
Foreign/local tourists increased	50	13,0	55	14,3	87	22,6	118	30,6	75	19,5
Visual & aesthetic beautification	69	17,9	32	8,3	103	26,8	109	28,3	72	18,7
Increased attractiveness	63	16,4	44	11,4	100	26,0	106	27,5	72	18,7
Eating/drinking places increased	35	9,1	45	11,7	91	23,6	121	31,4	93	24,2
Number of car parks increased	88	23,0	56	14,6	83	21,7	101	26,4	55	14,4
Local tourists increased	41	10,7	52	13,5	101	26,3	108	28,1	82	21,4
Foreign tourists increased	59	15,4	44	11,5	80	20,8	85	22,1	116	30,2

Table 1. Visitors' Views about Pedestrianisation / Positive Aspects

This observation of the visitors' is also confirmed by the shopkeepers, stating that the number of shops closing down increased, because they could not afford the increased shop rents. As it is observed in the Figure 2, two thirds of the shopkeepers think that after pedestrianization small and old businesses had to close down.

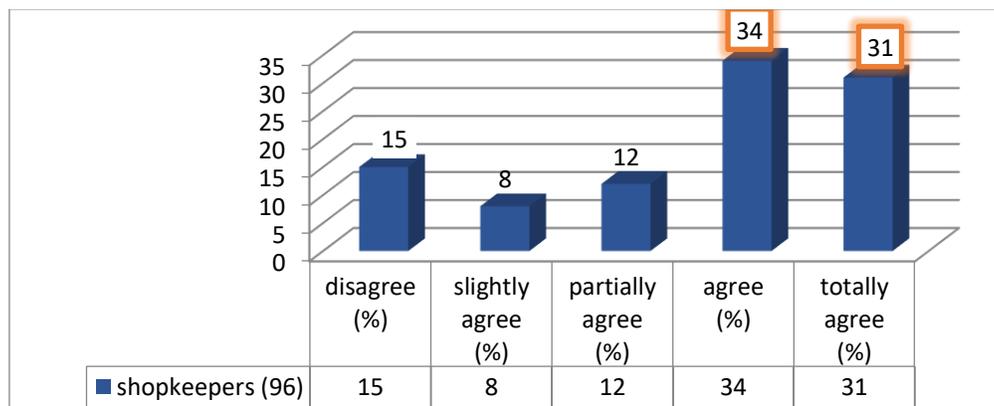


Figure 2: Shops are closed down after pedestrianisation (Shop-owners' views)

Kadıköy Historic Centre has always been a node for the prepared-food industry. The research showed that Mühürdar and Yasa Muvakkithane, Tellalzade and Serasker are important streets. In 2014, the authors updated a ten-year-old (2004) landuse map. This analysis showed that a third of the shops (108 shops out of 317) changed their retail functions (Selçuk, 2014) (see Figures 3,4)

In July 2014, as an externality, the Law of Obligations was changed to give the right to the property holders to legally displace tenants who had rented the same shop for more than 10 years. In the KHC, almost 2/3 of the shopkeepers are

tenants, and this legal change worsened their affordability of rents. After this change, it became possible for property owners to ask for higher rents. In 2016, for example, for a 100-m² shop, the rent was 10,344 US/month (Karakaş, 2016).

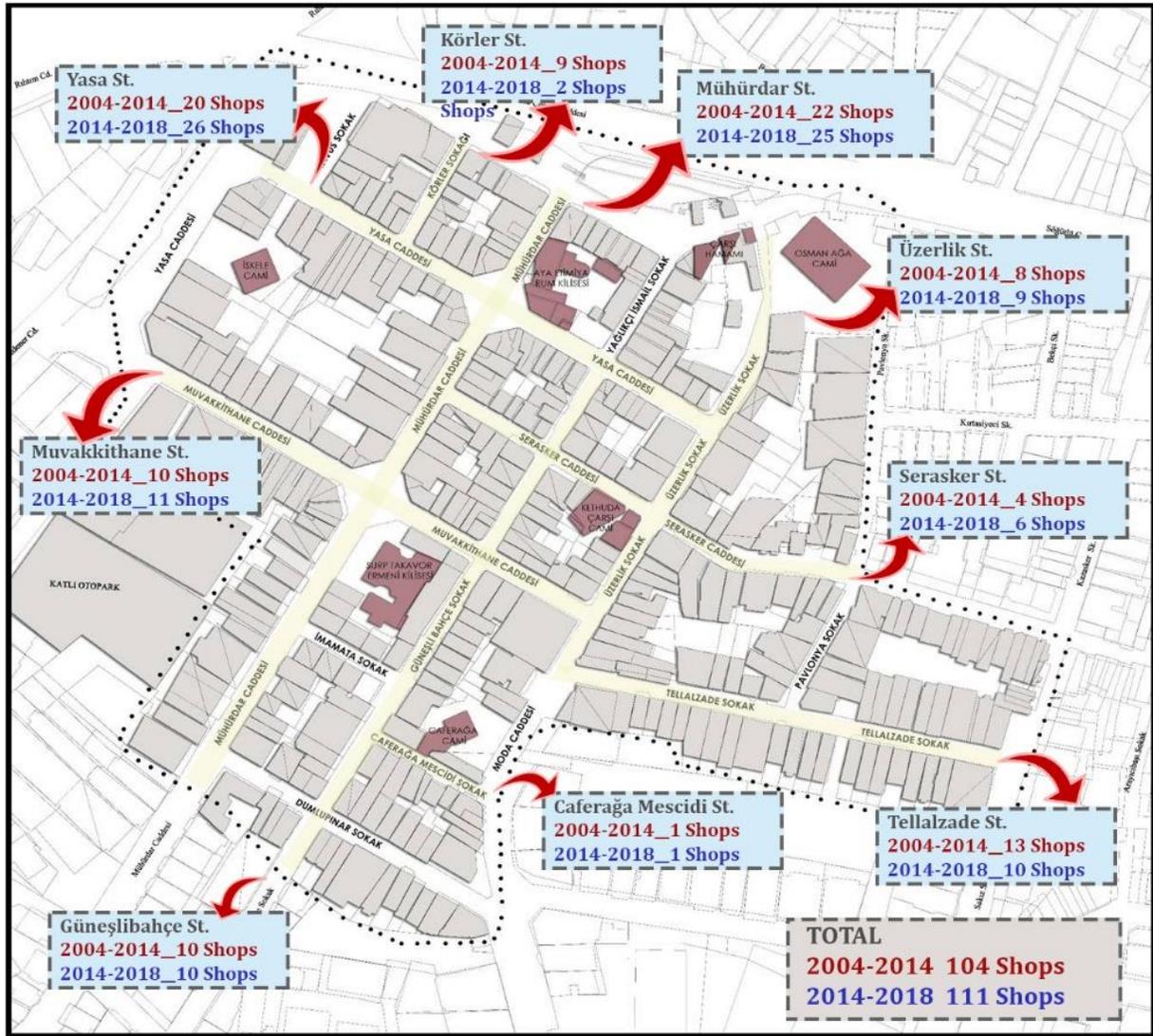


Figure 3: The Change in the shopmix in the KHC (2004, 2014 and 2018) **Source:** Prepared by authors

In the year 2014 a comparison with totals for 2004 showed that 107 shops changed their functions over 10 years, mostly turning into restaurants and cafes (43%). In that decade, four antiques shops and 10 bookstores were closed. These changes occurred mostly in two main streets, Mühürdar and Yasa.

An in-depth interview with Mehmet Ecevit from the Association of Retailers revealed that the opening of the nearby shopping centre Nautilus in 2002 had attracted some of the customers of the historical centre; however, after some time many visitors still preferred to shop in the Kadıköy historical centre. Starting from 2009, the pedestrianized area started to be popular among both visitors and investors looking for profits in the retail sector. This ended up with higher rents being asked by the shop owners from the existing tenants. This process has been further accelerated by a change in the

Law of Obligation which made it possible to displace tenants who rented the same shop for more than ten years. This way, small, family-owned businesses had to leave the area since they could not afford the much higher rents. On the other hand the keen investors, who paid these excessive rents, soon found out that unless they offered very specialized expensive services, it was not possible to pay the inflated rents and make profit simultaneously. This led to a rapid turnover among the business start-ups. Changing demographic structure in the area also resulted in the traditional shops serving to the daily needs of the locals being obliged to move to upper floors. Consequently, the demand for services was re-directed towards eating/drinking places, rather than the diverse needs of a traditional neighbourhood.

The land-use analysis in 2018 showed that the consequences of legal change regarding the displacement of old tenants were dire, as from 2014 to 2018, 107 shops (out of 317) changed their functions. Two main streets, Yasa and Mühürdar, were the ones with the highest rate of shop closures and new start-ups. For example, in Mühürdar Street, 25 shops changed their functions in four years (2014 - 2018), while 22 changes took place between 2004 and 2014.

STREETS	2004-2014	2014-2018	TOTAL
Muvakkithane Street	10	11	21
Mühürdar Street	22	25	47
Tellalzade Street	13	10	23
Serasker Street	4	6	10
Yasa Street	20	26	46
Üzerlik Street	8	9	17
Körler Street	9	2	11
C.Mescidi Street	1	1	2
Pavlonya Street	6	6	8
Yağcı İsmail Street	3	3	6
Tavus Street	2	2	4
Güneşlibahçe	10	10	20
TOTAL	108	107	215

Table 2: The Consecutive Change in Retailers in the KHC from 2004 to 2018

Tellazade Street managed to keep its authentic atmosphere with its antique shops, in spite of the changes. In the 2014-2018 period, there are four new antique shops, 21 new retail stores, and 25 new restaurants and cafes were opened, although 3 bookstores were closed. In 15 years, the area has been filled with national and international chains (see Figure 5).



Figure 4: National and international Chains in the KHC, in 2018

Source: Prepared by authors

A striking result was the scale of the changes, that is, on the street level there are 317 commercial premises; and as it can be observed in the Tables 2 and 3, within 14 years, 215 shops changed their functions. This means that 68% of the shops have gained new functions, mostly moving towards the eating and drinking sector. Many of these new businesses are the “fish and raki” restaurants/cafes, which filled a gap in the market after the closing down the fish and raki restaurants in the historical Beyoğlu district in 2011 (Milliyet, 2011; Bilgici, 2017). As Table 3 shows there has been a big change in the retail functions from small businesses to restaurants/cafes.

Streets	No.shops	Retail type 2014	Retail type 2018
MUVAKKİTHANE STREET	1	Bookstore	Restaurant/ Cafe
	1	Herbalist	Restaurant/ Cafe
	1	Food	Clothing items
	1	Clothing items	Restaurant
	2	Food	Shop
	2	Food	Restaurant/ Cafe
	1	Restaurant	Empty Shop
	1	Clothing items	Shop
	1	Shop	Restaurant/ Cafe
TOTAL:	11		
MÜHÜR DAR STREET	10	Food	Restaurant/ Cafe
	1	Bookstore	Restaurant/ Cafe
	1	Restaurant/ Cafe	Clothing items
	1	Empty Shop	Shop
	1	Restaurant/ Cafe	Empty Shop
	1	Bookstore	Empty Shop
	1	Clothing items	Shop
	1	Clothing items	Empty Shop
	1	Clothing items	Food
	1	Empty Shop	Shop
	1	Clothing items	Restaurant/ Cafe
	2	3+functions	Restaurant
	1	Restaurant	Shop
	2	Restaurant	Food
TOTAL:	25		
TELLALZADE STREET	4	Restaurant/ Cafe	Antique shop
	1	Restaurant/ Cafe	Food
	1	Antique shop	Empty Shop
	1	Antique shop	Shop
	1	Clothing items	Shop
	1	Shop	Antique shop
	1	Shop	Restaurant/ Cafe
TOTAL:	10		
SERASKER STREET	2	Food	Shop
	3	Food	Restaurant/ Cafe
	1	Antique shop	Shop
TOTAL:	6		
YASA STREET	1	White goods/furniture	Shop
	9	Clothing items	Shop
	3	Shop	Restaurant/ Cafe
	1	Food	Shop
	3	Food	Restaurant/ Cafe
	1	Herbalist	Shop
	1	Food	Restaurant/ Cafe
	1	3+functions	Restaurant/ Cafe
	2	Restaurant/ Cafe	Food
	1	Empty Shop	Shop
	2	Restaurant/ Cafe	Shop
	1	Clothing items	Empty Shop
	TOTAL:	26	

ÜZERKLİK STREET	1	Clothing items	Restaurant/ Cafe
	1	White goods/furniture	Restaurant/ Cafe
	2	Food	Shop
	1	Shop	Empty Shop
	1	Clothing items	Shop
	2	Clothing items	Empty Shop
	1	Empty Shop	Shop
TOTAL:	9		
KÖRLER TOTAL:	1	Clothing items	Empty Shop
	1	Food	Empty Shop
TOTAL:	2		
C.MESCİDİ STREET TOTAL:	1	Clothing items	Restaurant/ Cafe
	1		
PAVLONYA STREET	2	Restaurant/ Cafe	Antique shop
	1	Restaurant/ Cafe	Shop
	1	White goods/ furniture	Shop
	1	Restaurant/ Cafe	Empty Shop
	1	Clothing items	Antique shop
TOTAL:	6		
YAĞCI İSMAİL STREET TOTAL:	2	Food	Restaurant/ Cafe
	1	Food	3+functions
	3		
TAVUSKUŞU STREET TOTAL:	1	Food	Restaurant/ Cafe
	1	Empty Shop	Bookstore
TOTAL:	2		
GÜNEŞLİBAHÇE STREET	2	Clothing items	Restaurant/ Cafe
	1	Empty Shop	Restaurant/ Cafe
	1	3+functions	Restaurant/ Cafe
	4	Food	Restaurant/ Cafe
	1	Empty Shop	Food
	1	Shop	Restaurant/ Cafe
	1	3+functions	Bookstore
TOTAL:	10		
FINAL TOTAL:	107		

Table 3. Functional Change of Retail Premises in the KHC (2014-2018)

During work on this article, the world has been hit by the Covid-19 virus. In order to understand the economic consequences of the pandemic in Kadıköy's historic commercial centre, we conducted an online connection with the chair of the Association of the Retailers of the Kadıköy Historic Centre, Mr. Ali Geçgel on September 1, 2020. According to Mr.Geçgel:

“Kadıköy historic centre has been going through a difficult period, many shops are turning over their rights, or closing down due to high rents and the absence of customers. Delicatessens, sweet shops, *halva* shops, and many other similar types of businesses have either closed down or moved to other locations with cheaper rents. Along the Tellalzade Street, many antique shops have been replaced by restaurants. The Historic centre has been losing its diversity of shops. Unfortunately, local shopkeepers have not been able to benefit from the

support funding of the government; and many of the shops have been subleased ... Another problem is the inappropriately restored historical buildings, and during the pandemic, this problem has worsened.”

According to the Chair of the Association of the Retailers, if the necessary steps are not taken immediately, Kadıköy historical centre will be a marketplace serving only the textile and clothing industry, and eating and drinking places. To prevent this, historic shops and businesses along these historic streets and age-old buildings should be listed to conserve their heritage, and their guilds tradition.

CONCLUSION:

The regeneration of the Kadıköy historic centre has shown that improvements in the physical environment end up with an increase in property values, which reflect themselves in the shop rents. In cases, where the rate of tenancy is high, this might create problems for the small shopkeepers, family-businesses, and one-of-a-kind specialist shops which are not part of national or international chains. In the case of Kadıköy, these were the reasons which caused a high rate of shop closures and turnovers from 2004 to 2020. In addition to this, the legal amendments which enabled property owners to displace old tenants worsened the situation. The success of the historic centre pedestrianization scheme, unintentionally, brought about another problem, that is the reducing the diversity of retail functions. The historic centre and marketplace, once full of various types of commercial activities, has become a place full of *fish-and-raki* restaurants and Turkish coffee shops. This disproportionate clustering of a limited variety of retail units has also led to the diminishing richness in the supply of services. This way, the historic city centre of Kadıköy has become full of eating and drinking places, but lacks florists or millinery shops; this is a trend called the emergence of the “clone town” by the British economists (NEF 2005). The area also has been filled with national and international chains which can be found in any shopping centre in the city, leading to a certain blandness in the appearance of the town. The interviews with the association of the local tradesmen showed that there can be various measures to prevent losing authenticity in the area, such as controlling the permits for newly opened businesses, so that each time the same category of retail units can be retained instead of creating new eating and drinking places. The Association of the Retailers also suggested that the municipality should keep an inventory to control and monitor the start-ups and closing-down of businesses. Also, family-owned, small businesses providing specialized services can be given tax exemptions by the municipality. In fact, small-scale fine grain retail units are the ones giving an area its image and identity. Therefore, these are the ones which should be supported or protected by local authorities that plan to attract local and foreign visitors looking for authenticity and new experiences. The rent levels can be kept under control and assessed objectively to prevent speculative rent increases by the property owners.

The literature review has also demonstrated that municipalities might keep hold the ownership of some of the shops in the pedestrianized/regenerated area so that some very special retail units/businesses, instead of being displaced, can stay in business in the rent-controlled shops in the area. Local tradesmen can come together to form associations to stay resilient against national and/or international chains; and finally, the visitors might prefer to shop from the old local businesses as part of their awareness and sensitivity to protect the authentic tastes in the area (Rankin 2008, p. 43-47). All these problems and proposed solutions mean that pedestrianization cannot be considered only as a simple limiting device to control vehicular traffic by installing street furniture in the pedestrianized area. It requires a wide range of measures to stop commercial gentrification and displacement of local authentic, specialized retail services. In most cases, surprisingly, it has not been the failure but the success of pedestrianization schemes that has brought problems to the area.

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