MUSEALIZATION AS A STRATEGIC COMPONENT OF URBAN TRANSFORMATION IN 21ST CENTURY ISTANBUL

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Abstract

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Keywords: Istanbul, urban transformation, public space, gentrification, musealization

Musealization can be defined as the process by which an object is removed or detached from its original context or setting for its exhibition in a museum-like manner and environment. In the past decade, Istanbul has been the site of various urban transformation projects that are carried out using musealization as a strategy to conceal or disguise their non-consensual nature. This thesis analyzes several of these cases, most of which are unique to Istanbul's Beyoglu district and have occurred in recent years or are presently taking place. These cases exhibit processes of musealization that are implemented for three objectives: the encroachment of public space, the proliferation of consumption spaces, and the displacement of low-income/marginalized residents from centrally-located areas. These themes are analyzed within the context of Istanbul's rapid population growth as well as its ever-increasing role as a financial center and tourist destination.

Özet

21. YÜZYIL İSTANBUL'UNUN KENTSEL DÖNÜŞÜM'UNDE BİR STRATEJİK BİLEŞEN OLARAK MÜZELEŞTIRME

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Anahtar Sözcüklar: Istanbul, kentsel dönüşüm, kamusal alan, soylulaştırma, müzeleştirme

Müzeleştirme; bir nesnenin müzevari bir tarzda ve ortamda sergilenmek amacıyla, asıl bağlamından ya da çevresinden kaldırılması veya ayrılması süreci olarak tanımlanabilir. Geçtiğimiz on yıl içinde İstanbul; çeşitli kentsel dönüşüm projelerinin mekanı haline geldi, ki müzeleştirme bu süreçte projelerin rızai olmayan tabiatlarının gizlenmesi ya da saklanması stratejisinin bir parçası olarak kullanıldı. Bu tez çoğunluğu İstanbul'un Beyoğlu semtine özgü olan ve son yıllarda gerçekleşmiş veya halihazırda gerçekleşmeye devam eden vakaların bir kısmını incelemektedir. Bu vakalar üç amaca yönelik gerçekleştirilen müzeleştirme süreçlerini göstermektedir: kamusal alanın gaspı, tüketim alanlarının yaygınlaşması ve düşük gelirli/marjinalize edilmiş yerleşimcileri merkezi yerleşim alanlarından çıkarma. Bu konular İstanbul'un hızlı nüfus artışının yanısıra finans merkezi ve turistik mekân olarak devamlı artan popülaritesi bağlamlarında incelenmektedir.

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INTRODUCTION

Istanbul has experienced a series of vast transformations pertaining to its social and structural fabric since the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923. This thesis is primarily concerned with the period following 1980, which witnessed a major military intervention that set the stage for various neoliberal economic reforms. In light of these changes, this thesis seeks to explore urban transformation in Istanbul since then, focusing particularly on events occurring within the past decade. It seeks to examine how space is contested as a result of the city's ever-increasing role as a cultural and financial capital, as well as a popular tourist destination. Turkey's largest city has witnessed the construction of skyscrapers, multinational retail and restaurant chain-stores, gated communities, luxury apartments, and shopping malls at a staggering rate inrecent years.

This has coincided with the rapid redevelopment of urban space, particular in inner-city quarters housing low-income residents. Such redevelopment has frequently been met with controversy and significant opposition from the public, as these projects are frequently initiated from the top down without public consent. As such, it has become evident that the phenomenon of musealization has emerged as a tactic employed by the dominant political and financial elite to aid in the implementation of such projects. Within that frame, various cases of urban transformation that pertain to the last decade will serve as the objects of focus in this thesis. These cases all exhibit one or more of the three following themes: the proliferation consumption spaces, displacement of low-income residents from inner-city areas, and encroachment upon public space

This thesis attempts to explore a phenomenon at the forefront of gentrification and urban transformation in Istanbul. To provide context, the thesis attempts to elucidate the term musealization and introduce it in the urban realm of Istanbul, pointing out how

other scholars have implemented the term to characterize projects in other cities. It also employs other concepts frequently referenced in the field of urban geography and gentrification studies. As the focus at hand is Istanbul and primarily its quarter of Beyoğlu, some history of the city and the district in the 20th century is provided, for readers unfamiliar with the urban history of Istanbul, urbanization in Turkey, or modern Turkish history in general. The thesis utilizes many prominent secondary sources throughout to provide this contextual backdrop. The thesis also draws from many newspaper articles pertaining to the current issues explored therein. It attempts to provide a detailed analysis of the relevant cases, some of which have been continually unfolding during the writing process.

If the thesis were to be expanded into a dissertation, it would involve conducting interviews with those involved or affected at every angle of these types of urban renewal projects, from residents, landlords, shop owners, community activists, real estate agents, developers, municipal authorities, etc. However, at this stage the focus was not to conduct extensive ethnographic research, but rather to try and provide another perspective regarding gentrification in Istanbul. Much of the literature on the subject focuses on gentrification as a consequence or corollary of neoliberalism since the 1980's. A great deal of the discussion surrounds the country's adoption of neoliberal policy, although unlike a great deal of literature concerning urbanization in Turkey, such a theme is not at the forefront of this thesis. The objective here is to adopt a more theoretical approach, incorporating various conceptual frameworks and exploring overlaps and connections among various themes.

Musealization can be defined as the process by which an object becomes detached or removed from its original context, for its exhibition in a museum-like manner and environment. In Istanbul, such a process is frequently pursued by authorities and other powerful actors in order to justify certain urban initiatives that are realised without public consent. These initiatives often seek to suppress, mask, or extinguish the character and identity of various spaces, such as the historical and functional character of a public square, the architectural heritage of a building, and the social fabric of a neighbourhood. The five cases analyzed in this chapter exhibit instances of musealization.

The first chapter discusses two major events in the 20th century that contributed to the vast decline in Istanbul's non-Muslim population. It explains how these events drastically transformed the physical and social fabric of the city, particularly in Beyoglu, a central district of Istanbul and the location for all but one of the cases in this thesis. These events are referenced in other chapters since their consequences directly relate to some of the recent cases that will be analyzed. The chapter also discusses some of the major changes that occurred in Istanbul following a major military coup that took place in 1980. The economic reforms that were instituted following this coup were monumental in changing the course of Istanbul's growth and physical appearance.

The second chapter engages the term musealization, referencing definitions for clarity and discussing several articles that describe how musealization is used as a strategy for implementing urban policy initiatives. It also engages several popular themes relating to gentrification and dispossession.

The third chapter focuses on the theme of consumption spaces, discussing the rise of shopping malls and other profit zones in Istanbul over the past several decades. It discusses two cases, the first of which describes the construction process (and related consequences) of a shopping mall in a 19th-century apartment building on Istiklal Avenue, Istanbul's busiest street. The second case in the chapter is concerned with a street nowadays popularly known as Fransız Sokağı (French Street), located in a quarter formerly occupied by Greeks, later becoming a mixed enclave with a Roma and Kurdish population, which has been redeveloped as a French-themed cultural district.

The fourth chapter is primarily concerned with gentrification and the displacement of the inner-city poor and marginalized. Two Istanbul neighborhoods are the focus of this chapter. The first case in this chapter to be analyzed is a street art festival which took place in the middle of a demolition area in Tarlabaşı, a rapidly-gentrifying inner-city neighbourhood. Tarlabaşı was formerly a middle-class Greek and Armenian neighbourhood that is currently populated by a diverse population of mostly marginalized groups, including Roma, Kurds, West African refugees, and transgendered people. Tarlabaşı is in the process of undergoing a controversial urban transformation project (initiated under a recent law which permits the so-called renewal of historic areas) that has led to the demolishing of hundreds of its buildings and the displacement of many of its residents. The next case discusses the former Sulukule, a historically

Roma neighborhood located in the Fatih district of Istanbul close to the old city walls. Sulukule, like Tarlabaşı, was recently subjected to a brutal demolition programme that displaced its residents and destroyed the majority of their former homes. Presently, luxury apartment buildings bearing a so-called Neo-Ottoman style of architecture are being built in the area, which will ostensibly be marketed to wealthy tenants and owners.

The fifth and final chapter addresses the theme of enroachment upon public space. The subject in this chapter is the pedestrianization of Taksim Square, a construction project that is interconnected with the resurrection of an Ottoman-built military barracks that was slated to be rebuilt on Taksim Gezi Park, which replaced the original barracks following its demolition in the 1940's. Taksim, Arabic for 'distribution', is the undoubtedly the most significant square in Turkey. The site was originally a water resevoir, built in the 18th century to collect water flowing from the north of Istanbul so it could be distributed throughout the city. It retains a similar function today as a transportation hub, with buses, subways and funiculars taking passengers to numerous areas of Istanbul. The square is the site of the Republic Monument, built in 1928, five years after the republic's foundation. Throughout the 20th century, Taksim Square has been a prominent centre for mass demonstration. In 2013 and as of this writing, Taksim Gezi Park, located just behind the square, emerged as an iconic space since the contestation over its future spawned large demonstrations in Istanbul and throughout Turkey.

CHAPTER 1.

A SELECTED ACCOUNT OF ISTANBUL IN THE 20TH CENTURY

1.1 The Fate of Non-Muslim Communities in 20th Century Istanbul

The urban landscape of Istanbul is one haunted by ruptures in its social fabric that it has experienced since the early 20th century. This began in the years leading up to and following the establishment of the Turkish republic. Formerly home to a robust population of Greeks, Armenians, and Jews, who collectively comprised just under 50% of Istanbul's population in the late 19th century[1] the city is now, according to most estimates, over 99% Muslim. In a city with a population of around 15 million, estimates suggest that roughly 50,000 Armenians[2], 20,000 Jews[3], and 3000[4] Greeks remain today.

The bulk of these communities were forced out through a series of policies and events that were aimed at their displacement. They followed larger instances of demographic engineering such as the population exchange of 1923, where over 1 million Greeks living in Anatolia were forcibly transferred to Greece in "exchange" for around half a million Muslims who were sent to Turkey. Istanbul's Greeks were

1 Rıfat Bali, *The "Varlık Vergisi" Affair (*Istanbul:Isis Press, 2005), 35-37.

2 Vercihan Ziflioğlu, "Armenians to Build School in Istanbul," *Hürriyet Daily News*, November 12, 2012, Accessed December 15, 2012 http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/armenians-to-build-school-in-istanbul.aspx?pageID=238&nid=35099.

3 "Minorities Express Hope Despite Pains of the Past," *Hürriyet Daily News*, September 9, 2001, Accessed May 8, 2013, http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/minorities-express-hope-despite-pains-of-the-past.aspx?pageID=438&n=minorities-express-hope-despite-pains-of-the-past-2011-09-06.

4 Gökmen Köşe, "Gökçeada School New Hope For Istanbul's Greek Population," *Today's Zaman*, March 29, 2013, Accessed March 30, 2013 http://www.todayszaman.com/news-311144-.html.

permitted to remain in the city,[5] although they too were systematically pushed out in later decades. The Capital Tax of 1942, which targeted Turkey's non-Muslims, caused extensive dispossession of wealth and property which led to tens of thousands of non-Muslims leaving the country. The Istanbul Pogrom of 1955, a state-led assault on Istanbul's Greek community, saw the destruction of hundreds of primarily Greek businesses, residences and churches by armed mobs, and prompted another mass exodus. Jews and Armenians were also targeted during the riots. Less than a decade later thousands of Greek citizens who resided in Istanbul were forcibly expelled from the city following heightened tensions between Turkey and Greece over Cyprus. These events account for the diminished minority population of the city, in particular the tiny number of remaining Greeks.

The multiconfessional identity of the city, especially in several areas of Beyoğlu, where the bulk of Jews and Christians resided soon became replaced with a heterogenous population including Roma, Kurds, African migrants, transgendered persons and sex workers. The rapid demographic engineering that forced out Istanbul's religious minorities is re-emerging today by way of a series of initiatives which seek to significantly rearrange the urban landscape of the city without consultation of those most affected.

Such groups are particularly vulnerable to these so-called urban transformation projects, many of which are taking place in Beyoğlu, a district that for centuries was the heart of the non-Muslim community of Istanbul, and has re-emerged in the late 20th/early 21st century as the city's most vital cultural, entertainment and transportation centre. Beyoğlu's increasingly coveted status threatens to alter the character of some of its neighbourhoods which for several decades have existed as mixed-use areas for marginalized groups.

Beyoğlu has long been a district known for its cosmopolitanism and intersecting identities. Founded in the 13th century by Genoese traders, the Byzantines referred to the area as “Pera” meaning “far away” in Greek, a reference to its location on the opposite side of the Golden Horn across from the historic peninsula, and to the fact that the

5 Ayhan Aktar, “Turkification Policies in the Early Republican Era,” in *Turkish Literature and Cultural Memory: "Multiculturalism" as a Literary Theme after 1980* ed. Catharina Duft (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009), 46.

Genoese controlled the area and the trade that took place wherein.[6] Ottoman Greeks, Jews, and Armenians began to move into the district in the 15th century. By the late 19th century, Beyoğlu had become Istanbul's financial and cultural heart, as well as its most affluent district, and the site of most foreign embassies. Following the establishment of the Turkish Republic, Istanbul was ignored in favour of the new capital, Ankara, and migrants from the countryside began to move into the district beginning in the 1950's, although the area retained its popularity as an entertainment hub for elites.[7]

Following the establishment of the Turkish republic, a series of Turkification[8] initiatives were set into motion which sought to render non-Muslims economically destitute and force them out of the country. In 1923, the Treaty of Lausanne officially ended the war between Turkey the Allied powers, and established the modern Turkish state. Article 42 of the treaty guaranteed certain rights to Greeks, Armenians and Jews. The article stipulates that "the Turkish Government undertakes to take, as regards non-Moslem minorities, in so far as concerns their family law or personal status, measures permitting the settlement of these questions in accordance with the customs of those minorities."[9] Article 42 also made the state responsible for providing "full protection to the churches, synagogues, cemeteries, and other religious establishments of the above-mentioned minorities. All facilities and authorization will be granted to the pious foundations, and to the religious and charitable institutions of the said minorities at present existing in Turkey..."[10] However, in 1925, minority groups were pressured by the government to renounce these rights, and many Greek members of a sub-committee slated to vote on the issue who were opposed to such a move were arrested and the motion passed. Ayhan Aktar writes: "Thus was the last vestige of Ottoman *ancient*

6 Ayfer Bartu, "Rethinking Heritage Politics in a Global Context: A View From Istanbul" in *Hybrid Urbanism:On Identity Discourse and the Built Environment* ed. Nezar Al Sayyad (Westport:Praeger, 2001), 133.

7 Ibid., 134.

8 Ayhan Aktar (in Aktar, "Turkification Policies in the Early Republican Era," 27.) describes Turkification as "the way in which Turkish ethnic identity has been strictly imposed as a hegemonic identity in every sphere of social life, from the language spoken in public to the teaching o history in public schools; from education to industry; from commerical practices to public employment policies; from the civil code to the re-settlement of certain citizens in particular areas.

9 From the official English translation, as cited in a footnote by Aktar, Ibid. p.39

10 Ibid., 39.

regime abolished, and so, having been deprived of all the priveleges they had derived from being part of minority religous and ethnic communities and which had been guaranteed by international treaties, non-Muslim citizens became Turks from a "legal standpoint."[11]

However, the Greeks, Armenians, and Jews of Turkey were not treated as citizens. After 1926, these groups were barred from obtaining public service jobs:

> The Law on State Employees during the single party period gave only ethic Turks or Laz, Bosnian, Circassian, Kurdish, etc. citizens who could be Turkified (i.e. ethnically non-Turkish muslims) the right to work in public service, thus simultaneously encouraging a significant portion of the population to become Turks, and constituting a typical example of the "discriminatory" policies against non-Muslims.

The Wealth Tax (*Varlik Vergisi*) largely targeted capital of İstanbul's Jewish, Greek and Armenian populations. The tax, which was established in 1942, was imposed for the purpose of raising much-needed capital for Turkey's troubled economy, in light of a possible entry into World War II.[12]

However, the ulterior motive was the Turkification of the economy through the creation of a Muslim bourgeoisie by appropriating capital from the merchant class which was almost entirely composed of non-Muslims. Import/export trade and the financial sector were dominated by non-Muslims who were often multilingual and adept at dealing in foreign trade. The non-Muslim merchant class, who were not trusted to fight in the War of Independence, were demonized for allegedly becoming wealthy at the expense of the Muslims who had 'shed blood' for the Independence struggle. [13]

One particular example exemplifies the retributive character of this discourse. Aktar cites an interview in the *London Times* that finds Şükrü Saraçoğlu, the prime minister at the time, describing the Wealth Tax and claiming that:

> "Turkish peasants, have had to bear the burden all by themselves for centuries...This law will be applied with all its force against those who, even though they got rich thanks to the hospitality shown them by this country, have

11 Ibid., 39.
12 Bali, *The "Varlık Vergisi" Affair,* 35-37.
13 Ibid., 39.

refrained from carrying out their duty towards it in this precarious moment"[14]

This discourse was repeated continuously in debates and discussions regarding the tax immediately after its implementation. The interpretation of the event among mainstream sources, such as an excerpt of an article from the daily *Cumhurriyet,* cited by Rıfat Bali in his book "The 'Varlık Vergisi' Affair" remains the same today. The following opinion piece, published by the paper in late 2001 mirrors this discourse, asserting that:

> They [the Jews, Greeks and Armenians] were persons who held monopolies on this country's commerce, and thereby became very rich from the monies they earned off the people of the country...While the simple Turkish Muslim soldier of peasant stock was giving his blood and soul to defend the homeland, at the very least these [minorities] also had to contribute by giving a portion of their wealth.[15]

Speros Vryonis, in his book "The Mechanism of Catastrophe" refers to the memoirs of Faik Ökte, the director of finances of İstanbul who administered the tax. According to Okte's memoirs, Greeks, Armenians and Jews were added to separate tax lists and, via the implementation of a legal loophole, were taxed a rate significantly higher than their Muslim counterparts. Estimates of total appropriated capital from Muslim firms fell under 5% whereas between 150-230% of total capital was appropriated from Armenian, Greek, and Jewish firms.[16] Those who were unable to pay the tax on time were sent to camps in eastern Anatolia where they were forced to perform hard labor as punishment. 30,000 Jews and 20,000 Greeks subsequently left Turkey.[17]

The Wealth Tax especially impacted the social fabric of Istanbul given its high concentration of Greek, Armenian and Jewish residents. The rhetoric surrounding the

14 Aktar, "Turkification Policies in the Early Republican Era," 41.

15 Bali, *The "Varlık Vergisi" Affair,* 60-61.

16 Speros Vryonis, *The Mechanism of Catastrophe,* (New York:Greekworks, 2005), 38-40

17 Ali Tuna Kuyucu, "Ethno-religious 'unmixing' of Turkey": 6-7 September Riots as a Case in Turkish Nationalism," *Nations and Nationalism* 11, no. 3 (2005): 371.

implementation of the tax portrayed an explicit desire to appropriate capital from non-Muslims as retribution for their supposed complacency during the Independence War. The ultimate goal was to dispossess the non-Muslims of their wealth and property for the purpose of creating a new Turkish bourgeosie. The tax and its aftermath, which lacked any sort of compensation for the disproportionate harm it inflicted upon minorities, sought to inform these groups that they would never entirely be considered as citizens.[18]

In the 1950's, following the victory of Prime Minister Adnan Menderes and the Demokrat Party, an atmosphere of religious nationalism arose among the urban underclasses, who supported newly established nationalist organizations such as the Nationalist Turkish Student Union and the "Cyprus is Turkish" association. These groups sought to portay non-Muslims in particular as the wealthy other[19]. The Cyprus issue was of major importance in Turkey at the time, as tensions on the still British-ruled island flared. The Turkish government was opposed to Greek Cypriot rule on the island, and several popular newspapers at the time, namely *Hürriyet,* purported the claim that Istanbul's Greek community were sympathetic to the Greek Cypriot national cause. [20]

The false news, printed by the daily Istanbul Ekspres, that Greeks in Salonica had bombed Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's childhood home was immediately followed by violent rioting in Istanbul. Nationalist slogans such as "Cyprus is Turkish!" were shouted frequently during the mayhem. Thousands of buildings and more than seventy churches were damaged, burned or completely ruined.[21] More than 30 people were killed, and many women and children were raped. Police and firemen were generally unresponsive and failed to provide adequate protection during the riots. [22]Following the

18 Bali, *The "Varlık Vergisi" Affair,* 11.

19 Kuyucu, "Ethno-religious 'unmixing' of Turkey," 372.

20 Ibid., 375-76.

21 Ibid., 61-62.

22 Vryonis, *The Mechanism of Catastrophe,* 104-05.

military coup of 1960, it was discovered that the government played a central role in plotting the pogrom, although Menderes had claimed it to be communist insurgency immediately following the riots.[23]

Prior to 1955, there was a significant population of Greeks on the islands of Imvros and Tenedos (Gökçeada and Bozcaada) however today there are no more than a few left. The Greek population of Istanbul is between only 1000 and 2500. The Istanbul Pogrom in conjunction with the 1964 expulsion of Greek nationals residing in Istanbul formed a two-phase initiative that directly sought to force out the remainder of Turkey's Greeks.[24] The events of September 1955 occurred throughout in Istanbul (and in Izmir an other cities) however the greatest concentration destruction and violence took place in Beyoglu, the focal point of the riots.[25]

These monumental events in conjunction with the subsequent expulsions of Greek citizens residing in Istanbul directly relate to the processes of dispossession discussed in two of the particular cases in this thesis, discussed in greater detail later. As such, having a general understanding of the history of Istanbul's non-Muslim communities in the 20th century is crucial to understanding the contemporary dynamics of the city, particularly in Beyoğlu.

1.2 Istanbul after 1950

As Istanbul experienced significant changes in its social fabric throughout the 20th century due to the persecution and subsequent evacuation of the vast majority of its non-Muslim population, it simultaneously experienced rapid growth and structural transformation. 1950 marked a variety of major changes to the urban-rural dynamic in Turkey. Tahire Erman writes that beginning in this period “Turkey strengthened its economic and political ties with the US, the hegemonic power in the world economy. In brief, Turkish society experienced structural and political transformations in the process

23 Kuyucu, “Ethno-religious 'unmixing' of Turkey,” 362.

24 Vryonis, *The Mechanism of Catastrophe,* 559-561.

25 Ibid., 136-37.

of its integration into the capitalist world economy."[26] Following the Marshall Plan, agricultural technology became increasingly sophisticated, which subsquently decreased the demand for agricultural labor, resulting in rapid migration from rural to urban areas. Such migration exceeded the available supply of urban housing, which spawned the gecekondu, a term meaning "built in one night", which referred to the informal shanty-housing that rapidly spread throughout peripheral urban areas.[27]

As gecekondu neighborhoods continually increased in size and number throughout the major cities of Turkey, in the 1960's, they were partially legalized in an effort to transform the shanty settlements considered to be in adequate condition into formal neighorhoods, which brought infrastructure and services to many of these areas.[28] Throughout the 1970's, gecekondu neighborhoods came to be known as left-wing hotbeds. This decade was characaterized by political and economic instability as well as violence between radical left and right-wing groups, and in 1980 a major military intervention was staged, which led to the imposition of a conservative constitution, resulting in the closure of civil society groups, and the imprisonment of many who held membership in radical circles.[29]

A major neoliberalization process occurred following this coup. The military-led interim government facilitated the implementation of an IMF-proposed neoliberal programme, eschewing the import substitution industrialization-based economy of the prior two decades for an export-based model.[30]

In "Istanbul and the Concept of World Cities", Ayşe Öncü and Çağlar Keyder write that the 1980 coup

> ushered in a regime which was not of the earlier type of bureaucratic authoritarian rule, characterised by more efficient and greater state involvement in the industrialization effort. Rather, this new regime resolutely applied the orthodox policies counseled by the IMF in the hope of restructuring the

26 Tahire Erman, "The Politics of Squatter Studies in Turkey: The Changing Representations of Rural Migrants in the Academic Discourse," *Urban Studies* 38, no. 7 (2001):985.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid., 986-87.
30 Aylin Özman and Simten Coşar, "Reconceptualizing Center Politics in Post-1980 Turkey," in *Remaking Turkey:Globalizations, Alternative Modernities,Democracy,* ed. Fuat Keyman (New York:Lexington Books, 2007), 205.

economy towards greater openness and liberalization."[31]

In 1981, Turkey's banking sector underwent a dramatic change, as banks were now allowed to operate within international markets. In turn, international banks that had previously shied away from Turkey began to open branches in Istanbul. Istanbul had previously lost its role as Turkey's finance hub following the 1930's, as national banks began to leave the city for new headquarters in Ankara, however in the early 1980's the rapid alteration of banking regulations once again allowed Istanbul to establish itself as an "international financial center."[32]

A significant actor in transforming Istanbul throughout the 1980's was Bedrettin Dalan, who served as the city's mayor from 1983-1990. Mayor Dalan

> embarked upon transforming Istanbul from a tired city who's glory resided in past history, into a metropolis full of promise for the twenty-first century. Armed with a certainty of vision, arrogance, and enormous personal drive and executive capability, he used the vast powers and resources newly conferred to metropolitan mayoralities to put into motion a series of urban renewal projects which had remained on the drawing board for more than three decades.[33]

Dalan's huge projects included the levelling of large areas within inner-city historic quarters as well as the demolition of more than 30,000 buildings alongside the Golden Horn (the inlet which joins the Bosphorus with the Sea of Marmara.) Despite his projects being surrounded by extensive opposition, legal disputes, and corruption, Dalan was largely triumphant in his efforts to remake Istanbul, which subsequently "emerged as the showcase for Turkey's new era of integration into the world scene.[34]

Ilhan Tekeli points out that the rapid privatization of the state-owned sector, coupled with the collapse of the Soviet Union a decade later instilled Istanbul with an upgraded role in the global urban sphere: "Istanbul began to regain functions it had lost in the 1920's after the Soviet and Turkish revolutions. These transformations would give

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31 Ayşe Öncü and Çağlar Keyder, "Istanbul and the Concept of World Cities," (Istanbul:Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 1993), 19.

32 Ibid., 27-28.

33 Ibid., 28.

34 Ibid., 28-29.

Istanbul the status of a global city alongside the megacities of the world, although at the time urban planning circles in Turkey preferred to apply the concept of 'world city'."[35]

That 'world city' has subsequently expanded at an unprecedented rate. The population, which was just under 3 million in 1980, now officially stands at about 13 million[36], although the actual count is likely to be higher. Staggering sprawl has been the consequence of the rapid population spike, which largely consists of migrants from Anatolia seeking employment in the city with the country's most opportunities. Keyder remarks:

> Metropolitan Istanbul is already encroaching into its peripheries, in effect adding smaller cities to its urban area in a serial manner. It has become a sprawl without any clear divide to mark its limits. In official configuration the borders of the metropolitan municipality have been expanded to coincide with those of the province; all villages and rural centres have been made into neighbourhoods within the megalopolis. The prospect of endless growth in this same vein is a recipe for creating a geographical monster covering the entire area between the Marmara and the Black Sea coasts and gnawing into the remaining woodlands in the north of the city.[37]

Keyder points out that Istanbul has been under the governance of the same party (the Welfare Party) and its successor, the AKP (the ruling Justice and Development Party) and its leader (Recep Tayyıp Erdoğan, initially as the city's mayor then later as prime minster) since 1994.[38]

The conservative Welfare Party, which prevailed in local elections that year exhibited neo-liberal tendencies, interests that coincided with a broad group of elites focused on remaking the city as a global city/cultural capital:

> The new urban coalition—the city government, real estate concerns, the bourgeoisie in its manifold manifestations, and the top echelons of civil society,

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35 Ilhan Tekeli, "Cities in Modern Turkey," LSE Cities, Accessed December 12, 2012, http://lsecities.net/media/objects/articles/cities-in-modern-turkey

36 http://www.ibb.gov.tr/sites/airqualistanbul/documents/eng/istanbul.htm (Accessed May 8, 2013)

37 Çağlar Keyder, "Istanbul Into the Twenty-First Century," in *Orienting Istanbul: Cultural Capital of Europe?* ed. Deniz Göktürk, Levent Sosyal and Ipek Tureli (New York:Routledge, 2010), 31.

38 Between 1998-2001, however, the major of Istanbul, was Ali Müfit Güturna of the Fazilet Partisi (Virtue Party). The banning of the party in 2001 saw its former members forming the AKP (Justice and Development Party) and the more hardline SP (Felicity Party) Perhaps Keyder considers the Virtue Party as synonymous with its predecessor (Welfare Party) and successor (Justice and Development Party)

> including the media and the city-boostering foundations funded by businessmen—strived to consolidate the city around their image of gentility."[39]

As the city grows and grows, the contestation of its centrally-located areas intensifies. As the cases in this thesis demonstrate, the political and financial elites are continuously remaking Istanbul, especially its central areas as a major financial and "cultural" center. Malls and banks are spreading like wildfire; the centrally located areas are characterized by residences and spaces of consumption marketed to the wealthy. In the process, public space and low-income neigborhoods in the centre are being targeted. These initiatives are evidently meant to cleanse the city of marginalized and poor residents and confiscate public space-A particularly prominent technique used toward this end is that of musealization. The term is not frequently used in the greater realm of academic literature and there are only a few articles that apply the term to urban planning initiatives. Some of these will be discussed in order to better understand the term and its application in the context of the city.

39 Çağlar Keyder, "Istanbul Into the Twenty-First Century," 27-28.

CHAPTER 2. Exploring Key Themes of Musealization and Gentrification

2.1 Musealization

Within the term 'musealization' lies the implication of a transformative, dislocative, or even fatal process. Adorno, in his essay analyzing the differing positions of the poet Paul Valery and the novelist Marcel Proust regarding the role of the musem in the life (or death) of an artwork, describes such a process, where the distinction between 'museum' and 'mausoleum become blurred:

> The German word, 'museal' ['museumlike'], has unpleasant overtones. It describes objects to which the observer no longer has a vital relationship and which are in the process of dying. They owe their preservation more to historical respect than to the needs of the present. Museum and mausoleum are connected by more than phonetic association. Museums are like the family sepulchres of works of art.[40]

Embedded in the process of musealization is a transformation based on abstraction which is described as one that is threefold: "[1] loss or alteration of function, [2] alteration of context, [3] a new relation between the subject (viewer) and the object, whereby the viewer takes on a posture of admiration."[41]

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40 Theodor Adorno, "Valery Proust Museum," *Prisms,* trans. Samuel and Sherry Weber (Cambridge:MIT Press, 1996), 185.

41 Eva Sturm's definition (translated from German) as cited in: Anja Barbara Nelle, "Museality in the Urban Context: An Investigation of Museality and Musealisation Processes in Three Spanish-Colonial World Heritage Towns," *Urban Design International* 14, no. 3 (2009):154.

Anja Barbara Nelle, in an article detailing musealization processes in three World Heritage towns, describes how musealization is used in the urban sphere, referring to each element of the three-tiered definition by Sturm:

> [1] The alteration of function in the urban context signifies a modification or diversification of the uses of urban spaces and is related to changes in the uses situated in buildings...[2] An alteration of context in the urban sphere rarely includes the relocation of buildings, but describes modifications in characteristics that define the context such as the traffic system (that is, the establishment of pedestrian zones), the facades and street furniture and – interdependent to the built context-- the people who use the spaces and the way they do so... [3] Museality characterized by the 'posture of admiration' occurs if there is a pre-dominance of tourists present in the public space.[42]

Micheal Müller, who describes musealization as a "dislocation of place" also qualifies it as a "current strategy for transforming urban spaces, [which] exerts significance on our social, cultural, and aesthetic efforts directed towards visible reconstruction of the past."[43] Intriguingly, by noting that as museums continue to be characterized by the additions of shops and cafes, Müller points out that the process plays out in both directions, as "the dissolution of traditional spatial boundaries and projection of the aesthetic perspective onto urban space, in which historical and traditional narratives congeal into aesthetically frozen images, is paralleled by the urbanisation of the museum."[44]

Michael Kubiena uses the term to describe an urban renewal project in the Macedonian city of Skopje which seeks "to refashion the city to look as if it sprang directly from antiquity.."[45] Skopje, known as the "City of Solidarity" in the former Yugoslavia, which had "become a kind of open air museum for for the sculptural rough-edged brutalist architecture of that time, and which was produced under a Socialist political system that is now defunct, will have to give way to a different kind of

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42 Nelle, "Museality in the Urban Context,"155-56.

43 Michael Müller, "Musealisation, Aesthetisication, and Reconstructing the Past," *The Journal of Architecture* 4, no. 4 (1999):361.

44 Ibid.

45 Michael Kubiena "Skopje 2014-Musealizing the City, Reinventing History?," *Western Balkans Policy Review* 2, no. 1 (2012):87.

musealized city, with a very different aesthetic program." [46] The project involves the construction of a variety of bridges, statues and monuments, as well as "various public buildings, resembling neo-classical or neo-baroque architectural styles, as well as the decoration of existing structures with 'classical' facades."[47] Skopje 2014 "fabricates an idealized, aestheticized version of Macedonian history, by selectively transforming the world of experience into a representation of an ideological tendency and by erasing others—by history being aestheticized."[48]

Kubiena notes that the Skopje 2014 project does not simply involve the construction of new buildings, monuments and other structures, but also involves a "number of strategically patterned silences and omissions, such as Macedonia's Yugoslav past and the presence of minorities and their cultural and political manifestations."[49]

"Rethinking Diyarbakır Prison: Musealization as a Resistant Activism" by Alparslan Nas employs the term within a Turkish context. The article's subject was a notorious prison known for torture and human right violations inflicted upon primarily Kurdish political prisoners.[50] The term in this case is applied quite literally as the article deals with NGO initiatives seeking to transform the former prison in the primarily Kurdish southeastern region to a museum. At the same time, musealization is implemented as a process of resistance. Nas also invokes Adorno's Valery-Proust debate, writing that "in the case of the Diyarbakır Prison, the concept of the museum assumes a revolutionary character; not by working through art objects as Adorno's discussion is oriented around, but by providing an *after-life* to the death and torture."[51]

Nas argues that the process should be dialogical rather than pedagogical:

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46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid., 90.

49 Ibid., 96.

50 Alparslan Nas, "Rethinking Diyarbakır Prison: Musealization as a Resistant Activism," Cultural Studies and Literature Blog, Accessed April 4, 2013 http://zenfloyd.blogspot.com/2011/02/diyarbakr-prison-musealization-as.html

51 Ibid.

"Musealization is revolutionary only to the extent that it does not apply educational/research purposes and concentrates on activating a *dialogy* between the objects and the audiences in the museum of Diyarbakır prison.[52] This case distinguishes itself from those described by Nelle, Müller, and Kubiena, who all describe instances where musealization is implemented strategically in the city in order to create new narratives, usually for political and/or economic purposes. Nas also explains how musealization can be strategic but describes how it can be rescued from its tendency to be deceptive. In the case of the Diyarbakir prison, Nas describes how the process can be implemented in order to restore awareness and create new avenues of clarity.

2.2 Gentrification, Displacement, Dispossession

Themes of gentrification and dispossession circle resolutely around several of the musealization processes described in this thesis. As such, several of these themes will be analyzed throughout the rest of this chapter.

According to Neil Smith, while gentrification and its causes and effects result from various social, political, economic and cultural changes, it is the "complexity of capital mobility in and out of the built environment lies at the core of the process."[53] Smith points out that the rise of gentrification throughout the 1970's and 80's has paralleled a rise in the literature on the subject, which generally locates the explanation of the phenomenon within two categories, cultural and economic. Cultural explanations highlight the preference of the city among young urban professionals in light of the expanding service sector economy. Economic explanations often involve discussion of rising oil prices in conjunction with increased viability of acquiring inner-city property as new construction increases in the suburbs. This led many to conclude that gentrification had become a "back to the city" movement, indicating that the preferences and economic circumstances of the day that largely influenced those preferences had led certain groups to return to the city.[54] Smith, however, refers to empirical research

52 Ibid.

53 Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (London:Routledge, 1996), 51.

54 Ibid., 50.

conducted in Philadelphia's Society Hill neighbourhood in the early 1960's which depicts, rather than a return to the inner city from the suburbs, a "recentralization and reconsolidation of upper-and middle-class white residences in the city center."[55]

Smith alternative proposes a "rent gap hypothesis" as the key determining factor behind gentrification. The rent gap is the margin between potential and actual rent value of a particular piece of land or property, the most determinant factor for gentrification, which "occurs when the gap is sufficiently wide that developers can purchase structures cheaply, can pay the builder's costs and profit for rehabiliation, can pay the interest on mortage and construction loans, and can sell the end product for a sale price that leaves a satisfactory return to the developer."[56]

Another important concept for Smith, the revanchist city, is a useful concept worth bringing up within the context of gentrification in Istanbul. The roots of the term (coming from the French r*evanche,* meaning revenge) can be traced back to Paris at the turn of the 19th century. The revanchists were a bourgeouis faction opposed to the sentiments of the Paris Commune and the socialist/working class behind it, who had seized control of the city following the demise of the government under Napoleon III. They were vicious reactionaries who used violent tactics and moralist rhetoric to restore their bourgeois vision of Paris.[57]

Smith applies the term to the hostilities unleashed upon homeless residents of Manhattan's Lower East Side during the 80's and 90's, where the urban elite projected homeless and squatter citizens as invaders who had encroached upon an entitled, secure space.[58] In 1988, Tompkins Square Park in the Lower East Side was referred to as a "cesspool" by the Mayor at the time, following an antigentrification riot that took place in the park. The riots were blamed on "anarchists", and claims of police brutality were brushed off by the police commissioner.[59] Editorials in the *New York Times* claimed that

55 Ibid., 52.

56 Ibid., 65.

57 Tom Slater, "Revanchist City," in *Encyclopedia of Urban Studies,* ed. Ray Hutchison (Thousand Oaks:Sage, 2009)

58 Smith, *The New Urban Frontier,* 213-218.

59 Smith, Neil, "New City, New Frontier: The Lower East Side as Wild, Wild West," in *Variations on a Theme Park*, ed. Michael Sorkin (New York:Hill and Wang, 1992), 62.

the homeless living in the park had "stolen it from the public" and that it needed to be "reclaimed."[60] Following the closing of the park in 1991, homeless camps throughout the city were demolished as were buildings occupied by squatters.[61]

Smith emphasizes that the dominant discourse on homelessness had shifted from "sympathetic albeit often patronizing" to one that blames homeless people for their own predicament and for greater social problems.[62] However, the revanchist discourse wasn't limited to the homeless. Smith writes:

> ..the revanchist city expresses a race/gender/class/terror felt by middle-and ruling-class whites who are suddenly stuck in place by a ravaged property market, the threat and reality of unemployment, the decimation of social services, and the emergence of minority and immigrant groups, as well as women, as powerful urban actors. It portends a vicious reaction against minorities, the working class, homeless people, the unemployed, women, gays and lesbians, immigrants.[63]

Current gentrification initiatives in Istanbul, especially the ones in Tarlabaşı and Sulukule that will be discussed later on, are qualitatively similar to the policies that forced out Istanbul's non-Muslim community in the 20th century, insofar as they bear a revanchist quality. Revanchist discourses are employed to cast blame upon a certain community, ethnic, religious or otherwise, in order to gain public support for the seizure of land/property belonging to those groups, and eventually their expulsion. Musealization then functions as a technique that attempts to mask the ugliness and violence of these initiatives, softening the blow by applying a thin coat of historical manipulation. Smith's rent gap hypothesis is also illuminative in understanding how the systematic devaluation of property and land in these areas is instrumental in their redevelopment and marketing.

David Harvey argues that urban transformation almost always possesses a class element and as disproportionately harms the urban poor. Harvey describes the urban

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60 Smith, *The New Urban Frontier,* 214.

61 Ibid., 216-217.

62 Ibid., 222.

63 Ibid., 207.

onslaught led by Haussmann in 19th century Paris, who "tore through the old Parisian slums, using powers of expropriation in the name of civic improvement and renovation. He deliberately engineered the removal of much of the working class and other unruly elements from the city centre, where they constituted a threat to public order and political power."[64] Furthermore, Harvey sees a clear connection between social inequality and urbanization because "cities have arisen through geographical and social concentrations of a surplus product. Urbanization has always been, therefore a class phenomenon, since surpluses are extracted from somewhere and from somebody, while control over their disbursement typically lies in a few hands."[65] For Harvey capitalism requires growth through "accumulation by dispossession", which is "the mirror-image of capital absorption through urban redevelopment, and is giving rise to numerous conflicts over the capture of valuable land from low-income populations that may have lived there for many years."[66]

Another worthwhile concept important to Harvey, and relevant to this discussion is that of monopoly rent, which "arises because social actors can realize an enhanced income stream over an extended time by virtue of their exclusive control over some directlty or indirectly tradeable item which is in some crucial respects unique and non-replicable."[67] Due to globalization, monopoly rents are more difficult to come by as trade becomes less and less restricted, however capitalism thrives on the premise of monopoly power and replicate it, so it must find a means to preserve it in a "situation where the protections afforded by the so-called 'natural monopolies' of space and locatşon and the political protections of national boundaries have been seriously diminished if not eliminated."[68]

Beyond that, Harvey asserts that 'culture' has become increasingly linked with monopoly power, since "claims to uniqueness and authenticity can best be articulated as

64 David Harvey, "The Right to the City,"*New Left Review 53* (2008):33.

65 Ibid., 24.

66 Ibid., 34.

67 David Harvey, *Spaces of Capital:Towards a Critical Geography* (Edinburgh:Edinburgh University Press, 2001), 395.

68 Ibid., 398-99.

distinctive and non replicable cultural claims."[69] The shining example is that of the wine industry, which Harvey describes as an industry that seeks to retain monopoly rent by refusing to allow widepsread usage of location-specific terminology. He gives the example of French winemakers pressuring the EU to forbid foreign wine producers to use certain French terminology, important signposts of the specific quality of the product since "the French wine trade authenticity and originality of its product which grounds the uniqueness upon which monopoly rent can be based."[70]

The notion of monopoly rent and its links to culture are important when considering a city like Istanbul, recently crowned with the title of European Capital of Culture. How do powerful actors seize control of monopoly rents in cities such as Istanbul, which has such a rich and unique history featuring monuments, landscapes and views not found anywhere else? This will be an important question to consider in the context of musealization, how are spaces or buildings produced or reproduced using particular historical initiatives that enable the consolidation and/or production of monopoly rent?

Leela Fernandes, in a 2004 article entitled "The Politics of Forgetting: Class Politics, State Power and the Restructing of Urban Space in India" describes how the implementation of neoliberal policy in major cities such as Mumbai marginalizes the urban poor, who are subsequently forgotten and ignored by the state and the burgeoning middle class. According to Fernandes, the redevelopment of public space in urban India is not simply in response to the desires and consumer interests of the rising middle class, but are in fact strategic mechanisms of collaborative initiatives implemented by the public and private sectors.[71] She points to attempts at privatization of public gardens, and the drastic redevelopment ("beautification") of parks and other spaces to make them more friendly to popular middle-class activities such as jogging.[72]

She argues that "the state actively participates in attempting to produce a middle-

69 Ibid., 399.

70 Ibid. p.400

71 Leela Fernandes, "The Politics of Forgetting: Class Politics, State Power, and the Restructuring of Urban Space in India," *Urban Studies* 41 no. 12 (2004):2424.

72 Ibid.

class based-vision of a beautified, globalising city in which signs of poverty can be forgotten in both spatial and political terms."[73] The notion of a politics of forgetting is pertinent in the discussion of Istanbul's Tarlabaşı neighborhood, a place that was ignored and reviled by society and the state until it was realized as a profitable redevelopment opportunity.

Attention will now be directed to the five cases mentioned earlier. With the exception of Sulukule, these cases all took place (within the past decade) or are currently taking place in Beyoğlu. They all involve urban transformation to a lesser or greater extent implemented without public consent for the ultimate goal of profit, regardless of the impact on the social fabric and environmental integrity of the areas in question. Instances of dispossession, transformation of public space, and the encouraged proliferation of consumption spaces are frequently intertwined within the greater intention of manipulating and controlling the city.

73 Ibid.

CHAPTER 3.

PROLIFERATION OF CONSUMPTION SPACES

3.1 Demirören Mall and Hüseyin Ağa Mosque

Michael Sorkin, referring to the proliferation of skyscrapers, malls, hotels, and chain stores in the American city in the 1980's, calls this new urban form "a city without a place attached to it.[74] Three characteristics can be attributed to this new city: "the dissipation of all stable relations to local physical and cultural geography[75], "obsession with "security," with rising levels of manipulation and surveillance over its citizenry and with a proliferation of new modes of segregation[76], and a "city of simulations, television city, the city as theme park. This is nowhere more visible than in its architecture, in buildings that rely for their authority on images drawn from history, from a spuriously appropriated past that substitutes for a more exigent and examined present."[77] All three of these characteristics seem to largely shape new urban development in Istanbul today, especially the third, its architecture: "Whether it represents generic historicity or generic modernity, such design is based in the same calculus as advertising, the idea of pure imageability, oblivious to the real needs and traditions of those who inhabit it."[78]

74 Michael Sorkin, "Introduction:Variations on a Theme Park," in *Variations on a Theme Park,* ed. Michael Sorkin (New York:Hill and Wang, 1992), xi.

75 Ibid., xiii.

76 Ibid., xiii.

77 Ibid., xiv.

78 Ibid., xiv-xv.

Beyoğlu itself has largely been remade to function as a space of consumption. Zeynep Merey Enlil points out that the pedestrianization of Istiklal Avenue was undergone in order to refashion the area as a new cosmpolitan zone. The street, which also features a 19th century-style tram, is the center of area which has been reinforced with "fashionable nostalgia."[79]

The Demirören Mall and Fransız Sokağı, discussed in this chapter, portray both this "generic historicity" and "generic modernity" alike, lacking concern for the needs of those living and working in the areas in which they were established. Both are spaces of consumption covered with a gloss of history and culture, unnatural as they are strategic.

The neoliberal transition of the 1980's quickly resulted in the rise of malls, international retail chains and fast food restaurants. By the late 1990's there were over 1000 foreign retail outlets in the city, the 1990's and the 2000's saw the construction of several shopping malls, the latter decade also witnessed fast food restaurants spreading quickly throughout Istanbul.[80] Asu Aksoy describes how one of these malls, Kanyon, (built in a district among various skyscrapers that have entered the Istanbul skyline in recent years) "illustrates how public space has been incorporated into the culture of hyper-consumption.[81] Following the declaration of Istanbul as the 2010 European Capital of Culture, it was declared that Istanbul would become a "brand city", Prime Minister Erdoğan himself stating that the cultural capital accolade should be used to attract 10 million tourists.[82]

In May 2011, the Demirören Mall opened on Istiklal Avenue, Istanbul's main cultural and entertainment artery. The mall was the subject of much controversy. Built via the renovation of the 19th century-built Sin-Em Han, which formerly housed two cinemas decades prior, its construction extended beyond the height of the neighbouring Cercle D'Orient building. The height limit was an initial condition of construction that was circumvented through subsequent legislation. The construction of the mall also

79 Zeynep Merey Enlil, "The Neoliberal Agenda and the Changing Form of Istanbul," *International Planning Studies* 16 no. 1 (2011):21.

80 Ibid., 17.

81 Asu Aksoy, "Riding the Storm: 'New Istanbul'," *City* 16 no. 1-2 (2012):102.

82 Ibid. p.103

significantly damaged the walls and dome of another neighbour, the 16th-century built Hüseyin Ağa Mosque. After a description of the damage to the mosque was published in the Radikal newspaper in November 2011, Demirören publicly declared that it would undertake responsibility for the mosque's renovation.[83]

The construction scaffolding is surrounded by walls of old photos and text pertaining to the mosque's history, as well as historical photos of Istiklal Street and scenes of the surrounding area. In large letters atop the walls it reads: "The restoration of the Hüseyin Ağa Mosque is being undertaken by Demirören Holding"[84] The mosque is also musealized as a historic building undergoing renovation, dislocated from its (pre-Demirören) status as a functional religious facility where many went to pray.

Hüseyin Ağa Mosque is edified as a historically significant place, literally masking Demirören Holding's complicity in the extensive damage of what was also an operational place of worship. At first glance the postered walls surrounding the mosque's perimeter present it as an aging artefact deeply in need of restoration, of which Demirören Holding has graciously agreed to oversee and finance. The viewer is meant to appreciate the historical legacy of the 16th century mosque as well as its ongoing renovation, which masks the fact that its musealization was a strategic mechanism. It was done to redirect criticism for Demirören Holding's lack of concern for the mosque as both a place of worship and a vulnerable building, the structural integrity of which they were aware would be compromised if a mall was built next door.

In April 2013, the restorations came to a halt. It was announced that Demirören would not longer fund the mosque's restoration after having alotted 1 million TL for the project.[85] The self-promoting scaffolding still surrounds the area. At present, it is unclear when and if the Hüseyin Ağa Mosque will return to its functional status. The musealization of the mosque was rooted in violence and destruction. However, the same process seeks to conceal that violence and subsequently bury it within the positive context of a restoration project. The unwillingness of the company to see the restoration

83 Tuba Parlak, "Renovation Ongoing at Damaged Ağa Mosque," *Hurriyet Daily News*, May 12, 2012, Accessed December 12, 2012 http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/renovation-ongoing-at-damaged-aga-mosque.aspx?pageID=238&nid=20692

84 My own translation from the Turkish

85 Fatih Yagmur, "Ağa Cami Restorasyonu Kaynağa Takıldi," *Radikal,* April 28, 2013, Accessed May 23, 2013 http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/aga_camii_restorasyonu_kaynaga_takildi-1131356

through reveals its frail attempt to occupy a position of accountability.

Hüseyin Ağa Mosque wasn't the mall's only neighbour that experienced severe damage during the construction period. The owner of Ağa Lokantası, a restaurant that opened in 1920, rebuked requests to sell his property, so developers began digging under numerous sides of the restaurant, forcing the owner to eventually sell out of fear that the building would collapse. Finally, the remarks of a security guard working at the mall provide insight on how the Demirören building itself is musealized. "It'll take only a year or two for the shopping centre to be as black as the [Cercle d'Orient] building next to it. In fifty years, this will also be a historical building; nobody will even notice the difference."[86]

These comments are interesting given photos found near the entrance of the mall, one of which is an old black-and-white photo depicting the late-19th century Sin-Em Han building (which was also known as the Deveaux Apartments) several decades after its construction. Below is a photo taken from roughly the same perspective, although it depicts the sparkling white Demirören, which is portrayed as an updated, restored, modern, yet faithful-to-the-original version of its former self. The first photo reads "Deveaux Apartments, 1890 before the fire", depicting the building shortly after its construction. The second photo reads "Demirören Istiklal, the entire glory of Deveaux lives on."[87] (see figure 3.2) The photo implies that the mall, much like how a museum preserves artefacts or artworks, preserves the original aura and style of the building and acts as its protectorate, ensuring its immortality.

86 The account of Ağa Lokantası as well as the security guard's comments are from a detailed account of the mall and the controversy surrounding its construction: Letch, Constanze "Digging Deeper-Istiklal Caddesi Controversial New Shopping Centre," Accessed December 12, 2012 http://www.tarlabasiistanbul.com/2011/05/istiklal-demiroren/

87 My own translation from Turkish.

Figure 3.1 Outside Demirören Mall (Source: authors's photograph)

The photographs present the mall as part of a historical continuum. It is as much of an 'invented tradition' as is the rebuilding of the British Parliament in a 19th-century Gothic Style as described by historian Eric Hobsbawm, where repetition of behaviours, norms, and practices (in this case the replication/preservation of an architectural style) are established to demarcate continuity with a historical past. Hobsbawm points out that this continuity is usually fabricated.[88]

Such is the case with the Demirören mall, although as suggested by the comments of the security guard, in fifty years the brand new and glossy-white mall will

88 Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction, Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition,* ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge:Cambridge University Press, 1983,) 1-2.

have lost its lustre and taken on an aura similar to its predecessor, writing itself into the historical fabric of a building with which it bears no organic and essential similarity.

The construction of the huge mall, undergone without consideration of the neighbouring business owners or the architectural integrity of neighbouring buildings, articulates another identity preference held by the political and financial elite. It portrays their shared vision of what the city should be: a place free to exhibit signs of its physical and architectural heritage, so long as it benefits their interests and functions according to their decisions.

Figure 3.2 Near Demiroren Malls Entrance (source: author's photograph)

The mall features numerous floors, restaurants, cafes, a movie theatre and a home electronics store that takes upon an entire floor. The entry floor, patrolled by security personnel, is a wide and open entrance revealing the ultra-modern shopping center to all passersby. However, the entrance seems to be inviting and cautious at the same time, by displaying the mall for all to see, with its escalators, security guards, and upscale cafes, the invitation is open only to visitors within an intended demographic.

The neighbouring Cercle D' Orient building began to experience a similiar fate at the end of 2012. İnci Pastanesi, a reknowned and beloved profiterol shop that opened in 1944, was evicted from the building. Inci was that the last remaining storefront in the Cercle D' Orient building, cherished by locals and popular among visitors. The pastry shop was gutted on a cold winter day in December 2012, numerous onlookers and passersby stared in disbelief, incredulous that the Istiklal Caddesi institution was being destroyed before their eyes. The eviction, forced via lawsuit from Kamer İnşaat, the firm overseeing the "renovation" of the Cercle D' Orient was upheld by the Supreme Court, in spite of an appeal from İnci.[89]

The historic Emek Cinema, also located within the Cercle D' Orient, was demolished in April 2013 in spite of numerous protests, included one attended by numerous prominent Turkish actors and directors. This demonstration was met with aggresssion, as police sprayed water and tear-gassed the demonstrators. The reaction of the police faced intensive criticism, although Interior Minister Muammer Güler was quick to blame the escalation on protestors.[90]

The theatre, built in 1924, was demolished as the Cercle D'Orient is planned to be transformed into a shopping center much like its neighbor. Following the initial demolition of the interior of the theatre, the building's exterior was covered with wallpaper that echoed the original facade of the building, albeit in a revitalized, sparkly-clean appearance. Gone are İnci and Emek, their replacements are sure to be corporate coffeeshops and an ultramodern cinema, similar to those found next door at the Demirören Mall. The notion of two shiny new shopping malls with cafes and cinemas directly next door to each other is almost comic in a darkly revealing manner. Such excessiveness is symbolic of the extent to which spaces of consumption have become prevalent throughout Istanbul.

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89 "Historical Patisserie Closed Down Amid Protests," *Hürriyet Daily News*, December 8, 2012, Accessed December 12, 2012 http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/historical-patisserie-closed-down-amid-protests.aspx?pageID=238&nID=36394&NewsCatID=341

90 "Interior Minister Blames Provocateurs For Emek Clash," *Hürriyet Daily News*, April 9, 2013, Accessed April 9, 2013 http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/interior-minister-blames-provocateurs-for-emek-clash-.aspx?pageID=238&nID=44557&NewsCatID=341

3.2 Fransız/Cezayir Sokağı

The Fransız Sokağı project of 2004 sought to refurbish Cezayir Sokak (Algeria Street), a sloping street in Beyoğlu located just behind the famous Galatasaray High School in order to create a quarter similar to one found in late 19th century Paris. To this end, the street features numerous French-themed murals on the walls of cafes serving French-themed food and drink; the gas-powered street lamp lining the street were actually sent by the Paris City Hall.[91]

Amy Mills notes the irony of naming the project 'French' Street, given its original name, Algeria Street. Once a Greek neighborhood, most of the buildings on the street were uninhabited, unable to be maintained by the landlords who took over the buildings following the expulsion of Greeks in 1964.[92] Though the project was framed as a reconnection with a certain European or French historical past, the neighbourhood on which Fransız Sokağı is situated has no French past. It was however, in recent years, a mixed neighbourhood including a Roma and Kurdish population, many of whom were intimidated out of their homes by threats of eviction or rent increase, and were never informed about the project in the first place.[93]

Fransız Sokağı is a profitable venture for those involved in its creation, as the street and its cafes are popular, especially among tourists. It is also an exercise in musealization, a near-simulacrum of a street one might find in Paris. However, the cultural and historical reasoning employed seeks to gloss over the forced evictions and drastic transformation of an area from a mixed-used neighbourhood to a zone of consumption enjoyed mainly by tourists. Visiting the street on any busy evening will find one in the midst of a crowd primarily consisting of tourists. If one is willing to conceive of the street as an "architectural monument" of sorts, Müller's remarks seem quite appropriate: "Cultural politics regarding regional or local history embodied in architectural monuments are usually not much concerned about those who live there.

91 Sara Harowitz, "A Slice Of Paris in Istanbul," Cultour Magazine, Accessed May 8, 2013 http://www.schoolvoorjournalistiek.com/europeanculture/?p=3978

92 Amy Mills, "Narratives in City Landscapes: Cultural Identity in Istanbul," *Geographical Review* 95 no.3 (2005):454.

93 Ibid,. 454-456.

They are not designed to please the locals, but primarily to take into account the imperatives of the tourist industry, to attract people who will bring money..."[94]

The choice of France as the cultural theme is not surprising, given the vast cultural influence France has had on Turkey. Modern Turkish contains a significant amount of French loanwords (the words for train, ticket, truck, waiter, campus, to name a few). There are numerous French high schools in Istanbul, as well as a French university, Galatasary Üniversitesi. The cultural and historic ties make the French theme of the project an attractive choice in Beyoğlu.

Nevertheless, the street, with its real Parisian streetlights and constructed Parisian charm, is a textbook case of musealization. Refering to the famous Parisian quarter, Asu Aksoy describes it as a "gaudy fake Monmartre", noting that the "Beyoğlu Municipality was the first to allow private developers to turn an entire street in a run-down part of the centrally-located Pera district into a themed street, based on a French —in reality, a pseudo-French—lifestyle."[95]

As a living, breathing exhibition, it gives the spectator what appears to be a genuine French atmosphere, assuming the spectator doesn't ask any questions. A brief walk down the street reveals a crowd of mostly older tourists, who are able to breathe in a little bit of Paris during their short visit in Istanbul. The genuine streetlights and French artwork adorning the walls of the 19th century buildings imply that "this is how it always was." It seeks to capture what was once a real segment of the urban landscape, and sever it from its previous two contexts, (a Greek neighbourhood followed by a mixed enclave of Kurds and Roma). By doing so, it masks the historical reality of that particular landscape, the fact that the Greeks and later on, the Roma, Kurds, and other residents of the neighbourhood were forcibly relocated. These identities are to be suppressed so that the quarter can be re-claimed and re-developed. One particularly effective way of doing so is by decorating the urban fabric with physical elements pertaining to a specific yet separate cultural identity, around which a profitable zone of consumption can be constructed. As Mills points out: "..the French Street project deliberately inscribes a French identity onto the urban landscape, even though the

94 Müller, "Musealisation, Aesthetisication, and Reconstructing the Past," 365.

95 Aksoy, "Riding the Storm: 'New Istanbul'," 102.

history this commercial development claims to "revive" is completely synthetic."[96] What is most important about Fransız Sokağı, beyond its museal character and existence as a recently-built consumption space is how in relates to the themes in the next chapter, with regards to Tarlabaşı. In both cases, a formerly non-Muslim quarter that was replaced by marginalized groups after the previous residents left the neighborhood (and the country) experiences another wave of redevevelopment via dispossession.

96 Mills, "Narratives in City Landscapes," 457.

CHAPTER 4.

MARGINALIZATION AND DISPLACEMENT: TWO NEIGHBOURHOODS

Tolga Islam locates three particular waves of gentrification in Istanbul, the first of which began in the 1980's in quarters located alongside the Bosphorus, such as Kuzguncuki, Arnavutköy, and Ortaköy.[97] The second wave began in the late 1980's in Beyoğlu quarters like Cihangir and Galata [98], while the third wave took place in the 1990's in the Golden Horn neighborhoods of Fener and Balat.[99] Islam notes that most of the housing stock in each of those neighorhoods were former Greek, Armenian and Jewish residences. After these minorities left the city they were replaced by rural migrants in the 60's and 70's who were unable to maintain or improve upon this housing stock. As a result, "social decline was followed by physical decay, which led to further deterioration and devaluation. By the 1980's, these old minority neighborhoods became apt places for gentrification, with the easily 'displaceable' occupants and inexpensive housing stock they possess."[100]

Keyder argues that since the globalization process began in the 1980's, dynamics of class and social inequality have changed drastically, as "globalized spaces of commerce and leisure emerged along with secluded residential areas on the outskirts of the city."[101] With the emergence of these new spatial and social dynamics, Istanbul is now witnessing "Latin American levels of income inequality—such as scavenging in

97 Tolga Islam, "Outside the Core: Gentrification in Istanbul" in *Gentrification in a Global Context* ed. *Rowland Atkinson and Gary Bridge* (New York:Routledge, 2005), 127.

98 Ibid., 128.

99 Ibid., 129-30.

100 Ibid., 124.

101 Çağlar Keyder "Globalization and Social Exclusion in Istanbul," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29 no.1 (2005):124.

garbage bins, the *cartonero* phenomenon of collecting salvageables in wealthier neighborhoods, and street children at busy intersections attacking SUV's with squeegees —have become increasingly common."[102]

Such spaces include gated communities, which have appeared on the urban landscape of Istanbul in recent years. Zeynep Merey Ensil points out that these communitites have popped up on the outskirts in close proximity to gecekondu neighborhoods, although the new structures have created elements of physical and social segregation which previously did not exist in Istanbul.[103]

The next two cases concern the agressive gentrification projects in two Istanbul neighborhoods. Tarlabaşı, located in the center of Beyoğlu is inner-city in the truest sense of the term. Sulukule, located in the Fatih District near the old city walls, can also be considered "inner-city" in the context of a 21st century Istanbul that has expanded in every direction, as the city now encompassing the entire Istanbul region. Both cases are similar insofar as they deliberately seek to displace poor and marginalized groups in order to construct entirely new neighborhoods that are marketed to the upper classes. The background and recent history of these neighborhoods will be discussed alongside the musealization efforts that have corresponded with the brutal and non-consensual gentrification initiatives. Although Sulukule is not located in Beyoğlu, unlike Tarlabaşı and the other sites analyzed in this thesis, I felt that it should not be left out of the discussion as it overlaps in numerous ways with the Beyoğlu cases and the three referential themes.

4.1 Renovation Tarlabaşı

"Renovation Tarlabaşı" took place in the Tarlabaşı neighbourhood in September 2012. This street art festival will be discussed in the greater context of the Tarlabaşı neighbourhood itself and the so-called urban renewal project that is currently taking place in the area. Tarlabaşı, located in the heart of Istanbul, was formerly a middle-class Greek and Armenian neighbourhood. It became a popular place for marginalized groups to live (primarily Roma, Kurds, African migrants, and transgendered people) following

102 Ibid.

103 Enlil, "The Neoliberal Agenda and the Changing Form of Istanbul," 19.

the Wealth Tax and the September 6th and 7th riots that forced out the majority of its former community.[104]

The formerly non-Muslim-owned apartment buildings were legally transfered to a set of newcomer landlords by the state following the expulsion of their former owners. According to Ünsal and Kuyucu, "rural migrants mostly benefited from this process either by purchasing the buildings from their official caretakers (*kayyum*) or by extra-legally appropriating them and retroactively becoming legal 'owners'." Shortly thereafter, "a lucrative rental market emerged in the area, where the new owners rented out extra-dwellings, either formally or informally. According to resesarch conducted in the project area, 75 per cent of Tarlabaşı's inhabitants are tenants, 20 percent are property owners and the remaining 5 percent are occupiers."[105]

In the late 1980's, Mayor Bedrettin Dalan demolished hundreds of buildings in Tarlabaşı in order to create a major road connecting developing areas between the city centre and the airport. By effectively sectioning off the area from the rest of the district, these initiatives accelerated the socio-economic and structural decline of the quarter in the 1990's.[106] Tarlabaşı is presently the site of an aggressive and controversial gentrification project that seeks to displace its current residents and remake the area into a chic bourgeois enclave complete with modern cafes and office buildings. This project is made possible by Law No. 5366.

Law No. 5366, passed in 2005, is officially entitled the "Law on Renovating, Conserving, and Actively Using Dilapidated Historical and Cultural Immovable Assets." It allows municipalities to redevelop areas "which have been dilapidated and are about to lose their characteristics, create zones of housing business, culture, tourism, and social facilities in such areas, take measures against risks of natural disasters, renovate,

104 Nil Mutluer, "Disposable Masculinities in Istanbul," in *Global Masculinities and Manhood* ed. Ronald L. Jackson and Murali Balaji (Champaign:University of Illinois Press, 2011), 82.

105 Tuna Kuyucu and Özlem Ünsal, "Challenging the Neoliberal Urban Regime: Regeneration and Resistance in Basibuyuk and Tarlabasi," in *Orienting Istanbul:Cultural Capital of Europe?* ed. Deniz Göktürk, Levent Soysal and Ipek Tureli (New York:Routledge, 2010), 57.

106 Ibid.

conserve and actively use historical and cultural immovable assets."[107] The law also allows municipalities to expropriate private property from owners if a settlement is not reached[108]

Today, a blog[109] that follows the gentrification process in Tarlabaşı provides insight into the flourishing community of the neighborhood. The neighborhood features one of the most popular Sunday markets in the city, which reflects the diversity and community linkages of the neighborhood. However, these sides of Tarlabaşı are not highlighted in the majority of the information available regarding the neighborhood. It is difficult to find any information regarding Tarlabasi that doesn't refer to the neighborhood as a center of crime and squalor. Print media as well as books and scholarly articles that mention Tarlabaşı refer to poverty, violence, crime, and suffering, often in a sensational fashion which emphasizes those attributes as the neighborhood's defining chacateristics. For example, a recent book by Peter Clark describes the neighborhood as follows: "Tarlabaşı is one of the grimmest quarters of Istanbul: tenement buildings of an undistinguished design, poverty stricken people, squalor in the streets."[110]

Newspaper articles often highlight tensions among different groups as a defining feature of the quarter, or seek to portray it as a seedy-red light district, emphasizing the presence of transgendered residences and demonizing their professions. According to Nil Mutluer, the neighborhood has been stigmatized since the 1940's, following the mass exodus of non-Muslims from the area in light of both the Wealth Tax and the events of September 6th and 7th. The subsequent groups who came to reside in Tarlabaşı are subject to specific stigmatization; Kurds as terrorists, Roma as criminals, African migrants as drug dealers. Authorities and other actors perpetuate these stigmas in order to create the perception of a "homogenized criminal community."[111]

One article, in which the expatriate author claims to enjoy living in the

107 http://www.migm.gov.tr/en/Laws/Law5366_DilapidatedHistoricAssets_2010-12-31_EN_rev01.pdf Accessed February 20, 2012

108 Ibid.

109 www.tarlabasiistanbul.com

110 Peter Clark, "Istanbul: A Cultural History," (Northampton:Interlink, 2012), 210.

111 Mutluer, "Disposable Masculinities in Istanbul," 82.

neighborhood still seems to focus on the negative, albeit in a whimsical and condescending fashion:

> And Tarlabaşı can be exciting. Last December, a court in Ankara closed down the main Kurdish political party, leading to riots in İstanbul and in thes outheast of Turkey. Our Tarlabaşı police station always barricades our block in the event of trouble, and as I stood outside I saw three policemen point down the hill and start running back to the station. Then I saw what looked like a scene from a Frankenstein movie, with angry villagers carrying torches, only these were Molotov cocktails. I stepped inside and POOF, one landed at my door, followed by a BANG, then the skittering of tear gas canisters on the pavement. I love Tarlabaşı.[112]

In Tarlabaşı, demolitions began in early 2012. Nearly a year later, the demolitions have not been succeeded by any sort of new construction, and the section of Tarlabaşı affected resembles a war zone, as numerous buildings have been gutted, leaving only the facades, which are left to experience further degradation and filled with trash that is not collected by municipality trucks. Graffitti and street art has steadily appeared amidst the gutted buildings. Several streets reveal rows gutted facades which lie directly across from presently-inhabited apartment buildings. Children play in and around shells of buildings from which scattered debris frequently falls. No apparent concern for the safety and comfort of the residents neighbouring the demolition area is evident. In August 2012, corrugated metal fencing was erected around the facades on Sakı Ağaçı Sokak, a main thoroughfare passing through the center of the demolition zone. The fencing in conjunction with the gutted buildings and excessive debris creates an intimidating siege-like environment. The boundary of the fencing juts out onto the street, creating a narrow corridor that is dangerous for pedestrians to pass through since there is just enough room left for cars to zip by.

Prior to the demolitions, the Mayor of Beyoğlu, Ahmet Misbah Demircan, claimed that up to 70% of the buildings in the demolition zone were vacant and that the vacancy exacerbated crime in the area. However, figures from the construction company in charge of the project actually revealed that only 40% of the area's buildings were

112 Michael Kuser, “I Used to Hate Tarlabaşı” *Today's Zaman*, August 29, 2010, Accessed April 12, 2013 http://todayszaman.com/columnistDetail_getNewsById.action?newsId=220332

uninhabited, the remainder were either homes or workplaces.[113] Demircan also claimed that the new Tarlabaşı will turned into the Champ Elysees[114], referring to the famous boulevard in Paris known for its shopping. It is clear that local authorities wish to transform Tarlabaşı into an unrecognizable place, showing no interest in the current social reality of its inhabitants or their future concerns.

"Renovation Tarlabaşı" was sanctioned by the municipality and backed by a score of corporate donors. It featured different types of artists from Turkey and six other countries, in additon to music and dance performances, DJ's, and other activities. [115] It took place on Karakurum Sokak, down the street from the Virgin Mary Syriac Church. The facades and interior walls of a dozen or so 19th century Greek buildings, which had been gutted during the ongoing demolitions on Tarlabaşı, were adorned with various paintings and stencils. One particularly troubling stencil was of a recycler and his cart. Recyclers are visible throughout Istanbul, they comprise thousands of men and women who walk the streets pulling large carts and recycling paper products, bottles, etc. They are targeted by the municipalities and often have their carts confiscated. Tarlabaşı was the home to hubs for many of these recyclers, often basement apartments where they sort and categorize their haul. Many of them have been forced out by the recent demolitions.[116]

Street art, which serves to function as a means to articulate creative and political expression by using the urban landscape as medium, is in this case co-opted by the authorities and used to turn what was once a residential street into a temporary museum exhibit. The buildings, which lost their prior function due to the demolitions are further dislocated from their present reality when they are covered with street art. The viewers

113 Erisa Dautaj Şenerdem, "Contradicting Figures Provided on Istanbul's Tarlabaşı Project," *Hürriyet Daily News*, October 30, 2010, Accessed May 19, 2013 http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/contradicting-figures-provided-on-istanbuls- tarlabasi-project.aspx?pageID=438&n=contradicting-figures-provided-on-tarlabasi-project-2010-10-29

114 "Tarlabaşi Champs Elysees'ye Dönuşecek," *Sabah*, January 20, 2010, Accessed May 5th, 2013

http://www.sabah.com.tr/Ekonomi/2010/01/20/tarlabasi_champs_elyseesye_donusecek

115 http://www.streetartistanbul.com/2012-renovation-tarlabasi/

116 Sebastian Meyer, "The Recycling Families of Tarlabaşı," Accessed December 12, 2012 http://www.tarlabasiistanbul.com/2011/10/the-recycling-familes-of-tarlabasi/

of the exhibition are separated from the violence and displacement inherent in demolition by the art that renders the devastated facades somehow renewed and reinterpretable as a canvas, perhaps even conveying messages of resistance.

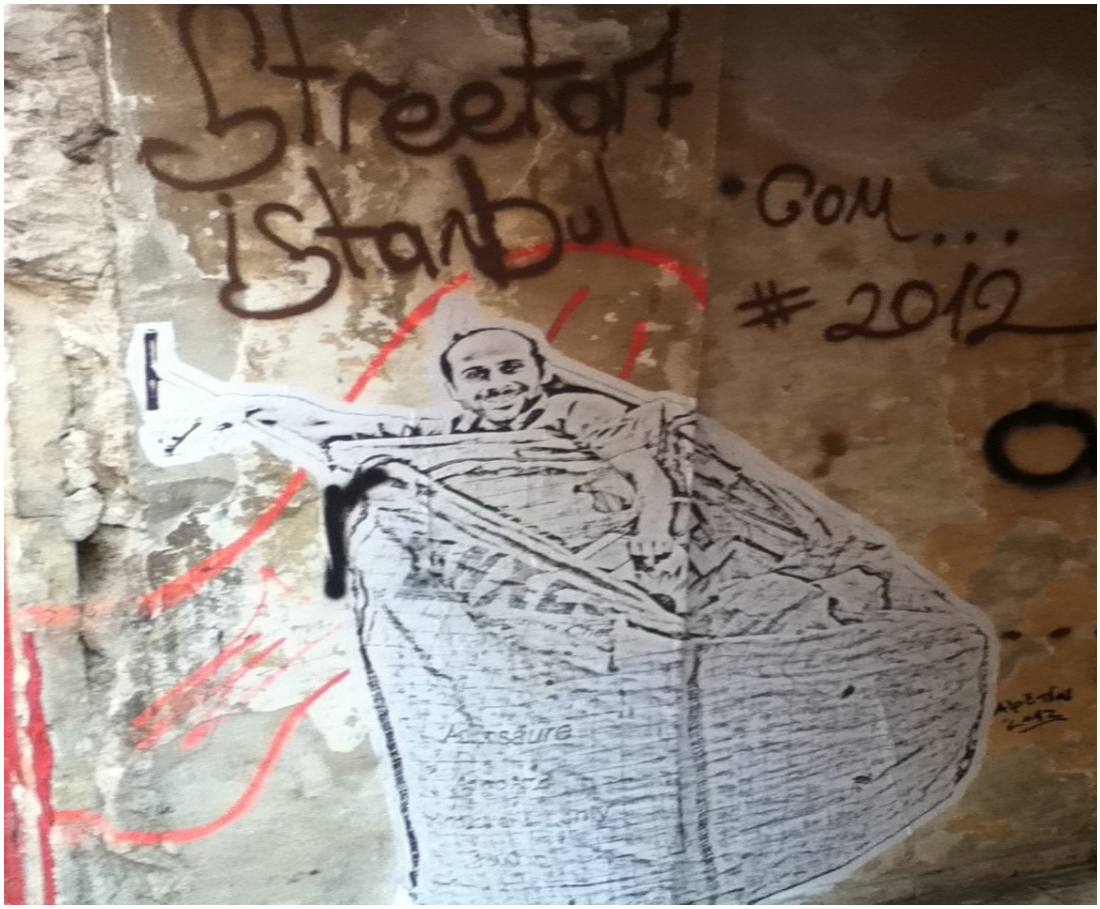

Figure 4.1 Tarlabaşı Recycler (Source: author's photograph)

Any hope for resistance or criticism, however, is impossible in such a gesture. How subversive can street art be when it involves adorning the walls of buildings brought down by a municipality, in a festival sponsored by the same municipality? The festival stages a performance which acts out the fantasy that destruction can create opportunities for new creation. The participants, organizers and spectators of the festival were by and large not residents of the neighborhood, so it cannot be justifiably claimed that the event was orchestrated for the benefit of the neighboring residents of its location.

The recycler is longed for and memorialized, although the painter (and likely the viewers) fail to remember that it is via the demolition of their homes and workplaces that made it possible to paste a stencil of the recycler's likeness on the wall of a building

she may have once lived in or utilized as a workspace Mere blocks away, on Tarlabaşı Boulevard, several large walls of scaffolding cover a large section of the demolition area. They are comprised of large computer-generated images depicting the future "renewed" Tarlabaşı, showing a chic, affluent quarter, lined with office buildings and cafes catering to an ostensibly prosperous demographic, the residents and consumers that are projected to descend upon Tarlabaşı.

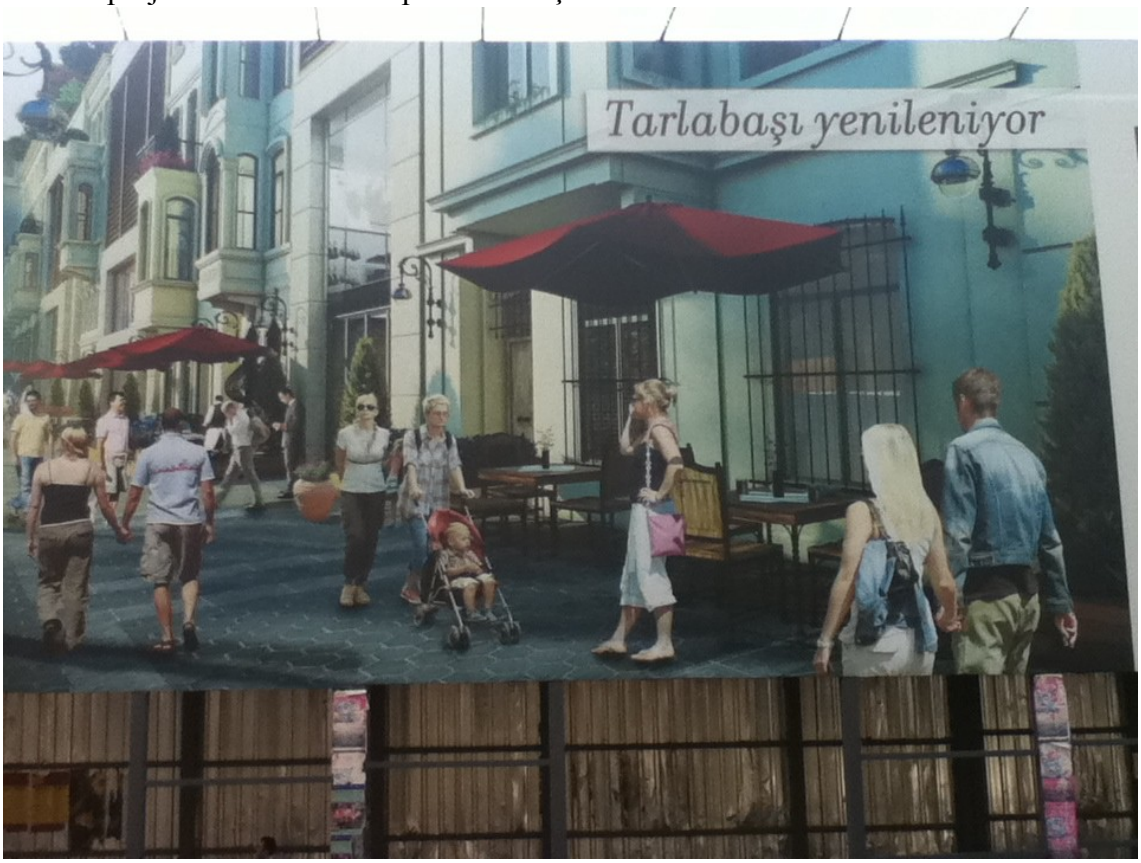

Figure 4.2 Scaffolding surrounding the Tarlabaşı demolition zone (Source: author's photograph)

The streets are tidy and lined with cars and smartly-dressed people, shuffling between the sparkling brand-new offices and restaurants. One wall of scaffolding encourages potential buyers to check out the real estate office directly across the street, where GAP Inşaat, the construction company facilitating the demolitions (a company which is under the umbrella of Çalık Holding, the CEO of which is the son-in law of Prime Minister Erdoğan[117]) exhibits potential investment opportunities for those awaiting to weave themselves into the "up and coming" area. The images on the

117 Constanze Letsch and Jonathan Lewis, "Turkey: Trying to Balance Urban Renewal and Residents' Rights," *Eurasianet*, July 18, 2011, Accessed May 8, 2013 http://www.eurasianet.org/node/63858

scaffolding act as perhaps the most evocative symbol of the inevitable displacement that characterizes many of the so-called urban renewal projects taking place in Istanbul today.

Authorities, developers and investors do not consider the inner-city to be an affordable option for the urban poor. Residents of Tarlabaşı are depicted as criminals and are subsequently evicted from their homes, which are demolished with a revanchist character that seeks to evoke territorial conquest. The facades of hundreds of mostly 19th century buildings of Tarlabaşı were preserved and will likely be remodeled in a pseudo-historic fashion, ironically edifying the historic quality of the original architectural style. Perplexingly, the area will be upsold using "historical" as an enticing adjective, despite the area bearing no traces of its original population.The chic apartments and offices that will be constructed within these facades also seek to whitewash the heterogenous existence of Tarlabaşı's current inhabitants.

4.2 Sulukule

Law No. 5366 was also successful in staging a total transformation of Sulukule, a historic Roma neighborhood located near the old city walls. The history of Sulukule, which prior to its annihilation was the oldest Roma community in Europe, dates to the 11th century. That particular law in 2005, under an agreement between the district and city municipalities, and TOKI (Turkey's Mass Housing Agency) set the stage for the demolition of Sulukule, in favor of the creation of what Kevin Robins refers to as a "marketable, modern version of neo-traditional neighborhood."[118]

The initial revanchist assault on Sulukule began in the early 90's. The area was known for its entertainment houses, which provided many jobs for its residents, as musicians, dancers, waiters, cooks etc. These entertainment houses were famed throughout Istanbul and were popular tourist attractions. These houses came under attack by a district police chief who raided them and assaulted the working musicians.

118 Kevin Robins, "How Tell What Remains: Sulukule Nevermore," *Cultural Politics* 7 no. 1 (2011):19.

37 entertainment houses were closed shortly thereafter.[119]

Around the same time, the chief of security and eventual mayor of Istanbul, Saadettin Tantaan, claimed that the entertainment houses were morally degenerate and closed all of them down by 1994. The quarter suffered dire economic consequences as a result of the overnight disappearance of its main source of employment.[120]

Sulukule's undoing was brought upon by the previously mentioned 'development' initiative that arose under Law No. 5366. Sulukule residents who owned their homes were given the option to buy properties in the future development, although very few could afford to do so. The neighborhood's renters were offered apartments in Taşoluk, a new district built under the authority of TOKI located 45 kilometres away from the city center. Demolitions occurred between 2007-2009, and in that period, the residents who had moved to Taşoluk realized that not only were there no jobs in the area and they could not continue to pay the inflated rental prices for very long. All of the residents who had moved to the peripheral settlement eventually moved from Taşoluk. By 2009, almost all of the former Sulukule was demolished, and the name Sulukule itself was erased, as the neighborhood was reappropriated into a bordering district.[121]

Prime Minister Erdoğan referred to the demolitions as a process of "clearing away the monstrosity."[122] Such comments correspond to a latent contempt for not just the architecture and physical attributes of the neighborhood, but also for the people who live there. They also lead one to believe that the PM considers any poor neighborhood with shabby housing to be unfit and undesirable for today's Istanbul. This kind of commentary, coming from a such a powerful source, surely has the possibility of influencing public perception of an area. They also expose the vested interests that Erdoğan ostensibly holds with regards to Istanbul. It would seem odd for say, the German Prime Minister to weigh in on a certain neighborhood of Hamburg, or for an American president to voice distaste for a particular neighborhood in New York City.

119 Hacer Foggo, "The Sulukule Affair: Roma Against Expropriation," *Roma Rights Quarterly* 4 (2007):41.

120 Robins, "How Tell What Remains," 17-18.

121 Ibid.

122 Ozan Karaman and Tolga Islam, "On the Dual Nature of Intra-Urban Borders," *Cities* 29 no. 4 (2011): 3.

By 2011, properties where age-old Roma households once stood became construction sites for "Ottoman-style" apartments and offices, the prices of which are advertised at nearly ten times the rate at which the Roma were forced to sell their homes.[123]

The gaudy apartment buildings that have begun to spring up amongst the ashes of Sulukule constitute a rejection of Roma history through the puzzling application of "historical preservation." The latter is conceived of by politicians and developers as a means to obliterate what they consider improper, undesirable, alien. An abstracted definition of the historical is then proposed to justify the systematic extinguishing of a vibrant culture by flattening its physical and communal infrastructure. The concept of pseudo-Ottoman architecture sitting side by side the walls of the old city presents a near-sighted attempt at the redrawing of a historical narrative, one that correlates with the reappropriation of central areas and the newly emerging capital that follows.

Figure 4.3 Fatih Municipality Mayor stands outside Neo-Ottoman apartment buildings in the former Sulukule (Source: Today's Zaman)

Sulukule remains a space of contestation. In June 2012, Istanbul's 4th Administrative Court ordered a halt in the construction of the luxurious quasi-historical apartments. The decision was seen as a victory by architects, planners and Roma

123 Constanze Letsch, "Turkish Roma Make Way For Property Developers in Historic Istanbul District," *The Guardian*, Nov. 11 2011, Accessed December 12, 2012 http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/nov/09/sulukule-roma-housing-row-istanbul

activists who had been fiercely critical of the quarter's aggressive redevelopment from its inception.[124] In spite of the court's decision, however, a lottery for new housing in the area took place merely weeks later, suggesting that construction would continue as planned. The Fatih District Mayor noted that the vast majority of the construction had already been completed anyway.[125]

In March of 2013, TOKI announced that it planned to restore 24 historic buildings that remained standing in the former Sulukule.[126] These buildings were likely among the few that were not demolished. These buildings, which once housed Roma residents that were forcibly displaced from the soil that has been associated with their culture for nearly a millenium undergo an extremely reprehensible process of musealization. Although the Roma population was entirely removed, as was the name Sulukule, a name synonymous with Roma culture and history, the authorities and developers still seek to recreate some sort of ambiguous historical motif.

The new settlement, which will feature Ottoman-style luxury apartments juxtaposed among the two dozen Roma buildings, which will be restored appropriately for their musealization. The goal is to create a historical atmosphere that is desirable to the future tenants and owners in the former Sulukule. These future residents will enjoy the presence of the restored Sulukule "heritage" buildings, without having to interact with the people who until very recently called them home. The Roma, who were constructed as an undesireable and problematic community, had to be removed for the new settlement to be realized. Their restored former homes will be loosely perceived as historical, but their legacy and history is written out of the landscape. The presence of these restored buildings, severed from their context, will conceal the non-consensual manner in which the Roma were forced out of home of 1000 years.

The area is "re-claimed" as a historically preserved site, although the "Neo-

124 Elif Ince, "Court Rules Against New Sulukule Villas," *Hürriyet Daily News*, June 14, 2012, Accessed December 12, 2012 http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/court-rules-against-new-sulukule-villas.aspx?pageID=238&nID=23085&NewsCatID=344

125 "Sulukule Lotteries Drawn Despite Ruling," *Hürriyet Daily News*, June 27, 2012, Accessed December 12, 2012 http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/sulukule-lotteries-drawn-despite-ruling.aspx?pageID=238&nID=24118&NewsCatID=341 (

126 "Evacuated Sulukule To Be Restored as Heritage," *Hürriyet Daily News,* March 3, 2013, Accessed March 4, 2013 http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/evacuated-sulukule-to-be-restored-as-heritage.aspx?pageID=238&nID=42208&NewsCatID=341

Ottoman" buildings that are soon to the dominant architectural style were never a part of the historical fabric of the neighborhood in the first place. As Kevin Robins puts it: "Fatih Municipality has a different story for the district, harking back to a vague-to-mock nineteenth-century Ottoman legacy for the Sulukule neighborhood. UNESCO et al deal in the world heritage business—both tangible and intangible, as they choose to categorize their own historical domain."[127]

127 Robins, "How Tell What Remains," 36.

CHAPTER 5.

CONTESTED PUBLIC SPACE

Public space, according to Neil Smith and Setha Low can range from "the street, the park, the media, the Internet, the shopping mall, the United Nations, national governments and local neighborhoods." It "envelops the palpable tension between place, experienced at all scales in daily life, and the seeming spacelessness of the Internet, popular opinion, and global institution sand economy" and "includes very recognizeable geographies of daily movement, which may be local, regional or global, but they also include electronic and institutional "spaces" that are every bit as palpable, if experienced quite differently, in daily life."[128]

Low and Smith distinguish from the term "public sphere" popularized by Habermas, in which "the ideal public sphere is deemed universal and thereby, in any meaningful sense, spatially undifferentiated." Furthermore, the public and private often overlap and in various situations one can observe private management of public space as well as public oversight of private space.[129]

David Harvey refers to the case of Paris in the mid-19th century, where the working class contested "bourgeois hegemony" by conferring in a vast network of private spaces such as bars and restaurants ignored by the upper classes. "Seeping outward from their own symbiotic fashioning of public, commercial, and private spaces, popular forces more and more asserted a public and collective presence on the boulevards of bourgeois Paris."[130] For Harvey, "public space counts for little or nothing politically unless it connects symbiotically with the organization of institutional (in this

128 Neil Smith and Setha Low, "Introduction:The Imperative of Public Space," in *The Politics of Public Space* ed. Neil Smith and Setha Low (New York:Routledge, 2006), 3.

129 Ibid., 5.

130 David Harvey, "The Political Economy of Public Space," in *The Politics of Public Space* ed. Neil Smith and Setha Low (New York:Routledge, 2006), 29.

case, commercial, although in other cases it may be religious or educational institutions) and private spaces."[131]

This issue of symbiosis over spaces in the public and private realms as well as the influence and power that one often holds over other are both important ideas to consider regarding the issues discussed in this chapter.

Mike Davis, in an article entitled "Fortress Los Angeles: The Militarization of Urban Space", describes the disparity of public space access in the 'ghetto' of Los Angeles, which is "defined not only by its paucity of parks and public amenities, but also by the fact that it is not wired into any of the key information circuits."[132] On the other hand: "the affluent Westside is plugged—often at public expense—into dense networks of educational and cultural media."[133] Davis argues that such a polarized urban reality signifies the end of what he calls the "Olmstedian vison of public space in America", referring to Frederick Law Olmsted, the creator of New York's famous Central Park, who believed that the park should be a space where people from different ethnic and class backgrounds could coxist harmoniously.[134] Davis' account Los Angeles in the 1990's portrays a city redirecting taxes from public spaces and recreational amenities to privatized locales, which are championed using positivist rhetoric in order to disguise the "brutalization of its inner-city neighborhoods and the stark divisions of class and race represented in its built environment.[135]

Public space has been a contested issue in Istanbul in recent years. In the summer of 2011, residents of Istanbul were dismayed to discover that outdoor tables and chairs throughout Beyoğlu had disappeared. Although the outdoor tables of the meyhanes in the famous Nevizade quarter remained, they were confiscated elsewhere. Many restaurants and bars placed tables and chairs outside their establishments throughout various pockets of Beyoğlu, such as in Asmalımescit and Küçük Beyoğlu,

131 Ibid., 30.

132 Mike Davis, "Fortress Los Angeles:The Militarization of Urban Space," in *Variations on a Theme Park* ed. Michael Sorkin (New York:Hill and Wang, 1992), 155.

133Ibid.

134Ibid.,156.

135Ibid.

which were popular especially in the warmer months. Authorities seized the tables and chairs while many customers were actually sitting down. Business owners and customers alike complained of police harassment, adding that much of the furniture was broken.[136]

The Beyoğlu Municipality, on the other hand, argued that the crackdown on outdoor seating was a necessary response to establishments using customers as "human shields" in a "street invasion", where proprietors had taken advantage of outdoor space in light a recent ban on indoor smoking.

Rumors began circulating that the real reason for the ban was due to a situation involving Prime Minister Erdoğan stuck in traffic on a crowded Asmalimescit backstreet. Patrons noticed Erdoğan and raised their glasses to him in a mock toast, which supposedly angered the prime minister enough to inspire him to push for the ban.

This was not the first time that Beyoğlu's outdoor eating and drinking establishments were targeted. In 1994, shortly following the victory of the Welfare Party in local elections, the mayor removed outdoor tables in Beyoğlu, claiming that the space should be available for those unable to afford to eat at such establishments to pass through. Critics, however, perceived the initiative as an attack on public space.[137]

The 2011 ban is relevant to analyze regardless of the official or actual reason. Although the narrow alleyways of tables and chairs throughout Beyoğlu don't constitute public space in the purest sense, they collectively function as a space for thousands of people to meet and socialize together outside in a highly centralized and busy area. As such, they resemble the symbiotic relationship that private and public spaces often share, as described by Harvey. The outdoor seating found by establishments in usually concentrated areas of Istanbul are where specific locations blend and the lines between public and private space are blurred. Such attacks on this form of socialization, which seeks to restrict assembly and movement, work alongside greater initiatives of encroachment that require the implementation of musealization.

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136 "Municipal Patrol Acts Harshly Towards Patrons Say Restaurant Owners" *Hürriyet Daily News*, July 11, 2011, Accessed April 15, 2013 http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/municipal-patrol-acts-harshly-toward-patrons-say-restaurant-owners.aspx?pageID=438&n=municipal-patrol-acts-harshly-toward-patrons-say-restaurant-owners-2011-07-25

137 Bartu, "Rethinking Heritage Politics in a Global Context," 146.

5.1 Taksim Square, Taksim Gezi Park and the Topçu Barracks

The re-creation (and simultaneous musealization) of urban space is reflected by the Taksim Gezi Park Project. The project, announced by Prime Minister Erdoğan prior to the last election, seeks, supposedly, to pedestrianize Taksim Square, Istanbul's most prominent and central public space, by removing bus stops and redirecting traffic underground tunnels. The project was quickly passed through the official channels and involved no public consultation, this in spite of the fact that it will be funded by taxes.

The plan also includes the closing of Taksim Gezi Park, a large park located just behind the square, in fact the only green space in its vicinity. The park is slated to be replaced by a reconstruction of the Topçu Barracks, which were built in 1806 but demolished in 1940 during a renovation of the square. This segment of the project was cancelled in January 2013 by the Cultural Assets Preservation Board due to a lack of sufficient archival documentation to reconstruct the building.[138] However, in March 2013, the High Council for Protection of Cultural and Natural Assets, which holds final decision-making ability in such matters, opted to reject the cancellation and move forward with the reconstruction. [139]

138 "Minister Confirms Cancellation of Topçu Barracks Replica Project," *Today's Zaman*, January 18, 2013, Accessed January 20, 2013 www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?newsId=304456

139 "Taksim Barracks Plan Gets Council Approval," *Hürriyet Daily News*, March 2, 2013, Accessed March 9, 2013 http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/taksim-barracks-plan-gets-council-approval.aspx?pageID=238&nID=42092&NewsCatID=341

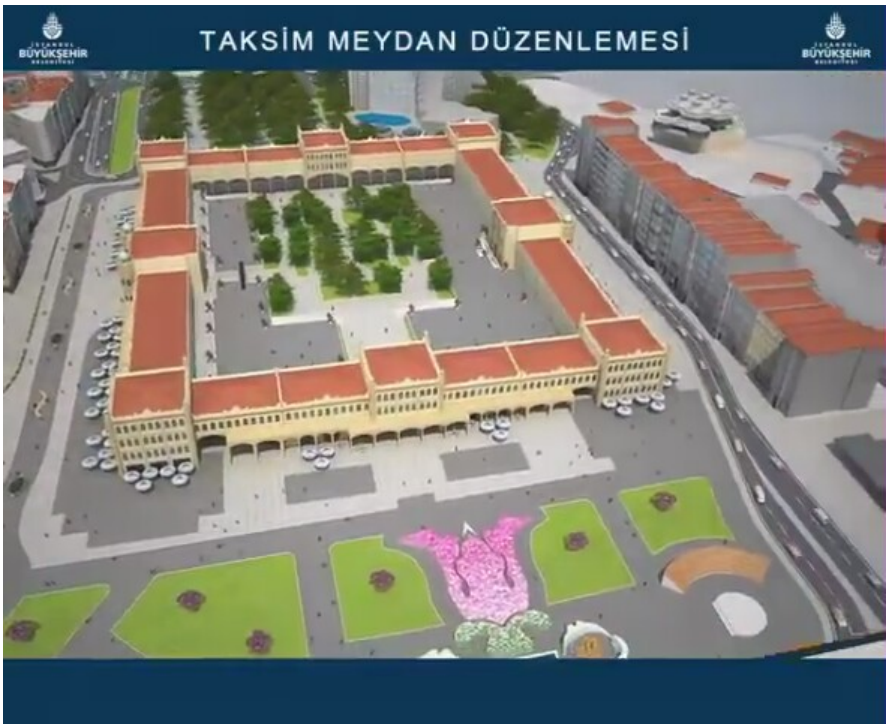

Figure 5.1 Digital image of the Taksim Square and Gezi Park redevelopment project (Source: Istanbul Municipality)

The project involves the resurrection of a once significant object from the dustbin of history, by implicitly invoking it with the historical relevance it once possessed. However, the reconstruction seeks to remove the building from function and context, musealizing it in a thinly veiled attempt to historicize the continued proliferation of "cultural" centres which inevitably become centres for consumption.

The aim here is to valorize the history of the Taksim Barracks (which bear both Imperial and Republican connections) while underwriting the history of the park that took its place. If the project is realized and the Barracks are reconstructed, what will be the effects on collective memory in, say 200 years? Connections between the Barracks in their functional form and their future symbolic form would have been forged (if only through aesthetic means) and the fact that a park ever existed in that space will be forgotten.

Şükrü Aslan offers the following comments regarding Taksim Square's political history in light of this project: "Taksim Square is not an ordinary square. The 1977 killings of dozens of people at May Day celebrations there has given a political identity to Taksim Square. To keep alive the political image in the minds of people walking by

Taksim is also a requirement for our political confrontation with the past."[140]

Baykan and Hatuka stress that the meydan (Turkish for 'square') is a separate concept and bears different attributes than those of the typical public square. The latter is built in the open, albeit in the midst of other buildings, allowing for considerable security and control within the space of the square itself. The meydan, however, functions in the opposite fashion, as a buffer between various spaces, inhibiting control and enabling pedestrian flow. As such, the conceptual difference should be understood "in order to understand the history of this space, not as a fixed concrete form but as to how it opened itself to different forms and representations, and to people's right to be there.[141]

On May Day 1977, a bloody and tragic attack occurred amidst a crowd of 400,000 demonstrators. Following his speech, the president of a workers union confederation asked for a minute of silence for those who had died struggling for workers' rights. In the midst of that silence, shots were fired, which were quickly followed by deployment of police cars blaring loud sirens, which prompted mass panic. 34 people were killed from the gunshots and due to being crushed by the crowd stampede as well as the police vehicles.[142]

As a result of this tragedy, Baykan and Hatuka conclude: "no matter how temporary the apppropriation was, or how permanently its traces were eradicated, the very fact of the existence of the demonstration on 1 May 1977, with the memories and associations it evokes, has permanently changed the face of Taksim Square."[143]

Taksim Square bears a profound political history and continues to be the most visible, central, and popular public space for protests and demonstrations. The proposed rebuilding of the Taksim Barracks and associated pedestrianization seeks to decontextualize the square by drastically altering its spatial reality in an attempt to sever the ties with both its political history and its present use as a space for mass

140 Bahar Çuhadar, "Experts Call for Debate Before Changing Taksim Square," *Hürriyet Daily News*, January 22, 2011, Accessed January 20, 2013 http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=experts-warn-for-public-debate-before-any-change-to-taksim-square-2011-01-20

141 Ayşegül Baykan and Tali Hatuka, "Politics and Culture in the Making of Public Space," *Planning Perspectives* 25 no. 1 (2010):51-52.

142 Ibid., 62-63.

143 Ibid., 63.

demonstration.

The current initiative in Taksin Square is entangled within a greater scheme of reducing access to public space. According to prominent architects, the project coincides with a plan to construct a new public square, across the Golden Horn below the historic peninsula in Yenikapı. Istanbul's Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning approved the plan in October of 2012. Architect Korhan Gümüş offers the following comments on the recently approved project:

> They are going to tear down Taksim Square [in central Istanbul] and build a closed meeting area away from the [urban] centre and under supervision. Severing the connection between the meeting area and the city was what they had always wanted to do up till now. [Demonstration] meetings take place in squares that open up to the city's streets. Everyone makes it to the area by walking there. According to this project, however, everyone will arrive in the meeting area via mass transportation and hold their demonstration in a well-controlled area. No one will see it or hear about it.[144]

Further controversy ensued in the days leading up to May 1st, when Prime Minister Erdoğan announced at a party meeting that the Topçu Barracks construction would include a shopping mall and residential area. This directly contrasted Istanbul Mayor Topbas's statement months earlier, where the mayor insisted that a cultural center and art gallery, not a mall, was in the works. Ironically, in the same speech, Erdoğan rebuked archaelogists and conservationists who had slowed down the Marmaray project, an ambitious project that seeks to build an underwater rail line beneath the Bosphorus, linking the European and Anatolian sides of Istanbul. The Prime Minister criticized those who wish to properly excavate "some pottery items" while ignoring the historical importance of the barracks.[145]

The irony of such a statement exposes the relationship that the political and financial elite share with the notion of historical preservation. The prime minister apparently considers the Byzantine-era archaeological discoveries unearthed via the Marmaray project construction neglible. At the same time he seeks to valorize the

144 Nilay Vardar, "Ministry Approves Coastal Project Next to UNESCO Heritage Site," *Bianet*, October 22, 2012, Accessed December 12, 2012 http://bianet.org/english/human-rights/141605-ministry-approves-coastal-project-next-to-unesco-heritage-site

145 Ipek Üzüm "Plans Voiced by PM for Mall at New Taksim Barracks Draw Criticisms," *Hürriyet Daily News* , April 30, 2013, Accessed May 16, 2013 http://todayszaman.com/news-314134-plans-voiced-by-pm-for-mall-at-new-taksim-barracks-draw-criticisms.html

historical significance of the barracks, although the former represent valid historical artefacts, while the latter is an initiative tied up in a pseudo-historical effort to recreate a a facility that was demolished decades earlier.

The authorities see history as something to be used as a means to further political and economic initiatives, and if history happens to get in the way of a certain project, then it can be circumstantially deemed unimportant. Musealization is a key tactic in valorizing the historical significance of an object or building in order to justify the confiscation of public space and/or the proliferation of consumption spaces. In this case it is involved in both, and occurs alongside the rejection of valid historic preservation initiatives.

Another controversy surrounding the Taksim Square pedestrianization element of project occurred when it was announced that May Day celebrations would not be allowed in Taksim Square, allegedly because the pedestrianization project rendered the area unsuitable for public demonstration. This was compounded by the cancellation of various transit services for May 1st, including the city's metrobus, funicular line, two subway lines, and numerous ferry lines.[146] It is no surprise that access to the area was barred on a day like May 1st, yet in spite of the construction Taksim is still open and accessible(albeit compounded by walls, barricades, and other materials surrounding the construction) otherwise. The rather comprehensive transit cut shows no concern for the fact that thousands of people will be hindered or prevented from going to work.

On May 1st groups of workers and activists who had assembled in other districts with the intent to walk to the closed square were attacked by police who deployed tear gas and water cannons. Several demonstrators were injured including a 17-year old girl who was hospitalized in critical condition after a gas canister hit her in the head. Following harsh criticism of the violent response of the police from various groups as well as the main opposition party, Istanbul Governor Hüseyin Avni Mutlu defended the actions of the police, saying it was necessary and justified while claiming that the injured 17-year old was a "radical."[147]

146"Debates on May Day in Taksim Rekindled After Era of Peaceful Celebration," *Today's Zaman*, April 30 2013, Accessed May 16, 2013 http://todayszaman.com/news-314076-.html

147 "Istanbul Governor Defends Crackdowns on May Day," *Hürriyet Daily News*, May

Even though the marchers had not even begun to approach Taksim Square, its closure was used as a pretext to stifle May Day demonstrations. This is indicated by the police taking action against marchers in districts like Beşiktaş and Şişli. The marchers were not even given the opportunity to march to the square.

In late May 2013, bulldozers began to uproot trees in Taksim Gezi Park, which prompted several days of massive protests in the park with thousands of participants. The protests lasted until morning with many demonstrators camping at the park overnight in tents. On the morning of May 31st, the remaining protestors were brutally attacked by police who deployed tear gas, sprayed water and burned tents. The brutality continued throughout the day as demonstrators peacefully assembling in Taksim Square and on Istiklal Avenue were met with police attacks. In addition to the tear gas, another chemical was sprayed liberally by police vehicles that burned the eyes and skin of protestors. Numerous videos and photographs captured the police violence that was dealt without provocation. Protests continued throughout Istanbul (where protestors numbered in the hundreds of thousand) and in many Turkish cities. The first several days of demonstrations were hardly covered in the mainstream Turkish television media, although social media was used to spread the word internationally, which resulted in numerous solidarity demonstrations all over the world. The quality of the protests were primarily peaceful and numerous groups stood side by side, calling for Prime Minister Erdogan's resignation, decrying police violence, demanding that the park remain a park, and an end to the privatization of public space and green space.

Following the erection of numerous barricades in the surrounding area, which made it inaccessible to police, the park itself took on the role of an autonomous zone, where protestors installed free mobile cafes, clinics and even a library. Volunteers circulated through the park, collecting trash and handing out sandwiches, masks, medical supplies and water. The police re-entered the park just over a week later, seizing control and again exhibiting excessive force. Throughout these events, the government utilized aggressive rhetoric and employed a variety tactics in an attempt to delegitimze the demonstrations. (For example, Erdoğan repeatedly claimed that protestors drank alcohol in a mosque that had been temporarily converted to a clinic. The mosque's

3, 2013, Accessed May 3, 2013 http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/istanbul-governor-defends-crackdown-on-may-day.aspx?pageID=238&nID=46136&NewsCatID=341 (

muezzin denied this claim.)[148] As of this writing, large protests continued to occur regularly in Istanbul, many of which were met with fierce police intervention. Forums began to take place nightly at parks throughout the city, and other creative demonstrations (including groups of people standing silently) were witnessed in Istanbul and throughout the country.

Expression of identity and political will are closely linked to the access of public space, since an accessible and central area for organizing protests and demonstrations is essential to conveying the presence and interests of particular groups. Taksim Square is the artery by which various groups are able to express their concerns and spread awareness. In the past year the square has been the starting point for demonstrations of various unions, LGBT groups, and numerous other groups representing various identities. By assembling at the square and continuing down Istiklal Avenue, even small movements are able to gain the attention of thousands of passerbys as well as that of the media, partially due to the fact that large groups of police are usually dispatched to monitor the event. Removing pedestrian access from Taksim Square and confining it on the other side of the Golden Horn threatens to take away the visibility that such groups are able to attain.

Taksim Gezi Park, as the only green space in a dense district, is an equally important public asset. It is the only open space in the area free from the associations of consumption. The massive demonstrations surrounding the uprooting of trees reflected a large group of people representing varous backgrounds and political beliefs, bonded by the evident assault that had been carried out against not just the right to peacefully assemble and utilize public space. The redevelopment of the square, in conjunction with the demolition of Taksim Gezi Park in favor of a consumption zone disguised as a historic military barracks is a two-part scheme that deliberately seeks to seize these assets from the public. This project, which sought to implement a specific vision and privatize an important public space, was heavily contested by various segments of society, who articulated their demands clearly. A June 6th court ruling, the details of

148 "Muezzin of Mosque Where PM Claims Alcohol was Consumed Questioned by Police," June 27, 2012, Accessed June 28, 2013 http://www.todayszaman.com/news-319410-muezzin-of-mosque-where-pm-claims-alcohol-was-consumed-questioned-by-police.html

which were revealed on July 3rd, cancelled the reconstruction of the barracks as well as the greater pedestrianization project.[149] It remains to be seen if the Prime Minister will respect the decision.

This case illustrates two of the three main themes in this thesis, encroachment upon public space and (attempted) proliferation of consumption spaces. The protests that occurred in Istanbul and throughout the country (the catalyst of which were the uprooting of trees in Taksim Gezi Park) show that the musealization of the former Topçu Barracks sparked widespread outrage at what many saw as yet another attempt to implement a frivolous project that would fail to benefit public interest. This project, which sought to implement a specific vision and privatize public space, was heavily contested by various segments of society, who clearly articulated their demands.

149 "Court Decision Cancels Taksim Artillery Barracks Project that Triggered Gezi Protests," *Hürriyet Daily News,* July 3, 2013, Accessed July 7, 2013 http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/court-decision-cancels-taksim-artillery-barracks-project-that-triggered-gezi-protests.aspx?pageID=238&nID=49972&NewsCatID=341

CONCLUSIONS

As Istanbul continues to gain popularity as a tourist destination and as a major financial centre, the marketing of heritage, history, and identity becomes a paramount consideration. Within this context, Ayfer Bartu's concluding remarks in a 2001 article are just as relevant a decade later:

> "Globalization is inscribed within particular localities and is reworked within particular social, cultural and historical contexts. Within this framework, heritage and the politics of the past take on a very different meaning, and which past to preserve and market, and whom to market it to, become political questions. Cities, as physical embodiments of histories, become crucial sites where different claims to the past are formulated and contested'[150]

The foreign press constantly uses binaries and clichés when describing Turkey, especially in reference to its largest city. It is routinely billed as the place where East and West meet, where tradition and modernity clash, where secularism and piety wage it out on the streets. These descriptions are all grossly simplistic and imply that the city possesses a neatly torn identity, one that is caught between two opposing forces, in the dead centre between two poles. Turkish politicians often recycle the same binaries, reducing the rich history of the city to a dichotomous narrative. Istanbul, where identity has been contested time and time again prior to and since the foundation of the Republic, occupies multiple realities that formulate a web of its complex image. As the city grows in age and in size, its collects and displays the struggles for its most pivotal monuments, avenues, and quarters, especially in Beyoğlu. Although the quarter (like Istanbul itself) has fallen in and out of favour over the years, it has now re-emerged as the apple of the eye of the financial and political elites. The gentrification of quarters like Cihangir and Galata cemented that fact in the 90's and 2000's, while the Fransız Sokağı affair and the top-down, deliberately executed gentrification of Tarlabaşı reveal that Beyoğlu is being redeveloped as a space for the elite and wealthy.

In recent years, "Neo-Ottoman" has emerged as a popular buzzword for describing both the domestic and foreign policy of the ruling AKP, postulating that the

150 Bartu, "Rethinking Heritage Politics in a Global Context," 153-54.

party harbours nostalgia for the Ottoman past and is actively attempting to recreate an imperial setting in the 21st century. Are the AKP truly attempting to resurrect a semblance of Ottoman heritage in the city? In my opinion, yes and no. There are certainly numerous instances of the reintroduction of Ottoman themes into the architectural framework of the city. The Topçu Barracks project clearly exhibits Ottoman nostalgia, as the barracks were a fixture of Ottoman times. The construction of so-called Neo-Ottoman luxury apartment buildings in Sulukule also attest to such a vision.

While Ottoman nostalgia certainly is alive and well among a significant throng of political and financial elites, asserting that the creation of a "Neo-Ottoman" city is among their highest aspirations is exaggerated. They are simply attempting to create an Istanbul that functions according to the maximization of their benefits and the valorization of their image. Reintroducing Ottoman themes and styles may be helpful as a means to an end, but that it is ultimately based less in heritage and more in political and economic control. Other themes explored in this thesis attest to a manipulation of history that is opportunistic rather than consistent. Such control is maximized by the cleansing of inner-city districts, transforming quarters occupied by marginalized groups into lucrative real estate opportunities, and by encroaching upon public space in order to deny the platform for various groups to assert their presence and express their grievances.

Musealization is implemented in Istanbul today quite frequently by authorities, developers, and other actors in order to justify non-consensual projects and decontextualize the urban space on which these projects are taking place. The upper echelon of wealthy and powerful political actors and financiers are rapidly restructuring Istanbul, (particularly Beyoğlu) demolishing certain buildings, erecting others, and implementing projects that seem to possess two goals: maximizing their own profit margins, and suppressing identities seen as undesirable, and/or politically problematic. As these maneuevers have been orchestrated quickly and entirely without consent, musealization as urban strategy has been implemented in order to coat a hazy historical glaze over the proceedings, diverting attention away from the profound violence and permanence of the consequences.

One of the most profound changes in Turkey since the Republic's inception has

been its rapid urbanization. Especially within the past decade, Turkey has taken on the image of a regional powerhouse with a growing economy. This is no more evident than in Istanbul, where the construction of new high-rises, chain stores, luxury apartment buildings and extravagant shopping malls seem to have no limit. Istanbul is known most famously for its historical sights. The city is home to architectural gems spanning the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires. Beyoğlu, and particularly Tarlabaşı still display a high concentration of late 19th/early 20th century architecture. Nevertheless, the layered historic charm of the city is being overshadowed by the glitzy imposition of sparkly-white capitalist modernity.

The ancient city looks newer than ever, in spite of the quasi-historical coating that is often applied. Spaces such as the Demirören Mall and the resurrected Topçu Barracks are seductive insofar as this quasi-historical layer is applied in order to mask the fact that these places are nothing more than ordinary zones of consumption. As Turkey's urban population continues to rise, the most centrally-located urban spaces increase in desirability. This increase perpetuates the contestation of these spaces, especially when they are characterized by dilapidated housing stock occupied by low-income tenants.

The profit potential is high, the more so when laws such as Law No.5366 are utilized in order to extract property at rates much lower than the actual property value. This maximizes the return when the area is redeveloped and marketed to wealthy tenants or owners. The city suffers, as poor inner-city residents are pushed to the periphery, creating arcs of poverty on the outskirts while the city centre ceases to be accessible to those unable to pay the new prices. As David Harvey puts it: “The right to the city, as it is now constituted, is too narrowly confined, restricted in most cases to a political and economic elite who are in a position to shape cities more and more after their own desire.”[151]

Unfortunately, this continues to become the reality in 21st century Istanbul, a reality that does not bode well for the city and its inhabitants, especially those in areas such as Tarlabaşı, a quarter characterized by a socially inclusive identity, comprised of numerous groups sharing the same space. Many of these people also shared the common reality of having moved to Tarlabaşı due to the political, social and/or economic

151 David Harvey, “Social Justice and the City,” (Athens: University of Georgia Press 2006), 329.

circumstances that made it no longer possible to remain in their former country, village, or neighbourhood. Current mechanisms of urban transformation in Istanbul and throughout Turkey appear hostile to the possibility of creating or sustaining spaces of social inclusion. On the contrary, they seek to segregate and atomize, forcing those who have already faced significant social and political exclusion to experience additional waves of displacement and marginalization. The authorities do not seem to consider public spaces to be important facet of the urban landcsape, rather they are seen as expendable when a profitable opportunity is conceived. However, the massive demonstrations that erupted throughout Turkey beginning at the end of May 2013 in part show that a large segment of the public is no longer willing to stand for urban planning projects that are implemented without consultation and harmful to public interest. As of this writing, the fate of Gezi Park is still unclear. It is also unclear to what extent the power of the ruling party and its top-down style of urban planning will actually be altered by the current unrest. For the sake of the city, one can only hope that these events signify a shift in how it is social and structural fabric are treated.

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