# REBUILDING OF BEYOĞLU-İSTİKLAL STREET: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF URBAN TRANSFORMATION THROUGH SECTIONS ALONG THE STREET 2004-2014

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## INTRODUCTION

"Beyoğlu Coming Out on World Scene" was a news headline regarding the promotion of Beyoğlu quarter during the 26th International Real Estate Exposition (MIPIM) (Marmara Haber, 2015). The MIPIM Exposition, which was organized in Cannes, France on March 10-13, 2015, has convened economic and political actors from 93 countries. Istanbul was also one of the participants with mega projects and investments. Turkey has been attending the event at a very high level for the last two years, and one of the most riveting quarters within the promotion events was Beyoğlu. The Beyoğlu Renovation Projects were thematically used to present Beyoğlu as a prospective investment opportunity for the largest real estate companies of the world. The headline and content of the above-mentioned news provides readers with a summary of the changes undergone by Istanbul and the historical quarter of Beyoğlu. Istanbul's transformation into a global city and Beyoğlu's transformation into a global center of attraction and investment are well underway. This article discusses the urban transformation initiatives in Istanbul and Beyoğlu, particularly, with reference to the spatial changes within İstiklal Street – the quarter's main artery – and its immediate vicinity.

The transformations that cities go through are a result of the economic restructuring based on neoliberal policies which came into play following the economic crisis of the 1970s (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Harvey, 2007). Cities develop ambitious strategies to become global centers of finance, tourism, culture and arts. Globalizing cities morph into competing cities in order to develop and outrank others, and leverage their localness as marketing strategies. Thereby, they aim to assure and allure foreign investors. The fact that cities have now become marketable goods eliminates the boundaries of nation states. It would appear that different cities within the same country are taking on each other as well. Policies focusing on culture and arts are amongst the prominent phenomena in

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terms of the competition amongst cities (Zukin, 1995). It is within this framework that projects are developed to revitalize old cities. These projects have now been mainstreamed as part of the cultural tourism activities that evolved in the post-war world (Urry, 1995; Amin and Thrift, 2007; Aksoy and Enlil, 2011). Beyoğlu-İstiklal Street, as part of this mainstreaming, has also been undergoing a transformation since the 1990s, and the process has gained momentum from 2005.

İstiklal Street happens to be the most heterogeneous urban space in Istanbul, where the most conflicting political, economic and societal processes of the collective memory and daily life were witnessed. The evolution of the street dates back to 18th and 19th centuries, followed by a period of degradation during mid-last century, and the pedestrianization during the late 1980s has revitalized the area. It is not accidental that the pedestrianization of the street coincided with the rise of neoliberal production and consumption mechanisms. The city centers in Istanbul have undergone a tourism and consumption driven transformation, and thus a spatial segregation has been formed in which shopping malls, gated communities and residences, as isolated urban spaces, have emerged (Öncü and Weyland, 1997; Keyder, 1999; Candan and Özbay, 2014). The historical regions have also been rebuilt, or at least varnished, through a process of displacing – coercively at times - the lower and middle class.

Accelerating in the 2000s, the gentrification processes turned cities into fighting grounds and at times urban transformation projects met strong civilian resistance. The biggest one of these civilian resistance movements was the Gezi Events in 2013, which opposed the pedestrianization of Taksim Square and the reconstruction decision of the Topçu Barracks. Gezi Events had been preceded by successive protests of a smaller scale against the construction of the Demirören Shopping Mall, and the demolition or refunctioning of buildings such as the Emek Theater and Narmanlı *Han*, buildings ingrained in the memory of the city. Ever the venue for protesting public policies, İstiklal Street this time turned into a fighting ground between the local administration and civil society, concerning its own spatial transformation.

This article aims to examine and discuss the above-mentioned transformation process at İstiklal Street from a spatial perspective. The article seeks answers to the following questions: How were implications of neoliberal policies in 2000s' Turkey in Beyoğlu-İstiklal Street? How was the legal basis for urban transformation created and how was it implemented in the street? In this context, the article will firstly present the research methodology. It will then present the theoretical framework, political environment, and historical background in the third and fourth sections in order to explain economic, political, and cultural occurrences in their proper context. Section five will dwell on the relevant legal basis in the urban transformation of Beyoğlu and İstiklal Street, various projects related to the area and the international events organized by Beyoğlu Municipality. The sixth section presents a general picture of the quantitative and spatial comparisons between sections. The seventh, and the final, section assesses the evolution of culture, finance, informatics and tourism sectors; and the evolution of subservient catering and shopping spaces within the context of globalization. This research is penned to devise a critical outlook on consecutively emergent urban transformation projects with regard to the rebuilding of Istanbul. It is also a spatial reading that contributes to

an extensive literature on concepts like global city, neoliberalism, urban transformation, gentrification and cultural tourism in 2000s.

## THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is predicated on a comparative spatial analysis of İstiklal Street. Sixty cross-sections (including all perpendicular streets) were obtained from Taksim Square to Tünel Square in 2004 with a view to analyze the spatial use patterns on İstiklal Street (Tekin, 2005). The study has been replicated in 2014 in order to analyze spatial transformation (**1**). Such urban reading via street sections functions as an x-ray of the street, enabling a better comprehension of (vertical) spatial relations on an urban scale.

In this framework, this research is based on analysis per square meter of the cross-sectioned buildings, spatial comparisons, media scanning for monitoring actors and discourses, and interviews with landlords and tenants. Within the scope of the field survey, the spatial use of the 60 cross-sections has been updated from 20 June 2014 to 22 July 2014, spatial use has been observed in situ, the changes along the street have been marked, and short interviews have been conducted with owners of establishments (sometimes the proprietor or the landlord, and sometimes tenants). These interviews comprised open-ended questions of a general nature regarding urban transformation: such as; "What is your opinion of the transformation taking place on İstiklal Street and its surrounding areas? What are your thoughts and experiences related to this?" As a result of the field survey, the data that belong to 2004 and 2014 on each cross-section have been internally checked against one another and a general picture of İstiklal Street has been created. The square meters relating to the spatial functions of the specified sectors have been calculated.

The main reason why the comparison in the research is based on analysis per square meters is related to the spatial expansion of the sectors that are of decisive nature in the transformation of İstiklal Street. On İstiklal Street, filled with highly compartmentalized and multi-functional *han*s, big businesses restore and refunction a *han* in its entirety or the building groups situated in one parcel. A comparison based on square meters has been deemed as valuable analysis in order to observe the sectors that spatially dominate the street and expand along the street. On the other hand, because the number of small/middle/large-scale enterprises is not disaggregated in the 2004 data, the change in number of businesses by their size could not be included in the analysis. A picture of the general changes could not be formed except for enterprises such as hotels, organizations and bookstores, and therefore these quantitative data could also not be included in the research.

Generally speaking, the comparison based on square meters has rendered the interpretation of a decade-long spatial transformation possible. Furthermore, this research has made it possible to take record of the decade-long transformation of İstiklal Street from 2004 to 2014. In order to discuss this decade-long process, the third and the fourth sections of the paper will present the political, cultural, and historical background of Istanbul and İstiklal Street.

## POLITICAL SETTING AND URBAN TRANSFORMATION DYNAMICS

The urban transformation dynamics of approximately the last 30 years are explained with reference to the concepts of globalization and neoliberalism. In globalization literature, pursued in many different fields from geography to economics, first Friedmann (1986) conceptualized the "world city" phenomenon, and then Sassen (1991) explained the differentiation in urban space organizations with the concept of "global city". Generally speaking; the "global city" concept stands for the hierarchal spatial organization of capital in cities that globally supply the control functions of capital and producer services, and harbor the labor force (Keyder, 1999, 3-30). Castells' (1989) concept of "informational city" has evolved correspondingly. Castells, by defining "urban informatics", argues that the global intensification of communication networks have created "flows of space", where corporate site selection is closely associated with factors such as proximity to financial markets, and presence of professional workforce source and opportunities to constantly update technology (Öncü and Weyland, 1997). The human flows forming the informal sector, together with the expansion of cultural flows through communication technologies, dig right into the boundaries of nation state.

Throughout the world, the increase in transnational capital, goods, and population mobility and neoliberal economy policies at the national level emerge as simultaneous processes (Öncü, 2010, 21). The transformations that cities go through are a result of the economic restructuring based on neoliberal ideology. Neoliberal policies came into play following the economic crisis of the 1970s and a process, in which capital manipulated the system, has started (Harvey, 2007; Brenner and Theodore, 2002). The socio-economic and political process of neoliberalism, defined as a market- and profit-oriented development model (Peck et al., 2009), leads to the spatial segregation of living spaces of different socio-economic groups (characterized in the literature as "spaces of decay", "distressed areas" and "privileged spaces") (Candan and Kolluoğlu, 2008, 9). In urban spaces, which are shaped by socio-spatial segregation, in order for capital to sustain itself and for cities to turn into the decision and coordination centers of global economy, a race for attracting investors to cities has started (Harvey, 2007; Brenner and Theodore, 2002). Neoliberalism, enabling free capital mobility and encouraging foreign investors, is a strategy that supports the race for becoming global cities.

Amin and Thrift (2007) state that the marketing of the cultural heritage of cities plays an important role in the race for becoming a global city. Culture is a marketable strength for urban economic growth and being used as a central component of urban development strategies focusing on the economic benefits of globalization (Zukin, 2004, 10). It leads to a revalorization of cultural heritage in many cities from North and Latin America to Asia and Europe, such as Brazil, Singapore and Barcelona, in the world and increases interest to the preservation and renovation of historic city centers (Richards, 2011, 12). Former industrial sites which go unused due to the disappearance of local production industries are refunctioned through tourism-oriented projects and old city centers are turned into centers of attraction (Urry, 1995). The urban development strategies based on cultural tourism have been criticized after 1980s. Harvey (1990, 21) argues that urban spaces seen as sources for cultural economic policies resemble "carnival masks" to hide the intensifying

class, racial and ethnic polarization. Ritzer (1999, 2) characterizes cultural and tourism-oriented projects as modern "cathedrals of consumption" (as important means of consuming the city) and Amin and Thrift (2007, 152) discuss the symptoms of cultural economy in cities through the "economics of spectacle". Richards and Palmer (2010, 2) point out that the growing prominence of events and festivals have led the cities like Melbourne, Seoul and Hong Kong to promote themselves as "eventful cities". As Lash and Urry (1994) emphasize, commodified culture becomes an important factor in capital accumulation. Therefore, urban sightseeing areas add to the city's image and are instrumentalized to attract international capital and tourists (Harvey, 1990; Zukin, 1995).

These urban transformation processes based on neoliberal policies started to take place in Turkey in the 1980s (Enlil, 2011; Yalçıntan et al., 2014). The January 24th decisions taken by the Turkish Government in the early 1980s mark the commencement of economic ties with international capital (Öktem, 2011). In this period called the "first neoliberal wave" in the literature (Boratav, 2008), the import substitution policies were replaced by neoliberal policies which were based on free market economy, downsizing of public sector's role in economy, liberalization of foreign trade and incentivization of foreign investors. State's active role in construction sector did shift to private sector in 1980s, and the Mass Housing Law, enacted in 1981, paved the way for suburbs erected by the private sector from 1990s onwards. This process was further accelerated by the Real Estate Investment Trust and companies with foreign partners. It was at this time that major changes were first observed in terms of urban construction practices such as gated communities, five-star hotels, new office blocks, removal of small businesses from central areas, start of gentrification in former residential areas (Öncü and Weyland, 1997).

In the 2000s, a stand-by agreement is struck with the IMF and the "second neoliberal wave" starts (Boratav, 2008). The main objective of this adjustment was to stop the state from interfering with the public life. In this period, international capital was allowed in and cultural and tourism-oriented urban transformation projects with a globalization vision in city centers accelerated (Aksoy and Enlil, 2011; Balaban 2011). The report titled *Tourism Strategy of Turkey 2023* published by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2007 states that investors will be incentivized and amendments will be made in the tax regime for the formation and development of branded tourism areas (Official Gazette, 2007). These strategies support the organizer and facilitator role of the state in neoliberal projects. The Justice and Development Party (AKP) governments, which won first the 2002 and then 2007 and 2011 general elections, adopted this role and development-oriented neoliberal policies and a globalization vision became important components of the party's discourse in the election processes.

"Commodifying urban spaces", neoliberalism brings about rapid transformations in the city (Şengül, 2015, 2). Construction sector is regarded as a driving force of the Turkish economy (Balaban, 2012). In the 2000s, in Turkey, forestlands were put on sale, the construction of environmentally-unfriendly hydroelectric power plants became a topic of debate, industrial sites in cities were evacuated, and TOKI's (Housing Development Administration) field of activity was expanded. In this process, Istanbul entered into a radical socio-spatial rebuilding phase as a showcase of global image for the AKP governments. Istanbul experiences, in its own context, the transformation that the former industrial zones, idled as a

result of deindustrialization, and the historical city centers of many cities such as Gateshead and Barcelona went through (Urry, 1995). Examples of projects in Istanbul, some of which are already completed, are as follows: Museum City project, 2010 Istanbul European Capital of Culture project, 2020 Olympic City project, Kartal Beach redevelopment project, to which star architects were invited, Haliçport and Galataport, which are projects aiming to refunction industrial sites, the Third Bridge (Yavuz Sultan Selim Bridge) project, Canal Istanbul project, the Third Airport project, and Haydarpaşa Station Building transformation project. The increased interest in city centers that began in 1990s in Istanbul was triggered by tourism sector and the interest of the capital in historic quarters of cities has become the distinct character of the 2000s (Dinçer et al., 2011, 18).

Resembling a huge construction site, Istanbul joined the race to become a global city and started to rise among global cities in the 2000s. According to the GaWC research (2012), which assesses cities' competitiveness in the global economic system, while Istanbul ranked second in the Beta+ group (moderate economic regions) and ranked thirty-five in total in 2000, it ranked sixth in the Alpha- group (major economic regions) and twenty-ninth in total in 2012. Furthermore, Istanbul ranked the fifth among cities that attract the most international visitors in 2012 (MasterCard Worldwide, 2012). As these rankings and the above-cited projects show, Istanbul in the 2000s provided many case studies in relation to debates on global cities and neoliberal urban policies. However, as Aksoy (2014, 26) points out, the abstract generalizations of neoliberalism and its generic components such as transnational capital flows, spatial segregation and urban transformation are diversified and specified in interaction with locally specific socio-political structures. Lovering and Türkmen (2011, 74) argue that the defining characteristic of the transformation that Istanbul has gone through is a neoliberal approach sustained under the authoritarian influence of the extremely centralized Turkish Government. Especially after the 2011 general elections, Istanbul became a showcase of cultural identity for the AKP government declared itself as a "conservative democratic party" (Aksoy, 2014, 27). Beyoğlu, with its cosmopolitan structure, became one of the most important stages for neoliberal policies and socio-political transformation projects.  The macro-economic policies implemented by the AKP government were also reflected on urban transformation projects in Beyoğlu, where AKP won the local elections after 2004. The cultural and historical heritage that Beyoğlu (Pera) possesses has turned into a trademark in the marketing of the quarter.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

İstiklal Street unfolds into two different directions; Taksim and Tünel Squares. These two corridors converge at Galatasaray Square (**Figure 1**). The street is approximately 1400 meters long, 15 meters of average span, and looks down on both the Golden Horn and the Bosporus from 65 meters high from sea level. It outstretches glitteringly and vivaciously, whilst being murky and conflicting as well. İstiklal Street is located within Pera (Beyoğlu) region, which had burgeoned in 18th century to the north and as an extension of Galata – an autonomous Genoese and Venetian walled city across the historical peninsula prior to the conquest of Istanbul (Kayra, 1990). Pera, initially known with its vineyards and orchards, burgeoned into a focal point with the construction of a couple of embassies in the

**Figure 1.** An overview of İstiklal Street from Galatasaray Square. Galatasaray-Taksim axis is on the left and Galatasaray-Tünel axis is on the right (by the authors, June 2014).

region, and the moving of the Medical School to Galatasaray (today's Galatasaray High School).

Pera represented the Occidental front of the empire with its socio-spatial formation. Galata was evolving into a major mercantile port in 1840s, and import goods were abundant on display of stores on İstiklal Street (then Grand Rue de Pera). Pera and its vicinity started hosting many hotels and restaurants. Subsequent fires have shaped the region; such as the Beyoğlu fire of 1870 breaking out on Grand Rue de Pera as a result of which the area between Galatasaray and Taksim has taken its current form. The urban texture of the region resembled, if not same, that of Paris in 19th century (Akın, 1998). The region then comprised major islands formed by the merger of dense buildings, passages across these islands that interconnected streets, and treeless and dark alleys.

Pera had always been an ethnically diverse settlement area. The population, back in 1848, was 137.400; 66.700 Muslims and 70.700 Non-Muslims (Durudoğan, 1998). The demographic structure consisted mainly of Levantines, and Greeks, Armenians, Jews and Turks. Russians, Bulgarians and Circassians were also parts of this ethnical diversity. The Street has preserved its multi-lingual and multi-cultural structure until the mid-20th century. Following the foundation of the Republic in 1923, and the subsequent moving out of embassies and minorities, who lost trade blocs, the population of Beyoğlu has begun to change. It was at this period that the name Grand Rue de Pera was changed into İstiklal Street. It must however be noted that the real demographic change was related to a series of anti-minority policies and laws. The Wealth Tax, enacted on 12 November 1942, levied on and resulting in the bankruptcy of non-Muslims; the incidents of September 6-7, 1955, which broke out as an act against the Greeks, and escalated into plundering of all shops/offices owned by non-Muslims; and the government's annulment of the residence permits of Greek people in Turkey (1964) were all elements of the Turkification policies that were in place since 1930s. 8600 Greeks of Turkish nationality had to leave the country following 1964 (Cezar, 1991). Pera's owners,

thus, started to change, and the cosmopolite structure of the city perished quickly between 1950 and 1970.

The fleeing of merchant and rich families from the region and the arrival of Anatolian migrants in 1960s changed the societal texture of Beyoğlu, and triggered an increase in crime rates and physical degradation. The abandoned buildings were transformed, ever-increasingly, into manufacturing shops and storages, and İstiklal Street became congested with vulgar night clubs and brothels. Beyoğlu has experienced a major transformation during the reign of Istanbul Metropolitan Mayor Bedrettin Dalan, between 1984 and 1989. Large-scale demolitions were carried out for opening Tarlabaşı Boulevard, and İstiklal Street has subsequently been pedestrianized. Dalan's projects, which displaced once centrally located small-scale shops and saw the destruction of a part of the old town's texture, were part of a broader reconstruction process aimed at attracting private entrepreneurs to Istanbul. Demolitions at Tarlabaşı generated controversy regarding the preservation of the architectural heritage of Beyoğlu. While the Chamber of Architects regarded the destruction of the old texture of the city at Pera, which represents the Western face of the Ottoman Empire, as the loss of unique architectural heritage, nationalists approved it, thinking that Pera represented European capitalism, and it was also supported by those who nostalgically wanted a revitalization of Beyoğlu (Bartu, 1999, 38). In this controversial climate, a nostalgic tramway was opened on İstiklal Street, following pedestrianization and the Street has been reinvigorated with festivals, art galleries and places of entertainment.

Cihangir district, to the east of the Street, became the middle-class intellectuals' favorite, whilst Tarlabaşı, to the west, became a refuge for migrant families from Southeast and temporary residents such as colored migrants. The Saturday Mothers, LGBTI groups and many other NGOs started frequenting the street from 1990s. The former multi-cultural and multi-layered tolerant structure of the street has resurfaced with the co-emergence of different actors. In this process, conservative ideology had started its rise and the Welfare Party (RP) had won the local elections in Beyoğlu in 1994. For the conservative ideology, the cosmopolitan cultural structure of the area had symbolic significance in terms of reviving the "Ottoman model" (Bartu, 1999, 39). Cultural identity (Islamic identity) in urban spaces and projects in that vein would be a topic of hot debate between the conservative and secular sections of society from that point on. However, the massive urban transformation in Beyoğlu would take place after 2005, accompanied by a global city discourse.

The socio-spatial diversity of İstiklal Street has started to perish again as a result of the urban transformation policies pursued after 2005 (Adanalı, 2011a). Dominated by non-Muslim capital and population in the 19th century, İstiklal Street began to transform into a market place for national and international goods and services that once again serve the high-income groups, this time with large-scale projects and interventions. The cosmopolitan heritage of Beyoğlu turned into a trademark for Istanbul's global city projects. Pera became a source of image and advertisement for the AKP, which won the local elections in 2004, 2009, and 2014 and determinedly pursued neoliberal policies, and the "Paris reference" was instrumentalized in a pragmatist way in the selection of the cultural codes used (Aksoy and Robins, 2012, 51). For instance, the Tarlabaşı transformation project was introduced by Mayor Ahmet Misbah Demircan

with a reference to the Champs-Elysées in Paris (Beyoğlu Municipality, 2010). The local administration presented Tarlabaşı's urban transformation, during which present users were displaced, as the same way it had happened in Sulukule, as a project that would preserve cultural richness. Included in tourism strategies, the marketing of localness was only being assessed in terms of physical space and this approach brought with it social exclusion.

Articulated to neoliberalism, conservative ideology had its own contradictions in its projects. For example, a much-discussed project was about a mosque that was to be built opposite the Greek Orthodox Church to symbolize the predominance of the Islamic identity in the city. Projects for rebuilding the Topçu Barracks and the shutting down and rendering the AKM opera building non-functional were all part of the revitalization (re-conquest) of Beyoğlu. Conservative ideology both followed neoliberal policies and contradicted liberal democracy (Peker, 2015, 4-19). Perhaps that is precisely why urban transformation projects in Beyoğlu varying from building scale to urban space scale caused such uproar and turned into a symbolical loss and acquisition battle that pitted conservatives against seculars. The urban transformation process, which generated this conflict started with a series of legal regulations. The legal infrastructure that was put in place in approximately the last 30 years changed drastically the socio-economic dynamics of İstiklal Street and came to dominate the city.

## İSTİKLAL STREET "BESIEGED"

İstiklal Street is currently besieged by urban transformation projects. The spatial besieging can easily be mapped, and it is overt within the physical environment. The ongoing peripheral transformations trigger, from far and near, the transformation dynamics of İstiklal Street. These urban transformation projects are parts of culture oriented tourism strategies, and encompass the old urban fabric of Istanbul as well. The nurturing legal background for these strategies date back to 1980s: Law No. 2634 of 1982 on "Tourism Promotion", Law No. 2863 of 1983 on "Conservation of Cultural and Natural Property", Law No. 3030 of 1984 on "Establishment of Metropolitan Municipalities", Law of 1985 on "Decree on Tourism Centers", "Environmental Law" No. 2872 of 1989, and "Coastal Law" No. 2495 of 1990 embody the spatial organizations in urban areas (Official Gazette, 2014). The Law No. 2634 of 1982 provided the legal basis for state subsidy for the development of tourist facilities, allowed central government to declare certain strategic sites as "Tourism Centers" and had major impacts on the existing urban form (Kocabaş, 2006, 116; Enlil, 2011, 15). On the other hand, metropolitan municipalities and district municipalities were authorized to make or commission master development plans in 1984. This has accelerated the urban decision-making and implementation processes of local administrations.

Culture Co. was established in 1989, within Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, with underlying private sector logic and the following mission statement: "transformation of Istanbul into an incontestable global city of culture and arts" and Mr. Nevzat Bayhan's, General Manager of Culture Co., "Istanbul's brand is and always will be based on culture and arts" discourse is indicative of how Istanbul's cultural structure is instrumentalized within the context of branding cities (Ünsal, 2011, 32). Similarly; the objectives and strategies report by Istanbul Metropolitan

**Figure 2.** Former urban settlements in Istanbul (on the left) and Beyoğlu-İstiklal Street and nearby quarters (on the right).

Planning and Urban Design Center (IMP, 2006) contains a vision statement on Istanbul Environmental Plans (1/100.000 scale). The said statement argues the need to bring Istanbul's cultural and tourism potentials into the forefront with a view to ensure global competitiveness. Accordingly; the Historical Peninsula, the Golden Horn, Beyoğlu, Kadıköy and Üsküdar regions have been designated as culture-oriented tourism areas (**Figure 2**) (**2**).

Legal regulations starting in the 1980s and playing a determining role in the transformation of city centers were completed in the 2000s. Some laws of this process and their scopes are as follows: "Amendment to the Law for the Encouragement of Tourism" of 2003 No. 4957 opened the way for foreign capital investments, and international investment in Turkey increased by tenfold between 2004 and 2008 (Hazman, 2010). "Law on Metropolitan Municipalities" of 2004 No. 5216, "Law on Special Provincial Administration" of 2005 No. 5302, and "Law on Municipalities" of 2005 No. 5393 saw the expansion of the duties of the municipalities, metropolitan municipalities, and special provincial administrations; the amendment to the "Protection of Cultural and Natural Assets" of 2004 No. 5226 gave the authority over cultural properties to local administrations; new adjustments in the law of 2005 No. 5398 paved the way for structuring on coastal areas.  Law No. 5366 of 2005 on "Conservation by Renovation and Use by Revitalization of the Deteriorated Historical and Cultural Immovable Property", which has played an important role in the transformation of Beyoğlu, has given broad authority to local administrations in the declaration of urban transformation areas and the implementation of development plans in these areas (such as Sulukule, Tarlabaşı, Süleymaniye, Fener-Balat); amendments to the "Law for Municipalities" No. 5998 of 2010 authorized municipalities in the implementation of urban transformation projects; amendments to the "Turkish Code of Obligations" No. 6098 of 2014 made it possible for the landlord to terminate tenancy agreements which have exceeded their ten-year extension periods and remove tenants without providing any reason in such quarters as Beyoğlu suffered because of this law (Official Gazette, 2014).

**2.** For comprehensive Istanbul mappings: Derviş and Öner (2009).

In this rather lengthy list of legal regulations, especially the Law No. 5366 relaxed the expropriation rules in urban transformation projects and expanded the scale of urban renovation from the building scale to the parcel scale, meaning that from then on not only the singular buildings but also building groups in a parcel could be renovated with their façades protected. Parcel-scale renovation projects played a decisive role in urban transformation that took place in Tarlabaşı and İstiklal Street. In the process of creating this whole legal basis, historical city centers went into a socio-spatial rebuilding process that gradually accelerated. The completed and ongoing projects in Beyoğlu are as follows: Galataport in the east (a project tendered in 2005 that includes plans to build a five-star hotel, residences and shopping mall on a 1200 meters long coastal strip, from Karaköy Square to Tophane), Karaköy and Haliçport in the south (a project tendered in 2013 that covers 250 decares of shipyards within the Golden Horn and includes plans to build a marina, hotel and shopping malls), Tarlabaşı in the west (an urban regeneration project, covering an area of 20.000 square meters in Tarlabaşı, which was tendered in 2007 and consists of 210 proprietary examples of civil architecture), Talimhane (a pedestrianization and accommodation project, underway since 2004), and Taksim Square in the north (a pedestrianization project of the square and reconstruction project of Topçu Barracks that has triggered Gezi Incidents in 2013). Beyoğlu Conservation Development Plan, which entered into force in 2011, comprises the main regional decisions including these urban transformation projects.

Beyoğlu Municipality, with its entrepreneurial role, becomes one of the main actors in the tourism and trade-oriented renovation projects of the quarter. Beyoğlu, as a globally branded quarter, is co-marketed by the private and public sectors. The Mayor of Beyoğlu, Mr. Demircan, pioneered the formation of Beyoğlu Investors Group (BIG) initiative, comprising 32 large scale investors and whose projects have been presented to international investors during a press conference on the occasion of the above-mentioned MIPIM Real Estate Exposition 2015 (**3**). Members of BIG have come together with Hainz and Goldman Sachs, prominent American investment firms, and Morgan Stanley, Blackstone, Abraaj Capital, Al-Futtaim, Amstar Bilfinger, Aerium, HB Reavis and Grosvenor, world's prominent investors (Marmara Haber, 2015). The objective of BIG members and the municipality was to internationalize the reconstruction process of Beyoğlu. Above-mentioned macro-scale urban transformation strategies reappear on the micro scale in İstiklal Street's spatial change. The 2004-2014 cross-sections of the street demonstrate this spatial transformation.

## İSTİKLAL STREET UNDERCONSTRUCTION: "BIG" CAPITAL, POLITICS AND DISCOURSES

In 2004, 60 cross-sections were obtained between Taksim and the Tünel Square in order to analyze the spatial use on İstiklal Street. The study has been reiterated in 2014 for the purposes of analyzing the transformation (**Figure 3**). The sections from the summer of 2014 continue to change whilst this report is being penned. İstiklal Street has already become one big construction site. Back in 2004, during the initial research on the Street, a more optimistic deduction could be made. Diversity in spatial use and users was yet to diminish. The 2004 owners of İstiklal Street, supposing that they were passive resisters against the reigning isolation of the whole city, was still able to create alternative living spaces in the city within the

**3.** BIG Group members: Piyalepaşa Real Estate Development and Investment, Gap Construction Investment and Foreign Trade, Lazzoni Furniture Construction, Amplio Real Estate, Ofton Construction Tourism and Investment, Naz Construction Real Estate, Rumeli *Han*, Kamer Construction, Nar Investment, CVK Group, Maksem Market, Krea Sirius Real Estate, Kapital Real Estate, Seba Vadi Construction, Aktif Construction, İpek Construction, Tuna Office and Furniture, Naba Tourism, Akdağlar Mining, Akfen Real Estate, Nesa Group Tourism, Timur Real Estate, Meydanbey Construction, Nidya Hotel, Kosikoğlu Hotel, Global Hotel, Rixos Hotel, Anya Tourism, Akka Construction, Berkolon Real Estate, İKSV (Istanbul Foundation For Culture and Arts), Koç Holding (Beyoğlu Municipality, 2015).

**Figure 3.** 60 cross-sections obtained from İstiklal Street, and the buildings overrun by those sections.

city. As for the sections from 2014, there is an entirely different and new snapshot at play. Almost every single cross-section of İstiklal Street has changed. Some franchises have already deserted the street, some have just been opened whilst others have expanded and a few have changed location. It was deemed suitable to work on a multi-part legend in order to detail the spatial uses. It is for this reason that the upper chords on service sectors have been broken down to subtitles like 1 and 2 (**Figure 4**).

The sections in 2004 covered a total area of 562.771 square meters whilst those of 2014 cover 572.093 square meters (**Table 1**). There has been an increase by 1.7 percent in terms of the total area of buildings in the sections. The street keeps on expanding vertically from top to basement. New stories are being mostly added during restoration and renovation projects of buildings housing shopping and cultural activities. 21.6 percent of 2004 sections were either vacant or under renovation, and this incidence has gone down to 20 percent in 2014. The current vacant buildings or renovation and restoration projects are mostly different than those a decade ago, the rapid construction and transfers do move around the sections.

A glance at the buildings in use would reveal that the inherent small scale enterprises of İstiklal's unique character gradually decrease. Spaces owned by small businesses, which are named as commercial/shopping facilities 1, contracted by 16.6 percent; whilst spaces owned by department stores and malls, which are classified as commercial/shopping facilities 2, increased by 323.4 percent. The spaces used by bookstores, commercial/shopping facilities 3, went down by 44.6 percent. There has also been a 29.5 percent contraction observed in manufacturing and craft spaces. Large
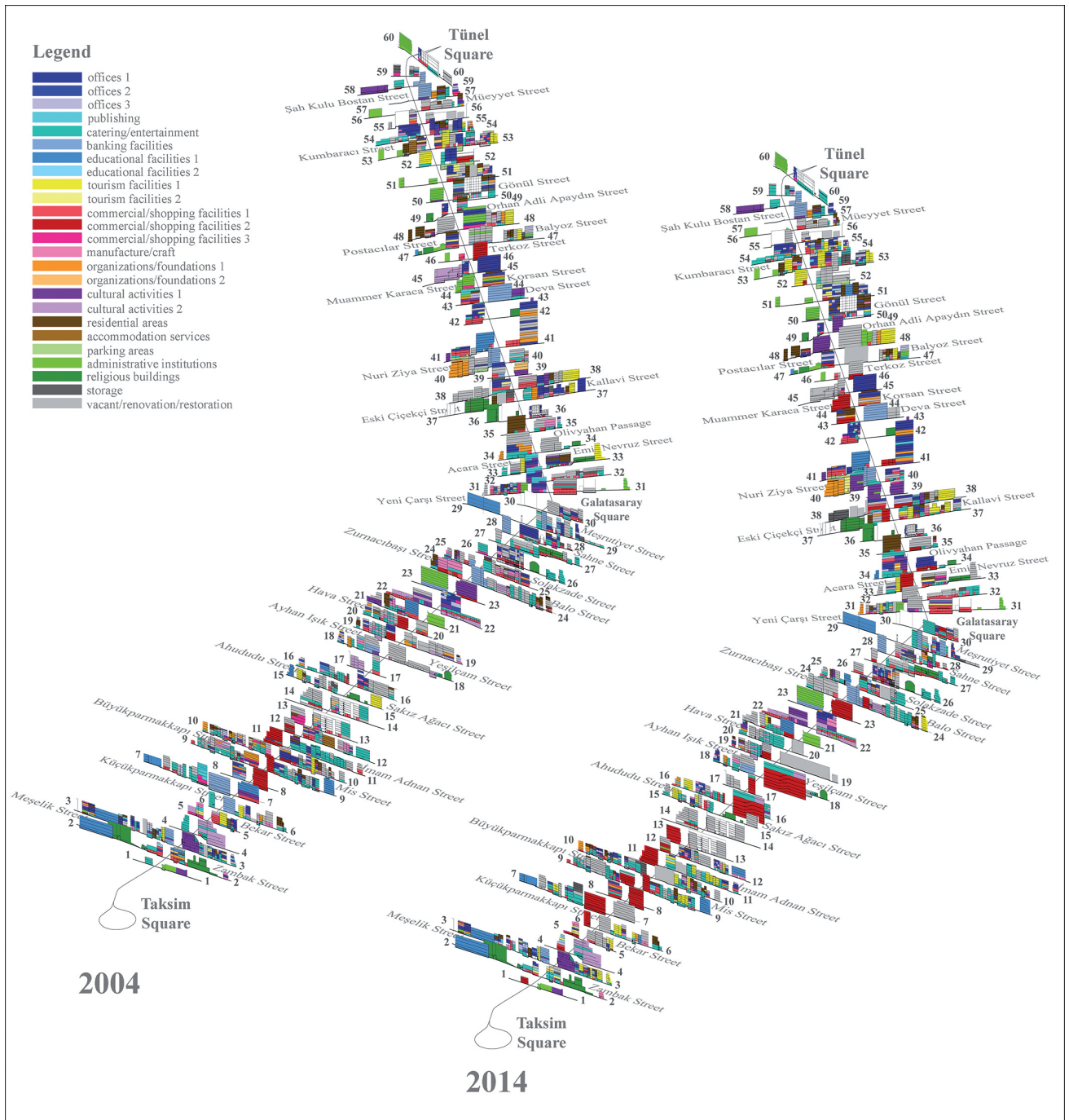
**Figure 4.** Scope of the Study: Comparison of cross-sections obtained from İstiklal Street between 2004 and 2014, and the legend used.

corporations are thus investing in large square meters, to the extent of a whole building, by choking the small and fragmented structure of İstiklal Street. The above-mentioned spatial change consorts with the 19.2 percent contraction of space used by organizations/foundations 1, comprising NGOs, associations and chambers, and the 87.9 contraction of space used by organizations/foundations 2 that comprise political organizations and parties. The largest increase, in terms of spatial use on cross-sections from İstiklal Street, is observed amongst department stores and shopping malls (323.4 percent), and the largest contraction is observed amongst political parties (87.9 percent). Depolitization of the street is related to the political

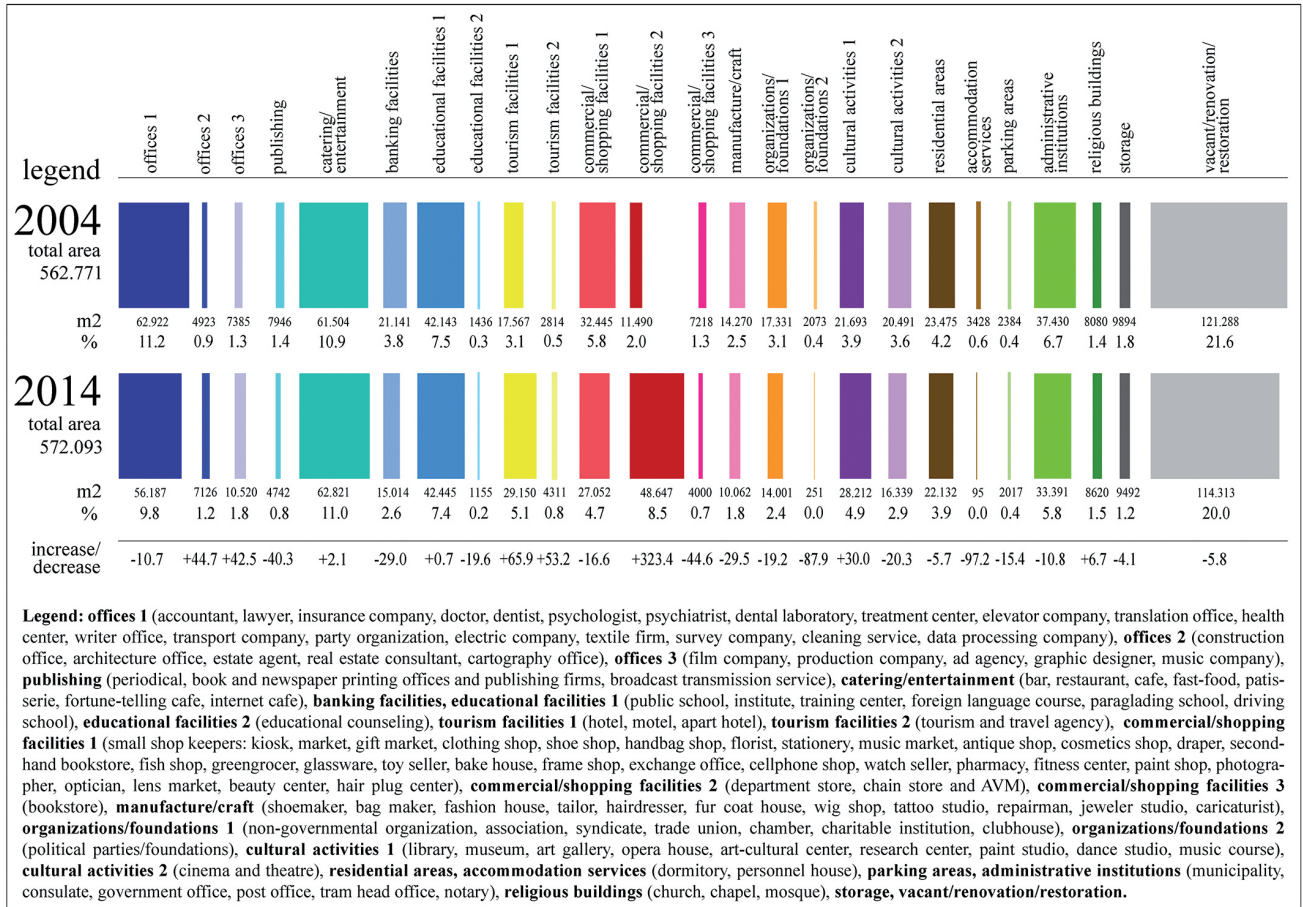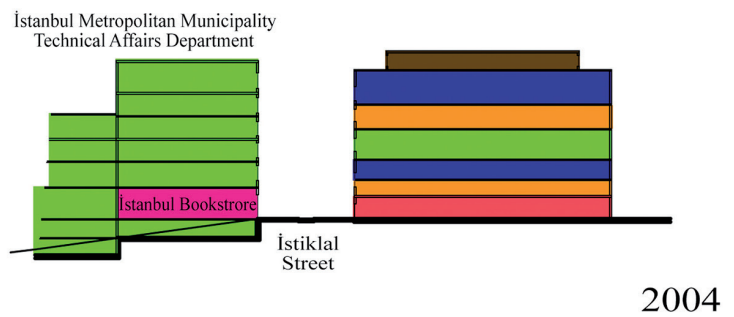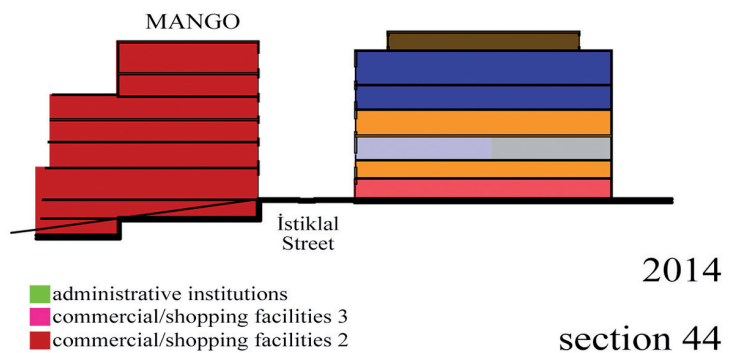| legend | offices 1 | offices 2 | offices 3 | publishing | catering/ entertainment | banking facilities | educational facilities 1 | educational facilities 2 | tourism facilities 1 | tourism facilities 2 | commercial/ shopping facilities 1 | commercial/ shopping facilities 2 | commercial/ shopping facilities 3 | manufacture/craft | organizations/ foundations 1 | organizations/ foundations 2 | cultural activities 1 | cultural activities 2 | residential areas | accommodation services | parking areas | administrative institutions | religious buildings | storage | vacant/renovation/ restoration |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2004** total area 562.771 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| m2 | 62.922 | 4923 | 7385 | 7946 | 61.504 | 21.141 | 42.143 | 1436 | 17.567 | 2814 | 32.445 | 11.490 | 7218 | 14.270 | 17.331 | 2073 | 21.693 | 20.491 | 23.475 | 3428 | 2384 | 37.430 | 8080 | 9894 | 121.288 |
| % | 11.2 | 0.9 | 1.3 | 1.4 | 10.9 | 3.8 | 7.5 | 0.3 | 3.1 | 0.5 | 5.8 | 2.0 | 1.3 | 2.5 | 3.1 | 0.4 | 3.9 | 3.6 | 4.2 | 0.6 | 0.4 | 6.7 | 1.4 | 1.8 | 21.6 |
| **2014** total area 572.093 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| m2 | 56.187 | 7126 | 10.520 | 4742 | 62.821 | 15.014 | 42.445 | 1155 | 29.150 | 4311 | 27.052 | 48.647 | 4000 | 10.062 | 14.001 | 251 | 28.212 | 16.339 | 22.132 | 95 | 2017 | 33.391 | 8620 | 9492 | 114.313 |
| % | 9.8 | 1.2 | 1.8 | 0.8 | 11.0 | 2.6 | 7.4 | 0.2 | 5.1 | 0.8 | 4.7 | 8.5 | 0.7 | 1.8 | 2.4 | 0.0 | 4.9 | 2.9 | 3.9 | 0.0 | 0.4 | 5.8 | 1.5 | 1.2 | 20.0 |
| increase/ decrease | -10.7 | +44.7 | +42.5 | -40.3 | +2.1 | -29.0 | +0.7 | -19.6 | +65.9 | +53.2 | -16.6 | +323.4 | -44.6 | -29.5 | -19.2 | -87.9 | +30.0 | -20.3 | -5.7 | -97.2 | -15.4 | -10.8 | +6.7 | -4.1 | -5.8 |

**Legend: offices 1** (accountant, lawyer, insurance company, doctor, dentist, psychologist, psychiatrist, dental laboratory, treatment center, elevator company, translation office, health center, writer office, transport company, party organization, electric company, textile firm, survey company, cleaning service, data processing company), **offices 2** (construction office, architecture office, estate agent, real estate consultant, cartography office), **offices 3** (film company, production company, ad agency, graphic designer, music company), **publishing** (periodical, book and newspaper printing offices and publishing firms, broadcast transmission service), **catering/entertainment** (bar, restaurant, cafe, fast-food, patisserie, fortune-telling cafe, internet cafe), **banking facilities, educational facilities 1** (public school, institute, training center, foreign language course, paraglading school, driving school), **educational facilities 2** (educational counseling), **tourism facilities 1** (hotel, motel, apart hotel), **tourism facilities 2** (tourism and travel agency), **commercial/shopping facilities 1** (small shop keepers: kiosk, market, gift market, clothing shop, shoe shop, handbag shop, florist, stationery, music market, antique shop, cosmetics shop, draper, second-hand bookstore, fish shop, greengrocer, glassware, toy seller, bake house, frame shop, exchange office, cellphone shop, watch seller, pharmacy, fitness center, paint shop, photographer, optician, lens market, beauty center, hair plug center), **commercial/shopping facilities 2** (department store, chain store and AVM), **commercial/shopping facilities 3** (bookstore), **manufacture/craft** (shoemaker, bag maker, fashion house, tailor, hairdresser, fur coat house, wig shop, tattoo studio, repairman, jeweler studio, caricaturist), **organizations/foundations 1** (non-governmental organization, association, syndicate, trade union, chamber, charitable institution, clubhouse), **organizations/foundations 2** (political parties/foundations), **cultural activities 1** (library, museum, art gallery, opera house, art-cultural center, research center, paint studio, dance studio, music course), **cultural activities 2** (cinema and theatre), **residential areas, accommodation services** (dormitory, personnel house), **parking areas, administrative institutions** (municipality, consulate, government office, post office, tram head office, notary), **religious buildings** (church, chapel, mosque), **storage, vacant/renovation/restoration.**

**Table 1.** 2004-2014 barcodes of İstiklal Street: a comparative analysis of total floor area of buildings in terms of their spatial usage.

parties and associations not being able to afford the increase in the value of the real estate on the street and leaving. On the other hand, depolitization is not limited to the buildings that surround the street. To achieve homogenization of the quarter and the elimination of the socio-economic user variety, which constitute an important part of gentrification strategies, protests and demonstrations were banned and suppressed by central and local authorities with an increasing frequency in 2010s. The street is not only becoming more and more depoliticized, but it is also becoming a homogenous and hygienic tourist destination whilst losing its spatially fragmented traits.

It is possible to screen the media for tracking down how capital is motivated on the street. In the aftermath of 2005, many national and international brands have started seeking tenements or for sale units on and around the Street. Since 2008; garment and food sector chain stores such as *Kahve Dünyası*, *Güllüoğlu*, *Zara* and *Mado*, which mostly cater the middle income group, have opened at least one shop on the Street (Gebetaş, 2008). For instance; Mr. İsak Andiç Ermay, the owner of Spanish fashion giant Mango, opened a store in the former Vakko building in 2007, and he has recently purchased another building that used to be the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Culture Co.'s bookstore – located between Galatasaray and Tünel (Taş, 2010) (**Figure 5**). Stores are bursting whilst bookstores are dying away. The owner of the Homer Bookstore says that the bookstores which moved from Cağaloğlu to İstiklal Street in the 1990s have started to leave the street now to go back to Cağaloğlu and adds:

İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality
Technical Affairs Department

İstanbul Bookstrore

İstiklal
Street

2004

MANGO

İstiklal
Street

2014

section 44

- administrative institutions
- commercial/shopping facilities 3
- commercial/shopping facilities 2

**Figure 5.** Section 44: MANGO has purchased the building that used to house Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Technical Affairs Department, including Istanbul Bookstore.

"People coming to the street started to change, those walking on the street now are not different from the crowds at Bakırköy. They only come to İstiklal Street now to shop and consume." (Interview 1, 2014).

Many book stores like Cumhuriyet Book Club, Adam, İstavrit, and Can Bookstore, which were part of 2004 sections, are now closed. Other bookstores such as Robinson Crusoe and Megavizyon were moved out of their ground floor stores located on the Street.

Besides the above-mentioned general assessment of İstiklal Street as a whole, there are also zonal differentiations on the Street. A review of spatial magnitudes and usages reveals differences amongst the Taksim-Galatasaray and Galatasaray-Tünel axis. Taksim-Galatasaray axis densely hosts smaller scale shops and local retailers while Galatasaray-Tünel axis mainly hosts larger scale and international brands (**4**). This spatial differentiation indicates that the fragmented spatial usage is still maintained on Taksim-Galatasaray axis. It must, however, be noted that the usage trends in the entirety of the street have now changed, and the whole buildings, rather than just ground floors, are being leased or purchased. The 2014 sections predict a future where the resistant fragmented structure of Taksim-Galatasaray axis would soon be lost as well. The changes on this axis have been triggered by the inauguration of Demirören Shopping Mall in 2011 (**Figure 6**). The building, which was converted into a shopping mall with its façades rebuilt in the original way and its interior designed independently from the façades, generated big reactions in the media both in terms of its architectural design and public interest (Gümüş, 2011). The construction of Demirören Shopping Mall has immediately been succeeded by changes in island scales of the catchment area. The historical Cercle D'Orient building (the Grand Club) next to Demirören is one of the ongoing renovation projects, and it is expected that the buildings on the

**4.** The main trademarks located along İstiklal Street are (36 of them is international): Taksim-Galatasaray; Lacoste, Swatch, Diesel, Clinique, D&R, Teknosa, Adidas, Centro, Mango, The Body Shop, Saray Muhallebicisi, Mado, LCW, Koton, Starbucks, Polo Garage, Top Shop, United Colors of Benetton, Hotiç, Lewis, Nike, Converse, MAC, Desa, Kemal Tanca chain stores and Demirören AVM; Galatasaray-Tünel; The House Cafe, Nursace, Greyder, Elle, Atasun, Swarowski, Adidas, Darty, Penti, New Balance, Bershka, Hotiç, Gratis, Starbucks, Ada Cafe, Özsüt, Paşabahçe. The new stores added to the list in 2014 are Shake Shack, H&M and Hard Rock Cafe.
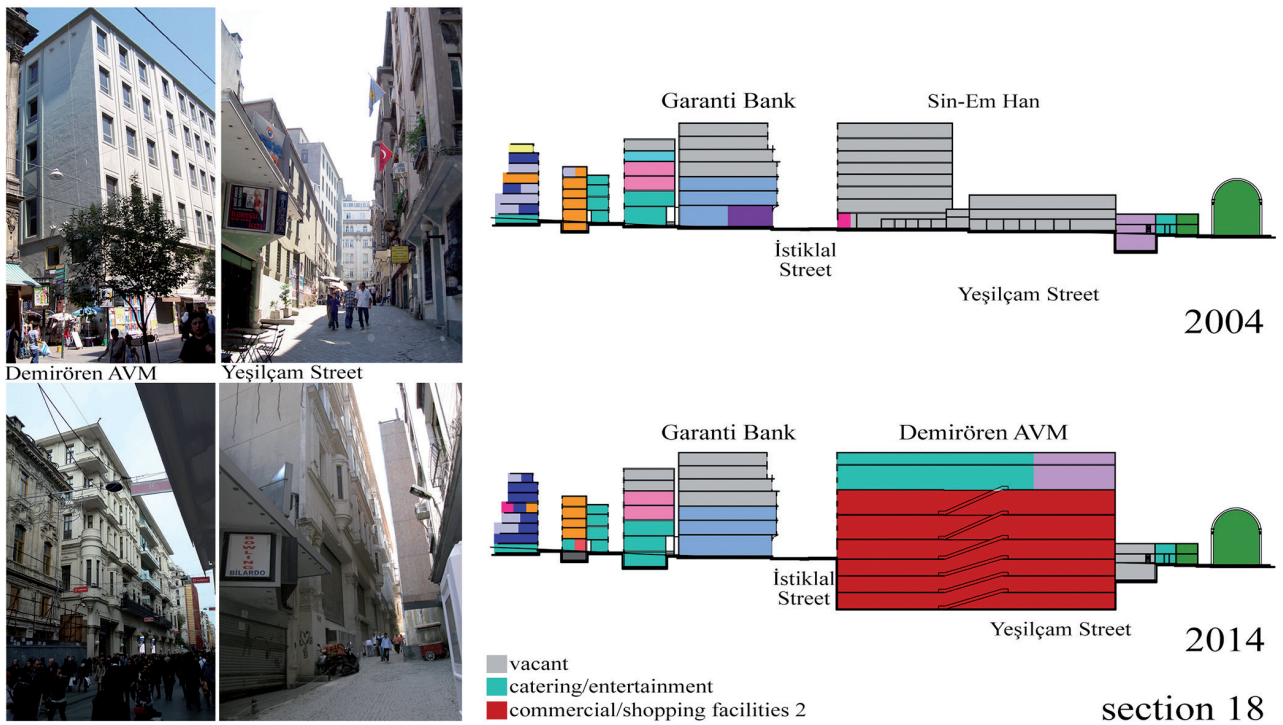
**Figure 6.** Section 18: Yeşilçam Street, where handicrafts were sold and movie festivals were organized in 2004, had its scale changed following the construction of Demirören shopping mall. It is now a desolate place. Emek Theater, opposite to the shopping mall, has been evacuated and demolished.

island, containing Emek Theater, will become another shopping mall under the name of Grand Pera.

The street is now on the radar of real estate firms and foreign funds as well. One of these foreign investment funds is the Dutch Vast-Ned, and they have purchased five buildings on the street (Taş, 2010). Yapı Kredi Arts Building (some of which is leased to Zara) and Komando *Han* are amongst the investments by Vast-Ned. Eastern European Property Fund Limited (EEPFL), a British fund established to work on real estate markets in Turkey, Romania and Bulgaria, has bought nine buildings (Adanalı, 2011b). Şark Aynalı Passage, Nil Passage, Ravouna Building, sixth floor of Mısır Building and various buildings at Asmalımescit and Cihangir are amongst these purchases. This whole process created a rapid mark-up. İstiklal Street has been ranked second in terms of largest rent increases according to the 2014-2015 international rent report by Cushman&Wakefield (2015) (Hürriyet, 2015). İstiklal Street's 27.3 percent increase in rents is only bested by San Francisco – Union Square (30 percent).

İstiklal Street has metamorphosed into a space of fast-paced renovation, refinement and marketing, and small business owners have started moving out. All urban/spatial elements of the Street, from restored facades to nostalgic tramway are transforming into advertising surfaces. The capital-oriented urbanization triggers a process that undermines the diversity and memory of the Street. As highlighted by Adanalı, İstiklal Street is becoming similar to all the other high streets around the world – "spread of cloned cities" (Adanalı, 2011b). The following statement by Nizam Hışım, the Chairman of Beyoğlu Enrichment and Preservation Association, epitomizes how economic and politic actors view the region: "protesters out, for new Demirörens to come" (Erciyes, 2011). This long urban corridor, once shining out with its spatial and user diversity, now functions as one big shop window for displaying consumer goods.

## SPATIAL ORGANIZATIONS FOCUSED ON CULTURE AND TOURISM

Aksoy and Enlil (2011, 25-30) analyze the cultural economy under cultural and creative activities (cultural heritage, arts, cultural industry and creative facilities) in *Cultural Economy Compendium: Istanbul 2010*. In parallel with this, the driving sectors forming global networks, as depicted by Keyder's notion of "global city" (2010, 7-11), are finance, tourism, informatics and culture. These are the sectors that can easily transmigrate and have computerized transmissibility, and cities are now functioning as nothing but piers for them. A city's convergence into a global city depends on the economic growth and momentum created by these sectors. These sectors come with catering and shopping spaces appealing to service professionals and they are the fastest growing production and employment areas of Istanbul. **Table 1,** which is shown in the previous section, provides a general comparison, and its review within the context of sectors emphasized by Keyder reveals an interrelated growth amongst Tourism Facilities 1, Offices 3 and Cultural Activities 1. The quantitative and volumetric magnitude of culture, arts and tourism oriented spatial organizations on İstiklal Street are important indicators of Istanbul's cultural tourism investments aimed at creating a branding edge.

A review of sections reveals that the one for Tourism facilities 1, including hotels and motels, has increased by 65.9 percent. A further analysis of spatial changes within cross-sections shows that catering and entertainment facilities are replaced by hotels and motels (**Figure 7**). What's interesting is that there has only been an increase of 2.1 percent in spaces covered by catering and entertainment facilities despite the ever-growing consumption focus on İstiklal Street. Investors, purchasing whole buildings and even series of whole buildings, are erecting one hotel after another.

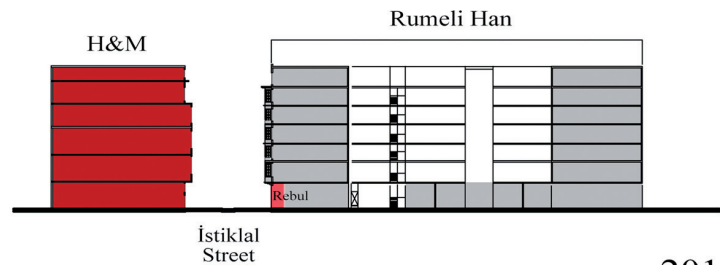**Figure 7.** Section 11: İmam Adnan Street, one of the streets with the most intense presence of new hotels.
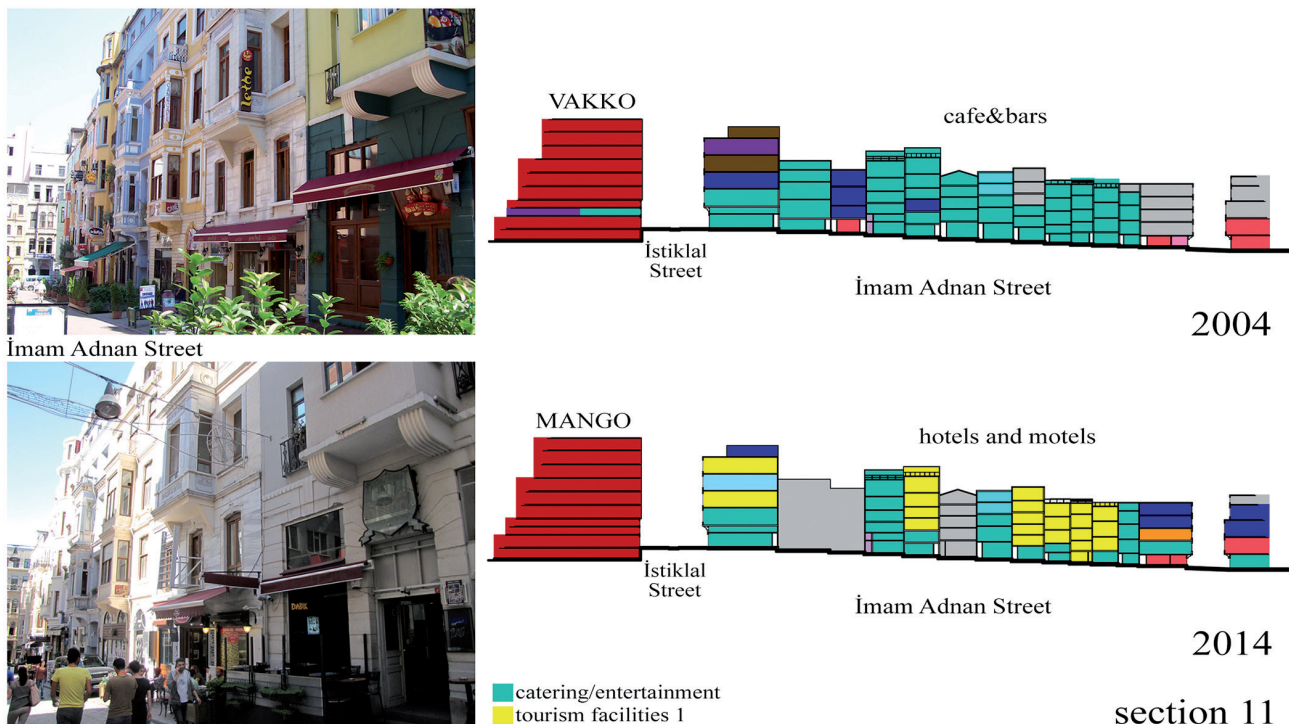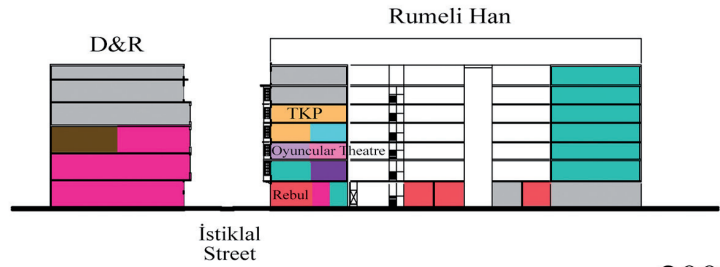
**Figure 8.** Section 13: Rumeli *Han* was evicted in 2014. "Curio-A Collection by Hilton" brand of Hilton Worldwide Co. is transforming Rumeli *Han* into a hotel.

Buildings, which once had a variety of usages and tenants, are losing their publicity. The increase in hotels and motels are followed by the category of Tourism Facilities 2 that contains tourism and travel agencies (53.2 percent).

Presence of hotels on and around İstiklal Street has increased in the aftermath of 2005, as is the case with shopping malls. In 2006, the hectic series of news on this matter has commenced with rumors about a hotel construction in Pera by İhsan Kalkavan, Orjin Group and Kıraç Holding Company (Turizmde Bu Sabah, 2006). İhsan Kalkavan renovated Pera Palas Hotel that he had bought following attempts in 2006. The subsequent hotel projects can be listed as follows: Ciner Group – Sarkuysan *Han* and Halk Bank; Serdar Bilgili – Former building of the American Consulate; Gulf Oil Co. – Afrika *Han*, "Curio-A Collection by Hilton" brand of Hilton Worldwide Company – Rumeli *Han* (Gürsel, 2011; Asal, 2015) (**Figure 8**). Apart from these projects, it is known that investors like Nizam Hışım, Martı Otel, Yılmaz Ulusoy, Ali Ağaoğlu, Dilek Holding Co., Galata Inc., Metro Group and Reisler Group are looking for properties to renovate and convert into hotels. The recently protested Yapı Kredi Koray real estate investment trust's project on Narmanlı *Han* is also amongst self-enclosed hotel/residence projects. The usage of gated public spaces, which has first been tested in 2004 at Şark Aynalı Passage and Fransız Street, is proliferating too despite resistance.

When hotel numbers are checked, it is seen that while there were 17 hotels in 2004 cross-sections, this figure goes up to 40 in 2014. While 13 of the hotels were boutique hotels, 3 of them 3-star hotels, 1 of them a 4-star hotel in 2004; in 2014, 36 of them were boutique hotels, 2 of them were 3-star hotels, and 2 of them were 4-star hotels. A general assessment shows that there has been an increase in the quality of the hotels. However, most of the hotels on İstiklal Street are stand-alone boutique hotels. That is why big

enterprises like Hilton Worldwide invest to convert large-scale buildings into hotels, as can be witnessed in the Rumeli *Han* example, or they merge and restore the building groups situated in the same parcel as in the Room Mate Emir Hotel project under way on Sadri Alışık Street.

Interviews conducted with owners of cafés and bars along the street show the concerns of shopkeepers regarding the increase of the number of hotels. For example, the owners of Mis Café and Zeytindalı Café on Büyükparmakkapı Street, the managers of the Sine Majestic Cinema and Café on Ayhan Işık Street have said that they were on the verge of shutting down their businesses because landlords prefer to convert their buildings into hotels as hotel management is more profitable (Interview 2 and 3, 2014). Small-scale cafés and bars that attract people of different income groups move to Beşiktaş and Kadıköy and are replaced either by hotels or chain stores.

With Keyder's (2010) sectoral assessment in mind; the urban transformation undergone by İstiklal Street has also attracted offices working on construction field and containing creative arts and design sector. It has been observed that the Offices 2 category, containing construction, architectural and cartography offices and realtors, has increased by 44.7 percent; and Offices 3, containing creative arts sector such as film and production companies, graphic design, advertisement, informatics and music companies, has increased by 42.5 percent. On the other hand, Publishing offices, which include periodical, book and newspaper printing houses, have started leaving the Street and space covered by them has decreased by 40.3 percent.

İstiklal Street and its vicinity's appeal to major financiers is not limited to hotels, residences and shopping malls. Culture and arts spaces are part of this chain too. The category of Cultural Activities 1, including libraries, museums, art galleries, cultural and research centers, has increased by 30 percent. The space covered by the category of Cultural Activities 2, cinemas and theaters, has, on the other hands, decreased by 20.3 percent. Many theaters, such as Sine-Pop, Alkazar, Rüya and Emek, have been closed down. There are also attempts to transform some buildings into hotels that boutique theaters like, İkincikat Theater House and Beyoğlu Terminal, resided in. Cultural activities on the Street are relocated, desolating cinemas and theaters. This relocation symbolizes the corporatization of art by way of prestigious cultural investments. Stallabrass (2009, 117), in his book *Art Incorporated, The Story of Contemporary Art and Biennales*, contextualizes contemporary art within the free trade ideology and capital relations of the new world order, and criticizes the form of contemporary art under state and corporate power. Art is becoming one of the self-marketing tools of cities.

Since the 1990s, corporate structures have been set up in Istanbul to manage the practical and cognitive mechanisms of art such as private museums, contemporary art galleries, biennales, bank exhibitions, Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts' (İKSV) and state's increasing prominence as sub-contractors of art, fairs, contemporary art auctions (Artun, 2011, 162). The existence of companies like İKSV, Eczacıbaşı, Sabancı, Koç Group, Doğan Group, and Borusan Inc. and banks like Garanti Bank, Osmanlı Bank, Akbank, Yapı Kredi Bank, and İş Bank within the globalizing culture policies is not only a matter of economic capital returns, it is also related with their willingness to possess symbolic capital (**Figure 9**). These companies are not only benefiting from financial relieves and incentives
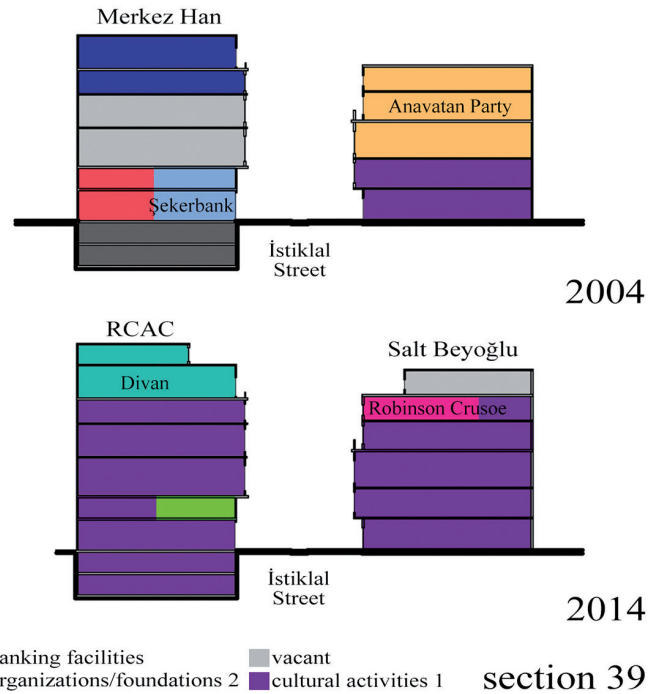
**Figure 9.** Section 39: KOÇ University Center for Anatolian Research (RCAC) opened in Merkez *Han* hosting various offices and Şekerbank, and facing Salt Beyoğlu - Platform Garanti.

provided under the Law on Tourism Promotion, they are also promoting themselves.

The 2004-2014 comparative analysis indicates that the sectors driving integration with global networks have an ever-increasing presence in terms of spatial use. New spatial uses mostly take the form of hotels, apart-hotels, galleries and big shopping chains. There are, on one hand, changes observed in terms of urban space hierarchy as a result of central-local policies and economic investments aimed at becoming global; and, on the other hand, such new formations mark up the rent obtained from urban land. Our media and daily experiences are already over-familiarized with people leaving İstiklal Street because of exorbitant rents, sort of a displacement. Due to the Amendment to the Turkish Code of Obligations No. 6098, the tenancy agreements of enterprises such as Kelebek Korse which have completed their 10-year period are terminated and old stores that are ingrained in the memory of the street move away, not being able to afford the increases in rent. The user profile and entertainment sense of İstiklal Street are changing in consequence of efforts to metamorphose it into a solely tourism-oriented street with refined countenance.

Neoliberal spatial formations bring with them the notion of cleanliness and safety, and generate control and discipline practices in urban spaces. Pressure on and social exclusion of the variety of socio-economic users on İstiklal Street is implemented as part of the gentrification project. For example, in the summer of 2011, the Municipality removed the tables outside the cafés on streets perpendicular and parallel to İstiklal Street. Certain groups have started frequenting other quarters like Beşiktaş, Karaköy and Kadıköy as a result of limited outdoor usage.  Moreover, a new tourist profile of people coming from Gulf countries has also become more prominent on İstiklal Street. The addition of Arabic to the Turkish and English on the boards of the stores in the 2014 cross-sections points to

the changing tourism policies.  The domestic and foreigner user profile of İstiklal Street is changing and the authentic character and atmosphere of the street is disappearing as a result of neoliberal policies.

Consequently, because of neoliberal urban policies, one group is the winner while the other is the loser. Aksoy and Robins (2012, 56) underline that the most important issue before Beyoğlu Municipality is to balance to public and private interests. Public good claims of urban transformation projects have turned into capital interests, and inter-class gaps have become widened. As a result of the Municipality's strategies to transform Beyoğlu into a global center, the socio-spatial structure of İstiklal Street has started to come undone. While this article was being written, İstiklal Street was continuing its rapid change. The post-2014 transformation of İstiklal Street requires ample research and re-assessment based on the socio-economic and political changes that the country went through.

**CONCLUSION**

This study aimed at analyzing the increase in Istanbul's cultural capital lots (assuming that spatial movements have resemblance to stock exchange movements) or the physical and quantitative increase in spatial organizations on the basis of İstiklal Street. The 2000s, during which integration with globalization gained pace, has witnessed substantial changes in terms of spatial organizations. The urban renovation projects and the increase in clusters of shopping centers, housing settlements and central business spaces – all related with Istanbul's race towards becoming a global city – have multiplied the spatial hierarchy. Increased spatial hierarchy is inevitable in city centers like İstiklal Street that go through the degradation-evacuation-revitalization cycle. Gentrification projects ignore inhabitants and the characteristic features of the region. In other words, the neoliberal economy policies have eviscerated İstiklal Street, and written a well-known script created by market mechanisms.

The future painted by 2014 sections of İstiklal Street presents, in the upcoming decade, a series of hotels, residences, shopping malls, in between which nothing can be done but to reminisce about the demolished and displaced spaces of urban memory. Urban regeneration is the legalized term used for urban displacement, and it is far from the alleged objective of taming the environment for it creates urban spaces with no socio-spatial character. Yet; the imaginative existence of old city centers embraces urban and daily lives, as against the periphery, by contact and interactions, by the events sheltered. It is far less disappointing than the isolated peripheral spaces. It is more ambivalent, freer and more heterogeneous. It is because of such a multi-layered structure that there is an ever-increasing resistance against urban transformation in historical urban spaces such as İstiklal Street. Numerous displacements like Emek Theater, Rumeli *Han*, Robinson Crusoe Bookstore and Narmanlı *Han* have thus received a backlash. Furthermore, the urban transformation of the Street turned into a symbolical loss and acquisition battle that pitted conservatives against seculars. However, in the urban transformation process, it is important to think about without the symbolical meanings of the area, to negotiate the future of this multi-layered quarter in a more cohesive city of plurality, to sustain the socio-spatial experiences and potentials in everyday life of the Street and to seek for the possibilities of opening new lines in the urban life.

The following recommendations can be made to Beyoğlu Municipality in guiding and regulating capital motivations over the street: While urban space is transformed to acquire such functions as hotel, residence, and shopping malls, renovation should be carried out in such a way that the socio-cultural texture is preserved; the urban space should be developed in such a way that historical and cultural spaces, users and uses do not disappear; stand-alone building projects should be encouraged rather parcel-scale renovation projects in which building groups are eviscerated save for the façades. On the other hand, in the transformation process necessary legal regulations should be made so as to ensure that the shopkeepers unable to afford the rise in the real estate value do not abandon the street; and a planning approach that will ensure the active participation of the dwellers should be developed. It is the opinion of this paper that these recommendations could deliver more democratic solutions to the urban transformation problems that Istanbul and Beyoğlu face.

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**ABBREVIATIONS**

AKP: Justice and Development Party.

BIG: Beyoğlu Investors Group.

IMP: Istanbul Metropolitan Planning and Urban Design Center.

LGBTI: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Transexual and Intersexed groups.

MIPIM: Le marché international des professionnels de l'immobilier – an international property event hosted in Cannes, France each March.

NGO: Non-governmental Organization.

RP: Welfare Party.

TOKI: Housing Development Administration.

**BEYOĞLU-İSTİKLAL CADDESİ'NİN YENİDEN İNŞASI: KESİTLER ÜZERİNDEN KENTSEL DÖNÜŞÜMÜN KARŞILAŞTIRMALI BİR ANALİZİ 2004-2014**

Kentsel mekânların, vitrinlerde teşhir edilen ürünler misali cazip hale getirilerek pazarlanması stratejisinin tarihi, İkinci Dünya Savaşı sonrasında başlar. Bu vitrin kurgularının arkasındaki stratejistler, politik ve ekonomik sermayeye sahip aktörlerdir. Sermayenin kent toprağına yönelmesinin sonucu olarak ortaya çıkan kentsel dönüşüm projeleri sosyo-mekânsal yapıda büyük değişimleri beraberinde getirir. Türkiye özelinde kentsel dönüşüm projeleri incelendiğinde, küresel kent olma yarışındaki İstanbul, tarihi, kültürel ve ekonomik potansiyelleriyle politik ve ekonomik aktörlerin en önde gelen vitrini konumundadır. İstanbul'da 2000'ler sonrasında izlenen makro ölçekteki kentsel dönüşüm projeleri, mikro ölçekte tarihi kent merkezlerinden biri olan Beyoğlu ilçesinin atardamarı niteliğindeki İstiklal Caddesi'nin yeniden inşasında ortaya çıkar. Bu bağlamda bu makalede, kentsel dönüşüm projeleri, İstiklal Caddesi ve yakın çevresinde 2005 yılından itibaren ivmelenen kentsel dönüşüm mercek altına alınarak incelenmektedir.

Bu araştırma, İstiklal Caddesi'nin karşılaştırmalı bir mekânsal analizini içerir. 2004 yılında İstiklal Caddesi'nin mekânsal kullanımlarını incelemek üzere Taksim Meydanı'ndan Tünel Meydanı'na caddeye dik 60 kesit alınmış, 2014 yılında dönüşümü analiz edebilmek için bu çalışma tekrarlanmıştır. Bu bağlamda makale, 2004-2014 on yıllık süreçte görülen mekânsal dönüşümü sermaye ve siyasetin etkileri üzerinden tartışır; İstanbul'da küresel kent, neoliberal politikalar ve kültür turizmine yönelik kentsel planlama stratejilerini ve Beyoğlu'ndaki yansımalarını sunar. Makalede İstiklal Caddesi'nde izlenen mekânsal dönüşüm, kesiti alınan yapıların metrekare analizleri, mekânsal karşılaştırmalar, aktörler ve söylemleri izlemek için gündelik haber taramaları ve mekân sahipleriyle yapılan görüşmeler üzerinden değerlendirilir ve tartışılır. Kentin küreselleşme olgusuyla ilişkili olarak kültür, finans, bilişim ve

turizm sektörlerindeki ve bu sektörlere hizmet eden yeme-içme ve alışveriş mekânlarındaki değişimler kültür turizmi olgusu üzerinden ele alınır.

## REBUILDING OF BEYOĞLU-İSTİKLAL STREET: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF URBAN TRANSFORMATION THROUGH SECTIONS ALONG THE STREET 2004-2014

The history of marketing urban spaces through showcasing them like commodities has started after the Second World War. The strategists, behind these window displays, are actors possessing political and economic capital. Urban transformation projects occurred as a consequence of the capital orienting to urban land, which brought about upheavals in socio-spatial structure. Considering the urban transformation projects in Turkey, Istanbul, as a city in the running to become a global city, is the preeminent showcase with its historical, cultural and economic potentials for the political and economic actors. The macro-scale urban transformation projects seen in Istanbul after 2000s can be observed on the micro scale in the rebuilding of İstiklal Street as the main artery in Beyoğlu quarter, which is one of the historic city centers. In this context, this article analyzes the urban transformation initiatives in Istanbul focusing on the urban transformation of İstiklal Street and its immediate vicinity which has gained momentum from 2005.

This research is predicated on a comparative spatial analysis of İstiklal Street. Sixty cross-sections were obtained from Taksim Square to Tünel Square in 2004 with a view to analyze the spatial use patterns on İstiklal Street. The study has been replicated in 2014 in order to analyze spatial transformation. In this regard, the research discusses the spatial transformation appeared in a decade, between 2004 and 2014, through the influences of capital and politics; and it presents the urban planning strategies oriented to global city, neoliberal policies and cultural tourism in Istanbul and the reflections of them in Beyoğlu quarter. The spatial transformation of İstiklal Street is evaluated through the analysis per square meter of the cross-sectioned buildings, spatial comparisons, media scanning for monitoring actors and discourses, and interviews with landlords and tenants. In relation to the phenomenon of globalization, the paper deals with the transformation of spaces covered by culture, finance, informatics and tourism sectors, and catering and shopping spaces appealing to service these sectors with reference to the phenomenon of cultural tourism.

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