

SOSYAL DEĞİŞİM VE POPÜLER KÜLTÜRÜN TARİHİ MEKÂNLARDAKİ ETKİSİ: İSTİKLAL CADDESİ ÖRNEĞİ

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Özet

Dünya var olduğu günden bu yana devamlı bir değişim ve gelişim içindedir. Tarih boyunca, özellikle konumu nedeniyle her zaman gözde olan İstanbul da bu değişim ve gelişimlerden şüphesiz en çok etkilenen yerlerden biri olmuştur. Bu nedenle çalışma alanı olarak Pera Bölgesi-İstiklal Caddesi seçilmiştir.

İstiklal Caddesi üzerine analizler yapılırken özellikle sosyal değişim ve gelişimler sonucunda geline güncel durumda popüler kültürün mekân üzerindeki baskısı ve kimlik üzerine etkisi ele alınmıştır. Veriler yerinde gözlem ve fotoğrafçılık yöntemlerinden yararlanılarak toplanmış, elde edilen veriler güncel panoramik harita görüntüleriyle karşılaştırılmıştır. Toplanan veriler ışığında İstiklal Caddesi'nin bugünkü haline gelene kadar yaşadığı tüm süreç ve geçirdiği dönüm noktaları belirlenmiştir. Çekilen fotoğraflarla elde edilmiş İstiklal Caddesi'nin güncel görüntüsü ışığında işlev analizi yapılmıştır. Cadde'nin tarihteki rolüyle günümüzdeki rolü kıyaslanmıştır. Geçirdiği değişimler ve yaşadığı popüler kültür baskısı tartışılmıştır. Sonuç olarak yapılan analizlerle İstiklal Caddesi'nin tarihindeki değerden uzaklaşmış olduğu ve sıradan bir caddeden, herhangi bir alışveriş merkezinden farkı kalmadığı belirlenmiştir. Yer alan ticari hizmet birimlerinin kimliklerine bakıldığında caddede yoğun olarak hızlı tüketim-popüler kültür üzerine şekillenmiş zincir markalar olduğu ve caddenin bu popüler kültür etkisinde yoğun bir kimlik değişimi yaşadığı tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Kimlik değişimi, Popüler Kültür, Sosyal Değişim, İstiklal Caddesi.*

THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL CHANGE AND POPULAR CULTURE IN HISTORICAL PLACES: THE CASE OF ISTIKLAL AVENUE

Abstract

The world has been in constant change and development since its existence. Throughout the history, Istanbul, which has always been popular especially because of its location, has undoubtedly been one of the places that are most affected by these changes and developments. For this reason, Pera District-Istiklal Avenue was chosen as the case.

While analyzing Istiklal Avenue, the pressure of popular culture on places, and its effect on identity, especially in the current situation which is a result of social changes and developments, are discussed. The data were collected using on-site observation and photographing methods, and the obtained data were matched with the current panoramic map view. In the light of the collected data, the whole process and the milestones Istiklal Avenue went through until today were determined. Function analysis was made in the light of the current view of Istiklal Avenue, which was obtained with the photographs taken. The role of the Avenue in history has been compared with its current role. The changes, and the pressure of popular culture that the Avenue has experienced are discussed. As a result, it has been determined that Istiklal Avenue has moved away from its historical value and is no different from an ordinary street or any shopping center. By observing the identities of the commercial service units, it has been determined that there are chain brands identified by fast consumption-popular culture, and that the avenue has experienced an intense identity change under the influence of this popular culture.

Keywords: *Identity Change, Popular Culture, Social Change, Istiklal Avenue.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, change has taken place wherever the human exists – whether by natural causes or by human intervention. These changes took place in social life and/or physical environment, and urban spaces were mostly affected by this situation.

As a result of wars, immigrations, discoveries, and revolutions; the world, changing in thousands of years, has spread out its novelties into the cities along. The industrial revolution which has taken place in the recent history and has dragged the world into an entirely new era, brought different consumption habits and priorities into people's lives. Along with this revolution which has caused immigrations and led to expansion and change in cities, different needs and luxury consumption have integrated into people's lives in time and they tried to create environments that would serve this new world. This state has been the main origin for the greatest reforms. People who have gained diversity in their priorities and habits have been inclined to adapt their environment into their new lifestyles.

Cities have been formed with different qualifications such as social, cultural, economic or technological developments. Along the historical process, every society has reflected their lifestyles and thoughts of their era upon the city, thus the concept of city identity has emerged which has been effective in enabling cities to gain their authenticity (Türk and Seydioğulları, 2018).

City identity is the synthesis of characteristic values that makes a city “different, unique and unparalleled” compared to any other city on earth. Today, the identity values of cities are fading away with the rapidly globalizing world. The world cities are facing a loss of identity and have started to assimilate. The places that the identity loss is most apparent are the public places which are open spaces and especially historical places.

Urban green spaces are like living organisms. Along with the changing generations, changing needs, changing social, economic and political approaches and developing culture; the perceptions of societies and individuals can change. Therefore, people's esteem towards events, places and spaces may also alter (Cihangiroğlu, 2019).

When urban scale reforms are examined, it's generally rooted from people that had migrated due to various concerns. The social changes started when people carried their own culture to the places they went and exchanged with others. People who brought their own lifestyle, expectations, and culture to their new settlements have caused material and spiritual, social and physical changes in line with the possibilities.

Culture is all kinds of human-made products, produced by societies in order to meet the basic needs of human beings. Since the basis of the concept of culture is human, it is actually antonym with nature. In Renaissance; “Everything produced by man, other than what nature gives, is culture” definition has been made (Kartarı, 2019).

Popular culture, has been central to the contemporary era of globalization (Crothers, 2021). On the other hand, is the culture that dominates daily life. Popular culture is a perception that the ruling classes renew and reflect the cultural values and traditions in line with their prevailing ideologies and somehow impose on the dependent individuals. The effects of popular culture are values that are often unconsciously included in our lives, from clothing to music, from food preferences to leisure activities.

Popular culture is a concept that affects and changes people, and places through people. This concept, which has originated from America, has rapidly spread all around the world along with the capitalist era, following the mechanization and technological developments of the 19th century (Coşgun, 2012). Popular culture, being much faster and cheaper, has in time become people's primary preference, replacing the cultural values.

In general, popular culture is defined as the dominant culture of any society at any time (Sözen, 2012). The common and dominant thought and practices in the society constitute the popular culture of the society. On the other hand, attention is drawn to the centralization process, where everything is similar. With this aspect, popular culture enables the spread of capitalism by affecting people's daily lives. With its influence on popular

culture, mass media, radio, cinema and music, it can affect people's eating, drinking, clothing, speech, and briefly their daily life practice (Tan, 2021). Thus, radical changes have emerged in the sense of culture and entertainment, in the practices of clothing, eating-drinking, working, education of the society, in short, in the way of life and therefore in urban spaces. In addition to this, the homogeneous structure of the society has begun to change, and different cultures and lives have begun to intertwine, especially with the migration movements faced by metropolitan cities (Öztay, 2021).

As in the whole world, major changes such as the intense pressure of the consumption culture and re-functionalization have been included in the city in Istanbul. Istiklal Avenue -Pera District, is one of the historical urban landscapes of Istanbul where a lot of social change has been experienced in historical process and which is under the pressure of popular culture. The region is one of the liveliest and most popular places in Istanbul, where theaters, cinemas, schools, consulates, foreign cultural centers and art galleries are located. It is aimed to determine the functional change and the identity change of the street along with the idea that the intellectual identity of Istiklal Avenue has changed with the pressure of popular culture.

2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

With deep history, Istiklal Avenue, which has come to the fore with its important cultural and intellectual features for every period, has attracted attention with both its physical structure and social identity. Due to these changes in the avenue, where a rapid social circulation and spatial change can be noticed, it was chosen as the research area.

The functions of the buildings located along the avenue has been researched and all of them classified as functional. The historical importance and evolution of the avenue have been examined; the physical and social changes, and popular culture pressure have been referred.

2.1. Location of Istiklal Avenue

Istiklal Avenue is the one that is located between Tünel Square and Taksim Square in Beyoğlu District on the European side of Istanbul. Istiklal Avenue, known as Grande Rue de Péra and Cadde-i Kebir in the past, is 1,4 km long. Along with Tarlabaşı Boulevard located exactly on the parallel, it is the backbone of Beyoğlu district. Administratively, Istiklal Avenue covers 9 neighbourhoods. Across the Avenue, which is left on the northern side of the Historical Peninsula and the Golden Horn, Üsküdar is located (Figure 1).

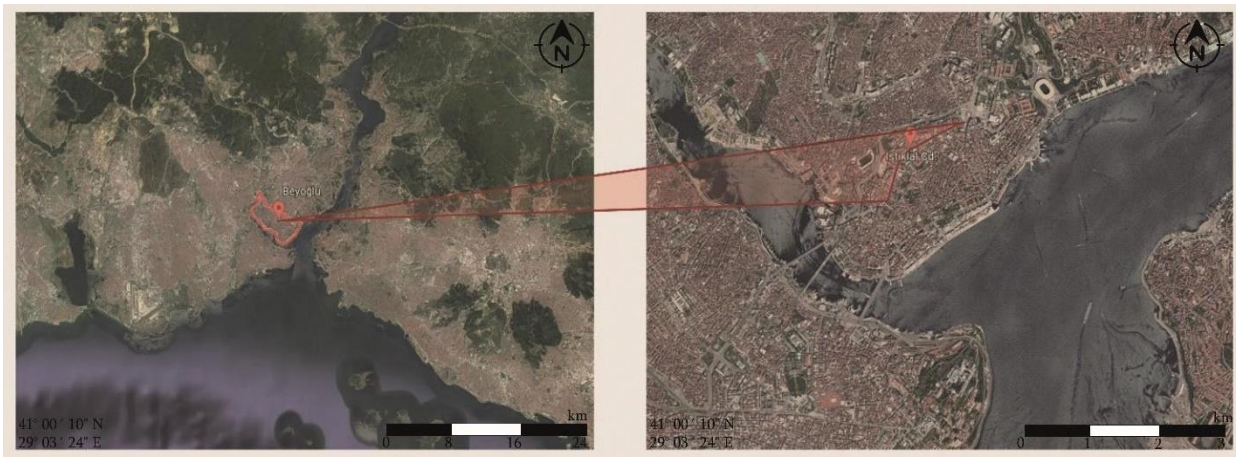


Figure 1: Beyoğlu district and Istiklal Avenue location (Google Earth, 2021).

The Avenue, which is in the easiest location to reach from almost anywhere in Istanbul, can be easily reached by bus, metrobus, metro or funicular. “Istanbul’s never sleeping Avenue” is a favorite of both local and foreign tourists and is the most crowded place in every season of the year. When the electric tram was being planned

to be put into service for nostalgia purposes in 1989, İstiklal Avenue, which is suitable for pedestrian traffic, was determined as an appropriate place for a symbolic Nostalgic Tram line. The nostalgic tram started to carry passengers on the Taksim-Tunnel route on January 29th, 1990 (Istanbul İETT, 2021). Over time, the nostalgic tram, which has become the symbol of Istanbul and even Turkey, has today become a value that attracts the most attention and gets most photographed by both domestic and foreign tourists.

2.2. History of İstiklal Avenue

Being the capital of great empires for about 1600 years, Istanbul has layer by layer carried the social, physical and architectural marks of every civilization it's hosted in every era. Surrounded by the sea on three sides, the city has always been an important center as it is also the bridge between Asia and Europe (Governorship of Istanbul, 2021).

İstiklal Avenue- Pera region, on the other hand, is a multi-layered center just like Istanbul. While the South of the Golden Horn was called Constantinople, the northern part was a Byzantine trade colony area named "Pera" by the Genoese in 1261 (Korucu, 2021). Pera residents have provided security by building the fortifications toward 1300s, and Galata Tower in 1349 for observation purposes. Later, it started growing beyond these fortifications it was in. Due to their alliance with the Ottomans during the conquest of Istanbul in 1453, it has continued to be a trade center, preserving its autonomy as it did during the Byzantine period (Kayra 1990; Tekin 2005).

Pera started to be known as "Beyoğlu" during Suleiman the Magnificent era. With the arrival of the Venetian, French and British embassies in Pera in the 1600s, the non-muslim population here increased their settlements around the embassies. Embassies gathered in Pera after this date and the Levantine population in the region increased. The western culture and lifestyle came along with these settlements and especially French influences started to become apparent in the particular region (Akın, 1998; Başat, 2007).

In 1840s, Galata became an important trade port and the large amount of imported goods brought wealth to the region. These imported goods have started to be sold in the stores of Pera, which were extensions of European life (Durdoğan, 1998; Tekin, 2005).

With the Ottoman Reform Edict of 1856, which brought various innovations, all kinds of civil buildings were allowed to be built, and non-muslim communities formed a commercial bourgeoisie with the support of European countries and began to be active in foreign trade. Most of the inns and buildings built in Galata and Pera belong to wealthy non-muslim groups who were able to open up to the world during this period. The Ottoman Reform Edict and Westernization reforms caused different steps to be taken for the Sultan and his entourage; The palace was moved to the coastal part. Also, interest in European entertainments increased during this period. Pera, with the support of the Palace, has turned into an environment similar to European capitals. Foreign newspapers and books were sold in this region; clubs, societies and educational institutions were established. Attention was paid to learning a foreign language (Akın, 1998; Başat, 2007).

While Galata is an unsafe trade port that welcomes sailors from various countries of the world, Pera and İstiklal Avenue, which is located right next to it, is an elite area with an aristocratic settlement (Batur, 2000).

Pera Region, which is similar to Western European cities in both physical and social aspects, however, did not have a regular municipal organization. For this reason, in 1864, "Beyoğlu and Galata VI. Municipal Office" was established as the first municipality in the Western sense. With this important step, avenues, streets and sidewalks have become more well-maintained, and cleanliness of waterways and sewages has been taken under control (Akın, 2003; Başat, 2007).

With the declaration of a new administrative system during and after the First World War, the capital city has changed and Ankara became the new capital city of Turkey instead of Istanbul. This situation caused the embassies to be moved to Ankara along with the administration and Pera began to be abandoned. A new era

has started for Istanbul and as a result of moving to Ankara, there has been a weakening in the total population and commercial relations (Aytepe, 2004).

Taksim Pera Region, on the other hand, has become the center of civilization and innovation in Istanbul during these changes. Firstly, the name Cadde-i Kebir (The Great Avenue) was replaced with Istiklal Avenue in 1927. Later, the "Republic Monument", which was built by the Italian sculptor Pietro Canonica in the area between Maksem and Barracks, and considered as the symbol of the Republic, was opened with a magnificent ceremony on August 8, 1928. The landscaping of the monument was designed by architect Giulio Mongeri (Durhan, 2009; Yıldırım, 2018).

In the following years, while the economic problems of the First World War could not be eliminated yet, the outbreak of a new world war has put a lot of pressure especially on countries like Turkey that were defeated in the first war. Despite the impartiality in the World War II, the first major eruption was the "Wealth Tax" as a result of the trade coming to a standstill and the increasing nationalist movements. According to this taxation system, taxpayers who earn very high incomes are divided into lists according to their religious and ethnic origins, although this situation was denied later on (Öztürk, 2013) (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Wealth Tax, Newspaper News (Google Images, 2021).

In November 11, 1942, in the Official Gazette, this situation was announced as: "A liability called "Wealth Tax" has been established for one time only and is to be collected on the "Assets and extraordinary earnings of the wealthy earners." The minorities, who were most affected by this new system in 1943, sold their houses and workplaces in order to pay the Wealth Tax. In this case, the most vacated place was Pera Region. Some of the wealth of minorities in Istanbul passed into the hands of Muslim-Turkish businessmen. Many minority group citizens emigrated from Turkey (Öztürk, 2013).

After the social change caused by the Wealth Tax, radical changes started in Pera and Istiklal Avenue. The establishment of The State of Israel in 1947 at the end of World War II, a while after the migrations had taken place, was also one of the important events that socially affected Istiklal Avenue and Pera. The State, which was founded with the promise of one and only safe homeland for the world's Jews, had started to receive immigrants from all over the world over the years. People that responded among the Jewish community of Istanbul to this promise, started to empty their homes and emigrate to Israel. Pera Region continued to empty with a different wave of immigration (Omay, 2000; Başat, 2007).

A new event that occurred soon afterwards caused an irreversible change in the avenue. On the night of September 5, 1955, a bomb exploded near the garden where Atatürk's house was located. On September 6, 1955, at 13.00, the state radio announced the news of a bomb attack on the house where Atatürk was born in Thessaloniki (Karayuluk, 2018). On September 6, 1955, at 19.00, simultaneous attacks started against the Rûms living in Istanbul, mostly in Pera, Şişli, and the Islands. The incident got out of control and in just a day, the houses and workplaces of minorities, and even Turks by pointing the wrong target, were looted. A large

number of deaths and injuries were recorded; There were headlines saying; "Heaps of goods exceeding one meter in Istiklal" (Figure 3, Figure 4), (Karayuluk, 2018).



Figure 3-4: Events of September 6-7, 1955, Istanbul (Google Images, 2021).

A total of 5,622 facilities including 4,214 workplaces, 1,004 houses, 73 churches, 1 synagogue, 2 monasteries, 26 schools and places such as factories and hotels were attacked. In general, the greatest damage was in Beyoğlu (Karayuluk, 2018).

Due to these events and to the changing perception of security in the last 15 years, Istiklal Avenue and Tarlabası Boulevard in its parallel have been completely emptied with a rapid migration.

Between 1950 and 1960, a wave of migration started from various cities of Turkey to Istanbul. In the city which encountered a strong change in its social structure with a rapid internal migration especially from the Black Sea and Eastern Anatolia Regions, Istiklal Avenue-Pera, again, was one of the most affected areas. Houses and workplaces that minorities and non-Muslims have vacated/had to vacate over the years have been filled this time by Anatolians who came by internal migration. With the excessive internal migration multiple families started to live in the households where a single family used to live in the past, and the attrition accelerated. After the exact opposite change in the social structure, the “Beyoğlu” of the past began to disappear with the same rapid change in architecture and planning (Youtube Documentary, 2021).

When the European homeowners of Levantine architecture had to leave the streets, new homeowners with high economic concerns settled in the neglected and demolished houses, and this situation gradually made the avenue and its environs obsolete. Slum concentration and unsafe environment, especially in the back quarters; is one of the major differences in identity (Figure 5), (Youtube Documentary, 2021).



Figure 5: 1984 newspaper (Marmara University, 2021).

The comments of Atilla İlhan, İlhan Berk and Çelik Gülersoy in the interviews made during the period reveal this change.

Atilla İlhan mentions (Marmara University, 2021);

“The Turks took Istanbul in 1453. They entered Beyoğlu in 1953. That's what I always say. Beyoğlu was a foreign city in Istanbul. It was a place where Levantine culture developed. I entered Beyoğlu culture in the 1940s. At that time, French waiters were encountered. French recipes were prepared. However, this was prepared not for tourists as it is now, but for people living in Istanbul. There were foreign bookstores. They used to sell foreign books and newspapers. These newspapers were bought and read in coffeehouses and were talked about. Concerts were given from time to time.”

Çelik Gülersoy, on the other hand, talks about Beyoğlu and İstiklal Avenue as follows (Marmara University, 2021);

“Like any other city, yesterday's Beyoğlu was consisted of two elements. Buildings, and the people who create them and live in them. We can divide these people into three groups: Foreigners, Levantines and minorities. Yesterday's Beyoğlu is definitely the creation of these three groups. This human element began to change after the Republic. Embassies went to Ankara. But the remnants of the old, that is, both the buildings and the people to some extent, continued to live until the end of the Second World War. The real drastic change happened in the 1960s and 70s. Instead of the cosmopolitan population of yesterday, the rural people settled in Beyoğlu. In other words, the blood of the district's body has changed. The new population, of course, started to change the buildings as well. Some buildings collapsed...”

While the efforts to keep up with all the changes continued, an unexpected step was taken in 1986. During the mayorship of Bedrettin Dalan, a series of demolition activities were carried out in order to clean and rehabilitate the area within the framework of the Essen Plan. A total of 368 buildings, 167 of which are registered, were demolished in order to clear Tarlaabaşı and its surroundings from prostitution and drug gangs, and to ease traffic. While the demolition process caused the destruction of the Levantine architecture and the urban identity of the region, which has been formed over hundreds of years, the cleaning and rehabilitation works counterproductively increased the obsolescence and collapse even more (Yoğurtçu, 2016).

Led by the Istanbul Chamber of Architects; Istanbul Technical University and Yıldız Technical University objected to the desire to destroy this unique Levantine architectural example with a quick decision. Despite the struggles and campaigns carried out jointly with local people and non-governmental organizations, the destruction could not be prevented (Youtube Documentary, 2021).

In 1993, Galata-Beyoğlu was declared an urban protected area. In 1998, the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Galata Region Development Plan was launched. Later on, “gentrification studies” started in this region (Başat, 2007).

Some of the the gentrification works on İstiklal Avenue in particular are; creating diversity in entertainment venues, banks opening up art galleries especially in this avenue, and increasing the number of eating-drinking and clothing venues which are described as "chains". The change in the user profile with these new movements caused the physical environment and activities to change. The desired gentrification goals have been achieved (Başat, 2007).

2.3. Method

For the functional analysis of İstiklal Avenue, two separate field studies were carried out in May 2021 and October 2021, all the functions along the street were identified and marked on the map, and photographic and video recordings were taken. The collected visual resources from field studies were digitized, matched and verified with the current panoramic avenue views on the maps. Then all the resources have been listed and classified as functional. The current plan of Beyoğlu has been edited using Autocad 2021, then with Adobe Photoshop 2019, the classification has been applied on the plan.

After all these studies, the photographs of the important functions that add value to the identity of the street, but which have undergone changes today, are compared with today's, and the pressure of popular culture is discussed.

3. FINDINGS

A classification has been made with the help of photographs taken and videos recorded on the street, and city maps in order to determine how much popular culture venues influence Istiklal Avenue. A map legend has been prepared by considering the functions at the entrances of the apartments located at the street level. Functions are divided into 14 groups and colored according to the colors of urbanism as: “Chain Restaurants, Local Restaurants, Chain Stores, Local Shops, Religious Buildings, Educational Buildings, Culture-Art Centers, Bank-Exchange Office, Public Institutions and Consulates, Inn-Passage-Business Center, Empty Construction, Hotel-Apartment, Bar-Entertainment, Health”. These functions, located on the left and right, on the 10-meter-wide and 1.4-km-long Avenue, are roughly seen in Figure 6.

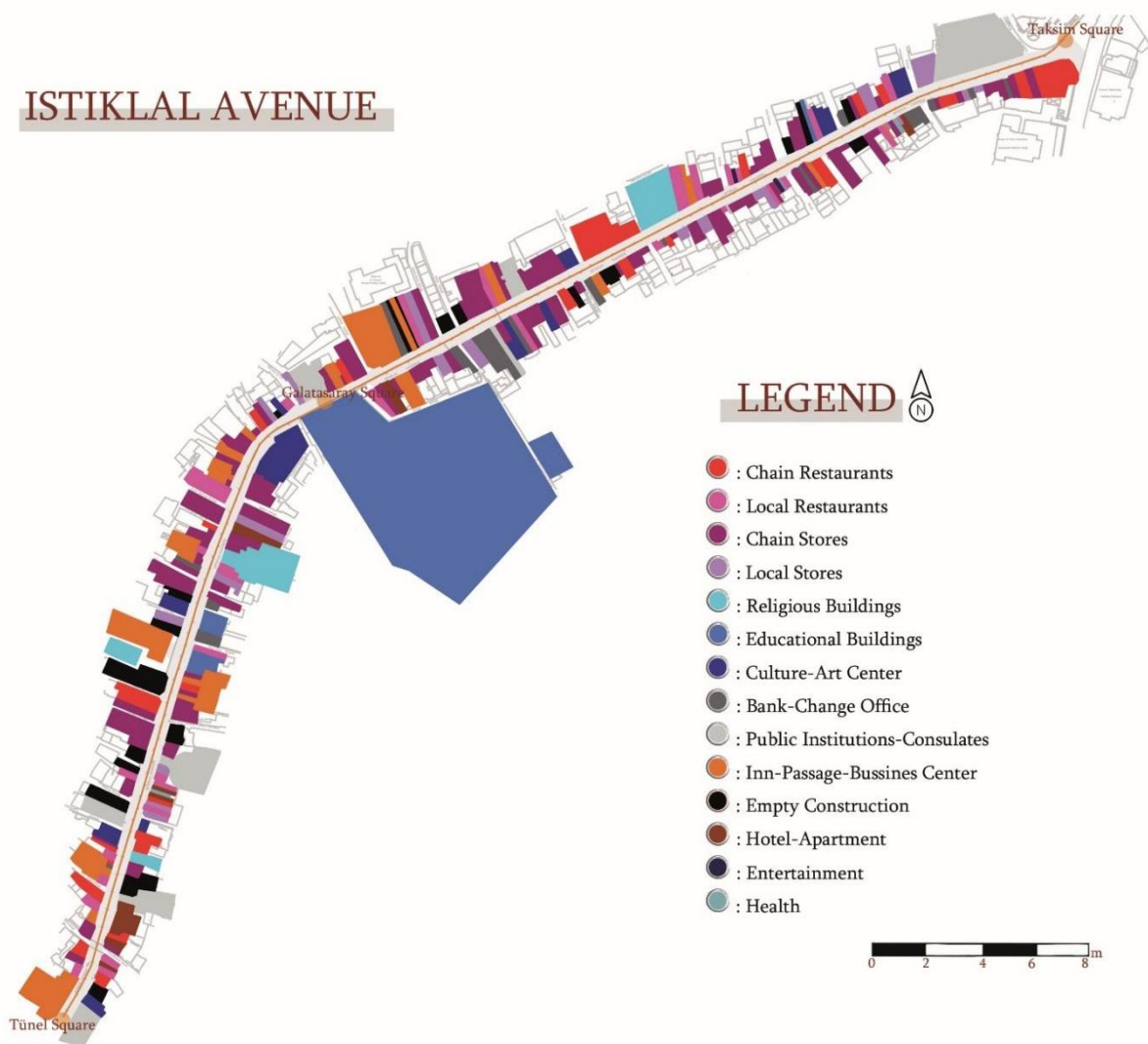


Figure 6: Istiklal Avenue Function Analysis

If we look at the distribution of the places on Istiklal Avenue, we can see that 276 places were determined and their numbers were graphed (Figure 7). As can be seen in this distribution, 94 out of 276 functions are chain stores. The second largest group is chain restaurants. It can be read on the graph that the dominant function in the avenue is chain consumption.

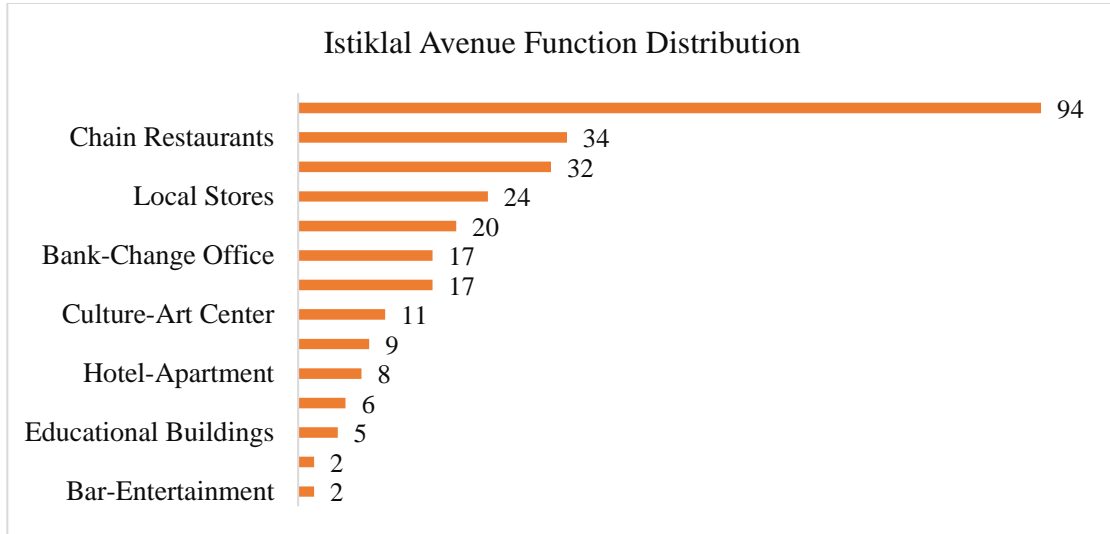


Figure 7: İstiklal Avenue Function Distribution

Especially in the recent past, in the first years of the Republic, important entertainment venues and patisseries of the period (such as Markiz, Lebon, Nisuaz), venues that played an important role with their cultural activities (such as Taksim Cinema, Atlas Cinemas, Alhambra Cinema, Saray Cinema), venues designed for shopping (such as Oriental Passage, Hacopulo Passage, Çiçek Passage, Avrupa Passage (European Arcade)) were the identity places of İstiklal Avenue. Although some of these places continue to exist today, they have been replaced by the new alternatives around them. Consulates of many countries (such as France, Russia, Netherlands, Sweden, Greece) are also on this street.

This situation in today's İstiklal Avenue can be seen in Figure 25 and Figure 26. İstiklal Avenue, which was the center of cultural events, especially with its various cinemas and performance halls, today hosts to very few cultural centers and cinemas, which mostly consists of bank art galleries (Figure 8).

The current situation of the inns and passages designed for shopping is as in the figure for busy hours (Figure 9).



Figure 8: Culture and Art Centers, Public Institutions-Consulates



Figure 9: Inn-Passage and Business Centers

While the preference for shopping was for inns and arcades in the past, this situation has changed today. The Avenue is home to a large number of clothing stores, mostly chain ones (Figure 10, Figure 11).

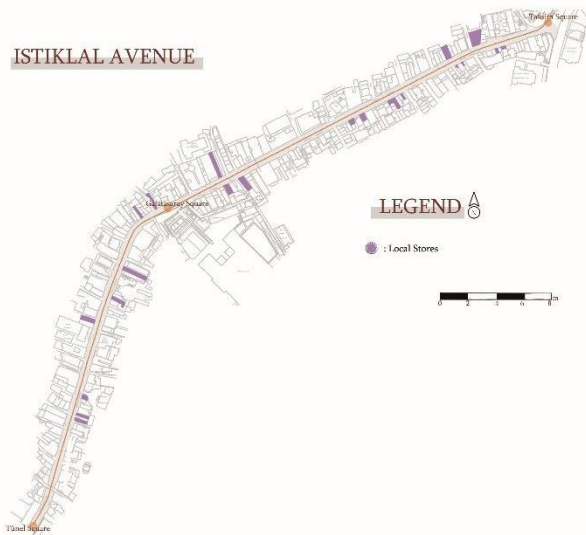


Figure 10: Local Stores



Figure 11: Chain Stores

The same situation is seen in terms of the diversification of eating and drinking places. There are many chain and local restaurants on the avenue. Few patisseries and restaurants, which were places of meeting and entertainment in the past, have diversified and increased considerably today (Figure 12, Figure 13).

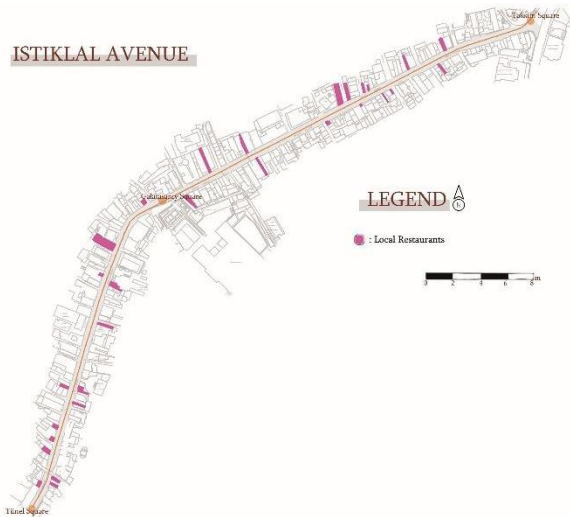


Figure 12: Local Restaurants

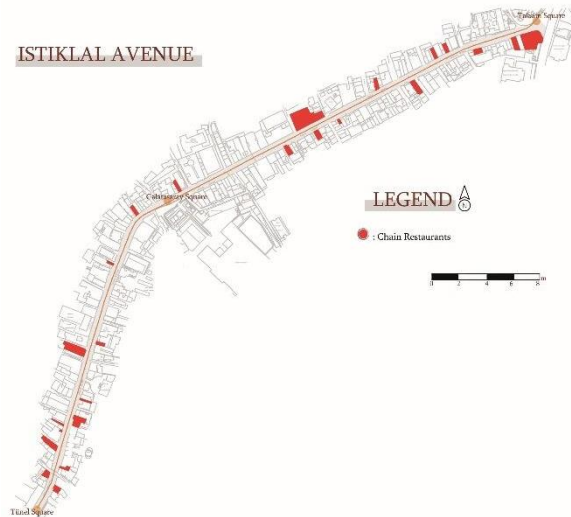


Figure 13: Chain Restaurants

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Every place where people exist; changes and develops with people as are like living organisms. While this process sometimes flows so slowly that it cannot be perceived, sometimes its dynamics is high. Istiklal Avenue-Pera region is an active region where these changes are frequently experienced. It has experienced changes that have spread over time and have had great repercussions in a short period.

As Tekin and Akgün Gültekin (2017) mentioned, Istiklal Avenue happens to be the most heterogeneous urban space in Istanbul, where the most conflicting political, economic and societal processes of the collective memory and daily life were witnessed. Pera had always been an ethnically diverse settlement area. The population, back in 1848, was 137.400; 66.700 Muslims and 70.700 Non-Muslims (Durudoğan, 1998). The demographic structure consisted mainly of Levantines, and Greeks, Armenians, Jews and Turks. Russians, Bulgarians and Circassians were also parts of this ethnical diversity (Tekin and Akgün Gültekin, 2017).

In every page of history it's mentioned, Pera Region has had a different identity independent of the time and place it is in. It used to be a colony with a different identity away from the center during the Genoese Period, when its settlement began; later, with the Ottoman Empire and the conquest it has had a different identity from Constantinople. This region, which was able to catch innovations and developments quickly and adapt, became a center of attraction first in the Reforms and then in the foundation of the Republic. In every page of history it's mentioned, Pera Region has had a different identity independent of the time and place it is in. It used to be a colony with a different identity away from the center during the Genoese Period, when its settlement began; later, with the Ottoman Empire and the conquest it has had a different identity from Constantinople. This region, which was able to catch innovations and developments quickly and adapt, became a center of attraction first in the Reforms and then in the foundation of the Republic. Pera Region, which has shown its different identity in these three main periods from its beginning, has experienced a continuous rise. "Grand Rue De Pera," which had been on the rise since the 1850s, Represented the most "Western" Face of the Empire in terms of architecture, demography, and lifestyle (Adanalı, 2011).

Considering the whole process; Pera- Istiklal Avenue took its current form with two major incidents. The first of these is that it was refilled with a different social texture as a result of the 1942 Wealth Tax and the great migrations that followed. In this process, there was a serious destruction in the region with this social change. The second incident, on the other hand, is the gentrification efforts that followed the destructions which were carried out with different excuses. Gentrification has made Istiklal Avenue completely unidentified while trying to save its obsolete identity.

This historical importance and change over the years paved the way for the avenue and the region to take its current form. Tekin and Akgün Gültekin (2017) analyzed the street in their study in 2004-2014. In the study, it has been determined that the businesses with the unique character of Istiklal Avenue are gradually decreasing and that they come to the street for shopping and consumption purposes and as a result, it was determined that there was a great physical and social change in the street in the relevant years.

Looking at today's analysis, it has moved away from the value of its history and is no different from an ordinary street or any shopping mall. The identities of the commercial service units involved are chain brands that were identified through fast consumption-popular culture. When we examine the analysis of these functions, we can see that the Avenue is perceived as the main shopping street in any newly built settlement instead of a connection road full of apartments with historical architectural identity. When the usage rates are examined, it is seen that more than half of the functions in the avenue are clothing stores. However, this avenue is not for local and foreign visitors who want to shop for clothing; In fact, it welcomes its visitors who want to see the main identity that actually makes this avenue popular. But all visitors who come with the advertisement and curiosity of this identity encounter a shopping mall-like view.

This avenue, which has a lot of value to be promoted and maintained, is now under the pressure of fast-fashion stores and chain restaurants appealing to the middle class. As Adanalı (2011) mentioned, the real estate investments of big local and foreign capital play an important role in shaping the transformation of Istiklal Avenue. Sales and purchases conducted by investors expand in volume every day as properties are hurriedly handed out. For example, Mango, which already has a store on the street, bought a building under the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and operated as the Istanbul Bookstore of Kültür A.Ş. until recently, while Dutch VastNed bought the Yapı Kredi building. Apart from VastNed, the UK-based Eastern European Property Fund

Limited (EEPFL) purchased a total of 9 buildings of various sizes in Beyoğlu, and Kazak Capital Partners purchased Kamondo Han, one of the most important buildings in Galata (Adanalı, 2011). This situation causes the street to be filled with foreign chain stores.

The region, which used to have a much more intellectual and multi-layered identity, is now corrupt and about to disappear. A great culture and value, whose history dates back to 1000 years ago and which is tried to be preserved and maintained until today, is about to disappear with the effect of this consumption community, the greed of rent and the ill-use of nature and the rapid artificialization and concretization.

For example, the place that is Demirören Shopping Center today served as Odeon Theatre, the Orient Cinema, Luxury Cinema and Palace Cinema in the past. While this cinema was an important cultural center where the premieres of Turkish movies were held, it was demolished in the early 2000s and this shopping center was built instead. (İstiklal Senin, 2021), (Figure 14).



Figure 14: Demirören Shopping Center 2021 – Palace Cinema, Odeon Theatre, the Orient Cinema, Luxury Cinema (Deveaux Apartment) (İstiklal Senin, 2021).

Inci Patisserie is the first place where profiteroles, a French dessert, were introduced to our country. This patisserie, which is one of the oldest businesses on the street, was moved due to the renovation of the Cercle d'Orient building, but after the renovation, a chain consumption store was opened instead. (İstiklal Senin, 2021), (Figure 14).



Figure 15: Adil Işık Store 2021 – İnci Patisserie (Cercle D'orient) (Turan Akıncı, 2021).

Today, the place that we encounter as the Golden Rose store is Borsa Lokantası, which used to host large meetings and organizations, where the most popular dishes of Istiklal Avenue used to be. The Istiklal Avenue branch of this restaurant, which has branches in more than one place, has moved to another location today, leaving its place to a chain store (Fig. 16).



Figure 16: Golden Rose Store 2021 – Borsa Restaurant (Istanbul City Map, 2021).

Alhambra Cinemas, one of the important cultural centers of its time and located on the entrance floor of the Alhambra Han, hosted Atatürk with his family twice. It was closed in 1999 after it was damaged by a major

fire. Today, the ground floor shops of this inn serve for chain consumption, as seen in Figure 17 (İstiklal Senin, 2021).



Figure 17: Alhamra Han 2021 – Alhamra Cinema and Various Chain Stores (İstiklal Senin, 2021)

This avenue and its surroundings, which were the center of culture, art and innovations and has been a center of attraction for years with this feature, today, has almost no culture-art centers and activities at all. If the change continues at this rate, Istiklal Avenue will turn into an open-air shopping center with consulates in it.

Considering the historical identity of Istiklal Avenue and its function in the city, it is the center of culture, arts and entertainment. Today, it has shifted these identity features to alternative places in various districts of Istanbul. Also, today, as Adanalı (2011) mentioned too, Istiklal Avenue is becoming similar to any main avenue that could be found in any other city of the world. The most important step to be taken for the avenue to regain its former value will be to make promotional activities and to open up centers that will emphasize the importance of these functions. The importance can be underlined by acting with the local administration for the recovery of lost functions.

Although it is very difficult to return to the milestones experienced, eliminating future dangers and making remarkable promotional activities about the value of this area can be a more solution-oriented planning approach.

Popular culture is a very common and very real concept that cannot be ignored. It shows its effects in many actions in daily life and in the shaping of places. Throughout history, Istiklal Avenue has always hosted people from different cultures together, and by accumulating memories from each of them, it has turned into a living value in the minds beyond being a physical place day by day. To define adjectives such as new and popular is to ignore and ordinaryize the entire history, architectural structure and social life of Istiklal Avenue. Giving such a large number of chain consumption places, the product of popular culture, on the street, which has its own historical and cultural identity, causes identity damage. It is necessary to ensure the continuity of the past and the present in harmony with Istiklal Avenue and similar important historical areas. Although multiculturalism and being open to change are concepts that expand the borders in temporal and spatial terms, it will lead to dangerous consequences for historical areas if the experienced changes simplify and destroy the existing value.

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