



In Search of Third Space: Flâneur's Escape from Polarization

Üçüncü Mekân arayışı: Flanör'ün kutuplaşmadan kaçışı

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Abstract

Modern şehir hayatının önemli bir figürü olan Flanör, şehrin sokaklarını tek başına dolaşarak modern hayatın karmaşıklığını ve bireyin özgürleşmesini temsil etmektedir. Bu makale, Orhan Pamuk'un Kafamda Bir Tuhaflık romanındaki flânörü inceleyerek flânörlüğün kutuplaşmanın üstesinden gelmek ve yeni kimlik biçimleri yaratmak için önemli bir mekânsal form olabileceğini savunmaktadır. Burjuva yaşam biçimiyle sınırlandırılan Flâneur kavramı genellikle politik boyutları dikkate alınmadan kullanılmıştır. Makale, Bhabha'nın Üçüncü Mekân kavramından yola çıkarak flânerie'nin hegemonyaya karşı direnişe dönüşebileceğini öne sürmektedir. Pamuk'un romanında başkahraman Mevlut, İstanbul sokaklarında dolaşan ve şehri gözlemleyen işçi sınıfı flânörüdür. Ancak Mevlut aynı zamanda İstanbul'un çeper mahallelerine hâkim olan sol ve sağ grupları arasında kalmış, marjinalleşmiş bir karakterdir. Bu zorluklara rağmen Mevlut'un flânörlüğü, kutuplaşmanın sınırlarını aşabilen bir Üçüncü Mekân yaratmasına imkân vermektedir. Bu Üçüncü Mekân'da Mevlut kendi kimliğini keşfederken kendisi gibi ötekileştirilmiş olanlarla temas edebilmektedir. Özetle, makale flânörün günümüz toplumlarını bölen kutuplaşmanın üstesinden gelmek ve yeni kimlik biçimleri yaratmak için bir araç olabileceğini savunuyor.

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This paper examines the flâneur in Orhan Pamuk's novel *A Strangeness in My Mind* and argues that flânerie can be a powerful practice for overcoming polarization and creating new forms of identity in a Third Space. We argue that flâneur has often been used in without considering its political implications. They propose that flânerie can generate resistance against hegemony by drawing on Bhabha's concept of the Third Space. In Pamuk's novel, the protagonist, Mevlut, is a flâneur who wanders the streets of Istanbul, observing the city. However, Mevlut is also a marginalized figure, caught between the wing and right groups that dominate Istanbul's peripheral neighbourhoods. Despite these challenges, Mevlut's flânerie allows him to create a Third Space, a position that is able to move beyond polarization. In this Third Space, Mevlut is able to explore his own identity and to form connections with the others who are also marginalized.

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1. Introduction

Power always seeks to control and restrict spatial mobility because it allows people to meet different ideas and cultures, encounter with the other and experience different lifestyles. This can be a threat to power because it can cause people to become dissatisfied with the dominant order and mobilise for change. In order to preserve the existing order and maintain its own existence, “power is opposed to change and movement” (Öksüz, 2022: 183). For these reasons, power seeks to restrict the working class to working class neighbourhoods, women to the home, ethnic groups to ghettos, refugees to camps and children to schools. This is a method used by power to reinforce social divisions and hierarchies. Therefore, all that is *sedentary* melts into air, too.

The power can use the politics of polarisation to control geographical mobility. Polarisation increases social grouping and draws boundaries between identities. These boundaries could manifest themselves in concrete spatial forms such as socioeconomic, cultural and political differences between neighbourhoods and districts (Modai-Snir and van Ham, 2018; Suk et al., 2022; Cerina et al., 2023). Spatial polarisation disappears the common ground between social spaces by restricting the mobility of individuals. This article suggests that flânerie, a type of mobility that is characterized by urban wandering and exploration, has the potential to overcome spatial polarization. Flânerie can create new identities, meanings, and experiences, and it can also allow people to transcend the two opposing cultural spaces of the dominant order and the opposition culture.

In Orhan Pamuk's novel *A Strangeness in My Mind*, the protagonist Mevlut uses flânerie to overcome the oppressive order of the neighbourhoods polarised between Sunni and Alevi, right and left. Mevlut's flânerie is a search for a Third Space, a place that does not obey either of the two polarised groups and can stand beyond them. Here, Homi Bhabha's (2012) *Third Space* theory provides a useful framework for understanding the emergence of cultural subjectivity and the distinctive relationship between space and identity. Bhabha argues that Third Space allows subjects to redefine their identities and create new identities by transcending two opposing cultural spaces.

Mevlut's journey through Istanbul can be seen as a search for Third Space. He migrates from the countryside to the city, and overcomes his identities in the village, in the neighbourhood where he settles with his relatives, and in the elite Beyoğlu, which represents the bourgeoisie. Through flânerie, Mevlut gets rid of the dictating identities of all these spaces and develops a new identity that does not conform to any kind of polarizing, oppressive, or normative order. This article argues that Mevlut's flânerie in *A Strangeness in My Mind* is a form of spatial resistance to power and oppression. Mevlut's Third Space is a place where he can create a new identity for himself, free from the constraints of the dominant order.

The flâneur is a complex and multifaceted figure who has been interpreted in many ways by scholars. However, all interpretations share the common theme of the flâneur as an urban observer who is both detached from and deeply engaged with the everyday world. The flâneur embodies the contradictions and complexities of modern urban life. While most studies focus on the flâneur as a leisure seeker, idle explorer, or urban flâneur, the political potential of the flâneur and their ability to transcend oppressive boundaries has been overlooked. Tim Cresswell, a geographer who has written

extensively on the politics of mobility, takes mobility beyond its physical definition as movement from one place to another. He argues (2010) that mobility can be understood as a triangle of movement, representation, and practice. In this framework, the practice of movement refers to the lived experience of movement through our bodies, including our bodily sensations, emotions, and memories. This embodied practice of movement is closely related to flânerie as a form of mobility.

Flânerie should be seen as a form of movement that contains the deep meanings of mobility. It is not simply about getting from one place to another, nor is it simply about wandering. Flânerie is also about our relationship to space, time, and place. It is about how we move through the world and how we construct our identities through movement. This understanding of flânerie as a form of mobility is particularly relevant to Orhan Pamuk's novel *A Strangeness in My Mind*. The protagonist, Mevlut, is a street vendor who wanders the backstreets of Beyoğlu known as a cosmopolitan district in Istanbul. In contrast to his surroundings and his job, which is considered worthless, Mevlut's desire to wander the city takes on greater significance. By refusing to stay within the boundaries of his neighborhood, Mevlut builds a subjective place for himself in the anonymous geographies of Beyoğlu.

People migrate to cities from rural areas in search of individual emancipation as well as economic independence. However, individualization is quite difficult for people coming from the countryside, especially because they are often forced to live in peripheral neighborhoods that lack individuality, tolerance, and diversity. In Türkiye, these neighborhoods are often dominated by extreme religious and nationalistic movements, which further threatens individualization. In this context, the article explores how individuals can create an alternative and anti-hegemonic life culture of their own in these urban spaces. The article argues that Orhan Pamuk's novel *A Strangeness in My Mind* suggests flânerie as a way to overcome the polarizing urban environment. In the novel, the protagonist Mevlut Karataş, who is overwhelmed by both economic and political struggle, finds individuality in the back streets of Beyoğlu, one of the most cosmopolitan districts of Istanbul.

This paper is organized into three main sections following of literature review and method sections. First section argues that flânerie can help people to overcome polarization and to create new identity forms. In the context of Istanbul, Mevlut's flânerie allows him to create a Third Space where he can explore his own identity and connect with others who are also marginalized. The second section begins with a discussion of Mevlut as a flâneur who wanders through the streets of Istanbul, observing the city and its inhabitants. Mevlut is also a marginalized figure, caught between the left-wing and ultranationalist-Islamist right-wing organizations that create a hegemonic urban environment in Istanbul's peripheral neighbourhoods. The third section claims that flânerie is practised in third places, which are public spaces where people gather casually, offer a higher potential for encounters between different groups than domestic spaces. Such flânerie encounters can take place in a variety of public places, including high streets, cinemas, passageways and parks, and can cross local boundaries. The openness of public spaces makes them ideal for encounters, allowing flâneur to observe people and identities from different backgrounds to socialise and interact.

The concept of the flâneur is typically analysed from two traditional perspectives in related studies. According to the first point of view, the flâneur is a character who lives detached from the

context and problems of the city and is obsessed with his individuality. According to the second perspective, the flâneur is a character who is a product of the bourgeois class. This article, standing outside these two traditional perspectives, argues that the flâneur can turn into a political agent in flâneur literature and that a flâneur can also emerge from the working class.

The notion of the flâneur has been particularly influential in urban studies and cultural geography. Scholars in these fields have used the flâneur to explore a wide range of topics, including urban mobility, the relationship between the individual and the city, and the nature of modernity. The concept of the flâneur emerged during the rise of modernity and metropolitan urbanization. Charles Baudelaire (1965) described the flâneur as a "nail with the streets of the city," an adventurer who explores the city and its inhabitants like a detective solving a mystery or an artist capturing the colors of urban life. Walter Benjamin, following Baudelaire, saw the flâneur's wanderings as a form of resistance to the calculated lifestyles imposed by modernity. David Harvey (2004) argued that the flâneur's mobility in the city is a form of resistance. Georg Simmel (2012) understood the flâneur as an impartial and critical observer who does not feel a sense of belonging to any particular group.

The flâneur, as a figure of the modern city, has been traditionally associated with masculinity, aristocracy, and apoliticism. However, recent scholarship has challenged these assumptions, revealing the flâneur's potential for political agency and subversion. Drawing on Pope (2010), this paper argues that the flâneur's mobility and detachment from the everyday world allow them to see beyond ideological boundaries and offer new perspectives on social and political issues. In the context of Istanbul, the flâneur's physical proximity to people and their intellectual distance from the crowd enables them to construct a subjectivity that is resistant to the polarizing forces of urban life. In conclusion, the flâneur is not a passive observer of the city, but rather an active participant in its political and social fabric.

In such a manner, Glassford and Kara (2018) claims that Pamuk draws a hero called Mevlut who has more affinities with Heidegger's authentic Dasein. Korkmaz (2015) also interprets Mevlut as flâneur who represents city image and memory. Unlike the figures with bourgeois identity in flâneur studies, Mevlut is a flâneur who migrates from the countryside to the peripheries of Istanbul to find a job and tries to hold on to the city as a street vendor. Korkmaz (2015) and Ankar (2021) have explored Mevlut as a working class flâneur trying to hold on to Istanbul. This study also considers Mevlut as a flâneur and explores the politics of flânerie. We argue that Mevlut's flânerie goes beyond a naïve urban wanderer and evolves into a form of resistance to the polarizing urban atmosphere around him. This political resistance is discussed in the light of Bhabha's Third Space and engaged with the flâneur. Engaging the flâneur with Third Space can contribute to the limits of traditional flâneur thought. Human geographer Latham (2020) challenges the traditional thought of the flâneur as a bourgeois character interested primarily in consumption and voyeur. Instead, he argues that the flâneur's gaze is more democratic and emancipatory.

Another example that supports the evaluation of Mevlut as a flâneur is Vivian Maier. Maier is a photographic artist who lived in the United States in the mid-20th century. Maier mainly earned a living as a babysitter and was interested in photography as an amateur. In Maier's photographs, the streets, people and daily life of the city are depicted in a very sensitive manner. Maier's photographs

show that he experienced the city as a flâneur. Mevlut and Maier's examples expand the boundaries of the traditional understanding of the flâneur. These examples show that a flâneur character can also emerge from the lower classes and the working class. Therefore, it is possible to consider Mevlut as a flâneur.

One of the problems that Türkiye has not been able to get out of and solve is social identities that are embedded in binary poles such as traditional and modern, religious and secular, poor and rich, rural and urban, right and left, women and men. As Gürle (2013) argues, the protagonists of novels in Turkish literature struggle between binaries such as tradition and modernity, religious and secular, rich and poor. In addition, Sibel Erol (2011) also shows how Pamuk constructs a hybrid zone between old and new. Here, we claim that binary model of cultural politics always tends to produce a divided culture: hegemonic and counter-hegemonic. In addition, the fact that the flâneur, who is evaluated by Dağ (2022) as a character who is in limbo, is in search of a Third Space is a statement that explains the questions in the literature. Then, it can be mapped bipolar places as marginal vs powerful centre. The problem is that division of culture causes a neglect field which is blind to radical third way. In Pamuk's case, the protagonist try to get further bipolar territory by flânerie and create a Third Space by Bhabha (1990):

The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation.

In his latest novel *A Strangeness in My Mind*, we claimed that Pamuk tries to overcome the polarization of secular and religious with Mevlut's tale by presenting a new Turkish hero. Pamuk (2015) depicts emancipatory dimension of living in the city:

You can hide in the city, forget your old identity. For Mevlüt, this is what makes the city attractive to everyone. Okay, there is economic opportunity, but you also get rid of your religious, ethnic, local, family identity. The reason why girls run away and get married is not necessarily to find the best husband, but to run away to the city, to leave their old life. History, religion, culture, moral imperative, tradition, all true, but we are human and free. We can do things beyond all of this. Honour killings, which are very much discussed in Turkish novels. My heroes don't think about honour like in other Turkish novels... While Mevlut goes to the cinemas showing porn movies in the back streets of Beyoğlu, he feels free to leave all this behind. He becomes an individual who gets lost in the city while watching a movie in his chair. Getting lost in the city crowd is one of the most attractive aspects of modernization. Being able to get rid of identities, thinking that you can do anything.

Similarly, Gareth and Rizov (2019) highlight the importance of existential space and argues that the individual freedom and anonymity provided by urban life are of vital importance for Orhan Pamuk. We claim that Mevlut's construction of subjectivity takes place thanks to the flânerie he raised in the urban streets and among the crowd, because he sees the crowd as a shelter in a typical flâneur manner.

2. Method

The novel will be subject to a close reading analysis, which involves scrutinising the text in detail, paying particular attention to factors such as the characters' actions and thoughts, the places they visit, and the language they use. The focus of the analysis will be to identify and interpret Mevlut Karataş's experiences of flânerie and their relation to the novel's themes, including those of identity,

alienation, and social polarisation. This paper also reviews two different theoretical literatures. Firstly, a critical review of theories on flânerie and Third Space will be conducted using a literature review approach. This involves reviewing existing research on the topic to identify key themes and debates.

The article will identify and discuss the ways in which flânerie and Third Space can be used to understand Mevlut Karataş's search for flânerie in order to escape social polarisation. The critical review integrates textual analysis and theoretical perspectives, informing the interpretation of the text. For example, the concept of Third Space can help to understand how Mevlut Karataş's experiences of flânerie allow him to create a space of liberation and originality in which he can re-examine his individuality and relationships with others. This methodological framework allows for a comprehensive and multifaceted understanding of the spatial politics of flânerie in Orhan Pamuk's *A Stranger in My Mind*. Cartographic mapping was used to analyse how to interpret Pamuk's descriptions of Istanbul as literary map. In particular, it explores how the social and political dynamics of Istanbul are reflected in Pamuk's descriptions of the city's streets, neighbourhoods and landmarks. In order to illustrate this point, we aim to breaking down Pamuk's chronotope and the spatial structure of the novel into single elements. There are five main elements of which a fictional space consists of: setting, zone of action, projected space, marker, route (Piatti et al., 2009). We count space and places in novel in order to draw zone of action in which Mevlut as Flâneur draws his rhythm in Istanbul.

3. Findings

3.1. A Flâneur under spatial polarization

There has always been a tension between traditional Islam and the secular vision for the modernity in Türkiye across many scales such as region, districts and even neighbourhood. The right-left conflict in Türkiye is the period of armed conflict and tension that started in the 1970s with the organization of right-wing parties that united against the strengthening of leftist ideas after the 27 May Coup, and tended to end after the 12 September Coup.

Türkiye is a country that is deeply divided along social and political lines. This polarization has its roots in the early days of the Republic and Late Ottoman era, when top-down Westernization efforts created a sense of division between different social groups. The rise of nationalism and socialism in the mid-20th century further exacerbated this division, leading to a civil war environment.

Mevlut also cannot be comfortable in and around the neighbourhood where civil conflicts have occurred. He is constantly stigmatized when meeting with friends from the and left camps, because the political borders are very sharp and do not allow crossings. When the conflicts get intense, Mevlut can't even hide his own feelings:

Let's go out and sell our boza in the city tonight," said his father.

No one will mess with his son with a strange spoiler. We are neutral."

Let's go to the city," his father said to Mevlut in the morning.

I will stay," said Mevlut.

My son! Their fight never ends, they can't get enough of killing each other and blood, politics is an excuse... Let's sell our yoghurt and boza. Don't get involved. Stay away

from Alevis, Leftists, Kurds, that Ferhat. Let's not be out of our homes while they're uprooting them from here." said his Father.

Mevlut remained neutral between neighbourhood conflicts, neither siding with a group nor fighting with them. Although this situation created an apolitical impression about Mevlut, it is obvious that he followed a different path. At that point, we claimed that Flâneur encourage the emergence of new paths and forms by getting beyond polarized society and its boundaries. Orhan Pamuk also placed Mevlut as a Flâneur of cosmopolitan Istanbul. What is distinctive in Pamuk's Flâneur is that he focused on emancipatory aspects of flânerie in atmosphere of violence between polarized social movements of Turkish society. Pamuk's Flâneur makes an impression of boundary crossing.

The neighbourhood where Mevlut settled down is knitted with practices based on polarizing social identities and habitus. Mevlut was able to get out of the habitus of these neighbourhoods, to some extent, thanks to the observations and thoughts he accumulated through his encounters in the cosmopolitan streets of Beyoğlu, where threshold transformations are experienced. After a while, Mevlut takes on a unique urban identity that does not fit all poles. It seems possible to consider this transformation in the light of Bhabha's concept of Third Space. Pamuk give an emphasize about polarization in Türkiye. Despite the all desperate things, he insists on a character who can cross the boundaries and create his own Third Space:

In the last 10 or even 5 years, despite all the economic growth, the language of the fight at the top has become tough and brutal. Everyone accuses each other of all kinds of treason. I wanted to write a novel about Türkiye, the poor that sees both teams. There is no such thing as the poor only on this side. Your main hero should not have strong, prominent views in this fight. If it does, it cannot be accommodated among leftists or extreme rightists. There is no such thing in Mevlut. Very sincere, sincere and honest. The economic problem is more prominent than his political and ideological problem. That's why he's on good terms with leftists, Alevis and Kurds. His best friend is Alevi. Uncle's sons are nationalist, conservative, sometimes religious, sometimes flag bearing people. It does not conflict with them. Have no thoughts of your own? A lot. But he manages. Because he wants to hold on in the city. Both sides have their favourite things and their troubles. I wanted to create such a hero, but I think most of my country is like that. The literary and sociological ideology, the ideology of prejudice that I am fighting in this book is this: The individuality of the poor is not developed. I wanted to create a poor hero, to reveal his humanity with all its richness, like the bourgeois, Nişantaşı heroes in my previous novels. It is always in my heart to understand the humanity of middle-class heroes. I would like Türkiye to receive Mevlut's optimism. I don't want people to care so much about this fight in Türkiye. Life also teaches me to be like Mevlut. Me too (Kürşad, 2014).

Homi Bhabha's theory of the Third Space presents a solution to overcome dualistic approaches towards identity and culture. The Third Space, as a hybrid domain, produces novel identities and cultural structures outside the dichotomous boundaries. Bhabha refers to hybridity as an exclusive attribute, neither reducible to nor reflective of the two cultures it originates from, but rather as something entirely new and different. The Third Space concept engages with non-uniformity and difference and stresses the importance of liminal spaces and in-between states. Bhabha's call for cultural difference also seeks a different spatiality, one that is not dualistic or territorial, but rather fluid and open-ended (Rose, 1995).

In this study, flânerie is associated with this investigation, and it provides the opportunity to develop a critical perspective against both right-religious-nationalist identity and the polarizing attitudes

of left, secular and liberals. Mevlut is both rural and urban, and neither rural nor urban. It is not lost in translation, however, because the processes of manoeuvring and translating between lifestyles and worldviews paralleled a new and conscious orientation to Third Space. What happens in such a situation is a new attachment point for Flâneur, which is understood as rambling, rather than being unable to hold on to a city.

Rose's (1995) critique of Bhabha's concept of Third Space is that it lacks concrete details in a number of aspects. Firstly, Rose suggests that Bhabha does not provide enough detail about how Third Space manifests itself in particular places in space and time. Secondly, Rose claims that Bhabha does not deal sufficiently with the questions of power and social differences embedded in Third Space. Reading Third Space with Flâneur can bring a specificity. Flânerie has a potential to create Third Space an alternative postmodern place which is designed to break down and disorder a rigid dichotomy. We suggest that spatial mobility between social topographies provide Flâneur to survival and spiritual refinement which can create a Third Space.

3.2. Flâneur's Third Spaces

In his novel *A Strangeness in My Mind*, Orhan Pamuk chronicles the social and urban transformation of Istanbul from 1969 to 2012, as waves of migrants from rural Anatolia to the big city in search of a better life. Pamuk interweaves the personal stories of his characters with the broader political and economic forces that shape their lives, creating a nuanced and comprehensive portrait of a city in transformation. Among the newcomers to Istanbul is 12-year-old Mevlut, who arrives from a small village in central Anatolia with his family. Mevlut and his fellow migrants find themselves at the margins of society, struggling to make a living and build a new life for themselves in a rapidly changing city.

Mevlut initially lives with his father, Mustafa, a street vendor who has been in the city for many years. Mustafa's brother, Hasan, is more ambitious and successful than his brother, and his sons Korkut and Suleyman later become wealthy in the construction business. Mevlut, on the other hand, remains a street vendor, selling boza, a traditional drink. Mevlut lives in the peripheral neighborhoods of Kültepe and Duttepe. However, for most of the novel, he lives and experiences urban social life in Beyoğlu, a central district of Istanbul. Unlike other who come to Istanbul seeking better economic conditions, Mevlut remains in the same economic conditions throughout his life. Mevlut spends much of his time wandering through the streets of Istanbul, taking in the city's diverse social world. In this way, he is able to get beyond the polarizing dichotomies that divide Turkish society, such as the secular/religious, left/right, liberal/socialist, and eastern/western divides.

Mevlut's engagement with flânerie was made possible by his absence of a static identity, his family's welcoming attitude and his gender. The fact that Mevlut's rural origins were not embedded allowed him to acquire a critical and emancipatory identity. The fact that his family did not attempt to control his subjective world and limit his practices also allowed him to continue as a flâneur. Moreover, his male gender allowed him to move freely in the most precarious streets of the city.

While there are difficulties for minor identities such as Kurdish, Alevi and women, it is also difficult for a person to break out of a conservative Sunni Turkish habitus. On the other hand, there are important outcomes that develop through Mevlut's agency. Firstly, Mevlut might not have had any incentive, discomfort or motivation to reject the mainstream dominant legal order. He could have conformed to the order. While the politics of the struggle of marginal identities is important, individual deviations from the dominant order are crucial to the formation of a more inclusive cultural environment. Indeed, Orhan Pamuk's choice of a conservative Sunni man is also significant in understanding the possibility of change in urban right-wing communities. The character of Mevlut expands the traditional definition of the flaneur, showing that individuals with dominant identities can also be flaneurs by deviating from the order.

Istanbul, Türkiye's economic centre, is a city of contrasts, where modernity and tradition, secular and religious, luxury and poverty coexist. The city's population of 16 million includes many people who have migrated from rural areas in search of better job opportunities. Istanbul is often described as a city where dreams of riches can come true, but this is not the case for everyone. The city is also home to many people who live in poverty. This division between rich and poor is reflected in the city's physical layout, with core areas being more developed and prosperous than peripheral areas. Therefore, Istanbul is spatially segregated between the dualities. We claim that *Strangeness in My Mind* represents Istanbul between core and periphery. In the novel, Pamuk characterises two Istanbuls. First is the central part of Beyoğlu which has a cosmopolitan atmosphere with people from various cultures. Second is peripheral Istanbul where city culture ends, and urban sprawl begins. This part focuses on spatial segregation in Istanbul with the lenses of Pamuk's dual chronotope in the novel. While location of traditional, religious and poverty is periphery, the author locates the modern, secular and luxury to core (Figure 1).

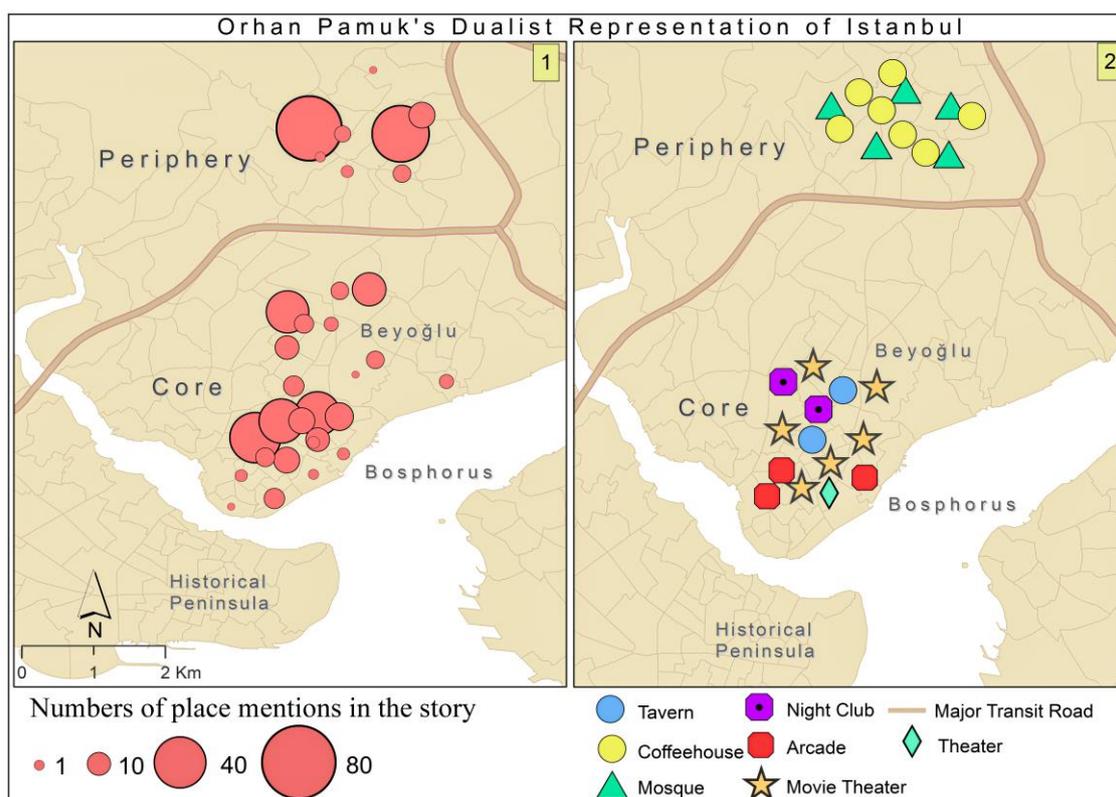
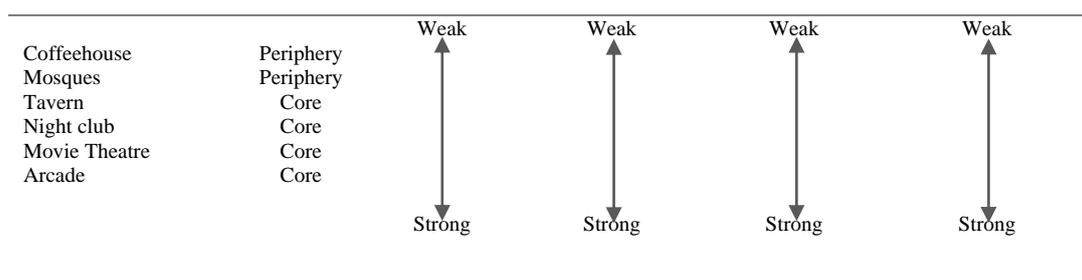


Figure 1. Orhan Pamuk's dualist representation of Istanbul.

In the sixty-two years story, Pamuk shows Mevlut a dweller between core and periphery. Pamuk represents core (Beyoğlu district, Istanbul) as a space of cosmopolitan culture, anonymity, invisibility, groups of exclusion such as LGBT, discriminated ethnicities, marginalized people and creative class. Hence, Beyoğlu is a kind of heterotopic place which allows alternative way of lives and cultures against nationalist hegemony in Türkiye. Unlike the core, periphery is place of far right which deploys dominant power practices such as stigma, heteronormativity and high level of surveillance. Furthermore, public spaces such as mosques and traditional coffeehouses are extremely nationalist Islamists ideologically embedded with gendered practices and discourses. As in the periphery, racism exclude individuality, Mevlut find an emancipatory site in Beyoğlu which provide encounter with diversity and marginalized side of the country. Besides these experiences, Mevlut also meet his subjectivity and sexuality in social spaces such as movie theatres, taverns, night clubs and arcades which have been located in Beyoğlu (Table 1).

Table 1. Identity and attitudes in social spaces

Social spaces	Location	Inclusion	Anonymity	Gender equality	Encounter with difference



In Istanbul people have to move fast because the city develops very quickly you have to keep pace otherwise you get left behind economically. Unlike the most people, Mevlut prefer to stay being a street vendor by selling old-fashioned drink Boza. One of the reason is that being in a street as if he is a nomad and always on the move. He does love to stroll in the street of Beyoglu and develop his thinking by observing crowd and the soul of the Istanbul:

Because he was constantly walking at night while selling boza, he had beautiful pictures and strange thoughts running through his eyes: In those days, he discovered that in some neighbourhoods, the shadows of trees moved even though not a leaf moved at night, and that there was a rhyme between the last syllables of the advertisements for circumcisers and classrooms affixed to the doors. Listening to what the city said to him at night and reading the language of the streets made Mevlut proud.

The effect of Mevlut's relationship with the city on his own is seen in the expansion of his imagination. This situation is compatible with the close relationship that the famous figure Flâneur of the modern city, popular with Walter Benjamin, established with the city alone. Flâneur is defined above all as a *thinker-wandering* or *walking thought*. The roads, streets and passages create a reflection in the world of Flâneur's ideas. As we can see in Mevlut, he builds a world of ideas between the city and his thought.

Geography is a discipline that studies the concepts of space and place. Space is a three-dimensional extension where physical and socio-cultural elements coexist. Place, on the other hand, is the embodiment of space built with values, emotion, meaning, attitude, values, beliefs, fears, and attachment. Since the 1980s, humanist geographers have begun to emphasize the importance of the concept of place. According to humanist geographers such as Tuan, Relph, and Seamon, place is shaped by the subjective experiences and meanings of individuals. Place plays an essential role in the construction of an individual's identity and sense of belonging.

However, Humanist geographers' understanding of place ignored social differences including class, gender, ethnicity, age and sexuality. In contrast, geographers such as Massey explored engagement of identity and place. According to Massey, place is a spatial form that is heterogeneous and in an in constant evolution. Although places have distinctive characters of their own, they do not have a uniform sense of place and a coherent pattern of identity shared by all who live in them.

Istanbul is a heterogeneous city in constant transformation. The city coexists people from different social groups, different cultures and different identities. For this reason, Istanbul is one of the cities that best reflects the importance of the heterogenous understanding of place. Mevlut is the main

character of Orhan Pamuk's novel *A Strangeness in My Mind*. Mevlut is the child of a working class family who migrated to Istanbul. Mevlut wanders the streets of the city to get to know the city and to construct his own identity. Intentionally losing himself in neighbourhoods such as Tarlabaşı and Beyoğlu, Mevlut pursues a Situationist derive. Especially Tarlabaşı is a neighbourhood that plays a central role in Mevlut's attachment to the Third Space. This neighbourhood is a heterotopic place where are consist of heterogeneous residents, excluded identities from the society can find a place for themselves. At the end of the novel, Mevlut moves to this neighbourhood and gets closer to his greatest love of wandering in the Istanbul, away from heteronormative culture.

In conclusion, geography is a discipline that analyses the notions of space and place. The place plays an essential role in the construction of an individual's identity and sense of belonging. In fact, Istanbul, which is woven with its routes within the city, is one of the cities that best reflects the importance of the importance of the place as a heterogeneous and constantly transforming city with routes rather than the roots. The presence of flâneur routes within the place shows us that the third space is rather limited to individuals and their small environment.

3.3. Flânerie and encounter with the difference

This study examines the potential of the Third Space as a site for emancipation and flânerie. For the many rural migrants who flock to cities like Istanbul each day, the city offers the promise of progress and opportunity. Beyond economic prosperity, values of freedom, self-realization, and tolerance in urban life are also highly appealing to immigrants. However, this understanding of the self and the body as mutually constitutive of the city raises questions about where and how these freedoms can be realized in the urban environment (Lees, 2004). The emancipatory city could offer opportunities for self-development in its streets, squares, cafés, cinemas, theatres, libraries, taverns, and other downtown public spaces, where flâneurs can experience the city and encounter its diversity. Given that encounters in public spaces are often fleeting and are constructed according to the rules of civility and anonymity, they provide little opportunity for sustained contact that might change people's understandings of those different from themselves. We argue that interactions in flânerie spaces, such as consumption space, public space and socialisation space have more potential in shaping outgroup attitudes. Valentine and Harris (2016) argue that because the nature of encounter is socially produced differently in different types of space, depending whether the encounter setting is more public or private, inter-ethnic contact in different spaces will have a different effect on attitudes towards minorities.

These reflective practices have another importance for Orhan Pamuk's flâneur. It was thanks to flânerie that Mevlut, who lived in the countryside until his youth, learned to live in a huge metropolis like Istanbul with no end to the streets. When political transformation is added to this pedagogical dimension, Pamuk's flâneur stuck in polarized neighbourhoods has turned into a freer individuality in terms of worldview. This individuality has the opportunity to become a creative spatial character for the subaltern segments who want to hold on to the city.

A further aspect of Benjamin's (2006) understanding of the flâneur is the idea of 'dreaminess' or 'semi-awareness'. Benjamin argues that this state is essential for the flâneur to engage with the city in all its diversity and uncertainty. Pamuk's flâneur meets his community's dark past, which is being tried

to be closed, as he explores the city on foot. In time, he learns that the apartments on the streets that he sells boza belong to the ethnic communities who lived here before. The encounter with the other gradually begins to create an awareness in himself. In fact, while walking around back streets of Taksim with Süleyman, from the neighbourhood where he grew up, he talks about the values of its past:

I suppose a Mercedes (car) has never entered this neighbourhood in its history.”says Süleyman.

Don't underestimate this neighbourhood too much. In the past, the smartest and most artisan Greeks and Assyrians lived here. It is the essence that keeps Istanbul alive.” replied Mevlut.

Before the rise of Turkish nationalism, Istanbul was an important city of multi-ethnic diversity and tolerance. This multicultural legacy is also reflected in the figure of the flâneur, a curious city-dweller who moved freely through the city streets, observing places and the lives of others with a need for anonymity. While not all of the urban dwellers could achieve the same kind of freedom of mobility as De Certeau (1998) suggests that all have the potential to shape the experience of walking in the city. Urban practices such as wandering can be a liberating force, allowing individuals to passively absorb the sights and sounds of the city and develop their own cosmopolitan view.

Oldenburg's notion of third places, which are public spaces where people gather casually, suggests that these spaces offer a higher potential for encounters between different groups than domestic spaces. Such encounters can take place in a variety of public places, including high streets, cafes, restaurants, cinemas, passageways and parks, and can cross local boundaries. The openness of public spaces makes them ideal for encounters, allowing people from different backgrounds to socialise and interact. We have suggested that flânerie, or the act of wandering aimlessly through public spaces, can play a key role in enabling intergroup encounters in highly polarised social topographies.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The importance of the flâneur figure lies in its ability to help us understand modern urban life and the possibility for emancipation that the city offers. First, as a key representative of modern urban life, the flâneur is one of the few nomad urban figure who can absorb the city's complexity and diversity. By wandering through the city's streets alone, observing different identities and distinct places, the flâneur helps us to understand the dynamics and changes of urban life. Second, as a representative of individual freedom, the flâneur has the opportunity to discover their own subjectivity and perspective on life by wandering through the city streets away from their local geographies.

Despite the significant potential of flâneuric mobility, social theory research has largely limited the flâneur concept to a lifestyle shaped by the bourgeoisie, leisure, and detachment. To arrive at a more inclusive understanding of the flâneur, this article examines the relationship that individuals from lower classes have with the city as they try to hold on to urban life.

Orhan Pamuk's novel *A Strangeness in My Mind*, which tells the story of Mevlut Karataş's personal relationship with the city after moving from rural Anatolia to Istanbul, presents a working-class flâneur. Mevlut, who enters the city in the squatter neighborhoods on the peripheral Istanbul, finds himself in a polarized environment, both in his immediate surroundings and in the surrounding

neighborhoods. He finds a way out of the polarized environment in spatial mobility. Mevlut, like a flâneur, liberates himself by finding himself in the streets, encountering other identities, exploring different perspectives, and building his affiliation with public spaces while working by selling boza in the city's deserted and crowded streets. The article reaches two important conclusions:

The flâneur reveals the possibility of a politics of the flâneur. The flâneur is not simply a detached observer, but rather an active participant in urban life. The flâneur's ability to wander freely throughout the city enables them to break free from the pressures of imposed social identities and authority. By leaving Istanbul's polarized social geographies, Mevlut achieves political liberation in the anonymous and relatively heterogeneous geographies of the city. The Situationists, who constantly focus on psychogeographical dérivés, attach great importance to the flâneur figure. They believe that a politics of the flâneur is possible and that flânerie, as a form of public space mobility, is a form of political resistance. In this context, Third Space, as a form of public flânerie, can also be used as a pioneering concept for social theory in terms of a form of political spatialization, especially in the radical flâneur studies.

The flâneur, who is generally identified with the bourgeois class, can also be born from the working class. The flâneur can be identified as a figure who is able to create a space for himself in the city, regardless of his social status. Especially individuals who move to a big city and feel uncomfortable in their own social geography can find a solution through flânerie in the anonymous streets of the city.

According to him, flâneur, indeed, look at everything in urban streets. Pamuk's flâneur embodies this democratic and emancipatory potential, as he seeks to move beyond the polarized politics of Istanbul. The flâneur can be anyone who has the freedom to wander the streets of the city and watch the city. In conclusion, we provide a contribution to the discussion of how the individual can overcome polarization in urban environments with flânerie. Our analyses of the liberating potential of flânerie are particularly important in today's increasingly divided world.

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