

An urban reading in-between past and future: Palimpsest identity

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Received: August 2012 Final Acceptance: February 2013

Abstract:

Within the architectural discipline, the phenomenon of identity is transformed every time it is defined and it simultaneously transforms the perception of space and experience. Since, this simultaneous transformation makes the urban history and its future projections visible in the present; it could be argued that the identity of the urban space has a palimpsest structure. The concept of “palimpsest identity” can be opened to discussion within the context of Istanbul, in relation to the current hegemonic structures and myths. Regarding globalisation, as one of the hegemonic myths of neo-liberal system, the city is re-structured through various discourses one of which is “The Brand City”. In this study, the concept of *palimpsest identity* is scrutinized in particular in relation to Istanbul, through how Istanbul is articulated to *brand city* rhetoric. A reading of the city could only give the episteme of a certain place and moment/time of Istanbul. In this consideration, the palimpsest identity of the Levent-Gültepe region on Levent-Maslak axis, which is developed to brand Istanbul as a “Financial Center”, is interpreted. As a result, the concept of palimpsest identity is offered to open up new ways of articulated to the eternal transformation of the city by producing new discourses on architecture and the urban space.

Keywords: *Identity, brand cities, globalisation, transformation, in-between*

Turkey entered a new period when the “Law Regarding the Transformation of the Areas under Disaster Risk” known as “Urban Transformation Law” became a law in May 2012. Buildings and settlement areas that has been claimed to carry the risk of collapse at an earthquake have been determined based on this law. On October 5, the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization demolished/destroyed some of these determined areas, simultaneously in many cities in an atmosphere of a feast. The destruction was broadcasted live. Destruction and reconstruction of the urban areas under the mask of “Urban Transformation” is nothing new, especially for Istanbul. Sulukule and Tarlabaşı neighbourhoods are only the two of the destruction and reconstructions carried out, under the name of urban transformation that ignore the city, its citizens, their culture and the history, by the central and local governments within the recent past. Apart from these, destruction and reconstruction of single buildings by the local contractors have been accelerated in the past few years in areas such as Kağıthane, resulting in illegal income opportunities. These implementations

are set to work with an understanding of cities as only composed of physical elements, and designed to form illegal income opportunities. The city “transformed” through this understanding, which is closely related to the hegemonic political system and is being articulated to the hegemonic economic system as a commodity. In this process the hegemonic system uses architectural and urban disciplines in order to strengthen its power. Do the designed futures of the destructed and reconstructed urban areas being purified from their rejected, abdicated pasts and evil connotations? The meanings associated with the destruction and reconstruction of urban areas includes not only cultural and social but also economic and political processes. The “destruction and reconstruction tradition” which has accelerated with the related law, could be researched in particular in Istanbul and could be scrutinized in an architectural and urban context.

Approaching the issue through a critical perspective could give some clues on how the city and the citizens can be articulated to the process in different ways. An understanding of today’s Istanbul might give way for setting up futures on an urban and architectural scale. The concept of identity is one of the concepts that enable this kind of understanding possible. In this study, the concept of identity, which has various connotations in different disciplines, is going to be defined and interpreted in an architectural and urban context. The concept of identity could be defined and interpreted not only through space but also through multi-layered and a complex relation net. In this regard, how the understanding of identity is transformed by historical process, with not only cultural and social but also economic and power relations is going to be scrutinized. How the concept of identity being interpreted in the relation nets of modern theory/paradigmⁱ are going to be dealt with initially in the first section of this study. The problematic ways of the concept of identity in the historical process of the modern paradigm is going to be emphasized. Why the modern paradigm is inadequate for understanding the place and defining the identity, regarding transforming relations, is going to be stated. The paradigm shiftⁱⁱ that is triggered by these transforming relations is going to be determined. Through what kind of myths and rhetoric/discourses the identity is organized and spatialized in the post-modern condition that has occurred following this paradigm shift, is going to be inquired. The possibilities and limitations of this new paradigm related to the globalization myth are going to be investigated. Identity as *Becoming* is going to be proposed in order to interpret the dynamic structure of the spatialⁱⁱⁱ relations of the post-modern paradigm.

In the second section, how Istanbul is articulated to hegemonic global capitalist economy and neo-liberal politics through the concept of identity is going to be discussed. How the globalization myth of post-modern paradigm reflected in architectural and urban productions is going to be investigated. How the identity of Istanbul, which is designed through the “brand city” rhetoric of the globalization myth, organized in architecture and urban space, is going to be searched. In the scope of this research Levent-Maslak axis, which is being spatialized with the “Finance City” brand is going to be studied. Levent-Gültepe area is going to be the focus point of the study as an exemplar. A thread of the brand city rhetoric, which is an extension of the perspective of hegemonic economic and political power to the city and the citizens, is going to be determined. The evolution of Levent-Gültepe under these threads is going to be investigated. In this regard the transformation process in the area is going to be read along with the social, economic, political and cultural relation nets, and the identity of the area is going to be

explored through its relation with the past and the future. The difference between the *urban transformation* rhetoric and the concept of *transformation* related to the *identity as Becoming* is going to be put forward. "Palimpsest identity" that refers to *identity as Becoming*, is going to be proposed as an alternative to understand the present of Istanbul in general and Levent-Gültepe in particular, departing from its past and to make future projections.

The globalization myth, and the brand city rhetoric which is articulated to it, could be scrutinized by historicizing^{iv} the urban space and the architecture. Historicizing of architectural and urban space could be accomplished through a reading on the social, economic and political structures that produce them and produced with them. The urban reading in-between past and future could be defined as a kind of historicizing attempt. In this regard an urban reading is going to be set to work through a phenomenological approach. A parallax^v position is going to be interiorized. A conceptual framework is going to be set through an interdisciplinary research on the concept of identity and globalization, late capitalist economy, neo-liberal politics, post-modern society and culture. The palimpsest identity of Levent-Gültepe is going to be interpreted through the relational experience in connection with the conceptual framework with various data such as photos and notes related to the personal experiences of the urban and architectural space, together with sketches and written documents. Relational experience could be grasped via the process of reciprocal transformation of the citizen and the city while being transformed by one another, and the identity could be understood as *Becoming*. The palimpsest identity, which refers to identity as *Becoming*, is going to be located in the historical, economic and political processes, and going to be grasped through relational experience. Through palimpsest identity concept, an answer is going to be searched for the question of how identity is related to spatiality within the architectural discipline.

The transformed identity conceptions from modern to post-modern paradigm

It could be argued that in a certain period of time cultural, social, economic and political transformations divided the history of humanity in three phases^{vi}: First, from hunter and gatherer to the formation of the agricultural society by domesticating plants. Second, the formation of the modern society and the urbanization with the industrial revolution (modernity) and as the last phase (for today) being freed from the place (relative deterritorialization^{vii}) with the present communication era and the formation of the knowledge society (post-modernity). These phases have different economic, political, cultural and social occurrence circumstances, however the latter did not wipe out the prior, it existed along with it. On the other hand, the phases are not homogenous structures either. For instance, modernity includes counter-processes of modernity such as Avant-garde movements. If the concept of identity is thought within these phases the paradigm shift relating to contemporary understanding of identity could be grasped more significantly. It would be helpful to have a look at the etymological roots and the occurrence date of the word of identity.

Identity comes from 16th Century Latin *idem* (*same*), *identitas*. The root was passed into English as *identical*. Unlike Western languages, in Turkish *kimlik* (identity) is produced from the root of *kim* (*who*), which is thought to be related to the relative pronoun *-ki* in Persian, which dates back to 8th

Century (Naşinyan, 2002). In Turkish, the word identity could be interpreted as the word used to define the properties of a person that made him/her that person. In this regard in Turkish, identity also includes the properties of a person that makes him/her different from others. However in this study, Western oriented identity, which refers to sameness in European centred thinking is going to be used. The meaning ascribed to identity in modern sciences (psychology, sociology, biology, etc.) corresponds to the industrial revolution. By defining how the concept of identity is being understood in the modern paradigm, the paradigm shift in the post-modern condition could be defined.

European oriented modernity is organized around the industrial (Fordist) production, the capitalist economic system and the colonial nation-states. In the industrial production, commodities are standardized in order to be mass-produced. Standardization is a kind of reduction, which leaves the non-standardized ones out, so as their differences. As Marx defines, the industrial production reduces the production duration of the commodity, and enables the production of the surplus value. The capitalist economic organization, aims to increase the profit and maximize the accumulation of the capital through surplus value. In order to reach this goal not only production but also consumption is being organized. Along with the means of production, capitalist economy began to organize the space and the society as the modern urban space and the modern society, regarding to their benefits. The modern urban space is not only the space of production, but also the space of consumption. Spaces for social life are designed around the production facilities, the factories. Modernity is not only related to the industrial production and the capitalist system but also related to the linear thinking of history. Regarding to this thought, traditional societies belong to the past, and are behind in every way, where the modern society is developed and ahead. The colonialist act of modernity is an extension of this linear thinking of history and its developmental approach. In this consideration colonial states do not only exploit but also attempt to modernize the traditional societies and urbanize the traditional space. This dualistic perception of the world forms the hegemonic narrative of the modernity. In modernity, people are defined in duality such as woman and man, the spaces as urbanized and un-urbanized, societies as developed and developing, life as modern and traditional. These dualities are represented in the sameness-difference axis through an “ideal identity” which has a timeless^{viii}, never-changing essence. The search for an essence for this “ideal identity” refers to the non-historical elements. For instance, the identity of an urbanized place is defined according to the properties and standards that make the place urban – in what ways is it same to the ideal urban. If a place does not have these properties, meet the standards, in other words if it is different than the ideal urban it is then outside the urbanization rules, it is un-urbanized, deurbanized. Therefore within the hegemonic ideology of modernity the concepts such as city, citizen, culture and society, are fixed and are not due to change. Places and societies are reduced to timeless representations through their relation to sameness. Identity as an “un-changing essence” in the hegemonic narrative of modernity is transformed in post-modernity while being articulated to the globalization myth.

Ideal identity thought in modernity, which was shaped with the industrial production relations, is transformed into a new concept of identity, which is not abstracted from place. This new understanding is related with the

globalization myth of post-modern theory, which is being shaped by the post-industrial (post-Fordist) production. The post-industrial production is based on mass-customization, therefore aims a quasi-difference. Standard and standardization has not disappeared but it has been dissolved down to some point. Besides, the post-industrial production made flexible production possible by freeing means of the production from space (relative deterritorialization). Deterritorialization of post-industrial production has also freed the capital accumulation from the place (flexible accumulation). Capitalism gained a global dimension by the deterritorialized capital and the customized mass production, while trans-national companies took the place of the colonial nation-states. In this consideration the deterritorialization brought a reterritorialization of production and consumption in the global scale. Post-modern theory organizes the society and cities around the post-modern consumption relations concerning the neo-liberal politics. In this regard societies, cities, urbanization and cultures, which are different from Europe, are recognized. Multiplicity, such as "multi-culturalism", took over the place of modernist dualities. Although it seems that dualities are abandoned, in the post-modern theory, the city and the society are organized through global-local opposition. The concept of identity related to this organization is another extension of the reductionist approach because cultural identities specific to localities are only considered in relation to space. When the identity fiction of the globalization myth is scrutinized related to the late capitalist economy and the neo-liberal politics, it could be argued that the organization of societies through space is a marketing strategy of the post-modern narrative. Considering this narrative, "local identity" fiction organizes the society through cultural (ethnic, religious, sexual etc.) identities. J.N. Pieters (2005, pp. 245), emphasizes that, global and local are not only geographical categories but also "ways of seeing and discursive frameworks". Regarding to this discursive framework, "global" is dynamic where as "local" is static. The local identity, defined through the opposition of global and local, points to a kind of stability. Neo-liberal politics are problematic, since they do not interpret the culture and local in a historical process and therefore deny the historicity of identity, culture and space. Moreover, the identity concept in global capitalism as an extension of post-modern economy becomes a tool to hide the production and consumption relations through space, or if they are exposed, it becomes a tool for their legitimization. For these reasons, the discourse of including 'different' identities through local and cultural identities in the post-modern theory, does not point to the multiplicity of identities, but only one of the possible thoughts of identity.

Brand city rhetoric

When nation-states devolved the means of production and the economic powers to transnational companies, cities began to gain importance instead of countries. In the globalisation myth, the city represents the local as the particular as opposed to the global as the general. Although it is accepted that every locality has its own culture, they are expected to articulate their economic and political structures to the hegemonic global system. In order to meet this expectation, the cities make an effort to present themselves as a brand to the global market of the hegemonic economic and political system. In this regard, cities are branded through their localities that became tools under the pressure of global dynamics. How the architecture and the cities are organized around the hegemonic political and economic system could be investigated in particular in Istanbul.

Cities, which were standardized and homogenized through the industrial production of modernization, continued to be re-produced by being differentiated in post-industrial production. Brand is the name of this differentiation. However, the brand does not reflect a difference in quality, but in quantity. The quantitative difference does not allow any products to have more than a commodity value. The mass-customization produces quasi-difference since the commodity still only has a commodity value, but presented as something different under the name of customization as well as branding. The sameness of commodities is concealed through the discourses that produce the quasi-difference. Through discourse, the product gains a character, an identity that makes it (quasi-) different from any other product. In neo-liberal system localities and cities are also considered as commodities that have to be marketed, in order to pursue the accumulation of capital. A certain culture or historical geography is commoditized through discourse of identity that serves for branding it, and makes it quasi-different in the market. This kind of identity is a discursive product, and space is organized around this identity discourse of post-industrial consumption. In this regard reductionist approaches of post-modern consumption precede identity of a place as a discourse rather than as a meaningful space-time experience. The identity of a place is not considered as a reflective socio-economic production process but rather as a myth, a given thing, an image, a pastiche made of various realities of appealing spaces and times. According to this approach the place is frozen as an ideal object and the identity of a place becomes a brand, a marketing label or a tool to impose hegemony over societies. Categorizing a place as a brand city (finance centre, culture city, tourism city, history city, sports city, etc.) results in ignoring its dynamics, relations and various opportunities. In this regard the multi-layered (historical and spatial) structures of a city are ignored and the identity of the city is unified with the brand. How Istanbul is reduced to the "Finance Centre" brand and articulated to a global market could be investigated in relation to the concept of identity.

In the studies that are carried out to make Istanbul a finance centre, 6 areas are foreseen to have been developed as the financial centres of the city: Levent-Maslak, Ataşehir, Yenibosna Basın Ekspres Yolu, Kartal, Topkapı-Maltepe-Bayrampaşa (Istanbul Finans Merkezi Altyapı Komitesi, 2011). Ataşehir, Kartal and Levent-Maslak axis come forward from the aforementioned areas. Levent-Maslak axis is being developed as a financial settlement area since the 1990s. Since its infrastructure exists and many service sector areas are already located there, it is currently being branded as the "Finance Centre" It would be appropriate to look at how the Levent-Maslak axis was like as an urban area, before it was designed to be a financial centre. In this regard, in order to explain how the palimpsest identity is formed, the historical transformation process of Levent-Gültepe region is going to be the subject of concentration.

The economic and social life is transformed across the country, while the agriculture is mechanized and the cities industrialized rapidly following the governance of the Demokrat Parti (Democratic Party). In Istanbul, in the 1955s-60s the industrial production facilities began to be established in Levent and 4th Levent districts. The villagers, who were left jobless because of the mechanization in agriculture, were prompted to immigrate to the city by the industrialization in the city. For the immigrants who began working at the factories located around Levent district, it was not possible to accommodate in the city centre due to the high cost of living. In this period

they began to form illegal settlement areas around these factories at the borders of the city. Gültepe, Çeliktepe and Seyrantepe are some of these illegal settlement areas. The immigrants built unauthorized houses in a very short period of time on land that did not belong to them. These houses were just a place for them to dwell. These dwellings with gardens formed a low-density area. The local governments were overlooking these illegal settlements to collect votes from their settlers. In contrast with these areas, Levent quarter, which is separated from Gültepe with the Büyükdere Road, was a suburban settlement area with two-three storey villas, produced in four phases by Emlak Kredi Bank. These areas that were located in suburbs in those years are going to be located in the centre city in the coming years.

Even though these settlement areas on both sides of Büyükdere Road seem separated, they were in a kind of relationship. Lifestyles of the people, who live in the squatter settlements, were transformed by getting in contact with the lifestyle of the city. They were not villagers any more, nor were they the urbane defined in the modern lifestyle. The people living in the squatter quarters emerged a unique culture. Every new family that immigrate from a village to the city with their families and clans, were transformed, while transforming the city. These squatter quarters, which are a kind of the waste products of the construction sites and production facilities of industrialization and also modernization, were accumulating as “dust” in Bataille’s (1995) words. The modern city was planned, and it had an order. The squatter settlements did not have any place in the modern city identity. The squatter settlements are seen as a “tumor” that have to be demolished, while their inhabitants were the villagers that had to return to their villages. They were not suitable for the modern city identity. However it was not possible for them to return to their villages, both because of their economic conditions (and also the country’s economic structure) and because of their lifestyles that have been transformed during the years. This accumulated dust, which had to be cleaned, is relocated in the neo-liberal urban politics based on branding. The city associated with the Finance Centre brand, is not a place for factories but the offices in high-tech skyscrapers, not a place for squatters, but residences that represent the post-modern lifestyle, not the place for shops of the quarter’s tradesmen, but the post-modern consumption spaces of the shopping malls (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Spaces of the brand city.

In order to understand that neither illegal housings, nor high-rise buildings are unique to Istanbul or Turkey, the place of the problematic in the local scale should be interrogated in the global scale. Every locality could have its own economic and political, as well as cultural and social structure. Nevertheless when the uniqueness of these localities is investigated based on the economic and political powers in the global scale; they could be placed in a context. Considering the global scale, these localities are not closed entities, but they are in one-way or the other (even if they reject or totally embrace it) in relation to the global. Therefore to understand the identity of Levent-Gültepe area, the relation of global capitalist economy and the neo-liberal politics to society and culture could be scrutinized. Rethinking the locality, following this inquiry, could reflect different connotations. This interaction between the local and the global relations could be possible when the local and the global are both considered as dynamic entities.

The brand city rhetoric presented as a kind of identity, in the globalisation myth of post-modern paradigm, does not accept the dynamic structures of localities and their differences in quality, but it aims to freeze them in time and show their quantitative differences. The branded city, is attached to the global in a one-way relation, in other words it serves to the hegemonic system –the global capitalist economy and neo-liberal politics. The branding of the city separates the city from its own reality – its history, culture, society as well as economic and political structure. The city that is separated from its own reality becomes a commodity. The city, which is included in the global market, now only has an economic value. Furthermore the locality that the city inhabits does not have a value in the global market but only the brand. While the city is branded, its past and future are equalized in the brand, its historicity is rejected and it is reduced to present/now. In contrast to the reductionist manners of the brand city rhetoric, “palimpsest identity” could be understood as a way to explore the multi-layered structures of Istanbul.

Exploring the palimpsest identity of the city

The identity of the city does not only reflect its physical appearance, but also gives spatial clues that could let us read its identity. Spatial clues enable us to relationally understand how the identity of the city is in a transformation process, directing us to investigate the social, economic and political relations. It is important to grasp people as the extension of time and space (and all the living things), rather than subjects in the space. Furthermore time cannot be separated from space as well. This understanding of time brings the spatial transformation with it and indicates that it is impossible to sustain a certain form. In this regard every architectural or urban product is continuously being transformed and it transforms its environment (including the people) at the same time. When the architecture and the city is grasped through this understanding, it is not possible to talk about an “ideal city” or “ideal architecture”, but a city or an architecture that is both passive and active -that is being transformed and simultaneously transforming. It is not possible to understand the architecture or the city through a frozen, static understanding of identity, which is an extension of reductionist approach of the modern paradigm. The branded local identities that are designed by the global capitalism and the neo-liberal politics do not carry a meaning other than being articulated to the hegemonic system. Grasping the identity as a *Becoming* could be an alternative to the modern and the post-modern understandings of identity. It should also be stated that interpreting the

identity as *Becoming* is only one of the many different and possible interpretations of identity. How can the identity be understood and interpreted as a *Becoming*? The concept of identity as *Becoming* could be scrutinized relationally. Lefebvre defines *Becoming* as such:

“The Becoming is a continuous development (an evolution) yet at the same time it is punctuated by leaps, by sudden mutations and upheavals. At the same time it is an involution, since it carries with it and takes up again the content from which it began, even while it is forming something new. No Becoming is indefinitely rectilinear.”

(Lefebvre, 2005)

Transformation is a key concept to understand identity as *Becoming*. Any kind of difference, may it be fast or slow, less or more, good or bad described as an identity, corresponds to a moment of transformation. Identity as *Becoming* could be defined by referring to this constant transformation. Identity as *Becoming* that appears in the mediation of subject and object exists in space-time relations, transforms these relations while being transformed by them. An identity ascribed to a place, can only be an instant moment in its eternal dynamism and transformation; identity could only represent multiplicity of dynamic data and relations for an instant. When the identity of a place is defined, the route of its ongoing transformation shifts; it begins to transform in a different direction. Therefore the identity ascribed to that place, becomes an extension of its transformation. In this regard, while palimpsest identity is related to the past of the place, it simultaneously triggers its production of future; it is articulated to its future. The relation that palimpsest identity establishes between past and present could be comprehended referring to Giorgio Agamben. He opens what contemporary is to discussion in relation to fashion:

“Following the same gesture by which the present divides time according to a “no more” and a “not yet,” it also establishes a peculiar relationship with these “other times” –certainly with the past, and perhaps also with the future ... in this way (it) make relevant again, any moment from the past. It can therefore tie together that which it has inexorably divided...”

(Agamben, 2012)

Producing the architectural and the urban episteme could be possible with the palimpsest identity in the relation that is being established in-between “no more” and “not yet.” Rather than temporally dividing the city in the past and the future, the present time of the city could be understood through a historical perspective and an intuition towards the future. Palimpsest identity establishes a peculiar relationship in-between the fracture of these two kinds of time, which is constantly in a state of becoming. When standing in-between the past and the present and looking at both of them from the same distance, the identity of the city emerge as *Becoming*; just like in palimpsest readings. High-rises, residences, offices, shopping malls as the spaces representing the Financial Centre brand, are infiltrated in-between the past and the present. This transformation could be read through the palimpsest identity (Figure 2).

While the city is being transformed, its relation to the suburbs and city centre(s) is also being transformed. Following the construction of the 1st Bosphorus Bridge in 1973 and the 2nd Bosphorus Bridge in 1988, Levent in the cross-section of the bridge connection roads, became an important location close to the city centre. Levent became a centre itself, following the

underground metro system, which began to be built in the beginning of the 1990s and opened in 2000, between Taksim and 4. Levent (later extended to Haciosman). On the other hand, the service sector began to gain importance in the city rather than industrialization, regarding the neo-liberal politics of ANAP government in the 1980s. The factory sites in Levent, which are suitable for building high-rise office blocks, become more valuable, based on their central location in the city. In this regard in 1990s the prestigious offices of the city began to be located at the Levent-Maslak axis. While factories of the industrial production left their places to office blocks of the service sector, the workforce profile in Levent has also shifted. By the way, Gültepe is an economic accommodation option for the students studying in the surrounding universities (İstanbul Technical University in Maslak and Taksim, Yıldız Technical University in Beşiktaş, Bogaziçi University in Etiler etc.) Therefore, Gültepe is being transformed in relation to Levent both socio-culturally and physically.



Figure 2. *The unity of urban layers.*

Squatter housings and factories are replaced with apartment blocks, office blocks, residences and shopping malls; a swap through place. Although the low-rise squatter housings leave their places to high-storey apartment blocks, causing the transformation to occur in instant shifts, the togetherness of low-rise squatters, five - six storey apartment blocks as well as 20-25 storey residences allows reading the city's past and future simultaneously. Furthermore, the high-rise office blocks, residences and shopping malls taking place of the factory buildings being articulated to the intensity of this reading. Eczacıbaşı Medicine Factory left its place to Kanyon complex (with its shopping mall, residence and office block). Similarly Deva Medicine Factory has been torn down and Zorlu Levent Offices has been designed in its place. Rosche Factory is going to be demolished and Özdilek Tower planned to be built in its place. Hollier (1998, pp. xiii) states that "the main thing about the system ... is not the conjunction of these two poles, but the space between them." Bataille emphasizes the togetherness of the contrast of slaughterhouse and museum, which Hollier puts as "One does not exist without the other, but it does not exist with the other either". In the case of the office-factory togetherness, it is not the question of the togetherness of the others or one is filling the place of the other, but the awareness of without an emptiness, there cannot be the other. People who built the squatters were the people working in the factories. Today, offices,

residences and the shops of the shopping malls purified from the dirt of the industry, took the place of the “dirty” factories. The ones leaving in the squatter quarters are today either working as a shopkeeper of an international brand or visiting the mall for shopping, eating-drinking or strolling around. It is not important for which, because today they are related to the social cleanliness and purification, rather than the hardness and overwhelming of the production. As Bataille (refer to (Hollier, 1998, pp. xxiii) states related to the concept of heterology, living one’s existence is simultaneously experiencing the *pure loss* of the other. The concept of palimpsest identity make it possible to read this simultaneous togetherness in the experience of Levent-Gültepe.

Instead of conclusion

Identity as a kind of representation can only be an instant image that departs simultaneously from the space and the individual. If the transformation of the space and the individual is continuous, then the transformation of the image is inevitable. However, the identity and the image of the city, which is designed with the brand city rhetoric, disregard the different imaginations of the citizens related to the city. As Lefebvre (2000, pp. 97, 361) mentions “image kills ... image is the enemy of imagination”. The palimpsest identity, on the other hand, does not imprison the city to a bare image, but takes the city on a journey into the individual’s mind between the past and the present. The eternal productivity of the imagination forms a helix loop, which is nourished by the space and its multi-layered relations. Instant moments, related to the past and the present that are constantly re-produced in the mind via imagination, enables the individual to understand the city from a perspective, which is different than the one that the hegemonic system imposes. These social, cultural and historical understandings are articulated to the economy-politics of the city. Furthermore, they are not only articulated to its spatial production but also to the production of the urban episteme, which at the same time transform the individual. Every different, individual understanding of the city through the palimpsest identity makes the constant re-production of the city possible and also comprises the power to investigate and transform. Through the concept of palimpsest identity, which was grasped through the exemplar of Levent-Gültepe in this study, it is possible for us to understand and transform the identity of Istanbul and the social, cultural, historical, economic and political structures it refers to, and also simultaneously to be transformed.

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Geçmiş ile gelecek aradılığında bir kent okuması: Palimpsest kimlik

Mimarlık ve kent bağlamında kimlik, yalnız kültürle ilişkili bir kavram değildir. Tarihselliği olan, toplumları kapsayan ve onların ekonomik ve politik ilişkilerini de içeren bir olgudur. Kimlik olgusu, bağlam ve anlam ilişkilerinde beliren bütünün (hiçbir zaman bütününün bilgisine erişemeyeceğimiz kentin ve mimarlığın bütününün) farklı yansımalarını temsil etmektedir. Çeşitli söylemler içinde yeniden tanımlanan kimlik olgusu, her tanımlandığında dönüşmekte ve mekan algısını ve deneyimini eşanlı dönüştürmektedir. Bu eşanlı dönüşümde kentin geçmişi ile kente ilişkin gelecek öngörüsü, bugünde görünür kılındığı için kentin mevcut kimliğinin palimpsest bir yapıda olduğu söylenebilir. "Palimpsest kimlik" kavramı, içinde bulunduğumuz egemen yapılar ve söylemler ile ilişkilendirilerek İstanbul bağlamında tartışmaya açılabilir.

Bugün neo-liberal politik sistemin egemen söylemlerinden biri olan küreselleşme söylemi içinde mimarlık, kent ve dolayısıyla kent kimliği, çeşitli söylemler üzerinden yeniden yapılandırılmaktadır. Sanayi sonrası üretim biçimlerinin pazarlama stratejisine denk düşen bu söylemlerden biri de "marka kent" söylemidir. Marka kent söylemi, küreselleşme söylemine eklenerek mimarlığı, kenti ve kimliğini, çok boyutlu ve karmaşık ilişkilerinden soyutlamakta ve yalnızca ekonomik bir değere indirgemektedir. Bu doğrultuda kent, "hiçbir zaman değişmeyecek bir kimlik" ve dolayısıyla bir öz arayışı ile markalaştırılmaya çabalanmaktadır. Kentin sürekli dönüşen kimliğinin belli bir zamanda sabitlenmesi/dondurulması ile oluşturulan – gerekirse yeniden üretilen– (marka) kent, serbest piyasa ekonomisinin alınıp-satılır bir malı/metası olmaktadır. Bu süreçte kentin hali hazırdaki durumunda marka değeri taşımayan her tür mimarlık yok sayılmakta ve kent ona yöneltilen marka ile ilişkilendirilen bir yeniden üretim sürecine girmektedir.

Bu çalışmada *palimpsest kimlik* kavramı İstanbul özelinde, İstanbul'un *marka kent* söylemine nasıl eklemeli olduğu üzerinden irdelenecektir. Ekonomik, toplumsal ve politik açıdan çok hızlı bir dönüşüm sürecinde olan İstanbul'un çok katmanlı bir kimliği olması kaçınılmazdır. Tarihsel coğrafyaya ilişkin her bir katman ya bir öncekinin (örneğin rezidanslar fabrikaların) fiziksel varlığını ortadan kaldırmakta, ya da ona eklenerek var olmaktadır. Bugün İstanbul'un süregiden dönüşümü daha çok mevcut olanı (eski, zamanı geçmiş, çarpık, çöküntü, işe yaramaz olanı) kaldırıp, markanın gerektirdiğini (yeni, çağdaş, eksiksiz, kusursuz olanı) onun yerinde koyma savı ile gerçekleşmektedir. Her ne kadar kent, tanımlanan marka çerçevesinde mevcut olanı yok sayarak ya da yıkarak yeniden üretilse de, o yerin geçmişiyle ilişkisini kesemez. Çünkü Bataille'in¹ da ortaya koyduğu gibi birinin (burada 'marka kent'in) varoluşunu yaşamak eşzamanlı olarak ötekinin (burada o yerin geçmişinin) yokluğunun (*pure loss*) deneyimidir. İşte palimpsest kimlik, tam da bu aradalıkta, geçmişle gelecek aradalığında okunabilen kentsel bir yapıyı temsil eder.

İstanbul'un bu çok katmanlı palimpsest kimliğine ilişkin bilgi, ilişkiel deneyim üzerinden kavranabilir. Hiçbir zaman bütününe bilgisine hakim olamayacağımız kente ilişkin bu tür bir okuma ile İstanbul'un belli bir yerinin ve belli bir anının bilgisi elde edilebilir. Bu doğrultuda, İstanbul'un "finans merkezi" olarak markalaştırılan Levent-Maslak hattı üzerindeki Levent ve Gültepe bölgesine odaklanarak bölgenin palimpsest kimliği anlamlandırılmaya çalışılacaktır. Levent-Gültepe bölgesindeki fabrikaların ve gecekonduların oluşumu ile gökdelen ve rezidanslara dönüşümleri tarihsel süreç içinde incelenecektir. Bölgeye ilişkin disiplinler arası araştırmaya, yerinde gözleme ve deneyime dayalı mimari ve kentsel okumalar, küreselleşme kavramı, marka kent söylemi, sanayi sonrası üretim biçimleri ve neo-liberal sistem ile ilişkili olarak tartışmaya açılacaktır.

İstanbul'un olası kimliklerinden biri olarak tanımlanabilecek 'palimpsest kimlik' kavramı ile bugünün mimarlığını ve kentini, egemen sistemin bakış açısından farklı bir yaklaşımla okumanın yolları aranacaktır. Mimarlık ve kent toplumsal, kültürel, tarihsel, ekonomik ve politik ilişkileri üzerinden bu farklı yaklaşımla yeniden anlamlandırılacak ve yorumlanacaktır. Var olan kentsel ve mimari birikimin üstüne yeni bir söz söylemek, yeni bir mekansal üretim yapmak, var olanın içinden farklı bir biraraya geliş ise, bu okuma da kente ve mimarlığa ilişkin yeni bir söz üretmenin ve kentin sonsuz dönüşümüne farklı şekillerde eklenmenin önünü açabilir.

¹Bataille'dan aktaran Hollier, D. (1998). *Against Architecture: the writings of Georges Bataille*. (B. Wing, Çev.) Cambridge: MIT Press. pp. 23.

ⁱ(Kuhn, T. (2006), *Bilimsel Devrimlerin Yapısı (The Structure of Scientific Revolutions)*, Translated by N.Kuyaş, İstanbul: Kırmızı Yayınları, pp. 282). Kuhn uses the term *paradigm* in two senses: first one as all of the beliefs, values, techniques that a certain (scientific) community shares. Secondly as model, theory or example and solid puzzle-solutions that could be used in place of certain rules and of solution foundation of all the other puzzles when necessary. Considering these two definitions of Kuhn, in this study the concept of *paradigm* is used to include the rules, values, visible or invisible acceptances and the conceptual or experimental tools that are used for explaining the modern and post-modern worlds.

ⁱⁱ(Kuhn, T. (2006), *Bilimsel Devrimlerin Yapısı (The Structure of Scientific Revolutions)*, Translated by N.Kuyaş, İstanbul: Kırmızı Yayınları, pp. 84). Kuhn claims "Successive transition from one paradigm to another via revolution is the usual developmental pattern of mature science," and he defines these transitions as *paradigm shifts*.

ⁱⁱⁱ(Soja, E. (1989), *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertation of Space in Critical Social Theory*, Newyork: Verso, pp. 80). Soja defines *spatiality* as "socially produced space". *Spatiality* refers that space is not a given container, but

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- like 'social', 'political', 'economical' and 'historical' generally suggest, it refers to the necessity of comprehending the space in relation to the human action.
- ^{iv}(Dirlik, A. (2008), *Postkolonyal Aura: Küresel Kapitalizm Çağında Üçüncü Dünya Eleştirisi* (The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism), Translated by G. Doğduaslan, İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi). Dirlik uses historicism in a different sense than the conventional historicism. He neither supports to sublimate history with "a self-referential universal historicism" (pp.127), nor excluding the historical and structural from the space (pp.7). Dirlik mentions that the transformations that shape the world are the historical conditions that make up the structural context. Thus he (pp.31) defines historicism as structural comprehension of history. He argues that in order to direct a critical perspective on the condition we are in, we have to historicize this condition. Therefore historicism, as Dirlik understands (and as used in this study), could be achieved not by abstracting space from time, but also conceptualizing the historicity of space and spatiality of time (parallel to this, the spatiality that E. Soja defines includes the historical and structural conditions) in regard to each other.
- ^v(Žižek, S. (2011), *Mimari Paralaks: Sınıf Savaşının Spandrelleri ve Diğer Fenomeni* (Architectural Parallax: Spandrels and Other Phenomena of Class Struggle), Translated by B. Turan, İstanbul: Encore, pp.11). Žižek defines the word parallax as "the apparent displacement of an object (the shift of its position against a background), caused by a change in observational position that provides a new line of sight".
- (Karatani, K. (2008), *Transkritik Kant ve Marks Üzerine* (Transcritique, On Kant and Marx), Translated by E. Ünal, İstanbul: Metis Yayıncılık, pp. 25). Karatani mentions that the parallax in Kantian thought emerged when it has been put forward that the shift is an optical illusion of both subjective and objective perspectives.
- ^{vi}In this study phase refers to the gas, liquid, solid and even plasma states of matter. These states do not have priority to each other, but they have different properties. These phases are formed regarding to different environmental conditions. Furthermore all of these states could be found in the same environment and also it is possible for new states to be emerged. Regarding this, it is not possible to talk about a linear line of development in the history of man, but the difference phases of man and the space.
- ^{vii}For further reading on relative (and absolute) deterritorialization, refer to Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (2005), *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Translated by B. Massumi, Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press.
- ^{viii}Timeless, signifies the abstraction of space from time, overlooking the existence of time.