

THE DEATH OF THE AUTHOR IN THE STREETSCAPE OF ANKARA: A
BARTHESIAN INTERVENTION INTO CRITICAL TOPONYMY

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ABSTRACT

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In this thesis I use the post-structuralist textual theory of Roland Barthes that is known as ‘the death of the author’ in order to explain the politics of street names. Barthes argued that in the literary texts author cannot fix the meaning as it is the readers who produce the meaning. In a similar way, I argue that the streetscape is a polysemous text in which the meaning is produced by readers (everyday users) rather than authors (the political elites that officially determine the street names). Implication of this argument in terms of power relations is that in the streetscape there is no any hierarchical relation between the ‘weak’ masses and ‘powerful’ political elites. In fact, in the last several decades many critical toponymists showed that the political elites do not have an absolute authority on the production of meaning in the streetscapes. Yet, by focusing only on the cases of the popular rejection of official place names they also re-produced the dualisms of ‘powerful-weak’ and ‘hegemony-resistance’. In order to completely transcend these dualisms, I show that the plurality of meaning is not an exception but a general characteristic in the streetscape. I demonstrate my arguments

by using the streetscape of Ankara with a special focus on social media posts on the renaming of Nevzat Tandođan Street as Olive Branch Street in 2018.

Keywords: Critical Toponymy, the Death of the Author, Power Relations, Post-Structuralism



ÖZ

ANKARA CADDE GÖRÜNÜMÜNDE YAZARIN ÖLÜMÜ: ELEŞTİREL TOPONOMİYE BARTHES'Çİ BİR MÜDAHALE

DÜZGÜN, Doğuş

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Bu tezde Roland Barthes'ın 'yazarın ölümü' olarak bilinen post-yapısalcı metin teorisi cadde isimlerinin siyasetini açıklamak için kullanılacaktır. Barthes edebi metinlerde yazarın anlamı sabitleyemeyeceğini, zira anlamı asıl üretenin okuyucu olduğunu öne sürmüştür. Benzer bir biçimde bu çalışma, cadde isimlerinin içerisinde anlamın yazar (cadde isimlerini resmi olarak belirleyen siyasi elitler) değil okuyucu (cadde isimlerinin günlük hayattaki kullanıcıları) tarafından üretildiği çok anlamlı bir metin oluşturduğunu öne sürmektedir. Bu argümanın güç ilişkileri açısından anlamı cadde isimlerinde 'güçsüz' kitleler ile 'güçlü' siyasi elitler arasında hiyerarşik bir ilişki olmadığıdır. Aslında son birkaç on yıldır birçok eleştirel toponomist cadde isimlerinde anlamın üretiminde siyasi elitlerin mutlak otoritesinin olmadığını göstermiştir. Ancak bunlar da yalnızca resmi yer isimlerinin kullanıcılar tarafından reddedildiği vakalara odaklanarak 'güçlü-güçsüz' ve 'hegemonya-direnış' ikiliklerini yeniden üretmişlerdir. Bu ikilikleri tamamen aşmak için bu çalışmada anlamın çokluğunun bir istisna değil cadde isimlerinin genel bir özelliği olduğu gösterilecek, çalışmanın argümanlarının

gösterimi için Ankara cadde görünümünden faydalanılacak, özellikle de Nevzat Tandođan Caddesi'nin isminin Zeytin Dalı olarak adlandırılması kararı üzerine sosyal medyada paylaşılan yorumlar üzerinde durulacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Eleştirel Toponomi, Yazarın Ölümü, İktidar İlişkileri, Post-Yapısalcılık



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

People need to render the places in their environment socially identifiable. On the individual level, identifiability of places may be ensured by personal memory. However, this is not enough for social identification of place, which requires a set of common codes among the people living in the same area. Place names come into play here: from the rooms of houses (for the households) to the names of continents (for all people living in the world), place names are used by people as labels to communicate place. For this reason, human beings have named the places in their environment since they began to live in communities. For example, according to one view, the hunter gatherers that are called Bushmans and that lived in the south of Africa named the places they lived in even 10,000 years ago (Raper, 2020, p. 2070). The need for and use of place names have increased with the human societies getting more and more complex. In the contemporary world, place names have become an indispensable part of modern societies. Moreover, the function of place names has also changed significantly. Today, place names do not function in the same way they did in the society of Bushmans. In the traditional societies, place names were not determined by a political authority; rather, they were products of the cultural processes. However, in the modern societies state bodies strictly control the place naming processes. So, place names are now being determined, controlled, and regulated by the intentional choices of a political authority rather than unintentional cultural processes. This ‘choice’ aspect renders the place naming processes in the modern societies ‘political’ by making them a part of ‘power relations’ (Palonen, 2018, p. 26).

In fact, a careful observer can easily notice the political messages carried by the place names that commemorate historical people and events. The practice of naming cities after kings, conquerors, and other important people and events started with the commemoration of Alexander the Great in the historical city of Alexandria and

extended into the Hellen and Roman geographies. In the modern era, this practice was seen in France in the 18th century, in the US in the 19th century, and in the Eastern Europe in the 20th century (Azaryahu, 2012a, p. 74). In addition, in the last few centuries – especially after the French Revolution – naming of streets, boulevards, squares, parks etc. that are located in the cities (rather than the cities themselves) after historical people and events has become a common practice almost everywhere in the world (Azaryahu, 1996, pp. 313-314). However, the political aspect of place names is not limited to the political messages carried by the commemorative names. The act of naming a place is itself political considering that “naming is a kind of norming” (Berg and Kearns, 1996, p. 99). By naming a place, the naming authority ensures that the place is always remembered with that name. So, the act of place naming is itself a commemorative action (Rose-Redwood, 2008a, p. 435). Also, place naming is an important tool to claim ownership of place. For example, during the colonization period, Europeans have systematically named the places they conquered (Ainiala, Saarelma and Sjöblom, 2016, p. 19). For this reason, the phrase “victors write the history,” which has been said since ancient times can be re-expressed as “victors name places” (Lehr and McGregor, 2016, p. 78). Yet, the place naming processes do not only show which community controls a specific geographical area, but also reflects the intra-communal hierarchies in terms of who have the power to speak in a society (Jordan, 2019, p. 2).

The political character of place names is also reflected in the maps. The most famous expression that maps are not just innocent illustrations of geographical features but a product of political-hegemonic processes was presented by Monmonier: “Not only is it easy to lie with maps, it's essential” (Monmonier, 1991, p. 1). In fact, until the 1970s, maps were thought to represent reality objectively and scientifically. However, starting from the 1970s, historians of cartography have made use of the ideas of many different thinkers such as Michel Foucault, Michel de Certeau, Edward Said and Anthony Giddens to demonstrate that the maps are actually discourses of power that have been used as tools of oppression throughout the history (Bernstein, 2018, p. 7). Since maps cannot represent all of the geographical reality, they have to exclude some parts of it. Which parts of reality are included and which are excluded, and in what ways (e.g. in which language) the included parts are represented are determined either consciously or unconsciously by the political tendencies of the people or institutions that draw the

map (Bernstein, 2018, p. 7). So, maps are inherently political. The political nature of maps is also reflected in the discourse of *realpolitik*. Especially in the regions such as Middle East where the political borders are still unstable, the phrase of ‘wiping off the map’ is very popular. For example, Mulla Mustafa Barzani, the leader of the Kurdish national movement in Iraq declared in 1975 that “the [Iraqi] regime has decided that the best way to deal with us is to wipe us off the map” (Culcasi, 2006, p. 681). Similarly, the Iranian government is frequently threatening Israel with wiping them off the map. In January 2019, Revolutionary Guard deputy leader Hossein Salami said that “our strategy is to erase Israel from the global political map” (Staff, 2019). Both the fear of Kurdish politician to be wiped off the map by the Iraqi regime and the threat of Iranian general to wipe Israel off from the global political map shows that what is represented on the map is contingent on the political power relations.

So, place naming is a political act that reflects power relations. Then, the question is ‘how to explain power relations inherent in the place naming processes’. This study answers this question by presenting an exploration of power relations in a particular kind of place names, i.e. street names. To do so, it benefits from the post-structuralist textual theory of Roland Barthes, that is known as ‘the death of the author’. Therefore, the research question that will be explored in this study is ‘how to explain the power relations in the streetscapes by using the post-structuralist textual theory of Roland Barthes?’. In fact, this is not the first time that this question is being asked as the relationship between power and place names has already been on the agenda of cultural geographers since the 1980s. Place names has been, and still continues to be, studied as linguistic and cultural objects since the 19th century (Vuolteenaho and Berg, 2009, pp. 5-6). However, with the critical turn that was experienced in the studies of place names in the 1980s, the place names began to be treated as political objects, as well (Rose-Redwood, Azaryahu and Alderman, 2010, p. 456). Since then, different approaches have been presented to explain the politics of place names. However, most of these different approaches have shared a common ground, that is the assumption that the place names are semantically controlled by the hegemonic powers in society. According to this assumption, the semantic content of the place names comes from a particular agent who determines the place names. In other words, the agent who names the places is assumed to be able to determine the content of the place names, as well. So, according to this viewpoint, every place name has a fixed meaning and this

meaning is controlled by the same agent who determined the official place names. This line of thought ends up in the view that hegemonic actors instrumentalize place names to impose their ideologies on the masses. In fact, this approach to place names has not been gone unchallenged. A number of researchers have showed that the process of ideological imposition through place names should not be considered absolute as in some cases the users of place names can consciously or unconsciously reject the official place names (Light and Young, 2014, pp. 671-672). However, even these studies that were aware of the importance of the reactions of users in understanding the politics of place names have not gone beyond demonstrating that the control of the hegemonic agents on the semantic content of place names can ‘sometimes’ be challenged. So, the political dimension of place names has been reduced to a hierarchical relationship between the hegemonic political elites that control the official place naming regimes and the users that in general submit to these hegemonic powers.

It is exactly at this point that this study aims to make a novel intervention. More specifically, this study makes an alternative explanation to the political dimension of place names by arguing that not the agents that control the official naming regimes but the users of place names are the producers of meaning. So, throughout the study I will argue that the users of place names should not be seen as passive recipients of the messages of hegemonic groups. In order to ground my arguments theoretically, I use the textual theory of Roland Barthes and specifically his concept of ‘the death of the author’. As it will be scrutinized later, for Barthes, the representation of the author as an agent that imposes its intended meaning to the readers is a myth that has pervaded in the field of literature. Barthes rejected this mythical conception of the author by arguing that the meaning in a text is not something imposed by the writer but produced by the readers. Considering the place names, and more specifically street names as something that can be treated as text, i.e. a city-text, I apply the textual theory of Barthes on this text. By doing so, I argue that the streetscape is not a monolithic textual entity that carries the messages of the political elites (i.e. writers) who control the official naming bodies, but an inter-textual entity, a ‘palimpsest’ (de Certeau, 1984, p. 202; Ferguson, 1988, p. 392), that is written and re-written by many different co-writers and that makes references to different contemporary and historical texts. The meaning of the elements in this palimpsest is not imposed by the political elites that desire to design the urban context, but produced by their users.

The most important implication of such an approach to street names is the recognition that the power relations in streetscape cannot be explained by the dualism of submission to and rejection of power. In the last decade many critical studies on place names have explored the everyday use of place names. However, in almost all of these studies the popular responses to the place names are reduced into two options: I either submit to or reject the hegemonic place names. If I reject, this is because the meaning I gave to a place name contradicts with the intended meaning of the hegemonic agents. So, there is a plurality of meaning in the cases of the rejection of official place names. In the cases of acceptance, on the other hand, the users of place names submit to the hegemony of the agents that determine place names. This dualistic viewpoint prevents the students of place names to see that the plurality of meaning does not only exist in the cases of rejection of place names, but it is an inherent feature of place names in general. Users give meaning to place names differently; this plurality of meaning sometimes causes a tension between the interpretation of users and the perceived intentions of political authorities, and thereby brings the rejection of official names. However, this does not mean that in the other cases the meaning is fixed. Contrarily, the meaning is plural in every instance. The difference is that in some cases this plurality ends up in the popular rejection of place names while in the others not.

To demonstrate these arguments, I use the streetscape of Ankara as a field of investigation. In the last 25 years, the streetscape of Ankara has been very dynamic. In this period, the political parties with similar ideological backgrounds have tried to shape the street names of Ankara in line with their nationalist-Islamist discourse. So, Ankara is a very appropriate context for a study that focuses on the politics of place names thanks to the dynamism of its toponymies. In addition to a number of different street naming activities, a special focus will be given on the case of renaming of Nevzat Tandoğan Street where the US Embassy in Ankara is located as Olive Branch Street in 2018. This was a symbolic response of the Turkish Government to the negative attitude of the United States (US) against the Turkish military intervention in Syria that was named as ‘Operation Olive Branch’. Majority of people in Turkey was not against such a name change and so did not reject it. However, as can be seen from the following box, the people interpreted this naming decision in many different ways rather than in a single way in line with the intentions of the government. So, by demonstrating the existence of plurality of meaning even in such a case where the

intention of the naming authority is clear and there is no a manifest conflict between the users of place names and the political authorities on the legitimacy of the new name, I intend to show that the plurality of meaning is not an exception but a norm in streetscape.

“Sometimes you want to annoy your enemy” (Twitter, 2018a)

“It should be written in English as well so that they read and understand better” (Haber7, 2018).

“The name of the Nevzat Tandoğan Street became Olive Branch Street but that is not enough. The name of such a big operation must be given to a big square” (Twitter, 2018c).

“Two slaps together. The erasure of the CHP governor who called the Anatolian people ‘Ox Anatolian’ is the first slap. The second slap is given to the US. A special offer in slap. If you buy one, get the second free” (Twitter, 2018d)

“A very pointed work. You are bringing down a non-national person from where it is not worthy and giving a message to the US in the language it understands. Congratulations” (Twitter, 2018e)

“If there was a necessity of giving a message and response, a start could be made by closing the US bases in our land” (Ekşisözlük, 2018).

“Let the name of Olive Branch Street be Nevzat Tandoğan street, Anatolia Square be Tandoğan square again. What kind of hatred and effort to destroy is this” (Twitter, 2018g).

“Nevzat Tandoğan is a person who has contributed to this country at various levels. America could have been protested in different ways. No offence but this is disrespect for labor and the dead” (Twitter, 2018h).

Figure 1. Different interpretations of the decision of renaming Nevzat Tandoğan Street as Olive Branch Street on social media.

In sum, this study aims to explain the power relations in streetscapes by using the textual theory of Roland Barthes. This means that it benefits from a number of different areas of study including politics (power relations), geography (streetscapes), and literature (textual theory). Although each of these fields are equally important, this study deliberately gives priority to the concept of ‘power relations’ over the ‘geography’ and ‘text’. In other words, it above all explicates on power relations as it is based on a post-structuralist critique of the approaches of power that see power as something exerted by and radiated from a fixed center in a stable structure. The specific aspect of social life in which this critique will be made is streetscape, that is an important element of place. Here, the term ‘place’ is considered as a palimpsest that

consists of both the material and non-material traces that are left by many different actors (Anderson, 2015, 6-7). Very importantly, the thesis argues that the social relations in place that is a complex amalgamation of traces of many different actors cannot be reduced to a duality of exertion of and resistance to power. To show these arguments, it approaches the place as a textual entity that have the capacity to communicate with the people who experience it. If the place is a text, then the traces in it are the words and sentences of this text. These words and sentences have a semantic content as well as a syntactic structure. Here, what is especially interested in is the production of the semantic content of the traces. More specifically, the argument is that the semantic content of the elements of city-text are determined by their users rather than their emitters.

The content of the thesis is as follows. Chapter 2 establishes the conceptual framework. Here, firstly the general characteristics of place names and street names will be examined. After that, these concepts will be evaluated on the basis of their roles in power relations. Specifically, it will be demonstrated that the post-structuralist conception of power is particularly successful in explaining ‘how’ and ‘why’ the street names become an element of power relations. Chapter 3 reviews the studies that critically examine place names on the basis of power relations. More specifically, in this section it will be shown that since the 1980s the critical toponymy studies have adopted four different approaches and that now it calls for a Barthesian reading. This is because the current situation of critical toponymy literature resembles to the situation of the literary theory against which Barthes presented his textual theory. While presenting his theory of text in the last quarter of the 1960s, Barthes criticized the existing literary theories for reducing the activity of reading to the decisions of acceptance and rejection of text. In the same way, it is possible to use the textual theory of Barthes against the dualistic reductionism that exist in the critical studies on place names. After the presentation of these arguments, Chapter 4 gives details on the thought of Roland Barthes. After mentioning his early years when he committed to revealing the ideological manipulations in the literary and other cultural artefacts, and his later adoption of the scientific method of structuralism, the chapter focuses on his famous textual theory of ‘the death of the author’ and its implications in the framework of the city and streetscape. Then, the chapter ends up with the application of the textual theory of Barthes to the street names. This application allows to see that the meanings

of street names are not determined by the authorities that determine the names (i.e. writers), but by the experiences of city dwellers (i.e. readers). In addition, using De Certeau's concept of 'metaphor', it will be shown that the city is experienced not only by living in it but also using the 'narrative structures' such as news, legends, stories that allow the readers to metaphorically travel from one place to another. Finally, Chapter 5 demonstrates all of these theoretical insights by using the streetscape of Ankara with a special focus on the case of the naming of Olive Branch Street.



CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: PLACE NAMES, STREET NAMES AND POWER RELATIONS

As indicated in Introduction, this study aims to demonstrate the role of street names in power relations. The first task to conduct such a study is to carefully clarify what exactly is meant by the expressions ‘place/street names’ and ‘power relations’. This chapter makes these clarifications. Firstly, it explicates on the concepts of ‘place names’ and ‘street names’. Then, it locates these concepts into power relations by resorting to the theories and debates of power in social theory.

2.1. General Features of Place Names and Street Names

Before anything else, place names are nouns that consist of words and suffixes, and have their own grammatical principles. Expressions that do not fit with these principles are not considered place names. Traditionally it is assumed that there are two kinds of nouns: proper nouns and appellatives. Proper nouns refer to a specific thing that exist in the world while appellatives represent the categories of the things (Anderson, 2007, p. 3). It is possible to put place names in both noun categories. General names such as ‘city’ and ‘village’ are appellatives while the names of specific geographical features and human settlements such as ‘Taurus Mountains’, ‘Amik Walley’, and ‘Istanbul’ are proper nouns (Perko, Jordan and Komac, 2017, p. 101). However, it is place names as proper nouns that have been the focus of the academic field of toponymy (Bright, 2003, p. 669).¹

¹ The term ‘toponymy’ was derived from the Greek words *topos* (place) and *onyma* (name) (Ainiala, Saarelma and Sjöblom, 2016, pp. 63-64). The term refers to both the ‘place names’ and ‘study of place names’.

In the toponymy literature, place names have been categorized in many different ways. Structurally, place names can either be 'simple' or 'compound'. The first has only one single part while the latter contains two parts, a generic part which indicates the kind of place and a specific part which is the unique name of place (Ainiala, Saarelma and Sjöblom, 2016, p. 71). Considering the type of geographical unit that is named, place names can be categorized as 'nature names' and 'culture names'. Nature names refer to the geographical features that are shaped by nature, and culture names refer to places and artefacts set up by people (Ainiala, Saarelma and Sjöblom, 2016, pp. 23-24). In terms of the actors that determine the name, place names can be divided as 'traditional' and 'official'. Place names that emerge over time through the experiences of local communities are 'traditional place names'. On the other hand, 'official place names' are determined by a political authority. These can be directly created by official institutions or emerge as a result of the official verification of already existing traditional place names (Ainiala, Saarelma and Sjöblom, 2016, pp. 64-65). This distinction between traditional and official place names can also be expressed in the form of 'folkloric' and 'institutional' place names (Karimi, 2016, p. 742).

Place names are not only technical linguistic terms but also an important element of human culture in that they both reflect the culture in which they emerge and play a role in the formation, transformation, and reproduction of it. Their function of reflecting the cultural values makes place names an enormous source of historical and cultural knowledge. In fact, all place names have meaning when they first appear. However, with the changes in language and culture for ages, this first meaning gets forgotten (Radding and Western, 2010, p. 395). Therefore, a place name that at first glance seems meaningless actually reflects the cultural aspects of the community that started to use this name for the first time. In this respect, place names can directly refer to the cultural traits of a community. For example, the name of a village in Anatolia that refers directly to Christianity, such as a cross or a church, gives us a clue that at least once Christians lived in this village. Even if a place name does not directly refer to the cultural characteristics of the community in which it was born, it still reflects the perspective of that community on the environment and nature (Chabata, 2012, p. 46). Therefore, in general place names are 'condensed narratives' about the cultural traits of a community and examination of them gives information about the cultural structure of different communities (Jordan, 2019, p. 1).

In terms of their second function, i.e. their role in the formation, transformation, and reproduction of the cultural norms, it is important to emphasize the contribution of place names to the processes of turning space into place. As Claude Lévi-Strauss indicated, “space is a society of named places, just as people are landmarks within the group” (1966, p. 168; Helleland, 2012, p. 117). There are two different ways to distinguish space and place. The traditional way distinguishes space and place geometrically. According to this view, “spaces have areas and volumes while places have space between them” (Cresswell, 2004, p. 8; Price, 2013, p. 122). The modern way, on the other hand, acknowledges that place is a social product. More specifically, this view holds that space turns into place by human intervention (Price, 2013, p. 120). The role of place naming in the transition from space to place can be understood when these two concepts are apprehended from the modern perspective. First of all, place names divide space mentally and so make it easier to mechanically transform space into place by breaking down complex spatial reality into smaller, simpler, and manageable units (Jordan, 2019, pp. 9-11; Rose-Redwood, Alderman and Azaryahu, 2010, p. 454). Moreover, place names also play a role in the process of turning these now malleable spatial units into place by tying them emotionally with the people. In particular, the capacity of place names to stimulate people's imagination and to narrativize place play an important role in establishing emotional relationship between people and place (Azaryahu, 2017, p. 1; Price, 2013, p. 122). This emotional relation, in turn, endorses a community's collective group identity and sense of belonging by attaching people to certain geographic areas,² thereby strengthening the feelings of togetherness within the community (Helleland, 2012, p. 109). Finally, as representatives of collective identity place names ensure that all these feelings are transferred to the new generations (Ainiala, Saarelma and Sjöblom, 2016, p. 19; Hakala, Sjöblom and Kantola, 2015, p. 272).

In addition to their roles in language and culture, place names are also political objects that play a role in the power relations in a society. As exemplified in the previous chapter, there are many ways in which place names interact with the political processes. The remaining parts of this chapter will explicate on this power-laden

² This situation is termed as ‘toponymic attachment’ (Hakala, Sjöblom and Kantola, 2015, p. 265).

aspect of place names. Yet, before this there is a need to specify the kind of place names that will be specifically focused on in this thesis. People name places of every kind. For this reason, there are various kinds of place names. Each type of place names has its own characteristics and different amounts of usefulness to be used as analytical tools in a social study. For example, the first human settlements arose around the water resources. So, hydronymies (names of water resources) have been among the most longstanding toponymies and their study has provided important information about the history and culture of ancient societies (Rončević, 2009, p. 118). Similarly, since the hydronymies have had an important effect on the formation of national identities, the study of these names has also helped to understand the political aspects of modern communities (Braden, 2018, p. 10). A similar example is the mountain names. For instance, the names of the Pamir Mountains have been influenced by and reflected the political events such as the transition to the Tsarist period and the establishment and destruction of the USSR (for details, see Horsman, 2006.) Apart from these instances, the names of other natural features such as forests, plains and valleys are also politically important. However, although political factors come into prominence from time to time, in general, cultural factors are more dominant than political factors in the naming of such natural geographical features. On the other hand, culture and politics form a more balanced pair in the naming of man-made geographical features. Here, the term ‘man-made geographical features’ includes both concrete human constructions such as bridges and roads, and settlements like village, town, neighborhood, street, boulevard, square, district and province.³ These features can belong to both rural and urban areas. The names of settlements in rural areas are also sometimes exposed to political influences. However, it is the names of the places in the cities that have actually been the main target of the different political projects. So, in general the urban place names have been more dynamic than the rural -place names, thereby providing researchers with richer information about the politics of place-naming.

Cities and urban contexts reveal ideological structures with their transformations. Materials in the city are always in a flux. These materials and their movement interact

³ Even it has been argued that domain names on the internet that are produced and used to orient in the visual world have some political and cultural aspects just like place names (Alderman, 2009, p. 268).

with different ideological, political, and economic factors (Palonen, 2019, p. 179). This interaction should not be considered as if it occurs in a vacuum. Rather, cities are also affected by developments at the national, regional, and even global levels (Dronova and Maruniak, 2020, p. 3). Moreover, constant contact with the elements existing in the city creates the perception that the city is a natural reality. Contrary to this perception, cities are human artefacts (Costa, 2012, p. 5). One of the elements of this human artefact is street names. Streets hold a very important place in the everyday life of the urban dwellers. It can be said that “if clothes make the man, streets make the urbanite” (Algeo, 2015, p. 221). In parallel with the significance of streets for the urban life, street names have always been appetizing for the political groups who thought that if they manipulate the names of streets then they could influence the worldviews of the people. So, although on the surface they seem politically innocent symbols that help the people to navigate in the city, when looked deeply, it can be seen that street names are important carriers of symbolic messages (Stiperski et al., 2011, p. 181). In fact, “there are few spaces as ordinary and mundane, yet politically charged as a city’s streets” (Rose-Redwood, Alderman and Azaryahu, 2018c, p. 1). Moreover, thanks to their abundance, street names are very suitable to be used in socio-political analysis (Algeo, 2015, p. 220; Oto-Peralis, 2018, pp. 188-189). As a result of this juxtaposition of qualitative importance and quantitative abundance, street names have become the focal point of most of the studies on the politics of place names.

This study is also about the politics of and power relations inherent in the street names and street naming processes. Yet, this does not mean that it isolates street names from the other kinds of place names. Contrarily, this study does not ignore that street names are a kind of place names and so they share the general features of place names indicated above. So, the use of the terms both ‘place names’ and ‘street names’ in the next chapters does not contradict with the aims of the study. When a feature is shared by all place names in general, the term ‘place names’ is used. In these cases, the underlined feature of place names is also shared by the street names. On the other hand, the term ‘street names’ is used when it is aimed to emphasize a specific characteristic of street names. Bearing these refinements in mind, the next section explains the power relations in the streetscapes in order to establish a solid ground for the next chapters that are based on the assumption that street names are a part of power relations.

2.2. Street Names and Power Relations

'Power' is an "essentially contested concept" (Lukes, 1974, p. 26). So far, many different approaches have been put forward to explain this concept. By looking at these approaches, this part of the chapter tries to find out which of them is more useful to understand the power relations in the streetscapes. Majority of the explanations of power have tended to reduce the concept of 'power' to the struggles of actors with each other to reach their goals. These struggles may take different forms, such as direct confrontations between the actors or attempts to influence the conditions of the social system in order to secure a structural advantage over other actors. Whatever the form of struggle is, the view that power is a generalized capacity that is hold by the actors to be used in social conflicts has underlain the majority of the theories of power (Hindess, 1996, p. 2).⁴ Yet, this view of power has not gone unchallenged. Some social theorists have rejected reducing the concept of 'power' to social contestations where all actors hold predetermined amount of a generalized and standardized capacity that is power. Instead, they have argued that power is a much more relational and fluid concept (Westwood, 2002, pp. 24-25).

The majority of studies on power relations in place names have used the relational approaches to power, especially Gramscian and post-structuralist conception of power. In fact, this is not a coincidence but an indicator of the fact that these approaches of power are much more appropriate to explain the politics of place names. Indeed, it is not easy for the traditional approaches of power to answer the question why the actors that hold power would waste their time and resources to have a say on such a trivial issue as place names. A satisfying answer to this question was presented by Gramscian concept of 'hegemony' which argues that hegemonic struggles cover not only the issues of elite level politics, but also everyday life of the ordinary people (Westwood, 2002, p. 24). In this respect, it could now be argued that the hegemonic groups see the place names in general and street names in particular as a tool to legitimize their rule and universalize their ideologies on the eyes of the people. This was an important step in recognizing that street names are not neutral spatial signifiers but elements of power

⁴ Using the terminology of Foucault, in the rest of the study I call these views of power as 'traditional' (Foucault, 1980, pp. 183, 198).

struggles. However, as I show in this chapter, it was especially with the utilization of the post-structuralist conception of power in the critical studies on place names that much more complex observations on the politics of street names became possible.

The views of post-structuralist scholars on the concept of 'power' has led to profound breaks in the theories of and debates on power. The best way to capture this new ground-breaking approach to power is to compare it with the previous approaches. However, given the extensiveness of the literature on the concept of 'power', such a comparison should be made on the basis of a carefully clarified criteria. For this reason, in this part the post-structuralist understanding of power will be examined on the basis of their contribution to better grasping the relationship between place names and power. I argue that especially three points are very important to understand the success of post-structuralist conception of power in explaining power relations in the place naming processes: (1) the conception of 'power' as a heterogeneous and contingent phenomenon; (2) the recognition that power does not have to exclude freedom in all cases of power relationships; and (3) the argument that power is immanent and everywhere. To show these breaks more clearly, this chapter starts with a brief examination of the traditional views of power. Then, after showing the importance of Gramscian conception of power and hegemony in recognizing the value-laden nature of place names, it focuses on the post-structural theories of power and their contribution to explaining power relations in the place names.

2.2.1. Traditional Views of Power

Most of the theories of power have conceptualized the term 'power' on the basis of the conflicts and hierarchies between actors in society and maintained that power is held by these actors either at an individual or group level to be used against the other actors in the struggles to reach their goals and protect their interests. As a result of these struggles, the powerful actor reaches its goals while the powerless cannot (Hindess, 1996, p. 2). The roots of this view in modern political thought goes back to Hobbes, who defined power as "present means to obtain some future apparent good" (Hobbes, 1651, p. 53; Read, 1991, p. 505). According to this definition, power is the means by which an individual achieves his/her goals. Additionally, for Hobbes these means that are defined as power are exerted by individuals upon other individuals. (Hayward,

2004, p. 11). Finally, Hobbes' theory of social contract makes this individual- and goal-based understanding of power more complex. Hobbes argued that in the absence of any central authority, all social relations including power relations take place in an anarchical fashion. Under these circumstances, neither the powerful nor the powerless actors can feel safe for life is “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short” for both (Hobbes, 1651, p. 78). However, since individuals are capable of rationally calculating their interests, they escape from this bad condition of anarchy by transferring some of their powers through a social contract to a sovereign body, thereby putting an end to anarchy and establishing a social order. Power struggles between powerful and powerless actors continue despite the end of anarchy. However, these struggles now take place under certain rules guarded by the sovereign who guarantee a safer and more comfortable life for both powerful and powerless (Westwood, 2002, p. 7).

The understanding of power as a means used in social struggles was re-formulated by Robert Dahl in the 1950s. Actually, Dahl (1958; 1961) developed his conception of power against the so-called ‘elitist’ group, including Wright Mills (1956) and Floyd Hunter (1953), who argued that in the United States (US) power was concentrated in the hands of a group of elites that are irresponsible to the people. For Dahl, the existence of some inequalities in terms of the distribution of power did not mean that the US is a country that is under the full control of irresponsible elites, and for this reason far from democracy and accountability (Hindess, 1996, pp. 3-4). In order to base his arguments against those of elitists, Dahl presented a definition of power that seemed suitable for an empirical analysis of power struggles among different actors: “A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do” (Dahl, 1957, pp. 202-203). In “Two Faces of Power” (1962), Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz presented a critique of Dahl’s conception of power. They contended that Dahl was able to show only one face of power, missing the other face because of the methodological problems that stemmed from his over-focus on actors’ ‘participation in decision-making’ (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962, p. 948). From this point of view, they argued, nothing that is not subject to concrete power struggles can fall within the conceptual limits of power. In this case, only the public face of power becomes unfolded, ignoring the fact that powerful actors use their power not only to eliminate his opponents in manifest conflicts, but also to prevent the emergence of these conflicts at all (Hayward, 2004, pp. 15-16). A more radical critique of Dahl was

put forward by Steven Lukes, who proposed a third face of power. In fact, Lukes appreciated Bachrach and Baratz's conception of the second face of power for going beyond simply focusing on manifest conflicts (Lukes, 1974, p. 21). However, according to Lukes, there was still another face of power. He argued that power is not only used during or to prevent the manifest conflicts but also to manipulate powerless actors' perceptions of what their real interests are. Thus, the actor who is prevented from entering the manifest conflicts does not even realize that if it would actually pursue his real interests, it would have entered into a conflict (Lukes, 1974, pp. 21-25).

In addition to Hobbes and participants of the debates on three faces of power, there have been many different social theorists that understood power as a capacity used in social struggles. However, these examples are enough to demonstrate the main tenets of the traditional view of power that made it unable to explain the power relations inherent in the place naming processes. First of all, this conception of power has seen the power as a simple quantitative phenomenon that can be considered as a common unit used by social actors to achieve their goals (Clegg, 1989, pp. 1-2). The starting point of this understanding in modern political thought is Hobbes for whom power refers to the different means that individuals hold in their hands to achieve their goals. Inherent in all these 'means' is a common and homogeneous capacity to be used by their users, that is 'power' (Hindess, 1996, p. 23). This capacity is present in different amounts in every individual to be used when individuals interact with each other. As a result of these interactions, individuals affect each other to the extent of their power, so that the power relationship emerges (Torfinn, 2009, pp. 109-110). This mechanical and homogeneous understanding of power presented by Hobbes inevitably makes way for determinism: if power is such a homogeneous and mechanical phenomenon, the result of a power relationship can be predicted by knowing the amount of power that the actors have in the power relationship (Clegg, 1989, pp. 30-31). Although this determinist assumption was not explicitly expressed by Hobbes himself for he was not interested in which actor was empirically more powerful, its implications influenced profoundly the modern conceptions of power. The first modern study that systematically introduced the homogeneous and deterministic notion of power was presented by Dahl (1957). When Dahl studied the subject of power, behavioralism was almost an orthodoxy in the social sciences. Accordingly, Dahl's understanding of

power was also greatly influenced from behavioralism (Hayward, 2004, p. 13). His main purpose was to measure, even by a formula, the amount of power the actors have. In this way, which actor is powerful and which actor is powerless could be understood (Dahl, 1957, p. 205). In addition to the first face of power, both the second and third faces of power are also based on the homogeneous and deterministic notions of power. Lukes himself said that each of the three faces of power was underlain by the same assumption that “A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interests” (Lukes, 1974, p. 31). So, all of these three explanations of power have a powerful A that has a homogeneous capacity to exert on the powerless actor B.

Secondly, traditional approaches have seen the power as a means by which powerful actors limit the free action of powerless actors. According to this understanding, ‘freedom’ means acting independently of external influences. So, when an actor uses power to influence the behavior of another actor, then the actor whose behavior is influenced is no longer free. This negative conception of freedom has underlain most of the traditional views of power. Still, there have always been debates on the question where to draw the line between ‘free action’ and ‘action shaped by external factors’ (Hayward, 2004, pp. 14-15). Again, the roots of this debate can be traced back to Hobbes. In Hobbes' understanding, power can be used by individuals to exert influence on other individuals, i.e. to restrict their field of free action (Hayward, 2004, p. 11). Moreover, Hobbes said that individuals can transfer some of their power to a sovereign body through a social contract and thereby create “the greatest of humane powers” who also restrains the freedom of people in order to maintain the order (Hindess, 1996, pp. 24-25). Thus, a new element was added to the power relations among the individuals: the system.

This conception of power as something that restricts the freedom of agents on both systemic and individual levels has also underpinned the debates of three faces of power. According to Dahl's definition of power, the powerful A forces the powerless B to behave in a way that B would not prefer if there was not a pressure from the A. So, here the behavior of the B is not free but determined by the power of A (Dahl, 1957, pp. 202-203). Bachrach and Baratz, on the other hand, explained the restriction of freedom differently by focusing on how some actors are deprived of the freedom of engaging in conflicts for their true interests (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962, pp. 948-949).

Finally, Lukes's three-dimensional view of power involves a relationship of domination, in which powerless actors are not aware of their genuine interests which is the very precondition of free action (Haugaard, 2009, p. 241). It should be added that the second and third faces of power also emphasized the role of the systemic factors in the restriction of the freedom of individuals. Bachrach and Baratz said that

Of course power is exercised when A participates in the making of decisions that affect B. But power is also exercised when A devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing ... institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to A (1962, p. 948).

So, for Bachrach and Baratz the agents exert power on the other agents not only directly but also indirectly by manipulating the institutional environment. Similarly, Lukes emphasized the role of system, or more specifically "the bias of the political system" in restricting the freedom of the individuals (Lukes, 1974, p. 57).

Thirdly, in the traditional approaches the power relations have been seen as something that appear only discretely. According to this view, when the powerful A exerts power on the powerless B, we talk about the power relationship; when this exertion of power ceases, the power relationship disappears. The similar idea has also underpinned the systemic explanations that emphasize the influence of the structural conditions on the nature of power relations. This situation can partly be explained by the strong role played by the notion of sovereignty in the modern conceptions of power. Since Hobbes, many views of power acknowledged that sovereign power, or in its modern sense the state, exerts power on the individual. Yet, the exertion of power by the sovereign power on the individual was seen as occurring only discretely. The sovereign sometimes exerts power on the individuals, but not always. This understanding can be related to the period when the concept of 'sovereign' first emerged. At that time, the feudal monarch, that is the sovereign of these times, was not intervening so intensely in the everyday life of ordinary people. Its main function was not a fundamental control of labor, but only the control and transfer of the product of labor (Clegg, 1989, p. 156; Bauman, 1982, p. 10).

The traditional views of power whose central tenets are explained above has not been so popular in the studies that explained the power relations of place names. This

situation proves the fact that the analytical tools presented by these approaches of power are not useful to understand the location of place names in power relations. By these means, the struggles between different social groups in choosing a specific place name, for example the struggle between the actors A and B on what the street X's name might be empirically explained to a certain extent. However, these approaches cannot explain why social actors struggle on such a 'trivial' issue as street names. Gramsci's concept of 'hegemony' is very important in this respect, for it acknowledged that hegemonic groups strive to spread their worldview to the depths of the everyday life of the ordinary people.

2.2.2. Gramscian Conception of Power

Gramscian explanation of power is also based on the struggles between social actors in society. Here, the powerful A's and powerless B's turn into hegemon and subordinated. In this sense, Gramscian approach of power also evaluates 'power' in the framework of social struggles. However, the difference between Gramscian and traditional views of power is that the first sees the power relations as a much more complex and relational process rather than reducing the concept of 'power' to a homogeneous and standardized capacity. More specifically, Gramscian conception of power emphasizes that the hegemonic groups reproduce their control over the subordinated ones in a myriad number of processes most of which are not directly related with the elite level politics (Clegg, 1989, p. 160). For this reason, it has an advantage over the traditional views of power to better grasp the importance of seemingly trivial issues for power relations.

Gramsci developed his theory of power by deepening Karl Marx's ideas on ideology. Marx argued that:

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, consequently also controls the means of mental production, so that the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are on the whole subject to it (Marx, 1986, p. 302).

So, for Marx the power relations are not only about 'who has the material power' but also 'who has the intellectual power' in the form of the means of mental production.

Gramsci was mainly interested in this second aspect of power that he termed as ‘hegemony’, i.e. production and exertion of the intellectual power, because he thought that the answer to the question of ‘why the oppressed classes do not rebel against the system in which they are oppressed’ lied here (Fontana, 1993, p. 140). His answer to this question was that the actors who hold dominance in society ensure that their own interests are perceived by the other members of society as if they were the general interest of the whole society so that the exploited classes cannot recognize their own interests and show a consent in the continuation of the existing system (Williams, 2005, pp. 92-93). This process of ideological manipulation of the exploited classes requires the penetration of the worldviews of dominant classes into every aspect of life including the seemingly banal, ordinary, and non-political elements of everyday life (Westwood, 2002, p. 24).

Gramsci’s recognition of the diffusion of power relations into everyday life has influenced the first critical studies on place names which argued that place names are political and ideological elements rather than neutral spatial signifiers. In fact, this was a very reasonable argument considering that even Gramsci himself emphasized the ideological aspect of street names. In one of his pre-prison writings, Gramsci criticized the street name changes conducted in Turin in 1917. Vuolteenaho and Puzey translated this criticism of Gramsci as follows:

Armed with an encyclopedia and an axe, [the street naming committee] is proceeding with the evisceration of the old Turin. Down come the old names, the traditional names of popular Turin that record the fervent life of the old medieval commune, the exuberant and original imagination of the Renaissance artisans, less encyclopedic but more practical and with better taste than the merchants of today. They are replaced with medal names. The street map is becoming a medal showcase. ... Every name [in the artisans’ city] was a branch of life, it was the memory of a moment of collective life. The street map was like a common patrimony of memories, of affection, binding individuals together more strongly with the ties of solidarity through memory. The shop-keeping bourgeoisie has destroyed this heritage. ... All the princes, regents, ministers and generals of the House of Savoy have been given their niche. ... The encyclopedia has provided the rest. The bourgeois city is cosmopolitan, in other words a false international, a false universality. ... It is the triumph of the colourless and tasteless cosmopolis (Gramsci, 1917, pp. 183-184; Vuolteenaho and Puzey, 2017, p. 78).

In Prison Notebooks, too, Gramsci briefly touches on street names:

The press is the most dynamic part of the ideological structure, but not the only one. Everything that directly or indirectly influences or could influence public opinion belongs to it: libraries, schools, associations and clubs of various kinds, even architecture, the layout of streets and their names. (Gramsci, 2007, p. 53; Vuolteenaho and Puzey, 2018, p. 78).

So, according to Gramsci, street names are one of the tools that are used by ruling groups to influence public opinion. In fact, what Gramsci described as ‘influencing public opinion’ means rendering the values and views that maintain the system which protect the interests of hegemonic groups natural in the eyes of the masses. Cities in general play an important role in this respect for the city creates the illusion that the urban elements are natural entities that have nothing with power relations (Costa, 2012, p. 5). As an element of cities, street names have been utilized by hegemonic groups to prove that their historical narratives are natural so that people accept that the present order is an inevitable and natural consequence of the course of history, or a part of the ‘cosmic order’ (Azaryahu, 1992, p. 354). This explanation of the importance of street names in power relations is a very important step considering the inability of the traditional approaches of power in answering the question why social actors struggle with each other to influence street names. As a result of this explanatory advantage, the Gramscian conception of power and hegemony became the major framework on the basis of which the politics of streetscapes was analyzed in the initial years of the critical toponymy literature in the 1980s.

However, in the 1990s and 2000s many researchers began to explore cases which could not be merely explained by a top-down exertion of power from the hegemonic groups to the subordinated masses. On the one hand, it was shown that the so-called ‘hegemonic groups’ were not so unified as assumed by the previous critical studies on place names. On the other hand, researchers began to recognize that the masses are not so passive in their responses to the place naming decisions of hegemonic groups. As a result, critical toponymy literature began to increasingly rely on the post-structuralist conception of ‘power’ to show that the power relations submerged in the place names are not a one-way process of domination of the powerless by the powerful but a much more complex process.

2.2.3. Post-Structuralist Conception of Power

In the last two decades the post-structuralist theory has formed the theoretical background in the majority of studies that critically examine street names. This is due to the fact that post-structuralism has a very sophisticated conception of power which provides very important tools for understanding the role of street names in power struggles. In this section I explain this conception of power in comparison with the traditional view of power by underlining three significant aspects of ‘power’ as framed by the post-structuralist theory.

2.2.3.1. Power is Heterogeneous and Contingent: Rejection of the Homogeneous and Deterministic Notion of Power

It was already stated that traditional views of power have conceptualized power as a simple quantitative phenomenon. It can be said that they have seen power something like electricity: just as electricity can be used for many different purposes, power is considered as a common unit used by social actors to achieve their goals (Clegg, 1989, pp. 1-2). This understanding naturally leads to determinism: if the amount of power that the actors possess is known, then the outcome of the power struggle between these actors can also be predicted (Clegg, 1989, pp. 30-31). This great influence of homogeneous and deterministic understanding of power in mainstream explanations of power stems from the fact that it seems very attractive at first glance for the empirical explanation of power relations between actors. However, since this understanding homogenizes the phenomenon of ‘power’, it ignores that different tools can have different efficiencies under different conditions.⁵ Likewise, the determinist approach that the amount of power actors possess predetermines the outcome of power struggles is also problematic, since there is no guarantee that an actor will be able to use its power in every power relationship with the same level of efficiency (Hindess, 1996, pp. 27-32).

⁵ In fact, this problem did not go unnoticed by Dahl who proposed the concept of ‘scope of power’ to show that it is necessary to refer to more constricted forms of power that can be used in some cases but not in others, rather than a single form of power that can be used universally in all cases (Hindess, 1996, pp. 27-29).

A radical critique of this conception of power was presented by the post-structuralist theorists. Foucault is especially important in this regard. According to him, it is not possible to reduce power to a single common capacity for power is not a certain amount of strength. Rather, it refers to instruments, techniques and procedures that have a considerable degree of heterogeneity, or to “a complex strategical situation” (Foucault, 1978, p. 93; Hindess, 1996, p. 100). So, power relations cannot be explained in a stable and mechanical causality (Clegg, 1989, p. 158). In general, a power relationship offers a wide range of opportunities for resistance and counter-resistance, and the costs associated with using these opportunities. As a result, it is unpredictable what the actors in a power relationship will do and which strategies they will resort to. (Hindess, 1996, p. 101). Foucault’s emphasis on the heterogeneity of power relations was culminated in his concept of ‘dispositif’, that is “heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions- in short, the said as much as the unsaid” (Foucault, 1980, p. 194).⁶

This conception of ‘power’ as a heterogeneous and contingent phenomenon has also been shared by other post-structuralist scholars. A good example in this respect is the concept of ‘assemblage’ that was set forth by Deleuze and Guattari and systematized by DeLanda as the ‘assemblage theory’ (Jervis, 2010, p. 1; DeLanda, 2006). ‘Assemblage’ is a very important term in understanding the complexities in the social life. Deleuze defined this term in the following way:

It is a multiplicity which is made up of many heterogeneous terms and which establishes liaisons, relations between them, across ages, sexes and reigns – different natures. Thus, the assemblage’s only unity is that of a co-functioning: it is a symbiosis, a ‘sympathy’. It is never filiations which are important, but alliances, alloys; these are not successions, lines of descent, but contagions, epidemics, the wind (Deleuze and Parnet, 2006, p. 69).

⁶ Deleuze and Agamben also discussed the notion of dispositif. According to the former, it is “a tangle, a multilinear ensemble (that) is composed of lines, each having a different nature” (Deleuze, 1992, p. 159) while the latter summarizes it as “a heterogeneous set that includes virtually anything, linguistic and non linguistic... (that) has a concrete strategic function and is always located in a power relation ... (and) appears at the intersection of power relations and relations of knowledge” (Agamben, 2006, pp. 2-3).

So, comprehension of social reality as an assemblage allows us to see the unstable nature of power relations inherent in the multiplicity of numerous heterogeneous terms. Ideas of both Foucault and Deleuze on the heterogeneity and contingency of power relations are very important in understanding the politics of street names. For example, Giraut and Houssay-Holzschuch have very creatively utilized the term ‘dispositif’ to explain the politics of place-naming:

[T]he actual actors of place naming are simultaneously multiple and situated in time, space, and social relations. Since actors function in articulation and tactical coalitions with one another, within specific contexts, and in order to implement certain technologies, this complicates the picture even further. Moreover, the various actors involved in a renaming process can follow diverse, sometimes even contradictory, objectives. Lastly, their respective standpoints and reasons for involving themselves in a specific renaming dispute vary wildly – to the point that their arguments and counter-arguments are sometimes not even congruent... In turn, this multiplicity falls fully within the Foucauldian definition of the dispositif as ‘thoroughly heterogeneous’ (Giraut and Houssay-Holzschuch, 2016, p. 10).

As Giraut and Houssay-Holzschuch argued, place naming can be considered as dispositif with multiple actors, contexts, technologies, goals, etc. On the other hand, Wideman and Masuda used the term ‘toponymic assemblage’ to refer to the “...complex process of social and material alignment among active and diverse entities that are made up of a constellation of elements” (2018, p. 496). As indicated in these conceptions of place naming as both ‘dispositif’ and ‘assemblage’, the process of place naming is associated with heterogeneity and indeterminacy. Especially the multiplicity of the actors is very important in this respect. Central and local state bodies, civil society organizations, private companies, and even the staff and workers responsible for changing place name signboards in the field may have different interests and attitudes toward street names (Light and Young, 2018, pp. 189-193; Giraut and Houssay-Holzschuch, 2016, p. 11). Similarly, international actors such as international organizations,⁷ foreign governments,⁸ and multi-national companies⁹ can also be

⁷ The most important international organization that specifically focuses on the place names is United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.

⁸ Sometimes street naming processes can be used as tools in diplomatic relations. For details, see (Adebanwi, 2012).

⁹ For example, a subway station in New York carries the name *Barclays*, a London-based bank (Rose-Redwood and Alderman, 2011, p. 3).

influential from time to time in the place naming processes. So, the conceptions of power as a simple generalized capacity and the view that the results of power relations are predictable cannot be so promising to explain place naming and street naming processes with such a multiplicity of actors with different goals and strategies.

2.2.3.2. Power Does not Necessarily Exclude Freedom: Rejection of the Negative Conception of Power

As explained in the previous parts, the majority of the theories of power in literature hold that power is a means by which powerful actors limit the freedom of powerless actors. Yet, some social theorists have managed to go beyond this explanation of power that is associated with the negative conception of freedom. One of the first systematic expressions of the idea that power can mean more than a means that infringe upon the ability of the powerless actors to act freely was provided by the ‘consensual view of power’ that was developed by Talcott Parsons and Hannah Arendt after the Second World War (Haugaard and Clegg, 2009, p. 2; Haugaard, 2009, pp. 243-245). In addition, post-structuralist thinkers have also transcended the negative conception of power. Again, Foucault was the pioneer in this regard. The most important factor that enabled Foucault to see beyond the negative understanding of power was his distinction between ‘power’ and ‘domination’:

[W]e must distinguish the relationships of power as strategic games between liberties-strategic games that result in the fact that some people try to determine the conduct of others and the states of domination, which are what we ordinarily call power. And, between the two, between the games of power and the states of domination, you have governmental technologies-giving this term a very wide meaning for it is also the way in which you govern your wife, your children, as well as the way you govern an institution (Fornet-Betancourt, Becker and Gomez-Müller, 1987, p. 130).

As can be seen from the quote, Foucault saw ‘power’ and ‘domination’ as two opposing things. Freedom is the decisive factor in this distinction: individuals within the networks of power relationships retain their capacity to freely decide and act; when these capacities disappear, then power relation is replaced by domination (Torfinn, 2009, p. 113). This seemingly dyadic relationship between power and domination was mediated by the concept of ‘governmental technologies,’ or ‘governmentality’. Foucault argued that, as the members of modern society, “we live in the era of a

governmentality” (Foucault, 2009, p. 109). However, there is an important point to note here: Foucault used the term ‘government’ in its 16th century-sense rather than its contemporary meaning:

[In the 16th century] ‘Government’ did not refer only to political structures or to the management of states; rather, it designated the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed—the government of children, of souls, of communities, of families, of the sick. It covered not only the legitimately constituted forms of political or economic subjection but also modes of action, more or less considered and calculated, that were destined to act upon the possibilities of action of other people. To govern, in this sense, is to structure the possible field of action of others (Foucault, 1982, p. 790).

So, for Foucault the term ‘government’ did not only refer to the institutions of state but covered management of all kinds of affairs in society. Moreover, Foucault said that it is no coincidence that the term ‘government’ has become synonymous with the state. This is because after the 16th century the power relations began to come under state control. As a result, in the modern world the state is no longer being seen as a specific form of the exercise of power but an all-encompassing form to which other forms of power relation must refer (Foucault, 1982, pp. 792-793).

Foucault’s explanation of the concept of ‘governmentality’ has proven to be very useful in explaining the emergence of official place naming practices. In order to govern individuals or groups, the place on which this relationship of government takes place should be rendered visible (Rose, 2004, p. 36). For this reason, in the words of Foucault, “a fear haunted the latter half of the eighteenth century: the fear of darkened spaces ... which prevents the full visibility of things, men and truths” (Foucault, 1980, p. 153). To cope with this fear, many different governmental techniques have been developed in European and North American cities, one of which were ‘technologies of locations’ that make cities increasingly legible, visible, and calculable (Rose-Redwood, 2012a, p. 625). Besides modified and modernized versions of map-making and census-taking, these new technologies also included house and street addressing practices (Rose-Redwood and Tantner, 2012, p. 610). At the beginning, street addresses were mainly based on house and street numbering.¹⁰ The first examples of

¹⁰ Later the practice of naming would begin to accompany the numbering practices in the 19th century (Azaryahu, 1996, pp. 313-314).

house numbering practices can be found in Paris in the 15th century (68 houses were numbered) and in Augsburg in the 16th century (a number of buildings in a social housing complex were numbered). In contrast to these isolated cases, however, house and street numbering became a widely applied technology of government in the North America and Europe in the 18th century (Tantner, 2009, pp. 10-11). Emergence of street addressing systems took place in different ways in different contexts. But most of the time, the main concern was the 'government of population' and the main mechanism was the 'apparatuses of security' (Rose-Redwood and Tantner, 2012, p. 610). For example, the reason for assigning numbers to the buildings in Geneva in 1782 was to watch and control the members of dissident bourgeois class (Cicchini, 2012, p. 618). Similarly, on March 1, 1768, King Louis XV ordered the numbering of houses in all cities and towns in France in order to track more easily the soldiers that were living in their civilian homes at that time. Paris was exempt from this order, since the soldiers in the capital were living in the official barracks of the army (Rose-Redwood, 2008b, pp. 286-287). So, cities were the starting point of the spatial technologies of government. However, over time these technologies were moved from the cities to the rest of the territory, a process which was called by Foucault as the 'urbanization of the territory' (Rose-Redwood, 2012b, p. 306; Foucault, 2009, p. 336).

Emergence and spread of the technologies of location first in the cities and then in the rest of the territories should not be seen as a process through which the absolute hegemony of state and the hegemonic groups that controlled the state apparatus have smoothly penetrated into the society in order to restrict the freedom of the people. There are many examples where these technologies were challenged. For example, in the early 1770s the Habsburg monarchy began to number the houses in its territory as a part of the new military recruitment system. However, in many towns including Litomysl and Jihlava people secretly erased the numbers on the houses. In the end, these actions of erasure discouraged the state authorities and persuaded them to abandon this policy in 1790 (Rose-Redwood and Tantner, 2012, p. 609). Moreover, in many cases street addressing technologies were first developed by non-state actors, and only later officialized by the states. For example, the most ardent proponents of house-numbering techniques in America in the 18th century were 'privately financed city directory publishers', who argued that these techniques would both facilitate the flow of capital and economize the time (Rose-Redwood, 2012b, p. 305). Ironically, in

the context of America state bodies have initially resisted for a certain time to accept the persistent demands of directory publishers for the officialization of the house-numbering techniques (Rose-Redwood, 2006a, pp. 480-481). In a similar way, in Europe the shopkeepers had already created the technologies of location with the signs they hung on their shops in order to attract customers (Rose-Redwood, 2006b, pp. 98-99).

So, the evaluation of the emergence of street naming and numbering practices requires going beyond a negative conception of power and a dualism between the powerful state that controls and restricts the freedom of its powerless subjects. In other words, power in the streetscape should not be seen as “a phenomenon of one individual's consolidated and homogeneous domination over others, or that of one group or class over others” (Foucault, 1980, p. 98). This is also relevant for contemporary place naming regimes. As will be shown in the next chapters, in place naming processes there are various potentials of resistance and rejection. In addition, even if people do not openly reject the decisions of official naming bodies, this does not mean that they completely submit to the will of the state that imposed a worldview upon them through street names.

2.2.3.3. Power is Immanent: Rejection of the Conception of Power as a Discrete Relationship

It was shown that the traditional views of power have seen the power relations as something that appear only discretely. Some theorists of power have tried to overcome this narrow perception of power relations. The thought of Gramsci was important in the recognition of the immanent nature of power for he was able to see how the power relations are embedded into the very different aspects of life. Another important theorist in this respect is Anthony Giddens who showed in his ‘theory of structuration’ that since power is inherent in all relationships at both structural and agential levels, it is impossible to talk about a social field outside the scope of power (Westwood, 2002, p. 16). Post-structuralist thought also rejected the conception of discrete power relations and saw power as an immanent phenomenon. Foucault expressed the immanency of power with the term ‘omnipresence’ to emphasize its production “from one moment to the next, at every point, or rather in every relation from one point to

another” (Foucault, 1978, p. 91). So, for Foucault power is everywhere. However, this does not mean that the power radiates in a hierarchical manner from top to bottom, or from a center to periphery. Contrarily, Foucault argued that power emerges from discourses and practices which emanate from the fields that seem neutral at first sight. In a discussion with Noam Chomsky, Foucault expressed this view with the following words:

It is the custom, at least in our European society, to consider that power is in the hands of government and is exerted through a certain number of particular institutions such as the administration, the police, the army. We know that all these institutions are made to transmit and apply orders and to punish those who do not obey. But I believe that political power also exercises itself through the mediation of a certain number of institutions that seem to have nothing in common with political power and seem independent from it, but actually are not (Youtube, 2017).

No doubt such an approach to power can pay attention to the power relations that take place in areas like streetscapes whose embeddedness in power relations are not so overt at first sight. As indicated above, Gramscian conception of ‘power’ had already allowed geographers to see the fact that the place names are political because they are instrumentalized by the hegemonic powers to neutralize their ideologies on the eyes of the people. Yet, the post-structuralist conception of power allowed for going beyond this groundbreaking but still relatively simple explanation. First of all, post-structuralism emphasizes that language is not an innocent set of signs that enable communication among people. Rather, it is a part of power relations that play an important role in the constitution of subjectivities (Clegg, 1989, p. 151). An important element of these linguistic processes of the construction of identity is the practice of ‘naming’. As Laclau says, “the identity and unity of the object result from the very operation of naming” (Laclau, 2005, p. 104). In this respect, place naming can be considered as a process that determines the identity and unity of the object it names, i.e. places. Secondly, for post-structuralists not only language, but also space gets its share from the immanency of power relations. Post-structuralist thinkers have been aware of the relationship between space and power. They acknowledged that, as Foucault stated, “space is fundamental in any exercise of power” (Foucault, 1984, p. 252). So, just like other spatial elements, place names cannot be thought to be free from power relations. Thirdly, in post-structuralist theory power is also related with knowledge. More specifically, knowledge and power are seen as completely

intertwined (Haugaard, 2009, p. 243). This argument is relevant for place names because “every place name displays some knowledge about the place it designates” (Giraut and Houssay-Holzschuch, 2016, p. 5).

2.2.4. Post-Structuralist Paradox in Critical Toponymy Studies

What I dubbed as ‘traditional approaches of power’ have not been popular in the studies on street names. I explained this situation by the inability of these approaches to explain the importance of such a seemingly trivial issue as place names for power relations. Gramscian explanation of ‘power’ and ‘hegemony’ is important in this respect for it allowed the researchers to locate the street names into the power relations as an element of ideological manipulation. Yet, it was the post-structuralist approach of power that allowed the students of critical toponymy to make much more sophisticated explanations on power relations in street names. Despite these developments, the critical toponymy literature is still far away from fully embarking on a post-structuralist conception of power. As I will show in the next chapter, majority of the critical studies on street names still treat the streetscape as a relatively stable structure in which power is held and exerted by a fixed center that is capable of ensuring the stability of structure. This is a paradoxical situation given the fact that in the post-structuralist thought there is no place for an imagined fixed and stable structure. The roots of post-structuralism lie in the theory of structuralism that emerged from the application of Saussure's structural method for linguistics to other social and human sciences.¹¹ Post-structuralists do not reject structuralism but radicalize it. They assert that while structuralists tried to eliminate essentialism, they introduced a new essentialism, that is the fixed structure itself. For them, the integrity, consistency and stability of the structure should also be questioned as representations that constitute the structure never remain constant; rather, they constantly change (Newman, 2005, pp. 151-152).

¹¹ Structuralism has two main pillars. First, it rejects the premise that social phenomena are the result of the conscious actions of autonomous subjects or the unconscious imposition of historical conditions (West, 1996, pp. 166-167). Second, it assumes that social reality is structured through linguistic relations and that people understand both themselves and their environment with an external linguistic structure that determines meaning (Newman, 2005, p. 4-5).

So, how to explain this paradoxical situation? There is apparently a legacy of the ideological criticism, a heavily structuralist approach, that was the major framework of analysis in the 1980s and 1990s in the critical studies on place names. Yet, in my opinion, this is more a reflection of the tendency in the Western thought to imagine place as a stable system with a fixed center than an innocent habit or legacy of the past studies. Whatever its cause, this is a problematic situation that should be overcome to have a better understanding of the politics of street names. This thesis aims to contribute to this task by applying the textual theory of Roland Barthes on the streetscape. However, before diving into the implications and details of this application, the next section gives more detail on the emergence, development and current phase of the critical toponymy literature.



CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

As indicated in the previous chapters, until the last quarter of the 20th century place names were seen as only linguistic and cultural elements, and their functions in power relations were completely ignored. Actually, this was not due to the ignorance or fallacy of toponymists. At that time, their conceptions of power were not yet suitable to provide themselves with necessary analytical tools to understand the power relations inherent in place names. They were doing just what they had done for ages: treating place names as politically neutral, cultural and linguistic objects. However, sophistication of the theories of power and their adoption by the students of geography changed the picture. In the 1980s, there was a transition from the traditional, apolitical study of place names to a more critical stance that was aware of the political nature of place names. At the beginning, this transition resulted in the proliferation of studies that, inspired from the Gramscian conception of 'hegemony', treated place names as tools in the hand of political elites to ideologically manipulate the masses. In the 2000s, critical studies on place names experienced another important transformation with the influence of the post-structuralist conception of power. Against the over-emphasis by the early students of critical toponymy on the top-down exertion of power through place names, many researchers began to search for a more balanced and sophisticated explanation of the politics of place names. As a result, it was increasingly accepted that the authority of the political elites in the politics of place names is far from being absolute as place naming processes give the users many different tools to challenge the place-naming authorities.

This chapter examines all of these changes and transformations experienced in the critical studies on place and street names. It first focuses on the structural conditions that allowed for the emergence of critical toponymy literature. Then, it divides this literature into four phases to better grasp the changes and transformations experienced

in the literature. After that, it evaluates the current situation of the literature and tries to show that critical toponymy calls a Barthesian reading. As argued in the last part of the previous chapter, increasing popularity of post-structuralist theories in the critical studies on place names have not yet brought a full-scale rejection of the dualism between the powerful and powerless. As Barthes coped with this problem in the field of literature by arguing that the literary texts should not be evaluated on the basis of a hierarchical dualism between the author and reader, I maintain that the studies on street names should be freed from an imagined hierarchy between the author and reader, or in this case between the political elites that control the official naming bodies and the users of place names.

3.1. Transition from Traditional to Critical Toponymy

In the Classical and Middle Ages, place names were being recorded to facilitate the work of merchants, explorers and soldiers. However, the scientific study of place names to reveal their original meanings and linguistic features was only possible in the 19th century (Steenkamp, 2015, p. 16). The real peak of the toponymic studies was reached in the first three quarters of the 20th century, when many linguists, anthropologists, and geographers examined place names as imprints of culture on geography. Such an approach was in line with the traditional perspective of cultural geography that prevailed at that time (Rose-Redwood, Alderman and Azaryahu, 2018c, p. 4). Cultural geography was a field led by Carl Sauer and his followers in the Berkeley School. Until the 1920s geographical studies were dominated by the tradition of ‘environmental determinism’ which assumed that the cultural traits of human communities were determined by their environmental and climate conditions (Braun, 2004, p. 154). However, with the publication of Sauer’s “the Morphology of Landscape” in 1925, which is accepted as the starting point of cultural geography, the focus of geographical studies shifted from the impact of environment on the culture to the traces left by human cultures on space (Cresswell, 2004, p. 17). As Sauer expressed, “culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape is the result. Under the influence of a given culture, itself changing through time, the landscape undergoes development, passing through phases” (Sauer, 1925, p. 46). So, what the Sauerian cultural geography really interested in was not the political nor ideological character of place but the autobiography of cultural landscapes, that is the

history of influence of human cultures on the landscapes (Till, 2004, p. 347). As other fields of geographical studies, the studies on place names were heavily influenced from this Sauerian approach of cultural geography. In general, they treated place names as one of the traces of human culture on space, whose examination could give information on the migration patterns and settlement forms of different communities (Azaryahu, 2017, p. 2).

Sauer's approach in cultural geography was heavily criticized in the 1970s and 1980s. Especially the conception of culture that underlay this approach was labelled as 'superorganic' for it presented culture as "an entity above man, not reducible to actions by the individuals who are associated with it, mysteriously responding to laws of its own" (Duncan, 1980, p. 182). In addition, epistemological standing of Sauer and his followers was despised for being 'naïve' as it prevented them from pursuing progressive ends in their studies (Price and Lewis, 1993, pp. 3-4). These and other attacks to the then dominant Berkeley School of cultural geography did not come from a single front. The 'critical', 'cultural' and 'spatial' turns that swept off all fields of social sciences were the sources of these criticisms.

To start with, the narrow and isolated conception of culture by the traditional cultural geographers was criticized with the 'critical turn'. According to these criticisms, although it was apparent that some processes in which human societies played a leading role were changing and transforming geography, these changes and transformations could not only be the result of politically innocent cultural processes. On the contrary, power relations and inequalities were always present in the alterations in space (Braun, 2004, p. 347). The awareness of the role of power and inequality in spatial processes was especially increased by the argument of the Marxist geographers that the mode and relations of production that underlay all social processes also play a leading role in the formation of geography (Fischer-Nebmaier, 2015, pp. 15-16). The most prominent example of this explanation was presented by Henri Lefebvre who in *The Production of Space* contended that with the changes in the modes of production, the spaces produced by these modes also change (1974, pp. 31-33). Another important figure in this respect was David Harvey who challenged the conception of place as a passive entity and instead asserted that place is a constitutive factor in the formation and change of capitalism (1973, pp. 310-313). On the other hand, with the 'cultural

turn' in the discipline of geography in the late 1980s and early 1990s it was acknowledged that the critical perspectives on place should not only be carried out on the basis of economic classes, and some concepts such as 'ways of seeing, means of communicating, constructions of value, senses of identity' should not be seen as reflections of the economic factors but as valuable in themselves (Pamela Shurmer-Smith, 2002, pp. 1-2). As a result, geographers began to recognize that the scope of critical geography should not only be limited to the political economy issues but should also cover other social notions such as identity and difference. Finally, 'spatial turn', that is "the reassertion of a critical spatial perspective in contemporary social theory and analysis" in the 1980s (Soja, 1989, p. 1) was also important. Actually, in the 1970s place was increasingly thought as something socially produced. However, this view soon began to be seen inadequate as it created the perception that social processes unidirectionally affect geography which implies that the only function of geographers was to map the reflections of social processes on the landscape, rather than to contribute to the explanation of the roots and development of the social processes themselves. Against this viewpoint, a new metaphor was introduced in the 1980s: "the social is spatially constructed too" (Massey, 1993, pp. 143-144).

With these three important turns, Sauerian traditional cultural geography gave way to a 'new cultural geography' that is (1) more sensitive to political processes, (2) has a more sophisticated understanding of culture in its relation with the other social processes and (3) foresees a more dialectical relationship between space and people (Cosgrove, 1983, pp. 9-10). These changes in the field of cultural geography had enormous effects on the toponymic studies, which culminated in the emergence of the critical toponymy literature in the 1980s. Firstly, just like many other geographical concepts, place names have begun to be studied not as empty, passive and innocent cultural elements but on the basis of their role in power relations. Secondly, with the concept of 'place' gaining importance throughout the social sciences, researchers in other fields than geography such as political science, sociology and anthropology have begun to contribute to the critical study of toponymy (Rose-Redwood, Alderman and Azaryahu, 2018c, p. 2). Finally, one of the criticisms of the new cultural geography to the Sauerian approach was that it ignored the city. Therefore, investigations on the city have increased significantly in the new cultural geography (Bunnell, 2013, p. 278).

This was also reflected in the place name studies with street names in the cities coming to the fore.

3.2. Critical Toponymy Literature

As explained in the previous part, under the influence of the general changes experienced in the field of cultural geography, the literature of critical toponymy emerged in the 1980s. From this time, critical toponymists have come a long way in terms of the sophistication of their explanations on power relations in street names. At the beginning, they were content themselves with showing that hegemonic groups use street names for the purpose of ideological manipulation. Then, it was realized that the so-called hegemonic groups that assumedly used street names to manipulate people were not so homogenous as presented by the initial studies. Finally, limits of the power of hegemonic groups in streetscape began to be questioned. At this point, using mainly post-structuralist theories, it was shown that the power relations in streetscape is not a one-way process from the powerful to the powerless but a much more complex process where the assumedly powerless individuals and groups can develop different tactics to resist and reject the control of the hegemonic groups. In this section I examine this historical development of critical toponymy in four different phases to reach the conclusion that despite great developments, the critical toponymy literature is still far away from getting rid of the imagination of streetscape as a stable structure in which there is a powerful center that fixes meaning and thereby ensures stability.

3.2.1. The First Phase: Street Names as Reflections of Hegemonic Discourse

Studies that treat place names as political symbols began to appear in the 1980s. These studies were based on a search for a correlation between two parameters: (1) ideology of the political groups that dominate the institutional mechanisms of place naming in a certain geography in a certain period of time, and (2) changes of place names made in that geographical area in the same time period. In general, as the cases where the relations between these two parameters are clearest, radical regime changes were examined. However, in these studies, the question of ‘why place names are so much affected by the ideologies of hegemonic groups’, and ‘why the hegemonic groups resort to place name changes’ was not much dealt with. Rather, the importance of place names for hegemonic groups was mentioned within only a few sentences. For now, it

was already novel enough to show that place names are affected by the political and ideological factors for until the 1980s place names had always been treated as being determined by culture rather than politics. So, the task was limited to showing that place names are political and ideological, and thereby demystifying the myth of the innocence of place names. The examples of such studies are as follows: Peter G. Lewis (1982) studied on the place name changes in Iran during the rule of Pahlavi and the following Islamic regime; Wilbur Zelinsky (1983) and Roger Stump (1988) traced the ideology of nationalism that began to be planted into American toponymy after the national independence; Jonathan Addleton (1987) examined the fate of British place names in the post-independence Pakistan; Maoz Azaryahu studied the place name changes in the context of post-war communism in East Berlin (Azaryahu, 1986) and in Berlin between 1921 and 1930 (Azaryahu, 1988); Yoram Bar-Gal, through his two works published in 1989 showed how the place name changes reflected the Zionist ideology during the establishment of the state of Israel (Bar-Gal, 1989a; Bar-Gal, 1989b).

In the 1990s, many researchers continued to analyze the efforts of hegemonic groups to reflect their ideologies on the place names. Azaryahu's (1990; 1992; 1997; 1999) studies on the street names of Germany and Israel, Cohen and Kliot's (1992) work on the toponymic policies of Israel in the administrated territory, Pavel Ilyin's (1993) survey of place names in the USSR, Brenda Yeoh's (1996) examination of the relationship between nationalism and place naming in Singapore, Faraco and Murphy's (1997) article on the impact of regime changes on the place names in Spain, and Herman's (1999) study on the colonization of place names in Hawai can be given as examples. However, in these studies it was no longer sufficient to only show the relationship between ideology and place names. Rather, there was an increasing attention on the causes of this relationship. Even in one article, Azaryahu (1996) directly focused on the sources of the power of commemorative place names without any specific case. In there, politics of street names was examined in a theoretical way with references to many different important social theorists including Michel de Certeau, Jacques Derrida, Umberto Eco, Anthony Giddens, and Henri Lefebvre. Azaryahu explained the importance of street names as follows:

Commemorative street names provide a distinguished example of the intersection of hegemonic ideological structures with the spatial practices of everyday life. Their apparent dailiness and apparent insignificance as well as their recurrent and unreflected use in various contexts, both ordinary and extraordinary, renders the past they represent tangible and intimately familiar... Their power lies in their ability to make a version of history an inseparable element of reality as it is constantly constructed, experienced, and perceived on a daily basis. History is interwoven with daily life and thus gains the appearance of naturalness; a most desired effect in the light of the function of history as a legitimizing factor (Azaryahu, 1996, p. 321).

So, according to Azaryahu street names are important because they can be used as tools by the hegemonic groups to penetrate their world views into the daily life of the people. Thereby, ideological views carried by street names are naturalized by going beyond being one among many different ideologies. Azaryahu also explained the specific importance of street names for newly established revolutionary regimes by a quotation from Lefebvre: “A revolution that does not produce a new space has not realized its full potential ... A social transformation, to be truly revolutionary in character, must manifest a creative capacity in its effects on daily life, on language and on space” (Azaryahu, 1996, p. 318). Then, in order for a social transformation to be truly revolutionary, this transformation must have an impact on daily life, language and space. As daily life items, linguistic features and spatial elements, the change of street names can create this impact at once. Moreover, changes in street names also erases the traces of the old regime from the public space. That is why, radical political changes are generally followed by radical toponymic changes (Azaryahu, 1996, p. 318).

This conception of street names as a tool for the dissemination and naturalization of the ideological worldviews, and for the proclamation of revolutionary changes continued to influence many studies during the 2000s. These studies have mostly focused on socialist and post-socialist geographies (Young and Duncan, 2001; Light, Nicolae and Suditu, 2002; Azaryahu, 2011b; Azaryahu, 2012b; Saparov, 2003; Joenniemi, 2003; Kadmon, 2004; Light, 2004; Gill, 2005; Horsman, 2006; Palonen, 2008; Drozdowski, 2014; Palonen, 2015), on the context of colonialism and post-colonialism (Byrnes, 2002; Guyot and Seethal, 2007; Bigon, 2008; Bigon, 2009; Mamvura, Mutasa and Pfukwa, 2017); and on the areas where geopolitical tensions are high such as Israel-Palestine (Azaryahu and Golan, 2001; Azaryahu and Kook,

2002; Azaryahu, 2012a). In addition, there were also a few studies that evaluated place names within the framework of hegemonic masculinity. For example, Mamvura, Muwati and Mutasa's (2018) study on Harare/Zimbabwe, Forrest's (2018) work on Durban, and Riazi's (2019) research on Iran have examined the relationship between place names and gendered identities in different contexts. These studies in the 2000s have been much more sensitive to the theoretical issues on the use of place names by hegemonic powers. In addition, there has been some progress in terms of methodology. Although dependence on the data published by official institutions still persisted, some different methods have started to be used to evaluate these data. For example, Pinchevski and Torgovnik (2002) evaluated street names in four different towns of Israel with hermeneutic reading; Tucci, Ronza and Giordano (2011) used Historical GIS, a method that combines the quantitative method of GIS with an interpretative approach, to examine the toponymies in Milan; and Palonen analyzed street names in Budapest using the discourse analysis of Laclau and Mouffe, and concluded that the place naming functions as a mechanism to fix at least temporarily the multiplicity of the different readings of the past (2018, p. 111).

3.2.2. The Second Phase: Focus on the Conflicts in the Naming Processes

After the recognition of the political nature of place names, some researchers have embraced the view that streetscape is not "a blank slate upon which sovereign powers inscribe their ideologies" but a cultural arena in which many different social groups struggle to ensure that their worldviews, identities, and historical narratives are publicly represented (Rose-Redwood, Alderman and Azaryahu, 2018c, p. 11). In other words, for these researchers the place-naming practices are not under the monopoly of a single hegemonic actor. This line of thought still kept untouched the view that the street names are used by the social groups to naturalize their worldviews on the eyes of the people. However, it rejected leaving the process of the choice of place names as a black-box that is under the control of an assumedly hegemonic class. As will be discussed in detail in the last section, this was a very important step in understanding the fact that streetscape is not the expression of a single unified subject but the product of the conflicts and compromises between many different subjects.

This aspect of place naming was first emphasized extensively in Kari Palonen's study in 1993, where he explained the process of place naming by using the political theory of Max Weber. For Palonen, especially the factor of 'choice' is very important for understanding the politics of place naming: "the choice aspect renders to the act of naming a political dimension: names could always be different and they are subject to potential conflicts" (Palonen, 2018, p. 26). After Palonen, the political conflicts inherent in the choice of place names have been emphasized from mainly two perspectives: 'collective memory' and 'political economy'. The studies in the first perspective are inspired by Maurice Halbwachs' *Collective Memory* (1980) and Pierre Nora's *Sites of Memory* (1984). While Halbwach separated collective memory from individual memory, Nora drew attention to the social construction of collective memory. Using both of these ideas, some researchers have considered the place names as one of different resources that play a role in the construction of collective memory (Vogel, 2012, pp. 20-23). According to this line of thought, different social groups try to invest place names with their own conception of memory, and thereby the contestations on place names emerge (Azaryahu, 2012a, p. 74; Alderman, 1996; Alderman, 2000; Alderman, 2002a; Alderman, 2002b; Alderman, 2003; Alderman, 2008; Tretter, 2011; Costa, 2012; Masalha, 2015). In connection with the concept of 'collective memory', some researchers approached place names from the perspective of 'spatial injustice'. According to this approach, space plays an active role in the formation and reproduction of social injustices. So, the fight with injustice should consider the elimination of spatial elements that contribute to the reproduction of injustice. In this respect, place names can be used as a means by the marginalized groups in order to be represented in the collective memory of the society and thereby increase the awareness of their exclusion (Alderman and Inwood, 2013, pp. 4-3; Rose-Redwood, Alderman and Azaryahu., 2018c, p. 12). For example, the efforts of African-Americans to commemorate Martin Luther King through the street names is evaluated on this basis by Alderman and Inwood (2013). In another study, struggles for the commemoration of a person who neither was famous nor actively struggled to fight injustice, but was a victim of social injustice is examined in the context of America (Kitada, 2016).

Other studies explained the contestations over place names from a perspective of political economy. The common view underlying all these studies is that the place

names are not only politically but also economically valuable resources. Of course, place names are not ordinary commodities sold and bought in the markets. Rather, they acquire an economic value through their symbolic value. In Bourdieu's terminology, place names can be considered as a means to collect 'symbolic capital'. They are important in themselves because they provide social groups with prestige. In addition, symbolic value of place names can also be converted into 'economic capital' (Rose-Redwood, 2008a, p. 434). This valuable capital is under the control of state. In fact, what is the norm is that governmental institutions determine place names in line with the needs and expectations of the public. However, from time to time place names are being commodified when governments grant the right to name a specific place to a non-governmental agency who is eager to capitalize on the symbolic or economic value of place names. So, what does the state receive in return? Loyalty and/or money. In the first case, the government guarantees the loyalty of a social group by granting the right to name a specific place to this social group. For example, it was shown that in post-Taliban Afghanistan the central government tried to buy the loyalty of local groups by offering them street names (for details see Karimi, 2016). In the second case, on the other hand, the cash strapped local governments sell the naming rights in order to increase their revenues (Rose-Redwood et.al., 2010, p. 466, for studies on the privatization of place naming rights see Medway and Warnaby, 2014; Light and Young, 2015; Light 2014). In both cases, there is a commodification of place names: just like everything that is commodified, in these cases, the exchange value of place names precedes their use value (Rose-Redwood and Alderman, 2011, p. 3). The commodification of place names has also been examined within the framework of neo-liberalism. In these studies on the neo-liberalization of place names (for example see Madden, 2018; McElroy, 2019), place naming processes are considered as a specific extension of the neo-liberal dispossession that dominates the modern cities. Lawrence Berg explains this situation as follows: "...neoliberalization is caught up in specific forms of naming that symbolically and materially solidify current (and historical) processes of capitalist accumulation by dispossession" (2011, p. 3).

3.2.3. The Third Phase: Performative Resistance against the Official Naming Authorities

As shown in the previous part, studies in the second phase of critical toponymy showed that place-naming practices are not under the monopoly of a single hegemonic actor. In a similar way, studies in the third phase demonstrated that the hegemonic actors, if not a single hegemonic actor, do not have an absolute authority on the streetscape. As the number of studies on the everyday use of place names rather than their selection increased, it became clear that the authority of official naming bodies over the users of place names is very contingent. Even if the use of official place names in official maps and documents was ensured, it was not certain that whether these names are used by the people in their daily life. Researchers resorted to the concept of ‘resistance’ to explain this situation. In addition, post-structuralist theories came to the help of the critical toponymists in their search for a better explanation for the relationship between the political elites that determine place names and the people that use these place names in their everyday life. Especially the concept of ‘performativity’ was frequently used to explain the failure of the hegemonic powers in ensuring the popular acceptance of the official names.

In a few studies in the 1990s, it was mentioned that the urban residents could resist official name changes by rejecting to use them (Azaryahu, 1996, pp. 315-317; Yeoh, 1996, p. 305). However, the main improvement in this respect came with Myers’ emphasis on ‘performance aspect of place names’. According to Myers, marginalized groups could use place names as tools for ‘arts of resistance’ through performance and manipulation (1996, p. 244).¹² The explanation of the cases of toponymic resistance by the concept of ‘performance’ was later elaborated by the introduction of the theory of performativity into critical toponymy literature.¹³ Kearns and Berg’s (2002) study

¹² Myers took the concept ‘performance aspect of place name’ from another source (Entrikin, 1991, p. 56).

¹³ The concept of ‘performativity’ was introduced by John Austin in the 1950s in response to the logical positivist understanding that language only represents the world. As opposed to this representational understanding of language, Austin argued that language is performative, that is, language does not only represent the things exist in the world, but also does something on its own (Rose-Redwood and Glass, 2014, p. 4). According to Austin, in order for an utterance to be performative, it has to be declared by an official authority acting according to the pre-determined procedures. This perspective which can be called ‘theory of sovereign performativity’ or ‘sovereignist conception of the performative’ is quite conservative since it does not question the

is especially important in this respect. Based on Butler's definition of performativity as "the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names" (1993, p. 2), the authors argued that the pronunciation of place names by the ordinary people in their daily lives is a performative act that contains many different possibilities for resistance. The authors were influenced by de Certeau while making this argument. According to de Certeau, banal and daily actions, such as walking in the city are forms of tactical resistance to official authorities that try to organize the lives of people with strategic plans. Kearns and Berg saw pronunciation of place names as having similar function with walking in the city: though naming authorities set an official name for each location, in their daily life people can pronounce these names differently than the official authority assumes and thereby perform a tactical resistance against the strategic plans of the authority (Kearns and Berg, 2002, pp. 287-288). For example, in the case of New Zealand some versions of pronunciation signified a support for decolonizing Aotearoa and a resistance against the hegemonic discourses of Pakeha New Zealanders (Kearns and Berg, 2002, p. 291).¹⁴

Another important study on the performativity of place names was carried out by Reuben Rose-Redwood (2008c) who demonstrated that performativity can be used to explain not only the resistance against, but also imposition of official names. In this study, Rose-Redwood examined the renaming of the 'Sixth Avenue' as 'Avenue of the Americas' in New York in 1945 in order to bolster the 'Good Neighbour Policy' of the US. Although the political elites followed official procedures and even showed extra performances – organizing an opening ceremony for the declaration of street name change and deliberately setting the time of this ceremony so that it coincides with another organization for the returning US Pacific Navy veterans in order to

concept of 'authority' (Rose-Redwood and Glass, 2014, pp. 6-7). Derrida (1988) and Butler (1993) rejected this conventionalist reading of performativity by arguing that not only the utterances of authority but also the process of authorization is itself performative (Rose-Redwood, Alderman and Azaryahu., 2018c, p. 15). The 1990s witnessed a performative turn in the social sciences. The field of geography was also influenced from this turn. Throughout the 1990s, Butler's work was read and discussed by feminist geographers. Even Gregson and Rose (2000, p. 422) put forward the phrase 'performative space' (Rose-Redwood and Glass, 2014, p. 15).

¹⁴ A similar example of the use of pronunciation to contest the hegemonic discourses can be given from Turkey. Although the name of 'Diyarbakir' was officially changed to 'Diyarbakır' in 1937, many people still prefer to read it as 'Diyarbakir'. Sometimes this is a conscious reaction against the massive place name changes of non-Turkish place names in Turkey in the 20th century.

benefit from its potential to gather crowds – the New Yorkers continued to use the old street name (Rose-Redwood, 2008c, pp. 877, 884). From this case, Rose-Redwood reached the conclusion that it is not certain that the decisions taken by the official naming bodies will be accepted by the people. Rather, in order to ensure this acceptance, official institutions need extra performances, or ‘repetitious reenactments’, in addition to following official procedures. This continuous need for reenactments renders the authority of official naming bodies contingent and creates possibilities for performative resistance on the part of the users of place names (Rose-Redwood, 2008c, p. 878). Just as official authorities increase the probability of acceptance of their decisions with ‘speech-act’, people can resist to these decisions with ‘counter-speech’. As seen in the case of Sixth Avenue, by using the old name, people set forth ‘the repetitious action of everyday counter-speech’, and so offered a performative resistance against the official bodies (Rose-Redwood, 2008c, p. 891). Thus, Rose-Redwood explained the performativity of place-naming processes not only from the perspective of resistance, but also from that of authority. Even Rose-Redwood criticized Kern and Bergs’ work for privileging everyday life over official discourse; for him, the performativity of official inscription was just as important as the everyday use of place names (Rose-Redwood, 2008c, p. 882).

After these preliminary studies, the performative element in the place naming processes have continued to be examined in different cases (for example, see Swanepoel, 2009; Tucker and Rose-Redwood, 2015). In addition, there were also theoretical refinements to the concept of ‘resistance’. For example, it was demonstrated that the resistance against the official naming authorities might develop along several lines rather than a single line. After his examination of the place naming practices in Durban, Duminy (2014) argued that even though there was popular resistance against the official toponymic projects, this resistance developed on different lines. In general, some people rejected the naming authority itself, while others only criticized the decisions of this authority. Moreover, even these two main lines of resistance were further divided into different lines (Duminy, 2014, p. 324). In another study, it was shown that popular resistance against the official place names might stem from not only ideological but also pragmatic sentiments of people. For example, in Timisoara although people did not oppose to the commemoration of the martyrs in the streetscape, they resisted to use these place names due to pragmatic

reasons, including the difficulty of using these long and complex names in daily life and the bureaucratic burdens of place name changes (Cretan and Matthews, 2016, p. 101).

The third phase of critical toponymy indicated a new critical turn within the critical toponymy literature. The first two phases were based on a critical stance against the assumption of the unpolitical nature of place names. They were based on the demonstration of how the political actors use, or struggle with each other to be able to use, place names in order to manipulate the people. In other words, the studies that are categorized under the first two phases exposed place names and place naming processes to ideological criticism. The third phase, on the other hand, added another critical edge to the critical toponymy literature by questioning the taken for granted assumption of the popular acceptance of official place names. As a result, there was now a shift of focus to the perception of place names by their users. At the beginning, this debates were realized on the conceptual framework of 'resistance'. However, as explained in the next part, this conceptual framework was later widened so that it included unconscious behaviors of the users of place names as well.

3.2.4. The Fourth Phase: Going Beyond Resistance

The common assumption of the studies in the third phase of critical toponymy is that people can resist the official toponymic projects through their daily performances in the city. However, some researchers criticized the association of the rejection of official place names with resistance. While acknowledging that resistance is a very common type of social behavior that explains many cases where official place names fail to be accepted by the people, they argued that some cases cannot not be explained by the concept of resistance. So, there is a need for going beyond the 'analytic lens of resistance' (Rose-Redwood, Alderman and Azaryahu, 2018c, p. 14) to explain the "reactions to place names that go beyond deliberate resistance" (Light and Young, 2014a, p. 672). One of such reactions is found in Bucharest, where the new name of a central marketplace that was changed and de-communized after the communist regime collapsed was not used by ordinary people. In this case, as Light and Young showed, most of the people continued to use the old name without any clear political motivation

(2014, pp. 674-675). So, using the terminology of Bourdieu, the concept of 'habitus'¹⁵ seems more useful than resistance in explaining the persistence of the old name of the marketplace, since it stems not from any intentional resistance against the political authority but from the non-reflective habitual practices (Light and Young, 2014, p. 679). In another study, Light and Young also examined these non-reflective practices in the context of neo-liberalization. They reached the conclusion that the increasing influence of the private sector on place names may or may not trigger resistance among the people depending on the context; sometimes people consciously react this situation, while sometimes they do not even notice the difference (Light and Young, 2014, pp. 448-449).

The introduction of the 'habit' did not cause a complete rejection of the 'resistance' in the streetscape: rather, the first is used for explaining unconscious behaviors of the people, while the second is continued to be used for conscious behaviors. Indeed, these two concepts together constitute a common point that is 'rejection'. The term 'rejection' has not been used in the literature; yet, it can be useful in constituting a common roof for the concepts of 'resistance' and 'habit' because of the fact that both of these concepts are used to answer the same question of 'why do people reject official place names?' from different angles. Yet, one should be careful in not treating these two concepts as isolated from each other (Light and Young, 2014, p. 681). On the contrary, transitions between unconscious and conscious behaviors can be observed with changing contextual conditions. This situation is demonstrated by Shoval's (2013) study. In his field study on the Israeli city of Acra with a significant Arab population, Shoval revealed that the native Arab people use the traditional, not official place names. Even though the rejection of official names by the Arab population is inspired by the habits, in some cases this unconscious behavior turns into conscious behaviors such as talking about the protection of traditional names from the intrusion of the official names and writing down these names under the official street names on the signboards. The transition between unconscious and conscious behavior depends on the general context in the city (whether people have the time to spend for thinking

¹⁵ Light and Young defines habitus as "a system of acquired and internalized dispositions that frames our interaction with the world and the way that we interpret new situations" (2014, p. 679). For more details, see Bourdieu (1984, pp. 169-175).

about issues other than meeting their basic needs) as well as the socio-political status of individuals (especially educated Arabs are more sensitive to the issues of place names) (Shoval, 2013, pp. 619-624).

Finally, the shift of attention from the behaviors of political groups that control or try to influence the public institutions responsible for place naming processes to the popular rejection of official place names triggered important changes in terms of methodology. The studies in the first and the second phases heavily relied on official documents and archives. However, in the third and fourth phases many studies have resorted to fieldworks such as in-depth interviews and surveys in order to understand the perceptions of the people on place names (Shoval, 2013; Light and Young, 2014 (a); Duminy, 2014; Cretan and Matthews, 2016; Eross, 2017; Madden, 2018; Brocket, 2019).

As scrutinized above, studies that are categorized under the last two phases of critical toponymy has focused on the rejection of place names. As a result, the focal point of critical toponymy was shifted from the ideological manipulation of the powerless masses by the powerful hegemonic actors to the conscious or unconscious responses of the ordinary people who use place names. As said before, post-structuralism was very important in providing the researchers with necessary tools for explaining these responses. Yet, the critical toponymists are still far away from adopting a fully post-structuralist conception of power. That is why, critical studies on place names are still under the influence of the assumption that streetscape is a stable structure where a hegemonic center, though sometimes facing with conscious or unconscious destabilizing forces, generally ensures its control in the structure. In the next part I explicate on this argument and make another argument that this situation of the critical toponymy literature calls a Barthesian intervention.

3.3. An Evaluation of the Current Situation of the Critical Toponymy Literature

Each phase in this literature review is very important in itself as studies at each stage have different advantages in explaining a different part of social reality. For example, the approach in the first phase has not been completely rejected with the emergence of other phases. On the contrary, this approach, the first examples of which were encountered about 40 years ago, is still being used to understand the ideological

discourses of political groups. Therefore, a hierarchical relationship in terms of importance should not be established between these phases. Nor the division of the literature into these four phases should be seen as the best way to understand the emergence and development of critical toponymy literature: this division is made not to present the best way of understanding the history of this literature but to show that the studies of critical toponymy reached to a point where it calls a Barthesian reading.

Considering the streetscape as text, the official naming authorities as writer, and the users of street names as readers, the first phase corresponds to the birth of the author. Before this, place names were thought to be anonymous and authorless cultural artefacts without any clear motivation. However, with the emergence of critical place name studies in the 1980s, it was shown that place names are determined by a political authority, and for the most time for specific ideological purposes. As a result, the streetscape began to be considered as a text that carries the intended meanings of the author and so waits to be deciphered through a critical ideological analysis. What renders such an analysis 'critical' is not only the decipherment of the ideological meanings embedded by the author into the streetscape but also, and more importantly, the assumption that these ideological meanings are imposed on the readers. So, as the users of place names, readers are assumed to be passive agents that have no other choice but to accept the imposition of hegemonic groups. In the second phase, it was shown that the author is not a homogeneous subject that smoothly transfers its ideas into the streetscape. In other words, the determination of street names was not the reflection of the intentions of a single hegemon but the product of very complex processes of conflicts and compromises among many different socio-political groups. In the third phase, the attention shifted from the writing to the reading, i.e. from the determination of street names to their perceptions among the people. The studies in this phase assumed that the users of street names are not passive agents but always carry the potential for resistance. Finally, in the fourth phase it was demonstrated that the concept of 'resistance' is not sufficient to explain all the cases where the official toponymic projects are rejected by the people. Instead, the concept of 'habit' is proposed to explain the cases where people unconsciously reject the official toponymies. So, in this phase the concept of 'resistance' was replaced by a more general conception of rejection.

Here, at the last point where critical toponymy arrived, we face a duality between rejection/acceptance. In fact, this is a natural duality: people either accept or reject the official place names. However, this natural duality manifests in the place name studies as an unnatural duality in the form of rejection/submission. This drift from a natural to an unnatural dualism is due to the imagination of the streetscape as a stable structure where the center (in this case the local or national political authority that controls the place-naming process) normally controls the play of meaning. The common point of all studies investigating the cases of rejection in the literature is that they reveal the presence of plurality of meaning inherent in place names. So, they implicitly or explicitly relate the rejection of official place names to the inability of the center to control this plurality. As a result, the one side of the binary relation, i.e. the rejection, is seen as the area where the play of meaning exists. Here, the readers are free to 'perform', whether through conscious resistances and/or unconscious habits. However, the other side of the duality, where the readers accept the official place names is assumed to be the field where the center manages to put an end to the play of meaning. Whether explained by the rigid theories of hegemonic control that were popular in the 1980s and 1990s in the critical toponymy or more flexible accounts of hegemony,¹⁶ this is the field where the hegemonic center manages to fix the meaning at least temporarily. So, popular acceptance of place names is associated with submission to the center, to the author, and to the political authority.

This study aims to show that this binary relationship is problematic by demonstrating that not only in the cases of rejection but also those of acceptance there is a significant amount of plurality of meaning on the part of the users of place names. This demonstration will be made in the Chapter 5 through the examination of the case of the renaming of Nevzat Tandoğan Street as Olive Branch Street in Çankaya/Ankara. As will be shown, although the majority of people did not reject to use the official street name, they gave many different meanings to it. The aim of making this demonstration of plurality of meaning is not only to show that the streetscape that is

¹⁶ For example, Palonen used Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) argument that hegemony is "the fixing of meaning on an undecidable, uneven terrain" to explain the hegemonic function of street naming in providing a fixation of "a discursive field that is always in flux" (Palonen, 2018, p. 101). Similarly, using Laclau's idea of the 'empty signifier', Hui argued that toponymies can be turned into 'hegemonic devices' by a naming regime to universalize particularistic ideologies and to "create a territorial order for legitimatizing power" (2017, p. 8).

assumed to be a stable structure may face destabilizing forces even if people accept the official place names. Rather, I intend to directly attack to the conception of streetscape as a stable structure. To do so, I benefit from the thought of Roland Barthes, especially that of ‘the death of the author’. In the critical toponymy literature, the relationship between the actors who determine and use place names, or the author and reader, has been significantly de-centralized so far. In other words, the absolute authority of the author over the reader has eroded significantly. Yet, the hierarchical relationship between two still persists: although the author has been weakened and the reader strengthened significantly, the first is still in a more decisive position than the second. This is quite normal because there is a disparity between these two actors in terms of their weapons: while the first has the power to determine the place names and even fix their meaning (?), the second only has the means of rejecting them. So, the only thing that prevents the reader from being a completely passive agent is that s/he has the right to reject the text. This is reminiscent of Barthes' criticism of traditional literary theories: “Instead of gaining access to the magic of the signifier, to the pleasure of writing, he (reader) is left with no more than the poor freedom either to accept or reject the text: reading is nothing more than a referendum (Barthes, 1974 [1970], p. 4).

In such an approach, of course the author will be in a position hierarchically superior to the reader. Barthes solved this problem by discovering a feature of the reader, that is its central position in production of meaning, and thereby announced ‘the death of the author’ as the center of the meaning of literary texts. What if we apply this concept to the streetscape and save the users of place names from their passive position? Before doing so, the next section explicates on the thought of Roland Barthes.

CHAPTER 4

THE DEATH OF THE AUTHOR IN THE STREETScape

This part of the thesis applies Roland Barthes' concept of 'the death of the author' to the streetscape. However, before that, it is necessary to understand what this concept means. So, in this chapter I will explicate on the concept of 'the death of the author'. In addition, Barthes always kept his ideas dynamic in order not to allow his thought to turn into fixed discourses and stereotypes. To do so, he frequently criticized his own ideas and tried to overcome them. For this reason, a study that will benefit from Barthes' thought should carefully understand the transformations that Barthes underwent. Therefore, before explicating on the concept of 'the death of the author' itself, the first endeavor in this chapter will be to focus on the transformations experienced in the general thought of Barthes. These transformations deserve attention not only for they prepared the ground for the concept of 'the death of the author'. In addition to this important factor, these transformations in the thought of Barthes are also significant for this study as they show parallelism with the transformations experienced in critical toponymy literature. In both cases there was a shift of attention from ideological criticism of the instrumentalization of cultural objects for political manipulation to the polysemy inherent in the activity of reading/consuming/using these cultural objects. On the one hand, at the beginning of his career Barthes was interested in the concept of 'myth', that is the use of mundane objects by the bourgeoisie for "ideological abuse" (Barthes, 1972 [1957], p. 11). On the other hand, as was shown, the initial studies in the critical toponymy literature was based on the assumption that street names are used by the hegemonic groups for the purpose of ideological manipulation. Later, in both Barthes' thought and critical toponymy this focus on the emitters of the cultural artefacts shifted to the perception of cultural artefacts by their users. In addition, in both cases this shift was a product of the increasing influence of post-structuralist theory. In the case of Barthes, Derrida's

criticism of structuralism and Kristeva's idea of intertextuality played a very important role while in that of critical toponymy the post-structuralist conception of power was influential.

Despite these parallelisms, there is a serious difference that makes a Barthesian intervention into the critical toponymy literature necessary. While Barthes completely reached a post-structuralist view of world, the critical toponymy studies still evaluate place names in a hierarchical and dualistic fashion. This difference comes from the fact that while in his textual theory Barthes declared the death of the author, that is the center of dualism and hierarchy in the texts, in critical toponymy the author in the form of the political elites that control the official naming regimes is still alive. According to this view, the streetscape is a stable structure in which a hegemonic center always fixes meaning and thereby give an end to the play of meaning. In some cases, this hegemonic center faces with some destabilizing forces that manifest itself in the popular rejection of the place names. Yet, such cases are only exceptions that do not break the rule. In general, people accept the official place names and so the hegemonic center manages to fix the meaning and thereby ensures the stability of the structure. However, we need to go beyond such a hierarchical (the hierarchy between the writer and user of street names) view of place names in order to have a better understanding of streetscape. To do so, I follow the path of Roland Barthes who transcended the hierarchical and dualistic view of world by proclaiming the death of the author. Barthes developed the concept of 'the death of the author' in the context of literary theory. However, he himself applied this concept to the non-literary cultural artefacts in the framework of what he called "new semiology" (Barthes, 1977a [1971], pp. 166, 169). This was possible because 'the death of the author' was not only a literary concept but also a textual theory. As for Barthes everything, including the city, could be read as texts, 'the death of the author' as a textual theory could also be applied to the non-literary objects as well. Even Barthes himself made this application in the context of Japan in the *Empire of Signs* (1989 [1970]). So, I make a similar application in another spatial context, that is streetscape. In this process, I use mainly three different sources. Firstly, I use Barthes' own work on the 'death of the author'. These include his short essay "The Death of the Author" (1977 [1967]) as well as other work that developed the main themes presented in this essay. My second source is the passages from *The Practice of Everyday Life* of Michel de Certeau on the everyday

life in place. There, I found very important insights that helped me in answering question ‘how the urban residents give meaning to the spatial elements in their everyday life’. Finally, I benefited from several critical toponymy studies.

The first part of this chapter explicates on the thought of Roland Barthes in a way that includes the phases of ideological criticism, structuralism and semiology, and finally ‘the death of the author’. Then, the first part ends up with an evaluation of the thought of Barthes and specifically his concept of ‘the death of author’ in the urban context and in the framework of streetscape. The second part makes a Barthesian reading of streetscape by using the main themes of the concept of ‘the death of the author’. After that, it presents an overall assessment of this reading in the context of the contemporary critical toponymy literature. In this assessment, in order to justify the selection of the case of Olive Branch Street that will be examined in the Chapter 5, it will be argued that the best way to demonstrate the usefulness of the Barthesian approach in the streetscape is to show the plurality of meaning in a case where the majority of people did not reject the official place name but still produced many different meanings on a specific street name.

4.1. Thought of Roland Barthes

4.1.1. Ideological Criticism of Cultural Artefacts

Throughout his carrier, Barthes showed interest in many different objects and fields such as literature, photography, sports, toys, cinema, fashion, food, city, etc. The source of this interest was not merely curiosity. On the contrary, all these different things that Barthes was interested in have a common point: all of them are cultural artefacts that, apart from their primary functions, have the capacity to carry social meanings. In particular, the field that attracted most of the attention of Barthes was literature; in fact, Barthes' work can be divided into those on literature and other cultural objects. It is therefore not surprising that his first published book, *Writing Degree Zero* (1967 [1953]) was about literature. Here, Barthes criticized the literary theory put forward by Sartre in *What is Literature?* (1988 [1948]).¹⁷ In general, in

¹⁷ Sartre set a different mission for the writer than the artists in the other branches for the raw material of the writer, that is words, was different from that of all other artists. Because of the capability of the words to carry meaning, Sartre argued, writers had the capacity to communicate with their readers through their works. Then, as a moral responsibility, the writer had to use this capacity in the struggle

Writing Degree Zero Barthes demonstrated the limitations of the freedom and autonomy of the writer. This demonstration, in turn, was associated with the influence of bourgeoisie ideology in the literature and the desperateness of the writers against this influence. According to Barthes, bourgeois ideology penetrated so much into the literature that even the attempts of the writers to develop the forms that are outside of the bourgeoisie norms are assimilated by it. In the words of Barthes, “however hard he (the writer) tries to create a free language, it comes back to him fabricated” (Barthes, 1967 [1953], p. 87). So, it can be said that *Writing Degree Zero* presents an ideological criticism in the field of literature.

In *Mythologies* (1972 [1957]), Barthes continued his critique of bourgeois ideology in the non-literary cultural objects. What pushed him to carry out such a study was his resentment with the popular acceptance of what are actually historical constructions as the products of nature. By this way, the values that in fact reflect the bourgeois ideology come to be seen as natural and universal. So, it was this ideological manipulation inherent in the process of naturalization of the bourgeois ideology that Barthes tried to unmask (Barthes, 1972 [1957], p. 10). In order to do so, Barthes used the method of Saussurean linguistics. He applied the analytical tools developed by Saussure for linguistics to the non-linguistic cultural artefacts in order to show that they are manipulated by the bourgeoisie ideology in the form of myths (Barthes, 1993 [1985], p. 12). Saussure had used the concept of ‘sign’ that consisted of a signifier and signified. Barthes argued that in some cases a sign becomes the signifier of another sign, and thereby creates a second-order semiological system that prepares the ground

for human liberty (Sontag, 1967 [1953], p. XV). In response to Sartre, Barthes argued that the writer’s field of freedom is narrower than Sartre imagined. For him, the writer works in the triangle of language, style, and writing. In the first two elements the writer cannot make free choices: the language is “a corpus of prescriptions and habits common to all writers of a period” (Barthes, 1967 [1953], p. 9) while the style is “a self-sufficient language which has its roots only in the depths of the author’s personal and secret mythology” (Barthes, 1967 [1953], p. 10). So, both the language and style are imposed on the writer – the first by the history and society, and the second by the psychological and individual biography. Contrarily, in the field of writing or form, the writer is relatively free as s/he can make “a general choice of tone, of ethos” (Barthes, 1967 [1953], p. 13). Yet, the freedom of the writer does not go beyond this moment of free choice for every (free) choice in terms of form brings a commitment and thereby gives an end to the freedom of the writer. The writer is free to accept or reject the traditional form of literature that reflects bourgeois norms. However, after making this free decision, the writer is no longer free as s/he is now positioned either along with or against the bourgeoisie norms of literature (Barthes, 1967 [1953], p. 3). The only way to prevent this position of commitment on the part of the writer is to completely abandon the literature. So, there is no any literary form without commitment, or “writing degree zero” (Barthes, 1967 [1953], p. 5).

for the emergence of myths (Barthes, 1972 [1957], pp. 111-113). For example, the sentence ‘my name is lion’ in a grammar book is a sign that consists of a signifier and signified. It has a literal meaning, which is denotation. However, due to its context in a grammar book, this sign as a whole becomes the signifier of another signified, that is ‘I am a grammatical example’. In this second-order system there is no literal meaning, or denotation, but connotation (Barthes, 1972 [1957], p. 114). However, the significations in the second-order semiological systems are not always so innocent as in this example. In some cases, the signified of the second-order signification becomes an ideological concept and so myths emerge. Very importantly, the signifiers of the myths do not have to be a linguistic element; they can be everything on the world, even the toys. For example, a doll played by a girl may seem like an innocent toy at first glance. However, this toy is actually a signifier of an ideological signified, that is women’s social role as mother (Barthes, 1972 [1957], p. 114).

In general, this phase of the intellectual career of Roland Barthes is based on the similar assumption that allowed the emergence of the critical toponymy literature. Taking inspiration from the Marxian-Gramscian concept of ideology, this assumption is that the objects that seem at first glance unpolitical in fact serve for the ideological manipulation of the masses. Of course, Barthes himself did not refer to the street names as an example of such ideological objects and used mainly the terminology of structuralist linguistics which did not exist in the critical toponymy. However, the emphasis of the first students of critical toponymy on the ideological nature of street names was similar that of Barthes as seen in the example of the toys. Just like toys serve as the signifiers of an ideological signified, and thereby gives the message to the children about how to think and behave (Barthes, 1972 [1957], pp. 53-55), street names are signifiers of the signifieds that are determined by the political elites that control the official naming bodies. Moreover, both Barthes and the students of critical toponymy would transcend this notion of cultural objects. As explained in the previous chapter, in the 2000s the critical toponymists would enormously deepen their conception of place names and go beyond only showing that place names are political. On the other hand, as will be shown in the next section, Barthes would leave the ideological analysis and instead fully embrace the methods of structuralism and semiology.

4.1.2. Semiology of Non-Linguistic Elements

In the last section it was shown that Barthes established his relationship with structuralist linguistics in *Mythologies* by using the terminology of Saussure. However, Barthes did not apply a strictly structuralist method to analyze the myths; rather, it was “a very loose and freewheeling structuralist analysis” (Bertens, 2008, p. 51). It was in the 1960s that Barthes completely submitted to the scientific rigor of structuralism. In *Elements of Semiology*, he presented the main principles of semiological research that aims to examine scientifically the structures established by the cultural artefacts (Barthes, 1967 [1964], p. 85). There, Barthes rejected Saussure’s argument that linguistics is part of a general science of signs; instead, he suggested that semiology be considered as part of the language as there is no semiological system outside language (Barthes, 1967 [1964], p. 11). On the one hand, the non-linguistic signifiers (such as photos in newspapers) are generally supported by linguistic elements. As Barthes said, “we are a civilization of the written word” (Barthes, 1967 [1964], p. 10). On the other hand, signifieds cannot exist outside language: in order to be able to imagine what a signifier is signifying, i.e. what is the signified, we have to resort to the language. So, the linguistics could not be seen as a narrower field than the semiology (Barthes, 1967 [1964], p. 10). The acceptance of semiology as a subfield of language would have methodological implications, as the analytical tools of the general field, that is linguistics, could legitimately be used in its subfield of semiology. Of course, some refinements were necessary to apply the linguistic method to the non-linguistic objects because of the fact that the primary functions of the latter objects are not signification but utility. For this reason, Barthes called these non-linguistic elements as “sign-function” (Barthes, 1967 [1964], p. 41). Barthes did not only study on the general principles of semiological method; he also used this method on a specific semiological system, that is fashion, through both a number of essays that were published in different media between the late 1950s and mid-1960s, and a book, *The Fashion System*, that was published in 1967.

It can be asked, if Barthes used Saussurean linguistics for analyzing both the myths and semiological systems, what is the difference here? The difference can be seen by comparing two different approaches adopted by Barthes in analyzing fashion systems, one in his essay in *Mythologies* (“The World of Wrestling”), the other in *The Fashion*

System (1983 [1967]). The first difference is in terms of scientific rigor. In the first, Barthes criticized the ideological manipulation of the fashion system in an interpretative manner, while in the second he seemed to be engaging in a scientific analysis in order to understand not only what does fashion system signify but also how does it work as a structure. Secondly, and more importantly for his subsequent thought, in the semiological research Barthes adopted a new perspective of meaning. In *Mythologies* Barthes implicitly accepted the existence of a 'true meaning' by arguing that the socially accepted meanings of objects are not natural but the result of ideological manipulation (Dant, 1991, p. 109). In his more rigorously structuralist semiological research, however, Barthes did not look for such a natural or true meaning. Rather, there was now an emphasis on the view that meaning is produced by and can change according to the differential and relational status of the sign within the system. Barthes explained this more relational understanding of meaning in an interview published in 1961:

Fashion and literature are ... homeostatic systems, that is, systems whose function is not to communicate an objective, exterior signified which pre-exists the system, but merely to create an equilibrium of operations, a signification in movement ... Fashion and literature signify strongly ... but ... they signify "nothing," their being is in signification, not in what is signified (Barthes, 1972 [1961], p. 152).

It can be seen from this statement that Barthes frees the signifier from being the form of a fixed content, or carrier of a fixed meaning, as there is no such a fixed content or meaning. Barthes saw this assumption of a fixed relationship between signifier and signified as a problematic conception of meaning and declared an all-out war against it especially in the 1970s. As Barthes expressed in his essay "The Kitchen of Meaning," "meaning can never be handled and analyzed alone" for "signs consist of differentiations" (1993a [1964], p. 154). So, the analysis must be based not on showing the signified of the signifiers, for example stating that blue-jeans signify the style and elegance of the teenagers, but on showing the differentiations and relations between the signs (Barthes, 1993a [1964], p. 154). By rejecting fixed signifieds, emphasizing the emptiness and relationality of the signifiers, and thereby destabilizing the meaning Barthes went beyond his approach of ideological criticism that he had adopted in the *Mythologies*. However, Barthes was not content with these developments. As will be explained below, he also dived into the problem of writer and reader in his studies on

the literature and thereby shifted from a structuralist-semiological approach to a post-structuralist textual approach, which would bring him into the concept of ‘the death of the author’.

4.1.3. Structural Analysis of the Text

Positioning of the sender/writer (the producer of cultural artefacts) and the receiver/reader (the consumer of cultural artefacts) in the process of the production of meaning is very critical issue for a theorist like Barthes who interested in the meaning of cultural artefacts. While analyzing the meaning of the non-literary objects, Barthes touched upon this issue in an essay “Semantics of Objects”:

Signifieds of objects depend not on the sender but receiver, i.e. the reader of the object. In fact, meaning of the object is plural, in other words, it easily presents itself to many readings of meaning: for an object, there are almost always many possibilities of reading which are realized not only from one to another reader but also within the same reader. In other words, every person has many vocabularies and reading reserves depending on their knowledge and culture level (1993b [1964], p. 170).

As seen from the passage, Barthes makes a distinction between the sender and receiver of the objects and says that the meaning is determined by the latter. However, in his studies both on the general principles of the semiological research and the fashion system, Barthes did not interest directly with the concepts of ‘sender’ and ‘receiver’. Rather, his emphasis was on the structure itself. But, in the literature, he had to immediately deal with this issue for there was a myth that prevailed in this field for many years, that is the myth of the author as the center of meaning. In fact, Barthes’ fight with the myth of the author began in *On Racine* (1983 [1963]) where he argued that the experience of writing is too complex to be explained as a simple process of the transfer of author’s pre-existing ideas onto the paper. There, he used psychoanalytical terminology to understand “what is happening inside an author at the moment he is writing” (Barthes, 1983 [1963], pp. 155-156). This novel experiment made him the target of the critique of the traditional literary circles (Allen, 2003, p. 24). In turn, Barthes decided to answer to one of such criticisms, that of Raymond Picard’s pamphlet *New Criticism or New Fraud?* (1969 [1964]), and wrote his book *Criticism and Truth* (2007 [1966]). In the first part of the book he responded to the criticisms of Picard and also criticized what he termed as ‘old criticism’. In the second

part, on the other hand, he systematically put forward a new conception of literary criticism. Here, heavily influenced by structuralist method, he treated the literary work as a structure and thereby rejected the traditional and mythical view that the meaning of the work comes from the intention of the author; instead, he argued that the literary work can contain many different meanings simultaneously and independently of the intentions of the author. So, the readers' inability to arrive at a single original meaning does not indicate their inability or deficiency; rather, this is due to the nature of the literary work, for a work does not impose "a single meaning on different men, but ... it suggests different meanings to one man" (Barthes, 2007 [1966], pp. 25-26). However, ignoring the plurality of meaning inherent in the literary work, the traditional approaches have always searched for a single legal meaning for each work (Barthes, 2007 [1966], p. 70). Instead of such a search, Barthes proposed for three different means of taking care of the literary work: reading, criticism, and science. By reading a work, one immediately reaches a particular meaning; this is a matter of love rather than analysis or examination. In the words of Barthes, "only reading loves the work, entertains with it a relationship of desire. To read is to desire the work, to want to be the work" (Barthes, 2007 [1966], p. 40). Criticism, on the other hand, is mediated by language to express the particular meaning derived from a text. There is a desire here, too. However, this is not the desire of reading but of "one's own language" (Barthes, 2007 [1966], p. 40). Barthes also warns that the goal of criticism is not to find the original meaning imposed by the author on the work. Rather, he argues that the meaning attributed by a criticism to a work is only "a new flowering of the symbols which constitute the work" (Barthes, 2007 [1966], p. 36). Finally, science of literature examines the general features of the literary work that allows the proliferation of meaning within it. Yet, Barthes cautiously said that there is no such a science yet (Barthes, 2007 [1966], p. 28).

In another study, that is "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives" (1977 [1966]), Barthes deepened his views on the science of literature by presenting a structural method for the analysis of narratives. His aim in there was to find a common structure that could explain all narratives. To do so, he followed a deductive method to design a hypothetical model on the basis of which all of the narratives could be evaluated (Barthes, (1977 [1966]), pp. 80-81). This work was the peak of Barthes' enthusiasm for analyzing literary works with a scientific rigor. On the other hand, it

was also the beginning of the era which he described as “eventually losing my interest in science, I entered in the signifier and in the text with the pleasure” (Barthes, 1993 [1985], p. 14). Indeed, this text was the first one where Barthes not only mentioned the plurality of meaning inherent in the text but directly answered the question ‘how to enter this world of plurality’. Still, it was heavily structuralist in its method: it assumed that there is ‘a’ way that can be found through deduction to analyze all of the narratives. In his next work, however, Barthes would embrace the conception of the text with many different ways of entrance, which means that proposals for understanding the text can never claim more than being only one possible way among many ways with equal legitimacy. Finally, just as in the *Criticism and Truth*, Barthes rejected the image of the author as a subject who imposes a single legal meaning on the text by saying that “structural analysis is unwilling to accept such an assumption (that makes the author a full subject and the narrative the instrumental expression of that fullness): who speaks in the narrative is not who writes in real life” (Barthes, 1977 [1966], pp. 111-112).

So, in both *Criticism and Truth* and the “Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives” Barthes completely rejected what he would later term as ‘the myth of the author’. For him, the literary work is the field of the plurality of meaning where the author cannot control the meaning. He also made this argument in his other writings and interviews. For example, in his preface to *Critical Essays* he said that “writing must go hand in hand with silence; to write is in a sense to become ‘still as death’, to become someone to whom the last word is denied; to write is to offer others, from the start, that last word” (1972b [1963], p. XI). In an interview in 1963, he again stated that the writer can neither fill nor close significations in the text: “The writer is concerned to multiply significations without filling or closing them, and ... he uses language to constitute a world which is emphatically signifying but never finally signified” (Barthes, 1972a [1963], p. 278).

All of these comments show that Barthes the structuralist had already rejected the author as the center of text. Yet, in these studies Barthes did not answer the question what does the writer, if not the author, of the text do? In other words, he just rejected the authority of the writer over the text, but not positioned it within the text. This task would be carried in his famous essay “The Death of the Author” (1977 [1967]) where

he announced the death of the author, positioned the writer as modern sriptor and heralded the birth of the reader.

4.1.4. The Death of the Author¹⁸

In “the Death of the Author” Barthes reiterated his view that the writer cannot impose her intended meaning on the text. But, this time Barthes examined the myth of the author more specifically. First, he explained the emergence of this myth. In ethnographic communities, narratives were transmitted by a mediator, who was not the creator but only the transmitter of the narratives. So, these people were appreciated for their performance, not for their genius (Barthes, 1977 [1967], p. 142). The concept of author emerged in the modern period as a result of the English empiricism, French rationalism, and Reformation. The faith in the individual creativity that was endorsed by these historical developments was also reflected in the literature with the characterization of the author as the creator of the text. As a result, all literary work began to be seen as the voice of its author, or the message that carries the theological meaning of the author-god (Barthes, 1977 [1967], pp. 142-146). However, Barthes argued that this conception of author is nothing more than a myth. This myth of author has sometimes been challenged by some writers such as Mallarme, Valery, and Proust who showed by their own writings that the form of writing associated with the author-god is not the only way to write. In addition, surrealism, by supporting an “abrupt disappointment of expectations of meaning,” and linguistics, by showing that “the whole of the enunciation is an empty process” has also shaken the sacred position of the author. Yet, the myth of the author still pervaded in the literature. (Barthes, 1977 [1967], pp. 143-145).

Barthes was probably aware that the myth of the author could not be abandoned before the presentation of an alternative conception of writer: there was a person who writes and waits to be positioned within the text. If s/he was not the author, who was this person? Barthes proposed the term ‘modern sriptor’ to solve this problem (Barthes, 1977 [1967], p. 145). Modern sriptor is only able to “imitate a gesture that is always

¹⁸ Barthes’ essay “The Death of the Author” was firstly published in *Aspen*, an American magazine, in 1967. It was also published in French in another magazine, *Mantéia*, in 1968. However, the essay gained popularity only after it was re-published in a book that collected Barthes’ different essays, *Image, Music, Text* in 1977 (Bennet, 2005, pp. 9-10).

anterior, never original” and “to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them” (Barthes, 1977 [1967], p. 146). The transition from the author to this conception of scriptor, i.e. the death of the author, allows the emergence of modern text that is “a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash... (and) a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture” (Barthes, 1977 [1967], p. 146). In addition to the writer and text, the death of the author has also implications for the reader: s/he no longer deciphers but disentangles the text. In other words, the reader does not need to restrict itself to searching the message of the author; contrarily, it can now enjoy with the plurality of the text (Barthes, 1977 [1967], p. 147). Then, here we face the ultimate result of the death of the author, that is the birth of the reader (Barthes, 1977 [1967], p. 148). So, just as the author is dead because it lost its ability to create a difference by controlling the meaning, the reader is born because it was rescued from its passive submission to the author and obtained the authority to produce the meaning.

Although “The Death of the Author” is a relatively short essay consisting of only 7 pages, Barthes’ views on three themes (reader, text, reader) put forward in this essay would be backbone of Barthes' later textual theory. The following sub-sections will focus on these three themes separately in order to prepare the ground for the Barthesian reading of streetscape that will be made on those three themes.

4.1.4.1. The Writer and Writing

In “The Death of the Author” Barthes explained the emergence of the myth of the author. Taking inspiration from Derrida, in his later work Barthes combined the myth of the author with a large-scale critique of Western civilization. Derrida argued that each sign finds its meaning only in its relationship with other signs. This relationality between the signs is established by the fact that the signifieds of the signs always become the signifiers of other signifieds. Therefore, the meaning cannot be reduced to the stable relationship between the signifier and signified within only one sign. Then, consisting of many signs, the text is the field of the play of meaning where the signifiers continually become the signifieds of other signs. The only thing that can end this process of the play of meaning is a ‘transcendental signified’ which is always fixed

and never becomes the signifier of another signified. Contrarily, it always stays in the center of the structure to ensure that play of meaning comes to an end. All of the philosophies within the Western civilization have been based on such transcendental signifieds. Even structuralism establishes such a center, that is sign (Allen, 2003, pp. 67-70). Barthes was influenced from these ideas of Derrida. He said that:

A dictionary is composed of signifiers; i.e., words printed in bold type, each one of them furnished with a definition serving as its signified. These signifieds are themselves made up of other words. So the dictionary is an infinite structure vertiginously off-center. But in the West there comes a point when the dictionary comes to a halt with God, who is the keystone of the arch, since God can only be a signified, never a signifier (Barthes, 1981a [1970], p. 99).

So, for Barthes the thought in the West is always based on the conception of a final signified that never becomes a signifier. This feature of the Western thought is reflected in the literature with the concept of 'author'. In other words, the final signified reincarnates in the literature in the form of the author, the center which never signifies but is always signified (Goulimari, 2015, p. 115). This understanding of the literature produces a 'dogmatic discourse' which is "based on a signified, and tends to valorize language through the existence of an ultimate signified" (Barthes, 1981 [1972], p. 161). Finally, for Barthes the myth of the author also serves to consumerism. If a book has only one single true meaning, a message that is imposed by the author, then when a reader understands this meaning s/he can continue with another book (Allen, 2003, p. 76).

4.1.4.2. The Text

Barthes argued in the "Death of the Author" that the text is not the message of the author, but a "tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture" (Barthes, 1977 [1967], p. 146). Here, Barthes was clearly influenced by Kristeva's theory of intertextuality which approached the text as something composed of the utterances that are taken from different texts (Selden, Widdowson, Brooker, 2005, p. 161). In his later work, Barthes gave details about this conception of 'text' by comparing it with the concept of 'work'. He argued that while the text is a "methodological field," the work is "a fragment of substance, occupying a part of the space of books (in a library for example)" (Barthes, 1977b [1971], pp. 156-157). The work is closed by a signified, whether a clear one such as the intended meaning of the

author of the text, or a secret one such as the class status or the sub-conscious of the author. In the first case, the work is under the scrutiny of the literary science, while in the second that of the thematic interpretation, for example Marxist or psychoanalytical. The text, on the other hand, is the freedom zone of signifiers, where they do not need to signify a stable signified as there is no a center, i.e. a transcendental signified in the text (Barthes, 1977b [1971], pp. 155-164). So, for Barthes if the meaning of a content is evaluated on the basis of its author, or its ideological and psychoanalytical tendencies, then we have a 'work'. When the authorial authority on the content is rejected, and instead the autonomy of the signifiers from the fixed signifieds is accepted, then we have a 'text' (Nayar, 2010, p. 38).

Since the text is different from the work, its analysis should also be different. In "The Death of the Author" Barthes said that the analysis of the text requires going beyond the procedures of decipherment of the author's messages and instead diving into the world of signifiers. "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives" was a preliminary study in showing the way to do so. But this study would be criticized and transcended by Barthes in another work, *S/Z*:

Precisely what the first analysts of narrative were attempting: to see all the world's stories ... within a single structure: we shall, they thought, extract from each tale its model, then out of these models we shall make a great narrative structure, which we shall reapply (for verification) to anyone narrative: a task as exhausting ... as it is ultimately undesirable, for the text thereby loses its difference (Barthes, 1974 [1970], p. 3).

So, Barthes criticized his approach in the "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives" for being too scientific to comprehend the plurality of meaning in the text. In his structural analysis, Barthes did not reject the plurality of the text, but he thought that this plurality can be tamed by the analyzer through a common model that can be applied to all narratives. In *S/Z*, on the other hand, Barthes was aware of that the taming of the plurality of meaning is neither possible nor desirable: there are many different entrances into the plurality of meaning of the text, and nobody can claim that the way he chooses to enter this plurality is better than the others (Barthes, 1974 [1970], p. 5). So, in this work Barthes tried to 'evaluate' (not scientifically analyze) and show his own way of entrance to the plurality in a narrative, Balzac's *Sarrasine*. He first divided the text into its smallest meaningful units, that are 'lexias'. Then, he searched for five

different codes scattered into these lexias.¹⁹ At first glance, the use of such concepts as ‘lexia’ and ‘code’ may seem to be the continuation of Barthes’ search for a scientific explanation of the text. Yet, Barthes clearly states that these are not hierarchically organized tools devised to tame the text, but that they serve to revealing the plurality of the text (Barthes, 1974 [1970], pp. 14, 20).

In *S/Z* Barthes also made a distinction between ‘writerly’ and ‘readerly’ texts. Writerly texts entirely serve for the production of meaning by the reader; they are associated with the ‘magic of signifier’. Readerly texts, on the other hand, is still controlled by the author; their readers do not produce meaning but just accept or reject the text (Barthes, 1974 [1970], p. 4). However, there are rarely completely writerly (univocal) or completely readerly (multivalent) texts. Rather, the texts exist on a scale between these two categories; most of them, just like Balzac’s *Sarrasine*, are ‘incompletely plural’ or ‘merely polysemous’ texts (Barthes, 1974 [1970], p. 6).

4.1.4.3. The Reader and Reading

Until the 1970s, Barthes’ interest was mainly in the question ‘how to analyze the texts’ as exemplified in the “Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives” and the *S/Z*. However, in the 1970s Barthes began to take a close interest in the activity of reading and the importance of body in this activity. In “The Death of the Author” he announced the birth of reader, and defined it as “the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost” (Barthes, 1977 [1967], p. 148). This definition is in line with an intertextual conception of the text: the utterances that compiled by the writer from many different texts would be interpreted by the reader to produce different meanings. From this idea, Barthes arrived at the conclusion that the activity of reading is a kind of labor, that is the ‘labor of language’ through which the meaning of the text is produced (Barthes, 1974 [1970], p. 11). This emphasis on labor is especially important. In *Mythologies*, Barthes argued that there is only one language that can escape the assimilating force of myths, that is the ‘language of labor’. Myth de-politicizes and thereby naturalizes what is actually

¹⁹ Two of the codes (hermeneutic and proairetic codes) are irreversible; they do not serve to the plurality of meaning as they work in the linear syntagmatic dimension. Three other codes (symbolic and cultural codes, and the codes of semes) are completely open to the interpretation of the reader for they are non-sequential (Allen, 2003, pp. 86-88).

political; but, 'the language of man as producer' is naturally protected from being assimilated into myths because of the fact that the language of production is always political (Barthes, 1972 [1957], p. 146). For example, when a woodcutter talks about the tree with which he directly contacted, s/he speaks the tree, not about it or its image. However, a person who is not a woodcutter, and so has no direct, but a mediated connection with the tree cannot speak the wood, but can only speak about its image (Barthes, 1972 [1957], p. 146). So, Barthes saw labor as an antidote against the assimilating power of myths. In a similar vein, the reader of the text establishes a connection with the text on the basis of labor; it is a producer of the meaning of the text. This status of reader as a laborer protects it from the mythological power of the author. In addition, it implies that the reading is an activity that involves body.

Barthes later further sophisticated the concept of 'body' in the activity of reading by resorting to the concepts of desire and pleasure. As indicated above, in *Criticism and Truth* (2007 [1966]) Barthes had already associated reading with love and desire. Also, in an essay published in 1970 he stated that "to read is to make our body work ... at the invitation of the text's signs" (Barthes, 1984 [1970], p. 31). However, it was with *The Pleasure of Text* (1975 [1973]) that Barthes fully focused on the issues desire and pleasure. Here, he defined the reader in the following way:

Imagine someone ... who abolishes within himself all barriers, all classes, all exclusions ... by simple discard of that old specter: logical contradiction; who mixes every language, even those said to be incompatible; who silently accepts every charge of illogicality, of incongruity; who remains passive in the face of Socratic irony ... and legal terrorism ... Such a man would be the mockery of our society: court, school, asylum, polite conversation would cast him out: who endures contradiction without shame? Now this anti-hero exists: he is the reader of the text at the moment he takes his pleasure (Barthes, 1975 [1973], pp. 3-4).

As it appears from this definition of reader, Barthes considers reading as a process guided by pleasure rather than logical consistency. There is no fear of contradiction on the part of the reader, but a search for pleasure.²⁰

²⁰ Barthes takes his inspiration from eroticism while explaining the pleasure of reading. However, Barthes warns, what he talks about is not the pleasure taken when the erogenous zone is seen. This

To sum up, in terms of writing, Barthes saw the traditional conception of ‘author’ as a reflection of the general search in the Western philosophy for a transcendental signified and so of a false conception of sign that assumes a stable relationship between signifier and signified. Then, Barthes arrived at a new conception of ‘text’ that differs from ‘the work’ by being both free from the tyranny of the author and composed of utterances from many different texts. Finally, Barthes defined the reader as the producer of the meaning of the text, and reading as an action that involves body. Although these three themes were developed mainly within the field of literature, as the next chapter shows, they also influenced Barthes’ views on the meaning of non-literary cultural artefacts, including that of city.

4.1.5. New Semiology, City, and Streetscape after “the Death of the Author”

Just as he did in his analysis of literary texts, Barthes abandoned the strictly scientific structuralist method as a tool to understand the non-literal cultural artefacts. He had started his structuralist adventure with *Mythologies*; dramatically, he also announced the end of this adventure with his preface to the new edition of *Mythologies* published in 1970. There, he stated that neither the ideological criticism nor the classical semiological analysis that underlay *Mythologies* were the proper methods to understand the contemporary world (Barthes, 1972 [1957], p. 8). Yes, the French society was still full of myths. However, Barthes argued that these myths could no

kind of eroticism also exists in the literature, when the reader impatiently reads the text to see the end of the story. This reading is just like watching striptease, where the spectators curiously wait to see the erogenous zone. The text even gives an opportunity to the reader that a spectator does not have: reaching the curious end of the story more quickly by skipping the details in the text, or speeding up the dance by intervening in the rituals of the stripteaser, thereby “on the one hand respecting and on the other hastening the episodes of the ritual” (Barthes, 1975 [1973], p. 11). However, this kind of enjoyment that “takes refuge in the hope of seeing the sexual organ” is not the pleasure Barthes talks about (Barthes, 1975 [1973], p. 10). Rather, the pleasure of text arises from intermittence, like “the intermittence of skin flashing between two articles of clothing” (Barthes, 1975 [1973], p. 10). What assures this intermittence in the text is the fact that texts have two edges, an “obedient, conformist, plagiarizing edge” where “the language is to be copied in its canonical state” and another mobile and blank edge where “the death of language is glimpsed” (Barthes, 1975 [1973], p. 6). The first edge works in line with the established cultural codes while the second has a destructive attitude to these cultural codes. It is neither the first nor the second, i.e. the culture nor its destruction, that is erotic; what is erotic is the seam, fault and flaw between them (Barthes, 1975 [1973], p. 7). Moreover, after explaining the pleasure of the text, Barthes made a distinction between the feeling of pleasure (this ‘pleasure’ is different from and narrower than the more general concept of the ‘pleasure of the text’) and bliss (*jouissance*). While the first comes from reading of a kind of text that is still in the borders of the culture, in the second there is a state of loss, a disconformity that comes from the unsettling of the reader’s established assumptions and norms (Barthes, 1975 [1973], p. 14).

longer be criticized on the basis of their relationship with the bourgeoisie ideology. Rather, there was a need for a broader criticism of “the whole of Western civilization (Graeco-Judaeo-Islamo-Christian), unified under the one theology (Essence, monotheism) and identified by the regime of meaning it practices” (Barthes, 1977a [1971], p. 167). The Western thought had always been based on the assumption of a stable relationship between signifier and signified, prioritizing the latter over the former. Now, it was the time to directly attack to this conception of sign, to “wage a historic battle with the signified” (Barthes, 1977a [1971], p. 85). So, in general Barthes rejected his old conception of semiology, labelled it as the ‘nascent semiology’ (Barthes, 1981 [1967], p. 45) and instead proposed for a ‘new semiology’ more in line with his struggle with the transcendental signifieds (Barthes, 1977a [1971], pp. 166, 169). In the 1970s, he used this new semiological approach to explain many different cultural artefacts, including cinema (Barthes, 1977b [1970]), photography (Barthes, 1980; 1981 [1980]), and music (Barthes, 1977a [1970]; 1977 [1972]); 1981 [1973]). In all these examinations, Barthes seemed to ‘read’ rather than ‘analyze’. In other words, he treated the cultural artefacts as texts. In fact, Barthes himself stated that the concept of ‘text’ is not limited to the literature: “It is wrong to say that the notion of ‘text’ repeats the notion of ‘literature’: literature represents a finite world, the text figures the infinite of language” (Barthes, 1977 [1975], p. 119).

The most extensive example of Barthes’ new semiology is the *Empire of Signs* (1989 [1970]). Here, Barthes showed that the Western philosophy and its obsession with the fixed centers that act as transcendental signifieds is not inevitable. Contrarily to the West, he argued, the Japan is an empire of ‘empty signifiers’ that are not forced to signify fixed signifieds. Barthes demonstrated the play of empty signifiers in many different aspects of Japanese culture, one of which is the Japanese cities. He specifically examined Tokyo, the capital city of Japan. In the West, it has been assumed that the cities must have centers in which all reality of the city is concentrated. For this reason, the signifiers in the city center are never allowed to be ‘empty’; they are always in relation with a fixed signified. Tokyo had a center, too. But, this center was very different from that of the Western cities:

The entire city turns around a site both forbidden and indifferent, a residence concealed beneath foliage, protected by moats, inhabited by an emperor who is never seen, ... by no one knows who ... this circle ... hides the sacred

“nothing.” One of the two most powerful cities of modernity is thereby built around an opaque ring of walls, streams, roofs, and trees whose own center is no more than an evaporated notion, subsisting here, not in order to irradiate power, but to give to the entire urban movement the support of its central emptiness (Barthes, 1989 [1970], pp. 30-31).

So, in Tokyo the city center does not radiate power and control the meaning, i.e. it does not obstruct the play of meaning, but contrarily provokes the movement of empty signifiers through its own emptiness. This situation is also relevant for the neighborhoods; in most of them, the center is a railway station, a ‘prosaic area’ where people always in flux (Barthes, 1989 [1970], p. 38). Finally, in Tokyo people do not use street names in their daily lives. So, one can know this city only by ethnographic activities such as walking, sight, habit and experience. In addition, when one goes to a street that s/he has never gone before, s/he begins to write there herself/himself (Barthes, 1989 [1970], p. 36).

There is also another study where Barthes directly examined the city as an abstract concept. This is an essay, “Semiology and the Urban,” that was produced from a lecture given in 1967. Here, Barthes said that just like other kinds of human habitat, the city constitutes a discourse (Barthes, 1997 [1967], p. 159). For him, this discourse can only be read by lively experiences: “The city speaks to its inhabitants, we speak our city, the city where we are, simply by living in it, by wandering through it, by looking at it” (Barthes, 1997 [1967], p. 160). So, the users of the city can be considered as a kind of reader (Barthes, 1997 [1967], p. 163). For Barthes, the discourse of city does not consist of fixed signifieds and their signifiers; contrarily, the signifieds are so ‘extremely imprecise’ that every signified is at the same time signifier of another signified. The signifieds are, in other words, the empty spaces rather than full and fixed reference points of meaning. So, ‘the hunt for signified’ in the city is not a proper way to understand the significations in the urban context. Instead, these significations should be evaluated on the basis of their correlative position with the other signs in the city (Barthes, 1997 [1967], pp. 161-162). Finally, Barthes argued that the best way to understand the language of city is to conduct more and more readings of city so that it will be possible to reach some general conclusions about the discourse of city (Barthes, 1997 [1967], p. 164).

These two studies of Barthes on city in general reflected his views on three themes that he developed in his literary studies. First, Barthes portrays the city as a text where a center or author cannot claim to be the origin of meaning. Contrarily, since in the city there is no a fixed and stable relationship between signifier and signified, there cannot be a transcendental signified in the context of the city. Second, as it is free from the tyranny of a center that is able to give an end to the play of meaning, the city is a text of plurality in terms of meaning. Third, the meaning in the city is produced by the reader, or by the activity of reading that involves the body in the form of living and experiencing the city. In addition to these common points, there are also some differences between these two works. Firstly, what is done in the *Empire of Signs* is to present a specific reading of the city-text, while in the “Semiology and the Urban” the general principles of the reading of city-text are presented. Second, while in the first study what is at stake is a specific city whose center provokes the play of meaning through its emptiness, in the second it is a general concept of ‘city’ and Barthes is well aware of the fact that the centers in the Western cities are not so empty as Tokyo’s center. So, in the second work, he mentions the concepts such as ‘planners’ and ‘rational calculation’ which imply the control of the signification processes in the city, though he does not give so much detail (Barthes, 1997 [1967], p. 160).

Then, the question that ‘how did Barthes’ thought on the city influence the urban studies?’ can be asked now. In fact, Barthes has not been at the top of the list of the most influential thinkers in the urban studies. Still, this does not mean that he has been completely lost in the field. First of all, Barthes' idea that many ordinary objects in everyday life, even a button on a dress, is socially meaningful has created an awareness that many spatial objects that seem insignificant at first are not in fact so insignificant (Barnes and Duncan, 1992, p. 18). Secondly, Barthes's theory of myth has influenced the studies that try to understand ideological meanings embedded in the city (Ristic, 2018, p. 31; Stevenson, 2003, p. 59).²¹ Thirdly, Barthes’ idea of ‘the death of the author’ influenced many urban studies by encouraging the researchers to see the plurality of meaning in the city, to see that “a city-text was not so much a single volume to be read but a whole library” (Burch, 2015, p. 196). More specifically, these studies

²¹ In fact, Barthes himself had two essays (“The Blue Guide” and “The Eiffel Tower”) on the spatial dimension of the myths in the *Mythologies*.

showed that the creators of the objects in the city do not have the authority to determine the meanings of these object and that the production of meaning depends on the perceptions of urban inhabitants (Burch, 2015, p. 196; 2008, p. 453). For example, in a study the phrase ‘the death of the architect’ was used to indicate that the architect does not have a power to control the meaning of the building s/he has planned (Hill, 2003, pp. 71-72). Finally, Barthes was influential in associating the bodily actions with the activity of in the urban context. This association was not directly popularized by Barthes, but by de Certeau, who followed Barthes in emphasizing the importance of the actions of the users of the city in understanding the urban significations in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984).

What about the influence of Barthes in the subject of this thesis? It can be confidently said that Barthes is almost lost in the critical studies on place names. There are just a few studies that make direct references to Barthes in critical toponymy literature. These studies only refer to either his idea of myth or his semiological approach; so, the concept of ‘the death of the author’ has not been mentioned. For example, using Barthes’ conception of myth, Ristic argued that the street names are the carriers of national narratives (Ristic, 2018, p. 134). Pinchevski and Torgovnik, on the other hand, applied the distinction Barthes made between denotation and connotation to the street names. They said that on the denotative level street names are spatial signs that help people with navigating in the city, and on the connotative level they signify an ideological content (Pinchevski and Torgovnik, 2002, pp. 367-368).

This apparent lack of Barthes in the critical toponymy is a serious deficiency considering that Barthes' ideas can be very helpful in understanding the nature of the politics of streetscape. Street names continue to reflect the worldviews of the hegemonic groups that control the official place naming regimes. In Barthesian terminology, street names are still full of myths. However, as was shown in the ‘Literature Review’, the critical toponymists are no longer content themselves with merely demonstrating this fact. Rather, they resort to different methods and theories to make a deeper analysis of street naming processes rather than presenting a one-by-one list of street names as signifiers and ideological content as signifieds. This is an admirable development and for this reason it is not this point that waits for a Barthesian intervention. Rather, there is another problem that we have to solve, that is the problem

of treating streetscape as a stable structure with a fixed center, if we are to have a better understanding of the politics of street names. Barthes proposed to fight with this regime of meaning by directly attacking to the concept of 'sign' itself. The concept of 'the death of the author' was the intellectual weapon of Barthes in this fight. In a similar way that Barthes used the concept of 'the death of the author' as a weapon against the idea of the stability of signs in both the literary texts and non-literary objects, I use this weapon in the streetscape. This means that I make a Barthesian reading of street names. The use of the verb 'reading' is a deliberate choice here as it implies one of the central assumptions of this thesis that the streetscape is a text that can be read. In fact, this implication of the street names as readable texts is not a novel one for the critical toponymy studies have already analyzed the streetscape as textual frameworks, i.e. they treated street names as city-text. With the influence of post-structuralism, in the cultural geography there emerged a conception of 'landscape as texts' (Duncan and Duncan, 1988, pp. 120-121). According to this conception, a place can be read as one of the many cultural texts that carry the political values and discourses meshed with power relations (Till, 2004, p. 349). The textual approach to the place was also reflected in the studies on place names. Ferguson (1988) was the first who used the term 'text' in a study on place names. He argued that street names are a part of the broader 'city-text'. But, he warned that street names "do not comprise the whole of that (city) text" and that "we cannot 'read' a city solely through its streets" (Ferguson, 1988, p. 395). In 1990, Azaryahu used the term 'city-text' in a narrower sense to refer to only "any set of street names in a particular city" (Azaryahu, 1990, p. 33). Since then, this conception of street names as city-text has frequently been used by other critical toponymists.

This study also uses this conception of street names as text. However, it claims to read this text in a novel way: using the themes Barthes put forward in "The Death of the Author" and then developed in his later studies, it shows that the conception of the writer (i.e. political elites that control the official naming bodies) in the streetscape as the center of meaning is a myth that should be transcended to be able to have a better understanding of the politics of streetscape. In fact, in the critical toponymy literature the absolute power of the naming authorities on the meaning and popular use of place names has already been rejected. Yet, these authorities are still being seen as a center that 'normally' controls the play of meaning in the streetscape though they

'sometimes' face with the de-stabilizing forces against their control. This continuation of the authority, if not the absolute authority, of the writer over the reader in the city-text is possible due to the existence of a dualistic style of thought that is based on the duality of acceptance/rejection and its deformed form of submission/rejection. This line of thought holds that users 'normally' accept official place names, but they can also 'sometimes' reject to use them. In the first case they submit to the hegemony of the stabilizing power while in the second they challenge it. Then, it is only rejection that can indicate the instability of the structure, otherwise, i.e. under normal conditions, the streetscape is stable. As already expressed, facing with a similar line of thought Barthes proposed the concept of 'the death of the author' to free the literary texts and readers from the tyranny of the author. In a similar way, the next section shows that another style of reading of the streetscape is possible by applying the textual theory of Roland Barthes to the streetscape. So, the next section will propose the death of the author and the birth of the reader in the streetscape.

4.2. A Barthesian Reading of Street Names

The ideas of Barthes was summarized in the previous section on three main themes: On (1) writing, Barthes rejected the traditional conception of author as a reflection of the search of Western philosophy for a transcendental signified and so of a false conception of sign that assumes a stable relationship between signifier and signified; on (2) text, Barthes arrived at a new conception of text that is both free from the tyranny of the author and composed of utterances from many different texts; and finally on (3) reading, Barthes defined the reader as the producer of the meaning of the text and reading as an activity that is not independent from the body. The rest of the chapter follows these thematical lines to apply Barthes' textual theory on the streetscape.

4.2.1. The Persistence of the Author in the Streetscape

In the literary text the writer has been assumed to be a transcendental signified that is capable of ending the play of meaning. Similarly, place name studies have taken the political elites that control official naming authorities as the center of the meaning, the transcendental or the fixed signifieds in the streetscape. Students of traditional toponymy saw the culture as the fixed signifieds of place names and examined place

names as the signifiers of the cultural values of society. The critical toponymists inherited this viewpoint, but changed the transcendental signified as the ideologies of the political elites that control the official naming bodies. So, the critical toponymy literature has been based on an imagined and mythical conception of author that is capable of controlling the meaning of place names. This mythical conception of 'the author', in turn, is based on another mythical conception, that of 'the sign' consisting of signifiers, and their stable and fixed signifieds.

Although the control of the authors over place names is still being seen as the norm, it has been increasingly accepted that this control is not an absolute one. Today, even the studies that directly use the place names as tools to understand the ideological tendencies of the political elites are careful in noting that the control of the political authorities over the perception of place names by their users is not absolute. In addition, it has been shown that the political authorities may need different performances to be able to control the popular perception of place names. However, these developments do not indicate that the myth of the author is completely abandoned in the critical toponymy studies. Rather, this myth is still alive thanks to the view that the control of the author is challenged only when the official place names are rejected by the people. As explained in the "Literature Review" many studies have recently showed that the place names are open to multiple interpretations and that the political elites cannot easily control this multiplicity. However, very interestingly all of these studies have examined the cases of the rejection of official place names by their users. Of course, this is not a matter of luck but an indicator of the prevalent assumption in the critical toponymy that the rejection of the authority is the field of richness in terms of meaning. According to this view, if in a case there is rejection of official place names, this means that the author did not succeed in controlling the plurality of meaning. Contrarily, the lack of rejection indicates that the people have submitted to the power of center; otherwise why would not they resist? So, through the duality of submission/rejection, the assumption that place names constitute stable structures continue to persist. What is worse, the increase of the number of studies that show how rich the place names are in terms of meaning can do nothing in eliminating this imagined stability for they also reproduce this imagination by solely focusing on the cases of rejection and thereby implicitly othering the cases of acceptance.

This persistence of the author in the place names can be seen as a reflection of the tendency in the Western thought for the ‘taming of the spatial’. In the Western philosophy the place has always assumed to be a consistent, closed, and stable system. This can be seen from the examination of the main tools for the representation of place, i.e. the modern maps, where the spatial relations are presented as very clear and orderly parts of a structure (Massey, 2005, pp. 106-107). The conception of space as a tamable entity has been reflected in all fields of geography, even in the cultural geography where post-structuralist theories have been very influential. Although the cultural geographers were aware of the importance of contestation and change within the geographical systems, they still continued to embrace the conception of space as a tamable entity by assuming that the center of the place can always ensure the stability even on the face of enormous levels of resistant forces. This approach of place reminds Deleuze’s statement that “what we present to ourselves as power itself is merely the representation of power formed by the slave” (Rose, 2002, p. 389; Deleuze, 1962, p. 81). In the next section, I show that this ‘representation of power’ which presents the official naming bodies as the tamer of streetscape is a myth by demonstrating that street names do not form a stable structure that waits to be tamed by a stabilizing center but a very complex, intertextual entity that is inherently instable.

4.2.2. Intertextuality of the Streetscape

The streetscape of a city cannot be ascribed in its entirety to one single actor. First, as indicated in the “Literature Review,” the studies in the second phase of critical toponymy have shown that street names are not clear expressions of the ideology of a single hegemonic group. but the products of the processes of conflicts and reconciliations among different actors. In the contexts where the place names are determined by democratic procedures, many different actors such as civil society organizations, political parties, and even private sector agents try to influence the process of place naming. Even in the most authoritarian systems, place naming processes are influenced by the bifurcations within the ruling elites as well as the political alliances they have established to consolidate their power. This conflictual aspect of place naming is already explained in the previous chapters. In addition to this, there is also another aspect of place naming that makes it impossible for the ruling elites to entirely control the streetscape, that is the archeological aspect of place names.

When a political group acquires the power to control the place naming process, it faces with not a blank slate but a palimpsest. Following De Certeau's expression that "the place is a palimpsest" (de Certeau, 1984, p. 202), Ferguson used this term in the context of place names (Ferguson, 1988, p. 392). According to this conception, streetscape is 'a multicolor tapestry' in which many different narratives and conflictual ideologies exist simultaneously (Tucci, Ronza and Giordano, 2011, p. 372). It is an incoherent, polysemous, and heterogeneous text that is written and over-written by co-authors (Azaryahu, 2011a, pp. 29-30). In it, a 'contemporaneous plurality' (Massey, 2005, p. 9) exists and "competing spatial imaginaries are juxtaposed from one street corner to the next" (Rose-Redwood, Alderman and Azaryahu, 2018c, p. 1). Of course, when a new group of political elites acquires the right to name the places, it does not hesitate to express itself. Yet, this expression can never turn into an all-over control of the streetscape. First of all, when there is no a very serious historical break, the change of the ruling groups or parties that control the place naming bodies generally do not amount to radical changes in place names. Because, stability and continuity in the place names are very important principles that cannot be easily put aside (Palonen, 2018, p. 28): radical place name changes generally cause problems in terms of spatial orientation and so may lead to popular resentment. Still, this does not mean that the ruling groups are completely desperate in expressing themselves in the streetscape. First of all, the newcomers may prefer to change the place names that openly contradict with their ideologies. In addition, the urban dynamism generally causes the emergence of new streets that are ready to be named (Algeo, 2015, p. 220).

What about the cases of radical political ruptures, or regime changes? As showed in many different studies, the serious political changes are generally followed by radical toponymic changes. Yet, even these radical changes in place names cannot erase completely the former writings on the palimpsest of city-text. As Light and Young states:

[T]he renaming of the urban landscape is not always immediate and thorough. Moreover, politically inspired toponymic change can often unfold in a rather incoherent, inconclusive, spatially diverse, and protracted manner, and the actions of key urban actors are less systematic and co-ordinated than might be expected. All this means that it is important to recognize the limits of renaming the urban landscape following political change (2018, p. 186).

Of course every political group that managed to overthrow an established political regime and struggle to set a new one will normally desire to erase all of the traces of the former regime. Yet, as Light and Young indicated, this desire is generally balanced with the limits in the streetscape. On the one hand, political elites of the newly established regime may have ambiguous ideological relations with the former regime. In these cases, they may not easily decide whether a street name is the trace of the old regime that should be erased or not. On the other hand, there may also be problems in terms of financial resources. Though it has generally been assumed that street name changes are cost-benefit tools for the expression of political change, this does not mean that they are zero-cost. So, as a result of these factors, even the most ambitious toponymic projects cannot prevent the left-over toponymies from the previous regime (Light and Young, 2018, pp. 186-190). There are many studies that show the limits of the toponymic projects on the wake of radical regime changes in the contexts of socialism (Chloupek, 2019), post-socialism (Palonen, 2008; Light and Young, 2014), and post-colonialism (Swanepoel, 2009; Ndletyana, 2012; Mangena, 2018). In all of these cases, it is shown that the newly established regimes cannot have an absolute control over the streetscape. This was also case in the context of colonialism. In these cases, the colonizers did not have to cope with erasing the traces of another political group in the streetscape as there was no any official place-naming system before them. Rather, the people were using the traditional place names that popularly circulated without the interference of political institutions. At first glance one may deduce that the colonizers faced with a blank paper. However, this is not true; rather, it can be said that there was no a paper at all. In other words, there was a much more difficult task that the colonial regimes had to deal: establishing a new toponymic system that would serve to the rational governance of place. Being aware of the heaviness of this burden, the colonizers generally preferred to focus only on the areas where the European population resided, while leaving the place names of the other areas untouched. This policy resulted in the emergence of a dual toponymic system (one western-style and one traditional) in many colonized lands (Bigon and Njoh, 2015, pp. 28-29). In some cases, the colonizers managed to inscribe the Western-type place name models on the colonized lands entirely. But in these cases the indigenous people generally continued to use their traditional place names; most of the time they were not even aware of the existence of the official place names determined by the colonizers. So, this time

another duality emerged in the place names, that is traditional and official (Tucker and Rose-Redwood, 2015, p. 198; Dovey and Ristic, 2017, pp. 42-43; Ndletyana, 2012, p. 90). So, even such a serious imbalance of power, that is between the colonizer and colonized, did not result in the absolute control of the second by the first in the place and street names.

In sum, as a product of the conflicts between different actors and of writings of multiple co-authors that exist on different time periods, the palimpsest of streetscape is an intertextual entity that allows the users of the street names to produce different meanings. Now the question arises to show the birth of the reader: 'how does the reader read the streetscape?'

4.2.3. Body in the Reading of Streetscape

Barthes argued that reading is a 'labor of language' to produce meaning. Later, he further sophisticated the concept of 'labor' by connecting it to 'desire' and 'pleasure'. All of these emphasizes on the body in the activity of reading was also reflected in Barthes' conception of the city as text: he used "walking, sight, habit, and experience" in *The Empire of Signs* and "living, wandering, and looking at" in the "Semiology and the Urban" to refer to the process of reading the significative elements in the city. So, Barthes saw the direct experience of the city as the origin of meaning in the urban context. From this, one can deduce that people give the meaning to the street names by experiencing them in the city. De Certeau provided important insights in this respect by arguing that place names are liberated spaces in terms of meaning as they do not have fixed meanings but wait to be interpreted by the passers-by. So, place names make the emergence of a certain level of play of meaning possible in such a 'system of defined places' like city, and thereby articulate 'a poetic geography' (de Certeau, 1984, pp. 104-106).

Although such a reader-oriented reading may seem promising in explaining the production of meaning in the streetscape, one should be careful in not ignoring specific conditions in which street names are meaningful. Street names become a text of special kind, i.e. city-text, only due to its existence within the urban context. They take meaning from their relations with other signifying elements in the city. When a person faces with a street name, s/he reads it in its context of the city, not as an ordinary word.

For example, when I see the word 'rose' in a narrative, I give it meaning with its position within the general narrative and its relationship with the other words in the narrative. Of course, every reader produces different meanings from this single word since the interpretation of the relation of this word with the narrative and other words is highly personal. Similarly, when I see the word 'rose' on a street name plate, I give it meaning with its position within the general structure of the city and its relationship with other signifying elements in the city. Here again the production of meaning differs from reader to reader. There are many different possible codes and the combination of these codes through which the users of street names produce the meaning. For example, one can interpret a street name and its relationality with the other signifying elements in the city by resorting to social, political, cultural, and ideological codes, and/or by using her/his personal memory in the city (Rose-Redwood, 2010, p. 459). So, the reading of street names differs from one reader to another (Forde, 2019, p. 12). In other words, street names allow "different people to invest the same portion of Earth with different meanings" (Arrous, 2016, pp. 31-32). So, in the streetscape there are "multiple readings and interpretations" (Light, 2004, pp. 155-156), which means that there is no a unified public that takes the message of the political authorities but sub-publics (Forest, Johnson and Till, 2004, p. 362).

In the terminology of Barthes, the kind of reading that is described above implies that streetscape is a writerly text that allows the play of meaning on the part of the reader. Yet, this is not the only way to read the streetscape. For example, in *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, Victor Hugo portrays the streets and their names that exist in the place where his narrative unfolds (2005, pp. 131-132). Then, while reading the book, these street names gain a meaning as a part of the narrative. However, interestingly they also become meaningful in their relations with the other spatial elements. So, street names are meaningful in this narrative as they are in the city-text. There is only one difference: in the narrative they become meaningful only by the activity of reading in its literal sense, while in the city they find meaning by living in and experiencing the city. This situation can be explained by resorting to De Certeau. In order to explain this situation, that is reading city-text without living in it, he used the concept of 'metaphor' in a metaphorical way:

In modern Athens, the vehicles of mass transportation are called *metaphorai*. To go to work or come home, one takes a “metaphor” a bus or a train. Stories could also take this noble name: every day, they traverse and organize places; they select and link them together; they make sentences and itineraries out of them. They are spatial trajectories (de Certeau, 1984, p. 115).

So, for de Certeau, stories, or more generally the narrative structures, can function as vehicles of transportation that carry someone to the places where s/he does not actually exist. However, this transportation should not be interpreted as a movement from the space to language. In the narrative structures one can really experience the place, just as s/he walks in there. As de Certeau states, “they (narrated adventures) make the journey, before or during the time the feet perform it” (1984, p. 116). So, what is produced here is not a linguistic imagination of geography but ‘geographies of action’ which allows one to switch to the ‘commonplaces of an order’, that is the order of the place (de Certeau, 1984, p. 116.). Finally, de Certeau indicates that the narrated adventures are organized not only by the stories but also by other kinds of narratives such as news and legends (de Certeau, 1984, p. 116.). Using this framework established by De Certeau, the readings of place names of a specific place without living in that place cease to be a problem. Place names can be read through the narratives without being reduced to the field of language: it is possible to read the place names from narratives in their spatiality, i.e. in their position in the city and with other spatial elements. However, probably most of such narrated adventures will not allow play of meaning as much as the unmediated urban experience does. Here, the extent of plurality of meaning is determined by the possibilities presented by the narrative to the readers to make connections between place names and other spatial elements. So, while the streetscapes become less writerly texts when mediated by a narrative.

4.2.4. A General Evaluation of the Barthesian Reading of Streetscape

The comprehension of street names in the way that is described above requires some revisions in the study of them. First of all, it is apparent that the only thing we can achieve by analyzing formal street naming procedures and processes is getting information about the approach of the political elites to the toponymies. Of course such an endeavor can result in important conclusions about the ideologies of the different political groups that try to influence the place naming processes. Yet, it can say nothing about the perception of place names by their real users. Instead, in order to understand

how the people read street names, researchers should pay more attention to the personal readings of their users as ‘co-creators of meaning’ (Light and Young, 2014, p. 672; Azaryahu, 2011a, p. 31). Of course, this shift of attention from the writers to the readers will have methodological implications. Official documents and maps that have always been the principle means of place naming studies are not sufficient for the analysis of the reading of street names (Light and Young, 2014, p. 683). Rather, there is now a need to enter directly to the world of readers through surveys, interviews, and content analysis of the texts that present different personal readings of street names. In fact, in the last two decades there has already been a shift of attention from the official naming practices to the perception of place names. Many different studies (these studies generally correspond to the third and fourth phases presented in the “Literature Review”) have been conducted to understand how the people give meaning to the place names in their daily life by using new methods that aimed to directly gather information from the field (Shoval, 2013; Light and Young, 2014; Duminy, 2014; Cretan and Matthews, 2016; Eross, 2017; Madden, 2018; Brocket, 2019). These studies have revealed that the users can give very different meanings to the place names and that not the intentions of the authors of streetscape but the multiple readings of the users of street names are decisive in the production of meaning in the streetscape. However, the existence of such studies does not mean that the myth of the author is completely erased from the city-text. Rather, the assumption that the streetscape is normally under the control of a center still persists through the dualism of submission/rejection. All of the studies that show the plurality of meaning in the streetscape examine the cases of the rejection of official toponymies by their users: they demonstrate that when people reject the authority by either conscious resistance or unconscious habit there exists a considerable amount of plurality of meaning. What about the cases of acceptance? These cases are not found interesting for the researchers as there is no one single case study that examines in the field what happens when people accept the official place names.

This lack of interest in the cases of popular acceptance of official place names reflects the continuity of the assumption of the streetscape as a structure where the center normally ensures stability. This is, as shown above, a specific example of the conception of place as a structure that is tamed by its center. So, according to this assumption, if the cases of rejection corresponds to the field of rejection of the

authority of the center, then the other side of the binary relationship should be reserved for submission. From here, it is apparent that there is a centering in the contemporary critical toponymy literature. This centering is based on an ‘either/or epistemology’ where everything is reduced to rejection or submission (Woodward, Dixon and Jones, 2009, p. 399). By taking the plurality of meaning as an exception that gives rise to the rejection of the official city-text, such a centered approach ignores the fact that the plurality of meaning is an inherent feature of the city-text and that it does not have to be accompanied by rejection in every case. As Rose stated, “centres dissolve, texts disseminate, and systems unfold, whether we recognize it, like it, or care” (2002, p. 397). So, as binaries always “unduly limit what can be conceived in the world” (Woodward, Dixon and Jones, 2009, p. 399), the binary of submission/rejection in critical toponymy limits the researchers by do not allowing them conceive of the fact that the plurality of meaning is a general feature of the streetscape. This chapter argued that the thought of Roland Barthes may be useful in finding a solution to this problem and demonstrated this argument theoretically. The next chapter, in turn, illustrates these theoretical insights by using the streetscape of Ankara with a special focus on the renaming of Nevzat Tandoğan Street as Olive Branch Street in 2018.

CHAPTER 5

THE DEATH OF THE AUTHOR IN ANKARA

This chapter examines the renaming of Nevzat Tandoğan Street as Olive Branch Street and a number of different street name changes in Ankara to ground the theoretical explanations made in the previous chapters. There are mainly two reasons for the selection of Ankara as an area of investigation. Firstly, as the writer of this thesis I have spent three years of my life in Ankara and I am still visiting there frequently. So, I know the spatial structure of the city thanks to my personal experiences. This means that the risk of reducing the city-text of Ankara into a ‘text’ is lower for me. In toponymy studies there is always the risk of forgetting that the concept of ‘text’ is only a metaphor. In these cases, toponymists tend to treat the place names as literally textual entities and affix fixed meanings to them without considering their relations with each other and with other spatial elements (Rose-Redwood, Alderman, and Azaryahu, 2010, pp. 454-455). This risk is minimized if the researcher has had experienced the spatial structure of the city on which s/he conducts her/his research. Secondly, a specific feature of Ankara also make it an appropriate context for this thesis. Ankara was not a very big city in the pre-Republic period. Therefore, it did not have so many streets or urban elements that can be named (Özkan and Yoloğlu, 2005, 57). As a result, the street and other urban toponymies in Ankara emerged later and for this reason they are not so powerfully embedded in the memories of the inhabitants. So, it can be argued that the political authorities in Ankara have been much more daring in changing the existing street names comparing with other cities that have deep-rooted toponyms. Confirming this hypothesis, a very active period in terms of the naming of urban toponymies has been experienced in Ankara since 1994. From this date until 2019, the city was ruled by the political parties that embarked on Islamic discourses and values, first the Felicity Party and then the Justice and Development Party (AKP). As a result, the place names, like other symbolic elements in the city, have been heavily influenced

by the ideological narratives of these two political parties (Erdentuğ and Burçak, 1998, 597-598). So, street names in Ankara are suitable in terms of their dynamism for a political analysis.

The case that this section will especially focus on is the renaming of Nevzat Tandoğan Street that host the US Embassy as Olive Branch Street in 2018. The most important aspect of this case for the aims of this thesis is that although the majority of people did not question the legitimacy of this renaming, and so, did not resist or reject the official act of renaming, they gave very different meanings to it. In other words, although the official street name was not rejected, there was still plurality of meaning in the interpretations of the people. So, this case is very suitable to show that independent of the acceptance or rejection of the official street names, streetscapes are associated with the plurality of meaning. Another important aspect of this case is that it triggered an unprecedented level of debate in the social media. So, there are numerous interpretations that are available on the internet for a critical analysis. After presenting the background and explaining the process of naming of the Olive Branch Street, I examine these interpretations in order to understand the different meanings the people gave to the decision of renaming Nevzat Tandoğan Street as Olive Branch Street. After that, I evaluate this process of naming and the responses of people to it in the light of the theoretical insights developed in the previous chapters.

5.1. The Renaming of Nevzat Tandoğan Street as Olive Branch Street

5.1.1. Background and the Process of Naming

After the spread of a series of protests that swept across many Middle Eastern and North African countries, Syria was dragged into a bloody civil war in 2011. Having difficulty in suppressing the uprisings, the Assad regime decided in mid-2012 to leave some areas in the north of the country where the Kurdish population is dense in order to avoid opening of new fronts at there (BBC News, 2019). The Kurdish political movement had already been organized in the north of Syria for many years even if it was not so active. After the retreat of the regime forces, the Democratic Union Party (PYD) – the most popular and significant organization of the Kurdish political movement in Syria – established a military organization that is the People’s Protection Unit (YPG) and took the control of a number of districts in the north Syria (Tejel,

2012). A few months later, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) that was originally based in the east but desired to control the north of Syria as well began to attack the areas controlled by the PYD/YPG. In this process, the US started to help the YPG forces in their fight against the ISIS. Initially, the YPG was trying to protect the lands it controlled from the ISIS invasion, and the US was supporting the YPG with light weapons. However, after the breaking of the siege of ISIS in Kobani, a strategically and symbolically important district held by PYD/YPG, the situation began to change and the YPG became the major element of the fight launched by the US to liquidate the ISIS (WSJ, 2014). In a short time period, many areas in the north and east of Syria held by ISIS came under the control of PYD/YPG. Thus, all the areas under the control of the PYD/YPG in the east of the Euphrates were geographically united (T24, 2015). Thereupon, in order to unite the district of Afrin, the westernmost point of the PYD/YPG held areas, with the rest of the PYD/YPG controlled lands, the YPG started to organize operations in areas located in the west of the Euphrates and controlled by the ISIS or other opposition forces. After some progress, the YPG was about to attack the ISIS-held district of Jarablus. However, at that point Turkey intervened (Al Jazeera, 2016).

The PYD has had close relationships with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), an archenemy of the Turkish state since the 1980s. Initially, the Turkish government did not take a very tough stance against the PYD due to its ongoing peace talks with the PKK and the fear of being alleged with the ISIS as the PYD-held areas were under the siege of the ISIS. However, with the combining effects of the failure of peace talks and the re-start of the conflicts between PKK and Turkey, coming to the fore of the YPG in the US-led fight against the ISIS, and emergence of the possibility that a broad area from the north-west to the east Syria might be united under the control of PYD/YPG, alarm bells in Turkey started to ring (Diken, 2016). On 21 October 2015, the Turkish National Security Council used the expression “extensions of separatist terror organization in Syria” (MGK, 2015) to refer to PYD/YPG, and in the press statement of the meeting on 27 January 2016, PYD/YPG was openly described as a terrorist organization (MGK, 2016). Then, in order to prevent the YPG from advancing further, the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) launched the ‘Operation Euphrates Shield’ in the summer of 2016 to take the control of ISIS-held district of Jarablus to not allow the YPG to do so (Stevenson, 2016). Thereby, it became impossible for the PYD/YPG

to unite the lands it controlled from the northwest to east Syria. This operation did not draw much reaction from the international publics, because what the West was primarily interested in Syria was the removal of ISIS elements, and it was not important whether the TAF or the YPG would do this.

About one and a half year after the Euphrates Shield Operation, Turkey launched another operation into Afrin district. Taking inspiration from Afrin's famous olive trees, 'Olive Branch' was selected as the name of the operation. Interestingly, this operation was perceived quite differently from the previous one in the international arena. Afrin had not been affected by the bloody process in the country since the beginning of the civil war. The Syrian regime had left the control of the district to the PYD/YPG without any conflict, and after that, there had not been any serious conflict in there. So, from the perspective of the Western publics and governments, a military intervention in such a relatively stable place had the potential to deteriorate the humanitarian problems in Syria. Moreover, the YPG was fighting against ISIS in the east of Syria, and this struggle could be influenced negatively if the YPG sent reinforcements to defend Afrin. These concerns led to the questioning of the legitimacy of the operation in the West. Accordingly, very hard statements came from different countries. For example, French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said that "while concerns over border security are legitimate it absolutely does not justify the deep incursion of Turkish troops in the Afrin zone" (Reuters, 2018) and that "ensuring the security of its borders does not mean killing civilians and that should be condemned" (Bianet, 2018a). The chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel declared that "despite all justified security interests of Turkey, it's unacceptable what's happening in Afrin, where thousands and thousands of civilians are being pursued, are dying or have to flee" (DW, 2018). Moreover, Germany suspended the project for the modernization of Leopard tanks of the TAF (DW, 2018) and foreign minister of Sweden cancelled his visit to Turkey to protest the military operation of Turkey (Bianet, 2018a). In addition to these statements and decisions from the European countries to condemn the Operation Olive Branch, the major reaction came from the US. In fact, the US officials initially avoided making harsh statements about the operation. Yes, the YPG was an important actor in the US-led fight against the ISIS. But, as a NATO member, Turkey had had a strategic partnership with the US for many years. Also, the YPG elements in Afrin were mainly affiliated with Russia and there were no any American

forces in there. Therefore, at the beginning the operation was not seen as a major military threat for the US forces in Syria. However, the things began to be complicated when the Turkish government sent the signals that it was serious in its intention to expand the operation into Manbij district in the west of the Euphrates where the US special forces existed along with the YPG elements (Hürriyet, 2018). Turkish government asked the US to leave the area, but this request was rejected (CNN, 2018). As a result, the tension between the US and Turkey raised.

The AKP government in Turkey explained the reactions of the Western countries and the attitude of the US against the Operation Olive Branch with the thesis that ‘the imperialist powers make plans to weaken and divide Turkey’. In March 2018, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the President of Turkey and the leader of the AKP argued that:

Those who steered DAESH yesterday are today setting PYD/YPG, the Syrian branch of PKK, on us. When the issue is Turkey, all of a sudden enemies become friends, closed doors open wide, money and weapons flow in abundance. From whom does PYD/YPG receive salary at the moment? From the U.S... Actually, what is desired here is that we shall never speak and they keep talking. No offence but we will say what is right (TCCB, 2018).

So, after stating that the PYD/YPG was put forward by some powers that come together when it is Turkey that is at stake, Erdoğan put the US on the center of those powers. However, as mentioned at the end of Erdoğan’s statement, Turkey would now tell the truth without considering who gets offended. Elsewhere, instead of the expression of ‘telling the truth’ Erdoğan preferred to use the phrase ‘giving an Ottoman slap’ (Yeniçağ, 2018). In fact, both of these statements signify the same claim in different styles: Turkey is capable to be on the field, that is, instead of watching what is going on in the world, Turkey is now actively engaging in the field either by telling the truth and/or giving the Ottoman slaps to who threatens its interests. Erdoğan had expressed this viewpoint during the Operation Euphrates Shield: “The plots and pretexts of those who supported a terrorist organization (PYD/YPG) against DEAŞ was spoiled and failed with the entrance of Turkey into the field” (Sabah, 2017). So, Turkey could now disrupt the games that threaten its national interests by directly intervening on the field. According to this point of view, in the case of Operation Olive Branch Turkey ruined the plans of imperial powers to establish a Kurdish state, which the government labelled as a ‘terror state’ (Anadolu Agency, 2019b) and ‘terror

corridor' (Anadolu Agency, 2019a), at the southern borders of Turkey, and the reactions of the Western states under the leadership of the US was stemming from the failure of their projects on the field.

In February 2018, an action supporting the narrative of government was realized in the streetscape of Ankara, the capital city of Turkey. The local government ruled by the AKP decided to change the name of Nevzat Tandoğan Street where the US Embassy located to Olive Branch Street. As soon as the decision was approved by the Municipal Council, the street name plate was changed under the intense interest of press members.



Figure 2. The change of street name plate

Source: (Ankara Belediyesi, 2018)

This event triggered serious discussions across the country. In fact, this was not the first time that a street name was being used by the AKP government to send a symbolic message to another country. For example, in October 2018, the street where the new US Embassy complex in Ankara is located was named as Malcolm X Street. The timing of this renaming was remarkable given the strained relations between the US and Turkey in the summer of 2018 due to the imprisonment of Andrew Brunson, an American pastor, in Turkey for the accusations of membership to the terrorist organizations (Rahim, 2018). Similarly, as a response to the Foreign Minister of the United Arab Emirates who shared a Twitter post that accused Fahreddin Pasha, a commander of the Ottoman Empire, of committing crimes against the local people in Medina during the World War I, the street where the embassy of the UAE in Ankara is located was renamed as Fahreddin Pasha Street in 2018 (BBC News, 2018). The naming of streets for diplomatic purposes were not limited to the cases of symbolic retaliation. In some cases, the AKP government, in cooperation with the local municipalities, used street names to send positive messages to the foreign countries. A good example in this respect is the case of Andrei Karlov Street. After the assassination of Andrei Karlov, the Russian Ambassador to Turkey, the street where the Russian Embassy in Ankara is located was renamed as Andrei Karlov Street (AP News, 2017).

However, none of these decisions have caused debates as much as Olive Branch Street did. This was due to mainly two reasons. Firstly, at that time both the military operation in Afrin and the response of the US to it were being discussed intensely. Being at the intersection of these two hot issues, the street name change attracted attention very easily. Moreover, the person that the old street name was commemorating, that is Nevzat Tandoğan, was also very controversial. He has been considered by the conservatives as a prototype of the ‘secular republican elites’ due to his alleged words that despised the people. In a public speech, Erdoğan himself quoted the words that have been attributed to Nevzat Tandoğan:

In the old Ankara, the state was in an inaccessible place. Our citizens who came from their homeland for a day and came back for weeks because they could not do their job remember the old Ankara very well. There was a governor in this city in the one-party period of Ankara. This person, after humiliating the Anatolian people with an adjective I feel ashamed to repeat here (this adjective is “ox”) said the following: “What is your business with nationalism, communism. If nationalism is required, we do it. If communism is necessary, we bring it too. You have two duties. The first is farming and growing crops, the second is joining army when we call.” Ankara was crumpled for years in the hands of such a mentality. So, this was the single-party era. This was the CHP mentality. Ankara was the prisoner of an ideology that overlooked the people (Yeni Şafak, 2019).

As can be seen from these words, Nevzat Tandoğan is seen as a prototype of anti-popular authoritarianism of the single-party period ruling elites who saw the people as nothing more than the farmers and troops. So, the erasure of this name from the city-text supported this narrative. In fact, this was not the first time that the AKP had erased Nevzat Tandoğan from the city-text of Ankara as in 2015 the name of Tandoğan Square was changed to Anatolian Square. Although the constituents of the AKP have been generally pleased with these decisions, there have also been a group of people that evaluated these decisions as a part of the long-standing efforts of the political Islamists to erase the legacy of republic from the public space. So, the decision of the naming of Olive Branch Street also attracted attention due to his reference to the debates on Nevzat Tandoğan. The following section examines the debates and different interpretations of the erasure of Nevzat Tandoğan and inscription of Olive Branch in the city-text of Ankara.

5.1.2. Reactions to the Olive Branch Street

There are many different ways to understand the popular perception of place names. As shown in the Chapter 3, with the increasing emphasis on the perception of place names in the recent years, there have been a number of different studies that used different methods such as content analysis, in-depth interviews, and surveys. However, in spite of these developments, the critical toponymists have yet to benefit from the great developments experienced in the field of internet, which contains many important tools that may be used to have a better understanding the politics of place naming. Rose-Redwood, Alderman and Azaryahu indicated that:

One methodological area which we have barely scratched the surface of is how the politics of place naming is playing out in the virtual spaces of social media, which are now just as much a part of the archival record as conventional governmental archives. Such new virtual arenas of social and political life provide a treasure trove of multi-media materials for future toponymic studies ... related to place name changes (2018a, p. 317).

So, despite its potentials social media has not yet attracted the attention it deserves in the literature of critical toponymy. Taking into account these calls, this section uses a number of different social media sources to understand the popular reactions given to the decision of naming the Nevzat Tandoğan Street as Olive Banch Street.

5.1.2.1. Positive Reactions

Some of the people perceived the change of street name just in the way that the government propagandized: Turkey had spoiled the plots of the foreign powers and now it was extending this victory into the symbolic field. A Twitter post summarized this point of view quite nicely: “Sometimes you want to annoy your enemy” (Twitter, 2018a). According to this view, through this street name change Turkey was registering its victory that it had gained in the field against the



Figure 3. Twitter Post

Source: (Twitter, 2018b)

terrorist organizations and their supporters. Another Twitter user expressed this viewpoint by sharing the following picture that was originally published in a newspaper *Diriliş Postası*. In the picture, a man dressed in military camouflage crushes a ‘little’ man representing YPG and at the same time steps on the feet of a man who wears a trouser with an American flag motif. It means that the victory of Turkey against the YPG has annoyed the US, its major supporter. The sharing of this picture as a comment to the naming of Olive Branch Street indicates that this action was seen as a registration and confirmation of the Turkish victory in order to further annoy the US.

Even some people did not only appreciate the street name change, but also made some recommendations to policy makers for similar symbolic retaliations. For example, a person write a comment to the news on the street name change in *Haber7*, a pro-government media outlet, that “It should be written in English as well so that they read and understand better” (Haber7, 2018). Similarly, a Twitter user indicated that “The name of the Nevzat Tandoğan Street became Olive Branch Street but that is not enough. The name of such a big operation must be given to a big square” (Twitter, 2018c). As frequently indicated in the critical studies on place names, it is a general rule that there be a proportionality between the importance of the spatial location of the place name and the person or event to whom the place name refers (Azaryahu, 1996, 325). However, this Twitter user does not think that this proportionality is ensured in this case because even if it is near the US embassy, a street is not enough to bear the name of such an important event.

In addition to these interpretations that focused on the proximity of the named street with the US Embassy, some people emphasized the importance of the erased name. In fact, according to the writings of two journalists that are close to the AKP, this feature of the renamed street is at least as important as its proximity to the US Embassy. Ersoy Dede, a columnist at *Star* that is a pro-government newspaper, wrote that the sending of a symbolic message to the US is the secondary function of this street name change. What is more important is the erasure of the name of Nevzat Tandoğan who had addressed the common people as ‘ox’ and forced Said Nursi, a religious functionary, to wear a hat (Dede, 2018). Similarly, in his column in *Milat* that is another pro-government newspaper, the columnist Akif Çarkçı indicated that the erasure of the

name of Nevzat Tandoğan from this street is very important as he was “one of the staunchest names of the Jacobin-Authoritarian-Kemalist Bureaucracy” (Çarkçı, 2018).

Finally, there were also some who emphasized both of these spatial elements (location and the old name of the renamed street) simultaneously. A Twitter user said that “Two slaps together. The erasure of the CHP governor who called the Anatolian people ‘Ox Anatolian’ is the first slap. The second slap is given to the US. A special offer in slap. If you buy one, get the second free” (Twitter, 2018d) and so expressed his view that the street name change is a good answer to both the US and the CHP. Another Twitter user remarked “A very pointed work. You are bringing down a non-national person from where it is not worthy and giving a message to the US in the language it understands. Congratulations” (Twitter, 2018e) Here the adjective ‘non-national’ is used to qualify not the US that is literally non-national but a person who born and lived in Turkey and served as governor in the capital city of Turkey for long years. This is not an error or distortion on the part of this Twitter user. In the AKP period the adjectives ‘national’ and ‘domestic’, and their opposites have been used to othering the sections of society that oppose to the AKP (Çınar, 2019). So, just as the US, Nevzat Tandoğan and his mentality that is allegedly shared by the current administration and supporters of the CHP is the ‘other’, and so ‘non-national’. The only difference between them is their geographical scales. The first is the other that is outside of the border, while the second is the other within the border. So, these two Twitter users interpreted the street name change as a symbolic message sent or slaps given to the ‘others’, the non-national elements existing in two different geographical scales.

In sum, in the interpretations that supported the government and adopted its narrative there was a plurality of meaning. In some of them the street name change was seen as an extension of the fight of Turkey with the foreign powers while in the others it signified the erasure of the bad memories of the single-party era. Even some people saw this action as a message to two non-national elements that function in different geographical scales.

5.1.2.2. Negative Reactions

In all of the comments presented above, the street name change was interpreted as a message to the US, to the supporters of the mentality of Nevzat Tandoğan, or both of

them, in line with the intentions and interests of the government. However, in some of the posts, while the street name change and its legitimacy was not completely rejected, the domestic and foreign policy of the AKP was criticized. For some people, the street name change signified not a strong message sent by Turkey to the US and the other foreign powers but the populism of the AKP. According to these interpretations, the decision of the government to make such a simple and ineffective action as changing the name of a street despite the fact that there were many other possible alternative ways to cope with the American imperialism shows that the AKP is not really fighting with imperialism but just appealing to the anti-imperialist sentiments to increase its votes. For example, a user of Ekşisözlük, one of the most popular forum sites in Turkey, said that “If there was a necessity of giving a message and response, a start could be made by closing the US bases in our land” and described this action as ‘adolescent’ (Ekşisözlük, 2018). Similarly, a Twitter user said “The struggle with the US and imperialism cannot be with street name change. Without closing Incirlik and Kürecik Bases it is possible neither to threaten the US nor succeed in the fight against terrorism. Imperialism is full of populism” (Twitter, 2018f).

The erasure of Nevzat Tandoğan was also emphasized in some of the critical interpretations presented on internet. A Twitter user remarked “Let the name of Olive Branch Street be Nevzat Tandoğan street, Anatolia Square be Tandoğan square again. What kind of hatred and effort to destroy is this” (Twitter, 2018g). In another Twitter post it was argued that “Nevzat Tandoğan is a person who has contributed to this country at various levels. America could have been protested in different ways. No offence but this is disrespect for labor and the dead” (Twitter, 2018h). Then, for these two Twitter users the street name change is a signifier of the disrespect or the hatred of the government to a person who contributed to the country.

In some of the critical interpretations, these two spatial elements (proximity with the US Embassy and the old name of the street) are added with a third spatial element, that is the name of another street nearby, to argue that the government exploited anti-Americanism to hide its intention of erasing the legacy of Republic from the landscape of Ankara. The best example of this kind of interpretation was presented by Yılmaz Özdil in his column “Olive Branch Street” in *Sözcü*. According to him, media outlets had mistakenly exaggerated the news about this street name change. Because, the

street that is actively used by the Embassy was not Nevzat Tandoğan Street but Paris Street. So, if the real aim of the government was to disturb the US, it would change the name of the Paris Street which would be “seen everyday by everyone who comes to the US Embassy.” For this reason, according to Özdil, the main aim of this street name change was to erase the name of ‘Tandoğan’. In order to hide its real intention, the government had explained this action on the basis of anti-Americanism. Moreover, if the AKP was genuinely an anti-American party, then it would not allocate a land, in the words of Özdil, “as big as Afrin” to the US to construct a new Embassy complex (Özdil, 2018). Similarly, Ahmet Takan, a nationalist journalist writing in *Yeniçağ*, argued that if the government was wholehearted in its anti-Americanism and anti-imperialism, it would change not the name of Nevzat Tandoğan but the Paris Street on which the Embassies of France and the US co-exists, as France also supported PYD/YPG, or in the words of Takan, “recognized PKK/YPG as a state” (Takan, 2018). This view which questions the anti-Americanism of the AKP and searches for a hidden intention, that is erasing the legacy of Republic from the city-text, behind this action was shared by many social media users as well.

All of the interpretations presented so far seem to be within the existing discursive boundaries in Turkey. It seems that both the supportive and critical interpretations of this street name change were under the influence of the narrative that ‘Turkey is under the threat of the plots of foreign powers led by the US’ (in the case of Afrin Operation, it is threatened by the establishment of a ‘terrorist state’ under the control of imperialist powers) and so it is legitimate for Turkey to enter to the field in order to ensure that these plots are spoiled. However, it should be noted that there was also a minority which questioned the necessity and legitimacy of the intervention of TAF into Afrin. Some of these views were influenced from the idea that such an action could cause the dragging of Turkey into the ‘Middle East swamp’. In fact, this idea was presented by Kemal Kilicdaroglu, the leader of CHP, in the mid-2014, when he warned the government that they should not drag Turkey into the Middle East swamp (Daily Sabah, 2014). In fact, Kilicdaroglu supported the Olive Branch Operation by saying that Turkey faces with “a national problem on its borders” (Cumhuriyet, 2018). Yet, this does not mean that there was not any opposing voices from the main opposition party. For example, CHP deputy Tuncay Özkan said that “We can achieve nothing by such an operation in the swamp of the region. There remained nothing that such

operations can give us. The AKP government can achieve nothing other than shedding the blood of our children from here” (Yeni Şafak, 2018). In addition, many leftist political parties were also against this operation. For example, Freedom and Solidarity Party (ÖDP) declared that “the operation against Afrin drags our country into a major stalemate” (Birgün, 2018) while in the press briefing of the Labour Party (EMEP) it was argued that “the operation is fuelling hostilities between Turkish and Kurdish people, and dragging Turkey into the swamp of a regional war” (Evrensel, 2018). Similarly, the co-chairperson of the People’s Democratic Party (HDP), an alliance of the elements from the Turkish left with the Kurdish political movement, defined the operation as ‘an attempt of occupation’ (Diken, 2018). Very interestingly, there is no a direct reference to these views that question the necessity and legitimacy of the operation in the posts on internet. This situation can be partly explained by the fact that the government strictly controlled social media and initiated legal action against the people who expressed a negative opinion about the operation.²² Still, it can be speculated that some of the people who have negative opinions about the operation itself might have expressed themselves by criticizing this name change without any open reference to their negative views on the operation.

To sum up, just like the interpretations that support the government, there was also a plurality of meaning in the critical interpretations of the street name change. A group of people argued that this action was nothing more than an attempt of the AKP to increase its vote. So, for these people the street name change signified the populism of the AKP. Similarly, some people interpreted this name change as an indication of the inability of the AKP in its struggle with imperialism. On the other hand, some emphasized the erasure of Nevzat Tandoğan from the city-text and saw this renaming as a part of the unending hatred of the AKP to the legacy of republic.

5.2. Theoretical Discussion of the Renaming of Olive Branch Street

In the previous section, the background and process of the naming of Olive Branch Street was presented along with the popular interpretations of this decision. This section, in turn, evaluates all of these data in the light of the theory of the death of the

²² According to the declaration of the Ministry of the Interior, 845 people were detained for they had ‘propagandized’ in the social media” (Bianet, 2018b).

author that was discussed in the previous chapter. More specifically, the concepts of writer, text, and reader will be discussed in the streetscape of Ankara with a specific focus on the naming of Olive Branch Street.

5.2.1. The Writer: From ‘Author’ to ‘Co-Writers’

At first glance, everything seems to be under the control of a single actor in the process of the naming of Olive Branch Street. The proposal for name change was made by the mayor of AKP and approved by the City Council of Ankara where the AKP held the majority. So, one may conclude that the AKP and its leaders were the author of the city-text in the case of Olive Branch Street. However, when looked more deeply, it can be seen that in this process many different actors with different aims and tools were involved. Of course, the leading role was played by the AKP government. But even the AKP did not act as a monolithic and coherent actor. Rather, there were the President, his staff consisting of a number of influential advisors, the Prime Minister, the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Mayor of Ankara who may have played a role in this process in the name of the AKP. It seems that the mayor Mustafa Tuna led the process. He was the person who announced this decision to the press through his tweet that “We signed the necessary proposal to change the name of Nevzat Tandoğan Street in front of the US Embassy to ‘Olive Branch’. Tonight, we will present the presidential motion to our Council. Best wishes, may the soul of our saint martyrs be blessed” (NTV, 2018). Yet, it is not reasonable to assume that such an important diplomatic action was undertaken without the direction or approval of the central governing bodies. In some cases, local governments can take initiative and make street name changes to send diplomatic messages to other countries. However, in general what is at stake in these cases is the show of goodwill to strengthen the relations between two local governments rather than major diplomatic messages. Such cases have been quite common in Ankara, especially during the period of former Mayor of AKP, Melih Gökçek. In these cases, the Municipality of Ankara signed a protocol of goodwill with a municipality in a foreign country and changed the name of one of the streets in Ankara as part of this protocol. For example, in March 2011, the Öveçler 4 Street where many Afghan people resided was renamed as Kabil Street in this way (Hürriyet, 2011). In addition, sometimes these namings were realized on the basis of the principle of reciprocity. For example, in July

2016, a town twinning protocol was signed between the municipalities of Ankara and Podgoritsa in honour of the tenth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Montenegro. As a part of this protocol, a street near the Embassy of Montenegro in Ankara was named as Podgorica Street. In turn, it was declared that a street in Podgorica will be named as Ankara Street (Hürriyet, 2016). A similar example is the naming of Budapest Street in Ankara and the naming of Ankara Street in Budapest (Türk-Macar, 2015; Haber46, 2016). In all of these cases, it was the local government who made the decision, although it needed the official approval from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, the case of Olive Branch Street is much more different from these cases. Here, what is at stake is not a show of goodwill but a symbolic retortion to a very important country. In a similar case in October 2018, the street near the new US Embassy complex in Ankara was named as Malcolm X Street as a response to the strained relations between the US and Turkey. Officially, this decision was given by the Municipality of Ankara. However, in fact it was the President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan who was the real decision-maker. After her meeting with Erdoğan in New York in September 2018, İlyasah Şahbaz, the daughter of Malcolm X declared that Erdoğan was planning to give the name of Malcolm X to a street in Ankara (Takvim, 2018). So, the naming of a street in Ankara as Malcolm X Street was a result of the cooperation between the Ankara Municipality with the central government. Therefore, when viewed logically and compared with other similar cases, it can be said that the chief actor of this process is the leadership of the AKP although the mayor was at the forefront. So, it is impossible to say that a single actor made and implemented the decision of the naming of Olive Branch Street.

In addition to the internal disunity of the major actor of the naming process, there were also a number of other actors and institutions that made it impossible for the AKP to act as a single coherent author. For example, at the first look the city council seems completely ineffective as it was dominated by the political party of the mayor and approved the decision without any objection. Yet, the way the decision is approved was important as much as the decision itself. The decision of naming the Nevzat Tandoğan Street as Olive Branch Street was passed unanimously from the Municipal Council consisting of five different political parties (TRT Haber, 2018). This situation reveals the attitude of both each of these parties individually and the City Council as a political institution towards the name change. Moreover, although the personnel

performing the name change appears to be a neutral element of the process, this is not really the case. For example, one of the personnel contributed to the meaning of this naming process with the green army hat he wore. So, in general, it's impossible to talk about a single actor who made this name change. On the contrary, many actors participated in this process with many different purposes and means. Therefore, it would be better to speak of 'co-writers' rather than a monolithic and unified 'author'.



Figure 4: The personnel of municipality with a green army hat

Source: (Ankara'dan Haber, 2018)

5.2.2. The Text: From the Carrier of Ideological Messages to the Inter-Text

When the concept of 'author' is replaced by 'co-writers', the notion of city-text as a monolithic unit that carries the coherent and clear ideological messages of its author becomes unsustainable. Instead, what the co-writers can produce is a text that consists of fragments from many different texts. So, what was produced in the case of Olive Branch Street was an inter-textual entity rather than a monolithic text that was underlined by a single, coherent and clear ideological message.²³ As shown in the previous section, there were a number of different actors in the process of the naming of Olive Branch Street and this situation made it harder for a single actor to impose its 'intended meaning' on the city-text without any external influences. Yet, this should not be interpreted as if there was initially a clear and coherent ideological message which became complicated and incoherent with the influence of other actors.

²³ Here what is intended by the term 'text' is not only the phrase of 'Olive Branch Street' but the textual entity that included this phrase as well as other signifying spatial elements that were in relation with this phrase.

Contrarily, even the major actor of the naming process, that is the AKP government, was far away from producing a single coherent text that is isolated from the influence of other texts. Especially the existing alliances and hostilities are very important in explaining this situation. This street name change was a message sent to both the US and the constituents with anti-imperialist sentiments. Moreover, through the erasure of the name of Nevzat Tandoğan, the AKP appealed to the anger of its own constituency against what it called as ‘CHP mentality’. All of these strategic calculations meant that the decision of the naming the Olive Branch Street was a pragmatic action that made references to different texts simultaneously rather than being a single and coherent ideological message.

In addition, the fact that this street name was not inscribed on a blank paper but a palimpsest that already had many signs which were written and re-written by the previous co-writers of city-text made the situation much more complicated. This meant that the AKP government had to act within a textual framework which was not its own product. So, the signifiers emitted in this process gained meaning by their relations with the other signifiers on which the AKP had no an absolute control. While making this decision, the government could choose among three different streets near the Embassy building: Nevzat Tandoğan Street, Paris Street, and Atatürk Boulevard. On the website of the Embassy, only Atatürk Boulevard is used among these three streets. So, the strongest message would be given if the Atatürk Boulevard was renamed as Olive Branch Street as it would require the change of the address of the Embassy. Yet, erasing the name of Atatürk could trigger negative responses and even protests from the people. In Turkey, ‘Atatürk’ is the most prevalent street name.²⁴ In fact, it is very hard to erase even any single one of this name as the majority of people in Turkey are sensitive to the protection of the legacy of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk as the founder of Turkish Republic. Let alone the erasure of the name, even the decisions that may threaten the prestige of Atatürk in the streetscape trigger reactions. For example, the decision of the district mayor of Ceyhan to change the status of an avenue that carries the name of Atatürk as street was meet with reaction in the district council. As a result, the mayor was forced to declare that “in the near future, we are planning to make an

²⁴ According to the figures published by the Ministry of Interior in 2017, the number of streets, boulevards, and squares that carry this name is 3618 (Ufuk Gazetesi, 2017).

urban transformation at the area where the Atatürk Avenue is located. After this, the name of this place will change to Atatürk Boulevard” (IHA, 2014). So, in the case of the Olive Branch Street, the decision to not erase the name of Atatürk reflects a compromise of the government with the parts of society that are sensitive to the protection of the historical legacy of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. On the other hand, the decision to erase Nevzat Tandoğan instead of Paris reflects the conflict of the AKP with an imagined single-party mentality. Of course, it would not be surprising if the Paris Street was renamed as the AKP government had not very good relations with France, too. In this case, the street naming would completely target the foreign ‘others’ and support the view that the foreign powers are getting together when it is Turkey that is at stake. However, instead of this, the government decided to rename the Nevzat Tandoğan Street and thereby targeted an internal ‘other’ along with the US, that is an external ‘other’. In other words, the government made a decision between sending a message to two different countries simultaneously and reminding its constituents that ‘we still have to be in an alarmed position against the internal non-national elements’ by showing that ‘they are still in us, in the very streets of our capital’. So, the naming of Olive Branch Street is not an open and simple expression of the hegemonic discourse of the AKP government. Rather, the choices made between different possibilities reflect its conflicts and compromises with the other actors in different geographic scales. So, the text that is produced by the AKP was already inter-textual from the moment it came in sight. The existence of the other actors that involved in this process made this situation much more apparent as it increased the possibility of giving different meanings to the text.

5.2.3. Reader: From ‘Passive Receiver’ to ‘Active Reader’

The texts that are assumed to carry a single coherent ideological message are passively received by their consumers. In them, the meaning corresponds to the intentions of the sender of the message. The texts that consist of fragments from different texts, on the other hand, allow their consumers to produce different meanings. In the previous section it was shown that the result of the naming of Olive Branch Street was an inter-text. Moving from this premise, this section argues that the readers of this text were active in terms of the production of meaning rather than passive receivers of the text. To do so, it is very important to answer the question ‘who were the readers of the text’

in the case of Olive Branch Street. The main intended audience of the naming of Olive Branch Street was the US. However, the domestic public was also an intended audience here. First of all, this street naming decision supported the ideological narrative of the AKP on the struggle of Turkey with the foreign powers. As explained in the previous sections, by this decision AKP gave the message that it tells the truth and gives the Ottoman slaps to who threatens its interests in international politics. Secondly, the erasure of Nevzat Tandoğan by this decision was also important as it appealed to the hatred of the constituents of AKP against the authoritarianism of the early periods of republic. So, the intended audience of the decision of changing the name of Nevzat Tandoğan Street was both the readers at the international and national level. The responses of the readers at the first level will not be discussed here, as this would require diving into the concept of diplomacy which is out of the concern of this study. Rather, this section focuses on the reception of this street name change by its domestic audience.

The concept of ‘domestic audience’ needs further elaboration as it may imply that there is a single and coherent body of readers. Contrarily to this, the domestic audience of the naming of Olive Branch Street was divided into a number of different kinds of readers. First of all, some people gave meaning to the street name change by their direct experiences of the urban context. This group of people included both those who live or spend most of his day in the area where the street name change was realised and those who, although not living in the area, have had the opportunity to spatially experience the name change as ‘passer-by’s. On the other hand, there were also some people who did not directly experience the spatial context of the street name change but still gave meaning to it by ‘narrated adventures’. This street name change was reflected in the media outlets. So, many people were able to give a meaning to this action by metaphorically experiencing the spatial context thanks to the narrative structures of news. Each group of these readers used different tools to interpret the decision of street naming. In the first group the personal memory and mental map of the geographical area is as important as the socio-political codes in interpreting the street name change. In the second group, on the other hand, the spatial experience is limited with the narrative structures through which narrated adventures are realized. In fact, the spatial elements presented by these narratives to the readers/viewers were quite limited. In the news, there were only three references to the spatial context of the

street name change: the proximity of the street to the US Embassy, the old name of the street, and the names of two other streets nearby (Atatürk Boulevard and Paris Street). So, in general, for the people who did not have knowledge on the geographical area where the street name change was realized there were limited number of spatial elements that allow them to give a meaning to this action. In addition, the presentation of these news was also not favourable to produce different meanings. Rather, they all univocally emphasized that this action was a message sent by Turkey to the US. For example, TRT Haber, the news channel of the state, presented this action as a symbolic message to Washington just before the US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's visit to Ankara (TRT Haber, 2018). Similarly, Sözcü, the newspaper that is mostly read by the secular-nationalist population, also associated the name change with the visit of Tillerson (Sözcü, 2018). So, neither the content nor form of the narratives of news on the street name change was favourable for the production of different meanings by the readers of the news. For this reason, here it is the socio-political codes that are important rather than the personal memory and mental maps of the urban context.

This categorization of the readers is important as it shows that just as there is no any single, coherent writer and text so there is no a single, coherent type of reader in the city-text. The result of all of this fragmented structure of the process of writing and reading as well as the text itself is plurality of meaning. As shown in the first part of this chapter, there were many different interpretations of the street name change, even in those that were in line with the interests of the AKP government. Yet, in spite of these differences in terms of meaning, in all of these readings people gave meaning to the new street name in its spatiality. In other words, what was interpreted in the case of Olive Branch Street is not the word 'Olive Branch' itself but the act of changing a street name plate that carried the name of 'Nevzat Tandoğan' with another of 'Olive Branch' in an urban context. In this process of interpretation, readers utilized many other spatial elements to give meaning to the street name change. Some people might have made this on the basis of their real experiences and memories of the place where the street name change was realized while the others have used the spatial elements presented in the news and other media reports on the case. But, whatever their source of reading is, the result was a reading that is heavily spatial.

In addition, it is apparent that the same spatial elements do not have the same meanings for different people. For example, while some people interpreted the erasure of Nevzat Tandoğan as a very pointed action for wiping out a non-national element from the city-text, others saw it as a revenge of the AKP to the legacy of republic. More interestingly, even some people did not notice the erased name of Nevzat Tandoğan. So, every reader gives (or maybe does not give) meaning to the spatial elements according to their own social codes and personal biographies. Moreover, the meanings given to the street names may change in time. As a result, the street names that had not caused any political reactions may become politicized years after its emergence. For example, in Turkey there are many place names that refer to Kenan Evren, the leader of the 1980 coup d'état and the President of Turkey between 1982 and 1989. Until recently, the existence of these place names was not the subject of political discussions. Kenan Evren was an important figure and statesman in the contemporary Turkish history and it was not very interesting to see his name at every corner of the cities. However, in the last decade, with the re-evaluation of the near history of Turkey, Kenan Evren became one of the most important symbols of the anti-democratic practices in Turkey. As a result, for many people the place names that refer to him came to be seen unacceptable. This situation was reflected in the streetscapes of different cities in Turkey. In addition to the decisions taken by the city councils individually, in the Turkish Grand National Assembly a commission was organized to follow the process of de-commemoration of Kenan Evren (Diken, 2019).

5.2.4. The Implications of the Death of the Author in the Streetscape of Ankara for the Critical Toponymy Literature

As shown in the previous sections, the signifiers emitted by the hegemonic groups in the form of street names do not correspond to a fixed and stable signified for every people. Rather, everybody assigns different signifieds to these signifiers and it is impossible for the hegemonic groups to control this process. In the case of Olive Branch Street, some social media users' interpretation of the street name change was in line with the interests and intended meanings of the government. In these cases, acceptance of the official city-text was accompanied by the submission of people to the narratives of the government in one way or another. However, in many cases this harmony between reader and writer was not the case. Contrarily, interpretation of

many readers contradicted with and even worked against the narratives of the government and these contradictions did not bring a rejection of the text by the reader. In other words, in the case of the Olive Branch Street the difference between the intended meaning of the government and the meanings that are produced by the users of the place names did not accompanied by rejection. However, for example in the case of the Banga Bandhu Şeyh Mucibur Rahman Boulevard the opposing views amounted to the rejection of the new official name. In Ankara, many people have been demanding for the change of this name. Yet, this demand stems not from a single understanding. On the one hand, some have argued that the use of this name in everyday life is very hard. So, for these people this street

name contradicts with the principle of rationality in the urban life. On the other hand, for the others this name has been seen unacceptable as it includes an Islamic phrase that is ‘şeyh’ and so contradicts with the principle of secularism. Even some people changed the name plate with one that carried the name ‘We are the Guardians of the Republican Revolutions Boulevard’ in 2006 (Sabah, 2006).²⁵ So, what is apparent in all of these cases is that, independent of the rejection and acceptance of their text, the writers are not the producer of the meaning in the streetscape, and the meaning is plural independent of whether or not this plurality ends up in the rejection of official street names.



Figure 5. The plate of ‘We are the Guardians of the Republican Revolutions Boulevard’

Source: (Sabah, 2006)

²⁵ The name of Banga Bandhu Şeyh Mucibur Rahman still remains in its place. Probably this is because this name is a very important figure for the history of Pakistan and so the change of this name may cause resentment on the part of the Pakistani government.

As a result, a Barthesian reading of street names brings us to the conclusion that streetscape is a polysemous text which is available for multiple readings of their users rather than being the voice of a single author. This means that it is not the political elites who control the official naming bodies but the users of street names that produce the meaning in streetscape. So, in terms of power relations, the users are not almost-passive agents who in general accept the official text and thereby submit to the will of the author. Of course, in streetscape there is a writer who determines the official city-text. Yet, the readers balance this power of the writer thanks to their role in the production of meaning. Implication of this conclusion for the critical toponymy studies is that the researchers should avoid taking the hegemony of the writers over readers as granted. As indicated in the previous chapters, even in most reader-oriented studies that focus directly on the everyday experiences of the users of street names there is always an emphasis on the power of the political elites that determine the official city-text. As a result, there is a tendency in the critical toponymy literature to reduce the complex relationship between authority, place names, and users into two specific kinds of social relation: submission and resistance. The forms of relationships that cannot be reduced to either of these two basic forms have been seen as irrelevant and outside of the scope of critical studies that examine the political dimension of place names. However, this viewpoint ignores the fact that political subjectivities are shaped not only by the issues directly related with the hegemonic power or challenge of it, but also by the experiences such as “desire and anger, capacity and ability, happiness and fear, dreaming and forgetting” that at first glance seem to have nothing to do with politics (Pile, 1997, p. 3). So, with such an understanding it becomes impossible to completely understand the process of the production of meaning of place names. By using the textual theory of Barthes, I presented a way to transcend this dualistic and exclusive way of thinking in streetscape.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

*“Oh, the name of Salamis,
most hateful to hear! Alas,
how I groan in remembering*

In *Persians* of Aeschylus that was written in the 470s BC., the messenger who reports to the Persian dignitaries the destruction of the Persian army in the Greek lands expresses his hate against the names of ‘Salamis’ and ‘Athens’ (Aeschylus, 2008, 11). Probably, many people who lived in the Persian territory and lost their relatives in the Greek territory at that time also felt similar feelings. This was not the result of a deliberate elite intervention or manipulation. Rather, some historical and geographical factors had turned a specific place name into a signifier of bad memories and disasters for a group of people. As seen in this example, place names gain their meaning in many different historical, social, cultural and geographical structures, texts and contexts. This is true not only for cultural names that emerge without any influence of a political authority, but also for official place names that are determined by political authorities. This very complex process of the production of meaning cannot be understood by only looking at the official gazettes and maps. What such an endeavor can do at best is to make inferences on the intentions and ideologies of political elites. So, it is not reasonable to limit the studies on the politics of place names to this elite-oriented methodological approach. Sharing this viewpoint, in the last decade many researchers have entered the complex world of the everyday use of place names, leaving the safe harbors of official documents. As a result, it has been revealed how people make sense of place names, and more specifically why in some cases they

refuse to use official place names. However, these studies did not show the same success in overcoming the dualism of 'powerful' and 'powerless' in the politics of place names as they always focused on the cases in which the place names are used as the tools of resistance to or rejection of the political authority. So, these studies continued to reproduce the binaries of 'powerful/powerless' and 'hegemonic/marginal' in the place names. According to this dualistic viewpoint, under normal conditions the hegemonic political elites control the meaning of place names. So, when there is rejection of this control, this is a deviation from the rule that deserves academic scrutiny. Such a dualistic approach makes it impossible to fully understand the politics of place names that is much more complex than such a limited conception of politics that reduces every kind of behavior into the exertion of or resistance to the hegemonic power.

This study aimed to transcend this dualistic conception of place names by using the textual theory of Barthes who challenged the reduction of the activity of reading and production of meaning into the duality of acceptance and rejection by showing that literary texts are characterized by the plurality of meaning. In a similar way, this study challenged the tendency of critical place name studies to reduce the responses of the users of place names into submission and rejection by showing the plurality of meaning in the city-text. On this basis, in the first section of the study general features of place names and street names were presented. Place names are a kind of noun with specific rules and an important element of human culture as well as a part of power relations. Street names, on the other hand, are a specific kind of place names that exist in cities. Thanks to their abundance and dynamism, street names are one of the best indicators of the ideological transformations in the city. For this reason, they are especially valuable analytical tools to understand the power politics of place names. However, understanding the role of street names in power relations requires going beyond the traditional approaches of power that have conceptualized power as a standardized capacity used in social contestations. Because, this view of power cannot explain why the social actors spend their capacity of power for such a trivial issue as street naming. This explanation was firstly presented by critical toponymists who were influenced from Gramsci's conception of power and hegemony. According to these initial explanations, street names are one of the tools used by hegemonic groups to manipulate the masses. This was a very important step in recognizing that street names

are not neutral cultural signifiers but a part of power relations. However, much more sophisticated explanations in this issue have been presented only after the introduction of post-structuralist conception of power into the critical studies on place names. Firstly, the poststructuralist explanation of power as a heterogeneous and contingent phenomena allowed the apprehension of complexities in the process of place naming. Secondly, post-structuralists have seen the power not as something that absolutely restricts the freedom of the subjects but an important element of the construction of subjectivities. This view of power allowed critical toponymists to explain the emergence of street names on the basis of their role in the construction of subjectivities in the modern society. Finally, the post-structuralist view that power is immanent contributed to the explanation of the importance of street names in power relations as parts of language, place and knowledge.

After the explanation of the general features of place and street names, and their position in power relations, in the third chapter a review of the studies on the politics of place names was presented. Place names have been examined as cultural and linguistic elements since the 19th century. However, in the 1980s a critical approach in the study of place names began to emerge. At the beginning, street names were considered as the instruments of hegemonic groups to penetrate their worldviews into the everyday life of people and many studies were conducted to show how the place names are influenced by the transformations in the hegemonic structures of a society. On the other hand, beginning from the 1990s, many studies began to show that place names are not under the absolute control of a single coherent political actor but the products of contestations between many different actors in society. These studies also accepted that place names are carriers of ideology, but they added that place names are determined as a result of conflictual processes. In addition to these studies that focus on the production of place names, especially in the last decade some researchers began to explore the perception of place names by their users. Initially, these studies focused on the cases in which people have challenged the authority of naming bodies through various performances from the complete rejection of official place names to little tricks in pronunciation. Then, in some studies the competency of the concept of 'resistance' began to be questioned. In some cases, people reject to use official place names not as a conscious resistance to the naming authorities but only because of their habits. In order to explain such cases, it would be more appropriate to use the concept of

‘unconscious habitus’. Both of these two groups of studies on the ‘conscious resistance’ and ‘unconscious habit’ focused on the rejection of official place names. So, it can be argued that the point that critical toponymy literature has reached today is based on a dualism between acceptance and rejection of official place names. This natural dualism, in turn, has turned into a dualism between submission and rejection. As a result of the over-emphasis on the cases of rejection and the demonstration of plurality of meaning in these cases, there has emerged an imagined association between plurality of meaning and the rejection of official place names. The acceptance of official toponymies, on the other hand, is associated with submission to the power of the hegemonic powers. This means that in spite of the increasing influence of post-structuralist theories, the critical studies on place names are still far away from embracing a fully post-structuralist conception of power. Rather, the assumption of a stable structure in which a hegemonic center fixes the meaning still pervades. In this sense, the current situation of the critical toponymy literature reminds of the situation of literary theory in the 1970s when the activity of reading was seen as a referendum between the choices of the acceptance and rejection of the meaning imposed by the center of the text, i.e. the author. Barthes went beyond this approach of reading and text by the concept of ‘the death of the author’. So, there is a need for a Barthesian intervention into the critical toponymy studies.

Chapter 4 presented the principles of such an intervention. Although this intervention is based specifically on the concept of ‘the death of the author’, this chapter also gave some information on the previous work of Barthes as well. Barthes is not a thinker whose specific ideas can be studied in isolation from his general thought as he always produced new ideas by criticizing his previous work. In addition to this, the transformations that Barthes experienced resembles to that of critical toponymy as both of them started with a critical analysis of the ideological manipulation of everyday objects. However, while Barthes managed to dispose of central, hierarchical, and dualistic thinking of structuralism, and thereby reached a fully post-structuralist mentality, this was not the case in critical toponymy studies. For these reasons, in the Chapter 4 I started with the general thought of Roland Barthes. Then, the chapter specifically focused on the concept of ‘the death of the author’. In his short essay “The Death of the Author” Barthes presented his basic ideas on the writer, reader and text and then further developed these ideas in his later work. According to Barthes, a text

is the product of numerous fragments from different texts. For this reason, it is not possible for a writer to control the meaning in such a fragmented intertextual entity. In other words, the meaning of the signifiers in a text is not fixed by the writers but determined by the readers. In fact, for Barthes the writer of a text is nothing more than a 'modern scriptor' who compiles different fragments from different texts. In addition, Barthes argued that the activity of reading is a bodily activity that involve 'labor' and 'desire'. Very importantly, Barthes used this theory of text to explain not only literary texts but also the other cultural artefacts including the city. In some parts of *Empire of Signs* and the article "Semiology of the Urban," he gave hints on how to read the significative elements in the urban context as texts that are not under the absolute control of a hegemonic center. According to these explanations, just as in literary texts, there is no a fixed relationship between signifiers and signifieds in the urban texture. In addition, production of meaning of the urban signifiers also requires bodily experiences such as walking and seeing.

In the second part of the Chapter 4, these views of Barthes on the meaning of literary texts and other cultural artefacts that can be treated as texts is applied to street names. According to this application, the writers of street names, i.e. the political elites that control official naming authorities, do not have the power to control the process of production of meaning in the streetscape. First of all, the naming bodies are not controlled by a single coherent hegemonic actor. Contrarily, even in the most authoritarian contexts place naming processes reflect the conflicts and compromises between different actors. Moreover, streetscape is not a blank slate that waits to be filled by the hegemonic groups but a palimpsest that was written and re-written by many co-authors and where many different historical narratives co-exist. Any signifier that is added to this palimpsest gains meaning through its relation with the other already existing elements and so gets out of the control of their emitters. Then, the meaning comes under the control of readers, or the users of street names. As a result of their spatial experiences, every person gives different meanings to the street names according to his/her personal memory and social codes. In addition to directly experiencing the city, people can also give meaning to street names by metaphorically experiencing the urban contexts through narratives. But, in these cases, the elements that are presented to the reader for the production of meaning will be weaker than the

real urban experience. In other words, in these cases the texts presented to the readers will be less 'writerly' than in the real spatial experiences.

In the Chapter 5 I illustrated the theoretical results obtained from the application of the textual theory of Barthes to the streetscapes by using the streetscape of Ankara as a field of investigation with a specific attention given to the renaming of Nevzat Tandoğan Street as Olive Branch Street. As a result of this investigation, it is concluded that the streetscape of Ankara is an inter-textual entity that is written by co-writers and available for the production of different meanings by its readers. As reflected in the social media posts, people gave many different meanings to the naming of Olive Branch Street by using a number of different spatial as well as social and political codes. Some of these meanings were in line with the narratives and interests of the government while others were not. In both cases the meaning was plural rather than fixed. More importantly, this plurality of meaning did not end up in the rejection of official street name: even the people that criticized this street name change did not question the legitimacy of the new official street name. So, plurality of meaning is not only a feature of the cases where official street names are rejected but a general characteristic of streetscape.

The conclusions that are reached in this study demonstrates that the studies on the perception of the users of place names should avoid both taking the political elites that control the official naming bodies as the center of meaning and limiting the politics of street names with only one of two relationships (submission and rejection) in relation with this 'center'. Power relations are much more complex than such a dualistic approach can explain. This study attempted to explain this complex relationship by deploying the textual theory of Roland Barthes. The most important conclusion of this attempt is that plurality of meaning is norm, rather than exception in the streetscape. This conclusion was reached through the examination of the reactions of people to the street name changes as presented on social media. In fact, the decision to use social media as a source of interpretations on street names was not an easy one. On the one hand, social media makes possible to reach a great number of interpretations without much labor. However, this does not mean that it is a perfect tool to understand the perceptions of people. The most important problem here is that in social media it is very hard to make a distinction between the interpretations that are based on the real

spatial experiences and those on the narrated adventures. Moreover, there is also a problem in detecting the social media trolls that share the ready-made posts. Finally, especially in the contexts where social media is under the strict control of government some views may not be represented in social media. In spite of these problems, I used the social media as a medium to reach the interpretations of people as a result of my calculations in terms of advantages and risks of this decision. The most important factor in this decision was the awareness of the fact that it is not the methodological innovation that this study tries to do as the critical toponymy studies have already come a long way in this sense. More specifically, in the last decade many different methods such as surveys and in-depth interviews have been deployed to understand the perceptions of the users of place names. While appreciating these developments, this study criticized the dualistic way in which the data collected through these new methods are interpreted. So, the most important implication of this study is that the methodological developments that is recorded in the critical toponymy literature in the last decades should be combined with non-dualistic theoretical approaches that are more aware of the complexity of power relations.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKE ÖZET

İnsanlar içerisinde yaşadıkları mekânları tanınabilir bir hale getirmeye ihtiyaç duyarlar. Bireysel düzeyde bu ihtiyaç kişisel hafıza ile giderilebilir. Ancak toplumsal düzeyde kişisel hafıza bu görevi görmek için yeterli değildir, zira bunun için aynı mekânı paylaşan insanlar arasında ortak kodlara ihtiyaç duyulur. İşte bu noktada yer isimleri devreye girer. Evlerin oda isimlerinden kıta isimlerine dek tüm yer isimleri mekân hakkında konuşabilmek için kullanılır. Bu önemli fonksiyonları nedeniyle yer isimleri insanların topluluklar halinde yaşamaya başladığı ilk dönemlerden itibaren var olmuşlardır. Üstelik insan topluluklarının giderek karmaşıklaşmaya başlaması ile birlikte yer isimlerine olan ihtiyaç da artmıştır. Hatta yer isimlerinin bugünkü modern toplumların ayrılmaz bir parçası olduğu dahi söylenebilir. Bu önemsel artışa paralel olarak yer isimlerinin fonksiyonları da zamanla değişime uğramıştır. Geleneksel topluluklarda yer isimleri herhangi bir siyasi otorite tarafından belirlenmeyip kültürel süreçlerin sonucunda kendiliğinden ortaya çıkmaktaydı. Ancak modern toplumlarda bu durum değişmiştir. Artık yer isimleri oldukça sıkı bir biçimde devlet kurumları tarafından kontrol edilmektedir. Bu nedenle yer isimleri modern toplumlarda bağımsız kültürel süreçlerin değil siyasi bir otoritenin bilinçli tercihleri ile belirlenmektedir. İşte bu ‘tercih’ faktörü yer isimlerini güç ilişkilerinin bir parçası haline getirerek siyasileştirmektedir.

Dikkatli biri tarihsel kişi veya olayları anan yer isimlerinin taşıdığı siyasi mesajları rahatlıkla fark edebilir. Aslında bu türden anıtsal yer isimlendirme pratiklerinin tarihi İskenderiye şehrinin Büyük İskender’e atfen isimlendirilmesine kadar gider. Modern zamanda kentlerin siyasi figür ve olaylara atfen isimlendirilmesi pratikleri 18. yy’da Fransa’da, 19. yy’da Amerika’da ve 20. yy’da Doğu Avrupa’da sürdürülmüştür. Son birkaç yüzyılda ise (özellikle Fransız Devrimi’nin ardından) kentlerin kendisinden ziyade sokak, cadde, meydan, park gibi kentsel alanların siyasi ve tarihsel mesaj

taşıyacak biçimde isimlendirilmesi pratiği yaygınlaşmıştır. Ancak yer isimlerinin siyasi boyutu yalnızca onların siyasi mesaj taşıyabilme kapasitesiyle sınırlı değildir. Bir mekânı isimlendirme eyleminin bizzat kendisi siyasidir. İsimlendirme eyleminde bulunan otorite isimlendirdiği mekânın her zaman bu isimle anılmasını sağlar. Böylece isimlendirme eylemi aynı zamanda bir ‘normlaştırma’ eylemidir (Berg and Kearns, 1996, s. 99). Ek olarak, isimlendirme eylemi mekâna sahip olmanın da yollarından biridir. Bu durum hem topluluklar arası hem de topluluk içi ilişkiler açısından geçerlidir. Bir mekâna sahip olan topluluk o mekânı isimlendirerek sahipliğini perçinler. Öte yandan, mekâna sahip olan topluluğun içindeki aktörlerden hangilerinin isimlendirme yetkisini kullandığı da o topluluğun kendi iç hiyerarşilerini yansıtır. Yer isimlerinin siyasiliği ve güç ilişkileriyle iç içe geçmişliği haritalara da yansımıştır. Haritaların işlevi belli bir alandaki coğrafi özellikleri göstermekle sınırlı değildir. Harita yapımcılar coğrafi özellikleri haritalar yoluyla gösterirken bazı özellikleri seçip diğerlerini dışarıda bırakmak zorundadırlar. Zira gerçekliğin temsili olan haritaların gerçekliğin tümünü aynı anda temsil etmesi mümkün değildir. İşte gerçekliğin hangi kısmının temsil edilip edilmeyeceği, temsil edilecek kısımların hangi şekilde (örneğin hangi dilde) temsil edileceği konusunda verilen kararlar bilinçli veya bilinçsiz olarak haritacıların siyasi eğilimlerini yansıtır.

Bu çalışmanın amacı yer isimlerinin bu güç ilişkileri ile iç içe geçmişliğini incelemektir. Daha spesifik olarak odaklanılacak olan yer isim türü ise cadde isimleridir. İnsan toplulukları çok çeşitli coğrafi özellikleri adlandırmıştır. Ancak genel olarak bakıldığında dinamizmi ve nüfus açısından yoğunluğu ve hareketliliğinin etkisiyle hegemonik gruplar başta olmak üzere farklı toplumsal grupların en çok ilgisini çekenler kentlerdeki park, bahçe, cadde, bulvar ve meydan gibi yer isimleri olmuştur. Zaten bu nedenle yer isimlerinin siyasal açıdan incelendiği eleştirel toponomi literatüründe çok büyük oranda kentlerdeki yer isimleri ve özellikle de cadde isimleri incelenmiştir. Kent, geçirdiği dönüşümlerle ideolojiyi açığa çıkarır. Bir şehirde bulunan materyaller sürekli bir akış içerisinde. Bu materyaller ve onların akışı genelde ideolojik, iktisadi ve siyasi faktörlerle etkileşim içerisinde. Ayrıca kentte var olan öğelerle her gün temasta olmak kentin sanki doğal bir gerçeklikmiş olduğu algısını yaratır. Hâlbuki şehirler bu algının tam tersine insan yaratıdır. Bu yaratı sürecinin önemli parçalarından birisi de cadde isimleridir. Cadde isimleri kent sakinlerinin hayatında oldukça etkili bir konuma sahiptir. Cadde isimlendirmesi süreci

içerisinde çok farklı aktörler bulunur: merkezi yönetimde bulunan yöneticiler, şehir yöneticileri, ulusal düzeydeki toplumsal-siyasal grupların kentteki kolları ile sadece belli bir kent özelinde örgütlenmiş olan gruplar, cadde isimlerini kullanacak olan kent sakinleri, cadde isim değişikliğini somut olarak sahada gerçekleştirecek olan işçiler. İşte cadde ismi değişiklikleri tüm bu aktörler arasındaki ilişkilerin bir sonucu olarak ortaya çıkar.

Cadde isimlerinin güç ilişkileri içerisindeki rolünü açıklamak için 1980'lerden günümüze dek pek çok çalışma gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu çalışmalarda genelde gücü aktörler arası mücadelelerde kullanılan homojen ve standart bir kapasite veya araç olarak gören geleneksel güç yaklaşımlarından ziyade gücün daha ilişkisel bir süreç olduğunu kabul eden güç açıklamaları ön plana çıkmıştır. Bu durum geleneksel güç anlayışlarının toplumsal aktörlerin 'güç' gibi değerli bir kaynağı 'yer isimleri' gibi basit bir konu için neden harcadıkları sorusuna cevap verememesinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu sorunun cevaplanması ancak Gramsci'nin 'hegemonya' kavramına başvurulması ile mümkün olmuştur. Gramsci'ye göre toplumsal güç ilişkileri yalnızca siyasi ajandaların en tepesinde bulunan alanlarda ortaya çıkmaz. Aksine, aslında kitlelerin aleyhine işleyen bir sistemi bu kitlelerin gözünde meşrulaştırmak için hegemonik gruplar ilk bakışta siyaset ile alakasızmış gibi görünen pek çok nesne ve alanı kullanarak kitleleri ideolojik olarak manipüle ederler (Westwood, 2002, s. 24). İşte cadde isimleri de bu ideolojik manipülasyon sürecinin bir parçasıdır. Resmi cadde isimlerini kontrol eden siyasi gruplar bu isimler yoluyla kendi dünya görüşlerini insanların gündelik hayatlarına sirayet ettirirler. Hatta cadde isimlerinin bu fonksiyonu bizzat Gramsci tarafından da vurgulanmıştır (Gramsci, 1917, ss. 183-184; Vuolteenaho and Puzey, 2017, s. 78). Her ne kadar Gramsci'nin 'hegemonya' kavramı cadde isimlerinin toplumsal güç ilişkilerinin bir parçası olduğunun görülmesi açısından önemli bir yere sahip olsa da cadde isimlerinin siyaseti ile ilgili daha sofistike açıklamalar ancak post-yapısalcı güç yaklaşımının önce kültürel coğrafya alanına daha sonra da yer isimleri çalışmalarına sirayet etmesiyle mümkün olabilmektedir.

Böylece önce Gramsci'nin daha sonra da post-yapısalcı düşünürlerin güç yaklaşımının etkisiyle 1980'lerde yer isimlerini yalnızca kültürel objeler olarak değil aynı zamanda güç ilişkilerinin de bir parçası olarak gören çalışmaların oluşturduğu 'eleştirel

toponomi' literatürü ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu literatürde ortaya koyulan çalışmalar dört farklı kategoriye ayrılabilir. Birinci kategorideki çalışmalar yer isimlerini hegemonik siyasi elitlerin söylemlerinin ve hegemonyalarını kitlelere yayma girişimlerinin bir parçası olarak ele almışlardır. İkinci kategorideki çalışmalar ise yer isimlerini belirleyen siyasi elitlerin yer isimlerini hegemonik projeleri için araçsallaştırdıkları varsayımını kabul etmekle birlikte bunun aslında oldukça çatışmalı bir süreç olduğunu ortaya koymuşlardır. Üçüncü kategorideki çalışmalar siyasi elitler yerine yer isimlerinin kitleler tarafından algılanış biçimlerine odaklanmışlardır. Böylece kitlelerin hegemonik grupların mutlak kontrolü altında olmadığı, aksine zaman zaman resmi yer isimlerini kullanmayı reddederek bu gruplara direnebilecekleri ortaya konulmuştur. Dördüncü gruptaki çalışmalarda ise 'resmi yer isimlerini kullanmama' davranışına odaklanılmaya devam edilmiş ancak bu davranışın açıklanmasında 'direniş' kavramının yeterli olmadığı, zira bazı durumlarda insanların resmi yer isimlerini bilinçli bir siyasi direniş temelinde değil bilinçsiz alışkanlıklar nedeniyle reddettikleri ortaya konulmuştur.

Öyleyse genel olarak bakıldığında özellikle 1980'lerden itibaren yer isimlerinin siyasi boyutu giderek artan bir şekilde coğrafyacıların ve diğer sosyal bilimcilerin ilgisini çekmiş, sonuçta bu konuda pek çok çalışma gerçekleştirilmiştir. Ancak bu çalışmaların büyük çoğunluğu 'yer isimlerinin anlamsal olarak hegemonik grupların kontrolü altında olduğu' varsayımını sorgulamadan kabul etmiştir. Bu varsayıma göre, yer isimlerini resmi olarak belirleyen siyasi elitler aynı zamanda yer isimlerinin anlamını da belirlerler. Pek çok araştırmacı yer isimleri aracılığıyla gerçekleştiği varsayılan ideolojik manipülasyon sürecinin mutlak olmadığını, zira kitlelerin bireysel veya toplumsal düzeyde yer isimlerini kullanmayı reddederek bu manipülasyona direnebileceklerini söylemişlerdir. Ancak bu çalışmalar dahi yer isimlerinde hegemonik aktörlerin yer isimleri üzerindeki kontrolünün mutlak olmadığını göstermenin ötesine geçememişlerdir. Diğer bir deyişle bu çalışmalarda hegemonik aktörlerin yer isimlerini anlamsal olarak kontrol etmeye en azından normal koşullar altında haiz olduğu varsayımının kendisi sorgulanmamıştır. Bu nedenle yer isimlerinin siyasi boyutunu inceleyen çalışmalar resmi yer isimlendirme rejimlerini kontrol eden hegemonik siyasi elitler ile genelde bu hegemonik gruplara boyun eğen yer isimlerinin kullanıcıları arasındaki hiyerarşik ikililiğin ötesine geçememişlerdir.

İşte bu çalışmanın amacı tam da bu noktada eleştirel toponomi literatürüne özgün bir müdahalede bulunmaktır. Daha spesifik olarak bu çalışma cadde isimlerinin anlamsal olarak resmi cadde isimlerini belirleyen siyasi elitlerin kontrolü altında olmadığını, aksine cadde isimlerinin anlamlarının bu isimleri kullanan bireyler tarafından üretildiğini öne sürmektedir. Tüm bu argümanları teorik olarak temellendirmek için çalışmada Roland Barthes'ın post-yapısalcı metin teorisi olan 'yazarın ölümü' yaklaşımı kullanılacaktır. Barthes düşüncelerinin sabit söylemlere dönüşmemesi için sürekli bir entelektüel dinamizm içerisinde bulunmuştur. Kariyerinin başında Barthes sıradan nesnelere burjuvazi tarafından "ideolojik suistimal" (Barthes, 1972 [1957], s. 11) amacıyla kullanılması bağlamında 'mit' kavramı ile ilgilenmiştir. Bu bakış açısı aslında eleştirel toponomi literatürünün ortaya çıkış mantalitesine oldukça benzemektedir. Zira ilk eleştirel toponomistler de cadde isimlerini hegemonik grupların ideolojik manipülasyon amacıyla araçsallaştırdıkları nesnelere değerlendirmişlerdir. Daha sonra Barthes bu ideolojik eleştiri yaklaşımından katı bir bilimsellik arayışının ürünü olan yapısalcı metot ile ilgilenmiş, oradan da metin ve metinsel yapılarıdaki merkezlerin varlığını yadsıyan ve "Yazarın Ölümü" (1977 [1967]) adlı kısa çalışmasında temel prensiplerini ortaya koyduğu post-yapısalcı bir döneme girmiştir. Eleştirel toponomi literatüründe de özellikle 2000'li yıllarda artan bir post-yapısalcı teori etkisinden bahsetmek mümkündür. Ancak bu etkiye rağmen eleştirel toponomi çalışmaları yer isimlerinin sabit ve istikrarlı birer yapılar olduğu şeklindeki varsayımı tamamen aşabilmiş değildir. Üstelik bu varsayımın hala aşılamamış olması cadde ve diğer yer isimlerinin siyasi boyutunun tam olarak anlaşılmasını imkânsız kılmaktadır. Eleştirel toponomi literatüründeki bu problemi gidermek için Barthes'ın tüm merkezleri yıktığı ve daha spesifik olarak edebi metinlerdeki merkez olan 'yazar'ın ölümünü ilan ettiği 'yazarın ölümü' kavramlaştırması kullanılabilir. Barthes'ın bu yaklaşımı temel olarak üç tema üzerinden kurulmuştur. Birincisi, yazarın metnin anlamının kaynağı olduğu miti Batı felsefesinin gösteren ile gösterilen arasında sabit bir ilişki olduğuna dair varsayımına dayanan genel yanılgısının edebiyat özelindeki yansımasıdır. Bu mitin aksine yazma eylemi bilinçli bir özne olan yazarın hali hazırda mevcut olan düşüncelerini boş bir kâğıda aktarmasından ibaret değil, çok daha karmaşık psiko-sosyal süreçlerin sonucudur. İkincisi, böylesi karmaşık bir yazma sürecinin ürünü olan metin, blok olarak yazarının düşüncelerini taşıyan bir yapı değil çok farklı metinlerin parçalarının

birleşmesiyle oluşan çoksesli bir yapıdır. Üçüncüsü, bu çoksesli yapıda anlamın üretimi okuyucu tarafından okuma eylemi esnasında gerçekleşir ve metnin çoksesliliği her okuyucuda farklı anlamların üretilmesine neden olur. Öyleyse okuma eylemi emek gerektiren bir üretim sürecidir ve bu sebeple de yalnızca zihinsel değil aynı zamanda bedensel bir aktivitedir. Okumanın bedenselliği aynı zamanda okuma eyleminden alınan haz ile de tezahür eder.

Bu çalışmada yer isimlerinin veya daha spesifik olarak cadde isimlerinin metin olarak muamele edilebilecek yapılar (kent-metni) oluşturduğu varsayımından hareketle Barthes'ın metin teorisi kullanılarak cadde isimlerinin siyasi boyutu açıklanmıştır. Böylesi bir açıklama yine Barthes'ın ortaya koyduğu üç tema temelinde gerçekleştirilebilir. Bu durumda öncelikle resmi isimlendirme süreçlerini kontrol eden siyasi elitlerin (yani bir metin olarak cadde isimlerinin yazarlarının) cadde isimlerinin anlamlandırılması süreçlerini kontrol edemeyeceği söylenebilir. Resmi isimlendirme kurumları yekpare bir hegemonik aktör tarafından kontrol edilmez. Tam tersine, en otoriter bağlamlarda bile yer isimlendirme süreçleri farklı toplumsal aktörler arasındaki çatışma ve uzlaşmaları yansıtır. Ayrıca bir kentteki cadde isimleri hegemonik gruplar tarafından kontrol altına alınmayı bekleyen boş kâğıtlar olmayıp birçok farklı yazar tarafından oluşturulmuş ve içerisinde pek çok farklı ideolojik anlatının eş zamanlı olarak varlığını sürdürdüğü bir yapıdır. Bu yapıya eklenen herhangi bir gösteren hali hazırda var olan diğer gösterimsel elementlerle ilişki içerisine girer ve böylece anlam kazanır. Böylesi bir süreçte anlam, bu göstereni ortaya çıkaran aktörün kontrolünden çıkararak göstereni tüketen, gören, kullanan, okuyan aktörün kontrolüne girer. Bu nedenle kentte yaşayan her birey kendi bireysel hafızaları ve sosyal kodlarını kullanarak cadde isimlerini farklı biçimlerde anlamlandırır. Dolayısıyla cadde isimlerinin anlamı siyasi elitlerin ofislerinde değil kent hayatının bizzat içerisinde belirlenir ve üretilir. Ancak bu durumun bir istisnası vardır. Bazen insanlar öykü, roman, haber vb. çeşitli anlatılar yoluyla da mekânsal deneyimler yaşayarak cadde isimlerini anlamlandırabilirler. Ancak bu durumda cadde isimlerinin kazanabileceği anlamlar anlatılarda sunulan diğer anlatısal ve mekânsal öğelerle sınırlı olur.

Böylesi bir cadde isimlerinin anlamlandırılması süreci açıklaması ile ulaşılabilecek olan sonuç cadde isimlerinin kabul ve ret ikililiği temelinde açıklanamayacağıdır. Son on

yılda yer isimlerinin gündelik hayattaki kullanımı üzerine pek çok çalışma gerçekleştirilmiştir. Ancak tüm bu çalışmalarda yer isimlerine kullanıcılarının verebileceği tepkiler iki ihtimale indirgenmiştir: ret ve kabul. Ret durumunda insanların yer isimlerine verdiği anlamlar yer isimlerini belirleyen siyasi elitlerin amaçladıkları anlamla çelişmiştir. Bu nedenle bu vakalarda anlamsal çokluk söz konusudur ve bu anlamsal çokluk resmi yer isimlerinin kullanıcılar tarafından reddi ile sonuçlanmıştır. Resmi yer isimlerinin kabul edilmesi halinde ise kullanıcılar hegemonik siyasi elitlerin iradesine boyun eğmişlerdir. Burada artık anlamsal çokluk yoktur. Zira hegemonik gruplar kendi istedikleri anlamı insanlara kabul ettirerek anlamı sabitlemeyi başarmıştır. Bu ikili bakış açısı yer isimlerinde anlamsal çokluğun yalnızca resmi yer isimlerinin reddedildiği hallerde ortaya çıkmayıp yer isimlerinin genel bir özelliği olduğu gerçeğinin görülmesini engellemektedir. Her birey yer isimlerini farklı biçimlerde anlamlandırır. Bu farklı anlamlar zaman zaman siyasi elitlerin kararları ile bir tansiyon oluşturarak resmi yer isimlerinin reddedilmesine sebep olur. Ancak bu her zaman böyle olmak zorunda değildir. Çoğunlukla insanlar resmi yer isimlerini kullanmayı reddetmeseler bile yer isimlerine birbirlerinden ve siyasi elitlerin amaçladıkları anlamlardan çok daha farklı anlamlar yüklerler.

Tüm bu teorik argümanları göstermek amacıyla bu çalışmada Zeytin Dalı Caddesi vakası incelenmiştir. 2018 yılında AKP hükümeti ABD'nin Suriye'de gerçekleştirilen Zeytin Dalı Operasyonu'na yönelik tutumuna karşılık Ankara'daki ABD Büyükelçiliği'nin bulunduğu Nevzat Tandoğan Caddesi'nin ismini Zeytin Dalı Caddesi olarak değiştirmiştir. Bu isim değişikliği AKP hükümetinin 'dış güçlerin oyunlarını sahada bozuyoruz ve bu başarımızı sembolik alanda da perçinliyoruz' anlatısının bir yansımasıydı. Halkın çok geniş bir kesimi bu cadde isim değişikliğini meşru olarak görmüştür. Diğer bir deyişle cadde ismi halk tarafından reddedilmemiştir. Ancak konuyla ilgili atılan Twitter gönderileri incelendiğinde anlaşılmaktadır ki yeni cadde ismi reddedilmemiş olsa da pek çok insan hükümetin bu cadde isim değişikliği ile yaymaya çalıştığı anlatıyı kabul etmemiştir. Aksine, yeni cadde ismi pek çok kişi tarafından farklı biçimlerde yorumlanmış, üstelik bu yorumların pek çoğu da hükümetin anlatısı ile çelişmiştir. Örneğin birçok Twitter kullanıcısı bu değişikliği AKP'nin popülizminin bir göstereci olarak değerlendirmiştir. Bu kullanıcıların yorumlarına göre AKP aslında emperyalizmle mücadele etmemekte, cadde isim değişikliği gibi aslında emperyalizme zarar

vermeyecek çeşitli hamlelerle oy potansiyelini arttırmaya çalışmaktadır. Kimilerine göre ise bu isim değişikliği bir acziyet ve güçsüzlük göstergesidir. Zira ABD somut bir biçimde Türkiye'nin çıkarlarını tehdit ederken hükümetin yapabildiği tek şey basit bir cadde isim değişikliğidir. Bazı eleştirel yorumlarda ise ABD ile ilişkilerin dışına çıkılarak caddenin silinen ismi ön plana çıkarılmıştır. Bu yorumlara göre Nevzat Tandoğan'ın isminin silinmesi Cumhuriyet tarihinin mirasına yapılmış bir saygısızlıktır. Görüldüğü gibi pek çok kişi cadde isim değişikliğini hükümetin anlatılarından farklı bir biçimde yorumlamış, üstelik bu yorumlar da kendi içinde farklılıklar göstermiştir. Ancak bu 'anlamın çokluğu' durumu yalnızca eleştirel yorumlarda değil aynı zamanda hükümetin anlatısını sahiplenen yorumlarda da mevcuttur. Bu tür yorumların bazılarında bu isim değişikliği ABD'ye verilmiş önemli ve etkili bir sembolik mesaj olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Bazılarında ise tıpkı eleştirel okumalarda olduğu gibi silinen ismin önemi vurgulanmıştır. Buna göre Nevzat Tandoğan tek parti dönemi otoriteryanizmi ile özdeşleşmiş bir kişidir ve onun isminin Ankara'nın caddelerinden silinmesi takdir edilecek bir gelişmedir.

Barthes'ın metin teorisi ışığında değerlendirildiğinde bu vaka açıkça göstermektedir ki resmi isimlendirme otoritelerini elinde tutan siyasi elitler anlamın merkezi değildir. Bu gruplar belli bir ideolojik anlatıyı cadde isimleri aracılığıyla kente sirayet ettirmek isteyebilirler. Ancak kullanıcıların ve okuyucuların gözünde bu cadde isimlerinin gösterilenleri her zaman hegemonik grupların ideolojik anlatısı olmayabilir. Bu vakada bazı insanlar için gerçekten de hükümetin ideolojik anlatısı ile Zeytin Dalı Caddesi arasında gösteren-gösterilen ilişkisi kurulabilmiştir. Ancak birçok kişide bu ilişki kurulamamıştır. Aksine, Twitter gönderilerinden anlaşıldığı üzere birçok kişi için bu isim değişikliği aslında hükümetin hiç görmek istemeyeceği ve onun aleyhine işleyen gösterilenleri göstermektedir. Yani burada genel olarak sabit bir gösteren-gösterilen ilişkisinden bahsetmek mümkün değildir.

Öte yandan bu vaka kent metninin metinlerarası yapısını da ortaya koymaktadır. Öncelikle hükümet bu cadde isim değişikliğini yaparken 'anti-Amerikancılık', 'anti-emperyalizm', 'tek parti jakobenizmi' gibi çok farklı söylemsel zeminden faydalanmıştır. Ayrıca hükümet bu süreçte saf bir ideolojik anlatıyı deşarj etmemiştir. Aksine, burada ulusal ve uluslararası düzeyde farklı güç blokları ile olan uzlaşma ve çatışmalar belirleyici olmuştur. Öncelikle açıktır ki ABD elçiliği önünde böyle bir

değişiklik yapılarak ülkede yükselen anti-Amerikanizm ve anti-emperyalizm söylemlerinden faydalanılmak istenmiştir. Aynı zamanda Nevzat Tandoğan isminin değiştirilmesiyle de geleneksel muhafazakâr kesim ihmal edilmeyerek onların tek parti dönemi ile kurduğu nefret ve öfke ilişkisi canlı tutulmuştur. Öte yandan hükümet bu cadde isim değişikliği kararını verirken değiştirebileceği üç alternatif ile karşı karşıya kalmıştır: Nevzat Tandoğan Caddesi, Paris Caddesi ve Atatürk Bulvarı. Büyükelçiliğin internet sayfasındaki adresinde bu üçünden sadece Atatürk Bulvarı kullanılmaktadır. Dolayısıyla verilebilecek en güçlü mesaj aslında bu bulvarın adının değiştirilmesi olacaktır. Ancak açıktır ki böylesi bir değişikliğin insanların önemli bir kısmından tepki çekmesi hatta protestolara yol açması muhtemeldir. Dolayısıyla burada AKP hükümetinin kararı Türkiye’de Atatürk konusunda hassas olan kesimlerle bir uzlaşma içermektedir. Zira ülke bir askeri operasyon içerisindeyken ABD’ye sembolik mesaj vermek için ülkenin önemli bir kesiminin tepkisini çekerek kamuoyunu bölmek çok akıllıca bir davranış olmayacaktır. Öte yandan geriye kalan iki cadde arasında yapılan seçim de yine bir çatışma ve uzlaşma sürecini yansıtmaktadır. Nevzat Tandoğan’ın seçilmesi durumunda hem bir iç hem de dış ‘ötekiye’ mesaj verilecekken Paris’in seçilmesi durumunda iki dış ‘ötekiye’ mesaj verilecektir. Zira Fransa da bu dönemde operasyona karşı takındığı olumsuz tavır nedeniyle hükümetin tepkilerinden nasibini almış ve ABD kadar olmasa da ‘dış güçler’ temasında önemli bir pozisyona oturtulmuştur. Ancak hükümet bunun yerine ‘ötekilerin’ coğrafi konumunu kombine etmeyi böylece aynı zamanda iç politikadaki gerilimleri de kontrollü bir biçimde de olsa canlı tutmayı amaçlamıştır. Dolayısıyla her ne kadar bu cadde isim değişikliği AKP’nin hegemonik söyleminin açık ve yalın bir dışavurumu gibi görünse de (zira AKP belediye meclisinde çoğunluğa sahiptir ve meclisteki diğer grupların rızasını almadan istediği isim değişikliğini yapabilmektedir) aslında burada farklı olanaklar arasından yapılan seçimler çok farklı uzlaşma ve çatışma süreçlerini yansıtmakta ve çok farklı metinlerden izler taşımaktadır. Daha da önemlisi tüm bu süreçler yazarın mutlak hâkimiyet kurduğu boş bir kâğıt üzerinde değil yazarın kendinden önce yapılmış tercihler ile yazılmış ve yeniden yazılmış olan bir yapı içerisinde gerçekleşmektedir. Burada hükümetin yaptığı isim değişikliği veya yazdığı kent metni bu metinde hali hazırda var olan pek çok farklı gösteren ile (yakınlardaki diğer cadde isimleri, ABD Büyükelçiliğinin konumu, silinecek olan caddenin ismi) girdiği etkileşim içerisinde anlam kazanmıştır.

Anlamlandırma sürecine bakılacak olunursa Twitter gönderilerinin bir kısmı belli ki cadde isim deęişiklięinin yaşıandığı bölgeyi daha evvelden bedensel olarak deneyimlemiş kişiler tarafından yazılmıştır. Zira bu bölge Ankaralıların gündelik hayatta sıklıkla ziyaret ettięi merkezi sayılabilecek bir konumdadır. Bu nedenle Ankara’da yaşıyan nüfusun büyük bir kısmının bu cadde isim deęişiklięini hakiki bir kentsel deneyim ile anlamlandırmış olması muhtemeldir. Öte yandan böyle bir fırsatı olmayan kişiler ise haberler ve köşe yazılarından bu deęişiklięi metaforik olarak mekânsal ilişkileri temelinde anlamlandırmışlardır. Bu haberler ve köşe yazılarında ön plana çıkan mekânsal öğeler isim deęişiklięinin gerçekleştięi cadde üzerinde ABD Büyükelçilięi’nin bulunması, bu caddeye yakın olarak Paris Caddesi ve Atatürk Bulvarı’nın bulunması ve caddenin eski isminin Nevzat Tandoęan olmasıdır. İster hakiki mekânsal deneyimle olsun ister metaforik deneyimle olsun insanlar Zeytin Dalı Caddesi ismini yorumlarken mekanı ve mekânsal öğeleri baz almışlardır. Yani tartışılan şey ‘Zeytin Dalı’ kelimesinin kendisi deęil bu kelimenin yazılı olduęu bir tabelanın ABD Büyükelçilięi’nin yakınlarında bulunan Nevzat Tandoęan Caddesi yazılı bir tabelanın yerine asılmasıdır. Burada okuma tamamen mekânsal deneyime dayanır ve buna göre çeşitlenir.

Zeytin Dalı Caddesi vakası açıkça göstermektedir ki cadde isimleri çoksesli bir metin oluştururlar. Bu metinde anlam metni ortaya koyan aktörler olsan siyasi elitler deęil metni okuyan kent sakinleri tarafından belirlenir. Öyleyse güç ilişkileri açısından yer isimlerinin kullanıcıları, hegemonik grupların iradesine bazı istisnai haller haricinde boyun eğen pasif alıcılar deęil, bizzat anlamın merkezi olan aktif üreticilerdir. Elbette ki siyasi elitlerin metni belirlemek gibi oldukça önemli bir fonksiyonu vardır. Ancak bu fonksiyonları siyasi elitleri hiyerarşik olarak yer isimlerinin kullanıcılarından daha üst bir noktaya taşımaz. Zira bunların da en az siyasi elitler kadar önemli bir fonksiyonu vardır: anlamı üretmek. Öyleyse yer isimlerinin siyasi boyutuna odaklanan eleştirel çalışmaların kent-metninde yazarın okuyucudan hiyerarşik olarak daha üstün, güçlü ve belirleyici olduęu şeklindeki varsayımı verili kabul etmekten ve yer isimleri özelindeki tüm ilişkileri hegemonya ve direniş ikililięine indirmekten kaçınmaları gerekir. Zira siyasi öznellikler yalnızca güce boyun eğme veya karşı çıkma ile deęil, bunların her ikisine de indirgenemeyecek “arzu ve öfke, kapasite ve beceri, mutluluk ve korku, hayal etme ve unutma” (Pile, 1997, s. 3) gibi çok farklı deneyimlerle şekillenir.

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