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**THE CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION OF
YELDEĞİRMENİ NEIGHBORHOOD**

ZEYNEP TÜRKMEN

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**YELDEĞİRMENİ MAHALLESİ'NİN
KÜLTÜREL DÖNÜŞÜMÜ**

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ZEYNEP TÜRKMEN

112611025

Tez Danışmanı: Dr. Saime Tuğrul



Jüri Üyesi: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Begüm Başdaş



Jüri Üyesi: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Meltem Yılmaz Şener



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Abstract

Rasimpasa neighborhood, also widely known as Yeldeğirmeni, located in the central Kadıköy district in Istanbul, has been undergoing a spatial, social and demographic transformation in recent years. It is observed that, the transformation in this historically protected, centrally located area which is also known with its spatial proximity to the main transportation axles, has taken different feature compared the other gentrification processes or urban regeneration/renewal projects happening in the other parts of Istanbul. This research aims to figure out the factors that triggers the transformation in Yeldeğirmeni area and differentiate it from the other transformation processes. Regarding this aim, the literature of gentrification is addressed and the role of the new cultural middle class in the transformation process is investigated.

In the progress of the transformation in Yeldeğirmeni, it is observed that the project run by the local municipality Kadıköy, in partnership with civil society organization called Yeldeğirmeni Renewal Project has an accelerating impact on the transformation of the area. Unlike many other renewal projects currently carried out by the municipalities in Istanbul, this project has been designed as a neighborhood revitalization project with the vision of protecting the historical features of the area, revitalizing the neighborhood culture and supporting the cultural and art activities. At the same time, changes began to be appeared in the spatial organization of the space with the increasing number of artists in the area and settling of foreign students. It is not possible to frame these changes without taking into consideration the changes in Kadıköy, and the other areas of Istanbul. It is seen that, especially the transformation process undergoing in Taksim and Istiklal Street, Gezi Park uprising and the social and political atmosphere emerged after the uprising have remarkable impacts on the process of transformation in Yeldeğirmeni. It is claimed here that investigating this area would provide a deeper understanding of a transformation process in the historical sites of Istanbul.

Key words: Gentrification, New Cultural Middle Class, Cultural Transformation, Yeldeğirmeni

Özet

İstanbul Kadıköy ilçesinde bulunan Rasimpaşa Mahallesi, bilinen adıyla Yeldeğirmeni, mekansal, sosyal ve demografik bir dönüşümden geçiyor. Tarihi yapısını korumuş ve Kadıköy'ün merkezinde, ulaşım arterlerine yakınlığı ile bilinen Yeldeğirmeni mevkiindeki dönüşümün İstanbul'un benzer mahallelerinde süregiden soylulaştırma süreçlerinden ve diğer kentsel dönüşüm/yenileme projelerinden farklı bir seyir izlediği gözlemlenmektedir. Bu araştırma Yeldeğirmeni'nde yaşanan dönüşümü belirleyen faktörleri bulmak ve diğer alanlardaki dönüşümden farklılaşan yönlerini ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaç çerçevesinde soylulaştırma literatürüne referans ve yeni kültürel orta sınıfın değişimdeki rolü tartışılacaktır.

Yeldeğirmeni'nde yaşanan dönüşümün hızlanmasında en önemli etkenlerden biri Kadıköy Belediyesinin sivil toplum kuruluşları ile ortak yürüttüğü Yeldeğirmeni Yenileme Projesi olduğu gözlenmektedir. Bu proje, yerel yönetimler tarafından yürütülen diğer yenileme projelerinden farklı olarak mekanın tarihsel özelliklerinin korunmasını, mahalle kültürünü yenilenerek yaşatılmasını, ve sanatsal faaliyetlerin desteklenmesini önüne koyarak mahalle canlandırma projesi olarak tasarlanmıştır. Öte yandan mahallede artan sanatçı nüfusu ve özellikle yabancı öğrencilerin yerleşmesi ile mahallenin mekansal organizasyonunda değişiklikler gözlenmeye başlanmıştır. Ancak bu değişiklikleri önce Kadıköy, sonrasında ise İstanbul'un diğer alanlarında süregiden değişikliklerden ayrı değerlendirmek mümkün görülmemektedir. Özellikle Taksim ve İstiklal Caddesi civarında yaşanan değişim ve dönüşüm, Gezi Parkı direnişi ve bu direnişten sonra ortaya çıkan sosyal ve siyasi atmosferin Yeldeğirmeni'nde yaşanan dönüşümde de etkili olduğu görülmektedir. Buradan hareketle, farklı dinamiklere sahip bu alanın çalışılmasının İstanbul'in tarihi alanlarında yaşanan dönüşümün daha iyi anlaşılmasını sağlayacağı iddia edilmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Soylulaştırma, Yeni Kültürel Orta Sınıf, Kültürel Dönüşüm, Yeldeğirmeni

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Abbreviations

AKP: Justice and Development Party

DKSC: Don Kişot Social Center

RFBDP: Rehabilitation of Fener and Balat Districts Programme

TAK: Design Atelier Kadıköy

YNRP: Yeldeğirmeni Neighborhood Renewal Project

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CHAPTER 1

The Aim of the Study and the Methodology

1.1. Research Rationale and Research Questions

One of the oldest neighborhoods of Kadıköy district in Istanbul, Rasimpasa neighborhood, also widely known as Yeldeğirmeni, has been in a rapid transformation process since 2010. Unlike other current renewal processes taking place in the historical neighborhoods of Istanbul, which are mainly aimed to (partly) demolish and reconstruct the existing built-environment, in order to change the social and economic structures of these areas, by using the power of the State (Kuyucu and Unsal 2010; Sakızlıoğlu 2014; Türkün 2014; Türkmen 2014), the transformation in Yeldeğirmeni prioritizes the existing cultural structure of the neighborhood. This differentiates it from the other renewal projects, and makes it attractive to new cultural groups. This research aims to investigate the agents of this transformation process and what makes it different to other projects.

The historical, inner-city neighborhoods of Istanbul have been undergoing a transformation process since the 1990s. This transformation process can be defined as gentrification – the transformation of working-class residential areas, deprived places, or vacant areas of cities into middle-class residential, commercial areas (Lees et.al. 2008) – since the existing users of these places have been replaced with wealthier, middle class newcomers who have different use and production of space, and different spatial relations compared to the previous users. In some places, such as Cihangir, Galata, and Kuzguncuk, gentrification has been taking place through the direct involvement of the middle classes in reshaping the social, cultural and economic structure of the locality. In some places, especially in recent cases such as Tarlabası, Süleymaniye, and Sulukule, intervention by the State, via the urban renewal project, became the means by which a new property

market was formed and gentrification processes undertaken in historical areas (Kuyucu and Unsal 2010). These two diverse gentrification processes are developed differently to each other since the processes are conducted by different actors and by different means. Although the general consequence of the processes are similar to each other, which is the eviction of the existing users of the place with wealthier new comers, and the organization of space according to the demands of the new comers, the progress and the process of gentrification is varied due to the dynamics of the each place, and due to the actors involved in the processes. From this perspective, it can be argued that, in investigating spatial transformation in inner city areas through a potential gentrification process, a more comprehensive study should be made to figure out the factors and forces that trigger transformation processes.

Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood, located in the Anatolian side of Istanbul, in the popular old district Kadıköy, has been undergoing a transformation which has peaked in the recent years. The transformation in Yeldeğirmeni has some peculiar features that differentiate it from other transformation processes in historical areas of Istanbul. The project of the municipality to revitalize the socio-spatial relations in the neighborhood, and later the arrival of the new, young, middle class residents who introduced an alternative culture to the neighborhood, are the main factors observed in the transformation of Yeldeğirmeni. Understanding the impact of these factors, which are embodied with high cultural capital but low economic capital (Bourdieu 1984), would bring another dimension to the discussions on the transformation of socio-spatial relations and gentrification in Istanbul. Besides, it shelters important answers to the discussions about the impact of cultural activities and cultural class on the course of gentrification in Istanbul neighborhoods.

The progress of transformation in Yeldeğirmeni has yet to be investigated. This thesis aims to identify the cultural and economic transformation process in the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood and the agents of this process by looking at the main dynamics of the macro-level changes – the new cultural class – and micro-level

manifestations – the neighborhood change. In this regard, the main research question is grounded on the investigation of the dynamics triggering the cultural and social transformation of Yeldeğirmeni. The research questions of the thesis are as follows:

- What are the distinctive elements of the transformation in the Yeldeğirmeni area which differentiates the progress of the transformation from other historical neighborhoods of Istanbul?
- What is the impact of culture and the new cultural class in the transformation of Yeldeğirmeni? Can this cultural transformation process be defined as a gentrification case?
- Who are the new comers to the neighborhood and why did they chose this area to live? How did the new comers and visitors affect the spatial and social organization of the neighborhood?

In dealing with these questions, I will analyze the ongoing process in the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood by examining the new population and the dynamics of transformation generated by cultural formations in Yeldeğirmeni.

1.2. Research Framework

To answer the research questions, I will address discussions on gentrification, the impact of cultural strategies, and the new cultural middle class, in the transformation of neighborhoods.

The increasing popularity of this central, old, historic neighborhood can be explained by the scope of recent urbanization trends, new urban development and increasing value of urban land, and the transformation of the inner city neighborhoods. Cities all around the world have been undergoing a massive transformation that changes the urban social, spatial and economic relations as it

has been known. In fact, it could be argued that the current urbanization process, which cause massive changes in the cities, is a milestone in the history of urbanization. In this process, cities are becoming much more alike each other (Lovering 2007). While the silhouettes of megacities are increasingly occupied by skyscrapers, the spatial configuration of cities and the functions that they provide to the ‘world citizens’ become much more similar despite the differentiated cultures of cities in different geographies. Gated communities, giant shopping malls, regenerations projects, gentrification, and displacement of urban poor and working class from their livelihoods are common stories and patterns of development that one can come across in megacities all around the world (Lovering 2007; Harvey 2008).

In this scenario, the long-term abandoned and neglected inner-city, historical areas, where mostly urban poor, working-class and low income groups have been living, have become popular once again. Gentrification of these areas is one of the most widely discussed topics in urban studies over the last three decades (Ley 1996; Butler 1997; Zukin 2010). Gentrification processes take different forms in different cities, and are even differentiated in different neighborhoods of the same city. However, what is similar in these gentrification processes is an emerging new image for historical settlements based on culture, art, neighborhood relations and a “boutique lifestyles to fulfill urban dreams” (Harvey 2008:32; Lees et al. 2008; Zukin 2010).

As an effect of suburbanization in the industrial cities, central city areas have lost their attractiveness for residents and for business (Zukin 2010). The changing economic structure of post industrial cities also affected their spatial organization. City centers began to be attractive for some groups; yet, the image of the inner city neighborhoods needed to be developed and promoted in order to attract many others who could transform these areas. According to Zukin (2010), cultural strategies began to be proposed for overcoming the image crisis of the cities, and inner city were chosen to implement this strategy. Cities would target investors

and visitors i.e. people with money, by rebuilding the center and making them look as attractive as suburbs (Zukin 2010:5).

These processes have made the urban space an attractive place for entrepreneurs engaging in new inventions, and new style of cultural practices, who create new communities around themselves. On the other side, the world in which the neoliberal ethic of intense possessive individualism, and its cognate of political withdrawal from collective forms of action (Harvey 2008:7) makes people living in cities detach them from each other. A new urban culture, which promotes individuality but at the same time creates its own cultural values, was born. As a subculture of this general trend, a new, young, middle class group emerged who have different values and lifestyle.

The impact of the new cultural middle class on gentrification is remarkable. The new cultural middle class is framed as a group of young middle class urbanites, who are educated, work in white collar positions, and have high cultural capital but low economic capital (Bourdieu 1984). They are different from traditional middle classes as they have different cultural values, are more liberal, and have more bohemian lifestyles (Sen 2007). City centers and historical neighborhoods became attractive for this new middle-class group as inner-city areas would separate them from traditional middle-class lifestyles and values, and allow them to build their own space representing their own culture. In that sense, although this middle class is assumed high in cultural capital but low in economic capital, they have had an impact on the transformation of socio-economic relations in inner-city neighborhoods, in which mostly low-income groups work.

The transformation process in the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood will be investigated in this framework, and the impact of culture and the new middle class in the neighborhood will be examined. It should be noted here that there is a long discussion in the literature about gentrification in the cities of developed countries, compared to the short history of gentrification that occurs in the cities of developing countries (Islam and Behar 2006; Ergun 2006). Hence, studies of

gentrification processes in the cities of developing countries are fairly recent and have developed by borrowing the conceptual framework of existing literature based on experiences in Western cities. Thus, it is important to investigate the dynamics of (possible) gentrification processes taking place in the cities of developing countries in order to develop literature on this topic.

In order to establish a framework to analyze transformation in Yeldeğirmeni, I will discuss theories of gentrification that creates social, cultural and economic transformation in urban areas as a result of new cultural and economic targets that cities have adopted. I will discuss gentrification as a process that restructures both the city and neighborhoods in relation to city politics and the mobility of the new cultural middle class. Then, I will investigate spatial transformation in the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood according to the conceptual framework of gentrification studies focusing on the new middle class and cultural transformation in order to answer the research questions.

1.3. Methodology of the research

This research is based on qualitative research methodology, which provides an exploratory attempt to capture an in-depth understanding of the process and developments that have taken place in the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood. The research area mainly covers the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood, but at the beginning of the research I also conducted participant observation and several interviews in another neighborhood, Caferağa, which is the central entertainment and cultural area in Kadıköy. The Caferağa neighborhood is important for this research since this neighborhood is the main location for the new cultural class I am investigating in this research.

The Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood was chosen as the case study for this research because of its unique transformation process due to several dynamics and factors around which the neighborhood is developing. Firstly, the neighborhood is a

potential gentrification area because of its central location and cheap accommodation facilities. In recent years, several urban and transportation projects increased the land value of the Kadıköy; however, Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood is still one of the most favorable residence areas for students in Kadıköy. In addition, the area attracted the attention of student coming to the city by means of the Erasmus program, i.e. foreign students, who look for a suitable residential area to observe local culture. Since it is a cheap and old historical neighborhood, Yeldeğirmeni has also attracted the attention of art producers. In these respects, the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood is a favorable location for several groups. In addition to these attractive features of the place, a renewal project has taken place in Yeldeğirmeni between 2010 and 2013, which improved the physical quality of the neighborhood, and caused an increase in cultural facilities thanks to the artistic and cultural activities of the renewal project.

The Yeldeğirmeni Neighborhood Renewal Project prioritized existing neighborhood culture and local identities in the process of renewal and vitalization activities. In other words, the prominence of culture and the historical importance of the neighborhood have been given attention in these years. This process has gone further in Yeldeğirmeni after the Gezi Park uprising, which caused a remarkable transformation in the social and political culture of Turkey. The first social and cultural center that was occupied by squatters in Turkey, Don Kişot (Don Quixote) Social Center, opened its doors in Yeldeğirmeni in the summer of 2013. The emergence of the Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity group and the opening of the Don Kişot Social Center (DKSC) generated an alternative social and cultural space in the neighborhood. The basic arguments of the Gezi Park movement, such as protection of commons and history, and maintaining the idea of solidarity became prominent in the production of space and spatial relations in Yeldeğirmeni. Hence, the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood became more attractive for the people who look for alternative ways of living and working, along with the people who are in search of a central, local, and cheap place for settlement. The close ties between the new cultural groups of the Yeldeğirmeni area with the

political movement that emerged in the Gezi Park uprising distinguish the transformation of Yeldeğirmeni from other gentrified areas in Istanbul.

Thanks to the development in the neighborhood, in the recent years, a remarkable social and cultural change, which also affects the local economic structure, has been observed. A new cultural group began to emerge, which then became influential in the production of public space. The establishment of the DKSC accelerated this process. Through activities organized in the DKSC, alternative ways of life have been both discussed and were put into practice in the neighborhood by this new cultural group. Eventually, the number of cafes and art ateliers serving to the members of the new cultural group, with their distinct concepts and services, has increased. Hence, not only the cultural space of the neighborhood but also local economic facilities began to change, with the daily activities of the new cultural middle class group. Following this process, the rents of flats and stores have increased. Putting all these observations and factors together, the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood provides a valuable ground to examine the impacts of the new cultural middle class on the cultural transformation of public space.

The actual research began with a literature review of theoretical conceptualizations of gentrification, and of the cultural strategies that are followed by local governments and the new middle class. The literature review enabled concepts to be clarified, and for themes and issues to be identified. Those concepts were employed to frame data collection and analyses, the selection of the interviewees, preparation of the interview themes, and qualitative data collection techniques.

My own experience as a resident of the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood also contributed to formation and design of the research to a great extent. I lived in the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood from 2010 to 2012 and had the chance to observe the changes from first hand. As an inhabitant of the neighborhood for two years, I observed the emergence of the new cultural group which embraced their living

space during the process of Gezi Park events. Thus, this research is also based on my desire to understand the changes that I observed closely. In this respect, I first got involved in the research process of the thesis through my experiences in the neighborhood. I participated in activities carried out within the scope of the renewal project and also by the DKSC. As part of this process, I undertook participant observation in the neighborhood.

After the research design became clearer, I started the field work with exploratory visits to the neighborhood in January 2015, which was followed by interviews conducted mainly in the period between March and early June in 2015. In order to figure out the social and spatial dynamics of the case study area, I carried out interviews with actors of the process and observations in the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood, as well as in all of central Kadıköy. Additionally, social media accounts of Caferağa and Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood groups were followed to figure out the views of the inhabitants of these neighborhoods. The print media, such as Gazete Kadıköy, and the internet media were also followed in order to get information about actual news about the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood.

The qualitative data collection techniques of the thesis are mainly based on in depth semi-structured interviews, participant observations and informal conversations. The interviews were conducted mainly with three different groups of actors involved in different aspects and stages of the process:

- The officials: The manager of the Yeldeğirmeni Neighborhood Renewal Project (1), the architect from Design Atelier Kadıköy (1), the head of the Rasimpaşa Voluntary Center (1).
- Yeldeğirmeni locals: Old inhabitants of the neighborhood (2), new inhabitants of the neighborhood (2), foreign students (3).
- The working places: Café owners (2), real estate agents (3), art ateliers (3).

Table 1.3.1: The profile of Yeldeğirmeni residents

	Age	Gender	The Working area	How long they have lived in Yeldeğirmeni
Old inhabitants	45-55	Male- Female	Real estate agent- retired	15-8 years
New inhabitants	24-26	Female-Male	Designer-theater player	2-4 years
Foreign students	23-24-22	Female- Male- Female	Art-management-business administration	5-5-3.5 months

Table 1.3.2: The profile of the owners of working places

	Age	Gender	Occupation	How long they have working place in Yeldeğirmeni
Real estate agents	42-46-57	Male- Female- Male	-	10-8-5 years
Café owners	36-55	Male- Male	Painter-advertiser	7 months- 2 years
Art ateliers	26-28-49	Female- Male- Male	Painter-designer-sculptor	1-7-10 years

Firstly I interviewed officials who provided basic information about the transformation process and also the impact of their local organizations on Yeldeğirmeni. I then conducted several interviews in the neighborhood with the

residents. Since I did exploratory visits to Yeldeğirmeni at the beginning of the research, I had contacted some of these interviewees previously. My network of friends and other contacts also provided me with access to inhabitants of the neighborhood. The initial interviews with officials, and the interviews in the neighborhood helped me to categorize interviews for analysis and to formulate further stages of the field research.

Before the interviews, I had some pre-formulated open-ended questions to be asked to these different groups of respondents, which were based on the themes, and issues raised in the literature review, and shaped according to the relation of respondents to the neighborhood. Additionally, during the interviews I recognized and discovered some more questions to be asked based on interaction with the interviewees, and the new themes and issues that they addressed. The basic questions I asked to Yeldeğirmeni locals and the owner of the businesses and art ateliers are:

- When did you move to Yeldeğirmeni?
- What were your reasons to choose Yeldeğirmeni for living/working?
- What is your observation about the cultural atmosphere of the neighborhood? Did you see any difference between before and now?

I also asked several other questions formulated according to their relations with the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood. These main questions provided a basic structure for the field study and also enabled me to develop more detailed interviews. I also interviewed three inhabitants of the Caferağa neighborhood in the first stages of the research in order to take a general view about Kadıköy. For this purpose, I utilized from the social media accounts of the neighborhood by asking members of *34710 Sakinleri* Facebook group to describe life in Kadıköy and to define the change/transformation in Kadıköy if they observed such a thing. In this respect I interviewed two female and one male residents whose ages are between the ranges of 28-32 and they have lived in the Caferağa neighborhood for more than 15 years.

As I designed the sample of the case study, I tried to choose one female and male in all categories. In addition to this I categorized old inhabitants as ones who have lived in the neighborhood for more than 4 years, and new inhabitants as ones who have lived in the neighborhood for less than 3 years, in order to make a comparative analysis of the actual situation in the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood. During the case study I interviewed 21 people in total. I analyzed the interviews according to the highlighted points in the answers to the questions by each interviewee.

1.4. Structure of the thesis

Following this introduction chapter, the literature review of the thesis will be presented. Since the thesis aims to study the cultural transformation of the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood through discussions of gentrification, the second chapter will, first, analyze theories on gentrification. Secondly, the relation of the new middle class and art with gentrification will be discussed by using debates about cultural explanations of gentrification. Lastly, gentrification cases in Istanbul will be examined in different locations and time periods.

In the third chapter, the historical background of the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood and the current conditions which have impact on the spatial and cultural development of the Yeldedeğirmeni neighborhood, will be presented. In the fourth chapter, the main dynamics of cultural transformation process of the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood will be investigated and the case study findings will be examined. The Yeldeğirmeni Neighborhood Renewal Project, Design Atelier Kadıköy, Don Kişot Social Center and the new cultural class of the neighborhood will each be examined. The last chapter of the research includes analysis of the research and a conclusion drawn from the case study findings.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Today, one of the crucial aspects of the urbanization dynamics, especially in metropolitan cities, is conceptualized as gentrification. Gentrification is a discursive issue which has been investigated from various aspects in the literature. Before moving on to the discussions in gentrification literature and how the concept is determined as a defining element of the current urbanization process, giving a brief summary of contemporary urbanization dynamics that establish the meaning of gentrification and the ways in which the gentrification occurs, it would be useful to understand the wider context that gentrification is formed within.

The decline of the industrial capitalist economies with increasing deindustrialization, and globalization around the world, turned the focus of economic policies to the value of urban land and the property market especially in the growing cities. The falling rates of industrial profits and restructuring of spatial organization in urban space directed central governments to market oriented restructuring projects to revalue deindustrialized urban land. From 1980s onwards, in the developed, advanced capitalist service economy, flexible capital accumulation regime and labor market, high tech industries have replaced heavy industrial production regimes and determined the dynamics of economic development; whereas the developing countries became the locations of mass production thanks to their cheap labor force and developing logistic systems.

As urban space has become the new field of economic development and a means of investment in a new economic, reproduction of urban space (Lefebvre 1991) to increase the exchange value of urban land developed the notion of ‘capital accumulation’ over cities. The changing dimensions in the capital accumulation process and production patterns have undoubtedly reshaped social and cultural

structures in cities. These significant changes in economic, social as well as cultural and political structures had fundamental impacts on the production and organization of space, and urban politics. Furthermore, other processes shaped local governments' policies to adapt their structure to the new economic system which takes urban land to a central position as an investment for capital accumulation. According to Smith (2002), *new urbanism politics* is one of these, as a parallel process of 'refashioned globalism' in a way that is reshaping social processes and relations in the urban context. In other words, new urbanism changed the urban forms, representations, functions and governing practices of their peculiar forms.

New urban politics arose in the 1980s in the United States but it flourished mainly in the 1990s across the world. In this process, which Harvey describes as urban entrepreneurialism (1989), the city governments became more actively involved in providing the conditions for economic growth, adopting market oriented policies to attract investments to compete with other cities (Harvey 1989; Hall and Hubbard 1998). Urban entrepreneurialism "rests... on a public-private partnership focusing on investment and economic development with the speculative construction of place rather than amelioration of conditions within a particular territory as its immediate political and economic goal" (Harvey 1989: 8). According to Hall and Hubbard (1998) this is not a reaction to global forces, but it is 'a trigger to new forms of competitive capitalism'. In this competitive atmosphere city governments pursue strategies to attract tourists and affluent residents into the city, such as offering qualified entertainment and leisure places as well as living conditions (Harvey 1989).

Following the urban entrepreneurialism and the trends in urbanization to increase the value of urban land and create a competitive land and property market, urban renewal and development projects came to the agenda to transform the existing built environment as well as the social and economic structures of cities. In the course of these transformation projects, cultural, visual and aesthetic values of

cities began to be redefined to create a 'new' city image and restructure the meaning of places.

The suburbanization and deindustrialization in many developed cities which once grounded their economies on industrial production cycles, caused deprivation of inner city centres and poverty due to the flow of capital to the periphery of the cities and job losses in many sectors. Zukin (2010) argues that in order to get back the tax income of local governments and tackle deprivation in the inner city areas, redevelopment/renewal or revitalization projects became the main political strategic to tackle deprivation. These projects promoted the *cultures of the cities*, an urban lifestyle for the *imagined urban* future along entrepreneurial lines, 'which helped to turn cities from *landscape of production* into *landscapes of consumption*' (Zukin 1998: 825). One of the underlined features of these projects aiming at the revitalization of city centres by promoting the cultural industries was to emphasize the diversity of urban social and cultural landscape; however – as Zukin (1998) discusses in her 'disneyification' thesis – they are, in fact, a part of the homogenization process of public culture. Following these patterns, local governments enhanced the cultural hegemony of the middle and upper classes in the social life in cities (Zukin 1995). Gentrification became one of the inevitable consequences of this whole process of restructuring the inner city areas and the new economic strategy followed by local governments.

In this respect, in the following section, the theories on gentrification which creates social, cultural and economic transformation in urban areas as a result of new cultural and economic targets adopted by cities are discussed. Particularly, gentrification as a process that restructures both the city and neighborhoods in relation to the city politics and movements of the new cultural middle class in the city are considered to form a conceptual background for this research.

2.1. Theories on gentrification

Gentrification is a term used to define both spatial and social restructuring of an urban space in several ways. The term arose from the power of the English aristocracy of the 19th century to shape the spatial and social organization of places. Ruth Glass first introduced contemporary use of the term in 1964 to explain the urban transformation in London during the 1960s. The tremendous physical and social change that she was observing in the working class quarters of the city was in a way an invasion by the middle and upper classes. Glass expresses the process of ‘gentrification’ as “it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working-class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed” (Glass 1964). In other words, middle classes renovate the housing stock occupied by working classes and change the whole atmosphere of the space economically, socially and culturally. This can, however, be regarded as a limiting definition for investigating the relations between the social classes in general, and neighborhood changes in particular (Ley 1996:34). Although ‘classed nature of neighborhood change’ is a common term in the literature, the nature of gentrification has been also discussed from culturally and economically different perspectives by scholars.

Among the cultural and economic approaches to changes at the neighborhood level, the ‘rent gap theory’ which was developed by Neil Smith in the late 1980s (Smith 1979, 1986, 1987) is a prominent one that defines the political-economy of the gentrification process. According to this theory, gentrification is one way of closing the rent gap between actual and potential value of the inner urban land. The inner urban lands which have been abandoned due to suburbanization and industrialization are perceived by investors and developers as profitable, undervalued areas having potential for increasing land value. In this upgrading process, gentrification emerges as a way of utilizing the rent gap for making profit from the space.

Neil Smith's theory is based on the economic approach and interests of capital in gentrification process. Partly critical to this approach to gentrification process, cultural approach claims that along with the supply or the productions side, the consumption or demand side should be considered. The explanations of gentrification focusing on cultural issues claims that "middle classes move in on working-class districts following a logic of free choice and where these gentrifiers' actions are explained by their values" (Ley 1986, Butler 1997). In contrast to the production side explanation, they argue the prominence of gentrifiers and their cultural preferences in the gentrification process. These explanations focus on occupational, demographic and cultural changes that trigger the demand of the middle class urbanites for inner city neighborhoods. The theorists suggest that "housing stock, economics and state policies influence gentrification, but that gentrification would not occur without gentrifiers who wish to participate in the process" (Ley 1986, cited by Brown-Saranico 2010: 65).

David Ley argues that gentrification is closely related to the tastes of the expanding 'new middle class' – professionals in the media, higher education, the design and caring professions, especially those working in the state or non-profit rather than the commercial sector – that he also refers to as the 'new cultural class' (Ley 1996:15). According to Ley although the new cultural class has enough economic capital to live in suburbs, "the aesthetic appropriation of inner urban place appeals to other professionals, particularly to those who are also higher in cultural capital than in economic capital, and who share something of the artist's antipathy towards commerce and convention" (Ley 2003:2540). In this respect, Ley points out the factors that affect middle class attraction to the city centre from a cultural perspective. Butler (2007) also suggests a cultural reading of the gentrification process. In her study in which she investigates the local social relations in London working class areas, she claims that gentrification should be taken as a place-specific issue because it refers to changing relationships between people and where they live.

It is a question that if the economic or cultural aspects of gentrification processes superior to one another, or how to bring them together in the analysis process. In her seminal works, Sharon Zukin emphasizes the importance of both culture and capital in gentrification processes. Zukin (1982) claims that in the current tendencies of the growth culture, urban politics is shaped to attract business and particularly finance capital to invest. With the collaborative efforts of government agencies, capital and new middle classes, culture became an agent used in redevelopment and making cities attractive. Zukin mentions that the middle class is reaffirmed as cultural producers in this process and gentrification is the spatial manifestation of the new middle class culture in the old city. Besides, gentrification as a 'spatial redevelopment' also became a part of the growth politics. Zukin (1982) observed in her seminal work about the process of gentrification in London Soho that changes occurred due to the cultural capital of artists and the importance of authenticity as a tool of cultural power beside the economic power of the middle class.

In the same vein, Cameron (2003) takes the gentrification issue into account from both cultural and economic perspectives but he also points out that gentrification can be used as a positive public policy tool in the purpose of 'rebalancing the population of disadvantaged and stigmatized neighborhoods'. According to Cameron's study in Newcastle city in the UK (2003) positive gentrification is implemented in a way to generate neighborhood revitalization while attempting to reduce segregation and foster inclusion. From this point of view, the collaborative study of Cameron and Coaffee (2005) indicates that local governments and other public agencies use public art and cultural facilities as promoters of regeneration and associated gentrification which benefits existing residents as well as new comers. In the following parts, in the light of these discussions, I will mainly focus on the relation of the new middle class and art with gentrification.

2.1.1. The new middle class and gentrification

The production side explanation of gentrification is mainly based on the role of gentrifiers and their cultural preferences in the process of gentrification of neighborhoods. From this cultural perspective, gentrification is discussed in terms of the demand of the new middle class which prioritizes their life style. Regarding this, it is important to discuss who the gentrifiers are, and what their basic motivations are which are influential on the transformation of an urban space. On this topic, both Ley (1996) and Butler (1997) examine the new middle class as a powerful transforming social group in changing socio-economic structure in the present gentrification processes. In order to define the impact of the new middle class on the process of gentrification, it is important to understand what the new middle class means and in which context they emerge.

The structural and cultural alterations in the middle class emerged with the deindustrialization in the 1960s in the advanced capitalist societies. With the decline of manufacturing industry and the growth and spread of non-manual, post-industrial employment, there have been large changes in household structures and patterns of economic activity (Butler 2007:163). The creation of a society in which middle classes working in non-manual service employments was an aim and also a result of the new economic order (Butler 2007).

In the new development scheme, city centers were the place of the financial, cultural and service industries which made (upper) middle classes move to suburbs in the first place. However, the newly emerging, young, educated middle classes who desire to separate themselves from traditional middle class culture began to settle in the city centers which then caused the gentrification process in inner city areas, especially historical areas, which once had been abandoned by the middle classes (Butler 1997, Zukin 2010).

The new middle class can be defined as a relatively young group of people whose education level is high, know foreign language/s and work in high income jobs and live in the cities. They have similar features with the petite-bourgeois as a

social class but they also adopt the bohemian culture of the 1960s (Ley 1994, Şen 2007, Zukin 2010). However, they have more liberal attitudes in contrast to the bohemian understanding. Şen (2007) claims that this new middle class has different values and living style to traditional middle class, hence is culturally different; but from an economic perspective, they have a similar position in the overall economic structure; thus, the new middle class can be interpreted as new culturally, or in other words, this ‘new’ class is a new cultural layer of the middle classes.

Before moving to the causal relation between gentrification and the new middle class, it is worth highlighting some other explanations about the changing nature of middle class culture to understand the (possible) impact of these changes. One of the prominent explanations about the new middle class culture belongs to David Brooks (2000) who claims that from the 1990s onwards, a new cultural class emerged in the cities, called *bourgeois bohemians*, in short *Bobos*. In the old schema, the bohemians championed the values of the radical 1960s but at the same time the bourgeois values of the entrepreneur yuppies of the 1980s (Brooks 2000:10). He observed that the bohemian and bourgeois cultures were all mixed up in America after the 1980s. This new class, what he calls Bobos, is a combination of “the countercultural sixties and the achieving eighties into one social ethos” (Brooks 2000:10-11):

In this era ideas and knowledge are at least as vital to economic success as natural resources and financial capital. The intangible world of information merges with the material world of money...So the people who thrive in this period are the ones who can turn ideas and emotions into products. These are highly educated folk who have one foot in the bohemian world of creativity and another foot in the bourgeois realm of ambition and worldly success. The members of the new information age elite are bourgeois bohemians. Or to take the first two letters of each word, they are Bobos.

The significant difference between bobos and traditional bourgeois depends on the choice of living style. Bobos do not prefer to settle into desolate, newly constructed places where the traditional middle class, or bourgeois lives. Bobos

prefer artistic, authentic, spiritual, ethnically diverse places to settle. In other words they desire to be *distinctive* in their place of living as well as their life style (Brooks 2000). Hence, they both lead to transformation and also reconstruct their identities in the urban space where they choose to settle. It is important to emphasize the point that the significant feature of this new socio-cultural group is *distinctiveness* in both their living spaces and life style.

In explaining the differences between the new middle class and traditional middle class, Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) social space diagrams can be referenced to show the fractions within the middle classes. In this diagram, polar opposites within the middle class are frequently provided by commercial entrepreneurs and industrialists on the one hand and cultural producers on the other. These two opposites within the same class structure are weighted with two types of capital: cultural or economic capital. These two opposite sides are located in social space in accordance with the volume of capital or nature of that capital (whether cultural or economic capital). However, Bourdieu also defines partly overlapping social groups between the opposites, which move along a continuum of selected occupations with distinctive associated lifestyle clusters, from artistic producers, who have high cultural capital and low economic capital, to others.

In the gentrification process, Ley argues that the "establishment of an urbane habitus drew its identity from a perspective rich in cultural capital but (initially) weak in economic capital" (Ley 2003:2536). He argues that as a group of professionals employed in the arts, media, social services, education, social sciences, and public and non-profit sectors, the cultural new class is 'frequently associated with the resettlement by the middle class of older inner-city districts, a process which has been given the generic label of gentrification (Ley 1994:53). According to his study in the districts of Canada-Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal being gentrified, Ley observes that these occupational categories are intensified in central city neighborhoods in contrast with the suburbs. The artists and aestheticisation of places as a process contributes to gentrification in these districts but also transforms the political culture of the districts. These groups

define themselves in the inner city areas with their *distinctive* cultural and political preferences (Ley 1994). In this regard, Ley argues the relationship between place and identity is mutual, reinforcing each other. This relationship is also crucial to understand the reasons for the changing locations of different classes across the city (Butler 2007).

Butler (2007) argues that gentrification takes place because of the changing socio-cultural behavior of the middle class at a local level. Hence, in order to understand “how *class places* are changing-of, how places that were once viewed as unsuitable become highly desired whether they are in the inner city, urbanizing suburbs...or deep countryside” (Butler 2007:177). In order to understand the changing patterns of the places, Butler tries to identify, describe and understand the changing relationships between people and places in a range of settings across the world (Butler 2007: 164). For this purpose, he develops an approach based on the conceptual framework of Bourdieu and borrows the concepts ‘field’ and ‘habitus’.

In his works, Butler concludes that place became an important issue in defining one’s identity, in the new middle class culture. He connects the role of an individual's occupational background and the place in the construction of identity:

As occupation has receded as the primary determinant of cultural preference, where you live has become an increasingly important source of identity construction for individuals. The process is, if anything, more extreme, as a greater spread of people feel obliged to express who they are by where they live and with whom they share their neighborhood” (Butler 2007:163).

Butler argues that, based on the notion of ‘elective belonging’, people seek out a specific habitus¹ by choosing a place in which to live through a differential deployment of cultural, economic, and social capital (Butler 2007:171). The

¹ It is a concept that Bourdieu developed: “It is in the relationship between the two capacities which define the habitus, the capacity to produce classifiable practices and works, and the capacity to differentiate and appreciate these practices and products (taste), that the represented social world, i.e., the space of life-style, is constituted...The habitus is necessity internalized and converted into a disposition that generates meaningful practices and meaning-giving perceptions” (Bourdieu 1984:170).

“sense of wanting to ‘flock’ with people like themselves” (Butler 2007: 171) is a basic pattern of a gentrification process in constructing their habitus in the field. The position of each particular agent in the field is a result of interaction between the specific rules of the field, agent's habitus and agent's capital (social, economic and cultural).

From a similar perspective, Savage et al. (2005) contributes to the argument of Butler. Savage et al. (2005) point out that as societies become more complex and mobile, individuals become more privatized and that globalization is leading to greater social differentiation. The need for individual belonging somewhere becomes more essential for these people. Savage et al. argues that “people are comfortable when there is a correspondence between habitus and field, but otherwise people feel ill at ease and seek to move – socially and spatially – so that their discomfort is relieved” (2005:9).

These new forms of middle class which are ‘globally connected yet locally identified’ super-professionals are engaging in new forms of gentrification which Butler expresses as ‘class clustering’ because of the prominence of ‘choice’ instead of ‘force’ (Butler 2007:177). In the field study in London’s gentrified neighborhoods, Butler (1997) observes that the new comers' choice of neighborhoods is based on the authenticity, social mix and central location of the space in addition to social (friends in the area) and economic reasons (the relatively low cost housing) rather than with an aim of causing a change in the habitus of the existing residents.

2.1.2. Art and gentrification

As we see in the previous part, the new middle class identifies and constructs their self-image with freedom from middle class convention and the vitality of inner city districts. This identification process is explained in relation with the artistic and bohemian lifestyle by the scholars (Zukin 2010; Ley 1994).

The references to ‘cultural’ rather than ‘economic’ capital point to another aspect of the appeal of disinvested inner city neighborhoods to the artist – the availability of low-cost accommodation for living and working (Cameron 2005:41). The aestheticization of the space by art and artistic facilities leads to gentrification of the neighborhoods because capital follows artistic and cultural facilities and enters the field. In this part, I will discuss the role and impacts of both artists and entrepreneurs, including the new middle class, in the gentrification process.

Zukin (2010) points out the emerging desire for an authentic urban experience in relation with the people following cultural patterns of the 1960s and gentrification. Zukin also defines these groups as Bobos in a sense that they prefer to live their authentic self as a state of nature by “abandoning the false lifestyle of modern society and form a commune which also offers physical consolation to social groups who have neither wealth nor power” (Zukin 2010:21). The emphasis here is again on the distinctive way of life. Zukin’s (1982) research on the gentrification in Soho, Manhattan shows that the concentration of artists confirmed the distinctive appeal of these areas and the emphasis on otherness of the areas against the enforced homogeneity of both the suburbs and the corporate centers of cities (Zukin 2010: 16). Hence, ethnically diverse, identifiably local and intensively cool neighborhoods attracted these people in order to connect with both the history of the place and their self.

Zukin discusses the concept of authenticity in terms of experience. She argues that “the concept [authenticity] migrated from a quality of people to a quality of things and most recently to a quality of experience” (Zukin 2010:3) as a result of both seeking an authentic self and becoming a cultural ‘tool of power’ of the urban governments as an ‘urban experience’. As a cultural and economic strategy, urban governments created authentic cities, urban villages, by “preserving historic buildings and districts, encouraging the development of small-scale boutiques and cafes, and branding neighborhoods in terms of distinctive cultural identities” (Zukin 2010:3). Zukin defines this understanding as a general process of the cities which had been deprived of the power of industry. It is a strategy of “production

of new urban territories, localities with a specific cultural product and character that can be marketed around the world, drawing tourists and investors and making the city safe, though not cheap, for the middle class” (Zukin 2010:4). In this sense, the places which are structured locally with their own dynamics turn into a bohemian alternative which the new middle class searches for.

In the pursuit of authenticity, real estate values rise and an upscale growth begins in the urban space (Zukin 2010). In other words the value of the neighborhood increases both economically and culturally. This process is called gentrification “because of the movement of rich, well-educated folks, the gentry, into lower-class neighborhoods, and the higher property values that follow them, transforming a ‘declining’ district into an expensive neighborhood with historic or hipster charm” (Zukin 2010:8). Some stores close and people change in the neighborhood in time because of the increasing rents and expenses in contrast with the past. Hence, different social and cultural practices emerge with the new comers and the following economic capital in the field.

The changing nature of the population attracts the new entrepreneurs who also represent the social and cultural background of new residents. The new entrepreneurs are also among the “same social mix of cultural, social and economic motivations” (Zukin 2010:9). It is seen as an economic opportunity for the entrepreneurs because of the increasing status, or the value, of the place and its opportunity to bring new tastes as a distinctive character of the population. In other words, these new entrepreneurs reproduce the authenticity in the space with both tastes and styles of their products. Hence, the process comes to the point that Butler emphasizes of people who desire to feel comfortable and socialize easily with others like themselves who move to the place and create their habitus. However, the long-term residents do not feel comfortable like the new comers in the process of reinvention of the urban because of cultural difference (Zukin 2010).

The same process can be seen in the study of Ley in Canada. Ley advocates the impact of the changing nature of consumption and life style on gentrification in relation with the cultural new class. From this point of view, he puts the cultural and aesthetic values of the ‘new middle class’ as the mainstay of the gentrification process (Ley 1996). According to Ley (1996:191), in such processes, the “urban artist is commonly the expeditionary force for the inner-city gentrifiers” and the “advancing or colonizing arm” of the middle classes. Urban artists, having less economic capital but high cultural capital also shape the urban space by generating different understandings of culture which emerges as an alternative scene. They also valorize the inner-city urban districts to a way of aestheticization. The economic valorization of the aesthetic brings followers who are richer in economic capital. Ley (1996: 2535) says:

The related but opposing tendencies of cultural and economic imaginaries reappear; spaces colonized by commerce or the state are spaces refused by the artist. But, as scholars know, this antipathy is not mutual; the surfeit of meaning in places frequented by artists becomes a valued resource for the entrepreneur.

Hence the gentrification cycle whereby gentrifiers with high cultural/low economic capital are replaced by those with high economic capital. The gentrification process Ley mentions also emerged as a result of a positive public policy tool for transformation of unpopular and stigmatized urban neighborhood. As can be seen in the study of Cameron and Coaffee (2005:64) in Gateshead, England, “both art and culture, and gentrification have been extensively used in public policy as instruments of physical and economic regeneration of declining cities, and the two are often associated in a relationship of mutual dependence”.

In this respect, art related projects are implemented in order to create positive impact on both the external image and self-image of the space in the process of regeneration. In the example of Gateshead, Cameron and Coaffee (2005:48) point out that “art was used in far more invisible ways as a means of environmental improvement and in stimulating social and community regeneration” in addition to the decorative art linked to the industrial heritage and traditional way of living

of the space. However, they argue that the positive approach to the regeneration process as a way of using art may result in private development in the long-term which is less distinctive in character. By creating external images, the space attracts relatively high income middle class population.

2.2. Gentrification in Istanbul

The 1980s were the start of a big transformation for Turkey, and so Istanbul. After the military coup of September 12th 1980, the country adopted the neoliberal economic model beginning to dominate the world economy, which brought a new developmentalist and transforming agenda to the political and economic arenas. Istanbul, as the most developed, industrial and biggest city of the country, became one of the hubs of the realization of the neoliberal economic model. The city has seen a big transformation in its social and economic lives and spatial organization. Because of its favored location and economic power, Istanbul entered the ‘global cities’ competition (Sassen 1991; Öktem 2005) in order to attract foreign capital and investment. One of the key issues in the restructuring of the city was to transform the existing economic organization and industrial structure of the city to an economy based on service sectors, flexible working conditions and advanced technological development. Like the other cities in the global cities competition, the service sector became one of the main economic interests of the city and a new group of middle class including professionals, managers or technicians emerged. The changing profile of the middle class also showed itself in the cultural life with the new consumption patterns, lifestyles and political affiliations (Keyder 1999). Moreover, the proliferation of new professional cohorts and the associated changes in the consumption and reproduction patterns since the 1980s have certainly contributed to the production of a pool of potential gentrifiers in Istanbul (İslam 2005:128).

All these changes in the economic and social life of the city found their representation in the spatial organization of the city. While skyscrapers began to

occupy the silhouette of the city, gated communities for the newly emerging upper middle class managerial workers, high-rise apartment blocks for the new middle class households mushroomed as the new residential areas in the city. Although in a later period than the old industrial cities of the developed countries, gentrification of the inner-city, historical, poor, working-class areas also began to be observed from the 1980s onwards in the city (Islam 2005).

The gentrification processes started in the dilapidated central areas of the city containing late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century housing stock (Islam 2005). Hosting the most marginalized and poor population of the city, these historical areas have been neglected for a long time and became dilapidated. Most of them were occupied by the non-Muslim, minority population of the city but then were abandoned due to various reasons² and political pressures on them following the 1940s (Keyder 1999). In the 1950s and following years, the rural population of Anatolia migrated to Istanbul during the rapid industrialization and urbanization process of the city and “some of them moved into these partly abandoned...neighborhoods, which led to the departure of the remaining minorities therein” (Islam 2005:126). However, due to the fact that this lower income rural population could not afford the reinvestment cost of their properties, these neighborhoods began to physically decline and devalorize in time. These old neighborhoods emerged as apt places for gentrification with their easily ‘displaceable’ occupants, inexpensive housing stock (Islam 2005:126) and their proximity to the city’s business centers (Ergun 2004).

Ayşe Öncü highlights another important point about the driving forces of gentrification and its beginning in the old neighborhoods. According to Öncü (1997:57) “the awareness of loss and disappearance of the political juncture of the

² The first major change in the livelihoods of the non-Muslim population was the population exchange agreement between Greece and Turkey in 1929 after the Lausanne Peace Treaty. The non-Muslim Greek citizens of Turkey and Muslim population of Greece were forced to leave their home countries due to this agreement and left their properties behind them in an ambiguous state. The second major event that changed the population dynamics of the historical areas is the indebtedment of non-muslim businessmen, which is also known as the ‘wealth tax’ applied in the 1940s and then the Cyprus conflict between Turkey and Greece which led to grievance against the non-Muslims in the country (Keyder 1999).

mid-1980s gave urgency to series renewal projects designed to re-create Istanbul's past glory in the present". The historical places came into prominence in this process in connection with their historical values and profusion of photogenic images, from advertisements to television media. Therefore Istanbul's middle classes have come to perceive the exotic beauty of the city's old neighborhoods, the romanticism of its indigenous wooden architecture, and the splendor of its historical monuments (Öncü 1997:56). It is also important that the multicultural neighborhoods symbolize being western for the upper class in their identity construction (Mert, quoted by Behar & Islam 2006: 173). Under these conditions gentrification by the movement of the high income groups had taken place in the old inner city neighborhoods of Istanbul.

The process of gentrification in Istanbul has taken place with different motives and in different locations. The first gentrification was observed in the 1980s in Kuzguncuk and Ortaköy, located on either side of the Bosphorus. The impact of cultural and art works have been more evident in the way of gentrification in these locations. In 1990s, Beyoğlu became the center of gentrification. As a central place of cultural activities and historical buildings Cihangir, Asmalımesit and Galata attracted several artists and culturally-economically affluent social groups. The transformation of the spaces mainly occurred through both the settlement of a new type of middle class in these areas and entrance of capital in relation with the changing dynamics of Taksim area in general. Since the beginning of 2000, gentrification has been also observed in the Istanbul Historical peninsula, which is mostly derived from state-led development projects. These three waves of gentrification (Islam 2005) indicate different transformation processes in the space. Since the Yeldeğirmeni case will also be examined as gentrification issue in this thesis, it is essential to understand how gentrification developed in Istanbul. In this regard, it is aimed to make a comparison between the Yeldeğirmeni case and other gentrified historical inner-city districts of Istanbul by identifying the motivations of gentrifiers and the gentrification process.

2.2.1. First-wave of gentrification

The first waves of gentrification are seen in the inner-city neighborhoods around the coasts of the Bosphorus, namely Kuzguncuk and Ortakoy. The transformation process began with the rehabilitation of old houses in these neighborhoods and resulted in the cultural and economic transformation of the space. However the gentrification process followed distinct paths in two neighborhoods.

Kuzguncuk was a middle class neighborhood near the Bosphorus. It was the first Jewish settlement area on the Anatolian side of Istanbul and was known as a Jewish village (Ergun 2004: 394). In time Greeks, Armenians, Turks also settled in Kuzguncuk. Gentrification began in Kuzguncuk with the arrival of a well known architect in the neighborhood in the late 1970s, who was followed by his architect and artist friends (Uzun 2001) and the renovation process began in the neighborhood. Because of the old houses dating back to the 18th-19th century, construction in the area is prohibited by law.³ Therefore, reconstruction of the buildings was not allowed but the restoration of the houses by newcomers changed the visual expression in the built environment and the cultural preferences of the newcomers and these changes were reflected in the use and articulation of space in the 1990s. The actors in the process shared a vocation to enhance the quality of life in pursuits that are not simply economic (Uzun 2001:168). Although no displacement of old residents occurred, the prices of land and property have increased in the process.

Ortaköy is another neighborhood gentrified during the 1980s. It is a residential area popular since the Ottoman times, set on one of the most beautiful points of the Bosphorus. During the Ottoman times, the summer houses of sultans were located in this area (Ergun 2004:394). The gentrification process in this area began with the opening of art galleries by artists. Later on, the properties with historical value and a sea view around the square were generally purchased by the

³ Bosphorus Development Law of 1983, which outlawed new construction along the Bosphorus that resulted in the renovation of the existing stock (Islam 2005).

higher-income group while others were used by artists. However, in Ortaköy, because of the efforts of the local municipality in the reorganization of the space “the area attracted bars, discotheques, cafés and other leisure activities in such an intense way that it disturbed the residential life and led to the departure of the gentrifiers who had settled there in the past few years” (Ergun 2004).

2.2.2. Second-wave of gentrification

In the late 1980s gentrification began in Beyoğlu neighborhoods, namely Cihangir, Asmalımescit and Galata. These neighborhoods have attracted cultural and economic elites with both its intense and embedded cultural and leisure activities, and because of being in the historic city center. In Cihangir, the gentrification process was mostly residential, whereas in Asmalımescit and Galata it was mostly commercial along with a relatively smaller amount of residential gentrification (Islam 2005). This process especially acquired a new momentum after the pedestrianization and reorganization of Istiklal Street in 1990 (Uzun 2001, Ergun 2004, Islam 2005).

Cihangir is one of the residential neighborhoods of Beyoğlu district changed in terms of its population. Before the 1950s, when Beyoğlu (which was known as Pera back in time) was an important financial, trade and entertainment district and the face of modern multicultural Istanbul; it also hosted doctors’ surgeries, clinics, luxurious apartments and bordellos (Ergun 2004:398). However, this very popular, modern area of Istanbul was drastically changed after the departure of the non-Muslim population. Then, as one of the residential areas in the district, Cihangir began to host low-income groups. Until the late 1980s, the area hosted marginalized groups, including LGBT households. The area began to be attractive again after the revitalization of Istiklal Street because of its central location and as a potential investment area. Gentrification started in the area in the 1990s which caused a population change gradually.

Cihangir became popular among artists, academics and writers in the 1990s on the heels of changes in Beyoğlu (Uzun 2001:108). The renovation process was started

in the neighborhood by the affluent class which settled there; but construction firms also began to take part in the property market of the neighborhood which then caused “the loss of important buildings with historic value as well as the loss of a sense of neighborhood culture” (Uzun 2001:110). The works of the construction firms in the neighborhood were criticized and opposed by the new residents of Cihangir. Against the actions of these firms in the neighborhood, the idea of collectivizing the renovation works instead of leaving it to individuals began to be discussed by the residents of the area. Then, in 1995, the Association for the Beautification of Cihangir was established. The members of the association were mostly the new residents of the neighborhood. They also aimed to increase the quality of their living space. Under the impact of the appreciation and gentrification of the neighborhood “members of the various sub-cultures represented in the area were forced to move out because of social pressure after 1990s” (Uzun 2001:112). After this process, Cihangir became the residential area mostly of artists, academics, and writers. “Living in Cihangir” became fashionable and Cihangir became more attractive and popular with its new cafes and bars. The gentrification process started in Cihangir and the massive transformation of the area resulted in a new life style, a bohemian style for the new middle classes of the city, which became hugely attractive for many and even created its own brand; the area began to be called “Republic of Cihangir” (Ergun 2004:398). The increasing popularity and escalation of the neighborhood in this process, which demonstrate themselves in the increasing rents and rise in the numbers of cafés, has introduced a new term called ‘Cihangirleşme’ (Cihangirization) which is used to define a gentrification process like the one in Cihangir.

Another neighborhood in Beyoğlu, namely Asmalımescit experienced a gentrification process mostly grounded on commercial motivations thanks to its proximity to Istiklal Street (Islam 2005). The change began in this neighborhood with the opening of an art gallery in 1994 (Ergun 2004). When the owner of the gallery came to the neighborhood, there was only one artist there. The gallery

owner began to form an art zone in the old trade neighborhood by organizing art events and exhibitions and inviting more artists to the area (Ergun 2004: 398). Thanks to his efforts, the area began to be attractive for the artists eventually, and then many authors, architects, journalists followed the rising trend moved in and restored the old building stock in the neighborhood. In this process, more art galleries and cultural centers opened and then many café houses, bars and restaurants took their places around them.

The last neighborhood that I would like to highlight in Beyoğlu district is Galata which passed through a similar gentrification process. The process in Galata began when architects and artists purchased or rented old, historical buildings, which were particularly suitable for art studios with their high ceilings (Ergun 2004:399). With the organizations of cultural events and festivals by the artists, the neighborhood attracted the attention of people. Until the mid-1990s, together with Galata's artistic community, only a few other professionals moved to the area to live. However, according to Islam (2005) the real impact of gentrifiers in Galata occurred after 1995 with the restoration of historical buildings by academicians, architects, journalists, cartoonists and film directors. Their motivations were "the desire to live in an old house or environment and being near to cultural and leisure activities" (Islam 2005:134).

2.2.3. Third-wave of gentrification

In the late 1990s, gentrification spread to the coastal zone of Golden Horn, to Fener-Balat districts. The deteriorated, historical housing stock and the social decline of the districts were opportunities for the start of a gentrification process. Fener-Balat had long suffered environmental degradation due to the heavy industry located in the Golden Horn coastal zone. The smell of the Golden Horn was unbearable for the residents (Türkmen 2014). In 1984-85, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality began a deindustrialization and revitalization scheme in the Golden Horn zone, which then ended up with the cleaning of the coast, creating open spaces and green areas on the coast. But, this process also caused

loss of jobs, increasing poverty and unemployment and the collapse of the business and economic activities in the area at the same time (Türkmen 2014). Deindustrialization of the area did not bring much benefit to the residents of the neighborhood since it increased the degradation in the area.

Fener-Balat is an important historical site having a 19th century Ottoman structure, but the prominent historical settlement began to lose its characteristics after the non-Muslim population had left the area and heavy industry dominated it. However, although the area was deindustrialized and the environmental quality improved, gentrification in these districts did not start in a similar way to second-wave gentrification. The gentrification in Fener-Balat started with rehabilitation and renovation projects by public institutions. The Rehabilitation of Fener and Balat Districts Programme (RFBDP), a 7 million Euro investment project funded by the European Commission in partnership with Fatih Municipality that primarily targeted the rehabilitation of around 200 selected houses (around one-seventh of the total housing stock in the two neighborhoods) between 2004 and 2006 (Islam 2005:132; Narli 2006; Türkmen 2014). Although the rehabilitation project intended to keep the existing population in the area by introducing some regulations in the implementation of the project, such as banning the sale of renovated buildings and eviction of the tenants after the renovation if there is any, the RFBDP became a triggering force for the middle classes and ended up with the start of a gentrification process in the area (Narli 2006; Türkmen 2014). Although the gentrification of this area did not occur in a similar way to the other cases or as quickly as the others, yet, along with the renovation of the houses, new shops, workshops and cafes were opened eventually in the area. Here, the differentiating point of Fener-Balat's gentrification process from the first and second waves of gentrification is the involvement and contribution of the public institutions to the process.

CHAPTER 3

Yeldeğirmeni Neighborhood

Yeldeğirmeni, also known as Rasimpaşa, is an old historical neighborhood which was established on the hill over Kadıköy coast on the Anatolian side of Istanbul. Once the livelihood of a non-Muslim ethnic minority this old neighborhood was left to fall into deprivation like other older neighborhoods in Istanbul. However recently, thanks to its central and favorable location, and due to several projects developing around it, the neighborhood has come into prominence once again. On the one hand, several substantial transportation projects, such as the subway and metrobus projects of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, along with urban development projects such as an urban regeneration project in Fikirtepe, have led to an increase in Yeldeğirmeni's land values. These measures have in turn affected the level of demand to move into the area. On the other hand, the area is a potential gentrification area by middle class settlers, like other old inner city districts of Istanbul. Additionally, the place-specific dynamics of other gentrified districts of Istanbul had important impacts on the neighborhood's cultural, economic and social transformation. In this regard it is essential to describe the main dynamics of the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood and its surrounding area in order to identify the ongoing gentrification process in the neighborhood.

In this chapter I will begin by presenting the historical background of the district for the purpose of revealing its social and economic structure prior to the transformation of the neighborhood. I will then examine the actual developments around the neighborhood and the changing socio-economic structure of central Kadıköy, in order to present a more general view of what is taking place in the whole area.

3.1. The history of Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood

The history of Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood traces back to the Chalcedon era in the 1st century BC. The area is one of the oldest settlement areas in Istanbul. The first signs of regular settlement are seen in the 15th-16th centuries. In the period of the Sultan Abdülhamit 1st, between the years of 1774-1789, four windmills had been erected in the area which gave the name to the area called today: ‘Yeldeğirmeni’ (meaning windmill in Turkish). Although the windmills used for supplying flour do not exist today, the legacy of Yeldeğirmeni being the place of flour can be seen due to the number of bakeries in the area. The area also is popular with the traditional pretzel (simit) baking place in Istanbul.

At the beginning of the 19th century, Yeldeğirmeni was one of the most(?) popular summer resorts in Istanbul. There were small mansions with gardens and a trade centre serving the mansions via the Kadıköy Pier (YD 2014:13)⁴. The distinctive architectural and social structure of the area which characterize it as present began after the announcement of the Imperial Edict of Reorganization in the 19th century which resolved the construction limitations of the housing stock for the non-Muslim population. One of the other factors that affected the formation of the physical fabric of the neighborhood in the 19th century was generated with the arrival of the Jewish residents from Kuzguncuk neighborhood due to a fire which devastated the neighboring district. (Atılğan 2010). Yeldeğirmeni, which had already had the cultural and physical reflections of Greek and Muslim populations, added the Jewish identity to its heterogeneity. Some of the historical buildings seen in Yeldeğirmeni today had been built by the Levantine Jewish and Orthodox Christian population settled in Rasimpaşa, such as Hemdat Israil Synagogue and Aya Yorgi Church.

At the end of the 19th century, the first apartments of Kadıköy were constructed in Yeldeğirmeni. Hence, Yeldeğirmeni can be named as one of the first ‘modern’

⁴ YD: Yeldeğirmeni Deneyimi, Kentsel Yenilemeye Farklı Bir Yaklaşım, February 2014. ÇEKÜL Foundation Publication.

apartment districts of Istanbul (Atılğan 2010). Some apartments from that time, such as the Kehribar, Celal Muhtar and Demirciyan apartment blocks, still exist in Yeldeğirmeni today.

In the beginning of the 20th century, the neighborhood saw another group of settlers arrive in the area: the foreign labor force who worked in the construction of Haydarpaşa Train Gar. The workers settled with their families in the mass housing they constructed in Yeldeğirmeni. Valpresa (Italian), Süngit Apartment, Osman Gazi Elementary School and Kemal Atatürk High School, in their present names, were constructed for the workers of the time. The increasing importance of Yeldeğirmeni paved the way for opening the first post office of Kadıköy district and a hospital beside the supplying several urban services for the district (Atılğan 2010).

During the first years of the Turkish Republic, the population of Yeldeğirmeni consisted mostly Turkish and Jewish people as well as Greek and Armenian inhabitants. The heterogeneity of the population could also be seen in the varieties of stores and lively street life (Akerman 2009). Beside the multicultural composition of the area, marginalized urban populations also settled in the area. For instance there were many sex workers living and working in Yeldeğirmeni, this activity intensified during the 1st World War. Due to the concentration of prostitution in the neighborhood during those times, Yeldeğirmeni was called 'Küçük Paris Mahallesi' (YD 2014:13), i.e. The Little Paris Neighborhood.

After the 1950s, the transformation of the historical buildings into reinforced concrete ones changed the physical fabric of the neighborhood. However, the structure of the streets, as one of the most important architectural features of the district, has been protected. Along with the built environment, the social structure of the neighborhood also changed with the political conjuncture of Turkey, particularly with the increasing attacks to the non-Muslim populations which showed itself most demonstrably on 6-7 September, 1954 all over Istanbul. Akerman (2009: 155) explains the event as follows:

Until this day the people who have now plundered stores have never hurt each other before [...]. They were frightened. [...]In the next morning, a lot has changed in Turkey. Also in Yeldeğirmeni, a lot has changed. To a great extent, these people were Greek. One after another, they left the country. Others filled up their places. People coming from more eastern places took over the houses. Some houses were ruined and some of them were rebuilt; but Yeldeğirmeni in its general structure wasn't changed.

As Akerman notes, Yeldeğirmeni, as an ethnically diverse district, changed dramatically in this period. The multi-ethnic societal structure of the neighborhood was now transformed to a place hosting mostly a Turkish Muslim population. In time, the historical built environment of the neighborhood also eroded. The changes in the built environment also affected the social structure and the relations in the neighborhood. The increasing numbers of apartments during the 1980s caused the disappearance of the interactive social life in the neighborhood, which was once the pattern of its lively streets. The neighborhood relations were in this way weakened and then almost disappeared.

Constructions on the empty spaces and green areas of the districts began with the rapid urbanization in 1980s which caused to loss of public spaces and green areas. In 1996, Yeldeğirmeni was announced as an urban conservation area by the Council of Monuments. Today, there are 302 officially registered buildings in Yeldeğirmeni; however, many historical buildings collapsed over the course of the time, and some were left abandoned, increasing deprivation in the area (YD 2014:13). The real estate prices decreased because of the deterioration of buildings of the neighborhood, which also affected the area's social and economic structures.. A real estate agent, who has been living in Yeldeğirmeni for 20 years, says that winebibbers and thinner-addicted people occupied the area almost ten years ago, and this made people afraid of coming to the area either alone or as a couple.⁵ As a result of the stigmatization of the neighborhood as dangerous and insecure, Yeldeğirmeni lost its affluence. On the other hand, the neighborhood's central location would always make it an attractive prospect for development.

⁵ <http://www.sendika.org/2015/03/nuhun-mahallesi-Yeldeğirmeni-didar-aytas/> Date Accessed: 16 March 2015

Because of the low rent and its central location in comparison with other neighborhoods of central Kadıköy, the neighborhood has become attractive to students in 2000s. The spatial proximity of the area to the both sea and land transportation facilities through the Rıhtım Street in Kadıköy made the areas attractive to many. Kadıköy is one of the central places that agglomerates the public transportation means to any direction. Thus, with its accessible location to the universities and other parts of Istanbul, the area attracted many students. Besides, the places suitable for art studios and workshops also attracted students, especially the art students of Marmara University located in Göztepe, a closer district to Kadıköy.

The area did not only attract the students with its accessibility and advantageous rent opportunities for the low income groups, but also attracted migrants from Anatolia from the 1980s onwards. Immigrants from Bingöl and Konya, and various cities of the Blacksea region constitute the main immigrant population of the area currently (YD 2014). In this respect, the networks based on the places of origin of the residents have become a powerful dynamic of the social relations in Yeldeğirmeni.

Since the existence of the dilapidated and devalued housing stock of Yeldeğirmeni, as well as its inner city location, has provided the appropriate conditions for gentrification, as it has been observed in similar cases in Istanbul, Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood emerges as a potential inner city gentrification area. Additionally, as discussed in the gentrification literature, the new cultural middle class prefers to live in historical and multicultural inner city districts like Yeldeğirmeni to separate themselves from the traditional middle class living style. In this respect Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood is an attractive area for this cultural class. In light of this, the neighborhood is open to cultural and economic transformation and an increase in its attractiveness and value. The current conditions of the neighborhood, the dilapidated historical built environment, the relatively cheaper property prices and at the same time its central location provide an opportunity to new comers, as has been observed in other inner historical sites

in Istanbul. Moreover, the area provides an opportunity for the new cultural middle class, with its historical built environment and its multicultural background, to separate itself from the traditional middle class life style, as many scholars point out. In that respect, Yeldeğirmeni is an attractive area for the members of this cultural class: hence, a cultural and economic transformation within the spatial and social relations of the neighborhood is likely to be taken place.

3.2. The conditions affecting the development of Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood

In the last 6 years, several large-scale public transportation projects and urban regeneration projects implemented around the central Kadıköy district have had a great impact on Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood. This is due to its spatial proximity to the central transportation axes and urban development projects. In fact, the impact of these large scale transportation projects goes beyond the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood scale. In this respect, there is also an observable revival in the central Kadıköy area in recent years in terms of increasing the number of visitors to the district, as well as its commercial activity. However, it should be noted that the revival of the central Kadıköy area and its increasing attractiveness to the cultural middle class is not only related to the surrounding large-scale development projects; it is related to the recent changes in the cultural and social atmosphere of Taksim which have caused an increase in the popularity of central Kadıköy, hence the Yeldeğirmeni area. From the new cultural class point of view, Kadıköy, hence Yeldigirmeni as a part of central Kadıköy, became an alternative cultural space to Taksim. Therefore the examination of cultural transformation of Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood would be more appropriate by considering the recent developments in these areas.

Ayrılıkçeşme area, the eastern border of Yeldeğirmeni, is the focal point for a number of transportation projects. Marmaray, one of the biggest transportation projects in Istanbul, connects two sides of the city under the Marmara sea, has been in operation since 2013 from the European side (Kazlıçeşme, Yenikapı, Sirkeci) to the Anatolian side via Ayrılıkçeşme. Marmaray also was connected to the M4 Kadıköy-Kartal subway line via the station in Ayrılıkçeşme. Another project, Avrasya Tunnel, a motorway tunnel underneath the Bosphorus, is still under construction and is planned to commence service in 2016. This will connect Kadıköy to Kazlıçeşme, and is designed for use by automobiles.⁶ In addition to these projects, Söğütlüçeşme area, which is located at the northeast of Yeldeğirmeni within walking distance to Yeldeğirmeni, has been the last station of the Metrobus on the Asian side since 2009. All these projects indicate that Kadıköy has received increased people flow, and has become the central meeting point for city travel from all directions. More importantly, the location of Yeldeğirmeni district has come into prominence further as a residence area.

Other important projects which have had an impact on Yeldeğirmeni district are urban regeneration projects surrounding the area. There are several urban regeneration and transformation projects underway around Yeldeğirmeni, such as Fikirtepe Urban Transformation Project, Haydarpaşa Railway Station and Haydarpaşa Port Transformation Project, Kadıköy Square Project and The Renovation Project of Moda Coastal Zone. Fikirtepe is a gecekondur⁷ district close to Yeldeğirmeni, which was declared an urban transformation area by Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality in 2010.⁸ The destruction in the district began in 2014 which caused eviction of the residents of the area. During this process, the property values in Fikirtepe and its adjacent areas, such as Yeldeğirmeni, have increased.⁹ Three other projects mentioned above are a part of the Kadıköy

⁶ <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/27197544.asp> Date Accessed: 12 May 2015

⁷ Gecekondur is a Turkish word meaning a house which is approved as an illegal construction putting up quickly.

⁸ <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ekonomi/16093428.asp> Date Accessed: 12 May 2015

⁹ <http://www.netgd.com.tr/haber/2013/09/istanbulda-kentsel-donusumle-birlikte-kira-ve-satis-rakamlari-artacak> Date Accessed: 13 May 2015

Coastline Transformation Plan by Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. The first stage of the plan involves Haydarpaşa Railway Station and its service areas which are at the west side of Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood. The project on Haydarpaşa was declared to the public in 2012, and this involves both the restoration of Haydarpaşa and the opening of its service area to urban development.¹⁰ Although Kadıköy Municipality did not give approval to the final plans, the project is still under discussion.¹¹ The second stage of the project is based on the transformation of the coast line of Kadıköy to a recreational area which would be connected to the Haydarpaşa Port Project. In March 2014, the Metropolitan Municipality Mayor Kadir Topbaş publicized the project¹², but the process was stopped because of a court decision on the suspension of execution passed in May 2014.¹³ And lastly, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality presented the third stage of the Kadıköy coastal line project in February 2015. The last stage covers the area between Haydarpaşa and Moda and suggests the demolition of the existing recreational area to build a marina alongside commercial units.

All these future projects surrounding Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood will have a massive impact on the spatial formation of Kadıköy district. These projects will also have a substantial impact on the land values of Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood. Furthermore, both urban regeneration and transportation projects will considerably change the cultural pattern of the district in general. These changes are clearly observed in the entertainment and cultural consumption centres of the district.

Caferağa neighborhood, which is located in Moda, is one of these areas where cultural activities are mostly concentrated. The neighborhood is dense with

¹⁰ In the following year of the declaration of the project the train services has been stopped from Haydarpaşa for 24 months on account of running the high-speed train which will be connected to Söğütluçeşme suburban line. Haydarpaşa Railroad Terminal is still unserviceable.

¹¹ <https://Kadıköybelediye.wordpress.com/2014/09/03/haydarpasa-gari-restorasyon-projesine-bu-haliyle-onay-vermiyoruz/> Date Accessed: 14 May 2015

¹²The video of the project by Kadıköy Municipality: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3NHZ87SJGzo> Date Accessed: 15 May 2015

¹³ For the whole process you can visit the web page: <http://megaprojeleristanbul.com/#kadıköy-meydan-projesi-ve-moda-dolgu-alanı> Date accessed: 14 May 2015

residences but also contains recreational and cultural facilities in the central Kadıköy. There is a street called Kadife Sokak where many bars, concert halls are located, along with one of the oldest cinemas in Istanbul. The inhabitants of the neighborhood define it as a quiet residential area which is mostly composed of middle class households. In one of the interviews I carried out in the neighborhood, a 29 year old woman, who is a long term resident of Kadıköy, defines the neighborhood as a place where people care about each other:

[Kadıköy] is one of the least destroyed quarters of Istanbul. Describing it, I'd say, it has been a saved area. People show respect to each other. People and small shop owners are inhabitants of the area which is why everybody knows everyone. Walking through the streets you'll always catch small talk. A neighborhood atmosphere is still existent. You're friends with a cafe or a bar owner. You are in touch with the people living in the same building [...]¹⁴

However, as an effect of the increased transportation facilities which have made it easier to access Kadıköy, several spatial and cultural changes have been observed by the inhabitants, especially during the last two years. First of all, with the impact of the large scale urban development projects, the land values in the area began to increase and the area became a profitable investment area for many entrepreneurs and investors. Secondly, the increasing number of visitors has changed the economic and cultural profile of the district. As another resident of Caferağa¹⁵ states the unique and distinctive alternative music and entertainment culture of Caferağa neighborhood is now full of indistinctive, commercial businesses that do not have any special features. In other words, there is standardization of the style of cafes and pubs which is no different from elsewhere.

The consumption and entertainment oriented transformation of the district has created a disturbance of the local population. Also, the increase in rents has caused many students to leave the area since they cannot afford the cost of living

¹⁴ Interview , 20 January 2015

¹⁵ Interview, 26 January 2015

in Kadıköy. Therefore the distinctive culture of the district, which brings different social groups together in the same place, has begun to be lost in some ways. This situation is expressed by one of the neighborhood residents as follows:

The recently opened cafes and pubs do not have any originality. Their managers only care about making profit. They came here because of the potential of the space to be the new Cihangir. Additionally, the people who come for having fun and drink on the streets are so lumpen. This situation has led to the abandonment of the inhabitants by selling their properties; this tendency has accelerated especially in the last 2 years¹⁶.

Social media analyses and discussions also show that there are many inhabitants who have been disturbed by the noise, the crowds and the attributes of the new visitor population of Kadıköy. A Facebook group named *34710 Sakinleri*¹⁷ (34710 Inhabitants) has witnessed many discussions about the changing profile of Caferağa neighborhood and central Kadıköy broadly. One of the discussions in the group points out the increasing number of coffee houses and their expensive prices, and comments upon the gentrification of the area by calling it ‘Cihangirleşme’ – a pun which refers to the gentrification process of Cihangir – to express the changing way of living in the neighborhood¹⁸.

One of the reasons for the changes in the spatial and cultural level is thought to be new metro line which carries people from other areas of the Anatolian side, such as Kartal, Ümraniye to Kadıköy, people who are new to the neighborhood culture of Kadıköy. Another explanation is about the saturation of Cihangir area, which is one of the first gentrified neighborhoods in Istanbul:

In fact, Cihangir is not out of fashion; it has a settled population and a settled character as a neighborhood now. The new generation of energetic people, like us, who are looking for places like Cihangir are moving in to most convenient places. Yeldeğirmeni is

¹⁶ Interview, 18 January 2015

¹⁷ 34710 Sakinleri, which is the postal code of Caferağa neighborhood, is a closed Facebook group and has approximately 800 members.

https://www.facebook.com/groups/34710Sakinleri/?ref=br_rs Date Accessed: 30 March 2015

¹⁸ https://www.facebook.com/groups/34710Sakinleri/?ref=br_rs Date Accessed: 29 March 2015

an example of this case. In fact, Yeldeğirmeni is a better example of gentrification than [the central] Kadıköy.

Regarding this point, it could be argued that the changing population of Yeldeğirmeni and Kadıköy in general is also related to the changing circumstances of the places the cultural new middle class has been using. Therefore, this relation can also be associated with the changing dynamics of the Taksim area. Taksim, as a center of cultural and entertainment facilities and also as a historical place, is mostly an attractive space for students, cultural middle class, artists and tourists. However, several interventions done by the Beyoğlu Municipality held by the governing Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi – AKP) and the Metropolitan Municipality have transformed Taksim massively in both spatial and cultural levels in recent years. According to Ayşe Çavdar, all the projects taken place in Taksim area has a significant political ground for the ruling party to be contested since the Taksim area has seen the closure of commercial networks as well as one of the most important political spaces of the Republic. In relation with this, Çavdar argues that Taksim is symbolically the space of the secular life style which the ruling party does not directly confirm.¹⁹ The closing down of many cinemas, the restrictions on businesses²⁰, the transformations of historical buildings and stores into shopping malls and the strict police control over the political space especially after Gezi Park protests²¹ have transformed the characteristics of the space in Taksim, as well as the users of the area. A café owner in Beyoğlu says that the conditions there have led some stores to move to other areas similar to ‘old Taksim’, like Beşiktaş or Kadıköy.²²

¹⁹ <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/al-jazeera-ozel/taksimde-masa-hala-yasak> Date Accessed: 10 April 2015

²⁰ Since 2011 the tables and chairs of the restaurants, bars and cafes on the streets has been cleared away by Beyoğlu Municipality for the reason of deterioration of public order. http://www.Beyoglu.bel.tr/Beyoglu_belediyesi/haber_default.aspx?SectionId=143&ContentId=26331 Date Accessed: 10 April 2015

²¹ Gezi Park protests will be explained under the topic of “Don Kişot Social Center and Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity”.

²² <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/al-jazeera-ozel/taksimde-masa-hala-yasak> Date Accessed: 10 April 2015

Kadıköy has also become an attractive space, an alternative location for some groups to set up their networks. In recent years, some associations that have lots of members and followers moved to Kadıköy from Beyoğlu. These have included the LGBTI (International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association) and the Buğday Association (for Supporting Ecological Living). Kadıköy has also become one of the venues for events which have been held in Taksim. For example, during the 34th Istanbul Film Festival, which is mainly taken place in Taksim, films were screened in the saloons of REXX Kadıköy.²³ In this regard, it can be said that the intended population of both associations and cultural organizations began to emerge in Kadıköy as well.

Kadıköy has become the new center of cultural and artistic events, and hence has become attractive for cultural groups in recent years. On the one hand, increasing transportation facilities which provide easy access to Kadıköy from other districts of the Asian side as well as European side affected the development of Kadıköy in general. On the other hand the changing spatial and social structures of the areas in which cultural groups mostly spend time, like Taksim, have had an important impact on the current situation observed in Kadıköy. The potential value of the district also increased in relation to prospected urban projects and the ongoing Fikirtepe urban regeneration project. As a result, the district has gained importance for investors and entrepreneurs as well as the cultural class. In the process, Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood emerged also as a favorable living and working area for the new comers in relation with to changes in Kadıköy as well as some distinctive characteristics of the neighborhood.

²³ http://www.radikal.com.tr/kultur/festivalin_yeni_cekim_merkezi_kadikoy-1326277 Date
Accessed: 15 May 2015

CHAPTER 4

The Process of Cultural Transformation in Yeldeğirmeni Neighborhood

Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood, located in the middle of the ongoing spatial and social changes outlined in the last chapter, has emerged as a new residential area for newcomers. Because of its both low prices and centrality, the area is already attractive to students, but after several sequential developments in the neighborhood the area has been paid attention to by the new cultural class that has been socializing in Kadıköy. In this chapter, I will examine the emerging dynamics of Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood, which has generated a cultural transformation in this space. In this respect, I will focus on three key developments: Yeldeğirmeni Neighborhood Renewal Project, Design Atelier Kadıköy and Don Kişot Social Center. These emerged recently as the main transformative elements in the neighborhood and became a triggering force in the composition of a new cultural middle class in Yeldeğirmeni. Lastly, the impact of the arrival of members of the new cultural class to the area upon the spatial and social relations in Yeldeğirmeni will be contextualized in a way to that will identify the motivations of actors within the gentrification process in Yeldeğirmeni.

4.1. Yeldeğirmeni Neighborhood Renewal Project

Yeldeğirmeni Neighborhood Renewal Project²⁴ (YNRP) was implemented in cooperation with The Protection and Promotion of the Environment and Cultural Heritage Foundation (ÇEKÜL) and the Kadıköy Municipality, which began in

²⁴ Yeldeğirmeni Project was declared to the public firstly as a vitalization project by Kadıköy Municipality.

However it was renamed as a renewal project after. Hence I will use renewal as a term. <http://www.Yeldeğirmeni.Kadıköy.bel.tr/default.aspx>. Date accessed: 30 April 2015

2010 and finalized towards the end of 2013. It was designed as a continuation of the Kadıköy Historical Bazaar Vitalization Project at the beginning of 2000s. YNRP gets into action because of the possible gentrification related to the urban and transportation developments around Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood. The vision of the project is based on the protection of the neighborhood culture in Yeldeğirmeni. The aim has been to avoid the social and economic problems (YD 2014) that could have emerged due to urban development in the area, which would have caused a rent-gap. Because of the central location of the neighborhood and also the low property prices in the area, gentrification has been acknowledged as inevitable, but at the same time the possibility to decelerate the process by creating publicly shared urban space and integrating all components of the neighborhood has been a concern (YD 2014). In one sense, gentrification has been taken under control by public authorities and used as a positive public policy tool in order to keep the current residents in the area and control the intervention of capital and other market forces.

YNRP has differences compared to the other renewal and regeneration projects announced by the AKP government all over the city. The government projects in the deprived inner-city historical neighborhoods, where the most marginalized and poor segments of the urban population live, aim to transform the present demography and built environment of these areas. One of the most likely consequences of these projects will be the displacement of the existing population of the deprived and poor neighborhoods, replacing them with a new residential profile. As mentioned earlier, Fener-Balat project is an example of this kind of renewal project. Contrary to the highly top-down structured urban renewal projects, YNRP presents a more participatory system of renewal, and mainly targets cooperation with the neighborhood residents. It is defined by the project holders as a part of the *new urbanism approach* to the city which targets the protection of the historical character of the neighborhood identity.²⁵

²⁵ <http://www.Yeldeğirmeni.Kadıköy.bel.tr/hedefler.aspx#> Date Accessed: 30 April 2015

The approach of the project is shaped according to opinions of the local people concerning the social and economic conditions of the district in 2010. The neighborhood is defined by the inhabitants as socially deprived because of the absence of social reinforcements like green areas, health services, cultural facilities and public spaces for development of interaction among the population of the neighborhood. Also, the neighborhood is identified as insecure and dangerous. However, the neighborhood identity and social relations within the neighborhood are emphasized as the most powerful force in the district. The project officer, Alp Arısoy says that:

The projects stressed the concept of neighborhood because the people who live there identify themselves from Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood instead of Kadıköy or Istanbul. There is a powerful neighborhood identity and attachment to the place. The perception of neighborhood here is societal organization rather than a spatial concept. We are talking about a group of people who embrace the space. However people were discontented from the neighborhood. According to our survey 78 percentages of local people had been desired to leave the neighborhood but they had not because of the economic reasons.²⁶

From this perspective, the project aims to reattach local people to the space in order to protect the cultural and historical identity of the neighborhood. To do this, YNRP focuses on to create public space and develop civil initiative which would reclaim the neighborhood culture. On this note, the main principles of the renewal project are summarized in four titles:

- 1) The urban space is activated by creating more public space.
- 2) The people lay claims to the urban space they use more.
- 3) The qualification of the urban space increases when people embrace it.
- 4) Along with increasing qualification, the urban space is embraced further and in relation with the increasing use of public space a vitalization movement in space would emerge.

²⁶ Interview with Alp Arısoy, 6 March 2015.

To successfully put into practices these four main principles, the project contained several focal points: vitalization corridors, common spaces, development of services and infrastructure, and social revival. The implementation of the project suggested the reorganization of space in a people-oriented way and neighborhood organization was centered in the determination of people's need. In this respect, all components of the neighborhood, which were determined as 'inhabitants, artists, students and small retailers' (YD 2014), were taken into consideration by the project team. With its main focus to achieve a cultural and social development in the neighborhood and its implementations in physical and social levels, YNRP is, therefore, an important factor to be examined in the cultural transformation process of Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood.

The projects falling into the category of the vitalization corridors are based on enabling the continuous movement of people by creating central lines and focal points in the neighborhood (YD 2014:52). To achieve this aim, green areas have been expanded, the facades of the buildings and stores have been maintained and redecorated, and the streets have been reorganized to allow pedestrian flow (YD 2014). Additionally, the artistic culture of the neighborhood has been supported with several art works.

Karakolhane Street has been physically rearranged as the main central throughway of the district. The trees were planted on the street, pavements were widened and restrictions were imposed. As a result a public space has been generated, accessibility to small retailers has increased and traffic flow has decelerated on the street. Additionally, some stores which caused noise pollution and bad-smells were closed. The streets were also improved in terms of the infrastructure, including the fitting of street lighting, rearrangement of the pavements and the installation of waste bins.

For the restorations of historical buildings, funding and consultation were provided to the property owners on request. Alp Arısoy, the manager of YNRP, stresses that the project did not have a mission for restoration work on historical

buildings (YD 2014:53). Pointing out the example of Fener-Balat Rehabilitation Project carried out by the European Union and Fatih Municipality which caused to an ‘unearned income’ in the area, according to him, by resulting the entrance of construction firms to the district, Arısoy mentioned that in order to avoid large-scale construction in the Yedegirmeni area, only the renovation of publicly owned buildings were concerned in the scope of the project. In other words, public authorities did not develop renovation works for privately owned buildings.

In order to provide revitalization, focal points were created in the streets and idle spaces were put into use in order to attract people’s attention. In the process, art works were supported to create a positive tendency to make the space attractive.²⁷ In this scope, Mural-ist Festival²⁸ – a wall painting festival – was organized in Yeldeğirmeni in 2012 and 2013. Due to this festival, many international artists came to the neighborhood and it received widespread media attention during the festival. According to Alp Arısoy, Mural-ist had an impact on the prominence of Yeldeğirmeni as an art space.²⁹

Another category of YNRP was based on creating common spaces to develop the interaction between people. The absence of parks made it essential to generate meeting points within the neighborhood (YD 2014: 81). In order to generate meeting points, the project aimed to transform areas that had lost their public use into common spaces. Firstly, the courtyards were transformed to city gardens with the support of Yeryüzü Association for the use of neighbors in that particular area.³⁰ Secondly, the neighborhood park was constructed with the initiative of Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity group.³¹ The park was named Ali İsmail Korkmaz³² Park in 2014. The walls around the park also became the working area of the artists. Third, play grounds and sport fields were created in the idle spaces of the

²⁷ Interview with Alp Arısoy, 6 March 2015

²⁸ <http://www.Yeldeğirmeni.Kadıköy.bel.tr/altsayfa.aspx?id=2213> Date Accessed: 3 May 2015.

²⁹ Interview with Alp Arısoy, 6 March 2015

³⁰ <http://www.arkitera.com/haber/9533/Yeldeğirmenini-yeserten-proje> Date Accessed: 5 May 2015

³¹ Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity group will be explained under the topic of “Don Kişot Social Center and Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity”.

³² Ali İsmail Korkmaz is one of the dying people during the Gezi Park protests.

neighborhood. Finally, public spaces at the Kadıköy and Ayrılıkçeşme borders of Yeldeğirmeni were reorganized with art works in order to make the space attractive and support the flow of people to the central lines of Yeldeğirmeni.

The absence of public services such as health and education services in the area was another prominent issue at the beginning of YNRP, which were expressed by local people.³³ In this regard, improvements to cultural, educational and medical services were targeted by the project in order to “increase the quality of life in the area and activate the internal dynamics of the neighborhood relations” (YD 2014: 97) In this scope, a voluntary centre, a research centre for children, a child protection and sanity centre and a cultural centre were established in the neighborhood.

Rasimpaşa Voluntary Centre was established to promote civil initiative in the neighborhood in 2010. This civil organization became a social center providing various services, and it is run by the inhabitants of the neighborhood. The center has generated a socialization space, especially for women. Several courses and social events are organized by the volunteers, and social activity groups are formed in the centre (YD 2014: 103). In the same year, Research Center for Children was opened in order to support the children in their education and engaged them in the educational and cultural activities the center presents. As a local medical service, Child Protection and Sanity Center was opened in the neighborhood in order to provide consultancy to the families who have children between the ages 0-6. Lastly, Eglisia Notre Dame du Rosarie Church, which was closed after the earthquake in 1999, has been renovated and converted to a cultural center called Yeldeğirmeni Sanat which is now hosting various cultural events.

YNRP promoted the local economy and civil initiatives to achieve social revival in the neighborhood. In this regard, several meetings were organized for sharing experiences and knowledge between inhabitants in Rasimpaşa Voluntary Center

³³ Interview with Alp Arısoy, 6 March 2015.

in order to encourage the culture of sharing. A civil initiative called Zumbara Assemblage supported the creation of a barter economy among the neighborhood residents via several activities in Yeldeğirmeni. Additionally, festivals, concerts, charity bazaars and movie screenings were organized in the streets in order to attract the attention of civil society (YD 2014:125).

Consequently, YNRP supported a transformation agenda for the neighborhood by encouraging cultural and artistic works, as well as improving the public service. YNRP creates a positive impact on the external image and self-image of the neighborhood in the process of renewal, which could be conceptualized as positive gentrification in an economically and spatially disadvantaged neighborhood held by public authorities, as it is discussed by Cameron (2003). Art is used to promote the environmental improvement of the neighborhood and community regeneration. Besides, Yeldeğirmeni becomes a preferable living area for a cultural middle class in the process.

It could be argued that existing residents and newcomers benefit from the renewal process in different ways: the cultural and artistic atmosphere generates a social space for newcomers, whereas the old residents benefit from the amelioration of their living space. Overall, it could be argued that as a result of the renewal project, which supported cultural and artistic works, as well as targeted improvements in the quality of life in the neighborhood, the cultural transformation of the neighborhood has started.

4.2. Design Atelier Kadıköy

Design Atelier Kadıköy (TAK)³⁴ is a voluntary organization opened in Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood in April 2013 in partnership with public (Kadıköy Municipality), private (Kentsel Strateji) and civil society (ÇEKÜL) institutions.

³⁴ TAK was also opened in Kartal and Gaziantep later in relation with the developments of the programs for the urban space. After that, the name is used as Design Research Participation (Tasarım Araştırma Katılım) for different locations.

During the YNRP, one of the oldest cinema halls, Özen Cinema³⁵, was bought and restored by the local municipality for TAK.

The vision of the TAK group is expressed as a strategic design management in order to find solutions for spatial problems of Kadıköy district. One of the coordinators of TAK, Bahar Yalçın defines this organization as an initiative which gathers different disciplines.³⁶ In this respect, designers and architectures as well as volunteers, students and supporters from any disciplines can present their creative and innovative ideas for the urban space. Although TAK is an organization completely apart from the YNRP project holders³⁷, as the project aims to develop design projects and promote art and culture for the revitalization of the neighborhood, TAK became a part of the project process.³⁸

TAK took part in the organization of several *creative* projects in the streets, boulevards, idle corners and other neighborhoods of Kadıköy. Bahar Yalçın says that TAK aims to increase the quality of urban space in order to encourage people to embrace their living area.³⁹ Their activities stress the importance of public spaces, green areas, streets and neighborhood culture. Under the organizational structure of, TAK various meetings, workshops, design competitions and movie screenings were organized on both national and international levels.⁴⁰ In these activities, Kadıköy as a *brand* was promoted.

TAK developed several projects for all neighborhoods of Kadıköy, but because of its location, it mostly attracted the attention of people to the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood. The organization also attracted the attention of new middle class members which included designers, artists, and professionals. In this sense TAK

³⁵ Özen Cinema, formerly named as Yeldeğirmeni Cinema, is the oldest cinema building of Kadıköy, which is extant. The building serves as cinema until 1970. Lastly the building is used for poster and signboard atelier. Resource: Atılgan, A. (2007), Yeldeğirmeni, *Yeldeğirmeni Sineması (Özen Sineması)*, TMMOB Mimarlar Odası, p.6.

³⁶ Interview with Bahar Yalçın, 5 May 2015

³⁷ Interview with Alp Arısoy, 6 March 2015.

³⁸ <http://www.Yeldeğirmeni.Kadıköy.bel.tr/hedefler.aspx#> Date Accessed: 30 April 2015.

³⁹ Interview with Bahar Yalçın, 5 May 2015.

⁴⁰ <http://www.Kadıköyasarim.org/programlar/> Date Accessed: 7 May 2015

became an important dynamic for the composition of new cultural class in Yeldeğirmeni.

4.3. Don Kişot Social Center and Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity

Don Kişot Social Center (DKSC) is the first squatted house in Turkey. After the Taksim Gezi Park protests, a ‘dump’ building, as the occupiers define it, has been occupied since August 2013 by the Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity group. Their aim was to create a common space for the use of neighborhood residents and others in need. This occupation movement both recreates the consciousness, solidarity and the idea of the commons aroused with the Gezi Park protests in Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood, and it has emerged as an attention-grabbing feature of the neighborhood. The centre takes its name from the eponymous protagonist of *Don Quixote*, the fighter of windmills, or Yeldeğirmeni in Turkish. It is from the centre that the neighborhood gets its name. DKSC emerged in relation with Gezi Park protests, it is essential to describe the reasons behind these protests and the social movement that emerged after them, which in turn forms the cultural class in Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood.

Gezi Park is an historical park located in the heart of the Taksim Square in Beyoğlu. It is one of the last remaining green spaces in Taksim. The initial cause of the protests was the plan to knock down Gezi Park to execute the pedestrianization of Taksim Square project and to rebuild the Ottoman-era Taksim Military Barracks that had been themselves been demolished in 1940 to build the park.⁴¹ The intention to rebuild the barrack was not based on the revitalization of an historical site; rather, the intention was to build another rentable place in the middle of Beyoğlu which could contain a new shopping mall, luxurious flats and other indoor commercial facilities. However, in response to the protests, the plan to build a new shopping mall in this new unit was withdrawn and instead a

⁴¹ <http://www.aktifhaber.com/taksim-gezi-parkinin-tarihcesi-796996h.htm> Date Accessed: 14 April 2015.

museum was proposed.⁴² However, the government did not withdraw the idea of rebuilding the old barracks in the park area despite the opposition of many different groups before the Gezi Park protests started. According to Barış Kuymulu (2013), the project planned for Gezi Park can be examined as a part of a larger project for ‘urban transformation’—AKP’s euphemism for gentrification, which could be interpreted as state-led gentrification—with the aim to radically transform Taksim Square (Kuymulu 2013: 275).

The Gezi Park protests started as “a modest occupy style peaceful resistance” (Kuymulu 2013) and began on 28 May 2013 against the illegally held construction activity of the government in Gezi Park. The resistance was organized against an urbanism that puts the interests of capital over the interests of ordinary inhabitants of Istanbul (Kuymulu 2013:275). However, this peaceful resistance turned into a civil unrest, before turning into riot, and occupy movements first in Istanbul and then all over Turkey. This escalation was caused by the brutal police attack against the occupiers in Gezi Park. Starting with the aim of protecting the park, the movement soon attracted other causes, especially after the police attack on the peaceful protest. In fact, the brutal attacks of police forces and the authoritarian attitude of the government became one of the main triggering elements as the riots spread all around the country. According to a survey done by researchers from Bilgi University, the protestors joined the Gezi Park protests because of the prime minister's "authoritarian attitude" (92%), the "disproportionate use of force" by the police force (91%), the "violation of democratic rights" (91%) and the "silence of the media" (84%).⁴³ In other words, the Gezi Park resistance became the symbol via which more general demands could be voiced from a population that has been frustrated with the politics of the AKP government, rather than solely to protect a common space. Among the protestors, there were different subcultures such as gays, lesbians, Kurds,

⁴² <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-pm-erdogan-retires-mall-project-vows-mosque-in-taksim.aspx?pageID=238&nID=48035&NewsCatID=338> Date Accessed: 14 April 2015

⁴³ <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/protesters-are-young-libertarian-and-furious-at-turkish-pm-says-survey.aspx?pageID=238&nID=48248&NewsCatID=341> Date Accessed: 14 April 2015

nationalists, the soccer hooligans, anarchists, communists, feminists, students, the young and the old, the secular and the religious. Karadağ (2014) defines the actors of Gezi Park movement as a new middle class which can be described with the features of being individualistic, specialized in their own fields, trained and cultured. There were also several professional organizations, artists and academics in the protests (Karadağ 2014:187-188).

After the police withdrew from Taksim Square on 1st of June, an occupy-like camp developed in Gezi Park with a library, medical center, food distribution area along with the protestors own media production. Several meetings were organized in the park in order to discuss the condition of the Gezi Park movement. A shared economy was implemented in the park during the occupation. After the Gezi Park camp was cleared by the police force brutally on 15th of June, the protestors continued to gather in forums to discuss the various issues and to collectively make decisions for action taking place in other districts of Istanbul. Plans and decisions were made in this collective manner until late August 2013. Kadıköy also became one of the main locations of the resistance during this process. Besides the protests on the streets of Kadıköy, several meetings were organized in public spaces. In July 2013, a festival named "1st Gas Man Festival" (1. Gazdanadam Festivali) was organized in Kadıköy to protest the police intervention in Gezi Park.⁴⁴ In different locations, people continued to meet in other parks all around Turkey and public forums were organized to discuss the ways in which the commons created during the Gezi Park protest could be sustained. In central Kadıköy, Yoğurtçu Park became the main area of the public forum. After this, neighborhood solidarity groups emerged in the forums with the aim of discussing and solving the distinct problems of each neighborhood. Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity group emerged in this process in Kadıköy Yeldeğirmeni area. The inhabitants of Yeldeğirmeni put forward several problems of the

⁴⁴ <http://www.cnnturk.com/2013/turkiye/07/07/Kadıköyde.gazdanadam.festivali/714484.0/> Date Accessed: 10 April 2015.

neighborhood in the forums and organized several activities⁴⁵ in a way to strengthen neighborhood solidarity. In this process, DKSC emerged as a necessity of a common space to keep the solidarity alive in the neighborhood later on. In light of this, an unused building, empty for years, was occupied by the solidarity members and fixed for using as a social center for the neighborhood use. One of the occupiers explains their motivations for creating a common space:

Because they have not left us any space in the city, because there are no more places where we can breathe, because there are no areas where we can express ourselves, or because we cannot find the real tranquility: from now on we take the initiative⁴⁶.

In this respect the DKSC became a symbol of an urban consciousness that made community action possible once more. This was a direct result of the Gezi Park protest, and the gains which were achieved by this movement were reflected onto the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood. In this way, the center attracted the attention of many people, who then joined the Gezi Park protests and media organizations. The practices which were carried out in Gezi Park were maintained in DKSC as well. For example, Yeldeğirmeni solidarity group organized ‘Brainstorming Saturdays’ in which participants discussed several issues like alternative means of production, economy, agriculture, transportation, internet use, education and media in an attempt to establish an alternative way of life in the city. Visitors to the neighborhood, the younger population and foreign students who resided in the neighborhood joined the activities of the center. Several workshops and exhibitions were organized in the center. It was also arranged two rooms in the center, one for the use of children and the other for swapping activities. Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity group also took initiative for revitalizing the neighborhood culture and for protecting the historical and cultural values of the neighborhood, as well solidarity amongst the community. For example, the group

⁴⁵ With the arrival of Ramadan, mass iftar (the ceremonial meal breaking the daily fast) tables were laid on the streets under the name of “land surface tables” (yeryüzü sofraları) in several neighborhoods including Yeldeğirmeni. <http://everywheretaksim.net/tr/birgun-Yeldeğirmeninde-dayanisma-sofrasi/> Date Accessed: 10 April 2015.

⁴⁶ A Videoreportage by Faith Pinar: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6rcxgg9Qz4s> Date Accessed: 30 March 2015.

organized a campaign for smaller retailers of the neighborhood that had the motto “neither AVM nor supermarket, shop from the small retailers”.

DKSC has been relied on the support of inhabitants and their neighbors in the modification and maintenance of the squatted building. The activities of the solidarity group also activate the streets and the daily life of the residents. One of the inhabitants, who has lived in Yeldeğirmeni for 5 years, expresses the contribution of the DKSC to their lives as follows:

The invaded houses reminded us of neighborliness and solidarity. Looking at their list of needs and supplying them, if it is possible, became our routine. I had sometimes felt a need to go away from this country, but now I think that I love this neighborhood and one of the reasons for this is the DKSC.⁴⁷

Although there was a positive tendency from the residents towards the center at the beginning, recently, residents began to distance themselves from the social center because of culturally different lifestyle of newcomers. One of the residents, who has lived in Yeldeğirmeni for 18 years, says “my father and my sibling live in the street where DKSC located. They have drunk late into the night and made noise. We respect them to a certain extent but if they do not respect to the lifestyle of other residents, they get reactions from the residents”.⁴⁸

Moreover, the political affiliations of some members of the solidarity group also have had an impact on the formation inhabitants’ ideas about the DKSC. This process began with the protests and demonstrations of the solidarity group in the neighborhood against the policies of the government. This was especially seen, during local elections in March 2014, when political affiliations began to be more visible within the public spaces of the neighborhood. Tension between the residents and solidarity group members escalated and came to another stage when Nuh Köklü, a member of the Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity group, was murdered by a

⁴⁷ <http://www.timeoutistanbul.com/sehirdenevar/makale/3560/Yelde%C4%9Firmeni-ve-i%C5%9Fgal-evleri> Date Accessed: 18 April 2015

⁴⁸ Interview, 25 April 2015

small retailer of the neighborhood in February 2015.⁴⁹ The event happened because of a disagreement between a group of friends and the owner of the store, ending up with the killing of Nuh Köklü by the shopkeeper. Although older residents were sad about this unfortunate murder, the same interviewee quoted above said in our interview that political slogans during the funeral disturbed them because people began to identify Nuh Köklü as a member of a political organization rather than as a neighborhood resident.⁵⁰

Although the last stage indicates that the positive impact of the center decreased in the neighborhood, the possibility of creating alternative ways of living in an inner city area attracted the cultural middle class looking for a bohemian alternative lifestyle(?), especially after Gezi Park protests. An actor that we interviewed who has been living in Yeldeğirmeni for 4 years claims that a definite cultural change took place in the neighborhood after the DKSC. He says:

I think the Gezi Park events have a positive impact on the cultural and social life in Yeldeğirmeni. People spend more time in streets and distinctive ways of living have been constituted through various types of cafes, workshops and cultural activities. In that respect, Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood has become the place for people who want “something else”: there is less commercial but more ‘arty’ production here. And people communicate with each other more.⁵¹

Therefore Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood, which had been structured locally with its own dynamic, has been transformed into an alternative cultural hub in a central urban area for many people who seek a form of community absent elsewhere and a sense of tolerance allowing distinctive ways of life to be practiced without impunity. The experience of house squatting generated this cultural realm. Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood has motivated the burgeoning cultural middle class in Kadıköy with the emergence of an alternative cultural space.

⁴⁹ <http://www.cnnturk.com/haber/turkiye/gazeteci-nuh-koklu-kartopu-oynadigi-icin-olduruldu>

Date Accessed: 20 April 2015

⁵⁰ Interview, 25 April 2015

⁵¹ Interview, 15 March 2015

4.4. New cultural class of Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood

In 2012, according to the data TAK gathered, the population of Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood was 12.000, whereas this number increased to 13.900 in two years according to the TUIK data.⁵² In other words, there is a vast increase in the population of this area. As I pointed out in this and the previous chapter, the social and cultural development of Yeldeğirmeni in relation to various projects implemented by YNRP and TAK and also DKSC increased popularity of the neighborhood and the number of visitors to the area. After these developments, some other spatial and cultural changes were observed in Yeldeğirmeni. First of all, the public art, which became more visible after the renewal project, had an important impact on the revival of the neighborhood in the following 3 years after 2010 (YD 2014:63). The number of art workshops increased in the neighborhood and young artists became a new social group in the area. The number of foreign students who sojourned in Istanbul also increased in Yeldeğirmeni area. But also, according to the project evaluation report of ÇEKÜL, Yeldeğirmeni became an attractive neighborhood for the young, employed people in the beginning of their 30s instead of students who are in search for inexpensive and temporary sheltering (YD 2014:30). The motivations of the newcomers differentiate, but it could be argued that the central location of the area, improving cultural and artistic environment and lower rents (especially at the beginning of the process) in the neighborhood are prominent motivations for the new comers. Furthermore, community networks are also an important dynamic that affect the population change in Yeldeğirmeni, since many of them preferred to settle because of their occupational networks or friends networks.

According to the real estate agencies that I interviewed, the change in the profile of the residents began in the last 3 years. The profiles of the new residents have similarities to one another. Most of them are young people whose ages vary

⁵² <http://rapory.tuik.gov.tr/15-05-2015-12:11:13-193687004117078779861060041144.pdf> Date Accessed:20 March 2015

between 25-35. They are students or young employees. There are also many foreign students who come to the city in the as part of the Erasmus academic exchange programme (hereafter Erasmus students). There are also artists, painters, and sculptors who have been moving to Yeldeğirmeni generally from the other side of Istanbul, mostly from Cihangir, Şişliand Balat neighborhoods. The flat prices eventually increased because of the rising demand from various groups, especially from Erasmus students who look for shared and furnished flats in the central areas of Istanbul. Among these areas, Yeldeğirmeni is still relatively cheap for this student group, hence the demand for the flats in the area is high. Under these circumstances, landlords turned the demand of Erasmus students into an advantage to increase the rents of their flats.

Although cheap rent is an important factor, the motivations of Erasmus students to live in Yeldeğirmeni vary. The Erasmus students I interviewed say that they prefer to settle on the Asian side because the European side is more individualistic, crowded and attract tourists. Erasmus students are attracted by affordable and attractive flats that would cost a lot more in other parts of the city, but also the local culture, multicultural structure and lively atmosphere of the neighborhood are attractive factors of the area for this group. One of them defined the neighborhood as a ‘little village in the city’, in which everybody knows each other. On the one hand, desire for an authentic urban village which has an ethnically, locally and culturally distinctive character is one of the basic motivations for people who look for a connection with the history of a place (Zukin 2010). On the other hand, it can be said that they seek a specific habitus, as Butler (2007) argues, as a basic pattern of gentrification process. This may allow them to feel comfortable and belong to the cultural atmosphere. An Erasmus student puts this into words as: “I can see that there are many young people living in my neighborhood. They are all very nice and I feel comfortable”⁵³.

⁵³ Interview, 2 May 2015

These basic patterns are also observed in the other social groups in Yeldeğirmeni. One of these groups is comprised of artists who have had an impact on the cultural environment of Yeldeğirmeni. Since the neighborhood supplies suitable places for art ateliers in terms of both affordable prices and also spacious places, art students and artists have already settled in Yeldeğirmeni. However art ateliers and studios, and artists moving to the area became the most prominent feature of Yeldeğirmeni in recent years due to a dramatic increase in the artistic community. The number of ateliers increased from 30 to 80 until the end of 2013. Today there are several kinds of ateliers in Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood housing sculptors, painterscollage artists and designers. For the owners of new ateliers that I interviewed, the quiet, multicultural and historical atmosphere of the neighborhood provides inspiration to them. The space is also favorable in terms of various kinds of small retailers which supply the materials used in the art productions. The existence of many art ateliers is also an important reason for the new artist population; they have a circle of artist friendship in the area, which make them feel comfortable. Most of the new comers familiarize themselves with Yeldeğirmeni via their friends. They are the settled population of Yeldeğirmeni as well. However the interviewees, especially who work and live in Yeldeğirmeni for a long time, emphasize that rent prices are no longer affordable for many artists.

The increasing value of the space is also related to the new café culture which affects the profile of the visitors of the neighborhood as well as the new residents. In relation to this, the neighborhood has become crowded, impacting negatively on the quiet atmosphere of the neighborhood.

Several types of cafes and coffee houses began to appear mainly in the last two years. There are almost 25 newly opened cafés in Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood. Today there are many cafes, coffee houses and hostels, as well as several food & beverage places, one bar and one performance hall. They are distinctive with both their concepts and their understanding of business. For example one of the first cafes of the neighborhood that emerged during this period Komşu Café, opened

in November 2013 following the Gezi Park movement. It presents to their visitors the possibility of paying whatever they can or helping the works of the café in return food and drink. In other words, support and sharing are basic motivations of this cafe. Another example is Matruşka Anti Café opened in April 2015, which people can use to work, prepare meals or simply to eat or drink by paying a fixed amount of money for one hour or one month. In this regard the cafes also are constructed in Yeldeğirmeni as an alternative to other standardized and homogenized businesses. They also support the cultural life with several activities. The owner of the breakfast hall opened in April 2015 is a well-known poet of Kadıköy and he uses the space for organizing poet nights and nostalgic Turkish films screening. In this regard, they are a part of alternative cultural life in Yeldeğirmeni. The owner of another café, Bilumum Şeyler, is a painter and is 36 years old. He moved from Cihangir to Yeldeğirmeni for economic reasons. He also has several artist friends living in Yeldeğirmeni:

I gathered up all the material for the café from the street and I constructed the inside myself. My aim is not just to earn money by serving tea and coffee; I am trying to define my space as a social meeting place. I especially want to develop the bicycle culture in Yeldeğirmeni. In other elite cafes or coffee shops, they use the bicycle as a decoration material. In Yeldeğirmeni, there are not these kind of things. People come here and share their stories. Other café owners have similar aims. They are also people who could not do anything in their own fields or even by opening their own business for the purpose of producing something in their field.⁵⁴

In this sense, they are mostly motivated by the alternative culture of Yeldeğirmeni. They are not investors but are mainly developing an individual belonging to the space in terms of their life styles. Their motivations for opening a café in Yeldeğirmeni are both related to affordable rent prices and the lively atmosphere of the neighborhood. These new group also are generally in their 30s.

From the viewpoint of other new residents in the neighborhood, the alternative, dynamic and lively atmosphere of Yeldeğirmeni are their basic motivations. One

⁵⁴ Interview with the owner of Bilumum Şeyler, 10 May 2015.

of the interviewees, who is a 26 year-old designer, settled in Yeldeğirmeni a year ago due to the relatively cheaper rent. Also, for her, the authenticity of the neighborhood appealed to her. Another new resident also defines Yeldeğirmeni as a distinct area from its surroundings in terms of its quiet but colorful atmosphere. This resident also likes the newly emerging café culture of Yeldeğirmeni. According to him cafés present a distinct atmosphere; they prioritize a way of life instead of focusing purely on making a profit from the space. However there are members of the community who argue that the latest cafes, especially coffee houses, target a more elite class due to their prices making them unaffordable to poorer residents. In relation to this argument, Cihangirleşme phenomenon was frequently mentioned by the interviewees in the field study for defining the ongoing process in Yeldeğirmeni.

Cihangirleşme was basically identified with both the existence of art ateliers and various cafes and also the hipster culture. It is used by inhabitants to describe the appearance of these buildings and their role in the cultural realm. This phenomenon has been observed in Yeldeğirmeni, and there is a concern about the deterioration of cultural structure of Yeldeğirmeni, disappearance of small retailers and displacement of the old inhabitants in the future, as it was seen in the gentrification process of Cihangir. It was argued that the newcomers have no consciousness of the existing cultural structure of Yeldeğirmeni and a cultural distinction has been generated between them and the local residents. In this sense, some of the old residents of the neighborhood, who are relatively conservative and have a traditional family structure, express their disturbance about the new cultural profile of the neighborhood. One of the old residents of the neighborhood emphasizes the family based household structure of Yeldeğirmeni and says “the old inhabitants of Yeldeğirmeni are from Bingöl, Ağrı. Culturally different people to us open cafes here and unavoidably the local people perceive their attributes differently”.⁵⁵ Therefore they have a beef with the new cafes and also the new

⁵⁵ Interview, 10 May 2015

profile of Yeldeğirmeni. However, some of the local residents, in particular landlords, are pleased about the revitalization of the neighborhood.

The residents of the neighborhood associate the increasing demand for settlement in Yeldeğirmeni with several reasons. The artists I interviewed mainly argue that Kadıköy is a tolerant and comfortable place for many people in recent years because of its relatively more democratic and distinctive atmosphere compared to other central districts of Istanbul. For the new demand of art producers and people who run businesses in the space, they say that the politics implemented in Taksim do not enable them to pursue their life style there. Yeldeğirmeni became a favorable place for these people who live or work there in terms of tolerance and neighborhood culture. They also express that the internal dynamics of the neighborhood accelerated the transformation process. In this sense, the favorable living and working facilities of the neighborhood for Erasmus students as well as artists, the alternative scene which emerged with DKSC and the amelioration of the streets and public spaces of the neighborhood affected the perceptions of people who look for a living area in Kadıköy.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

5.1. Concluding Remarks on Case Study Findings

In the last three years, an accelerated transformation process has been observed in Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood. The population of the neighborhood increased in this process and an alternative café culture following the newly emerged cultural groups was generated in the space. Today, there are many art producers, foreign students and young employed people living in Yeldeğirmeni. In relation to the demand for residential as well as commercial units, the values of the properties and the rent increased in the neighborhood. In other words, the new population, which brought a new neighborhood culture to the neighborhood, generated an economic valorization of the place. As the field study indicates, there are several triggering forces at work in the transformation process of Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood. Since the dynamics discussed in the previous chapters were actualized in a sequential way in the area they triggered each others' impact on the transformation process.

As an economically deprived historical locality, Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood is a potentially profitable but undervalued area for entrepreneurs and investors. In consideration of Smith's theory (2002), this emerging rent gap between the actual and potential value of the space reveals the possibility of gentrification of Yeldeğirmeni. Although a gap between the actual and potential prices of the land value emerged in Yeldeğirmeni in the course of all the transformation process, yet, this rent gap has attracted a limited amount of capital that could invest on the space. In other words, there is a limited private capital investment in the area which does not attract wealthier customers and potential property investors. Therefore, one of the differentiating elements of the transformation in

Yeldeğirmeni area is the limited capital investment in the area, although the cultural investment is increasing.

Why does the area attract limited capital compared to the other central, historical districts under the gentrification process? There are several interrelated social and economic reasons which were explained in the previous chapters and are highlighted below in this chapter. Before highlighting the factors that makes the transformation peculiar in Yeldeğirmeni, I would argue that along with the new comers, who belong to the new middle class, old residents of the area have also an impact on the dynamics of transformation in the area: since they are willing to live in the area, they are property owners and the transformation in the area brings some benefits to them. Especially from the property owners' point of view, the increase in demands for rental places as well as the increase in rent prices are benefits of the current transformation process. Therefore, it can be argued that, firstly, old residents have strong ties in the neighborhood and a will to live in the area; and secondly, property owners in the area, who are the old residents, benefit from the increasing demand in rental places as well as increasing rent, thus they keep their properties rather selling them to property investors. Therefore, the rich capital investment in the area has not taken place yet, which makes the transformation process in Yeldeğirmeni different from the other gentrifying areas.

In the whole transformation process, the Yeldeğirmeni Neighborhood Renewal Project (YNRP) has a noticeable role. YNRP has been formed rather differently from the other municipality-led renewal projects. For example, since gentrification has led to the displacement of existing population and the deterioration of the historical structure of the neighborhoods in some places such as Cihangir and Fener-Balat, YNRP avoided a direct intervention in the historical structure. Instead, YNRP aims to protect existing neighborhood culture and also the revitalization of the neighborhood for newcomers by creating and encouraging artistic and cultural urban space. Within the scope YNRP green areas and public spaces were generated, several public structures were established, the streets were physically rearranged and various infrastructural improvement works were

implemented in Yeldeğirmeni. In this respect, the physical quality of the space was increased. Additionally civil initiatives, such as the civil economy and interchange economy were encouraged in order to generate the neighborhood's own cultural-economic structure using as an alternative to market forces. Art was used in several projects and the festivals contributed to the recognition of the neighborhood as an artistic place as well. In the similar path with YNRP, Design Atelier of Kadıköy (TAK) as a voluntary organization implemented several projects based on design in the spatial realm of Kadıköy including Yeldeğirmeni. TAK also promoted the 'brand' of Kadıköy by developing creative design projects and workshops on the national and international level.

These attempts can be conceptualized as a 'positive' gentrification, which Cameron (2003) proposes as a public policy tool for the physical and economic regeneration of the neighborhood. As seen in the study of Cameron and Coaffee (2005), art is used for improvement of the environment to create a positive impact on the image of urban space. On the other hand, Zukin argues that these kinds of attempts of urban governments are a cultural and economical strategy for deprived spaces in order to market the district, attract tourists and investors and promote safe the spaces. According to Zukin, local governments use the historical tissue of places to create an authentic image for them, and use this authenticity to market the area with its distinctive cultural identity for attracting investment. Although having different approaches, both Zukin and Cameron argue that these attempts are likely to result in an increase in real estate values and private development in these areas. In the Yeldeğirmeni area, the highlighted points of the two approaches can be observed. Although the municipality's intention with YNRP was not directly to attract capital, the impact of the project can be observed in the cultural transformation of the area and the changing economic activities, such as a rising number of cafés and art places.

One of the crucial points that is underlined in the gentrification studies is the role of the people who carried out the social and cultural practices in the gentrifying areas. Gentrification cannot only be explained with the practices of local

governments or the investment of the capital in the spaces which cause changes in the social and economic demography of places. The differentiated characteristics of the gentrifiers should be taken into consideration in observations on the spatial reorganization. To that extent, Zukin (2010) works on the concept of Bobos (bourgeois bohemians), introduced by Brooks (2000), as a group that leads cultural transformation in these areas, who have a bohemian world of creativity but at the same time the ambitions of the bourgeoisie. Zukin (2010) argues that the bourgeois ambitions of this cultured group attract capital and entrepreneurs to invest in these areas in order to supply the cultural and social needs of this population. In the Yeldeğirmeni case, it is seen from the research findings that a culturally rich group of residents has been moved to the area recently which could be associated with the cultural middle class groups. Furthermore, it is also seen that, the number of art ateliers, cafés and entertainment places are increasing. This picture suits to the conceptualization of *Bobos*; but still, the big investors following up the cultural capital have yet to be arrived to Yeldeğirmeni.

As mentioned above, one of the reasons of the lack of following-up capital in a culturally developing place can be argued as the condition of the current property market and the residential profile. The other reason I would draw as a conclusion from the research findings is the changing political and social culture and spatial preferences in Istanbul due to the Gezi Park protests and its impact on the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood. As is discussed in Chapter 4, the Gezi Park uprising and the transformation of Taksim and Istiklal Street have a remarkable impact on the development of central Kadıköy, so the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood. The most noticeable, the Don Kisot Social Center (DKSC), the first squatted building of Turkey, was established in Yeldeğirmeni. DKSC is an important element of the transformation in Yeldeğirmeni that determines the nature of the transformation and the social relations in the area. DKSC is an alternative cultural group taking actions in the space in which they live, which has been formed during the Gezi Park protests and shaped by the ethical values that emerged within the protests. Because of the ongoing destructive politics all over the city, many people are

motivated to protect the places that they live and which are under threat. In this sense the solidarity idea and alternative ways of living which emerged with the Gezi Park movement emerged in Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood with the Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity group and DKSC, which leads to a culturally as well as politically distinct environment. Therefore, the emergence of a distinctive and alternative life with DKSC in Yeldeğirmeni attracted several other social groups, but also the popularity and activities of DKSC also began to influence the existing neighborhood relations. Therefore, along with the cultural transformation in the area by the new cultural middle class, there has also been a transformation in the political environment of the neighborhood with the establishment of Yeldeğirmeni Solidarity group and DKSC.

Today, Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood hosts several different social groups such as artists, Erasmus students and newly employed young people as well as new businesses which share similar motivations with the new residential profile of Yeldeğirmeni. Kadıköy as well as Yeldeğirmeni attracted the attention of these social groups after the changing socio-cultural structure of Taksim which is another important location for the cultural and entertainment facilities. Taksim started to lose its affluence for students, new middle classes and artists as a result of the restricting politics of the governing party AKP over the cultural use of space. Especially after the Gezi Park protests, increasing intervention of police forces in the area affected the population and businesses of the area. The artist population living and working in Taksim or Cihangir also affected colonized space by commerce and the state forces. As Savage et al (2005) argue, artists and cultural classes seek to move socially and spatially when there is no correspondence between their habitus and field. In this sense, more local and tolerant culture of Kadıköy became attractive for these people in the way of constructing their habitus. The Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood emerged as a favorable residential location for this new cultural class because of the low rent prices, central locality and alternative social and political culture mostly derived from DKSC.

As the new population of Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood is investigated, the features of a new cultural class are observed. This new cultural class prefers to live in Yeldeğirmeni because of low rent prices and also alternative cultural spaces. Besides, the area presents many advantages such as its spatial proximity to the central transportation axes and its less commercialized and quiet places. The historical, authentic and local atmosphere of Yeldeğirmeni is also an attraction point for the new comers. Additionally, the alternative culture became more important eventually in the formation of the spatial relations. For example, cafes opened in Yeldeğirmeni represent an alternative way of service in terms of their concepts and business understanding. Therefore, the alternative ways of living have been put into practices in Yeldeğirmeni.

The field study demonstrates that, many people moved in to Yeldeğirmeni via their social networks, from which it can be concluded that social networks are also important in the population flow of Yeldeğirmeni. They preferred to move in this area because they feel comfortable with people like them. As Butler (2007) argues, people engaged in new forms of gentrification based on the prominence of choice. This is called as 'class clustering' by Butler, which means that people choose their living place accordingly where they feel comfortable not only physically but also socially. The impact of this factor can be observed in the increasing demand for rental flats and stores, as well as the increasing prices of rent in Yeldeğirmeni especially in last year.

In Yeldeğirmeni, in contrast to various other cases, the new population of the neighborhood does not have enough economic contribution in the gentrification process. Rather, the existing artistic population of the neighborhood has a high cultural capital but low economic capital. Besides, there are students who came to this area due to its central location and the cheap rent. However, the increasing number of cafes which are getting more and more commercial and also have a more elite profile to the visitors to the neighborhood generate a concern about the possibility of a similar gentrification process to Cihangir. It is hard to estimate the future of the area in such a dynamic process; yet, the features of the area

explained here could change soon. In fact, due to the increase in the prices of the rental places, the area is becoming unaffordable for the newcomers as well as the students. Hence, it can be argued that rising prices in the neighborhood would suggest more changes in the population of the area.

5.2. Conclusion

The cultural and economic transformation of historical inner-city areas is one of the main dynamics of urbanization in the metropolitan cities. The emergence of the new middle class in relation to the changing economic activity of societies and also new spatial arrangements of the city centers as an effect of suburbanization and deindustrialization generate gentrification in some residential areas of the cities. As gentrification discussions indicate, there are several dimensions of the issue, which differentiate according to culture and economy. However the main point of the discussion is that it is basically the class movement which transformed the neighborhood into a gentrified area.

The process of gentrification began in the historical inner city areas of Istanbul mainly through the movement of the new middle class to the central areas of the city in the 1980s. Since the cultural and economic activities intensified in the city centers, culturally and economically affluent social groups moved to the close places to business centers as well as cultural facilities. The historical inner city areas came into prominence in this process. The neighborhoods where the lower income immigrant population settled emerged as potential residential areas for this group because of both their inexpensive housing stock and proximity to the city centers. In this regard, the gentrification process started in several old inner city area of Istanbul. Artists and architects were actors of gentrification processes of Cihangir, Galata, Asmalımescit, Kuzguncuk and Ortaköy; there was an individual attempt to renovate the old housing stock of the neighborhood and the following process increased the real estate prices, and investors and entrepreneurs

bought and restored the buildings. In contrast, there was a direct impact of government and municipalities in the gentrification process of Fener-Balat. As in these districts, Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood is an historical inner city area which has potential features of gentrification similar to these other cases. However, the case of Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood differentiates in terms of its own dynamics as well as the class-based nature of the transformation.

Yeldeğirmeni is an old historical neighborhood located in central Kadıköy. As we see in other cases, Yeldeğirmeni was also an economically and physically deprived neighborhood which was abandoned by the non-Muslim population and later an immigrant population from Anatolia settled there. Because of the cheap accommodation opportunities as well as its central location students and artist have been moved in Yeldeğirmeni. In recent years Yeldeğirmeni come into prominence with several transportation projects and urban transformation projects surrounding the area. Due to these large scale urban development projects, the land value of the area started to increase and Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood turned into a potential gentrification area. Being aware of the potential of the area, Kadıköy Municipality and ÇEKÜL implemented a renewal project in the area in order to protect the local identities, historical character of the area as well as to ameliorate the living conditions of the neighborhood for both inhabitants and newcomers.

The transformation of the neighborhood has some distinctive characteristics that eliminated the entrance of big capital to the area to make investment in the property market. So far, the transformation process has not caused displacement of the old residents on a remarkable level; rather, in this neighborhood, it is observed that the old residents also benefitted from the increasing cost of living in the area since the main intention of the newcomers is to find rental places rather than make investment on the property market.

In Yeldeğirmeni, the transformation in the social and economic scale and the organization of the space is carried out by the new cultural middle class and

students who have high levels of cultural capital but low levels of economic capital. Therefore, the transformation in the area derived from these groups is different from the other gentrifying areas where economic capital has been central to the gentrification process.

Last but not least, the political turmoil that the country has been experiencing has also impacted on the socio-political and spatial transformation of the neighborhood. Yeldeğirmeni became an attraction point for the groups formed during the Gezi Park uprising, which represents a new political culture developing especially among the youths. This political culture has a big intention to reorganize space and spatial relations, as well as take part in the dynamics of everyday life due to the reason that this political culture has emerged: Gezi Park. This unique case, which is a milestone in the political culture of Turkey, has had an important impact on the transformation of Yeldeğirmeni, making Yeldeğirmeni a unique case at the same time. To sum up, not only the local dynamics but the broader political and economic conditions, as well as the spatial politics have impacts on the transformation of areas.

The social and spatial transformation in Yeldeğirmeni is in its early stages and there are many other issues that need to be investigated in the future. What the Yeldeğirmeni case indicates in this research is that the social and economic features of the people who are likely to cause gentrification in a certain place, and the overall political and economic conditions are all crucial elements in understanding the dynamics of spatial transformation, if they give way to the dynamics of gentrification.

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