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ABSTRACT

SCREEN PRODUCTION AND EXHIBITION IN ISTANBUL UNDER URBAN TRANSFORMATION

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This research explores the relationship between new screen production and exhibition spaces and urban transformation in Istanbul. In the last two decades Istanbul, like many other metropolitan cities, witnessed a dramatic growth of urban reconstruction projects. These reconstruction projects create new screen production sites by transforming post-industrial areas such as old ports and docks, abandoned factories into "creative locales" as well as new exhibition sites such as multiplexes, luxury city club movie theaters, hotel and museum screening halls, which are adapted to the neoliberal urbanite consumption trends. This dissertation focuses on physical and representational spaces in the city and in TV series to provide a comprehensive understanding on the relation between media production, consumption and urban studies. Such analysis helps to understand the social and economic impacts of urban renovation projects on screen media and vice versa.

The first part of the empirical research focuses on screen media production: how the TV series and film production has shaped the city in the last two decades and how this transformation is represented in films and TV series. The first paper explores on-location TV production sites; historical neighborhoods, post-industrial spaces and business centers to illustrate how TV production may promote gentrification in less visible yet more complex ways than other creative industries. The second paper discovers TV drama production studios of Istanbul and shows the relation between the construction of these studios, the content of the TV series and the ratings.

The second part of the empirical research focuses on contemporary exhibition strategies in the city: from open-air cinemas to the construction of multiplex cinemas and contemporary alternative exhibition spaces and how and why they are used by film festivals and filmmakers. The third paper examines the nostalgic sentiments around the newly-established open-air cinemas in Istanbul and traces their history and disappearance that dates back to the urban transformation projects in the 1950s. The last paper looks at alternative film exhibition spaces in Istanbul, such as museums, cafes, cultural centers, exhibition halls and the politics behind their proliferation in the last decade.

The research combines relevant research methods for each individual case study: content and visual analysis for cases on screen representation; archival research for historical data and interviews and participant observation for cases on media production and exhibition. Using such multimethod approach, this research aims to explore the entangled relationship between the film-TV industry and the urban renovation projects in Istanbul and show how both screen making and consumption are connected urban production and consumption patterns.

Keywords: Urban media and communication, TV production, film exhibition, urban transformation, Istanbul

ABSTRACT

AUDIOVISUELE PRODUCTIE EN VERTONING IN ISTANBUL IN TIJDEN VAN STEDELIJKE TRANSFORMATIE

Sezen Kayhan Müldür

Oktober 2020

Dit onderzoek heeft als doel de relatie te onderzoeken tussen nieuwe audiovisuele productie- en presentatieruimten en de stedelijke transformatie in Istanbul. Tijdens de laatste twee decennia kende Istanbul, net als vele andere grootsteden, een aanzienlijke groei in stedelijke reconstructieprojecten. Deze reconstructieprojecten creëren nieuwe plekken voor audiovisuele productie door postindustriële gebieden, zoals oude havens en dokken of verlaten fabrieken, om te vormen tot "creatieve ruimtes" en nieuwe vertoningsplekken, zoals multiplexbioscopen, luxueuze stadsbioscopen of vertoningszalen in hotels en musea, die aangepast zijn aan de neoliberale grootstedelijke consumptietrends. Dit proefschrift richt zich in het bijzonder op de fysieke en gerepresenteerde ruimtes in de stad en in televisiereeksen om een uitgebreid inzicht te geven in de relatie tussen mediaproductie- en consumptie en urbane studies. Een dergelijke analyse draagt ertoe bij de sociale en economische gevolgen van stadsvernieuwingsprojecten voor de audiovisuele media en vice versa te begrijpen.

Het eerste deel van het empirisch onderzoek richt zich op de productie van audiovisuele media: hoe hebben televisiereeksen en filmproducties de stad in de afgelopen twee decennia vormgegeven en hoe wordt deze transformatie op haar beurt weergegeven in films en televisiereeksen? Het eerste artikel gaat op zoek naar productieplekken op locatie voor televisie: historische wijken, postindustriële ruimtes en zakencentra om te illustreren hoe de televisieproductie gentrificatie kan bevorderen op minder zichtbare en complexere manieren dan andere creatieve industrieën. Het tweede artikel verkent de productiestudio’s in Istanbul voor televisiedrama’s en onthult de relatie tussen de bouw van deze studio's, de inhoud van de televisiereeksen en de kijkcijfers.

Het tweede deel van het empirisch onderzoek richt zich op hedendaagse vertoningsstrategieën in de stad: van openluchtcinema's tot de bouw van multiplexbioscopen en hedendaagse alternatieve vertoningsruimten en hoe en waarom deze worden gebruikt door filmfestivals en filmmakers. Het derde artikel onderzoekt de nostalgische gevoelens rond de nieuw opgerichte openluchtbioscopen in Istanbul en traceert hun geschiedenis en verdwijning die teruggaat tot de stedelijke transformatieprojecten van de jaren vijftig Het laatste artikel gaat in op alternatieve filmvertoningsruimten in Istanbul, zoals musea, cafés, culturele centra, tentoonstellingsruimten en de redenen en de politiek achter hun proliferatie sinds het laatste decennium.

Dit onderzoek combineert relevante onderzoeksmethoden voor elke individuele casestudy: inhoudelijke en visuele analyse voor de casestudies over representatie op het scherm, archiefonderzoek voor historische data, en interviews met en observaties van deelnemers voor de casestudies over mediaproductie-en-vertoning. Met een dergelijke multimethodische aanpak wil dit onderzoek de verstrengelde relatie tussen de film- en televisie-industrie en de stedelijke renovatieprojecten in Istanbul onderzoeken en aantonen hoe zowel audiovisuele productie als consumptie verbonden zijn met stedelijke productie- en consumptiepatronen.

Trefwoorden: Stedelijke media en communicatie, televisieproductie, filmvertoningen, stedelijke transformatie, Istanbul

TEZ ÖZETİ

DÖNÜŞEN İSTANBUL'DA EKRAN MEDYASI ÜRETİMİ VE GÖSTERİMİ

Sezen Kayhan Müldür

Ekim, 2020

Bu araştırma, İstanbul'da ekran medyası üretim ve gösterim alanları ile kentsel dönüşüm arasındaki ilişkiyi keşfetmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Son yirmi yılda İstanbul, diğer pek çok büyükşehir gibi kentsel dönüşüm projelerinin hızla artışına tanık olmuştur. Bu kentsel dönüşüm projeleri, eski liman, rıhtım ve terk edilmiş fabrikalar gibi sanayi sonrası alanları "yaratıcı mekanlara" dönüştürerek yeni medya üretim alanları yaratmakta ve otel, müze ve lüks şehir kulüplerinin salonlarını neoliberal tüketim kültürüne uygun şekilde gösterim alanları haline getirmektedir. Bu çalışma, medya üretimi, tüketimi ve kentsel çalışmalar arasındaki ilişkiyi kapsamlı bir şekilde ele almak için hem şehirdeki hem de televizyon dizilerindeki fiziksel ve temsili alanlara odaklanmaktadır. Bu analizin amacı, kentsel dönüşüm projeleri ve ekran medyası arasındaki sosyal ve ekonomik etkileşimin anlaşılmasına yardımcı olmaktır.

Ampirik araştırmaların ilk bölümü ekran medyası üretimine odaklanmakta: televizyon dizisi ve film yapımının son yıllarda şehri nasıl şekillendirdiği ve bu dönüşümün filmlerde ve televizyon dizilerinde nasıl temsil edildiğine bakmaktadır. İlk makale, tarihi mahalleler, post-endüstriyel alanlar, yeni iş merkezleri gibi televizyon dizisi çekim alanlarına bakmakta ve televizyonun soylulaştırmayı nasıl görünür kıldığına odaklanmaktadır. İkinci makale, İstanbul'da televizyon dizilerinin çekildiği stüdyoları ele almakta ve bu stüdyoların inşası, televizyon dizilerinin içerikleri ve reytingler arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektedir.

Ampirik araştırmaların ikinci bölümü, kentteki çağdaş gösterim stratejilerine odaklanmakta: açık hava sinemalarının azalması ve çağdaş alternatif gösterim mekanlarının film festivalleri ve film yapımcıları tarafından nasıl ve neden tercih edildiğini tartışmaktadır. Üçüncü makale, yeni açılan lüks açık hava sinemaları etrafındaki nostaljik duygulara bakmakta ve eski açık hava sinemalarının yıkılarak bu duyguların oluşmasına ön ayak olan, tarihleri 1950'lere dayanan kentsel dönüşüm projelerinin izini sürmektedir. Son makale alternatif film gösterim mekanlarına odaklanmakta ve son yıllarda İstanbul'da sayıları hızla artan müze, kafe, kültür merkezi, sergi salonu gibi alternatif gösterim mekanlarının çoğalmasının ardında yatan politik ve ekonomik nedenleri araştırmaktadır.

Çalışmada ayrı vaka çalışmaları için farklı metotlar kullanılmaktadır; temsil tartışmaları için içerik ve görsel analiz, tarihsel veriler için arşiv araştırması, üretim ve tüketim alanlarına ilişkin bölümler için gözleme dayalı katılımcı röportajları gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu araştırma, film-TV endüstrisi ile İstanbul'daki kentsel dönüşüm projeleri arasındaki iç içe geçmiş ilişkiyi ortaya koyarak hem ekran medyası üretiminin, hem de tüketimin şehrin şekillenmesi ve şehirdeki tüketim kalıplarıyla bağlantılı olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Kentsel medya ve iletişim, TV yapımı, film gösterimi, kentsel dönüşüm, İstanbul

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my father Aykut Kayhan who passed away while I was still working on this thesis. Along with my mother, he was my biggest supporter in life who has never withheld his love and attention from me. He was a great father and put so much effort in my education; spent endless hours teaching me literature and maths after school, brought me to extra-curricular courses of my choice in the weekends from primary school to university. He always encouraged me to be independent and do whatever makes me happy in life. Making him proud was one of my main motivations in life and I find consolation in the thought that he would be very proud if he could see that I completed this thesis.

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LIST OF FIGURES

Chapter 1

Figure 1. Circuit of Culture by du Gay et.al…….....…….…….....20

Chapter 2

Figure 2.1. Istanbul: Map of major TV series shooting locations…….....…….....…47

Figure 2.2. *Perihan Abla* Street in Kuzguncuk……...…..….....49

Figure 2.3. *Valley of the Wolves* gunfight scene shot in Fikirtepe……...……....….....53

Figure 2.4. "Creative" Office space in *Rental Love*, terrace decorated with graffiti...…...56

Chapter 3

Figure 3.1. Circuit of media studies by Julie D'Acci…….....….....…68

Figure 3.2. A Fully Equipped Operation Room at Yıldız Film Studios……...….....76

Figure 3.3. A Classic Courtroom Set Up at Yıldız Film Studios…….…….....76

Figure 3.4. A Small Jail Unit at Anatolia Studios…….....…….....77

Figure 3.5. Map of Istanbul Film and TV Studios…….....…….....78

Figure 3.6. Office Spaces with Wall to Wall Glass Windows…….....……...…82

Chapter 4

Figure 4.1. Destruction of Open-Air Cinemas of Istanbul……...…….…...…..99

Figure 4.2. Malta Lüks Open-Air Cinema is now used as a parking lot……....….....101

Figure 4.3. Kozyatağı Bonus Premium Cinecity…….....…….….....103

Figure 4.4. A Traditional Open-Air Neigbourhood Cinema……...…….....….....103

Figure 4.5.(L) The districts of Istanbul with highest number of open-air cinemas in 50-60s

(R)The districts of Istanbul with new luxury open-air cinemas today…….. ..104

Chapter 5

Figure 5.1. Istanbul Modern Cinema……....…114

Figure 5.2. Map of Istanbul's Alternative Film Screening Venues…….....…….....114

Figure 5.3. Aynalı Geçit…….....…….….....115

Figure 5.4. Karga Pub…….....…….…..…118

LIST OF TABLES

Chapter 2

Table 2.1. List of Turkish TV Series Discussed…….……...…48

Chapter 3

Table 3.1. Active Film and TV Drama Production Studios in Istanbul……..……...75

Chapter 4

Table 4.1. Number of Movie Theaters and Their Seating Capacity in Turkey in 1969.....97

Table 4.2. Number and Distribution of Open-Air Cinemas in Istanbul in the 1960s…….99

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Statement of Authorship ……..…….……..…....i
Ethical Clearance…...…….……..….ii
Abstract (English)……...…..…...…...iii
Abstract (Dutch) ……..… … …….....….....iv
Abstract (Turkish)……..……..…...v
Acknowledgements…….…….…….…….....vi
Dedication……vii
List of Publications……..…….….….…viii
List of Figures……ix
List of Tables……...x

I. INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1. Introduction……1
1.1. Theoretical Framework……..……...….. ……..…..….....11
1.2. Historical Background…..….....….……...……..…….....23
1.3. Istanbul and Media Studies…….…….....27
1.4. Methodological Approach ……..……..……....……...…..…….....34

II. PAPERS

Chapter 2. TV Series Production and the Urban Restructuring of Istanbul……..…….....41
Chapter 3. TV Drama Production Studios of Istanbul: From Empty Sound Stages to Standing Sets….....……..…….....…….....……63
Chapter 4. Open-Air Cinemas of Istanbul From the 1950s to Today…….……....92
Chapter 5. The Proliferation of Alternative Film Exhibition Spaces in Istanbul: Cultural Segregation and Urban Cinephilia…….....……..109

III. CONCLUSION

Chapter 6. Conclusion…….……....124
6.1. Production……127
6.2. Representation……...128
6.3. Consumption……130
6.4. The Entangled Relationship Between Screen Production, Representation and Consumption……131
6.5. Limitations and Suggestions……133

BIBLIOGRAPHY…….....137
Annex 1……...…... ...147
Annex 2…….....…151
Annex 3.....155

I

INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

"Cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears, even if the thread of their discourse is secret, their rules are absurd, their perspectives deceitful, and everything conceals something else."
— *Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities*

"What strange phenomena we find in a great city, all we need do is stroll about with our eyes open."
— *Charles Baudelaire, Miss Scalpel*

"I think all other cities are mortal but Istanbul shall be eternal as long as mankind exists."
— *Petrus Gyllius, The Antiquities of Constantinople*

Cities hold poetic and mysterious powers that attract writers, artists and filmmakers both as luscious spectacles where they encounter new wonders and as exploratory surroundings that raise universal questions. Henri Lefebvre tells that cities cannot be understood as a simple agglomeration of people and things, but they are socially produced and made productive in social practices (Lefebvre 1991, 59). An urban space is a social construct based on the production of meanings and values. Every society produces its own space and its own spatial practice. In an urban space, the meanings make sense to us through semiotics; namely urban communicative practices such as signs, images, maps, senses etc. As Manuel Castells puts it, the spatial manifestation of the ideological system is a sign system where the signifiers communicate with the signifieds through signs in urban space (Castells 1977, 165-280). Today, accommodating more than half of the world's population, the cities are undoubtedly central to communication practices.

Because of the importance of communication in an urban context, the burgeoning branch of media and communication studies known as *urban communication* has gained momentum in the last two decades. As Krajina and Stevenson state "the two domains, cities and media/communication, become more accessible for analysis when observed alongside, against, and in terms of, each other" (Krajina & Stevenson, 2020). A series of monographs and edited volumes (Drucker and Gumpert 2016, Krajina and Stevenson 2019, Georgiou 2013,

Matsaganis et al. 2013, McQuire 2008, Tosoni and Ridell 2016, Papastergiadis 2016) are concerned with how people in the cities connect with others and the urban environment via symbolic, technological, and material means.

Tosoni and Ridell use the term "urban media studies" to define the studies that focus on the largely disjointed issues of media with cities together. The field of urban media studies resonates with the ongoing work in human geography, urban studies, technology and mobility studies that aims to tackle 'the pervasive mediation characterizing contemporary cities' (Tosoni and Ridell 2016, 1278). This dissertation belongs to a subfield of urban media studies focusing on the relationship between screen media and the city, exploring how film and TV production and consumption are connected to an urban space.

By looking at the impact of film and TV production and exhibition/consumption, this dissertation aims to explore the relationship between urban transformation and screen media in a globalizing city. According to Thomas Elsaesser, "our concept of the cinematic city must be reworked in the era of the post-industrial or global city, which has seen a fundamental reconfiguration of urban societies and their relationship to cinema as culture, institution and economic agent" (Elsaesser 2016). In this respect, Istanbul offers a very broad research area because of the current transformation it has been going through. Parallel to its globalization, Istanbul, like many other metropolitan cities, witnessed a dramatic urban transformation with the integration of neoliberal politics after 1980s. Along with internal migration and globalization, the changes in both the urban structure and the boom in media industries became visible in Istanbul. Media industries, especially the advertising and television sectors began to flourish during the course of the economic liberalization undergone in Turkey after the 1980s (Öz and Özkaracalar 2017, 60).

In the last two decades, film and TV drama production in Turkey have been booming with a significant international impact. Turkey has become the world's fastest-growing television series exporter in the world and the second-largest drama exporter after the US, as TV series have been exported to nearly 146 countries in many continents from the Middle East to the Balkans, from Africa to Central Asia, the Far East, and South America, reaching some 700 million people (Daily Sabah 2019). Turkish series have recently gained even more visibility generated by the production of Netflix original series in Turkey: these include *The Protector (Hakan Muhafız/2018)*, *The Gift (Atiye/ 2019), Love 101 (Aşk 101 2020),* a Netflix movie, *One-Way to Tomorrow (Yarına Tek Bilet 2020)* and three more projects currently in production.

Each year, between 50 to 70 TV series are broadcast on Turkish channels each season, covering 65 percent of prime-time broadcasting. With 85 production companies and a 16-million dollar profit for the top 10 production firms, TV series have gained a central place in the cultural industry of Turkey. Apart from a few exceptions, the majority of these series are shot on location and in studios in Istanbul. Just like the boom in media production, the screen exhibition has also rapidly developed in the city. With the increase of shopping malls in Istanbul, the number of movie theater halls has increased to 894 with 110,187 seats (TÜİK 2019), as well as countless alternative exhibition spaces; cultural centers, museums, cafes, university halls etc. The highest-grossing box-office films are also Turkish productions. The all-time box-office record holder film, Recep İvedik 5, was watched by 7,437,050 million people (around 1/10th of the country's population). It was followed by Recep İvedik 2 with 7,369,098 viewers and Düğün Dernek with 6,980,070. There is a visible increase in both the production and consumption of Turkish media content, especially in the last decade.

Today, the headquarters of Turkey's 39 private TV channels (17 of them news channels), almost all production companies and facilities and hundreds of movie theater halls and alternative exhibition spaces, make Istanbul a major media center. Michael Curtin used the

term “media capital” to describe cities that represent centers of media activity that have specific logics of their own: ones that do not necessarily correspond to the geography, interests or policies of particular nation-states (Curtin 2003, 204). While explaining the concept of media capital, Curtin follows Saskia Sassen’s notion of global cities, which defines them (global cities) as urban locales that once served as national centers of industrial production and have now been superseded by global financial and service centers. As marketing and manufacturing operations have dispersed since the 1980s, Sassen contends that finance, planning and design functions have congregated in transnational centers of global economy (Sassen 1991). While her analysis mainly focuses on financial and producer service sectors (such as accounting and law), Curtin claims that such patterns of globalization have also affected cultural industries; the economic and political forces have profoundly altered the terms of cultural production (Curtin 2003, 205). Cities like Istanbul which once were the engines of industrial production in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have become the product of global economy and the increase of financial flow after the 1980s (Yanardağoğlu 2016, 4). Today, as the local goes global, even the relatively impoverished parts of the world have witnessed the explosion of creative industries, as well as information and entertainment options (Curtin 2003, 206).

Several scholars have discussed the relationship between creative industries and urban transformation as these industries attract higher income groups to the cities and they often displace the long-time residents of these neighborhoods (Zukin 1982, 2010, Lloyd 2010, Mathews 2010, Curran 2010, Pratt 2009). Cities turn their investments in culture and arts and exploit their cultural capital to generate development interest and consumer spending (Grodach and Foster 2014, Zukin and Braslow 2011, Hutton 2009). Michael Curtin claims that cities aspire to be creative locales with the desire to increase real-estate values. The media and culture industries are intimately linked to urban regeneration and real-estate speculation in post-industrial cities (Curtin 1996, 194). This link is mostly visible in global cities that promote

themselves through their creative locales such as London, New York, Los Angeles, Berlin, Shanghai and Istanbul.

In Istanbul, the urban reconstruction projects in the city have created new screen production sites by transforming post-industrial areas, such as old ports and docks, and abandoned factories into creative locales as well as new exhibition sites such as multiplexes, luxury city club movie theaters, hotel and museum screening halls adapted to the neoliberal urbanite consumption trends. A comprehensive analysis of these spaces provides a better understanding of the interaction between the urbanites and screen media industries, as well as the social and economic impacts of urban renovation projects on screen media and vice versa.

This dissertation explores new screen production and exhibition spaces that appeared in Istanbul in the last two decades under urban transformation. It consists of three parts; the introduction, empirical studies and conclusions. The introduction includes the theoretical framework of the study, the historical background of the film and TV industry of Istanbul, a literature survey on Istanbul and screen studies and the explanation of the methodology used in this study. The second part consists of four chapters, structured as journal articles which can be read independently, as each chapter has a different framing and uses different material. Yet, when read together, the chapters overlap and complement each other presenting how screen media production and exhibition/consumption are connected through urban transformation and how both screen-making and consumption are connected to the city-making and consumption patterns.

The first part of the empirical research focuses on screen media production: how the TV series production has shaped the city in the last 15 years and how this transformation is represented in TV series. The first article, "*TV Series Production and the Urban Restructuring of Istanbul",* aims to show both how urban renovation is reflected in TV series in Istanbul, and

how the on-location production process of these series has been instrumental in transforming the districts they have been shot in. Focusing on three production sites; historic neighborhoods, post-industrial spaces in working-class neighborhoods and business centers/luxury residences, this chapter documents the entangled relationship between Turkish TV series and Istanbul since the 1980s with the rapid gentrification in the city connected to the neoliberal engagement with globalization. Three segments of the article probe how series reflect and push forth the gentrification of historical neighborhoods, their increasing use of abandoned post-industrial areas as shooting locations, and their promotion of spaces associated with creative industries and luxury lifestyles. It argues that television production may promote gentrification in less visible, yet more subtle and complex ways than other creative industries.

While discussing the relation between gentrification and screen industries, the chapter does not only focus on the dynamics of production, but also argues the representational politics. As Charlotte Brunsdon explains, "understanding TV dramas as both particular texts and specific commodities, with particular conditions of production and circulation, requires an approach attentive to both the symbolic and the material dimensions of culture" (Brunsdon 2019, 36). This chapter approaches both the material dimensions by studying means of production and symbolic dimensions with the analysis of well-known Turkish series such as *Noor, the Valley of the Wolves* and *1001 Nights* which were produced in the mentioned shooting sites. While this chapter mainly focuses on location production processes, the next chapter complements screen production studies in Istanbul by exploring productions in studios.

The second article *"TV Drama Production Studios in Istanbul from Empty Sound Stages to Standing Sets"* goes into a deeper discussion on the TV series production by examining studios and their transformation through the changing nature of TV broadcasting in Turkey. This chapter looks at the means of production in the studios and their relation to the scripts of the TV series. With the current increasing demand for Turkish TV series, a cheap and fast studio

system is needed. The sets containing standing decors of the locations which are difficult to shoot, such as police stations, hospital rooms or prison cells have become very popular in the last few years.

Examining these standing sets, which were mostly transformed from abandoned factories, warehouses and administrative buildings in Istanbul, showed that the demanded and repeated storylines of the Turkish TV series also shape these locations and create a cheap and fast studio system based on supply and demand. As most of these studios lack proper infrastructure and appropriate security measures, this fast and cheap production system puts the creativity and security of the crews into question. The discussion on the use of film and TV drama studios along with on-location sites provides an indepth insight into the TV production space in Istanbul.

While the first part of the empirical research focuses on screen media production, the second part looks at exhibitions and how screen media consumption patterns are related to urban transformation. The second part discovers film exhibition strategies in the city: from open-air cinemas to the building of multiplex cinemas and contemporary alternative exhibition spaces, and together with the first part, shows how both production and exhibition/consumption are related in an urban context.

The third chapter, *"Open-Air Cinemas of Istanbul from 1950s to Today",* discovers the nostalgic sentiment on contemporary open-air cinemas in Istanbul by exploring their history which has its roots in the 1950s. Besides the post-1980s urban gentrification that led to the building of multiplexes, Istanbul's cinema-going urbanites encountered a similar, yet less frequently discussed experience of urban gentrification around the 1950s. This chapter examines how today's nostalgic conception of open-air cinemas was formed by the urban gentrification projects that caused the disappearance of open-air cinemas after the 1950s.

As the history of open-air cinemas in Turkey is poorly documented, using archival research, this chapter explores this understudied area: the meaning of these cinemas which had been places of socialization for the middle and lower classes in the lives of urbanites. It also discovers how irregular urbanization and structureless industrialization, along with the proliferation of television have influenced the urban spectatorship culture and how new gentrifiers use nostalgia to commodify open-air cinemas and reproduce them as a space of commodity and not socialization. While this chapter discusses the significance of contemporary open-air cinemas, the next one discovers the use of the current alternative film exhibition sites.

The last chapter, *"Alternative Film Exhibition Spaces of Istanbul: Cultural Segregation and Urban Cinephilia",* looks at the change of film exhibition through digitalization, as well as other reasons that gave rise to the alternative film exhibition spaces. In the last decade, Istanbul has witnessed the rapid proliferation of alternative film exhibition spaces such as museums, cafes, art and cultural centers in specific neighborhoods. Besides technological developments, this increase is a result of mostly three forces: the monopoly of dominant distribution companies, authoritarian pressure of the government and urban transformation in Istanbul. These places provide space for censored films and are important for independent and experimental films as well as documentaries and short films which have very limited or no theatrical release.

The alternative film exhibition spaces are concentrated on specific neighborhoods in the city and target the audience with certain cultural capital, the intellectual and well-educated, considering the films that are being screened in these places require certain knowledge of cinema culture. While these alternative spaces provide an important space of expression for filmmakers, they also articulate cultural segregation and social hierarchy. This chapter, along with the analysis of new open-air cinemas in the previous chapter,

documents the transformation of urban spectatorship from industrial to post-industrial city.

With looking at screen production sites both on-location and studios, and several exhibition sites from open-air cinemas to alternative exhibition spaces, this dissertation reflects the entangled relationship between screen media and the city, illustrating the applications of neoliberal politics in the city, and the political, economic and social motives related to urban transformation. It also contributes to the critical debate about the production studies focusing mainly on the means of production and exhibition studies focusing predominantly on consumption, showing the need for a more comprehensive analysis in order to apprehend the intertwined relationship between screen media production, space and consumption. The details of this approach will be discussed in the following subsection on the theoretical framework of the dissertation.

Theoretical Framework

Since this dissertation is at the intersection of urban, production and exhibition studies, this subsection will explore the theories from these different areas related to this dissertation. First, I will look at the urban media studies, then I will explore how production and exhibition studies deal with the city and finally I will present how the "Circuit of Culture" devised by Paul du Gay, Stuart Hall and others (du Gay et.al., 1997) will be applied in this dissertation to bring the empirical studies and these different fields together with a comprehensive approach.

In urban media studies, Henri Lefebvre's theory of spatial production plays an important role (Aiello and Tosoni 2016). According to it, all spaces are produced and the produced urban spaces can be categorized into: perceived, conceived and lived spaces. The perceived spaces can be experienced through senses (such as the streets and houses), conceived spaces refers to the representations of space (such as maps, photographs and films) and lived spaces, that are socially produced, are the representational spaces of the lived experience (Lefebvre 1991). For Lefebvre, a dialectical relationship exists between this triad as there is a unity between the fields of the physical, the mental and the social (Lefebvre, 1991, 11). Both the physical and symbolic dimensions of space and their interactions shape the social experience of the space itself (Lefebvre 1991). For Lefebvre, cities are places where meanings are both produced and consumed. The three aspects of urban space, production, representation and consumption, which take place in the physical, the mental and the social fields, complete the circle of meaning-making in the urban context. Lefebvre's categories of production, representation and consumption are also major branches of media studies.

For a long time, the focus of media studies mostly has been on representation (D'acci 2004, 422). The first discussions on cinema and the city also emerged from the representation perspective. As Johann Andersson and Lawrence Webb point out, in film and TV studies, the

idea of the 'cinematic city' first emerged from a scholarship that discussed cinema within the context of modernity (Andersson and Webb 2016). In one of the earliest sources that focus on the relation between the city and the screen, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern,* Friedberg provides a rich account of the approaches to visual representation in the modern period. As she explains, the dominated approach of classical film theories is to define gaze as an all-seeing and immobile eye that embodies power relations. However, with the help of the analogy between shopping malls and arcades, Friedberg points out that the gaze of the contemporary spectator is mobilized and virtual (Friedberg 1993). With approaching contemporary spectators as flaneurs, she connects cinema, literature and urban studies in her work.

Following Friedberg, the first generation of edited books on cinema and the city also appeared in the 1990s (Aitken and Leo Zohn 1994, Clarke 1997, Shiel and Fitzamurice 1997) that merge theories from the humanities and social sciences with interdisciplinary debates on literature and urban studies. In Aitken and Zoon's edited volume, fourteen geographers examine the effects of the cinematic representation of place and space on perceptions of self and societies in the world. Through analyzing specific cities and spaces in films, such as the use of modern spaces in the documentary *Berlin Symphony of a Great City*, or the depiction of the beach in *Chariots of Fire* (1981), the book suggests that filmic spaces may inflect the constitution of everyday spaces.

David Clarke is another geographer who explores the inter-connection between the cityscape and the screenscape in his book *The Cinematic City* (1994). With a diverse selection of films from *Blade Runner* (1982) to *Metropolis* (1927), genres from film noir to musicals and different cities such as New York, Berlin, London and historical periods from the 1950s to contemporary films, his book examines the notion of "cinematic city" with its relation to various disciplines such as sociology, history, urban studies and cultural studies. Shiel and

Fitzmaurice similarly pay attention to the changing nature of cities and how cinema captures these changes. Starting from Los Angeles, then analyzing European metropolis such as Paris and London, their edited book analyzes various themes and moods created around these cities on screen and also draws attention to the political economy of film production and exhibition. Examining Clarke's and Shiel/Fitzmaurice's works, Charlotte Brunsdon explains that both studies, even though they have different genealogies, claim that "cinema/city" scholarship must surpass the paradigm of representation (Brunsdon 2012).

As Julie D'acci also points out, for a long time the focus of media studies mostly has been in a text-centered direction, mainly based on representation (D'acci 2004, 422). Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model on how media messages are produced, disseminated, and interpreted has been a key text for the text-centered studies. For Hall, the message is transformed from social and economic means of production (encoding), through a moment of signification (TV program), back to the forms of social and cultural practices (decoding) (Hall 1973). However, instead of applying Hall's full model, the dominant tendency was to focus on decoding and eliminate encoding. There developed a tendency in some analyses "to overlook the conditions and specific shaping forces of production; the conditions and intricacies of reception; and, ironically, because much of this was considered to be text based work, the specificities of the televisual form (D'acci 2004, 423).

As Caldwell puts it, deindustrialized cultural studies "tend to gloss over one of the most important components of televisuality: the industry" (Caldwell 1995, 24). Production studies fill this gap by focusing on the means of cultural production (Caldwell 2008, Mayer, Banks and Caldwell 2009), labor in media industries (Miller 2016, Sanson and Curtin 2016, Bulut 2016), practical theories of production systems (Szczepanik and Vonderau 2014) and political economy of the TV industry and cultural policies (Des Freedman 2008). Following John Caldwell's 2008 book *Production Culture: Industrial Reflexivity and Critical Practice in Film*

and Television, a study of below-the-line (craft) workers in the film and television industry, researchers became more interested in the structures behind the camera and how they can determine what audiences ultimately see on screen.

Production studies often focus on the labor practices, the distinction between above-the line (creative) and below-the-line (craft) workers (Miller 2016, Sanson and Curtin 2016, Bulut 2016). The anthology of Petr Szczepanik and Patrick Vonderau, *Behind the Screen: Inside European Production Cultures*, adds new information to the growing discourse about film and TV production outside a Hollywood context, examining labor structures that surround our complex culture but are frequently hidden in plain sight. The book depicts the comparable situations of below-the-line workers by showing the similarities of production work around the globe with varying conditions in different geographies from. It is a reflection of today's global conditions where a film and TV show have its roots in Europe, but funding and other production services elsewhere. The outsourcing also creates concerns on pay scales, working conditions, gender and race issues with which nearly all below-the-line workers must grapple (Shimpach 2020).

Another focus of production studies related to urban studies is on how the productions of popular films and TV shows contribute to the development of certain regions with promotion divided such as Portland or New Orleans (Mayer 2017, Parmett 2012) or creating a new image for cities like Belfast (Çelik Rappas 2019). As James Hay points out, the cities should also be studied as centers of screen production and not just mere representations (2011, 75). In this respect, Helen Morgan Parmett's case study on the series Portlandia shows "on-location shooting practices are constitutive of urban regeneration efforts that draw on local, alternative, and creative cultures of production to help promote, rebrand, and revitalize marginalized city spaces with, often, gentrifying implications" (Parmett 2018). Similarly Josh Stenger's essay, "Return to Oz: The Hollywood Redevelopment Project, or Film History as Urban Renewal",

focuses on the reciprocal relationship between cinema and Los Angeles, and the influence of LA's cultural mythology on the Hollywood Redevelopment Project. As LA's image became stronger than the city itself, "it became increasingly difficult to distinguish the city's cultural geography from that of its cinematic doppelgänger, rendering Los Angeles and Hollywood as interchangeable spaces and interchangeable signs" (Stenger, 61) where symbolic value and exchange value are connected.

Production studies related to cities make this link between the symbolic and exchange values of the locations. Ipek Çelik Rappas looks at the screen economy connected to Titanic and Game of Thrones and how the celebratory discourse around them branded Belfast as a global media capital. She shows how post-industrial cities alter their past image by promoting the region through screen industries. With a similar approach, in their book *The Film Studio: Film Production in the Global Economy (2005),* Ben Goldsmith and Tom O'Reagan analyze the economic flow around several film studios in Australia and Canada and show how the studios promote themselves and their regions through international co-productions.

While production studies heavily focus on production practices and their influence on the city, labor and the political economy of the film and TV industry, the exhibition studies focus on reception, consumption, distribution and on how both exhibition and consumption are related to the city. Robert C. Allen argues that, for a long time, the dominant text oriented tradition within film studies approached the field as if films had no audiences, thus a more thorough and empirically-oriented inquiry on film audiences and reception is needed (1990, 348). Daniel Biltereyst and Philippe Meers explain that film exhibition and cinema audience research became appealing only after the 1970s and the historical film/ cinema audience research still follows Allen's research agenda which proposed research on exhibition, reception, social composition and discourses, and cinema-going as a social practice. According to the authors, the common tendencies of research are to analyze the structural and institutional

contexts in which the film consumption occurs (Gomery 1992), explore film programming and other generic data such as the number of seats or box-office results (Sedgwick 2011), analyze cinema-going as a social phenomenon and explore cinematic experiences of the audiences with ethnographic perspectives (Kuhn, Biltereyst and Meers 2017), and address the social composition of the audience (Biltereyst and Meers 2018).

When we look at the studies on contemporary media exhibition, we can see that the transformation of film exhibition with digitalization dominates contemporary research. The transformation of the movie-watching experience in the postmedia age is analyzed by Francesco Casetti. Casetti compares the movie-watching experience of the past (before television) with contemporary practice (after television and computer). As he explains, film theatre is no longer a heterotopic place which is a fenced-in space that detaches the outer world from the theater but a more open space that lacks a true boundary and belongs to the everyday world. Casetti calls contemporary watching experience as "performance" rather than "attendance" because the spectators are very active in this watching practice as they intervene by choosing the instrument on which to watch the film or TV series; DVD, mp3 player or computer, and they can also intervene by stopping or fast-forwarding during the screening (Casetti 2011, 6). The use of new technologies in film exhibition such as digital screens, DVDs, home videos (Klinger 2006, Kuhn 2009, Friedberg 2000), multiplication of screens on digital TVs and tablets (Vitrinel 2015), watching films on mobile phones (Verhoeff 2012, Odin 2012), and internet spectatorship on digital VOD platforms (White 2006, Siapera 2004, Respini 2018) became appealing research themes with the improvement of technology and the digitalization of film exhibition and distribution.

The change of geographical locations of movie theaters in postindustrial cites is also another common field of research (Huffer 2014, Hubbard 2013, Jones and Hillier 2000). Phil Hubbard analyzes the relation between fear and anxiety in the post-industrial city and how these

feelings affect the citizens' cinema-going experience. In post-industrial cities, it is possible to see the relocation of the movie theaters out of the city center. As Hubbard points out, the post-industrial city centers are commonly depicted as lawless, risky and unpredictable environments and this suggests a plausible reason for the move of movie theaters 'out-of town' (Hubbard 2013, 53). For Hubbard, the everyday fear and anxiety play an important role in these shifting geographies of movie theaters and the cinema-going habits. Similarly, Huffer looks at the economic and cultural relations that flow from and constitute a film exhibition in Wellington. He portrays "how the activities of local and transnational exhibitors have intersected with 'post-industrial' local government policy and the demographic dynamics of Wellington to shape the population's experience of cinema and the city" (Huffer 2014). These researchers look at the relations between geographical divisions of movie theaters in post-industrial cities and their relation to the political economy.

Another research area related to urban studies, film exhibition and globalization is the increased number of multiplexes and how this increase changes both the urban structure and cinema-going habits. The emergence of multiplexes first in the U.S. in 1963 and later in Europe in the 1970s changed the distribution dynamics of the film produced in the U.S. Major Hollywood studios shaped the screening halls and had the chance to distribute their films to the world with the multiplexes (Tüzün 2013, 87-89). The spread of multiplexes in the world gave rise to discussions about 'cultural imperialism' by scholars like Pierre Bourdieu, Marc Auge and Hungarian director Bela Tarr. They named the multiplex as an evil product of neoliberalism and as the 'new cargo planes of the US' (Tüzün 2013, 90). By locating multiplexes into the upper floors of shopping malls, the movie-watching experience becomes a leisure activity, something in-between shopping and fast-fooding (Tüzün 2013, 94-108). The effects of the rising popularity of multiplexes both on the urban structure and cinema-going culture are

analyzed by various scholars in different geographies, such as in China (Yi Lu 2016), India (Athique 2014), Turkey (Tüzün 2013) and Korea (Park and Ham 2016).

As these studies show, production studies and exhibition studies have different focuses, while the former focus on the industry and the means of production, the latter mostly focus on reception, audience and consumption. In his 1987 essay, "What is Cultural Studies Anyway?", Richard Johnson criticizes this academic codification of cultural and media studies research. According to him, there are three models of cultural research: production-based studies, text-based studies and studies of lived cultures. Each model is consistent in itself but quite inadequate as an account of the whole. While production studies focus on the powerful means of cultural production, text-based ones concentrate on the form while the studies of lived cultures are associated with a politics of representation. Each model excludes the others in their research methods (Johnson 1987).

This categorization between production and exhibition singles out the sites of production and consumption and "predefines those domains and their contents by abandoning the radical contextualization of cultural studies" (Grossberg 1997, 256). Criticizing the categorization of production, text and lived-culture studies, Johnson presents a circuit, maintaining Hall's connection with Marx's circuit of production and consumption. But instead of depicting a circuit of meaning, Johnson introduces a circuit of production, circulation and consumption. In his circuit, production, texts/forms, readings and lived cultures each represent moments that are connected.

Later, referring to Johnson's model, in their book *Doing Cultural Studies: The Story of the Sony Walkman* (1997), Paul du Gay, Stuart Hall, Linda Janes, Andred Koed Madsen, Hugh Mackay and Keith Negus presented another circuit called "circuit of culture". This book identifies five major cultural processes: Representation, Identity, Production, Consumption and

Regulation **(Figure 1)**. As the authors explain, "taken together, they complete a sort of circuit - the circuit of culture - through which any analysis of a cultural text or artefact must pass if it is to be adequately studied" (du Gay et al., 1997, 3). Previously the model of production of a cultural artifact was seen as the prime determinant of the meaning. The circuit of culture breaks this logic by analyzing the biography of the cultural artifact with a theoretical model based on the articulation of a number of related processes (du Gay et al., 1997, 3). Thus, rather than privileging one single phenomenon such as the process of production or consumption, it argues that an artifact comes to possess a combination of all these processes.

According to the authors, the meaning does not arise directly from an object in itself, but from the way in which it is represented in language, both orally and visually, as well as how itis produced, not only technically, but also culturally. Meaning-making is an ongoing process and meanings are not just 'sent' by producers and 'received' by consumers, but rather they are actively made in consumption:

> Throughout, you will find a close connection being drawn between culture and the media, between the meanings and practices which forms the basis of all modern culture and the technological means - the media - by which much (though not all) of that culture is now produced, circulated, used or appropriated (du Gay et al. 1997, 23).

Representation constructs an identification between the consumers and the meanings. It is the practice of constructing meaning through the use of signs and language. Because cultural artifacts are constructed through a range of meanings and practices, they have a profound impact on our culture. *Production* is also an integral part of the culture and the distinctive practices used in the production in terms of specific values, beliefs and patterns of working have relation to meaning-making. *Consumption* is another essential part of the relations of production. Even though they are mostly studied and analyzed separately, production and consumption are interrelated and overlap. This theoretical issue has a long history, going back to Marx's analysis of the relations of capitalist production in the nineteenth century:

> Production is ... at the same time consumption, and consumption is at the same time production. Each is directly its own counterpart. But at the same time an intermediary movement goes on between the two. Production furthers consumption by creating material for the latter which otherwise would lack its object. But consumption in its turn furthers production, by províding for the products the individual for whom they are products. The product receives its last finishing touches in consumption…Without production, no consumption; but, on the other hand, without consumption, no production; since production would then be without a purpose. (Marx in du Gay et al. 1997, 13-54)

For a cultural artifact to have any social meaning, production has to be connected to consumption. They are made to articulate and it is important to trace the dynamics of their articulation. While looking at the relation between production, consumption and representation, the identities of the specific cultural artifact, like the geography that they are produced and consumed, also need to be explored. Regulations affect the modes of production, so it is also essential to analyze the impact of identities and political, economic and social regulations in these relations.

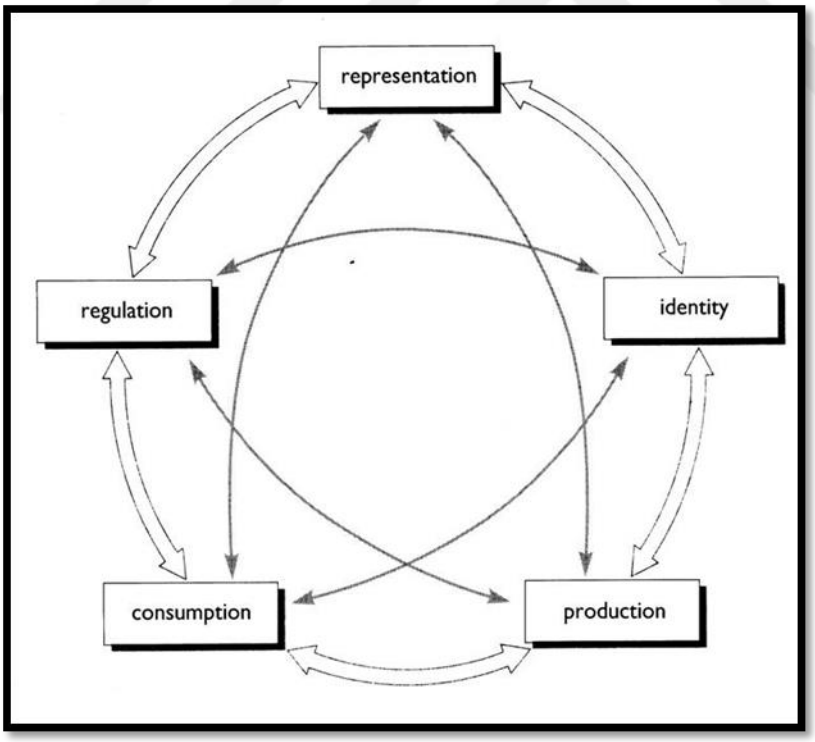

Figure 1. Circuit of Culture (du Gay et al. 1997)

As Szczepanik and Vonderau also point out, a remediation of the outworn dichotomies of structure and agency, text and context or object and subject is needed to advance media

studies (Szczepanik and Vonderau 2014, 5). Following such interdisciplinarity, some studies break the lines between the separate trajectories of production, text and audience-based studies, such as Vicki Mayer's article "The Places Where Audience Studies and Production Studies Meet" (2016). According to Mayer, even though the audience and production studies have had largely separate trajectories in research, unified studies can reveal the power relations involved in mass media production. In this article, Mayer looks at the TV show *Treme* and how placemaking, production and representation of New Orleans in the show connect producers and the audience. Because New Orleans was first wrought by a hurricane, and later a combination of governmental neglect and corporate profiteering, it needed recovery support. Media representations of New Orleans in that sense helped the city. Residents did not only value these representations "as accurate or authentic portrayals of place but also their exchange value in terms of the marketplaces for disaster recovery. Viewers felt producers understood the city and defended it with joining the production" (2016, 710). In her book *Almost Hollywood, Nearly New Orleans: The Lure of the Local Film Economy* (2017), Mayer develops an even more extensive discussion on the production in New Orleans and how representations and audience reactions to *Treme* are all connected. By showing the values the workers and viewers share and how this affects the region's economy and social practices, her study proves how the conversation between these fields can be beneficial for research.

Following such an interdisciplinary approach, this dissertation aims to apply the circuit of culture to screen media in Turkey. Within the context of this dissertation, particular attention is paid to production, representation and consumption, those three aspects of screen media and circuit of culture that are increasingly influenced by the urban transformation. This study first discovers *the production*, how the screen media is produced and what are the dynamics behind the production in the city. Exploring the mode of production and the inhabitants' participation during the process gives information about the entangled relationship between screen media

and the city. Then it looks at *the representation*, specifically focusing on the city and how it is depicted on screen. As explained further in the thesis, the representation of Istanbul in films and TV series is closely related to the production and consumption of these media. It later explores *consumption* by analyzing the urban exhibition spaces, how and by whom the screen media is consumed in urban areas. Even though the dissertation will mainly focus on these three aspects (production, representation and consumption) of the circuit of culture, it will also take into account the regulations; how the current politics, authoritarianism and censorship effect screen media and the identity; how the national identity and nationalist discourses and regulations affect the production and consumption. By applying the 'circuit of culture' to screen media in Turkey, this study aims to illustrate the multi-layered, complex structure that lies behind the relationship between the city and screen media.

1.2. Historical Background

After Turkey became a Republic, Istanbul experienced the first big wave of urban change in the 1960s which started with the Marshall aid received by the Democrat Party (DP) lead by Adnan Menderes that resulted in the construction of thousands of apartments to accommodate the immigrants coming from small Anatolian towns. The population of the city rapidly increased and it became car-friendly with the opening of new boulevards and the construction of large parking lots. The economic developments with foreign financial aid also caused a boom in the film industry in Istanbul. The number of production companies significantly increased with integral migration and the foundation of new production companies in the city (Gül 2012). In the golden years of the Turkish cinema, also known as the "Yeşilçam Period" between 1960 and 1974, Istanbul became a universally known film production hub. In 1972, the Turkish cinema set a record with 299 films, making Turkey one of the most prolific countries in the world (Directorate General of Press and Information 2009). In this most productive period of the film industry, different trends appeared in Turkish cinema such as copying Egyptian melodramas or Western movies. These years were also golden for film exhibition in the country. In 1969, the number of indoor movie theaters increased to 1420 with 892,474 seats and outdoor movie theaters to 1534 with approximately 1,335,077 seats (Coş 1969).

In 1972, with the broadcast of the first Turkish-dubbed foreign TV series *The Fugitive* (1963-67, the Turkish audience got acquainted with this new form of scripted entertainment. With the introduction of television and the political turmoil in the country, cinema audiences started to decrease. In the '70s and '80s American TV series such as *Lassie* (1954-73, *Little House on the Prairie* (1974-83), *Dallas* (1978), *Mission: Impossible* (1988), *Knight Rider* (1982-86), and *Macgyver* (1985-92) became extremely popular in 1970s and 80s. Considering the limited number of TV receivers nationwide in the '70s, the fans gathered

to watch the series and this played an important role in the proliferation of television countrywide. Observing hectic public interest in foreign TV series, Turkish producers started to make local series as early as 1974. The first local Turkish series was a literary adaptation of the novel *Forbidden Love (Aşk-ı Memnu/1974-75)* which was produced as a miniseries with six episodes.

After the coup d'état of 1980, the number of local film productions rapidly decreased due to the general unrest in society that made the streets unsafe and kept families away from the movie theaters (Çetin Erus 2007, 124). Because of economic instability, television production was also not very intense in this period. Between 1980-1990, two important events, the transition to a neoliberal economy and the break-up of the state monopoly over broadcasting changed the media structure of Turkey (Yanardağoğlu 2016, 51).In the second half of the 1990s, with the introduction of private TV channels and the rising demand for locally produced series, the production environment was nourished both by the audience and the newly established production companies. The revival of TV production goes hand in hand with the reemergence of Istanbul's film industry in the mid '90s. Also in the '90s Turkey witnessed the rise of multiplexes, most of them in Istanbul, which resulted in changes in the distribution dynamics. Many small movie theaters in the city centers were closed because of unfair competition with companies that owned movie theater chains. Multiplexes transformed the movie-watching experience into a practice of consumption. Located into the upper floors of shopping malls, multiplexes turned the movie-watching experience into a leisure activity between shopping and fast-fooding (Tüzün 2013, 94-108). At the same time as the topography of the exhibition transformed, film programming was also changing. Multiplexes all around the city organized their film programs with a few dominant distribution companies; this resulted in the screening of the same blockbuster films in all movie theaters. The multiplexes and distribution companies also shortened the box-office duration of the films. Those films without

high box-office success would be screened for one or a maximum of two weeks in these multiplexes. If the tickets did not sell to the satisfaction of the distribution and multiplex company, the film would no longer be screened, which eventually had a negative impact on independent film production and exhibition. Such an application of neoliberal consumption trends changed the structure of film and TV production and exhibition in the country.

This change of structure can also be seen in the merge of the film and TV industry. According to Zeynep Çetin Erus, there is a strong affiliation between film and television in Turkey (Çetin Erus 2007, 123). The reasons for such interaction can be explained by their use of the same casts, crews and technical equipment based in Istanbul. "The borders between the two sectors are porous, as the percentage of acting personnel in cinema who often work for television varies between 76% and 85% for the 192 Turkish films that were released between 2006 and 2009" (Behlil 2009, 3). Like the acting personnel, films and TV series also use the same camera and sound crews: assistant directors, art directors, hair and make-up artists and also the same technical equipment. The common human capital and the technical facilities of the film and TV industry are based in Istanbul:

> Istanbul is the only city in the country where all kinds of economic activities are located that can result in the production of a film. Since the second half of the 1800s, Istanbul which hosted many industries in parallel with its economic development, has become the center of the intertwined industries: TV, film and advertisement. No other city in Turkey could provide such production structure. All actors of these industries from casting agencies to TV channels, post-production studios and advertisers are located spatially very close or easily accessible one from the other (Töre 2010, 8).

Today, the film and TV industry in Istanbul intersect on so many levels and are inseparable parts of the screen media in the country. Their strict bond is also the reason why this paper does not separate the TV and film industries and studies them together as inseparable parts of screen media. Focusing on today, this dissertation also presents the historical

background of the urban reconstruction and how screen media has changed and evolved with this transformation.

1.3. Istanbul and Media Studies

Studies of the urban space in Turkish cinema and television have few main focuses which are the cinematic representations of the city in films and TV series, historical accounts of urban spectatorship and film production, and the impact of urban representations in TV series on a foreign audience. The research on Yeşilçam films shot in Istanbul approaches films as images that present nostalgic memories of Istanbul for the urbanites. In his article "Black and White Istanbul" (Abacı 2004) in the book *Cinema in the City, City in the Cinema* (Türkoğlu, Öztürk and Aymaz 2004), Tahir Abacı analyzes some of Yeşilçam films, *In the Name of Law* (*Kanun Namına 1952), Three Friends (Üç Arkadaş 1959), Birds of Exile (Gurbet Kuşları 1964),* and *Oh Beautiful Istanbul (Ah Güzel İstanbul 1966)* which take place in Istanbul. For him, one of the most important qualities of these films is their realistic depiction of the old Istanbul. Abacı defines Lütfi Akad's fiction film *In the Name of Law (Kanun Namına 1952),* as a documentary, so realistic in the way it depicts the past Istanbul (Abacı 2004, 262). The domestic migration in the 1960s, which played an important role in the history of Istanbul, is also analyzed through the cinematic representations in Yeşilçam films (Torun 2017, Türeli 2010). The film *Birds of Exile (Gurbet Kuşları 1964)* starts with a scene at the Haydarpaşa train station when the protagonists arrive to Istanbul. The films that were produced before *Birds of Exile* usually started in the city and not at an arriving point. However, with the increase in domestic migration, Yeşilçam films started to use train and bus stations as shooting locations. In a way, these films represent the memories of the immigrants who had just arrived to Istanbul (Torun 2017, Altınsay 1996). In her book "*Vesikalı Şehir*", Feride Çiçekoğlu defines the urban images in films as the collective unconscious of the city as mostly reflecting the male point of view, through the eyes of the male characters. In this respect, the film *My Prostitute Love* (*Vesikalı Yarim 1968)* is a rare work that exposes the urban memories of a woman and the rowdy man

who falls in love with her (Çiçekoğlu 2007). These cinematic depictions are mostly discussed as representatives of the memories of the immigrants and the urbanites.

Another source on Yeşilçam and Istanbul's shooting locations is *"İstanbul in Turkish Cinema" (Türk Sinemasında İstanbul 2010)* which presents the shooting locations in Istanbul chronologically from the 1920s to today through collecting the memories of Yeşilçam filmmakers. Even though Agah Özgüç does not analyze the images in this book, his work presents a certain sense of nostalgia and looks at the past cinematic spaces of Istanbul from today with admiration. The Istanbul volume of *World Film Location Series'* (Köksal 2011) also maps the shooting locations of the city, adding the discussions on the representation of Istanbul in foreign films such as *Murder on the Orient Express (1975), Topkapı (1964), Time to Love (Sevmek Zamanı 1965)* and *Oh Beautiful Istanbul (Ah Güzel Istanbul 1966)*. Istanbul is often used as a foreign, mysterious and exotic locale in international spy and action films (Akser 2014, Pamir 2015). As Ahmet Gürata explains, this cosmopolitan city attracts foreign filmmakers because it "provides a setting for a number of binary oppositions such as East-West, communist-capitalist, Asian-American, and exotic-modern. These ideological oppositions reinforce the conventions of cinema tinged by Orientalist tropes" (Gürata 2012, 23).

The studies about the relation between contemporary Turkish cinema and space follow a path of analyzing images related to their representation of specific concepts. After the '90s, with the shift of shooting locations from the city to the provinces in Turkey, the academic research on the provincial spaces increased (Suner 2009; Çelikaslan 2008; Akbal Süalp and Güneş 2010). In Turkish cinema, the provinces are mostly the representation of positive concepts, such as the peaceful past (Suner 2009), childhood memories and the longing for the stillness of time (Akbal Süalp 2010). In nostalgia films such as *Vizontele (2001)* and *İftarlık Gazoz (2016),* the narration is shaped around remembrance (Suner 2009). The childhood memories in the provinces are reminiscent of peaceful and serene feelings. Urban space on the

other hand is mostly related to negative aspects, such as violence (Akbal Süalp 2004), cruel competition (Türkoğlu, Öztürk and Aymaz 2004) and loneliness (Güler 2011). Türkoğlu, Öztürk and Aymaz claim that in Nuri Bilge Ceylan's *Distant* (Uzak 2002), the city is represented as a place of lovelessness, selfishness and cynicism. The human relations in the metropolis impose individualism on urbanites (Türkoğlu, Öztürk and Aymaz 2004, 278). Also with the impact of recent massive urban transformation, dystopic depictions of the city augmented in Turkish cinema. Asumen Suner analyzes the representation of Istanbul in an earlier film, Derviş Zaim's *Somersault in a Coffin (Tabutta Rövaşata 1996),* as agoraphobic. Most of the scenes take place in exterior locations in İstanbul: the shores of Bosphorus, Rumelihisarı, Aşiyan Asi Cemetery, Fatih and Galata Bridges. The exterior locations of the city, especially some renowned touristic sites, are depicted as dangerous, cruel and deadly. As Suner states, the film does not only visualize the agoraphobic urban experience but also pushes the audience into an agoraphobic relationship with the city (Suner 2009, 227). In contemporary Turkish films, the urban space is often related to urban anxiety and agoraphobia. The films *Frenzy (Abluka 2015), Inflame (Kaygı 2016)* and *Saf (2018)* represent urban spaces as dark and gloomy, full of danger. The contemporary films on Istanbul and urban transformation *Çekmeköy Underground (2014), Saf (2018)* and *Ghosts (2020)* also reflect such agoraphobia through the difficulties their characters are facing in the urban context. The general focus of the studies on both rural and urban spaces concerns what these spaces allegorically represent, and much less how they are represented. In other words, the urban and rural locations are studied not as spaces of production or literal portrayal but more of a representation of a specific sensation.

The research on Turkish TV series and urban space is not very different from the film studies in terms of analyzing images according to their representation of various concepts such as identity and social class. The locations that are used in the series are discussed as the

representations of the characters' social class (Mersin 2012), identity (Ünür 2013) and culture (Tanrıöver 2002). Serhan Mersin explains that the TV series *Adını Feriha Koydum (2012)* and *Fatmagül'ün Suçu Ne* (2003-2005) draw a clear line between the rich and the poor through the use of locations. While the scenes of the rich mostly take place in luxury villas, residences and offices in skyscrapers, the scenes of the poor take place in small houses, gecekondus or little neighborhood shops (Mersin 2012).

In addition to the cultural dynamics, the locations of the TV series also include information about the characters' social class . The TV series *Lost City (Kayıp Şehir/2012-2013)* portrays the backstreets of Istanbul as a place for immigrants, gypsies, transvestites and refugees living around Tarlabaşı. As Ünür describes:

> ...the back streets of the city are usually the residential areas of 'the others' because of the economic distress and the unfavorable treatment in the community they are exposed to. The media representation of the inhabitants of these neighborhoods is generally negative and forces them to be marginalized only emphasizing the crimes, poverty, rape, drug-trafficking and violence which also creates a deep fear in the general population (Ünür 2013).

Lost City, is an exception as it represents marginal identities such as transvestites and sex workers not from the viewpoint of the mainstream, but from the perspective of its residents. As illustrated, TV series are mostly discussed as a representation of identity, culture and social class.

Another common approach is to analyze the social and political impact of the Turkish TV series on the TV audience. Very popular Ottoman period dramas are often analyzed according to their impact on foreign countries (mostly Arab countries). In the 2000s, a distinct change of locations was being observed in Turkish TV series. Most of the TV series started to be produced in rich residential compounds and high-rise office buildings. The upper-class melodramas taking place in luxury residences such as *Noor (Gümüş/2005-7), One Thousand and One Nights (Binbir Gece/2006-9), Forbidden Love (Aşk-ı Memnu/2008-10),* and *The Tulip*

Age (Lale Devri/2010-14) reached an unexpected international success. Yanardagoglu and Karam (2013) explained the reason for their success as the 'Modernized' and 'Westernized' look of these shows. As the authors illustrated the TV audience in Middle East countries thinks that "the most amazing thing about Turkish shows are their decorations/furnishings that are never seen in other shows. The country is clean, there are nice landscapes and dressing is fashionable" (Yanardagoglu and Karam 2013). The modern, classy and elegant look of these series is related to the selection of shooting locations, decorations and costumes. Other scholars discussed how these popular TV series support the AKP government's soft power policies in Middle East countries, and their political impact on Middle East countries (Yörük and Pantelis 2013, Buccianti 2010, Kraidy and Al-Ghazzi 2013, Yanardagoglu and Karam 2013, Balli and Cebeci 2013). Especially after the distribution of the *Magnificent Century (Muhteşem Yüzyıl 2011-2014*), Turkey uprooted "anti-Turkish sentiment in the Arab world without affecting a deep geopolitical shift, relying instead on media, popular culture, diplomacy and skillful oratory to create the aura of Neo-Ottoman Cool" (Kraidy and Al-Ghazzi 2013, 28). Like the impact of TV series on international relations, it is possible to see their effect also on local politics. Recently, with the increase of anti-terror policies in Turkey, the number of military TV series has increased dramatically (*Söz 2017, Sakarya Fırat 2009-2010, İsimsizler 2017*). Aysegül Kesirli Unur claims that military and police procedural TV series play an important role in the strengthening of the nationalist discourse in Turkey (Kesirli Unur 2016). Bulut and İleri discovers how the TV series *Payitaht Abdülhamit (2017)* reflects the Turkish government's desires to both establish cultural hegemony and consolidate its populist style of government (Bulut and İleri 2019). The impacts of the Turkish TV series are visible both on Turkey's international relations and on local politics. These studies focus on the content of the series and their representational value, as well as their impact on Turkish and foreign audiences, and rarely on the political economy of the film and TV industry.

When we look at the studies on urban space and film exhibition, we can see that even though film exhibition is a popular research area, the relation between the city and movie

theaters in Istanbul, and the rise of new exhibition spaces such as open-air cinemas, art museums are understudied. Most of the academic work on Turkish cinema simply avoids the conceptual relation between urban space and the cinema-going experience. Even though the history of Istanbul's movie theaters was discussed by various film historians (Evren 1998, Gökmen 1991, Scognamillo 2009, Dorsay 1985, 2004, Arslan 2011), the conceptual relation between the urban space and the changing cinema-going experience is not explored in depth. Mustafa Gökmen's *Eski İstanbul Sinemaları (Old Cinemas of Istanbul 1991)* presents a detailed account of Beyoğlu Movie Theaters with their architectural plans and information including their scale, the number of seats etc. Burçak Evren, in his book *Eski İstanbul Sinemaları Düş Şatoları (Old Istanbul Cinemas: Castles of Dreams),* shares his childhood memories at Beyoğlu cinemas with some rare pieces from his own archive such as old movie tickets, posters and film announcements. Similarly, Atilla Dorsay in *Benim Beyoğlum (My Beyoğlu 1991)* and Giovanni Scognamillo in *Bir Levantenin Beyoğlu Anıları (Beyoğlu Memories of a Levantine 2009)* share their own memories in these historical movie theaters and their experience as spectators in the nineteenth century. These accounts are the historical documentation of old movie-theaters and focus on personal memories rather than conceptual debates on the sociological aspects of the audience experiences.

Recently film and media scholars have been discussing the new digital exhibition and distribution structures (Yavuz 2016, Erkılıç 2012, Tüzün 2013, Çetin Erus 2007, Tanrıöver 2011) and the transformation/destruction of historical movie theaters (Yücel 2015, Pösteki 2013, and Atabinen 2015). In their articles, Yavuz and Erkılıç give the number of movie theaters with digital projections and document the transformation from celluloid to digital film exhibition in Turkey (Yavuz 2016, Erkılıç 2012). More recent studies cover the protests, mainly against the closure of Emek Movie Theater and the reaction against the destruction of historical movie theaters. Film critic Fırat Yücel compares the destruction of Emek Movie Theater and

the resistance in Istanbul with the 1968 protests of the directors at Paris Cinematechque (Yücel 2015) and explores the similarities between the two uprisings. He discusses the destruction of movie theaters and their impact mainly on cinephiles, but does not really examine the contemporary experience of movie-watching urbanites or the historical background of urban transformation and cinema spectatorship. By exploring the relationship between open-air cinemas and the current alternative film exhibition spaces, this study aims to fill this gap and build a bridge between the historical and current experiences of urban spectators.

The studies either on Turkish TV series or film exhibitions generally do not address the relationship between urban space and the changing urban experience in terms of screen media production and exhibition. In İpek Türeli's book *İstanbul: Open City,* a chapter titled "Cinematic Memories" approaches the subject from a relatively different perspective (Türeli 2018). Even though she does not focus on production or exhibition phases, she analyzes the relation between the promotion of housing and films from the '60s. Türeli analyzes both the transformation of the urban space and the representation of such transformation in films. This is the comprehensive approach that this dissertation also intends to follow. This dissertation aims to cover these understudied relations between urban transformation, screen production and exhibition strategies in Istanbul from an interdisciplinary viewpoint.

1.4. Methodological Approach

In this part, the methodological strategies and procedures of the research will be presented. As Gillian Rose explains in her book *Visual Methodologies*, because the culture cannot be thought of as a singular whole, it is more helpful to think of it as a range of meaningful social practices in which visual images' effects are embedded (Rose 2001, 14). The interpretations of visual images come from three sites where the meanings of an image are made: the site of the production, the site of the image itself and the site where it is seen by various audiences (Rose 2001, 16). Looking at all these three sites, production, representation and consumption, this dissertation identifies general characteristics of the interaction between screen production and exhibition and urban transformation; it focuses on the conceptual framework and provides examples about the theories that are discussed in the thesis. Because this dissertation pays attention to the notion of discourse as articulated through various kinds of moving images and texts, TV series and the scripts, as well as social practices and the practices of institutions, it uses a mixed-method strategy, which benefits from more than one method in order to precisely explore the diverse meanings that particular images carry at their various sites of production, image and reception.

Using more than one method for this particular research clearly has benefits; it allows for a richly detailed picture of the visual material and sheds light on the contradictory meanings an image may articulate. "The visualities articulated by producers, images and audiences may not coincide and this may be an important issue to address" (Rose 2001, 292). Theoretical decisions enable to focus on methodological strategies and because this research looks at the different phases of image production, consumption and reception, it follows an interdisciplinary approach and uses various qualitative research methods. This study relies on library, archive and visual media research, as well as fieldwork which consists of visiting the

production/exhibition sites and conducting interviews on screen media locations. Each chapter presents a different body of scholarships and uses relatively different methods described as follows.

Content and Visual Analysis

This dissertation uses both qualitative content (text-based) and visual (image-based) analysis while analyzing the scripts and the visual representations of certain locations on the screen. It combines the analysis of the content of the TV series, their themes, stories and narrative structures, as well as their visual representations of the city. By looking at the aspects of both the content and visuals of screen media, the research aims to portray a wide-ranging idea of the representation of the city on screen.

Qualitative content analysis is a very common method used in film analysis as it is an interpretative and a flexible technique; it can be a thematic analysis based on the themes of the text, or a formative analysis which involves close reading of every phrase in the text and its meaning. This dissertation uses thematic analysis and looks at the common themes, storylines and general techniques used in the TV series, instead of examining every phrase in the text as a code. However, instead of solely focusing on the meanings created through the characters or storylines in the TV series, this dissertation also explores how the content of the TV series, specifically their storylines, affects the dynamics of production. This specific type of content analysis maps the relationship between the text and the means of production.

Different from content analysis, visual analysis pays more attention to the images (moving images in this case) and compositional modalities such as the mise-en-scene, montage, spatial organization, sound, lighting etc. Just like content analysis, visual analysis technique is also flexible and can either interpret every shot in a film or TV series as a code, or focus on specific representations or just look at the general visual depiction as a whole (Rose 2001, 37).

This study focuses on various depictions comparing and contrasting Istanbul's representation in different series such as the dark and gloomy look in action-thriller genres such as the *Valley of the Wolves (Kurtlar Vadisi/2003-)* or *Ezel (2009-11),* or the bright, elite look of series such as *One Thousand and One Nights (Binbir Gece/2006-9)* and *Noor (Gümüş/2005-7),* and the colorful depictions of neighborhood series *Aunt Perihan (Perihan Abla/1986-88)* or Bread Boat *(Ekmek Teknesi/2002-5).* The use of visual and textual material in the research will be explained in more detail in the chapters, as the methodology will be fully developed in the chapters.

Archival Research

In the most classical sense, archival research methods include "a broad range of activities applied to facilitate the investigation of documents and textual materials produced by and about organizations" which "involve the study of historical documents; that is, documents created at some point in the relatively distant past, providing us access that we might not otherwise have to the organizations, individuals, and events of that earlier time" (Ventresca and Mohr 2002, 811). In this research, the archives are used to collect information about the history of film studios, movie theaters and exhibition spaces. The study of the archives helps to understand the historical background of the development of the screen media, as well as urban transformation in Istanbul.

Particularly, the third chapter of the dissertation on the 1950s open-air cinemas is mostly based on archival research as most of the open-air cinemas mentioned in the article were already destroyed. The archives used for this chapter are: Istanbul Research Institute *(for publications on Istanbul)*, Beyazıt State Library *(for old periodicals such as Hayat, Ses, Şık Perde, Yıldızlar Postası, Lamek Film Sinema Postası)*, İBB Atatürk Library *(for old newspapers)*, TÜRVAK Film Museum *(for photographs of old cinemas and cinema tickets)*, and TSA-Center for Turkish Cinema Studies *(for online periodicals such as Akademik Sinema, Istanbul Film*

Postası, Istanbul Hollywood, Ve Sinema). For Chapter I also used some online film archives which are: *Arzu Film Archive* (YouTube) and *Erler Film Archive* (YouTube). The personal archives of film historians and film critics Burçak Evren (film historian), Mustafa Gökmen (film historian) and Vahit Tansoy (cinephile) were also used with their permission.

Participant Observation and Visiting Sites

In this dissertation, participant observation helped to have a better understanding of the context and phenomenon under study while increasing the validity of the research. As DeWalt and DeWalt state participant observation can be used to help answer descriptive research questions, to build theory, or to generate or test hypotheses (DeWalt and DeWalt 2020). In this research, the participant observation method is used to collect data about the production sites, studios and movie theaters, to gain a better understanding of the interaction between them, the production crew and inhabitants of neighborhoods where on-location production is made, and to observe the urban transformation in these sites.

For the first chapter TV production sites are visited in order to take photographs and observe the recent surrounding of the sites to document the change. The neighborhoods visited for this chapter are *Fikirtepe, Beykoz, Maslak, Kuzguncuk* and *Balat.* For the second Chapter I visited the film and TV studios *Beykoz Kundura*, *Anatolia Film Studios*, *Orion Studios*, *Ümraniye Plateus*, *Yıldız Film Studios*, *Film Sokağı, Işıklar Film Complex* and *SVC Studios*. For the third chapter, I visited the neighborhoods which once had the open-air cinemas to document the ruins and their new surroundings with photographs. The visited neighborhoods for this chapter are: *Fatih*, *Vefa, Karagümrük*, *Maltepe* and *Beşiktaş.* For the fourth chapter I visited the alternative film exhibition sites *Aynalı Geçit*, *Bantmag Bina*, *Kadıköy Cinematechque (under construction)*, *Kadıköy Movie Theater*, *Salt Galata*, *Istanbul Modern*, *Pera Museum* and the *Italian Cultural Center*. On-site observations allowed me to reach

information, otherwise, it would not be possible to learn from written sources, such as the surroundings and social/isolated structure around the sites, the interaction between the sites and their residents, and working conditions in the studios.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews have the advantages of both structured and unstructured interviews, as the interviewees can express their opinions and ask questions to the interviewers encouraging them to give in more useful information, while the structured part gives the interviewers reliable, comparable qualitative data. The second and fourth chapters of the research heavily depend on the fieldwork and interviews. The second chapter on TV drama production studios is based on fieldwork conducted with thirteen participants (five studio owners, three studio managers, three screenwriters and two art directors). Through four months of field research, I visited TV drama studios in Istanbul (once each) and conducted semi-structured interviews with the owners and managers of these studios. The fourth chapter on alternative exhibition spaces includes fieldwork; semi-structured interviews with seven participants (four festival directors, three alternative film festival programmers). Most of the interviews were conducted on location through a sound device, while some others were conducted after the visits through Skype. They were recorded, transcribed and translated for the publication.

Each interviewee is informed about the process and signs the Informed Consent Form **(Annex 1)** before the interview. Four different sets of questions for festival programmers, film studio managers, scriptwriters and art directors **(Annex 2)** are used for the semi-structured interviews. With literature review, discourse, content and visual analysis, the fieldwork and interviews become complementary for the research.

As explained above, a multimethod approach, combining relevant approaches for each individual case-study is used in the research; content and visual analysis for cases on screen representation; participant observation and visiting sites for cases on production and exhibition spaces, archival research for historical data and semi-structured interviews to gain a better understanding of the current production and exhibition dynamics. Using these methods, this research aims to explore the entangled relationship between the film-TV industry and the urban renovation projects in Istanbul and discover how production and consumption of screen media are related to placemaking in the city.

In this first part of the thesis up to this point, the general literature on urban screen media studies, as well as screen production and exhibition studies were discussed. I mapped the place of this study within screen media literature, showing which theories it is related to and what its contribution to literature will be. The historical background of the research and the methods that will be used in the study were also presented. In the second part, we will explore the empirical studies on screen media and look at how TV series production and film exhibition both affect and are affected by urban transformation.

II

P

CHAPTER 2

Paper I. Celik Rappas, I. A. & Kayhan, S. 2018. TV Series Production and the Urban Restructuring of Istanbul. *Television & New Media*, 19:1, 3-23.

This chapter is the first part of the empirical research that focuses on the first aspect of the Circuit of Culture (de Gay et al., 1997) which is the production. This chapter focuses on the on-location media production spaces in the city and shows how both urban renovation is reflected in TV series in Istanbul, and how the on-location production process of these series has played a role in the transformation of the districts they have been shot in.

This paper is a co-authored article written with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ipek Çelik Rappas. The details of our collaboration is explained in the ***Annex 3.***

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TV Series Production and the Urban Restructuring of Istanbul

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Abstract

This article explores the entangled relationship between Turkish TV series and the city of Istanbul examining both the series' representation of the city and the effects of flourishing series' production on the city. We argue that TV series production and representation changes and is changed by the urban restructuring of globalizing Istanbul since the late 1980s. Analyzing internationally popular series such as *Noor*, *Valley of the Wolves*, and *1001 Nights* and building on television, urban and cultural studies, this article explores the ways that Istanbul's neoliberal renovation process appears in and is shaped by TV series. The three segments of the article probe how series reflect and push forth the gentrification of historical neighborhoods, their increasing use of abandoned post-industrial areas as shooting locations, and their promotion of spaces associated with creative industries and luxury lifestyles. We show that both images and image making are connected to city making.

Keywords

Turkish TV series, Istanbul, urban renovation, TV production, city and television, creative industries

In his work at the intersections of media industries and cultural geography, Michael Curtin explains that one of the markers of the transition from a Fordist economy to post-Fordist culture industries is "the emergence of new creative locales" (Curtin 1996, 194). Examples of these "new creative locales" range from New Jersey to Silicon Valley and the South Park neighborhood in San Francisco. Curtin shows that one of the reasons why cities aspire to be and to have creative locales is related to their

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desire to increase real estate values. Hence, Curtin reveals how media and culture industries are intimately linked to urban regeneration and real estate speculation in post-industrial spaces.

With its increasing number of museums, international festivals, and other art events over the last two decades, Istanbul has been part of the global competition between cities as centers of cultural production. Istanbul aspires to improve its international visibility through screen tourism, hosting blockbuster films such as *Taken 2* (2012), *The International* (2009), and James Bond films *The World Is Not Enough* (1999) and *Skyfall* (2012)—turning touristic sites such as the Maiden Tower and the Grand Bazaar into "creative locales" of film production. In terms of television production, however, the "creative locales" are more numerous and dispersed in Istanbul. On a quotidian basis, spaces ranging from streets in the Golden Horn area to a former shoe factory on the shores of the Bosphorus have been used as sites for the shooting of various Turkish TV series. This article shows that TV production-related "creative locales" (studios or exterior locations) in Istanbul are central to urban renovation efforts and the increase of real estate value across the city. Neighborhoods affected range from historic middle-class to modern working-class areas, and from former industrial to current business districts.

Since the 1980s, Istanbul has been going through an intense city-wide renovation process. According to Deniz Göktürk, Levent Soysal, and İpek Türeli, this neoliberal urban restructuring has three components. The first is the establishment of protection around historic neighborhoods, especially formerly multicultural ones, hence promoting tourism and increasing property values in these areas. The second component of Istanbul's renovation process is the conversion of abandoned industrial zones into art museums, exhibition centers, and film and TV studios, signifying, as in other post-industrial urban contexts, the move from industrial to cultural economies. The third strategy in changing the landscape of the city is to give it a modern panorama through the building of business towers and luxury residences (Göktürk et al. 2010, 9–11).

What we aim to show in this article is not only that all three strategies of urban renovation are reflected in TV series shot in the last three decades in Istanbul but also that the series' production processes themselves have been instrumental in transforming the districts in which they were shot. Hence, TV series production and representation has been changing and has been changed by the urban restructuring of globalizing Istanbul since the late 1980s. By analyzing internationally popular Turkish series such as *Noor*, *Valley of the Wolves*, and *1001 Nights* and building on research from television studies, production studies, cultural geography, and creative industries, this article explores the ways in which Istanbul's neoliberal renovation process appears in and is shaped by television production.

The following section elaborates on the ways that this inter-disciplinary intervention builds on and expands the literature on cities as spaces of cultural production. After this literature survey, we inquire into three different kinds of "creative locales" in Istanbul established by TV series production. These shooting locations are Istanbul's historic neighborhoods represented as havens from the city's chaos, former industrial spaces, and working-class neighborhoods portrayed as shady crime/action locations,

and newly built business centers and residences associated with aspired upper-middle-class lifestyle and consumption patterns. The article aims to show the different ways in which TV drama production establishes "new creative locales," meanwhile increasing their property value and prestige both through images and through the image-making process. We examine a vibrant production setting in an underexplored non-Western context that provides unique insights into how cities function and evolve as spaces of media production.

TV Series Production and Location

TV drama production in Turkey has been booming with a significant regional impact since the late 1990s. Between 2010 and 2014, fifty to seventy series have been broadcast on Turkish channels each season covering 65 percent of prime time broadcasting (Deloitte 2014). With eighty-five production companies and a sixteen million dollar profit for the top ten production firms, TV series have gained a central place in the cultural industry of Turkey. Furthermore, as of 2014, seventy series have been exported to more than forty countries—primarily in the Middle East and North Africa—which has generated considerable revenue[1] and led to TV-induced tourism in Istanbul (Yanardağoğlu and Karam 2013).

Apart from a few exceptions, the majority of these series are shot on location and in studios in Istanbul. Despite an intensifying period of production over the last two decades, the effects of TV drama production on the city are currently understudied. A growing body of academic work on Turkish series is exploring this cultural sector's impact on neighboring Middle Eastern countries (Kraidy and Al-Ghazzi 2013)—reading this trade in popular culture as an instrument of foreign policy (Yörük and Vatikiotis 2013) or as a generator of tourism (Yanardağoğlu and Karam 2013). Other researchers have analyzed the changes in Turkish society from the 1980s to 2000s (Tanrıöver 2002), by exploring series' reflections of the changing Turkish political scene (Batuman 2014), and inquiring into their depictions of certain regions in Turkey (Öncü 2011). Hence, research on Turkish TV series mainly focuses on their marketing and reception or their representation of political and historical contexts rather than exploring their production.

The need for more systematic engagement with TV production processes appears also in research into media production in other locations. Television studies research that focuses on series and space mainly explores how series contribute to tourism and how images in the series influence their real or imagined shooting locations. Examples range from studies into tours to the virtual locations of *Friends* (1994–2004) in New York (Torchin 2002) to the tourism created by *Game of Thrones* (2011–) and its influence on the images of national heritage (Tzanelli 2016). Another line of research in television studies inquires into the series' representations of changing urban contexts, for instance, the way *CSI: Miami* (2002–2012) reflects the virtualization of Miami (West 2009), how *The Wire* (2002–2008) discloses a "systemic analysis of Baltimore" (Kinder 2008, 50), or how *Friends* and *Sex and the City* (1998–2004) present glorious and marketable images of New York during a boom period for that city (Sadler and

Haskins 2005). Although these studies do explore the changing post-industrial urban landscape and the series' portrayal of these changes, they do not take into consideration the impact of television production on the urban fabric, at times because the series are shot in studios in other locations.

Even in film and television production studies, research into the physical impact of screen-image production on its location is rare. The literature on TV production studies concentrates on the precariousness of screen-media labor (off-the-clock, non-unionized labor, excessively long shifts; Bulut 2016; Curtin and Sanson 2016), and on the challenge of situating the very concrete labor practices of creative professionals within the global abstraction of media work (Banks et al. 2013; Mayer 2011). Media production studies focus on spaces, especially those outside of Europe and North America, in the frame of the outsourcing of labor (Miller 2016; Szczepanik 2016), and on incentive policies that attract Hollywood productions (Landman 2009). Recent research on cultural industries follows a similar tendency to explore the relationship between a city and creative economies from a larger policy perspective, through looking into cultural policy agendas in metropoles such as Shanghai (Gu 2015), Toronto (Patterson and Silver 2015), and Berlin (Kosnick 2012). Therefore, even though there is growing interest in the interaction between media production and the city space, except for a few exceptions (Kumar 2016; Parmett 2014; Stenger 2001), the screen-media production study and cultural industry study literature lacks systematic engagement with the subtle, intricate, and multiple quotidian impacts that media industries have on a city's residents and on its complex social fabric.

Emerging from an entrepreneurial and managerial perspective, urban studies scholar Richard Florida's famous work praises the effect of creative industries on cities: "The cities that are truly booming . . . are the ones that have the most creative citizens" (Florida et al. 2015, 96), thus defining creativity as "*the* most important, economic commodity" (Florida et al. 2015, 96) for any city. In response to this optimism, cultural geographer Jamie Peck (2005, 740) explains how "[Creativity strategies] work quietly with the grain of extant 'neoliberal' development agendas, framed around interurban competition, gentrification, middle-class consumption and place-marketing." Other cultural geographers and urban studies scholars have shown how creative industries embodied in museums play a significant role in marketing cities on the margins of Europe—such as Bilbao (Harvey 2012) and Marseilles (Ingram 2009)—that did not have touristic appeal before the construction of these museums.

These studies by cultural geographers and urban studies scholars tend to focus on permanent policies and institutions' (such as art museums, media centers, or other venues for artistic and cultural events) impact on the urban fabric. The effects of temporary and mobile television screen-media production processes on the city are less visible as the production continuity depends (especially in Turkey) on shifting weekly ratings and may be abruptly ended. Taking up the challenge to deal with this slippery slope, rather than focusing on top–down cultural policies and institutions, this article probes the ways that temporary yet repeated use of "creative locales" in television production may promote gentrification in less visible yet more subtle and complex ways than other creative industries. Scott McQuire explores the role of media in organizing and governing urban life stating that

> Rather than treating media as something separate from the city—the medium which "represents" urban phenomena by turning it into an image—I argue that the spatial experience of modern social life emerges through a complex process of co-constitution between architectural structures and urban territories, social practices and media feedback (McQuire, 2008, p. vii).

Thus, we attempt to go beyond the focus on the visual representation of the city to see how the process of image making interacts physically with the city space. The film and television industry has been central to establishing "a postmodern inexorability in valuing cities as images rather than as sites of production" (Swann 2001, 96). In a context in which cities are increasingly valued "as images," this article insists on paying attention to the city as a material site of image production and pursuing the converging political economies of the city and screen-media production.

Production Site I: Historic Neighborhoods

Kira Kosnick's research on the growth of cultural industries in Berlin illustrates that cosmopolitanism becomes a strategy that urban policy makers capitalize on "to transform, govern, and successfully market the city," and opens the city to the creative classes, along with tourists and investors (p. 37). The attribution of a cosmopolitan image to Istanbul,[2] that is, the branding of the city as one in which different ethnic and religious groups co-habit peacefully, has been directly linked to the urban renovation projects in the city (Potuoğlu-Cook 2006). In certain neighborhoods of Istanbul, such as Kuzguncuk and Balat, their former religious diversity, branded as cosmopolitanism, has become instrumental in the current restructuring, increase in property values, and appeal for image production.

Both Kuzguncuk and Balat had the reputation of being multicultural territories in the last century. Kuzguncuk, once home to lower middle-class non-Muslim (Jewish, Greek, and Armenian) minority communities most of whom were gradually forced to move out in the 1940s and 1950s, saw a large wave of gentrification with the restoration of its traditional houses that attracted higher income groups and changed its social stratum in the 1990s (Mills 2010, 7–10). Around this period, Kuzguncuk became one of the most highly regarded shooting locations for TV series. It has been especially popular as a location for *mahalle*/neighborhood series in which the problem of an individual becomes public and is resolved collectively with the participation of other neighbors in open street discussions (Mills 2010, 69). The series whose huge success gave rise to the *mahalle* genre is *Perihan Abla* (*Sister Perihan*, 1986–1988) shot in Kuzguncuk, most scenes taking place in and around one of its renovated historic houses (Figure 1, Table 1).

Although the focus of the TV series is on the love story between a middle-aged couple, *Sister Perihan* is predominantly known for its sincere, sympathetic depiction of a peaceful and harmonious historic neighborhood. In the series, the portrayal of wooden houses with bay windows, old cobblestone streets, and clothes hanging to dry on lines drawn between houses all contribute to the portrayal of "historic Istanbul"

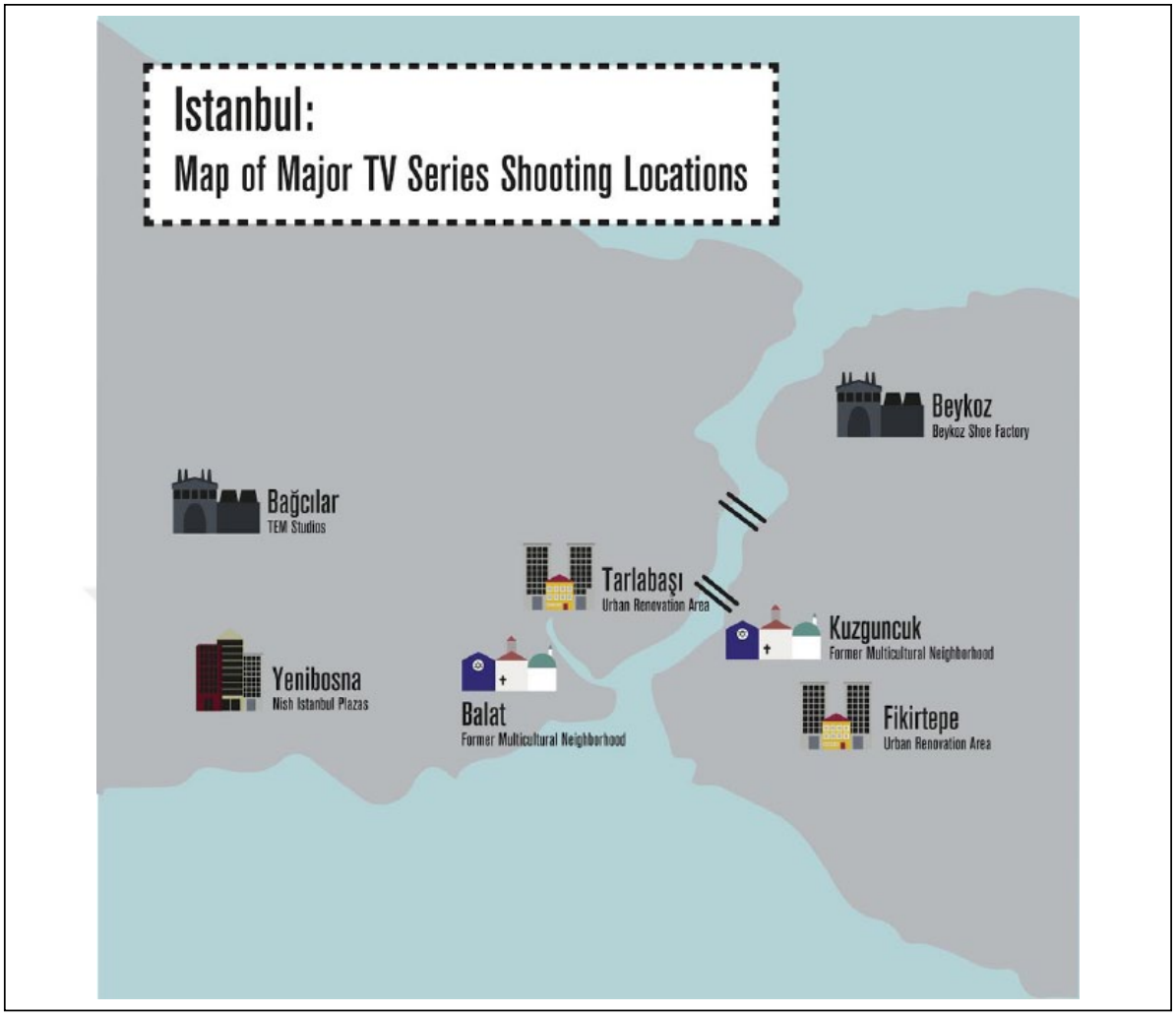

Figure 1. Istanbul: Map of major TV series shooting locations.

where neighbors live in close intimacy. *Sister Perihan* takes the spectator into a world of solidarity between the residents (often women) and shop owners (often men), confirming traditional gender roles—while men work, women are at home sitting by the window communicating with each other from one window to another. If an inhabitant is in need, all the residents collaborate to help, Perihan being the first in line.

Sister Perihan paved the way for the production of other successful *mahalle* series such as *Süper Baba* (*Super Dad*, 1993–1997) and *İkinci Bahar* (*Second Spring*, 1998–2001) that followed the same formula of choosing traditionally cosmopolitan historic Istanbul neighborhoods as shooting locations. In an Istanbul in which cosmopolitanism became marketable and celebrated despite the city's diminished diversity (Komins 2002), it is not a coincidence that neighborhoods in which a feeling of nostalgia for cosmopolitanism can be cultivated are chosen as locations for *mahalle* series. Although Kuzguncuk's multiethnic history and culture of tolerance have been popularized in television and print media, *Sister Perihan* evades any reference to the neighborhood's former diversity in its scripts, lacks minority characters, and avoids the depiction of the neighborhood's multicultural religious institutions. The series' nostalgic depiction

Table 1. List of Turkish TV Series Discussed.

Original title	English title	Year	Theme	Main shooting location
Aşk-ı Memnu	*Forbidden Love*	2008–2010	Romance	Sarıyer
Binbir Gece	*1001 Nights*	2006–2009	Romance	Sarıyer
Çemberimde Gül Oya	*Rose Lace in My Scarf*	2004–2005	1970s period drama	Balat
Ekmek Teknesi	*Bread Boat*	2001–2005	Neighborhood	Kuzguncuk
Ezel	*Ezel*	2009–2011	Crime	Balat
Güllerin Savaşı	*War of the Roses*	2014–2016	Romance	Darıca
Gümüş	*Noor*	2005–2007	Romance	Kandilli
Hayat Bilgisi	*Knowledge of Life*	2003–2006	Neighborhood	Kuzguncuk
Haziran Gecesi	*Night of June*	2004–2006	Romance	Kanlıca
İkinci Bahar	*Second Spring*	1998–2001	Neighborhood	Samatya
Kayıp Şehir	*Lost City*	2012–2013	Drama	Tarlabaşı
Kiralık Aşk	*Rental Love*	2015–	Rom Com	Yenibosna (Nish Istanbul Plazas)
Kurtlar Vadisi	*Valley of the Wolves*	2007–	Crime	Fikirtepe
Muhteşem Yüzyıl	*Magnificent Century*	2011–2014	Ottoman period drama	Bağcılar (TEM Studios)
Osmanlı Tokadı	*Ottoman Slap*	2013–2014	Ottoman period comedy	Balat
Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman Ki	*Time Goes By*	2010–2013	1960s period drama	Beykoz
Perihan Abla	*Sister Perihan*	1986–1988	Neighborhood	Kuzguncuk
Süper Baba	*Super Dad*	1993–1997	Neighborhood	Çengelköy
Yeditepe İstanbul	*Istanbul Seven Hills*	2001–2002	Neighborhood	Balat

of an imagined traditional communal life is connected to the space of shooting as the series appropriates a sentiment that was originally attached to the cosmopolitan diversity of Kuzguncuk. The series benefits from nostalgia, a historical sensation conditioned by a lack, replacing the diminished cosmopolitan diversity with a homogeneously lower middle class that faces similar problems and solves them in solidarity. In the absence of multicultural images, dialogue, and personalities, the harmony of *mahalle* life is assured through smooth transitions between public spaces—such as the coffee house, cab stand, or barber shop—and the privacy of homes (Tanrıöver 2002, 95).

The production of *Sister Perihan* had a lasting influence on the neighborhood by giving its name to the street on which it was shot and more fundamentally by providing a nostalgic image of Kuzguncuk as a haven from chaotic and alienating city life (Figure 2). After the production of *Sister Perihan*, other famous *mahalle* series such as *Ekmek Teknesi* (*Bread Boat*, 2002–2005) and *Hayat Bilgisi* (*Knowledge of Life*, 2003–2006) were produced in Kuzguncuk. Its promotion as a peaceful and tolerant historic

Figure 2. *Perihan Abla* street in Kuzguncuk.
Source. Courtesy of Zeynep Naz Megrel.

neighborhood had a role in increasing property values, which drew higher class residents and higher end shops such as chocolatiers and organic product vendors. However, what the new residents found seems to be different than what they had imagined. Although the series provided peaceful images of Kuzguncuk, their production caused unrest. Many residents and new businesses report feeling disturbed by the endless stream of series production and have lodged complaints about the damaging effects of TV production on the historical texture and daily life of the neighborhood (Karaca 2012). In 2007, residents organized a demonstration with banners saying "No More TV-Shows" and "Kuzguncuk is not a Set." The head of the *Kuzguncuk Residents Association* explains, "We want our neighbourhood to remain as a neighbourhood. We want the crews to remember that residents also have rights and the shooting hours should be limited" (Karakaş 2007).[3]

By contrast, the inhabitants of another historic neighborhood, Balat, who are mostly working and middle class, have reacted differently to the increasing TV production in their locale. Balat was a district where a Sephardic Jewish community resided for centuries. In the 1930s, the area was designated for industrial use and hundreds of factories were established there (Bezmez 2009). This led to significant environmental damage and the exchange of higher income residents with working-class ones employed in the newly built factories (Eken 2010). In the 1990s and 2000s, a series of rehabilitation projects initiated another transformation in the area: factories have been converted into museums, exhibition centers, and educational institutions and architectural conservation projects restored traditional houses, which made the area attractive to real estate investors.

TV producers discovered Balat once the rehabilitation project started in the 1990s. The popular *mahalle* series *Yeditepe Istanbul* (*Istanbul Seven Hills*, 2001–2002) was shot there profiting from Balat's historical structure, low production costs, and central location. After the series' success, other production companies started to get interested in the area and soon Balat became a favored exterior location for TV series producers. Besides providing the setting for other popular *mahalle* series, Balat also attracted producers shooting a wide variety of period dramas. An expedition to the site could take one past scenes that represented the 1980 military coup (*Çemberimde Gül Oya [Rose Lace in My Scarf]*, 2004–2005), an Ottoman bazaar in 1400s (*Osmanlı Tokadı [Ottoman Slap]*, 2013–2014), or a fancy patisserie from the 1960s (*Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman Ki [Time Goes By]*, 2010–2013). Between 1998 and 2010, almost thirty TV series were shot in the neighborhood.

Balat gained popularity as a site for TV production in tandem with its gentrification. Similar to Kuzguncuk, as a result of its growing public visibility through the series along with the rehabilitation project, Balat witnessed the emergence of new restaurants, hotels, and gift shops, drawing higher class residents prepared to pay increased real estate prices. Yet, as noted and in contrast to Kuzguncuk, Balat residents are not opposed to the neighborhood's use in TV productions and even founded an association to benefit from it. *The Solidarity Association for Fener-Balat Residents and Filmmakers* helps production companies with location scouting and securing extras for the series, and serves as a negotiator between the inhabitants and TV crews. The deputy head of the association believes that series production has positive effects on the residents, "The film and TV actors are the role-models for our young population. Women in the crews organize training programs for our young girls. The directors and actors also support the educational activities. These are important for social change" (Erge and Ceylan 2015). Despite the differences between their residents' reactions to TV series production, Kuzguncuk and Balat share the same role in TV series representation. Both neighborhoods appeal to a nostalgia for an authentic community in solidarity, a nostalgia intensified by the city's neoliberal restructuring (Yanardağoğlu 2016, 45). While the representation in TV series imagines a long-lost Istanbul, the production of the series promotes the new face of Istanbul.

Production Site II: Post-industrial Spaces and Working-Class Neighborhoods

Reconstruction in Balat started with initiatives that included turning abandoned docks, factories, and warehouses into museums and educational institutions. Such reuse of former industrial zones by creative entrepreneurs has become trendy in many post-industrial cities. Sharon Zukin, who explored similar transformation in New York, explains that the mass exodus from a city's industrial urban core can create undesirable low-income zones attractive to young artists and entrepreneurs who are in need of big spaces and low rents (Zukin 1982, 2–3). This trend results in the conversion of manufacturing buildings into spaces of cultural industry; abandoned factories and

harbors both in the center of and at the periphery of cities become homes for artistic practices and media production.

Post-industrial spaces may be used for TV production after being renovated to serve as all-purpose studios. Among the major examples of warehouses-turned into TV studios are Titanic Studios, situated in the former industrial harbor of Belfast where the interior scenes of the blockbuster HBO series *Game of Thrones* are shot, and Belle de mai studios, a former tobacco factory in Marseilles, housing the imaginary Mistral neighborhood of France's longest running TV series *Plus belle la vie* (2004–). Like many other cities, Istanbul has followed the trend of turning its abandoned factories into "creative locales." An example of this is a former wire factory in the industrial Bağcılar neighborhood that was transformed into an all-purpose studio. A range of series were shot here from sit-coms to period dramas such as *Muhteşem Yüzyıl* (*Magnificent Century*, 2011–2014), representing the Ottoman court life in the sixteenth century. Another abandoned post-industrial site frequently used as a filming platform is the former Beykoz Shoe Factory, one of the oldest factories in Istanbul that continued to function until the 1990s. When manufacturing stopped, the abandoned factory was bought with the intention of turning it into a holiday resort given its prime location on the shores of the Bosphorus (Cingi 2012). As a result of complications regarding construction permits, the factory remained vacant for a while (Semercioğlu 2015). In the meantime, its rundown appearance attracted TV producers and the property owners decided to profit from a growing interest in renting the former factory for both location shootings and as a studio. The factory has hosted more than a hundred film and TV productions over the last ten years even though it lacks essential facilities—such as sound isolation, a makeup room, and proper restrooms—and its value has increased immensely. In 2004, the abandoned factory was sold for approximately ten million dollars and in 2015 the site was worth 2.7 billion dollars. The property owners declared that they had resolved the construction permit problems and altered the renovation plans to include a cultural center with exhibition halls and film studios along with a luxury hotel and residences (Semercioğlu 2015).

The attraction of the dilapidated former shoe factory for TV producers points to another, more cost-effective use of these warehouses in screen-media production. Derelict, disused factories, former industrial spaces, and harbors in shambles become crime or action settings appropriate for chase, gory torture, and other suspenseful scenes. For instance, in the crime series *Dexter*, Warehouse 1 and a former tuna cannery in San Pedro were used for certain murder scenes, and in *The Walking Dead* Seasons 4 and 5, the former Collier Metals factory in Atlanta served as the cannibal sanctuary Terminus. Similarly, Turkish crime series frequently use defunct industrial zones for gunfights, abduction, and interrogation scenes, the *noir* atmosphere reinforced by low-key lighting filtered through small high windows and the striking use of shadows. The long-running popular TV crime series *Valley of the Wolves*—totaling nearly three hundred episodes—often uses abandoned buildings as spaces where so-called justice (mostly in the form of murder or torture) is carried out. The series features a Turkish undercover agent who goes through reconstructive plastic surgery, gets a new identity and name, and infiltrates the Turkish mafia. The lead characters in the

series (be they agents or mafia) are represented as warm-hearted and caring in their personal lives, but transform into killing machines when they fight with their enemies. This duality is established and reinforced by the choice of shooting locations. Whereas private life is shown taking place in large peaceful sunny villas, the professional life of crime takes place in dark, ruined factories, abandoned warehouses, unoccupied ports, and deserted streets. The contrasting spaces give Istanbul the image of a deceptive, mysterious, and cruel city: the bright and peaceful lives in the luxury villas hide the dark dealings in the *noir* atmospheres of former industrial spaces.

Valley of the Wolves opens with an abduction scene at night in a deserted port where the mafia leader Çakır shouts toward the city: "Hey İstanbul! What can I tell you! You are amazing. You are a crazy city. So crazy! Is there a better place to live in the world? Even to die?" Çakır's hostage replies, "This city swallowed so many maniacs, one day it will also swallow you." Çakır is not worried as he explains that he has made a deal with Istanbul. In the following episodes, the audience witnesses that the city indeed has enough chaos to camouflage this mafia boss's crimes. In the first episodes, desolated forests and secluded ports are used as exterior locations, while a large vacant warehouse is used for interior scenes as a casino under construction where Çakır runs his dirty business.

Along with post-industrial spaces, neighborhoods under renovation are also recycled in Turkey as production locations for crime series. One of the current shooting locations used by *Valley of the Wolves* is Fikirtepe, a traditionally working-class neighborhood targeted for urban regeneration. Although nearly five thousand buildings have been vacated, only three thousand of them have been demolished (Özbey 2014) as all construction has been put on hold due to a revision of plans by the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization. The partial destruction of Fikirtepe and the remains of ruined buildings have increased its popularity as a shooting location and producers have started to rent abandoned houses and shops especially for explosion or fire scenes (Kuburlu 2014).[4]

These destroyed buildings also became locations for gunfight and chase scenes in *Valley of the Wolves* (Figure 3). Ukra Construction Company, a company that collects land-registry documents from a certain area in Fikirtepe to build large housing estates, had trouble with some "holdout" homeowners and decided to use the show's popularity in its favor. The company, also known for using two leading actors from *Valley of the Wolves* in its commercials, devised a plan to convince some homeowners to sell their homes. *Valley of the Wolves* offered supporting roles to homeowners who were persuaded to sell their estates to Ukra (Açar 2011); after closing the deal, the company declared its sponsorship for the series. Later in 2011, the producer of *Valley of the Wolves* himself founded a construction company called Pana Construction to run one of the biggest construction projects in Fikirtepe. This project cost 150 million dollars and involved the eviction of residents in 488 apartments to build 732 new apartments (Kulcanay 2014).

Low-income and working-class neighborhoods under renovation become locations not only for crime shows but also for more realist and gritty dramas. Tarlabaşı, for instance, has been a popular shooting spot for both crime series such as *Ezel* (2009–2011) and for dramas that follow realist conventions like *Kayıp Şehir* (*Lost City*, 2012–2013). A low-income area located close to Taksim in the heart of the city,

Figure 3. *Valley of the Wolves* gunfight scene shot in Fikirtepe.
Source. Courtesy of Nazım Serhat Fırat and PANA Film.

Tarlabaşı has traditionally been inhabited by predominantly Kurdish and Roma populations since the 1990s and is now becoming home to Syrian and Iraqi refugees. In 2006, Tarlabaşı was declared a regeneration area and the renewal process that formally started in 2007 facilitated the increasing production of series. Both the social realist *Lost City* and the crime series *Ezel* draw on the neighborhood's sensational representation in the tabloids as a space of "poverty, rape, drug trafficking and violence" (Ünür 2013). *Ezel* uses it to build a dark (most scenes are shot at night) crime narrative in which the young protagonist, fresh out of prison, seeks to start a new life of crime and revenge in a vacant building in the neighborhood. The social realist *Lost City*, which offers a rare representation of the city's marginalized sex workers, transvestites, and refugees, also uses the district's association with the underworld. Although generically different, both shows portray the rebuilding of the lives of their main characters in this neighborhood that is itself under renovation. Hence, the way working-class neighborhoods under construction (such as Fikirtepe and Tarlabaşı) are appropriated for crime, action, and gritty realist narratives shows the intimate connection between the city space and the production of particular media genres.

Production Site III: Business Centers and Luxury Residences

For action and crime genres, sites under renovation serve as spaces where the underdogs of the city live and shady deals take place. By contrast, most Turkish TV romance series prefer luxury residences and business plazas as shooting locations. In the

mid-2000s, the most popular romance on Turkish TV was *Binbir Gece* (*1001 Nights*, 2006–2009), a series about the love affair between an architect (Şehrazat) and her boss (Onur), the owner of a construction company. Taking place mainly in a business plaza, the series reflected the rise of the construction sector in Turkey. *1001 Nights* opens with a tense scene where Şehrazat is late for an important meeting with the owners of the construction company Binyapı Holding. After a brief discussion, she presents her award-winning project Sky Towers that consists of the design and construction of two forty-five-floor skyscrapers in Dubai. The towers are to be built by the water so that along with their reflections they can appear as four towers.

This aesthetically appealing project gets Şehrazat the job and introduces the spectators to the concept of signature architecture and its potential role in the globalizing aspirations of the Turkish economy. In later episodes, Şehrazat and Onur visit Dubai to follow the evolution of this project. While driving around, they see the famous Burj-Al-Arab, and Onur excitedly praises the building. Şehrazat says that the building is "too assertive" for her taste as evidenced by her more elegant designs. The company is presented as successful—even in Dubai, a city famous for its signature architecture. The series not only presents the construction sector as a positive economic force but also guides audience perception of the ongoing construction projects in Istanbul. Neglecting the negative effects of the construction boom such as environmental damage, increasing housing prices, and poor urban planning, the emphasis is on the creative side of the construction sector.

In the 1990s and the 2000s, along with the restoration of the historical texture of the city and the recycling of derelict factories and docks for culture industries, the renovation of the city center involved changing the panorama of Istanbul's business districts through building architecturally inventive business plazas, shopping malls, and luxury residential compounds. Cultural geographer David Harvey counts such signature architecture and "the cultivation of distinctive aesthetic judgments" among the main elements for creating a distinctive city that attracts global tourism and investment (Harvey 2012, 106). In the restructuring of post-industrial cities, the traditional construction sector comes together with new creative industries to produce signature architecture that makes the city's panorama distinct. Simultaneously, "the cultivation of distinctive aesthetic judgments" is enabled by practices ranging from establishing cultural institutions such as art museums to the promotion of life-styles associated with a new bourgeoisie—the creative class.

1001 Nights played a role in "the cultivation of distinctive aesthetic judgments" by portraying the construction sector as part of the creative economy and its middle and upper-class representatives (architects and CEOs) as "the creative class" that is, as Richard Florida describes, the driving force for the economic rejuvenation of Turkey in the mid-2000s. Florida defines a creative class as "people in science and engineering, architecture and design, education, arts, music and entertainment, whose economic function is to create new ideas, new technology and/or creative content" (Florida 2002, 8). In the last three decades in Istanbul, even though the number of those working in culture industries and the creative sector has been relatively small compared with other global cities, this new bourgeoisie has been crucial in defining aspirational lifestyles, residential choices, and consumption patterns (Keyder 2010, 26).

In the 2000s, such distinct lifestyle and consumption pattern changes can be observed in numerous Turkish TV series. A large number of series started to be produced in wealthy residential compounds and high-rise office buildings. Along with *1001 Nights*, many other romances such as *Gümüş* (*Noor*, 2005–2007) and *Aşk-ı Memnu* (*Forbidden Love*, 2008–2010) take place in luxury residences. All of these TV series scored high ratings in Turkey and also achieved unexpected international success. Yanardağoğlu and Karam, Buccianti, Kraidy and Al-Ghazzis' works have linked the series' success in the Middle East to their so-called Modernized and Westernized look An Egyptian fan of *Forbidden Love* explains, "The most amazing thing about Turkish shows are their decors that are never seen in other shows. The country is clean, there are nice landscapes and clothes are fashionable" (in Yanardağoğlu and Karam 2013, 571). Turkish series present a classy modern look to a global audience by highlighting the lives, spaces, and consumption choices of its new bourgeoisie, the creative class.

In the 2000s, a growing number of TV series started including characters belonging to the creative class. One of the main characters in *Haziran Gecesi* (*Night of June*, 2004–2006) is a jewelry designer; *Güllerin Savaşı* (*War of the Roses*, 2014–2015) is about the competition between two fashion designers, while *Kiralık Aşk* (*Rental Love*, 2015–) is about the love story between a shoe designer and his personal assistant who later becomes his protégée. This increase in the representation of a specific kind of creative class, designers of luxury products, leads also to the promotion of products such as designer costumes, shoes, and jewelry as well as the luxury residences that the characters live and work in. TV series represent and promote creative industries in a number of ways. Creative industry jobs and spaces that are represented in the series market these sectors and products through spectator's identification with these characters and spaces. In turn, TV series production itself is promoted by creative industries through sponsorships, advertisements, and product placements that advocate the consumption patterns attached to creative industries and creative classes.

One of the earliest popular series related to the creative industries was *Noor* (2005–2007), which reached international success with its distribution to Arab sat-casters, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Albania, and Iran. The series focus on Noor and Muhanned, a couple entering an arranged marriage. After the wedding, Noor moves from a provincial city to Istanbul. In the beginning, Noor does hand embroidery at home and desires to be a fashion designer. With her husband's support, Noor eventually achieves her goal and opens a fashion design store in the heart of Istanbul's modern high-end shopping district, thus her traditional talent grows into creative entrepreneurialism. Noor breaks away from her traditional role by moving into a modern city, which affects her lifestyle and job.

Rental Love (2015–), an adaptation of the Korean TV series *Salangdo Doni Doenayo* (*Can Love Become Money*, 2012), focuses similarly on the creative industries' role in providing upward mobility for its female character Defne. She moves easily between the traditional warmth of her *mahalle* (where, as in other *mahalle* series, the transition between the private and public space is smooth), her boss Ömer's fortified ultra-modern residence, and her firm in the business plaza, the space of creative production. In this love story, the three main locations both contrast and complement each other. Büyükdere, yet another former cosmopolitan neighborhood on the

Figure 4. "Creative" office space in *Rental Love*, terrace decorated with graffiti.
Source. Courtesy of Fatih Yılmaz and Ortaks Production.

Bosphorus where Defne lives, is often shown in exterior scenes where the main character interacts with her friends. Levent, the neighborhood where Ömer lives, represents elegant intimacy as his life in a luxury residence continues in extreme privacy with occasional ventures into his private garden. Then there is their workspace, the designer shoe company, located in the *Nish Istanbul* business towers in an industrial area of Istanbul. This place represents the colorful lifestyles of the creative class with brightly lit rooms, graffiti, and sketches of designer high heel shoes. Ömer's office in *Nish Istanbul* has glass windows that show a terrace decorated with graffiti (Figure 4). This classic office space is transformed with the use of graffiti that represents the alternative and edgy side of the city and creativity in the business space. The extreme popularity of this series shows the allure of modern spaces, luxury consumption patterns, and the lifestyles of the creative class, along with the ongoing attraction of established formulas (a nostalgic sense of community and warmth in a traditional *mahalle*) to balance out the edgy side of these creative lives. Meanwhile, property values in all three of these shooting locations continue to rise as TV production makes them ever-more popular and desired habitats.

Conclusion

In this article, we explore the entangled ways that TV series production interacts with the urban space of Istanbul. Previous research on the rising sector of TV series in Turkey has mainly focused on the ways that the series have been marketed, their

reception, and less frequently, their representational politics. The production processes and their ramifications on space have been underexplored. In this article, we examine the city both as a location of production as well as representation. We analyze the many different ways that Turkish TV series influence and modify their shooting locations, from increasing real estate values through their idealized portrayals of neighborhoods to being actively involved in reconstruction projects. Hence, both images *and* image making are influenced by and contribute to city making.

We explore the interaction between the city and TV series production in three segments, divided according to the three ways that urban renovation has evolved in Istanbul since the 1980s. This was done to show the extent of the alignment between gentrification and TV production processes. TV series production is instrumental in the marketing of certain neighborhoods as peaceful havens in a chaotic city, which increases their popularity among the upper classes and facilitates gentrification. The production of TV series also creates heated debates about their economic, social, and environmental effects and residents have had reactions ranging from flat rejection of TV crews to acceptance of these productions as potential opportunities for local labor. Another way that TV drama production may contribute to gentrification and raise the property value of city locales is through the appropriation of post-industrial spaces and working-class neighborhoods under renovation either as studios or as shooting locations for noir, crime, or gritty realist series. Third, the gentrification of the city is encouraged in Turkish series by the positive depiction of a new bourgeoisie and its associated lifestyles. The increasing choice of luxury residences as shooting locations in Turkish romances goes along with the rise of the positive portrayal of creative industries, characters, and lifestyles. While Istanbul gets a facelift through the creation of modern business districts and signature architecture, TV series promote luxury lifestyles and consumption habits of the city's creative class, who in turn financially aid a TV production through sponsorships and product placements.

Helen Morgan Parmett's recent work on the HBO series *Treme*—a series that deals with the rebuilding process of the Treme neighborhood in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina (filmed on location)—invites questions regarding the relationship between urban space and TV production. Parmett (2014, 295) argues that "considering media production as a spatial practice opens up a new range of questions, ethical and political faultlines, and sites of exploration that remain opaque if scholarship on space remains transfixed on practices of primarily representation and reception." Taking up Parmett's challenge, we examined the many spatial "sites of exploration" that TV series productions open up for television studies scholarship. In seeking to provide insights into vibrant television production in a non-Western, non-English speaking context, and geographically expand television production studies and research on television series, we seek to show that, compared with other fields of creative production that establish permanent institutions such as museums, media production, despite being scattered and temporary, may have effects that are much more pervasive and wide-spread in a post-industrial city. And finally, our intention is to lead the way for any TV series—regardless of whether it deals with the city, its residents, or urban change—to be explored in conjunction with the conditions of its production and the impact of this

production on its space. As this article shows, no matter the genre or theme of a TV series its production and representation have a constant interaction with the "creative locale" that they generate in tandem.

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Notes

1. According to figures alluded to by the Minister of Culture, the revenue from TV series exports was two hundred million dollars in 2012 (in Tanrıöver 2015).
2. Istanbul was a cosmopolitan city in the nineteenth century; today, however, this is not the case. Among the fifteen million residents of the city, now religious and ethnic diversity is negligible as there are only fifty thousand Armenians, fifteen thousand Jews, and two thousand Greeks remaining after various waves of forced and voluntary migration throughout the twentieth century (Bali 2010, 85) and hence the cosmopolitanism attributed to Istanbul has morphed into a diminished diversity (Komins 2002). For more about the imagination of cosmopolitanism of Istanbul, see Özyürek (2006) and Türeli (2010).
3. To produce TV series in Turkey, it is necessary to get shooting permission from multiple authorities. The general permission for shooting a series is provided by the city's directorate of culture. Then, permission to shoot on the streets is provided by the Office of the Governor, while Regional Municipality gives permission for parks and gardens. To shoot an interior scene, it is necessary to get permission from the owner of the place. The problem with the regulation of TV series production is that local residents have no say in the decision of shooting while negative consequences affect them directly.
4. Instead of building new sets to destroy, producers find it cheaper to demolish rundown buildings in Fikirtepe. The cost of demolishing a whole building for a scene is between 3,500 to 5,000 dollars in Fikirtepe, while the three-hour rent of a ruined shop is around 330 dollars. These affordable prices draw not only TV series producers but also short-film filmmakers and film students.

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CHAPTER 3

Paper II. Kayhan Müldür, S. TV Drama Production Studios of Istanbul: From Empty Sound Stages to Standing Sets. Under Review, submitted to *Critical Studies in Television.*

This chapter goes into a deeper discussion on the TV series production by exploring the film and TV drama studios in Istanbul and looking at their transformation through the changing nature of TV broadcasting in Turkey. While the previous chapter mainly focuses on-location production processes, this chapter complements screen production studies in Istanbul by exploring productions in studios.

This paper was recently completed and submitted as an article to Critical Studies in Television: The International Journal of Television Studies. The manuscript has passed the editor's initial screening phase and has been sent to the reviewers. Currently it is still under review.

TV DRAMA PRODUCTION STUDIOS OF ISTANBUL: FROM EMPTY SOUND STAGES TO STANDING SETS

Abstract

This study explores the transformation of production spaces from empty sound stages to standing sets, drawing on the findings from fieldwork involving 14 key players studio owners and managers, screenwriters and art directors. The sets containing standing decors of hospital rooms, police stations, jails and courtrooms, transformed from abandoned factories, warehouses and administrative buildings in Istanbul, mostly lack proper infrastructure and appropriate security measures. Examining their transformation shows that the demanded and repeated storylines of the Turkish TV series also shape these locations and create a cheap and fast studio system based on supply and demand, putting creativity and security of the crews into question. The research also aims to contribute to the critical debate about production studies focusing solely on the means of production and excluding the text and the audience, while also showing the need for a more comprehensive approach in order to apprehend the intertwined relationship between the formation of the production spaces, the content of the TV series and the audience.

TV Drama Production Studios of Istanbul: From Empty Sound Stages to Standing Sets

On April 8th 2008, a local Kocaeli newspaper in Turkey published an obituary meant to commemorate the fourth death anniversary of someone called Süleyman Çakır:

> "*1461 days ago, we learnt about the death of the unforgettable Süleyman Çakır, son-in-law of the deceased Ziya Yılmaz (Laz Ziya), husband of Ms. Nesrin, brother-in-law of Meral Yılmaz, Polat Alemdar's dear friend and partner, Memati, Erhan and Abdülhey's friend, brother of the deceased Derya Çakır, Uncle Seyfo's foster nephew, father of Selvi and Pusat. We are in deep sorrow. I extend my condolences to his wife and relatives. With all due respect. A citizen." (Haberturk)*

Süleyman Çakır was a fictional character, a mafia leader in the popular Turkish TV series *The Valley of the Wolves* who died on-screen during the 45th episode of the series. After his death, hundreds of Çakır fans gathered for his funeral prayer in a mosque; four years after his death, a fan published an obituary to commemorate him and to show his undying love for the character.

In the 16 years that have passed since Çakır's death, Turkey has become the world's fastest-growing television series exporter in the world and the second largest drama exporter after the US, as TV series have been exported to nearly 146 countries in many continents from

the Middle East to the Balkans, from Africa to Central Asia, the Far East, and South America, reaching some 700 million people (Daily Sabah 2019). Recently the Turkish series have gained even more visibility generated by the production of two original Netflix series in Turkey: *The Protector (Hakan Muhafiz/2018)* and *The Gift (Atiye/ 2019), Endless Love (Kara Sevda)* winning the International Emmy for the Best Telenovela in 2017 and Haluk Bilginer winning the Best Actor Award with *Persona (Şahsiyet)* in 2019. In 2010s the rapid development of the screen industry created the need for more shooting locations, especially film and TV studios in Istanbul where most of the production is based and which contains all major actors of the industry from casting agencies to production companies, post production studios, equipment rental companies.

This development also meant production companies needed faster and cheaper solutions than spending months constructing whole new decors. A season with 35-40 episodes each between 120 and 150 minutes in length (excluding commercials), which is much longer than an average American or Western European series episode (around 30 to 60 minutes), needed longer production schedule, such as filming for 6 days a week, with crews working up to 18 hours a day. Around 25 TV channels, each broadcast one series every night of the week.

Because of such high and intense demand, the investors started to build standing sets in old factories and management buildings, not necessarily suitable for big-budget productions or up to international standards but enough to accommodate 1 or 2 TV productions each week. Most of these sets do not have the appropriate infrastructure to support the production or proper security measures but they are fast and cheap solutions for the intense TV production in the city. These studios, mostly with decors of a hospital, a bank, a police station, a jail, a courtroom and office spaces, were specially created to facilitate access to locations which are difficult to shoot. After they were constructed, many TV series started using them with the exact same settings and decors. Frequently using the same sets and decors is also related to the use of the same or similar storylines in many Turkish TV series. The sets were designed according to the common popular storylines of the series, varying from kidnapping, gun wars, criminal or custody trials to office love stories.

This study will focus on the increase in standing sets in Istanbul after 2012 (with the change of rating system) and examine the relationship between the creation of these locations, the content of the series and the demands of the ratings. The fieldwork of the research includes participant observation of the author at the production spaces in Istanbul; 8 film/TV studios and

standing sets in four months and in-depth interviews with 14 professionals; 5 studio owners, 3 studio managers, 3 screenwriters and 3 art directors[1]. The study will show that demanded and repeated storylines also shape the locations, creating a cheap and fast studio system based on supply and demand, putting security and creativity into question. It suggests that the creation of these production spaces and the means of production are shaped by ratings which also directly affect the content of the TV series.

The Intertwined Relationship Between Production Spaces, Scripts and the Audience

The historian Richard Johnson explains that there is an academic codification of cultural and media studies research. Cultural research has three models: production-based studies, text-based studies and studies of lived cultures. Each model is consistent in itself but quite inadequate as an account of the whole. While production studies focus on the powerful means of cultural production, text-based ones concentrate on the form while the studies of lived cultures are associated with a politics of representation. Each model excludes the others in their research methods (Johnson 1987). This categorization singles out the sites of production, text, and consumption and "predefines those domains and their contents by abandoning the radical contextualization of cultural studies" (Grossberg 1997, 256). It separates "the cultural production" from "the cultural product" and leads to them being studied differently.

Even though some exceptional studies (Parmett 2018, Mayer 2016, Anderson and Webb 2016) adopt a more comprehensive approach to film and TV production, the categorization between text, production and audience studies is still valid for research related to film and TV studios. A wide range of studio studies is on the classical Hollywood studio system (Davis 2018, Afra 2016, Gomery 2005, Anderson 1994) focus on how 8 major film studios (Paramount, RKO, MGM, Warner Brothers, Fox, Universal, United Artists, and Columbia Pictures) dominated the film industry and formed a production and distribution system around the world. Jacobson explores the history of first studios before the Hollywood system emphasizing the importance of the many non-shooting and non-film-specific activities that shaped studio's working practices (2015, 4). The historical/archival studies on European studios either focus on the means of production in these studios, as exemplified by Cinecitta (Redi 1985), Babelsberg (Geiss 1994, Jacobsen 1994) and Barrandov (Millea 1997), or examine

their architecture and set design (Jacobson 2014, 2015) or analyze the political content of the films produced there during Nazi Germany (Locatelli 2001) or Mussolini's Italy (Morcillo, Hanesworth and Marcena 2015). An exceptional piece of research on Cinecitta uses the methods of lived culture studies, examining how the studio was used as a refugee camp after World War II (Steimatsky 2009).

The studies on contemporary film and TV studios mainly focus on how studio development enhances specific clusters in the cities and contributes to the local and global economy (Goldsmith and O'Reagan 2003, 2004, 2005, Coe and Johns 2004, Krätke2002) mostly through runaway productions (Pardo 2010; Breen 2005). There is also a considerable amount of studies on the technical and technological aspects of film and TV studios such as their architectural elements (Lescop 2012, Jacobson 2014), the use of lighting (Park and Yong Jeon 2017) or sound in the studios (Hanson 2007) which again focus solely on the phases of production. Another aspect contemporary studies delve into is film studio tourism (Wohlfeil 2018, Beeton 2016, Frost 2009), exploring how consumers experience theme parks and studio tours using lived-culture study methods.

Critising such categorization Johnson presented a circuit, maintaining Stuart Hall's connection with Marx's circuit of production and consumption. But instead of depicting a circuit of meaning (like Hall), Johnson introduced a circuit of production, circulation and consumption. In his circuit, production, texts/forms, readings and lived cultures each represent a moment that are connected. Julie D'acci later revised Johnson's model with another circuit what she calls "the circuit of media studies" **(Figure 1).** According to D'Acci, Johnson "hastens to tell that there is a dual aspect to the circuit: it is both a circuit of capital and a circuit of the production and circulation of subjective forms (D'Acci 2004, 427).

This model includes four sites— production, cultural artifact, reception, and sociohistorical context—"which are figured as spheres with broken lines in order to represent porous and analytical rather than selfcontained and fully constituted domains" (D'Acci 2004, 432). It covers all phases from production to reception with looking at a cultural artifact not only as it is produced technically but also how it is produced culturally. Without singling out each phase, the model connects economic, social and cultural discourse and "makes clear that cultural artifacts, reception, and sociohistorical context cannot truly be conceived or understood

apart from the specific conditions of television production that are operative for the specific project in question" (D'Acci 2004, 434).

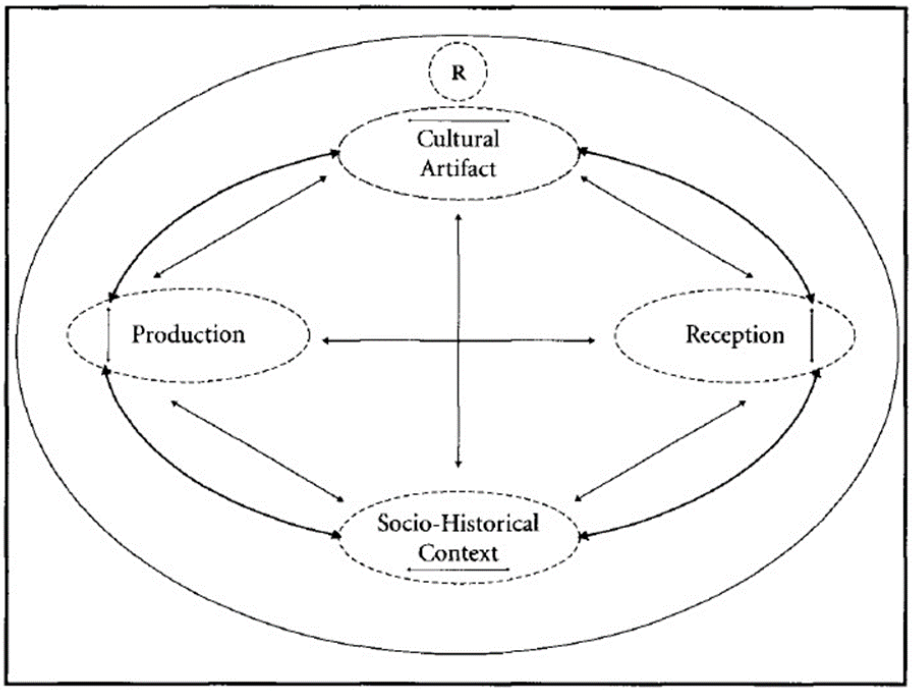

Figure 1. Circuit of media studies by Julie D'Acci

This study following D'acci's model aims to cover the phases from production to reception with analyzing how the TV drama production studios are built (production), what is the relation between their interior architecture and the scripts of the series (cultural artifact) and how the ratings (reception) effect both the storylines and the construction of standing sets within sociohistorical context. By examining the complex relationship between the rating system in Turkey, the screenwriting dynamics and the creation of TV drama studios, this study aims to develop a more comprehensive approach to TV production by including the role of both the text and the audience in the creation of production spaces.

How the Current Rating System Shapes the TV Industry in Turkey

Today, with the increase of digitisation, the audience participation has diversified across digital platforms. Audiences participate at several levels in the production of content and this makes it more complex to define the audience participation concept within broadcast television (Walvaart, Dhoest and Van den Bulck 2018, 2). Jenkins, Ford and Green make a distinction

between 'political' and 'corporate' conception of audience participation. While the political participation views audience as active participants who involve in media production, the corporate participation sees audiences as consumers who react to media content (Jenkins, Ford and Green 2013). The common measurement method of corporate participation is the rating system for broadcast television which is responsive to consumers desires. This study approaches audience from corporate participation perspective and documents the relation between the ratings and how ratings effect the content of the TV series.

For 22 years between 1989 and 2011, AGB Nielsen, later in collaboration with TİAK (TV Audience Measurement Committee), did the rating measurements in Turkey (Temel, 2016, p.56). An investigation against AGB Nielsen and TİAK started in 2011 as a result of a complaint from TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation) indicating that the ratings received were inconsistent with the improvements made in the last two years. The suspects were accused of collecting and sharing the private data of the television owners who had measurement devices in their houses and offering them gifts to give higher ratings to particular shows. After this crisis, the broadcasters TRT, NTV, Habertürk and BloombergHT decided to withdraw from viewer rating measurements (Hurriyet 2011).

After the termination of the agreement with AGB Nielsen and TİAK, a new company called TNS won the tender to measure TV ratings in 2012. It introduced a new panel design with a new categorization of sample groups compatible with TÜİK's (Turkish Statistical Institute) guidelines. By changing the definitions of the demographic groups, called SES (socioeconomic statuses), TNS introduced new classes; A, B, C1, C2, D and E, representing different layers of society in a consecutive order according to the viewers' education, income, work, residency etc. The most striking change was replacing the education criteria with income, as in this new system the income became the most important metric. So the dynamics of the AB group which dominates prime-time ratings started to be determined by economic rather than cultural capital (Bulut 2016, 89). The journalist Levent Gültekin criticizes this new system claiming that these changes are ideological and that the current government is manipulating the media by increasing the representation of D and E groups, that usually vote for them. He is also concerned that changing and lowering the representation of the educated ex-AB group may significantly decrease the overall quality of Turkish television (Gültekin 2012).

This system created a very chaotic environment for TV producers as they do not have any guarantees they can complete a season. A contract between a TV channel and a production company is usually signed for one season (at least for 13 episodes); however in this system, the TV channel has the right to terminate the agreement in case the first episodes has low ratings. Thus, many series are being cancelled by TV channels even before their fifth episode because of bad ratings. 33 new series started in 2018-2019 and 23 of them (70%) were cancelled; 16 even before their thirteenth episode (Okur 2019). The cancelled TV series, created an environment of insecurity and instability. Without knowing the exact criteria for the new rating system and being unable to define their target audience, production companies have now been using the trial-and-error method to see rating results.[2]

In the field of TV drama, "the script" is generally seen as the first criteria of the ratings. TV series are picked up by their pilot episode scripts. In Turkey, like in US, every season a pitch needs to beat out hundreds of other pitches and survived months of second guessing and rewritings. Analyzing the success of Turkish series in 2018 and 2019 seasons, Eyüboğlu explains that the most important criteria is the script rather than celebrities. When the most popular celebrities act in a series with an unpopular script, their shows are pulled even before the fifth episode (Eyüboğlu 2019). Scripts are so effective on ratings, that several studies develop systems that predict ratings of the new TV series from their pilot episode scripts (Hunter, Smith and Chinta 2016).

As Denise Mann explains, today's blockbuster-style television production also changed the TV authorship and altered the practices of "collective authorship". In US some studios use more cost-effective systems by adding a "second writers room". So the writers continue to work even without knowing what will be in the next episode (Mann 2009, 100). Even though working with writers room is not a common practice for Turkish TV series, the scripts are mostly written by multiple writers (mostly 2 or 3), again without knowing the future episodes, and the scriptwriters can be changed in the middle of the season because of the ratings:

> "The most stresful time is the day after broadcasting because we receive the rating results. Ratings are everything. You can see in which minute audience change channels, which character they like, which character they don't like. Then we write more scenes for the characters audience like. Or if they liked a violent scene, we repeat that as soon as we can.We also arrange twists right before the commercial breaks, so the audience who don't want to miss any scene, has to watch the commercials." (Aslı, scriptwriter)

To allow for more commercial breaks[3], the duration of an episode is extended to 120-150 minutes. The rating system and the duration of the television series not only negatively affect the crews' social lives, but they also reduce the quality of the stories and limit the creativity of the narrative (Tüzün Ateşalp 2016, 27). In 2010 The Association of Scriptwriters protested against the length of the TV series, which was around 90 minutes at the time, in an action called "Local Shows are Too Long (Yerli Dizi Yersiz Uzun)", saying that they should be limited to 45 minutes (Hurriyet 2010). 5 years later, in contrast to these demands, the length of the series was extended up to to 120-150 minutes. In 2017, the scriptwriters published a manifest expressing their unhappiness regarding the current system:

> "We are unhappy with the fact that the producers can easily change the scriptwriters because we have worn out very quickly in this working tempo. We are unhappy with the fact that we consume our stories very fast and then repeat ourselves and betray to our characters and stories. (Sozcu 2017)

As Ozturkmen explains "What Turkey produces for television are not soap operas, or telenovelas, or period dramas: they are *dizi*. They are a "genre in progress", with unique narratives, use of space and musical scores" (Bhutto 2019). Even though they are not defined as soap operas because of their genre and narrative structure variety, their production phases resemble the mass production of soap operas which leaves writers litte place for freedom. As Brennan states, in soap operas, rather than creating new stories from scratch every time, it is common to insert scenarios into pre-established story templates. And this type of mass production results in the "demystification of cultural production and the proletarianisation of television drama writers" (Brennan 2004, 75). The case is the same for Turkish TV, when a TV series becomes a hit, production companies and TV channels order similar narratives and screenwriters standardize the storylines by adopting certain formulas:

> "To write a TV Series in Turkey you have to follow certain formulas. We know in which minute there should be a twist or when to create tension. We know which themes the audience prefers. In these times of brutal rating wars, you have to know these formulas by heart. We know what we are doing is not art, we just try to survive in this business" (Merve, screenwriter)

Parallel to the standardization of storylines as a result of the new rating system, the construction of standing sets has also gained speed in Istanbul after 2012. As the length of the episodes increased and the preparation period decreased, production designers and art directors started to look for fast and easy solutions for locations. The standing sets, providing different setups in one building, more or less covering the needs of standard TV series narratives, were a good solution for mass production. As the results of the fieldwork will explain in detail, this structure illustrates an intertwined relationship between studios, scripts and the audience which was very similar in the past, between 1950 to 1970, when the Turkish film industry was living its golden years.

A Brief History of the Film and TV Studios in Istanbul

Looking back to the history of the filming studios in Istanbul one can see that very little has changed in terms of the construction and the use of the studios in the city. The first film studio in Turkey was opened by two brothers Kemal and Şakir Seden in 1922 with the guidance of the established director Muhsin Ertuğrul. The brothers rented an empty textile factory in Haliç which once belonged to the Turkish military and turned it into Turkey's first film studio: Kemal Film Studios (Maraşlı and Şen, 2010, 105). Barely covering the infrastructural needs of a studio, the factory also hosted a small lab for film processing as well as a sound stage for shooting. The second studio, İpek Film Studios was located around Nişantaşı and it was originally the storage of a large bakery. Kemal and İpek Film were both production companies and studio owners that also distributed their own films.

During World War II, economic and social problems in Turkey almost stopped film production. Afterwards, in the 50s and the 60s, the film industry enlivened and the number of produced films reached record numbers.[4] This period, also known as Yeşilçam, was named after the Street where all the production offices of the period were located. The tax reduction on cinema tickets attracted a larger audience and was the start of the golden years for the Turkish film industry. Even during that period, when melodramas and salon comedies attracted and brought thousands of people to cinemas, the production spaces in the city were neither professional nor satisfying the needs of the film industry.

In his memoirs, established director Lütfi Akad describes his experience working in the early studios as:

> There was a 40-50-metre long street called Rikaptar, where the production activities were taking place before Yeşilçam Street. On the right side of the street there was a Bulgarian Exarchate, and on the left side there was an old building used as a garage. This building was the yplace where filmmakers started to use for shootings. It was called "Necib's studio". Its name was an exaggeration for sure. The floor was covered with cement screed, there was no hardware other than the planks that were placed between the tensioners of the system holding the roof to put the lights, and the walls were covered with sheets of different sizes thickened with old papers (Akad 2016, 8).

The owner of this place, Necip Erses, also managed Ses Studios located at the Syrian Passage which was the only studio open to the productions of different companies. A few years later, Necip Erses bought a mulberry grove plantation of around 3-4 acres and built a studio with a dubbing office and a film lab on the first floor, and an editing room and a dubbing room for Turkish films on the upper floor. This way all the post-production facilities were located in one studio (Akad 2016, 21). But Istanbul never had a studio where both the sound stages and post-production facilities were in the same complex like the big studios in the U.S or Europe.

In the 60s, there was a huge demand for Turkish films, especially from the audience in Anatolia. As a result, producers preferred making more Turkish films, than dubbing and distributing foreign films. Production companies like Lale Film, Erler Film, Acar Film, Erman Film and And Film, all had their own studios, mostly former abandoned factories or other post-industrial buildings. However, none of these studios or sets had the proper infrastructure needed for production. As the well-known producer Şeref Gür explains:

> "We were making films but we never had enough capital. So we never had proper infrastructure. They processed film negatives in cooking bowls. The editing machines couldn't be set up. There was no integrated facility. We were using Erman Film Studios but we were going to Lale Film Studio for dubbing, and going abroad for coloring. The audience wanted Turkish films and we needed studios, so we tried to get loans from the banks. But they rejected it. They were not giving loans to filmmakers." (Saydam 2015)

In 1968, TRT (The Turkish Radio and Television Corporation) opened its first studio; Mithatpaşa Studios in Ankara, later followed by İstanbul and İzmir Studios (Öztürk Çiçek 2017, 3).

These early TV broadcasting studios were only producing non fiction content, as there were no local TV series until 1974.

With the social, political and economic crisis in the country leading to the decline of Yeşilçam in 1970s, the film industry regressed and most the production companies went bankrupt. Besides some rare private initiatives like the foundation of AFM Studios in 1980, film and TV producers mostly used real shooting locations in this period. In the 90s, both film and TV industries started to recover and investors were once again interested in studio productions (Erus 2007). The largest studios up to that date, called Istanbul Film Studios, which included two different studio complexes, TEM Studios in Mahmutbey and ATA Studios in Seyrantepe, opened at the end of the 90s. TEM Studios was transformed from a wire factory also and hosted the famous TV series *Muhteşem Yüzyıl (The Magnificent Century 2011).*

TEM and ATA studios, both recently destroyed due to the urban transformation projects, used to be the center of TV productions in the 90s and the 2000s. While they had the largest complexes and the highest technology in the country at the time, they still had many infrastructural problems like lack of sound isolation and being located close to the airport. Despite their infrastructural problems TEM and ATA Studios, along with ANS, AFM, Ciner Studios and Film Sokağı covered the need for studios in the 90s and the 2000s.

Contemporary Studio Types: Structure and Geographical Division

The contemporary film and TV drama production studios in Istanbul can be categorized into three types based on existing typologies: classical motion picture studios, standing sets and mixed studios. **(Table 1)** The first type is the classical studios which have empty sound stages where production designers and art directors can construct anything they envision. They are mostly owned by camera and lighting equipment rental companies and are generally not used for TV series or other long-term projects, but are preferred for advertisements, music videos, films and short-term video projects. The oldest among the ones that are still in place in this category is **Film Sokağı**, located in a central place in an industrial area surrounded by car repair shops, mostly serve for advertisements and music clips. Another one is **Orion Studios**, one of the oldest camera and lighting rental companies in Turkey, opened its studios in a textile factory transformed into a studio mainly used for advertisements and motion pictures. **SVC Studios,** very close to Orion Studios, is a former warehouse that used to contain generator pieces. It was opened in 2015 and now it mostly

serves for advertisements and music videos, as well as other short-term projects.

Studio Name	Neighbourhood	Appx. Total Seize	No. of Sound Stages	Does have standing sets?	Max. no. of projects studio can accommodate simultaneously
Beykoz Kundura	Beykoz	183000 m²	-	No	10
Ümraniye	Ümraniye	110000 m²	-	Yes	11
Işıklar	Işıklar	55000 m²	2	Yes	5
Yıldız	Çavuşbaşı	6000 m²	-	Yes	2
Anatolia	Ümraniye	5000 m²	-	Yes	3
SVC Studios	Işıklar	1600 m²	4	No	3
Orion	Işıklar	1500 m²	3	No	3
Film Sokağı	Maslak	1200 m²	4	No	5

Table 1. Active Film and TV Drama Production Studios in Istanbul

The second type, which is also the focus of this study, is standing sets, where the studio has standing decors such as hospital rooms, intensive care units, banks, jails, courtrooms or police stations in multiple floors of a building. These studios are generally used for TV series which film in the same location continuously for many episodes and they rarely work with feature films. **Yıldız Film Studios,** which used to be a pharmaceutical factory, has been used in Ümraniye/Sancaktepe since 2012. The first floor has the decors of a jail and a hospital with one intensive care unit and an operation room **(Figure 2),** as well as hospital corridors. The second floor has a courtroom **(Figure 3)** and a police station as well as a lobby that can be decorated as an entrance of a hospital or a hotel. On the third floor, there is a forensic medical lab and large office spaces. Another studio with standing sets is **Anatolia Studios**, also located in the Ümraniye region, which used to be an old administrative building of a holding company. The current manager of the studio rented it in 2015 and has built a three-floor studio. The first floor has a small jail **(Figure 4),** two hospital rooms and a studio house decor with a kitchen. The second floor has a large lobby that can also be used as a cafe set-up and the third floor has 2 large open office set-ups, 2 smaller office rooms, hotel rooms and long corridors that can be used both as hotel or office corridors. Actually, many other studios fall into this category; **Bosphorus Studios** in Sancaktepe, **Gülay Kuriş Studios** in Ümraniye, **Plato Pozitif** in Beykoz**,** but they were recently closed because of the reasons which will later be discussed in this article.

Figure 2. A Fully Equipped Operation Room at Yıldız Film Studios

Figure 3. A Classic Courtroom Set Up at Yıldız Film Studios

The third category consists of the mixed studios, larger complexes that have both standing sets and sound stages. These studios serve for a wide range of content from TV series to advertisements, films, TV programs, music videos. They generally have strict conditions such as, the precondition of using equipment from the same company or working with the

catering firms that the company has an agreement with. The three largest studios in Istanbul are in this third category. **Beykoz Kundura Studios** was transformed from an old shoe-manufacturing factory in 2005 and is now used for various media productions including advertisements, music clips, TV series, motion pictures, educational videos, as well as for hosting film screenings, concerts and art exhibitions. In terms of TV production, Beykoz Studios are mostly preferred for period dramas because of their large empty sound stages and backlots. As the studio does not have standing sets, it is not generally used by low budget TV dramas.. **Işıklar Studios,**another large complex, was a dairy farm and became a studio in 2014. As one of the biggest studios in the city, it has both sound stages and standing sets as well as a backlot with neighbourhood setting. . **Ümraniye Studios**, once a tele-receiver and telephone manufacturing factory, started to serve as a studio in 2015. In the beginning, only one building of the complex was decorated with the standing sets of a police station, a jail, a courtroom and a hospital room on every floor. With demand increasing, the other buildings were also transformed to standing sets with house, office and hotel rooms, as well as a cafe, a lobby space and corridor decors.

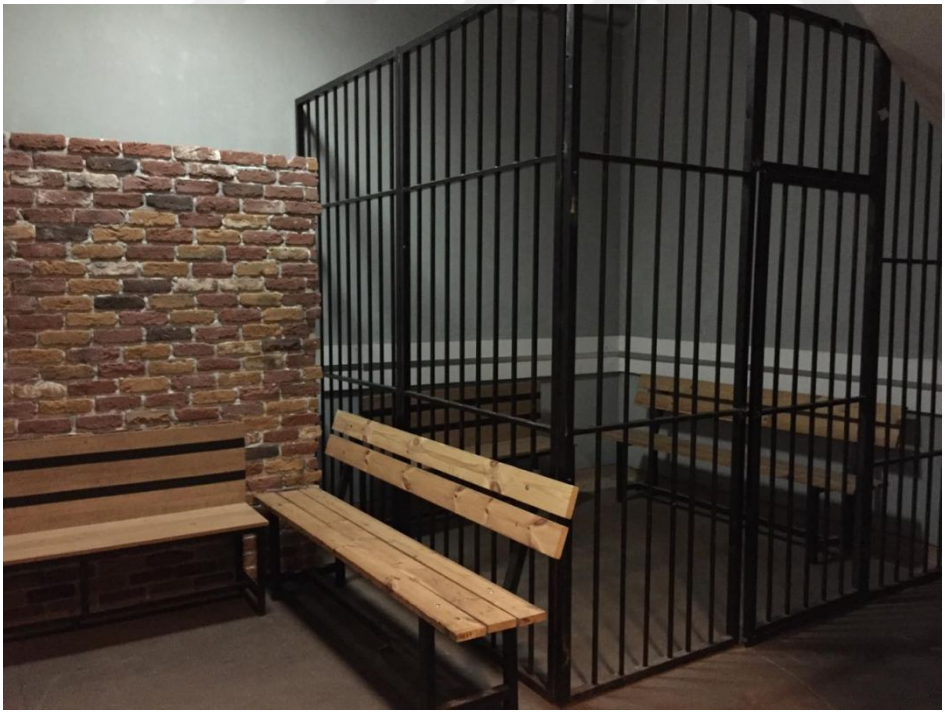

Figure 4. A Small Jail Unit at Anatolia Studios

In terms of the studios' geographical division, most are located outside the city center and are mainly concentrated in two regions of Istanbul: Ümraniye and Eyüp (Işıklar). **(Figure 5)** These lower middle-class regions are surrounded by industrial areas, as most of the studios are refurbished abandoned factories. Especially studios at Işıklar neighbourhood are very isolated and

most of them are not reachable by public transport. When I took a bus to reach one of them I had to walk extra 20 minutes from the bus station, no one was around and stray dogs came after the smell of the tuna sandwich in my bag; it was a worrying experience. A studio manager, Okan explains the reasons behind their location choice as follows:

> "Economy is one reason. The rents are cheaper here. Another reason is the lack of large available spaces for studio construction in the city center. You only find these kinds of spaces outside of the city."

Most studio managers said they would prefer a more central location that can be reached by metro or other types of public transportation. While an isolated place is good for shooting action scenes as there are no neighbors to disturb, it is not that good when the crews need something like a prop for which they have to go all the way back to the city center. While empty sound stages (SVC, Orion and Işıklar Studios) are concentrated in Eyüp region, the standing sets (Yıldız, Anatolia, Ümraniye Studios) are mostly located around the Ümraniye region. In contrast to large studios complexes in Sydney, Melbourne and Toronto which added value to their surroundings and are parts of the regeneration plans of these cities (Goldsmith and O'Reagan 2015), the studios in Istanbul are very isolated and not have much interaction with their surroundings and they generally do not cause any change around the neighbourhoods they are located.

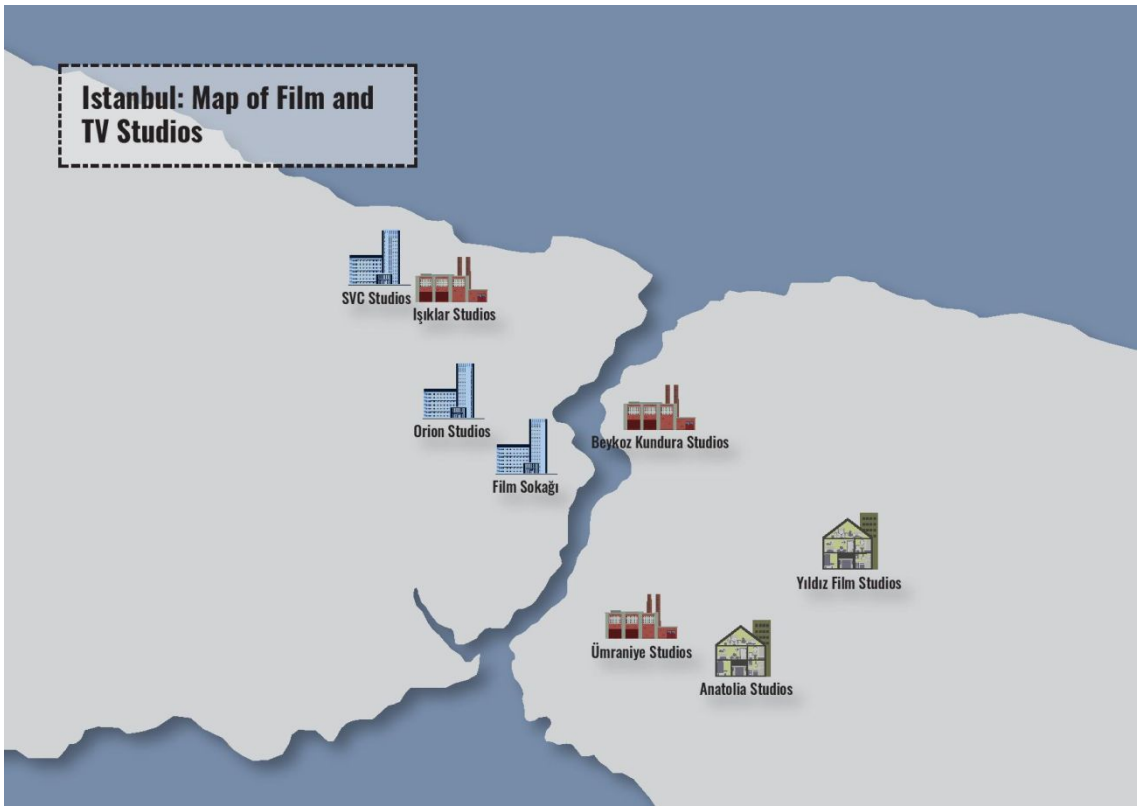

Figure 5. Map of Istanbul Film and TV Studios

Scriptwriting and Placemaking

The locations in a film or TV series are depended on the scriptwriters because they are defined by the script at first. Sometimes the scriptwriters negotiate with producers on the numbers and types of locations according to the budget:

> "Before the series start we decide how many locations we will use and how many leading characters will be in the series according to the budget of the producer. For example a producer can say "we need to shoot the first three episodes in six locations, we can only afford that". Then we try to fit the story to six locations". (Murat, scriptwriter)

According to the owners of the standing sets, these type of studios were an urgent need of the TV industry in Istanbul because of the rising number of TV series and the standardized storylines which take place in very difficult locations to shoot such as hospitals or police stations. The owner of a standing set, Kemal explains how he decided to open his own studio:

> "I was a production assistant. We were shooting a series in a real police station. It was 2 A.M at night. They kicked us out saying, something happened and high-rank police officers will come to the station. Our equipment was stuck inside. They didn't inform us about anything, so we couldn't leave. After two hours of waiting in the rain in a park next to the station, I said to the director 'Sir, I will open a studio as soon as possible. We serve this industry but we are not treated like humans."

After Kemal rented an abandoned space, he started building standing sets according to the most demanded places in Turkish series. A very similar decision was taken by another studio owner, Ertan, who, after working in the TV industry for years and facing difficulties shooting in real locations went on to build standing sets. When asked whether it was hard to decide what to build as standing sets, he said most TV series use the same locations because of their storylines:

> "In most of the TV series, the same things happen. Someone is wounded, so they bring them to the hospital. The wounded character stays in the intensive care unit. The other character who shoots him goes to the police station. There, he is interrogated and goes to court, then to jail. And this usually happens at the end of the season. So generally someone gets shot at the end of the season and next season begins with one at the hospital and the other one is in jail. So there is a high demand for the courtroom and hospital rooms in April and May when the TV series season ends. And you can shoot all of these scenes in our 3-4-floor building complex with standing sets."

TV critic Serpil Kara explains this situation with what she calls "the last bullet theory": in most Turkish TV series, someone gets shot close to the end of the season (Kara 2015). The

statistics prove her point in the 2018-2019 season, as 26[5] out of 33 TV series closed the season with the shot, stabbing or suicide of a character that ended up in the hospital or jail. One of the most popular series of the season *Eşkıya Dünyaya Hükümdar* olmaz ended right before a gun fight scene where 12 men pointed guns to each other. Another popular series *Kuzgun* ended with one of the leading characters pointing the gun to her own heart and shoot herself. Another series *Nefes Nefese* had multiple kidnapping and gunfight scenes in its final episode. While visiting the location where most of the kidnapping scenes shot, the studio manager explains how often kidnapping scenes are shot at that location:

> **"**I don't know how many kidnapping scenes were shot here, it should be more than a hundred. Every season crews come here to this depot, to shoot specifically the kidnapping scenes. But I agree with them, if I was going to kidnap someone I would bring him here, it is the best spot in Istanbul to kidnap someone" (Zuhal, studio manager)

As Lukinbeal argues the repeated usage of sites by television series is related to their formulaic narratives and genre constrictions. As he suggests "although each production constitutes a unique taskspace, routinized practices produce formula fiction, where narratives are predicatable, and their location needs are as well, especially with television shows and television movies" (Lukinbeal 2012, 181). Such predictability is also the main motivation behind constructing standing sets with fixed decors.

> "I first built the jail. There is a high demand for the jail scenes. I don't know any other country that has TV-series with that much jail, police station or hospital scenes. It is only in Turkey". (Ertan, studio manager)

The reason for the high demand for jail, police station and courtroom decors was also related to action genre series becoming more popular than comedy and drama among Turkish audience. "The series that combine two genres (mostly action and drama) are more successful in rating results" (Okur, 2009). The long-running crime series *Arka Sokaklar (Back Streets),* which started its broadcast in July 2006, is still leading the rating results today with its 545th episode. *Arka Sokaklar* is an action-oriented police procedurals about a special unit in Istanbul. They work on various cases from murder, kidnapping, robbery, arms smuggling, narcotics, terrorism and public riots. As Kesirli Ünür explains, this variety does not only contribute to the action-oriented narrative of the series but also supports the nationalist ideological approach of the series of crime as a national threat. By representing motivations like threats to national unity,

robbery of elderly people, dishonoring of women, getting illegal financial gain, the series makes a clear distinction between right and wrong (Kesirli Ünür 2016, 262)**.** The common traits of the action-oriented genres, police procedurals, military series, and even mafia series are their use of values like honor, justice, integrity, righteousness in very similar ways in repetitive storylines with similar settings. *Arka Sokaklar*, the longest-running police procedural drama in Turkey is also the oldest user of the standing sets. Kemal, who opened three different standing sets around the city, always worked with the crew of *Arka Sokaklar*:

> "The series has been continuing for 16 years, their main location is a police station at Kavacık. Except that they use hospitals, courtrooms and jails in different standing sets. Because of its storyline, they always need these same locations."

Despite being criticised for logic errors and overused dialogues, Arka Sokaklar, survived the brutal rating wars in Turkey.

The next popular set locations in Turkish dramas after hospitals, courtrooms and jails are the office spaces. The offices are ideal places for love-themed TV series where generally the boss falls in love with his assistant (*Kiralık Aşk, Erkenci Kuş, Aşk Laftan Anlamaz, Yasak Elma, Dolunay*) or there is a love triangle (*Afili Aşk, Güllerin Savaşı, Fazilet Hanım ve Kızları*), as "nothing beats a love triangle in ratings" (Bhutto 2019). Like action-oriented dramas, popular love-themed series also put forward some traditional values such as loyalty, trust, faithfulness, while they are surrounding the story with jealousy, secrets, misunderstandings and tension.

The best way to create tension between lovers in an office is through a space where characters can watch each other or witness some events from their own rooms and misinterpret them. The new set design trend for this type of narrative is to build wall-to-wall glass windows in office sets, so characters can watch each other's rooms freely. When they want to hide something from each other, they simply close the window shades **(Figure 6).** These large glass windows provide so many visual options for the camera while supporting the complicated storylines. These office spaces are rented to production companies, completely ready with their all furniture and props. Erhan, an art director who works on these office sets, says they only change very little before the production:

> "We only make minor changes. Sometimes we change the places of the furniture, the paintings and posters on the walls. That's it. We don't have time to redecorate the set at pre-production, so we use what we have." (Erhan, art director)

Sometimes, even if the décor is originally designed for another set, it can be recycled and used in the set of another TV series. The original decors of the period drama *Karadayı (The Uncle in Black/2012-2015)* were later used for another period drama *Kurşun (The Bullet/2019),* both telling stories from the same time period, the '70s. The popular drama *Diriliş Ertuğrul (Resurrection/214-2018)* used some of the previous decors, ships and the tavern from another series, *Fatih (2013).* There is no copyright for the decors as the studio owners say the agreement is only verbal. If the production company permits other companies to use them, they do not get any copyright. The art directors who design the original décor also do not get any copyright for their work. As the course of the TV industry in Turkey shows, increasing the mass production of TV series leaves little space for creativity in terms of scriptwriting and set design, decreasing individual contributions, as well as generating inappropriate working conditions for the crews.

Figure 6. Office spaces with Wall to Wall Glass Windıows

Infrastructure and Security

Most studios, both empty sound stages and standing sets, lack the proper infrastructure or the security measures mainly because they were not built from scratch. As most of them were transformed from abandoned buildings they still have old electricity and heating systems.

> "Electricity is the most dangerous but no one cares. We don't have proper electricity infrastructure. We did not have the budget to renew the whole electricity infrastructure. Sometimes someone from the crew brings a kettle to boil water for coffee. And it blows the fuse. Then all the machines on the set are shut down. Electricity is very dangerous. Even the lighting technicians in the industry are not well-educated on electricity." (Metin studio manager)

Just like electricity, the roof infrastructure is also critical because it has to bear the weight of hundreds of kilos of lighting equipment. However, most are converted by factory roofs without instructions from professionals.

> "The feasibility of the carrying capacity of the roof is very critical. There are rainy and snowy days. The roof carries all the heavy lights. 80-90 people are working under that roof. If it falls, no one can save the workers under it. Not everyone builds the roofs with the instructions of professionals. You need to be careful about it." (Ahmet, studio manager)

According to studio managers, job safety is not a priority in the Turkish TV industry. Until recently the production companies were not required to hire a job safety professional and some of them still do not do it. In April 2019 an art department assistant died on the set of Netflix series Atiye (The Gift). Later it was revealed that he was uninsured and he died after he fall down the stairs while he was painting the walls of the decor in his day off. (Cumhuriyet 2019). As art director Erhan explains this can happen again if the measures are not changed:

> "My biggest fear is the accidents. There are no job safety professionals on many sets. They recently introduced that. For years, we worked without job safety instructions. Recently an art department assistant died on the set of a Netflix series. It could happen anywhere." (Erhan, art director)

Actually many other incidents happened on the sets; the decor was collapsed and 15 workers were injured during the shooting of an AKP commercial in a studio (Milliyet 2014), the roof of another studio, owned by producer-director Birol Güven was burned during a fire (Keklikçi 2005), and the roof of another decor for the TV series *Tozlu Yollar* was collapsed

after a heavy snow because the infrastructure was not appropriate. Luckily it collapsed in a day off and nobody injured there.

As Bulut explains, TV industry in Turkey has a complex degree of physical insecurity that can not be understood only with economic indicators and employment dimension. (Bulut 2016, 97). Film and TV unions that need to protect creative workers' rights, have never been strong in Turkey. Today three active unions Sine-Sen (Cinema Workers Union), Cinema and TV Union and Actors Union are trying to improve the working conditions and shorten working hours. However, because there is no legal support for their efforts, there is little improvement in the production of advertisements and movies, but the conditions of TV drama production are getting worse. Walking around the backlots of one of the biggest studios one can see the crew with tea and coffee in their hands, trying to get warm, as it is really cold and the owner confesses that the heating is not enough:

> "Honestly, we cannot provide enough heating in the studio. We have air conditioning, but they are not enough to heat the whole studio. But it is a problem for the first 1-2 hours. After they set-up the lighting, the big lights warm the place." (Metin, studio manager)

Like heating, sound isolation is also not sufficient in most studios. No studios in Istanbul currently have sound isolation up to international standards. Standing sets, in particular, have almost no sound isolation, which is why they can not accommodate more than two sets in one building. If there is a construction or renewal in one of the sets, the others automatically become unavailable because of the noise. Even though the infrastructure is not sufficient and the security measures are not appropriate, these studios continue to function because the audience's demands need to be met. The sustainability of the production spaces with such deficiencies and defects is another question.

The Sustainability of the Standing Sets

While the number of series and the demand for standing sets is rising, a number of studios with standing sets which opened at the beginning of 2010s closed down after 4-5 years of work. Their failure was caused by different variables such as the lack of agreements between studios and production companies, the unfair competition between studios and the lack of local support. As the studio owners and managers explain, it is really hard to make a written agreement with production companies or make them pay most of the time:

> "An agreement is only verbal. They promise you. That is all. It was not like this before. It changed around 2005. Before 2005, the budgets were ok and we were signing contracts. But after that everything changed. Now, only after you send them the invoice, they tell you that they don't have that much money. But they don't say it in the beginning" (Metin, studio manager)

> "There is a problem with the production companies in Turkey. They just don't pay. They don't pay the rent of the studios, and they also don't pay to their employees. Generally when shooting weekly series, you have to pay the crew every Friday. But they don't. They pay their weekly salaries months after the promised time." (Ahmet, studio owner)

> "I lived that too. They refuse to sign the contract. They are afraid that they won't get the money from the advertisers. And you are afraid that they will cancel the job if you force them to sign the contract. At the end, they work for four days and then disappear without paying anything. And they don't answer my phone calls". (Hasan, studio manager)

In addition to the difficulties of receiving payments, the studios lower their prices as much as they can, as there is no legal minimum limit for studio rents:

> "We, as studios also damage each other's jobs with lowering the prices without minimum limit." (Metin, studio manager)

Lowering the prices with the concern of losing the jobs to other studios, creates unfair competition between studios at the expense of quality which is sacrificed for the price. And even though the studios are used in the PR companies of local municipalities, they do not receive any financial support from them. On the contrary, the local municipalities generally see the studios as a new revenue stream.

> "The local municipality does not help at all, on the contrary, they try to rob us saying the filmmakers who work in our studio also need to pay to the municipality for shootings. It is not legal. This is private property, I pay my taxes, the crew has the permission. I objected and I won." (Kemal, studio owner)

> "Every season there are more series getting produced outside of Istanbul. Because the municipalities of other cities provide accommodation, catering and other services for production companies for them to come and shoot in their city and make publicity. But the local municipalities in Istanbul ask money for everything" (Ahmet, studio owner)

The lack of written contracts, difficulties in receiving payments, unfair competition between studios and the lack of local municipality support cause these studios to close down just a few years after they started to function. While the demand in the TV industry encourages

investors to open new studios for TV drama production, the dynamics of the local industry later forces them to close their studios.

CONCLUSION

As sites for film and TV production, the studios mainly provide an efficient working environment, regulating the climate, maintaining functional and secure workspaces and protecting the privacy of the productions. But the major studios around the world also have a symbolic value connected to the studio architecture and the corporate identity (Jacobson, 2014, p.60). The studios of Warner Brothers, Universal, Babelsberg, Cinecitta or Ealing are not only production spaces but also part of branding and PR campaigns that manage theme parks and organize studio tours for hundreds of visitors every year. The architecture and the public image of these studios are as important as the production facilities in them.

Despite the international success of the Turkish TV series, branding and PR campaigns are not on the agenda of the studios in Istanbul. Architecturally, in contrast to the major international studios, they have very uninteresting facades (except Beykoz Kundura), as most have not changed after the transformation of the factories. If you do not know their exact address, it is even difficult to see them just by passing through. They are gated complexes, protected by 24-hour security, very private and not open to visitors. There are no theme parks or regular studio tours as the managers do not want the fans to interrupt the shooting or violate the actors' privacy. In contrast to international studios that enhance the specific clusters they are located at by attracting runaway productions, these studios are isolated production spaces targeting domestic TV production which has rapidly increased in recent years.

The intense demand for TV drama production caused the need for more production spaces in Istanbul, especially standing sets which are cheap and fast solutions for TV producers. The standing sets with decors of hospitals, police stations, courtrooms and office spaces are designed according to the popular and repetitive storylines determined by the rating results of Turkish series. Many standing sets were constructed in Istanbul after 2012 as a result of the new rating system and the increased number of the TV series. However, these sets neither have the proper infrastructure nor appropriate security measures for TV production. The standardization of the storylines and the mass production of the TV series under intense circumstances put screenwriters' creativity and the crews' security into question. Working in unstable and

insecure conditions also jeopardizes the sustainability of these studios and TV production in Turkey in general.

This study, looking at the phases of both production and reception; the way the studios are built, the relation between their interior architecture and the scripts of the series and the way ratings effect the storylines of the scripts, shows that the construction and design of the production spaces are depended on the context of the TV series and the demands of the consumers. These demands and the content of the series (especially the duration) also define the means of production for the crews and scriptwriters. An analysis of the relation between the current rating system in Turkey, popular storylines of the series and the formation of standing sets, illustrates how television production cannot be truly conceived without taking into account all components of the industry; cultural artifact, reception and the sociohistorical context.

ENDNOTES

1. The interviewees will be mentioned with psydonyms and not with their real names.
2. In previous rating system the first criteria of AB group was education not income. When the income criteria replaced education, the system became more consumption-based. The TV series became longer with more commercial breaks. In the old system, the TV networks were not cancelling the series before their agreement ends (most of the time not before their 6th or 13th episode according to the agreement), but in new system the TV series are pulled even before their 5th episode.
4. TV networks in Turkey are allowed to broadcast commercials maximum 12 minutes in 1 hour. With one-hour summary of the previous episode at the beginning and a 150-minute actual episode, a prime time Turkish TV series is 210 minutes long, starts at 8.00 pm and ends at 12.00 pm. It has four circuits of commercials, total time for commecial breaks is 48 minutes.
5. Film production in Turkey increased drastically during Yeşilçam years between 1950-1970. During the 1960s Turkey became the fifth biggest film producer worldwide with an annual production that reached 300 films (Özon 1966, 42).
6. 26 series that finished the 2018-2019 season with a gunshot or stabbing are: Ağlama Anne, Arka Sokaklar, Aşk ve Mavi, Avlu, Bir Deli Rüzgar, Bir Zamanlar Çukurova, Bizim Hikaye, Can Kırıkları, Çarpışma, Çukur, Elimi Bırakma, Eşkıya Dünyaya Hükümdar Olmaz, Halka, Kadın, Kuzgun, Kardeş Çocukları, Dip, Nefes Nefese, Zalim İstanbul, Yüzleşme, Zengin ve Yoksul, Ufak Tefek Cinayetler, Söz, Sen Anlat Karadeniz, Tehlikeli Karım.

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CHAPTER 4

Paper III. Kayhan Müldür, S. 2018. Open-Air Cinemas of Istanbul From the 1950s to Today. *Space and Culture.* (First Published online)

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This chapter discovers the open-air cinemas in Istanbul and the nostalgic sentiment around them by exploring their history. While the previous two papers analyze screen media production, this third paper looks at screen exhibition and how screen media consumption patterns are related to urban transformation.

This chapter focuses on another aspect of the Circuit of Culture, which is the consumption, and shows how both screen exhibition and consumption are related to urban context.

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1–16
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Open-Air Cinemas of Istanbul From the 1950s to Today

Sezen Kayhan Müldür[1]

Abstract

This article explores open-air cinema spectatorship in Istanbul from the 1950s to the contemporary era. Since the 1990s, literary authors, actors, and film critics have been depicting open-air cinemas in their memoirs with a certain sense of nostalgia. This nostalgic sentiment is largely driven by multiplex cinemas, which have changed the spectatorship experience in Istanbul. Besides the post-1980s urban gentrification that led to the building of multiplexes, Istanbul's cinema-going urbanites encountered a similar, yet less frequently discussed, experience of urban gentrification around the 1950s. This research first examines how urban gentrification projects caused the disappearance of open-air cinemas after the 1950s. It then explores how today's nostalgic conception of open-air cinemas was formed, and how it is commodified in the new luxury open-air cinemas in hotels, art centers, and shopping malls.

Keywords

open-air cinema, Istanbul, nostalgia, film spectatorship, urban reconstruction

> In later years these cinema gardens would disappear—the mulberry and plane trees would be chopped down, replaced with apartment buildings or turned into parking lots, or mini football fields covered with AstroTurf; but in those days, each time I set eyes on these mournful places—surrounded by whitewashed walls, little factories, teetering old wooden houses, and two-or three-story apartments with too many balconies and windows to count—I was shocked by how crowded they were. Intermingled in my mind with the drama on the screen was the lively humanity I sensed in all those big families, the mothers in their headscarves, the chain-smoking fathers, the soda-sipping children, the single men, the barely suppressed fidgetiness of these people munching disconsolately on their pumpkin seeds as we watched the film, almost always a melodrama. (Pamuk, 2009, p.164)

These are the words with which Kemal, the protagonist of Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence* (2009), expresses his feelings of sadness at the disappearance of open-air cinemas. A scion of one of the city's wealthiest families, Kemal encounters Füsun, a beautiful shopgirl who dreams of being a film star, in the spring of 1975. His affection for Füsun brings Kemal to the open-air cinemas of Istanbul, a space that enables different classes to merge and so permits their interclass love. This is where Kemal has his closest contact with Füsun:

> Sometimes while holding hands in a cinema, I would feel a light shiver passing through her. Sometimes she would lean into me, or even rest her head gently on my shoulder. She would sink into her seat to get closer, and I would take her hands between mine, sometimes stroking her leg, like a feather's touch. (Pamuk, 2009, p. 286).

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Kemal's obsessive love continues even after Füsun marries another young man. For 8 years, from the late 1970s to the early 1980s, Kemal finds excuses to visit the impoverished backstreets of Istanbul where Füsun lives with her parents and husband. In contrast to the time they spent together at the open-air cinemas, Kemal discovers the consolations of middle-class life at a dinner table in front of the television. These 8 years in *The Museum of Innocence* mark not only a change in Kemal and Füsun's relationship, but also the transformation of spectatorship in Istanbul. Pamuk's protagonist addresses television's effect on urban spectatorship in a monologue on wall clocks:

> Until television sets came to dominate the soundtrack of domesticity, changing the way people ate, drank, and sat—until the mid-1970s—these wall clocks continued to tick away, as they had done for so long, even though the householders scarcely paid them any attention. (Pamuk, 2009, p. 178)

For Kemal, television completely changed the urban spectatorship, soundscape, habits, and even conception of time. In *The Museum of Innocence*, Pamuk reimagines 1970s Istanbul from the present with a deep longing for the city's past and former urban lifestyles. Kemal's depiction includes a certain sense of loss, both of his former lover and of the city's interclass spaces of entertainment.

Open-air cinemas are depicted in the memoirs of artists (Füruzan, 1973; Pamuk, 2009; Şoray, 2012) and film critics (Evren, 1998; Özgüç, 2010; Scognamillo, 2009) with a similar nostalgic longing for the past, written amidst excessive urban transformation and sprawl in Istanbul during the 1990s and 2000s. Since the 1980s, Istanbul has been undergoing a new phase of development, with the intensive construction of high-rise office towers/residences and shopping malls. "All this changed when Istanbul, in common with other globalizing cities of the Third World after the 1980s, experienced the shock of rapid integration into the transnational markets and witnessed the emergence of a new axis of stratification" (Keyder, 2010, p. 26). As sociologist Çağlar Keyder points out, Istanbul became attractive for foreign investment. As in other developing countries, multiplexes also emerged after major players entered the Turkish cinema sector in 1987. Istanbul, like many other metropolitan cities, witnessed the dramatic growth of multiplex cinemas in various areas. These cinemas are mostly located on the upper floors of shopping malls, adjacent to food courts, thereby offering a complete leisure experience of shopping, eating, and watching movies in the same architectural complex. Given the rising global popularity of multiplexes and the Turkish government's great support for urban gentrification projects, it is unsurprising that tens of multiplexes in brand new shopping malls have been built in Istanbul. Meanwhile, many historic movie theaters have been destroyed by urban gentrification.

In 2013, the 29th Istanbul International Film Festival opened with protests against the reconstruction of the Emek Movie Theater on İstiklal Avenue. The police deployed water cannons and tear gas to disperse a group of thousands that included the Greek-French director, and festival guest, Costa-Gavras. Isyanbul Kültür Sanat Varyetesi, one of the NGOs involved in the protests, stressed that:

> The attempt to demolish Emek Theater is an occupation of a public domain for the interest of the capital. With a special emphasis on the demolition of Emek Theater, the demonstrations target the renovation project for the whole Cercle D'Orient building, which is classified as a 1st Group Cultural Asset structure, together with the surrounding lots such as Inci Patisserie and Yeni Ruya Movie Theater that are all crucial for the identity and memory of Beyoglu and Istanbul. (Doğan, 2011, p. 8).

Government authorities defended the planned reconstruction and renovation of the theater, which would be moved to the upper floor of the new shopping mall. Since the cinema's entrance would also have to be moved from the ground floor to the upper floor, it would no longer be directly accessible from the street. The activists occupied the theater during these protests and claimed

their right to the city. As film scholar Özge Özdüzen observes, the Emek protests "brought a new understanding of activism which relied on active participation in the decision-making through direct interaction with other activists" (Özdüzen, 2017, p. 16). In its manifesto, Isyanbul Kültür Sanat Varyetesi stressed that this demonstration conveys Istanbulites' fear of losing an important building, held dearly in their memories.

Media scholar Nigar Pösteki emphasizes how such loss could damage the collective memories of cinema-goers, and terms the Emek Movie Theater a "figure of remembrance" of crucial importance in collective memories' formation (2013). The excessive destruction of historic movie theaters and the rapid construction of shopping mall cinemas gave rise to nostalgic sentiment on the spectatorship and cinemas of earlier Istanbul. This nostalgia has mainly been initiated by the neoliberal policy of urban gentrification in the 1980s and 1990s. However, the urban restructuring of the 1950s that similarly affected cinema-going urbanites has been much less discussed. As in Pamuk's novel, the decline of Turkey's open-air cinemas is commonly depicted by media scholars to coincide with the emergence and domination of television (Erkılıç, 2003; Tanrıöver, 2002; Tüzün, 2013). However, television was not the only reason for this downturn. By the time television entered Turkish homes, urban reconstruction projects were already instrumental in the destruction of these cinemas in Istanbul.

Despite the rich history of open-air cinemas in Istanbul, the relation between the city and outdoor cinemas is understudied. Most academic works on Turkish cinema overlook the conceptual relation between urban space and the cinema-going experience. Studies on the relation between urban space and film/the film industry present catalog-like information on the film locations in Istanbul (Köksal, 2012; Özgüç, 2010) or focus on films' representation of urban space (Akser, 2014; Aymaz, 2004; Güçhan, 1992; Güler, 2011; Kaplan, 2015; Pamir, 2015; Süalp, 2004; Türkoğlu, Özürk, & Aymaz, 2004), how directors use urban space (Kayalı, 2015; Süalp, 2004; Suner, 2009), or the history of movie theaters (Evren, 1998; Gökmen, 1991; Scognamillo, 2008). These works generally do not address the relation between movie theaters and the changing urban experience of filmgoers. İpek Türeli's dissertation *İstanbul: Open City*, a rare combination of urban and film studies, analyzes the urban experience in films from the 1960s. In what follows, I explore the understudied historical changes of open-air cinemas in Istanbul, including their transformation from a sociability space for different classes in the 1950s to luxury cinemas in the 2000s. My exposition includes a discourse of the loss and nostalgia surrounding their contemporary existence.

Early Movie Theaters and Open-Air Cinemas of Istanbul

Istanbul's first movie theater, *Cinéma Théatre Pathé Fréres*, was opened in 1908 by Sigmund Weinberg in the Pera district, mostly occupied by non-Muslim minorities: Italians, French, Greeks, Armenians, and Germans. Pera soon became host to many other early movie theaters, including the *Ciné Eclair, Ciné Centrale, Ciné Gaumont, Les Cinémax Orientaux, Ciné Palace, and Ciné Lion*, all of which opened during the 1910s (Scognamillo, 1991). These early theaters were mainly targeted at the Western elite then living in this region, who were familiar with this Western-oriented technology. The ads and other announcements of foreign films were printed in different languages for audiences of different ethnic backgrounds, including the upper-class Muslims who lived around Pera. This western and upper-class socioeconomic tradition of cinema needed to be adapted, translated, and naturalized into the new nation-state established in the 1920s (Arslan, 2011). Such technological adaptation was also compatible with the policies of the Turkish republican reformers, who envisioned a secular, westernized, and modern society. After the Republican Revolution, the intense need to both westernize and modernize can be observed in many different fields, including cinema. The political economy of the post-revolution period supported the proliferation of movie theaters throughout Istanbul.

When the city's entertainment center shifted from Tepebaşı to Cadde-i Kebir (presently known as İstiklal Street) in the 1940s, the latter also became the hub for construction of movie theaters (Evren, 1998). Among the well-known theaters built there (almost all now destroyed) were *Rüya (aka Artistik), Ar (aka Sinepop), Alkazar (aka Electra), Atlas, Elhamra, Emek (aka Melek), İpek*, and *Lale Movie Theatres*. These enlivened the entertainment industry and made cinema-going a popular leisure activity in Istanbul. Until 1950, cinema-goers were still from the upper-class, who attended film galas in glamourous movie theaters. As explained by the film critic Giovanni Scognamillo (2009), cinema-going was like a ritual: men and women dressed up, reserved their seats, and socialized in these theaters.

The second half of the 20th century was a period of rapid urbanization in Istanbul. Between 1950 and 1955, the city's population rose from 285,000 to 1.2 million. Intense population movements resulted in mass urban transformation projects (Türeli, 2008). The newly established multiparty system, under the leadership of Adnan Menderes, brought various changes in the economic, social, and cultural structures of Turkey.

Movie theaters became popular among the middle and lower classes when the sales tax on cinema tickets was reduced from 75% to 25% in 1948. With the Turkish film industry booming and increasing urban population, Turkey's open-air cinemas emerged as a sociability space and enjoyed their golden age during the 1950s. Open-air cinema was the cheapest entertainment of the period to attract audiences of all ages, ethnic backgrounds, and social classes. Hundreds of open-air cinemas were operating nationwide, but Istanbul, home to only 6% of the country's population, had 20% of the national movie-going audience (Türeli, 2008) and was thus the center for movie theaters and outdoor cinemas. However, despite their popularity in Istanbul, open-air cinemas could not last long as urban renovation projects throughout much of the city began to replace them with apartments and parking lots in the 1970s.

Between 1950 and 1953, Turkey's economy grew by 13% and the country became integrated in the capitalist system, not only economically but also in terms of defense and foreign relations (Gül, 2012). When the Democratic Party (DP), known for its liberal policies, came to power in 1950, a new open economic system was introduced with an industrialization program supported by Marshall Aid. Gül (2012) reports that "the elections of 1950 not only marked the end of the early Republican period but ushered in a series of liberal economic and social changes that were to radically shape Istanbul's urban form" (p. 127).

DP assigned special importance to Istanbul because it wanted to use the city to display Turkish cultural achievements to the rest of the country. Prime Minister Menderes believed that unbreakable barriers between villages and cities represented continuing backwardness for the country, and so targeted their destruction (Gül, 2012). DP was interested in popular desires and traditions, and encouraged small entrepreneurs to move to Istanbul and start new businesses. The popularity of feature films and DP's new policies drew many rich Anatolian merchants to Istanbul, some of whom became film producers. The city consequently experienced an explosion of production companies (on a street called Yeşilçam/Green Pine) and increased construction of new movie theaters, especially open-air neighborhood cinemas.

The history of open-air cinemas in Istanbul dates back to 1913, when an old tea house called *Eski Osmanbey Bahçesi* was converted with the installation of a screen and a film projector (Evren, 1998). From 20 open-air movie theaters recorded in Istanbul in 1949, the number then rose to 103 in 1958, 122 in 1960, 143 in 1964, 169 in 1966, 184 in 1967, and 188 in 1969. At the end of the 1960s, Istanbul had more outdoor (260) than indoor (150) cinemas (Coş, 1969). Countrywide, the number of open-air cinemas was also twice that of indoor movie theaters (Table 1).

Open-air cinemas (termed garden or summer cinemas) were located mainly in middle- and lower-class neighborhoods lacking access to major movie theaters in the city center. Their distribution among small and poor neighborhoods significantly enlarged the exhibition area of national films, thereby indirectly supporting their production. Families used to attend these cinemas

Table 1. Number of Movie Theaters and Their Seating Capacity in Turkey in 1969.

Region (no. of cities)	Indoor movie theaters	Outdoor movie theaters	Indoor movie theater seats	Outdoor movie theater seats
Marmara (10)	397	532	246,934	453,796
Aegean (8)	300	335	237,000	360,125
Mediterranean (7)	135	193	90,990	156,909
Southeastern Anatolia (6)	87	91	49,851	76,895
Central Anatolia (10)	208	176	113,360	130,768
Black Sea (14)	212	184	115,540	137,264
East Anatolia (12)	81	23	38,779	19,320
Total	1420	1534	892,474	1,335,077

Source. Nezih Coş (1969).

together as the screened films' genres (such as family melodrama, salon comedy, and musical) were suitable for all ages. Burçak Evren, a film scholar who witnessed that period as a child, recalls his cinema-going experience as follows:

> The quality of the food prepared by our mother at dinner was the signal for our movie night. If the dinner was prepared fast, with scrambled eggs or snacks, then we would understand that it was cinema night. If the film was very popular, we would knock on our neighbors' door to discuss the theme of the film and guess the storyline and which actors would be starring. When the sun went down, we would go to the open-air cinema with all our neighbors. We walked to the cinema together, sat on our chairs, and soon enough the film would start. (Evren, 1998, pp. 123-124)

Open-air cinemas, with no hierarchical seating, affordable ticket prices,[1] toilet facilities, and cheap food and drinks, were democratic urban spaces where all social classes could watch a film in a collective local environment. These cinemas connected cinema-goers with the city. Low ticket prices and easy access to the cinemas within one's neighborhood made the spectatorship experience inclusive for urbanites from all classes.

Istanbulites' spectatorship experience in the open-air cinemas of the 1950s resembles the early cinema spectatorship of Americans described by film historian Miriam Hansen. As nickelodeons emerged in the peripheries of U.S. cities around the 1900s, repressed or alienated social groups—such as the new immigrants and urbanized working class, who previously lacked access to certain institutions of public life—became able to experience social inclusion in a larger public sphere. Hansen explains that

> at less expense than the mainstream commercial entertainments, the cinema offered an horizon that made it possible to negotiate the historic experience of displacement in a new social form-even though its own institutional development enhanced the very process of displacement. (Hansen, 1991, pp. 91-92)

The immigrants who experienced industrialization, not only in the factory but also in all areas of everyday life, were disoriented, alienated, and lost in the city. The preindustrial nature of their lives, including a specific linguistic and cultural environment, was abandoned for a new world promising liberation and also entailing reduced space and time, and limited expression, interaction, and interpretation. The loss of their traditional experience was superimposed with new demarcations of public and private (Hansen, 1991). The industrial city blurred the lines between them by introducing new concepts of time and space. Hansen suggests that early movie theaters were places for adapting to urban life, especially for immigrants. Though not separate from the

market, these theaters were an indiscriminately inclusive industrial–commercial public sphere (Hansen, 1991). Cinema helped immigrants to organize their urban experience by providing not only a collective space but also a "collective forum for the production of fantasy and the capability of envisioning a different future" (Hansen, 1991, p. 112).

The open-air cinemas, as the most popular leisure venue of lower- and middle-class Istanbulites in the 1950s and 1960s, served as both a democratic public space and a place where different social classes could dream and imagine together. In *The Museum of Innocence*, Orhan Pamuk describes the same collective experience for Istanbul cinema-goers as Americans enjoyed in the nickelodeons, explaining how this helped the crowds to accept their hard lives: "As our soul focuses on objects, we can feel in our broken hearts that the whole world is one, and we come to accept our own sufferings. What makes this acceptance possible is enshrined in the cinemagoers' eyes" (Pamuk, 2012, p. 192). Watching a film among a crowd of others sharing similar emotions connected people from different classes in open-air cinemas.

The architecture critic P. Morton Shand defines early movie theaters as "modern cinema," exclusively characterized by their open space of freedom for audiences:

> The cinema, whether taciturn or chattersome, fills a need in our lives which no preceding age has ever felt . . . The cinema is at once the most public and secluded of places. One can go along, *a deux, en famille* or in bands. One can take one's children there to keep them quiet or one can take one's girl there to be quiet one's self. Punctuality and decorum are of little consequence. One can drop in and out at will. One can smoke. One can chew sweets, or peel oranges or manicure one's nails. It is an essentially democratic institution. (Shand, 1930, pp. 9-11).

Istanbul's open-air cinemas very closely resembled the early nickelodeons, and followed the same dynamics discussed by Hansen and Shand. Unlike nickelodeons, though, they also offered various freedoms, such as smoking and buying drinks and snacks during the screening, attending as a whole family, and even (in some cinemas) the possibility of free entry. Some cinemas' architecture allowed their screens to be seen from the balconies of nearby apartments, thus providing free access to neighborhood residents. In her memoir *My Cinema and I*, the revered Turkish cinema actress Türkan Şoray describes watching a film from her balcony, and how this experience influenced her decision to become an actress:

> I close my eyes. Images after images . . . From my life, from my dreams . . . A vision remained from my childhood: A woman with long hair standing in lights and collecting something in the water. I saw this in a magical screen when I was 7 . . . One night our neighbors took me with the other kids to the roof of an apartment next to our house. We could see the screen of the open-air cinema from that roof. I watch this with the amazement of a child without understanding what is really going on. The lights coming from the window take us in. I breathlessly watch the woman in lights. It feels like this woman looks and blinks at me. (Şoray, 2012, p.3)

The "woman" to which Şoray refers is Italian actress Silvano Mangano, and she sees her on the screen for the first time on her neighbor's terrace. The films screened in these open-air cinemas inspired many young men and women to move to Istanbul in the hope of becoming famous actors and actresses. In the 1950s and 1960s, moving to Istanbul to be discovered by a talent hunter became a common phenomenon (Türeli, 2008, p. 101). Examining the districts of Istanbul with a high concentration of open-air cinemas supports their effect on the lower- and middle-class youth. As Table 2 shows, the districts with dense lower and middle-class populations—Fatih, Gaziosmanpaşa, and Üsküdar[2]—had a high concentration of open-air cinemas in the 1960s.

Open-air cinemas were neighborhoods' central attraction throughout the 1950s and 1960s. However, their destruction proceeded much more quickly than their earlier construction. Every open-air cinema was destroyed within just a few years as urban gentrification projects were

Table 2. Number and Distribution of Open-Air Cinemas in Istanbul in the 1960s.

District	Number of open-air cinemas
Princes Islands	3
Bakırköy	19
Beşiktaş	9
Beykoz	5
Beyoğlu	8
Eminönü	5
Eyüp	7
Fatih	30
Gaziosmanpaşa	15
Kadıköy	31
Sarıyer	8
Şişli	13
Üsküdar	21
Zeytinburnu	9

Source. Burçak Evren (1998).

Figure 1. Destruction of an open-air cinema in Istanbul.
Source. Günyüz Demirhan.

rolled out citywide. Most of these cinemas were not destroyed because they lost their audiences; rather, as urban renovation projects caused the land on which they were built to rise in value, owners sold their land to contractors, who then destroyed the cinemas (Figure 1). This development will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

The Change in Spectatorship With Urban Transformation and the Proliferation of Television

Turkey's movie theaters, film industry, and domestic film audiences had an entangled relationship in the 1950s and 1960s. When movie theaters started to become popular among Turkey's middle class around the 1940s, national film productions were limited around 3 to 4 per year. With so few national productions, movie theater owners first screened Egyptian and Indian melodramas, and

later Hollywood films. As existing movie theaters could not accommodate the surging number of spectators, open-air cinemas started to spread throughout the country, and local producers began to make far more Turkish films (Erkan, 2015).

The Turkish film industry enjoyed its golden age between 1950 and 1970. In the 1960s alone, 1,903 films were produced, making Turkey one of the world's biggest film producers. Yeşilçam, in particular, was most productive during the 1960s: from 68 films in 1960, its output rose to 116 in 1961, 127 in 1962, 125 in 1963, 178 in 1964, 214 in 1965, and 238 in 1966 (Coş, 1969). National films dominated movie theaters and leaving very few openings for the exhibition of foreign films (Scognamillo, 2003).

During this period, domestic film audiences were the only source of finance for the national film industry. Thus, the feelings and opinions of spectators were incredibly important for Turkey's film producers. At first, producers adapted the Egyptian and Indian films that achieved box office success in Turkey. They later progressed to using formulaic scripts according to the tastes of domestic film viewers (Ayça, 1992). The popular genres were salon comedies and melodramas, mostly featuring impossible love stories between individuals of different social classes. Film critic Nijat Özon laments filmmakers' reliance on certain audience-centered formulas, which he does not consider a suitable long-term strategy for developing the Turkish film industry:

> Although domestic film audience is the lifeblood of the domestic film industry, filmmakers have not studied this audience's disposition, development, tendencies etc. Despite this, they rarely fail to implement certain "formulas" with which they hope to lure audiences, so that their films may earn more in the shortest length of time. Yet these formulas are highly deceptive: often a formula that had put a smile on the producer's face with one movie can fail miserably in another. The fact that a proven formula may turn into a fiasco, that what was in vogue one year may disappear the next, is born out of the unfamiliarity with the audience. Filmmakers are aware only of the audience's day-to-day tendencies, and even that is perfunctory. However, discovering this audience's ongoing development and its disposition in five or ten years' time, and taking appropriate action is vital for the future of our cinema. (Özon, 1995, p. 221)

As explained by Özon, spectators' day-to-day tendencies were the film producers' main concern. Spectators were highly important for the film industry. From cars decorated with film posters, the names, themes, and stars of the films being aired in open-air cinemas would be broadcast through megaphones around local neighborhoods, with the aim of attracting audiences. Families and neighbors would discuss films and carefully follow film programs. Yet despite continuing high demand for neighborhood open-air cinemas, they started to be rapidly destroyed after 1950s.

The major reason for this change was widespread redevelopment works, in which thousands of buildings were demolished, many properties were expropriated, and gigantic boulevards were constructed[3] (Gül, 2012). The artificial expansion of Istanbul in the early 1950s was criticized by Zeki Sayar, the editor of the period's only architectural journal, who denounced the practice of speculative housing development and the use of attractive advertisements to drive sales (Türeli, 2008). A series of laws approved in the 1950s, aimed to increase the housing supply by providing land and credit. Various insurance premiums were offered to real estate developers through the Real Estate and Credit Bank (Türeli, 2008).

The other remarkable infrastructure improvement around the 1950s was in road construction. Redevelopment was largely premised on opening up large boulevards in Istanbul, a popular idea among postwar politicians who believed in the magic of highways. "The car was seen as the liberator of the people, unshackling them from rigid public transport and allowing them to travel at will" (Gül, 2012, p. 176). With thousands of people from the provinces and rural areas moving to Istanbul in the hope of starting a new life (Suner, 2011), roads played a crucial role in the immigrants' mobility. Thus, massive migration to the city triggered extensive road and housing construction.

Figure 2. Malta Lüks Open-Air Cinema is now used as a parking lot.
Source. Copyright: Sadi Çilingir.

The increasing land required for roads and housing ultimately left no space for open-air cinemas. Some were replaced by apartments, while many were transformed into garages to cover parking needs as the number of cars in the city continued to grow (Figure 2). The wall onto which films were once projected at the Malta Lüks Open-Air Cinema remains in situ. The land is now used as a parking lot in Fatih district, where many contemporary urban renovation projects still take place.

These massive urban reconstruction projects caused the disappearance of open-air cinemas, which had been places of socialization for the middle and lower classes. The city's housing and parking problems led to the cinemas' replacement by more functional buildings. Decisions on the destruction or reconstruction of buildings were made by the ruling Democrat Party, and neighborhood residents were excluded from decision making on the transformation of their own living areas. Urban analyst Manuel Castells talks about this new global spatial arrangement by the dominant class and explains that the new spatial organization disconnects people and spatial form and therefore peoples' lives and urban meaning:

> Yet, what tends to disappear is the meaning of places for people. Each place, each city, will receive its social meaning from its location in the hierarchy of a network whose control and rhythm will escape from each place and, even more, from the people in each place. Furthermore, people will be shifted according to the continuous restructuring of an increasingly specialized space. (Castells, 1983, p. 314)

Urban renewal and regional restructuring mostly changed the neighborhoods and their residents' lifestyles. As open-air cinemas were destroyed, people lost the meaning of collective cinema-going experience. While film lovers lost a very dear place to embrace their passion, neighborhood residents lost an important public space for socialization. Yet along with urban transformation, the proliferation of television also played an important role in transforming urban spectatorship.

Broadcasting in Turkey began in May 1964 with the establishment of the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT). The channel's first live national telecast was from a small studio in Ankara in 1968. Pilot broadcasts were initially aired 3 days a week, for certain hours of the day. News, studio shows, and weather forecasts formed the core of TRT's broadcast content. In 1972, with the broadcast of the first Turkish-dubbed foreign TV series, *The Fugitive* (1963-1967), Turkish audience became acquainted with this new form of scripted entertainment. In the 1970s and 1980s, American TV series including *Dallas* (1978), *Little House on the Prairie* (1974-1983), *Mission:*

Impossible (1988), *Knight Rider* (1982-1986), *Lassie* (1954-1973), and *Macgyver* (1985-1992) quickly conquered the hearts of TV audiences in Turkey, thereby seriously impacting on Turkish society. With a limited number of TV receivers nationwide, fans gathered together to watch the shows, which played an important role in the proliferation of television in Turkey. Observing fervent public interest in foreign TV series, Turkish producers started to make local series in 1974. The first locally produced Turkish show was a literary adaptation of the novel *Forbidden Love* (Aşk-ı Memnu/1974-1975), which was broadcast as a miniseries of six episodes.

With the destruction of neighborhood cinemas, television replaced cinema as the cheap entertainment of choice, especially among the lower and middle classes. Particularly after the military coup of 1980, when social unrest on the streets kept people in their homes, television became the most popular news, propaganda, and entertainment tool (Tanrıöver, 2011). From 1974 to 2015, the number and technical quality of Turkish television programs, especially TV series, increased enormously. Today, almost 70 TV series are being shot in Turkey every year, and the most popular shows are watched by millions. The principal source of finance for these TV series are their viewers, so producers use a rating system to measure audience tendencies. Thus, just like the films of the 1950s and 1960s, contemporary Turkish TV series use formulaic scripts to attract audiences and continue to use popular genres, especially melodramas and comedies. In contrast, the audience's interest in films is overshadowed by television.

Independent films are either funded by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism or by foreign (e.g., German or French) film funds and do not need the assurance of box office success to secure funding for their production. Thus, these films mostly ignore viewers' tendencies and search, instead, for alternative styles. In contrast, mainstream films (mostly comedies) are tailored according to audience tendencies. However, these box office films are mostly screened in multiplex cinemas in shopping malls and do not target the lower classes.

As these transformations show, irregular urbanization and structureless industrialization, along with the proliferation of television, have obviously influenced urban spectatorship culture. With these modifications, the lifestyles of the lower and middle classes have dramatically changed. Former cinema audiences became trapped in high-income zones when their neighborhood cinemas were destroyed, while the new luxury cinemas welcome upper-class elites in a totally different environment.

Nostalgia for the Collective Cinema-Going Experience and New Open-Air Cinemas

In the 1990s, open-air cinemas started to regain their former popularity, driven partly by the use of nostalgic advertisements. New open-air cinemas are mostly located on the roof-tops of 5-star hotels (Sheraton, Hilton), in luxurious city clubs (Hillside City Club Trio, Deniz Private Cinecity Trio, Viaport Marina), in private residences (Sait Halim Pasha Mansion), in contemporary arts centers (İstanbul Modern, Uniq Istanbul, Bomontiada), or in new shopping malls (Zorlu Center, Akasya). Unlike the cheap summer neighborhood cinemas of the 1950s, the new open-air cinemas charge from 20 to 100 Turkish liras (TL) per ticket, which is quite expensive for someone earning the minimum monthly wage of 1,404 TL. These new open-air cinemas offer pool views, comfortable seats, and sometimes cocktails and snacks. As shown in Figure 3, the open-air cinema at Kozyatağı Bonus Premium Cinecity offers an exclusive film-viewing experience on lounge chairs and seat cushions, at an additional cost of 32 TL or 25 TL, respectively. Hierarchical seating is organized according to a price list, which differs greatly from the wooden chairs of the 1950s open-air cinemas, which offered the same experience for all film-goers, regardless of class (Figure 4).

The popular contemporary Turkish films featuring open-air cinema scenes, such as *Vizontele* (2001) and *İftarlık Gazoz* (2016), also support the revival of these cinemas with their nostalgic depictions. In these films, rural outdoor cinemas are presented as a lost value of the past. The

Figure 3. Kozyatağı Bonus Premium Cinecity.
Source. Copyright: Sadi Çilingir.

Figure 4. A traditional open-air neighborhood cinema.
Source. Copyright: Abdülkadir Kıdeyş.

collective cinema-going experience is exalted, with joyful scenes that show everyone in the audience as members of a large family. *Vizontele* (2001) is based on the screenwriter-director's childhood memories of the arrival of the first television in his southeastern village in the late 1970s. The mayor of a small village opposes the activities of an opportunist who runs an open-air cinema; to break his monopoly on village entertainment, the mayor introduces the village's first television. However, even the mayor's family keep watching open-air screenings from their rooftop for free. Even though the television creates excitement, most of the villagers perceive it as ominous, a devil's invention that "cannot replace cinema." However, they adapt their collective viewing experience to embrace television and gather in the coffee house with all their neighbors to watch together. The film ends with sadness as, reinforcing the villagers' earlier suspicion of the threat posed by television, the main character learns that his son has died from a TV news announcement. In the final scene, they bury the television, which had only brought bad luck to the village. The spread of television is, thereby, depicted as inevitable but ill-fated.

Such depictions in films preserve nostalgia for the collective entertainment practices of the past. Fredric Jameson explains the effects of nostalgia films by referring to *Blue Velvet* and *Something Wild* in his article *Nostalgia for Present*:

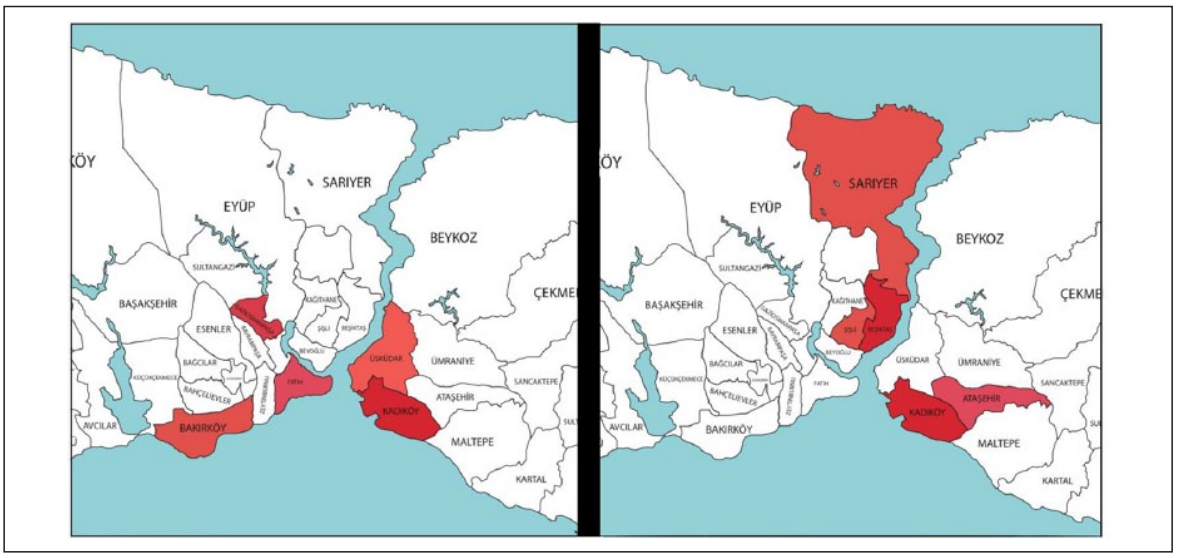

Figure 5. (Left) The districts of Istanbul with highest number of open air cinemas in 1950s-1960s. (Right) The districts of Istanbul with new luxury open-air cinemas today.

> For it is by way of so-called nostalgia films that some properly allegorical processing of the past becomes possible: it is because the formal apparatus of nostalgia films has trained us to consume the past in the form of glossy images that new and more complex "postnostalgia" statements and forms become possible. (Jameson, 1991, p. 287)

The nostalgia films present shiny images of the past, resulting in the belief that reconstructing these images in the present is possible. Thus, the nostalgic Turkish films featuring open-air cinema scenes explain the recent popularity of new and luxurious open-air cinemas. However, the open-air cinemas on hotel rooftops, on art gallery terraces, and in luxury residences offer a supposedly nostalgic experience that, in truth, differs fundamentally from the interclass collective audience experience of the 1950s.

While open-air cinemas are depicted as a classless place in these nostalgic films, their contemporary replicas target a completely different audience, formed of the upper and middle classes. A comparison between old and new districts with open-air cinemas of Istanbul shows that old open-air cinemas were located in low- and middle-class districts while the new luxury open air cinemas are placed in high- and middle-class areas (Figure 5). These new luxury cinemas use the nostalgia of past cinema-going and commodify this experience.

Such commoditization of open-air cinemas can be seen in a shopping mall advertisement run by Carrefour SA in 2013. It announced that "customers who buy products more expensive than 20 Turkish Liras[4] will win a ticket to the 'Nostalgic Open-Air Cinema of Carrefour'" (Perakende Bulten, 2013), located in the mall's parking lot. This illustrates that the private spaces generated by urban gentrification projects, which earlier destroyed open-air cinemas, are now being reusing the concept of these cinemas, albeit adapted to the current consumption trends. Thus, the parking lots originally created by destroying or converting summer cinemas are transformed into new open-air cinemas, accompanied by the need to market the old experience.

Conclusion

On October 1, 2017, the Grand Pera Complex (including the new Emek Movie Theater on its upper floor) opened with a ceremony at which the Istanbul State Opera and Ballet performed.

The interior design of the Emek Movie Theater has been preserved,[5] but the theater was moved to the upper floor of the complex, which is essentially a shopping mall. On its website, the owner brands the complex thus:

> Grand Pera is located at the heart of Istiklal Avenue in Beyoğlu, which has been a center of attraction and a symbol of shopping culture since the 19th century. Offering services to the culture, arts, entertainment, fashion, and gastronomic world, Grand Pera is a new generation lifestyle center that brought one of Istanbul's most valuable historic buildings, Cercle d'Orient, back to its former glory through quality renovation at world standards and that introduced Emek Cinema to future generations through a sustainable understanding. (Grand Pera, 2015)

As this description conveys, the Grand Pera Complex is a new lifestyle center that provides space for shopping, eating, and other leisure activities. Despite the claim that renovation has restored the historic building to its former glory, the Emek Movie Theater has been separated from its context, and the cinema-going experience is combined with shopping and other leisure activities. Just like the Grand Pera Complex, new open-air cinemas also market the old collective cinema-going experience to create a different concept, targeting the upper and middle classes.

The destruction of historic movie theaters created a certain sense of nostalgia for the open-air cinemas and collective cinema-going experience of the 1950s. This nostalgia has been reflected and used in different ways. In her book *The Future of Nostalgia*, Svetlana Boym explains that the modern nostalgia comprises two distinct categories: reflective and restorative nostalgia. Reflective nostalgia is individual, and recalls fragments of the past with a sense of distance, with awareness that the past no longer exists. It is narrated in stories with a clear sense of past, present, and future. In contrast, restorative nostalgia tries to rebuild the past in the present, and pretends to reconstruct the mythical place called "home." As Boym (2002) explains, "If restorative nostalgia ends up reconstructing emblems and rituals of home and homeland in an attempt to conquer and spatialize time, reflective nostalgia cherishes shattered fragments of memory and temporalizes space" (p. 49). There is a clear distinction between the individual longing for the past and a planned desire to reconstruct it.

In this respect, the memoirs of artists and film critics and the depiction of open-air cinemas in literature are reflective nostalgia, remembering the past in its own context. This nostalgic sentiment is related to the democratic structure of open-air cinemas, mainly targeting the middle and lower classes without access to major movie theaters in city centers. In contrast, the new gentrifiers use the nostalgia of collective cinema-going experience to market new open-air cinemas in shopping malls, city clubs, private residences, and arts centers. This restorative nostalgia aims to culturally commodify the cinema-going experience of the past. The new open-air cinemas detach the collective cinema-going experience from its context and transform urban spectatorship by limiting it to the middle and upper classes.

The destruction of historic movie theaters and open-air cinemas created longing for past collective urban spectatorship. One of the by-products of this nostalgic sentiment is the commercially oriented open-air cinemas in luxury city clubs, arts centers, and shopping malls. While urban renovation projects cause reflective nostalgia for certain urbanites, new gentrifiers use restorative nostalgia to commodify open-air cinemas and reproduce them as a space of commodity, not socialization. As shown by this two-sided relation between nostalgic sentiment and urban gentrification, urban regeneration both generates and is furthered by nostalgia.

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Notes

1. In the 1950s, the minimum monthly wage was around 465-585 Turkish liras (TL), and a cinema ticket cost approximately 1 TL (1/500 of the minimum wage) (Erkan, 2015). In contrast, in 2017, the minimum wage was 1,404 TL and a cinema ticket cost approximately 20 TL (1/70 of the minimum wage).
2. Recently, these neighborhoods have faced a large wave of gentrification, including the destruction of their traditional houses.
3. It is difficult to estimate the total number of buildings demolished during Menderes' redevelopment program, as conflicting figures have been published in several sources. According to Menderes's press conference in March 1957, a total of 5,540 properties were demolished during the redevelopment program. However, during the later Yassıada trials (in which many politicians, including Menderes, were charged with corruption, embezzling state funds, extravagance, and other crimes), he stated that the total number of properties demolished was between 8,000 and 10,000 (Gül, 2012)
4. While this promotional ticket was less expensive than the ticket for a hotel or arts center cinema, receiving it is preconditional on consumption. Thereby, Carrefour SA commercialized the nostalgia of open-air cinemas to increase its sales.
5. The journalist Serhat Bali shared his first impressions of the new Emek Movie Theater in his *Radikal* newspaper column. For Bali, the new theater looks almost the same as the old one, with only the theater balcony reduced in size (cutting the total capacity from 800 to 600 persons; Bali, 2016).

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CHAPTER 5

Paper IV. Kayhan Müldür, S. 2020. The Proliferation of Alternative Film Exhibition Spaces in Istanbul: Cultural Segregation and Urban Cinephilia. *Visual Studies*, 35:2-3, 232-244.

This last chapter looks at the proliferation of contemporary alternative film exhibition venues in Istanbul with analyzing the reasons that gave rise to their increase. While the previous chapter discusses the significance of contemporary open-air cinemas, this chapter discovers the use of the current alternative film exhibition sites.

In addition to looking at exhibition/consumption, this paper also looks at the other aspects of the Circuit of Culture, which are regulations and identity. Analyzing authoritarianism, government policies and their effects on screen exhibition in Turkey, this last part completes the circle by analyzing consumption, regulations and identity, in addition to the analysis of production and representation in previous chapters.

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The proliferation of alternative film exhibition spaces in Istanbul: cultural segregation and urban cinephilia

SEZEN KAYHAN MÜLDÜR

In the last decade, Istanbul witnessed the rapid proliferation of alternative film exhibition spaces such as museums, cafes, art and cultural centres in specific neighbourhoods. This increase is a result of mostly three forces: the monopoly of dominant distribution companies, authoritarian pressure of the government and urban transformation in Istanbul. These places provide space for censored films and are essentially important for independent and experimental films as well as documentaries and short films which have very limited or no theatrical release. On the other hand, their concentration in specific districts and that they target the audience with certain cultural capital is aggregate hierarchical clusters. Through analysing these alternative exhibition spaces in Istanbul, this study investigates the changing relationship between film exhibition, audience and the city. It discovers how urban transformation, authoritarian cultural policies and economic capital changed cinema-going and urban cinephilia in Istanbul. It suggests that while these alternative film exhibiton venues provide space for independent filmmakers, festivals and censored films, they also articulate to social hierarchy and cultural segregation.

In 2016, the 16th !f Istanbul Independent Film Festival cancelled the screening of a short film entitled 'The Last Schnitzel' which is a political satire that takes place in the future in space. The film is about the president of The Grand Turkish Republic who demands a schnitzel before allowing any Turks to leave the vanishing earth; his hopeless assistant, Kamil, must come up with the fried meat despite the fact that chickens had been dead for over 200 years. The censorship of the 'Last Schnitzel' was not an exceptional case; it was one of many film censorship cases that arose after 2014 as a result of the government's efforts to dominate the cultural scene in Turkey. The religious conservative government of AKP (The Justice and Development Party) has never been strong in the cultural scene and the creative industries are mostly dominated by secular Turks. Political science scholar Ersin Kalaycıoğlu uses the term *Kulturkampf* to explain the contemporary cultural struggle and the segregation between the secularist and the religious conservative segments of society in Turkey (Kalaycıoğlu 2012). This cultural segregation which has existed since the foundation of the Turkish Republic at the begining of the nineteenth century still continues, and has even increased with the rule of the conservative government in the last decade. Cultural segregation is mostly apparent in the cultural scene, especially in cinema and theatre where the secular dominate.

After the censorship of 'The Last Schnitzel' the festival organisers of !f Istanbul Independent Film Festival decided to hold a forum with the filmmakers on 18 February 2017 at Bomontiada ALT art space. Filmmakers included İsmet Kurtuluş, the director of the banned film who discussed the censorship issue. In previous censorhip cases *(Antalya Film Festival 2014, Istanbul Film Festival 2015)* the filmmakers withdrew their films from the competition as a means of protest. In the forum of the !f Independent Film Festival, some of the filmmakers agreed with the idea that withdrawing films from the festivals as a way of protest is not a solution for censorship. Instead, the filmmakers agreed that they need to find new ways to screen their films instead of withdrawing them. Thus, it was not necessary to screen the film in the festival programme as it could be screened in alternative film exhibition spaces. Even though the 'Last Schnitzel' has not yet been screened in an alternative venue, other recently censored films such as *Bakur (Çayan Demirel, Ertuğrul Mavioğlu, 2015)* and *Yeryüzü Aşkın Yüzü Oluncaya Dek' (Until the Earth's Surface Will Be the surface of Love, Reyan Tuvi, 2014)* were shown in various non-theatrical spaces. These spaces varied from a basement or backroom to a warehouse space or loft, a museum/art space or a café. Generally these venues offer alternative film programmes (mostly art house) and screen the films to a very limited audience.

In the last ten years there has been a visible increase in the numbers of alternative venues in Istanbul and censorship was not the only reason for the increase in

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these spaces. The proliferation of alternative film exhibition spaces in the last decade was due to three combined forces: the distribution monopoly, censorship and urban transformation. Firstly, in the last ten years independent and/or experimental films have had difficulties reaching distributors and finding spots for exhibition in major movie theatres. The main reason for this problem is the distribution monopoly created by dominant companies (Mars, Avşar, Prestige) resulting from the lack of anti-trust laws. When independent films were unable to be shown in movie theatres, their producers and distributors started looking for alternative venues and new exhibition strategies to reach audiences. These alternative spaces offer places to present their films to their intended audience-mostly cinephiles. Secondly, urban transformation has changed the geography of urban cinephilia. After the closure of Beyoğlu (the entertainment centre of Istanbul) movie theatres, independent film distributors and film festivals had difficulties finding venues. Several film festivals that previously used Beyoğlu movie theatres (especially Emek) as their cult venues, started using museums and cultural centres. While Beyoğlu had limited screening opportunities, another district, Kadıköy received the migration of artists, authors and filmmakers; thus, this opened or transformed various cultural spaces into screening venues. The concentration of alternative exhibition spaces in specific districts, such as Kadıköy, deepened the polarisation in film taste and cultural segregation between conservative AKP governed districts and secular CHP governed neighbourhoods. Thirdly, these spaces opened a new way to overcome film censorship in Turkey. The last few years, film censorship re-emerged with the cancellation of the screenings of various films due to their political content by the major film festivals. The governmental control mechanisms expanded their impact area and, as a result of the authoritarian pressure, some festivals developed new strategies and screened films in alternative exhibition spaces such as museums, cultural centres, art spaces, university halls and cafes. Through analysing these spaces, this study investigates the changing relationship between film exhibition, audience and the city. It also reveals how urban transformation, authoritarian cultural policies and economic capital changed cinema-going and urban cinephilia in Istanbul. It suggests that the alternative film exhibiton venues provide space and freedom for independent filmmakers, festivals and censored films, but notes that they also articulate social hierarchy and agregate cultural segregation by targeting cinephiles in specific, mostly secular neighbourhoods.

Alternative Film Exhibition Spaces from Educational to Cinephiliac

Alternative exhibition spaces have their roots in the film societies or cine-clubs that started to screen films in the cafes of Paris in at the beginning of the twentieth century (Alvin 2007, p. 5). Similar to Paris, the earliest public screening of a film in Istanbul took place in 1897 in Salle Sponeck, a beer hall in Pera (contemporary Beyoğlu) (Arslan 2011, 25). Sigmund Weinberg, a Polish Jew from Romania and a representative of Pathe Freres in Istanbul was the sponsor of this screening (Güvemli 1960). Soon after the early screenings in Pera, Henri Delavallée, a French painter living in Istanbul, showed a film on a Karagöz shadow play screen in a coffee house, the *Fevziye Kıraathanesi* (Çalapala 1947). Later with the development of filmmaking and movie theatres, commercial cinema dominated the exhibition halls of Istanbul as in the rest of the world.

In these early years, film was defined as a 'business' focusing on profits, and it was perceived as commercial entertainment. The powerful production and distribution companies dominated the industry and determined how and for how long a film would be screened. This system started to change in 1935 when the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, opened a Film Library which aimed to save and exhibit films that were in danger of being lost and also to prolong the typical life cycle of a film which is limited to its release period. As Haide Wasson explains in her research on Moma's Film Library:

> … the project to transform cinema from its status as a passing and mass entertainment to an edifying and educational activity grew out of the impulse to arrest the seemingly endless circulation of ephemeral images, securing them in time and space, moving them away from the location of commercial cinema and relocating them (sometimes the same images and sometimes not) elsewhere as part of an imagined and physical strategy of stabilization (Wasson 2005, 18).

Inspired by MoMa's Film Library, Amos Vogel's Cinema 16 opened in 1947 in New York; it is often cited as the first microcinema. Cinema 16, the most successful and influential membership film society in North America with more than seven thousand members filling a six-hundred-seat auditorium, showed a mix of experimental films, socially conscious documentaries and international films. Amos Vogel, his wife and their assistant Jack Goelman presented the widest selection possible choosing from hundreds of

films annually and organising fall and spring series (McDonald 1997, 4). As the scholar Scott McDonald explains, Vogel and his colleagues saw themselves as a special type of educators exploring cinema history and alternative cinema experiences to nurture global responsibility and enliven the potential in a democracy:

> Vogel was above all, an audience builder, a teacher, and a political motivator. For him the challenge was to use the widest articulation of film practice as a means of invigorating viewers' interest in cinema and their willingness to use what they learned at Cinema 16 in their everyday lives as citizens of the United States and the world. (McDonald 1997, pp. 28-29)

For Amos Vogel, Cinema 16 was not only a resistance area against commercial cinema but also a space for education. Various film societies used alternative exhibition spaces for the similar purpose of creating awareness on certain social issues. The first cinema club in the US, the Cleveland Cinema Club, began in 1915 as the Civic Committee of the Cleveland Federation of Women's Club. They worked on a range of film exhibition projects and also formed an all-women film reviewing committee which reviewed films from the perspective of the female spectator. 'This kind of spectatorship was linked with the "New Woman of the 1920s, whose new public presence (as voter and consumer)" emphasized interpretive choice as a key feature of spectatorship' (Nichols 2013, p. 255). Similarly, the London Film Society which was established in 1925, was screening films from the avant-garde to scientific films and other types of documentaries, classic shorts and features, to provide their members the widest range of film materials to watch and study (McDonald 1997, 6). The film societies not only fulfilled the existing need of alternative exhibition, but they also provided a forum and showcase where their members could discuss cinema, gain information/education in the content and reach an awareness on film as a medium.

McDonald marks a certain change in alternative film exhibition spaces in the US with the foundation of the New American Cinema Group by Lewis Allen and Jonas Mekas in 1960. The New American Cinema Group, which was founded by directors was determined to distribute their films through a cooperative where filmmakers decided how their films would be distributed and how much would be paid to filmmakers from rental revenues. Filmmakers were publishing their own catalogue and suggesting films from their potpourri programs as in Cinema 16. However, the movement from Cinema 16 to the Filmmakers Cooperative reflected a certain change in focus from the audience to the filmmakers. It also indicated a shift from educational venues to cinephiliacs. While the Film-makers' Cooperative certainly hoped programmers would rent the films they distributed, they were less concerned with audience size than with the integrity of individual film artists' cinematic visions (McDonald 1997, 29). While Cinema 16 focused on the audience and how the films were related to their everyday lives, Filmmakers Cooperative focused on filmmakers and how they could distribute their films. This change also had an impact on the audience profile and attracted more filmmakers and high-brow cinephiles.

In 1936, the foundation of French Cinematechque in 1936 encouraged many countries to have their own cinematechques. The British, Soviet, German Film Archives were founded simultaneously. However, even in sixties, the Turkish film industry was still dominated by commercial cinema. The industry was enjoying their golden years with record numbers of films in production. Yet, commercial cinema dominated the entire Turkish industry, and there were no alternative exhibition areas. In 1962, Şakir Eczacıbaşı, the founder of Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts met with Henri Langlois, the founder of the French Cinematechque, in Paris. Langlois convinced Eczacıbaşı that cinematechques were needed for the future of independent filmmaking (Alıcı 2016, 197). After Eczacıbaşı had a meeting with the well-known film critic Onat Kutlar, and later other film critics, the Turkish Cinematechque Association was opened in 1965. They organised screenings of famous auteurs like Claude Chabrol, Jean-Luc Godard and François Truffaut in a movie theatre in Sıraselviler Street (in Beyoğlu) and published their own film magazine called Yeni Sinema (New Cinema). They were also involved in film archiving and the education of young filmmakers and film critics.

With the Turkish Cinematechque, the cultural polarisation in Turkish Film Industry became more visible. On one side, there were high-brow film critics who were fond of European auteurs and who critized the Turkish commercial film industry. On the other side, were filmmakers who defend national values and criticised the critics to envy the West (Kalsın 2014, 75). This discussion, started in the early days of the Turkish Republic, still forms the core of the cultural debates between secular and conservatives. In 1980, the Turkish Cinematechque was closed down during a military coup and it has never reopened.

Between 1980–1990, the Turkish film industry was dominated by foreign (mostly American) productions. Multiplexes entered the country and commercial cinema dominated almost all movie theatres. Mainly due to the dominance of mainstream films in the Turkish market, a high demand for art house films arose in the 1980s. The first major cinema event of this period, Istanbul International Cinema Days (which later named as Istanbul Film Festival) was organised in 1982 with the screening of 6 films on 'Cinema and Arts'. Later, this event became a yearly activity and eventually became the biggest film festival in Istanbul. Hülya Uçansu, the director of Istanbul Cinema Days, explains the high interest in these early activities; 'The ticket sale topped in 1987. We were awarded because of the beautiful programme with the sale of 140.000 tickets and the breaking of 1986's record' (Uçansu 2012, pp. 161–162). As film scholar Aylin Sayın points out, the high interest and participation to Istanbul Cinema Days illustrates a transformation of urban audiences' taste in film from Yeşilçam to arthouse. (Sayın 2018) Also in 1990s, with the introduction of digital technologies, DVD cafes spread all over the major cities; Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, became very popular screening spaces. However, when the DVD players entered homes, these cafes are closed down rapidly.

In 2000s, the museums and modern art centres started to programme their own screenings.[1] With the emergence of these new spaces of circulation for films, there has been a deictic turn towards more complex and mutable conceptions of space and location in galleries (Butler 2010, 306). The new technologies diversified the everyday experience of spatial location, as well as film exhibition and production. With the emergence of video as a way of production, experimental films and video art works also found a wide area of exhibiton, including museums and art centres. While the technological developments diversified the production and exhibition methods and spaces, their audience also changed with these new improvements. Clearly, the contemporary proliferation of alternative film exhibition spaces in Istanbul is related to these technological developments. But they also depend on a series of sociopolitical and economic reasons which this articles aims to discover.

Distribution Monopoly and the Use of Museums and Art Spaces as Film Venues

One of the main reasons of the contemporary proliferation of alternative spaces in Istanbul is the difficulties independent filmmakers having to reach the audience because of the film distribution monopoly caused by few dominant companies. As explained in the documentary *Only Blockbusters Left Alive* (Yücel and Müjdeci 2016); the 3 biggest distributors in Turkey have a hold of 70% market share. This 'big three' determines which films will be played in which locations with how many prints. The top distributor Mars Group is notable for increasing its share from 6% to 30% in one year. This unequal distribution deeply effects the industry. Because Turkey does not have anti-trust laws like the U.S., the most powerful film distributor conquers the exhibition halls. This imbalance in distribution grows exponentially when it comes to operating film theatres. As the European Audiovisual Observatory data shows: 'one company has taken hold of more than half of the total audience in Turkey. Mars Groups dominates with 52%. There is no other country in Europe where one company has more than 50% of the market share' (Kanzler 2014). The report of Antrakt Magazine in 2017 shows that: 'Mars Group, the biggest of the top 10 film theatre chains in Turkey has more than 95 000 seat capacity. The remaining 9 biggest companies on the other hand have 86 000. Compared to 677 screens Mars Group commands, the other 9 have 756' (Yavuz 2017). Compare to Europe, the ratio of multi/megaplexes is twice the EU average. 85% of the audience in Turkey is directed to those multi/megaplexes with multi screens, which located inside the shopping malls (Yücel and Müjdeci 2016). The distribution crises reached its peak in 2019 with the arbitrary practices of Mars Group.[2]

The monopoly of commercial cinema in Turkey provoked a segment of filmmakers and cinephiles to find alternative exhibition solutions for independent and small budget films. Başka Sinema, a distribution initiative programmed a collection of independent local films and released them together every month. With Başka Sinema, independent filmmakers had the opportunity to release their films in movie theatres and compete with commercial films to a certain extent. Başka Sinema both used movie theatres (Beyoğlu, Kadıköy, Altunizade Movie Theatres) and alternative spaces (Koç, Sabancı, Boğaziçi Universities, Bomontiada Art Centre, Istanbul French Cultural Centre). One of these alternative venues is the well-known modern art museum **Istanbul Modern** (**Figure 1**) which has partnership both with Başka Sinema and Istanbul Film Festival.

In 2004, Istanbul Modern, a former custom warehouse in Karaköy (**Figure 2**), opened as Turkey's first modern museum and contemporary art centre. In addition to its temporary exhibition halls, photography gallery and library the museum opened a 130 m2 microcinema with

FIGURE 1. Istanbul Modern Cinema.

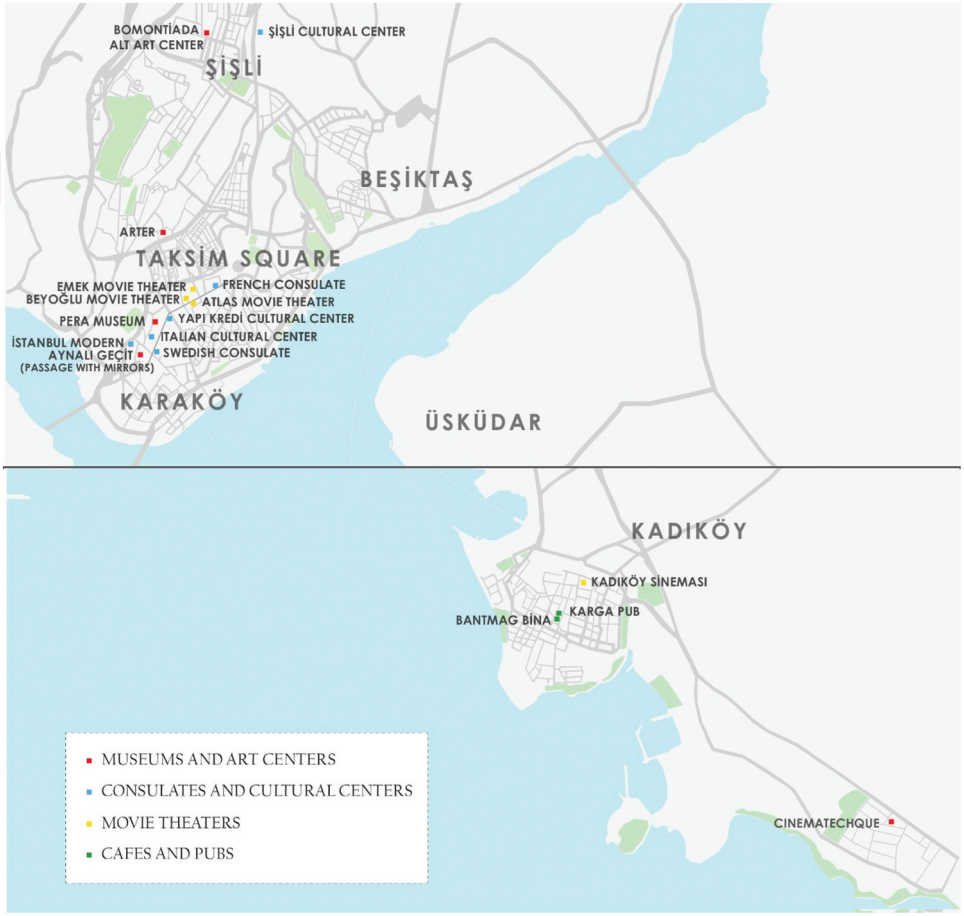

FIGURE 2. Map of Istanbul's Alternative Film Screening Venues.

117 seats in 2006. In Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays, they screen films from their monthly program. The cinema makes room for local and contemporary productions, as well as film programs complement ongoing exhibitions of the museum and talks on film history and cinema culture (Istanbul Modern).

Parallel to the national distribution crises, alternative exhibition spaces started to make more room for local independent films. Starting from 2011 Istanbul Modern Cinema started the program '**Count Us In!**' which is held in autumns and offers the latest examples of cinema in Turkey as well as talks with directors, producers, and cast members. In the last years these selections screened films like *Körfez (The Gulf, 2017, Emre Yeksan), Kaygı (Inflame, 2017, Ceylan Özgün Özçelik), AnaYurdu (Motherland, 2015, Senem Tüzen)* which had limited distribution in Turkey, or Anadolu Turnesi *(Anatolian Trip, 2018, Can Eskinazi-Deniz Tortum), Onun Filmi (Her First, 2017, Su Baloğlu-Merve Bozcu), Anarşik Harmoni (Anarchic Harmony, 2014, Koray Kaya)* which had no theatrical release at all.

In addition to the 'Count Us In!' programme Istanbul Modern Cinema also organised another series **Rendezvous with Directors** that features the entire filmography of a director from Turkey's contemporary film culture with a distinctive artistic identity and original approach. This program hosted panel discussions with well known Turkish directors Reha Erdem, Derviş Zaim, Ümit Ünal and Zeki Demirkubuz. While supporting national films to reach wider audience, museum's cinema also opens its venue to various film festivals such as Istanbul Film Festival, Filmmor Women's Film Festival on Wheels and Sinepark.

A similar attempt to support national independent cinema is a program called **'Cinema, Where To?'** organised by experimental film initiative Fol Cinema and production company in a small art/event centre called **Aynalı Geçit** (Passage with Mirrors) (**Figure 3**). As its name indicates, the centre is located in a historical passage called European Passage (old name Aynalı Pasaj/Passage with Mirrors). Built in 1874, the passage was restored many times, and re-opened in 1990s after the final restoration. In 2009 the events centre Aynalı Geçit started to show films, organise meetings, seminars and concerts in this historical place. The venue has 100 seats and a small cafe. They provide space for Istanbul and Documentarist Film Festivals as well as special organisations like 'Cinema, Where to?' program. They screen one film each month, don't have a pre-scheduled day, they announce the event through social media. In the last two months they screened Emre Yeksan's *Körfez (The Gulf, 2017)* which was premiered in Venice Film Festival and had limited distribution and Burak Çevik's *Tuzdan Kaide (Pillar of Salt, 2018)* which was premiered in Berlinale and had no theatrical release in Turkey.

This program is a small DIY project that connects filmmakers with their audience. The attendees foster intimate and communal relations. In a personal interview, Burak Çevik, a cinephile and one of the founders of Fol Cinema Group tells that audience and filmmakers share unique experiences in every screening. Fol Cinema Group was founded in 2015 with a group of university students. They organise regular screenings (mostly experimental films) in different alternative film venues of Istanbul. With inviting the director, the Group allows a ground for dialogue between the audience and filmmakers.

Fol Cinema initiative funds their screenings with crowdfunding campaigns and donations. As Burak Çevik explains that they had a crowfunding campaign in 2016. With 50 backers, they were able to fund their screenings for the whole year. Besides that they also ask for the sponsorship of locations. They were sponsored by various venues such as SALT Galata, Bomontiada ALT Art Centre, Adahan Hotel, Pera Museum and finally Aynalı Geçit.

One other reason of the distribution crisis was the closing down of historical independent cinemas in Beyoğlu and opening of multiplexes which reserved their screening halls for Mars Group. Historically,

FIGURE 3. Aynalı Geçit.

Beyoğlu has long been the entertainment centre of Istanbul. But this started to change with the new policies of AKP's Beyoğlu Municipality. The transformation of the district also effected the distribution of alternative exhibition spaces.

Urban Transformation and How Cafes Became Microcinemas

The neo-liberal economic policies implemented after 80s, have made Istanbul one of the most attractive places for international investment (Gül 2012, 178). By the 1900s, Beyoğlu became a prominent shopping and entertainment locale (Öz and Özkaracalar 2011, 166). 'The residential transformation in Beyoğlu, or "the grand transformation" as the Beyoğlu mayor calls it, seems to be going hand in hand with the overall commercial upscaling of the district' (Eder and Öz 2014, 296). Beyoğlu Municipality first targeted the noisy bars, cafes, shops and the restaurants (most of them have the licence to sell alcoholic beverages) saying that these places are polluting the neighbourhood. During this process many buildings were demolished and rebuilt and many movie theatres were closed down. Some of the buildings such as the historic Cercle D'orient building which also hosted Emek Movie Theatre was renovated and turned into a shopping mall. The demolition of Cercle D'orient building and Emek Movie Theatre were protested many times by the activists.

After the destruction of Emek and other historical movie theatres in Beyoğlu, festivals started to face difficulties in finding venues. As Necati Sönmez, the director of Documentarist Film Festival, remarked that in 2017 they had found it difficult to find a venue for the Documentarist 9th Istanbul Documentary Days, and they had mostly applied to venues in foreign consulates, such as French Cultural Centre and the Swedish Consulate in Istanbul. Recently Documentarist Film Festival only uses alternative film exhibition spaces which are Aynalı Geçit, the Chamber of Architects of Turkey, Tobacco Warehouse, Yapı Kredi Cultural Centre and Bitiyatro.

Like Documentarist, Istanbul Film Festival also had difficulties in finding venues. Kerem Ayan, the director of Istanbul Film Festival, explains that the festival organisers are trying to find new venues in Beyoğlu (the centre of the festival): 'We don't want to give up Beyoğlu. It is the most colourful district of Istanbul. Many movie theatres are closed and the others are not in good condition. The bank Yapı Kredi opened a new cultural centre at İstiklal Street and we use their upper floors as our festival centre. In addition to Atlas and Beyoğlu Movie Theatres, we have screenings at Pera Museum, French Cultural Centre and Arter Art Centre' (Ögeturk 2018). Even though the festivals used alternative spaces in Beyoğlu, the numbers of seats were not enough for the festival audience and they also wanted to widen the area of the festival and used cinemas and alternative spaces also in the other side of the Bosphorus, in Kadıköy.

In May 28th, 2013 to prevent the destruction of Gezi Park, a group of activists occupied the park which is located in Taksim square in Beyoğu district. The occupation continued for two weeks and ended with brutal police intervention on the night of June 15th, 2013. Even before the Gezi uprising, the cultural and social life of Beyoğlu were damaged by the municipality under AKP. The alcohol restrictions on pubs and cafes, the transformation of historical buildings and stores into shopping malls, the closing down of many cinemas and the strict police control over the political space especially after Gezi Park protests, resulted in the movement of many residents from Beyoğlu to Kadıköy district.

Kadıköy, a well-known district on the Asian side of İstanbul, became an attraction point for the groups formed during the Gezi Park uprising, which represents a new political culture developing especially among the youths, and became an alternative cultural space to Taksim. Kadıköy is easily accessible both by sea and land transportation and suitable for art studios, workshops, hotels, and hostels, mostly attracted students, cultural middle class, artists and tourists. Several types of cafes, coffee houses, pubs and bars started to increase in the last years in Kadıköy, as well as associations and cultural organisations.

The majority of Kadıköy residents fit David Brooks' concept of BoBo (bourgeois bohemians), who have bohemian world of creativity but at the same time the ambitions of the bourgeoisie (Brooks 2000). As sociologist Çağlar Keyder points out; a 'new middle class' is formed in Turkey after 80s with globalisation and increase of educated youth. This new middle class (who also protested in Gezi Park) demands the democratic features such as their rights and freedom, as well as the right to control and join the collective decisions on their habitat (Keyder 2013). According to Zeynep Türkmen (2015, 39), which is also discussed in the gentrification literature, 'the new cultural middle class prefers to live in historical and multicultural inner city districts like Kadıköy to separate themselves from the traditional middle class living style'. For them

Kadıköy is a tolerant and comfortable place because of its relatively more democratic and distinctive atmosphere compared to other central districts of Istanbul.

As media scholar Donna De Ville explains alternative spaces for film exhibition require certain demographic, economic and cultural attributes of metropolitan locale to be sustained (De Ville 2014, iii). In the case of Istanbul these spaces started to spread especially in Kadıköy region, after the demolition of historical movie theatres in Beyoğlu and Gezi Park protests. In Kadıköy, the alternative film exhibition spaces are located around Bahariye-Moda, and Caddebostan districts which have middle and high income inhabitants. In the last decade as well as cafes and pubs, these districts also witnessed the increase of art galleries, bookshops, artists' ateliers and small film exhibition sites.

One of the well-known alternative film exhibition space in Kadıköy is **Bantmag Bina** which is located at Moda district. Bantmag Bina is a cafe/restaurant and an art centre placed in a restored three-storey historical building, which previously used as a pub called Isis Bar. The first floor is a cafe and a restaurant with a small garden. The second floor is an exhibition hall for artists and illustrators. The top floor is a space for film exhibitions, concerts and workshops. Bantmag Bina is open everyday from 11:00 am to the late hours at night (depending on the screening times). The film screenings in Bantmag Bina varied from Turkish films and documentaries, such as Mert Gökalp's environmental documentary *Lüfer – Boğazın Prensi (Bluefish – The Prince of Bosphorus, 2017)*, Mu Tunç's *Arada (In Between, 2017)* to international classsics and contemporary films, like Scott Cooper's *Hostiles (2017)* or Adam Curtis' documentaries.

Another characteristic film exhibition venue in Kadıköy is **Karga Pub** (**Figure 4**) which was transformed from another historical building that used to be architects' residence during the building of Haydarpaşa Train Station in 1900s. The 5 storey building started to be used as a pub in 1996. In 2001 the owners decided to use two top floors as an art space; KargART which later started to host film screenings in 2004. While the first three stories of the building still serve as a cafe/pub, fourth and fifth floors host events such as short film, documentary and animation screenings, seminars and art exhibitions. Karga Pub is also a location sponsor of ! f Istanbul Independent Film Festival and screen the festivals's shorts programme selection every year. All screenings are free and without any commercial viability in mind.

The increase of café-type screening spaces and the enlivening of Kadıköy also inspired the owners of Kadıköy Sineması to re-open the historical movie theatre and claim their father's legacy. Funda Kocadağ, the owner and manager of Kadıköy Sineması explains her motives of restoring the theatre as: 'We are forced to consume the products in multiplexes which are kind of shopping mall packages. I always resisted to these packages. We will open our doors to independent filmmakers and festivals. We are going to screen the independent films of Başka Sinema and Istanbul Film Festival. Kadıköy Sineması won't screen any commercial films' (Erkoçak 2018). This welcoming approach to festival audience appealed many filmlovers and guided them to Kadıköy.

The demands of cinephiles in Kadıköy also encouraged the Kadıköy Municipality to invest in cinema related activities. 52 years after the foundation of the Istanbul Cinematechque, Kadıköy Municipality decided to open it again in a new building in Moda neigbourhood. In a special event, Kadıköy Mayor, Aykurt Nuhoğlu announced the opening of **Cinematechque** in 2019. For the first time, a municipality involves in the management of such project in Istanbul. Almost 40 years later after its closure, the cinephiles who were involved in the original Istanbul Cinematheque works with the municipality to recreate the same atmosphere. Jak Şalom, the first member of the original cinematechque and the advisor of the new one told that 'We are trying to build a comprehensive institution with film archive, film library, screening halls, classrooms and ateliers for film students' (Hurriyet 2018).

Kadıköy Municipality's effort is important in terms of branding 'Kadıköy' as the 'New Cultural Centre of Istanbul'. The creative migration from Beyoğlu to Kadıköy created a new geographical distribution directly related to existent cultural segregation. One of the main reasons of this segregation is that Kadıköy is governed by the municipality of CHP, the opponent political party. CHP's Kadıköy Municipality brands the neighbourhood as a new cultural centre and invests in all kind of cultural events, also to create cultural capital in this area.

The confrontation between AKP and CHP is clearly visible between the different municipalites they control and the lifestyles in these neighbourhoods (Beyoğlu and Kadıköy). While Akp municipalities restrict the cultural and entertainment business, CHP municipalites open new spaces to them. Another example of this confrontation can be seen in the film programmes of cultural centres managed by CHP municipalities, not

FIGURE 4. Karga Pub.

only in Kadıköy, but also in other districts like Sarıyer, Beşiktaş and Şişli.

Screenings at Cultural Centres to Bypass Film Censorship

The relations between filmmakers, film festivals and the government were not really troublesome between 2003 to 2010, during Turkey's ruling party AKP's first and second term rules. In this period, Turkish Ministry of Culture's Production Fund raised and many independent filmmakers made their films with the support of this grant. In this period, Turkish film industry was enlivened and many international co-productions were screened in A-List film festivals all around the world.

However, the discontent regarding AKP's environmental, urban, and labour policies and their increasingly authoritarian rule also effected their relations with the film industry negatively. In 2013, the Istanbul International Film Festival opened with the protests against the reconstruction of the Emek Movie Theatre on İstiklal Avenue. The police deployed water cannons and tear gas to disperse a group of thousands. Government authorities defended the planned

reconstruction and renovation of the theatre, which would be moved to the upper floor of the new shopping mall. Since the cinema's entrance would also have to be moved from the ground floor to the upper floor, it would no longer be directly accessible from the street. The decision of destroying Emek Movie Theatre was also protested in the closing ceremony of İstanbul Film Festival.

2 months after the Emek protests, Gezi Park Protests started and the government became very intolerable and violent against the opponents. Many activists were taken into custody, journalists were arrested and the opponents were punished. With the rising authoritarian rule, the film censorship in Turkey is also re-emerged. Major film festivals cancelled the screenings of various films due to their political content.

In 2014 Reyan Tuvi's documentary about the Gezi Park demonstrations entitled the *Face of the Earth Becomes a Face of Love* was removed from the programme of the 51st International Antalya Film Festival. The documentary was narrating how people from very diverse lifestyles and ideologies fought together to convert the Gezi Park into a model of the world they dreamed of. When the documentary is removed from the program, the jury president of the National Documentary Competition, Can Candan and later ten other jury members announced their withdrawal from the festival. After that, almost all documentary directors (13 of the 15) also withdrew their films. As a result, the National Documentary Competition is cancelled.

In 2015, the screening of a Kurdish documentary entitled Bakur (North), a documentary about PKK was cancelled during the 34th Istanbul Film Festival. Festival organisers received a notice from the Culture and Tourism Ministry "reminding them that all films created in Turkey to be shown at the festival must have obtained a 'registration document'. Bakur was removed from the programme and as a reaction to the censorship, all the films in the national feature-length film categories were withdrawn. Jury members at the festival also organised a press meeting to announce that they were also withdrawing. All competitions of the festival are cancelled.

Before the prevention of Bakur's screening, the festivals were not used to require films' registration documents before putting them on their programmes. Yet, after Bakur case, all festivals started to ask for registration document which is provided by Turkish Ministry of Culture under government's control. The request for the registration document became a censorship method of the government.

> … registration documents appear to be a useful means of preventing the screening of films, mostly those relating to the struggle for Kurdish rights, that the state does not want to be screened. In other words, it forms an inspection mechanism allowing committees connected to the Culture and Tourism Ministry to intervene on the basis of the content of films. The festivals where films have been removed due to not having registration documents have generally not mentioned the content of these films in their statements on the matter' (Doğan 2011, 8)

According to the law, the registration document is needed only if you will screen the films in movie theatres, or a venue with film theatre status. The repression is directed against festival venues. Thus, the festivals legally did not need registration documents to screen films in alternative exhibition spaces such as museums or foreign cultural centres. The strategy was to place the films with risky political content to these alternative exhibition spaces.

In 2015 Documentarist Film Festival organised a program called Censored Films (Sansüre Takılanlar) and screened Bakur and other censored films *'Dersim 38'(Çayan Demirel, 2006), 'Yeryüzü Aşkın Yüzü Oluncaya Dek' (Until the Earth's Surface Will Be the surface of Love, Reyan Tuvi, 2014) and 'Berivan' (Aydın Orak, 2010)* in **Şişli City Cultural Centre** *(aka Cemil Candaş Kent Kültür Merkezi)* (Diken 2015). The management of this cultural centre controlled by the Şişli regional municipality administred by the opposition party, CHP. Unlike AKP, CHP supports secular and dissident contents and encourages their exhibition in their cultural centres. They provide space for alternative film and art exhibitons, theatre plays, concerts and various events in the cultural centres of the regional municipalities they are in administration. The programmes are more flexible and libareted in the cultural centres located in the regions governed by the municipalites of CHP, such as Beşiktaş, Kadıköy and Şişli. Şişli City Cultural Centre is one of these venues with 700 seats open to alternative art activities. These cultural centres which do not have movie theatre status were relatively (although not completely), protected areas, thus film festivals prefered to screen risky content films in these venues.

However, the use of such alternative venues did not really stop censorship. One of the programmers of Documentarist and Which Human Rights Film Festival explains that, now, they meet with the lawyers before every festival and discuss different strategies in case of

a possible police intervention. The lawyers show them every legal way and discuss how they can protect themselves from illegal police action. As she says in a personal interview ' … since the censorship of Bakur, the repression of festivals had increased and that the raiding of festival venues during film screenings was is longer an unlikely prospect'.

Last year the organisers of Which Human Rights Film Fesival organised a forum during the festival to discuss how they can cope with the pressure on film festivals. The result was to form a solidarity network with legal consultants to warn and protect each other. They planned to inform their audience on social media with private messages about the screenings of risky content films, and do not announce it in mainstream press. So, in addition to protecting the festival organisers with legal guidance, this solidarity network also aims to share some films with their audience through alternative channels.

CONCLUSION

In January 2019, the Law no. 5224 the Evaluation, Classification and Promotion of Cinema Films is changed. According to the new legislation 'Any film which is not approved as "proper", cannot commercially be distributed or exhibited.' This meant that with the new law the committee of the Ministry of Culture and Turism can censor any film they do not think it is proper and prevent its distribution and exhibition (Atsüren 2019). Now all films mainstream or independent, political or apolitical are subject to censorhip. Thus alternative venues become much more important for the visibility of the films. The cultural segragation which is visible even in the law, increased the polarisation not only ideologically but also geographically. The seculars mostly concentrated in the regions governed by the opposition party. A significant change related to this issue is the migration of Istanbul's entertainment industries from Beyoğlu (an AKP governed territory) to Kadıköy (a CHP governed territory).

In Istanbul, alternative film exhibition venues become the sociability spaces of cinephiles. In many countries these spaces are expanded to suburban and rural communities and proved that art films are not only appreciated in big cities (Alvin 2007, 5). However in Turkey, alternative venues are concentrated in big cities, especially in Istanbul and not reach or find audience in rural areas. And in Istanbul they reach a limited high-brow audience. The audience of alternative film exhibition spaces can be regarded as being well endowed with what the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu terms cultural capital, that is knowledge, expertise and competency in appreciating valued cultural products (Bourdieu 1987). This situation also marks the polarisation of tastes in Turkish society. As the scholar Özgür Arun points out with analysing the research data of *First European Quality of Life Survey* (Wallace, Pichler, and Hayes 2007), the distribution of cultural capital in Turkey is inequal. Even though the Turkish Republic aimed to provide equal education and minimise the difference between school-educated against self-educated from its foundation, this ideal is failed and the cultural inequality increased:

> The cultural inequality in Turkey is fed by two factors: the first one is the inequal distribution of the economic capital; and the second is inequal distribution of cultural capital. The inequl distribution of economic capital limits the eligibility of cultural practices such as art galleries, concerts, cinema and theatre. The inequal distribution of cultural capital on the other hand, increases the cultural hierarchy and legitimizes the differentiated approach of different classes/categories to the practices of cultural production and the cultural products. (Arun 2014, 187)

The data of *First European Quality of Life Survey* shows that in Turkey the high class only forms 6.1% of the population, while 10% has low income, need basic food, shelter and clothing and can only have *taste of necessity*. 50% of the population recorded themselves as not having any hobbies. In terms of cultural consumption, television is still the most common cultural product for low-middle classes in Turkey. As the data shows cinema is not a part of the lives of the majority of the population in Turkey. Alternative exhibition venues of Istanbul on the other hand, very different from Vogel's Cinema16 which also aimed to educate the audience, target already educated high-brow cinephiles, and the filmmakers who cannot distribute their films in commercial cinemas.

As mentioned in this article, the proliferation of alternative exhibition spaces in Istanbul is related to distribution monopoly, authoritarian pressure and urban transformation. These places provide space for independent and censored films and film festivals. In this respect, the existence and proliferation of these spaces are essentially important for independent and experimental films, as well as documentaries and short films which have very limited or no theatrical release. On the other hand, their concentration on specific districts and targeting the audience with certain cultural

capital deepens the polarisation. While these alternative film exhibiton venues provide space for independent filmmakers, festivals and censored films, they also aggregate hierarchical clusters.

NOTES

[1] Mithat Alam Film Centre, which also has a screening venue, opened in 2002 in Boğaziçi University. The activities of the centre include showing movies almost every night during the year; preparing retrospective programs on film directors, actors and genres; organising panel discussions and talks in which world famous directors, actors and critics participate. In addition to Mithat Alam Film Centre, cinema clubs of the universities in Istanbul continued to screen films in universities.

[2] In 2016 the biggest cinema chain in Turkey, Mars Cinema was sold to South Korean CJ CGV Co for 800 million dollars. After their take over CGV started to develop their own exhibition strategies in Turkey. One of these strategies was to define 'cinema' not only as a fim screening hall but rather a leisure place. So they organised various promotions that added popcorn and drinks to the film ticket price. While doing this they also cut the revenue of the producers. Before, they agreed to pay 50% of their revenue to the film producers, but later with adding popcorn and drinks, they started to give around 20% of the ticket revenue to the producers. In January 2019 the leading mainstream production companies in Turkey (BKM, CMYLMZ, Çamaşırhane Film) announced that they are going to boycott Mars Group which has 45% share in the distribution of the whole country and not going to release their films in the cinemas of Mars Group (Erem 2019).

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III

CONCLUSION

6. Conclusion

While I was completing this dissertation, Covid-19 hit the world and changed all the social, economic and political dynamics around the globe. Just like its impacts on social environments such as the university setting, the devastating effects of Covid-19 have also had a negative impact on screen production and exhibition practices. The virus has deeply influenced the forms of production and exhibition of screen media, as all sets worldwide have been canceled due to the spread of the virus and the movie theaters closed down. All this happened in a period when the discussions on the transformation of traditional screen production and exhibition through digitalization were already on the agenda. Covid-19 increased the demand for digital platforms even further. Netflix, which radically changed the distribution dynamics of the film and TV industry, also stopped their productions for a while right after it started the production of two new Netflix original series in Turkey: *If Only (Şimdiki Aklım Olsa)* and the third season of *The Gift (Atiye).*

Istanbul, a large media center which hosts tens of film and TV series sets daily, almost all of the central broadcasting studios of the national networks, accommodates around 900 movie theater halls and has many alternative exhibition spaces, became a production hub for Netflix in 2018 with the production of the first Turkish Netflix original series *The Protector (Hakan Muhafiz/2018-2020).* Previously the city also hosted the production of Hollywood blockbusters such as *Skyfall (2012), Taken (2008)* and *The International (2019).* With Turkey becoming the second-largest TV series exporter in the world in the last decade, the popularity of Istanbul as a shooting location increased even more. Today, it is possible to come across a new film or TV set anywhere in the city.

The contemporary media industry boom in the city is parallel to Istanbul's globalization process which made the city an important center for international investments. The current

government, along with international companies, invested in the construction sector which resulted in significant changes to the city's panorama, especially with the construction of skyscrapers and high-rise buildings in the business districts. The population of Istanbul has kept growing and reached 15.52 million in 2020. Even though Istanbul's popularity as a media production hub dates back to the 1960s (Yeşilçam Period), parallel to its current growth and transformation, the city became even a larger media center. All of these developments and changes in the city and in screen media are related to a number of social, cultural, political and economic factors discussed in this dissertation.

The first part of the empirical research looked at TV drama production sites (first chapter on-location sites and second chapter film studios) to document the relationship between screen media, production spaces and urban transformation. Analyzing three main on-location sites: historical neighborhoods, post-industrial areas and new luxury working spaces for creative industries, the first chapter shows the extent of the alignment between gentrification and TV production processes. The production of TV series in particular parts of the city creates economic and social flows and both the physical production and the representation of locations on TV have an interaction with the 'locale' they are generated. Just like on-location sites, TV drama production studios, mostly located in post-industrial areas and transformed from abandoned factories, also interact with the city. The construction of these studios and their distribution around the city are directly linked to the needs of the TV industry. When the media industry is enlivened in Istanbul, more factories are turned into studios and structured according to the common storylines of the TV series.

The relationship between the urban transformation and screen media is not only visible on production sites, but also at media exhibition sites. Very similar to the transformation of factories into film and TV studios, various post-industrial spaces, such as old ports and docks, abandoned factories, are turned into museums, exhibition halls and movie theaters.

The second part looks at the contemporary exhibition strategies in the city: from open-air cinemas to multiplexes and contemporary alternative exhibition spaces. The third article explains how the narrowing down of public spaces due to urban change resulted in the disappearance of open-air cinemas, and how new luxury open-air cinemas use the nostalgia of the past cinema-going experience. Bringing the discussion to alternative exhibition spaces, the last chapter explores the reasons behind the transformation of post-industrial spaces into exhibition halls and the increasing the need for alternative venues.

The four articles together show that urbanism is an efficient context to show the relationship between screen production and exhibition and reveal the political, economic and social power relations involved in mass media production and consumption. Following Paul du Gay and Stuart Hall's circuit of culture, which suggests production, representation, consumption, identity and regulation all together form a circuit which is necessary to adequately study a cultural text or an artifact, this dissertation looks at screen media as a whole and analyzes it according to these aspects which are visibly connected in an urban area. Analyzing the relationship between urban transformation and screen media according to major aspects of the 'circuit of culture', this dissertation contributes to the field urban media studies on two levels; first, it pays attention to a relatively understudied field; how the production and consumption of screen media influence the city and vice versa. Secondly, it contributes to the critical debate focused around the categorization of the studies into production, text and exhibition/consumption which mostly exclude the other, showing that there is a complementary relationship between the city and all three aspects of screen media. As this dissertation illustrates, screen media and the city intersect at these three major levels: *production, representation and consumption* which are all related to each other and place-making in an urban context.

6.1. Production

The first level on which screen media interacts with the city is *production*. The transition from industrial to post-industrial areas in the city has created a space for creative areas and they have been used by screen media. The places in the city where screen productions have been made were created by transforming abandoned factories. Almost all of the studios in the city today are transformed from factories such as *Beykoz Kundura* that was originally a shoe factory, *Orion Studios* from a textile factory, *Yıldız Studios* from a pharmaceutical manufacturer, *Ümraniye Plateus* from a telephone manufacturing factory and *SVC Studios* from a former warehouse. Post-industrial areas are rare, empty and large places in the city that provide film and TV series with the needed space.

The post-industrial areas are not only transformed into film and TV studios but they are also used as settings for crime and action series. The derelict, disused factories and abandoned harbors that are in shambles became natural settings for the chase, torture, and suspense scenes in the productions such as *Kurtlar Vadisi (The Valley of the Wolves/2007-).* Along with post-industrial spaces, neighborhoods under renovation are also recycled in Istanbul. Neighborhoods such as Fikirtepe and Tarlabaşı where thousands of buildings have been vacated and demolished and are ideal for the production of explosion, fire and chase scenes. Fikirtepe has also been used as a post-war setting as Aleppo in a film *Kaçış (Escape/2014)* and TV series *Let it Be A Miracle (Bir Mucize Olsun/2018)* which shows the multifunctional use of neighborhoods under renovation.

Another aspect of production is the physical presence of film crews in certain districts and their relationship to the inhabitants. If a TV series is not produced in a studio, but shot on location, its physical production can affect a neighborhood positively or negatively. As Kuzguncuk's case shows, living close to a set can be challenging because of the noise, traffic

and chaos created by the production. The production of a TV drama can cause unrest in a certain neighborhood. On the other hand, as seen in Balat, the production can also have a positive impact on the residents by providing jobs for the inhabitants such as location scouting and securing extras for the series. The inhabitants can benefit from the economy of a TV series production in their neighborhood.

As these case-studies show, the process of image-making physically interacts with the city space. In Istanbul, screen productions related to creative locales (studios or exterior locations) are central to urban renovation efforts and the increase in real estate value across the city. Just like the production, the representation of the city in TV series is also closely related to urban transformation.

6.2. Representation

The representation of the city on the screen allows the viewer to get some ideas about the city, like visual representations such as the neighborhoods being peaceful and tolerant havens in the TV series *Perihan Abla (Neighbour Perihan/1986-88)* or *Ekmek Teknesi (Bread Boat/20020-5),* promoting these areas as welcoming and open to foreigners. The popularization of the culture of tolerance in television and print media makes specific neighborhoods more attractive for residence. As Balat and Kuzguncuk's examples show, these neighborhoods have gained popularity through their visibility on TV in tandem with their gentrification. This has increased property value and attracted higher-class residents and higher-end shops. These areas have become actively involved in reconstruction projects parallel to their idealized portrayals on TV. Some of the new residents of these neighborhoods mentioned that their decision to move there had come after they had seen it on TV and were charmed by its historical and peaceful

nature.[1] The representation of the specific neighborhoods on screen, along with gentrification, has thus been found to have a certain impact on the demographic changes of certain districts.

Another popular depiction in recent shows is the luxury lifestyle found in wealthy residential compounds and high-rise buildings. It creates a classy modern look for a global audience by highlighting the lives, spaces, and consumption choices of its new bourgeoisie. This modern and Westernized look especially affects audiences in the Middle East as they find the nice landscapes and classy look of the city in the series very impressive such as in *Binbir Gece (One Thousand and One Nights/2006-9)* or *Gümüş (Noor/2005-7).* The attention of the TV audience, especially those from Middle Eastern countries, has created screen tourism in the city. Visitors organize tours to see the shooting locations of several Turkish TV series which are mostly combined with Bosphorus tours where most of the mansions in the series are located. TV tourism has started to make an important contribution to the city's creative economy.

On the other hand, thematic representations, like the identification of Istanbul as a city full of action and intrigue, affect both the script of the series and the formation of production spaces physically. Because of the increasing popularity of the action-drama genre and scenes like kidnapping, shooting or stabbing, many Turkish series use similar locations such as hospitals, intensive care units, police stations or courtrooms as decors created in post-industrial spaces. The frequent use of these locations has resulted in the construction of standing sets and a new system based on supply and demand. This new studio system is directly linked to the storylines and representation of Istanbul on TV.

As this dissertation shows, not only are urban changes reflected on screen as representation but the production and consumption processes are also instrumental in

[1] Pekçelen, Seda. "Kuzguncuk'u Nasıl Bilirsiniz?" *Timeout.* 3 Ağustos 2016. https://www.timeout.com/istanbul/tr/emlak/kuzguncuku-nasil-bilirsiniz

transforming and are being transformed by the districts in which they take place. This brings us to the last intersection level between the city and screen media, which is *consumption*.

6.3. Consumption

The physical spaces of screen media consumption such as movie theaters and alternative exhibition venues are places directly linked to urban transformation. Examining the disappearance of open-air cinemas in Istanbul in the first wave of change in the 1960s shows that the transformation of the city had a direct connection with the changes in urban spectatorship. Even though the decline of Turkey's open-air cinemas is commonly depicted by media scholars to coincide with the emergence and domination of television, television was not the only reason for this downturn. By the time television entered Turkish homes, urban reconstruction projects were already instrumental in the destruction of these cinemas in Istanbul.

The open-air cinemas which had been places of socialization for the middle and lower classes were located in large gardens, neighborhood squares and broad areas. Every open-air cinema was destroyed within just a few years as urban gentrification projects were rolled out citywide in the 1960s as the city needed more apartments and parking lots with domestic migration. Most of these cinemas were not destroyed because they lost their audiences. Rather, urban renovation projects caused the land on which they were built to rise in value. The owners sold their land to contractors who then destroyed the cinemas.

Today, Istanbul's cinema-going urbanites encounter a similar experience of urban gentrification. Beyoğlu district, which has been the entertainment locale of the city since the 1800s, has witnessed a major recent urban renovation with the closing of bars, cafes and restaurants and the demolition of hundreds of buildings including historical movie theaters.

When the historical movie theaters closed down, film festivals and independent filmmakers faced difficulties finding replacement venues. Thus alternative film exhibition spaces such as museums, cafes, cultural centers, art galleries have become important places for film exhibitions. The Kadıköy region, governed by the opposition political party (CHP), has become a center for culture and arts in the city. The interests of cinephiles and the increasing number of film screening events in the Kadıköy region, have encouraged the municipality of Kadıköy to re-open the Istanbul Cinematechque after 52 years. The closing down of open air cinemas and the proliferation of alternative exhibition spaces show how urban transformation is related to screen exhibition in the city.

6.4. The Entangled Relationship Between Screen Production, Representation and Consumption

As this dissertation and case-studies show, the physicality of both screen production and consumption connects them to the urban context[2]. Both new production and exhibition sites in the city share the post-industrial spaces, re-use and transform them as their settings. Because of their physicality and need for physical space, they are both affected by urban transformation projects. The same transformation projects can result in the destruction of an exhibition space (a historical movie theater and old exhibition hall etc.) while opening a new site for a screen production, such as the case in Beyoğlu where movie theaters were closed down but Tarlabaşı became a popular shooting location for series related to urban transformation. The construction of the new buildings, shopping malls and residences can create new spaces both for film production and exhibitions, such as the case of Ataşehir where the construction of high-rise buildings increased the number of both movie theaters and on-location shooting sites in this area, or Beykoz Shoe Factory which was transformed from an

[2] The Covid 19 measures also proved how their physicality binds screen production and exhibition when both film and TV sets are stopped and the movie theaters are closed down at the same time in the city.

abandoned factory to be used both as a studio and a movie theater.

On the other hand, the representation of certain locations in film and TV series can boost the production in these areas such as the case of Kuzguncuk, or currently Yeniköy; when a TV series (*Perihan Abla/1986-88* or *Kara Sevda/2015-17*) becomes a hit, other production companies start to produce more series in these locations. And when a certain neighborhood is represented in a specific manner in a TV series, like the neighborhood Balat being a popular location for the 70s period dramas, the other series may continue to use these locations in similar ways. So the representation of certain neighborhoods in a TV series can result in a boost in production in the area attracting more producers to certain locations.

In this respect, urban context and transformation provide an efficient base to illustrate the relationship between screen production, exhibition, representation and the city. In addition to these levels, what connects screen production, exhibition and representation in Turkey is that they are all subject to the same media regulations. Both screen production, content/representation and exhibitions are controlled and monitored by the same institutions (Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Radio and Television Supreme Council) in Turkey. These two institutions give shooting permits to production companies, screening permits to films and movie theaters, and also monitor the content of the films and TV series and intervene if they think a content is inappropriate[3]. And these institutions controlled by the government are not independent from the conservative political ideologies defended by the ruling political party (AKP is the current case). Screen production, representation and exhibition are all monitored by the government that also controls urban transformation and provides construction permits. In this sense, it is possible to see the connection between the applications of

[3] Sometimes, depending on the type of production, the shooting permit is provided by the governer's office which also works depending on the government.

neo-liberal and conservative politics of AKP (as discussed in the dissertation related to the issues of censorship and gentrification) both on urban and media policies. So these different aspects of screen media are not only connected on a physical level, but also on political and economic levels.

These three articulatory moments of the 'circuit of culture', production, representation and exhibition, each represent a key site for in-depth multi-perspectival analyses, which can facilitate a broad contextual understanding of the complexities and contradictions associated with screen media and the city. As the results of this research shows screen media may promote urban transformation in less visible yet more complex ways than other creative industries. Both screen production and exhibition change the city, and are in turn being changed by the urban structuring of the globalizing city. No matter the genre of a film or a TV series, its production, representation and consumption have a constant level of interaction with the "creative locale" in which they are generated. And because the political economies of the city and screen media converge on many levels as illustrated, both image-making and image-consuming are connected to city-making and urban consumption patterns.

6.5. Limitations and Suggestions

This dissertation is designed according to the regulations of Koç University's PhD program, as a 'stapler thesis' with separate articles. While this format offers a variety of empirical studies, its eclectic structure reduces the visibility of their links within the general framework. Also, the word count limitations of some academic journals may have prevented further exploration of some theories in the articles. The shortcomings of this structure are remedied in the first part of the dissertation where the connection between the articles is presented and their place in the general theoretical framework is mapped.

Another restriction of the study is its focus on only one city and not comparing the dynamics of screen production and exhibition in similar developing cities with empirical research. Because of time, finance, resource limitations, I preferred to look at Istanbul where I have access to the subjects in film and TV industries. However, I believe applying the same research pattern to other developing cities would provide comparable data and a more comprehensive understanding of the relation between screen representation, production and exhibition/consumption in an urban context. Thus this research can be improved in further studies with the addition of more cities with similar developments.

Today's developments also show that the studies focused on both the screen and the city can be diversified. The first field of exploration is the change in the production and exhibition dynamics through digitalization. With the proliferation of digital platforms such as Netflix and Amazon, the production and consumption patterns of films and TV series have changed as well. Studies are already being conducted into the effect of Netflix on cinemas and cinema-going culture (Styliari, Kefalidou and Koleva 2018, Weinberg et al. 2020). Since these platforms are very popular, the impact of digital platforms on urban-cinema going will probably be discovered more in future studies.

Another research topic also related to digitalization is how Covid-19 affects the physical production and exhibition of screen media. Because film and TV production is inevitably collective, many new measures are needed to start the sets up again. Currently, in some countries, screen production started with very strict measures in place on the set. Covid-19 has changed everything from the tea and coffee consumption on set to the placement of cameras and microphones. Now on the sets, every actor has a separate sterilized microphone for the whole TV series. All of the crew members need to have PCR tests to prove that they are negative for Covid-19. The crew members need to repeat this test every 15 days and they pay for the tests themselves. The necessary distance between the actors has changed the way that the scenes

are being shot. If the actors have an intimate scene, they need to be quarantined for 14 days before production starts. These measures also affect the scripts for TV because now the screenwriters need the approval of the production crew before they write any intimate scenes. Covid-19 has therefore changed all of the dynamics of screen production.

Similarly, film exhibition has also been affected by the virus as most cinemas have closed down. Cinema-going also needs to be reorganized according to the virus. Today, some of the cinemas have re-opened with very strict measures. Outdoor cinemas, which are also the focus of this study, started to regain their popularity especially in countries with warm climates. In the United States 160 Walmart parking lots became temporary drive-in movie theaters to host a movie series in 20 cities this summer.[4] More creative film exhibition solutions like creating a floating movie theater on the river at the Bassin de la Villette in Paris also follow the trend of screening films in open-air during COVID-19. Similarly, new open-air cinemas are used in different geographies; Istanbul Film Festival moved its entire program to the large garden of Sabancı Museum and screened all films in open-air.[5]

As today's conditions show, the urban production and spectatorship will be transformed by these new innovative ways. However, even though digitalization changes the spatial relationships between screen media, production crews and the audience, the city will always be in the picture and public urban screen production and consumption spaces are crucial despite digitalization and private home viewing practices. The city will remain as a coherent analytical category and a vital framework for orienting ourselves spatially. The city is a crucial subject and setting for contemporary screen media, that continues to produce

[4] Shapiro, Ari. The Rise, The Fall And The New Rise Of Drive-In Movie Theaters. July 21, 2020. https://www.npr.org/2020/07/27/895867501/the-rise-the-fall-and-the-new-rise-of-drive-in-movie-theaters?t=1596913184494

[5] Milliyet. 39. İstanbul Film Festivali'nde Ulusal Yarışma heyecanı. 19.07.2020. https://www.milliyet.com.tr/kultur-sanat/39-istanbul-film-festivalinde-ulusal-yarisma-heyecani-6262684

more stories and provides space for production and exhibition. Thus the relationship between the city and screen media will constantly be alive and open to new practices, and their relationship and transformation will offer more perspectives for future research.

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