



Entertainment & Leisure Consumption in Istanbul
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The current study aims to comprehend the basic parameters of the historical development of leisure consumption and entertainment. My key research questions are as follows: **(a)** How could we to comprehend and contextualize the demands of various types of consumers? How were such demands fulfilled by various types of producers who supplied such entertainment and leisure consumption-oriented services? In short, I try to look at the dynamics of supply and demand in entertainment and leisure. **(b)** How did the state and other actors regulate and mediate between leisure consumption and entertainment supply and demand? How did regulation and mediation mechanisms provide the broad contours within which such activities were operating? How were the mechanisms such as; support and promotion, provision of employment opportunities, assignment of different levels of respect and prestige, taxation, deciding on legal and/or informal frames of employment and entrepreneurship, limitation, banning and penalizing deployed variously by governmental and non-governmental forces? **(c)** How were 'ethnic' difference and diversity functionalized, and then later on, commodified? How was this functionalization taking place in terms of consuming the 'Other' as an object of interest? How various ethno-religious groups were socially, economically and culturally channeled to distinct leisure consumption and entertainment-oriented vocations and market niches?

Leisure and entertainment landscapes encompass individuals, groups or institutions that offer leisure and entertainment. On the one hand: there are producers, that is, entrepreneurs and larger entertainment corporations including their employees. On the other hand, there are consumers, that is, individuals and groups who are interested in enjoying these activities. They are in a chicken and egg relationship, they influence each other, and their interaction drives the development of these leisure consumption and entertainment landscapes.

But, as elsewhere, this interaction does not take place in a vacuum. Following Kloosterman and Rath, I am sensitive to the fact that the interaction of supply and demand, of production and consumption, is on the one hand always *embedded* in wider structures, and on the other hand is always *mediated* (Kloosterman & Rath, 2001; Rath, 2007). That's why I am interested in the wider social, cultural, political and economic structures that shape leisure and entertainment. In this sense, I am also interested in:

- 1) The role of the state and its allies in regulating the social, cultural, political and economic life of Turkey and, in so doing, regulating the leisure and entertainment landscape.
- 2) The set of mediators and the process of *mediation* that affect taste, preferences and choices of leisure and entertainment seekers on the one hand, and the strategic choices and style preferences of entertainment entrepreneurs on the other hand.
- 3) Finally, I am interested in how social and cultural *diversities* (in plural, thus ethnic, religious, class and lifestyle, etc.) interfere in these processes.

In order to analytically organize the book, I have espoused a chronological approach whereby I have assigned chapters to different historical periods that I claim could be categorized together: Chapter II charts the story from the Byzantine Empire, via the Classical period of the Ottoman Empire that lasted until the Reform Ottoman period covering the nineteenth century until 1920s. Chapter III concentrates on early Republican (single-party) period of modern Turkey (1920s-1950) and the multi-party, Populist-Developmentalist period of 1950-1980. Chapter IV brings the story until today by analyzing the Neoliberal-Conservative period since 1980. Chapter V is the concluding section that wraps up the historical and analytical discussion. At each chapter, I tried to address the research questions, identify the continuities and transformations by connecting the historical itinerary to the complex interplays of among producers, consumers, mediators and regulators and chart the workings of the processes of diversity as summarized categorically.

As discussed in the **Chapter II, leisure consumption and entertainment under the Byzantine, Classical and Reform Ottoman periods** of Istanbul are certainly

instructive in the sense that they help us better understand the developments and transformations during the Republican period.

(a) Consumers and Producers: In terms of understanding dynamics of supply and demand in entertainment and leisure, consumers and producers were positioned differently under different periods. Between the Byzantine and Classical Ottoman periods, there exist important continuities: In both periods, there was a hierarchical stratification consisting of elite entertainers on the top, who were seen as high-skilled and/or highly educated and popular entertainers on the bottom who were seen as lower-skilled and/or lower-educated. I claim that they catered to ‘high-brow’ (i.e. consumers in Crown/Palace, aristocrat or richer circles) and ‘low-brow’ (lower class of consumers) forms of leisure consumption and entertainment, respectively. Another dimension of continuity had to do with the organization of entertainers under various vocational categories. However, what has changed during the Classical Ottoman period has to do with the impact of ‘ethnicity’ that became a clearer and stronger dynamic in organization and clustering of entertainers and their work.

(b) Regulation and Mediation: In all three periods, states and other actors developed various ways to regulate and mediate between leisure consumption and entertainment supply and demand. In the Byzantine and Classical period Ottoman Empires, leisure consumption and entertainment were important for the state in terms of prestige and showing off Imperial wealth and power. The states were also not only active in terms of provision of public entertainment, but also in terms of directly helping form and hierarchically clustering organized groups of entertainers. Also under the Byzantine and Classical Ottoman periods,

religious authorities had important roles of regulating leisure consumption and entertainment in terms of morally allowing or condemning and penalizing various forms and actors.

(c) Dynamics of Diversity and 'Ethnicity': In the Byzantine, Classical and Reform Ottoman periods' leisure consumption and entertainment, 'ethnic' difference and diversity were variously functionalized, and then later on, commodified. Byzantine and later, Classical Ottoman leisure consumption and entertainment were characterized by important levels of 'ethnicity'-based vocational specialization, maintained not only by regulatory policies and categories, but perceptions of 'ethnic' difference prevalent in the larger public. However, those two classificatory mechanisms operated under stricter rules during the Byzantine and Classical Ottoman periods than during the Reform Ottoman period.

In Chapter III, I argue that the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 signified, among many other things, a deep transformation in leisure consumption and entertainment. This transformation implied a radical break from the previous Reform Ottoman period. It at once incorporated some important continuity with it.

(a) Consumers & Producers: In the period of 1920-1980, Turkey has witnessed the pains associated with a transformation from a multi-ethnic, multi-confessional empire to a homogenized nation-state. Non-Muslims in Turkey their numbers, social visibility and cultural participation decreasing progressively. With such larger impacts, in general and the anti-minority legislation concerning those employees of the leisure consumption and entertainment sectors, specifically, Jews became the first group to

evacuate those sectors, followed at a slower pace by Greeks and Armenians, respectively. Their positions within those trades, their capital and establishments were started to be replaced by their Muslim or Turkish *kalfa* (journeymen) or *çırak* (apprentice) who bought off their establishments at significantly reduced rates.

(b) Regulation & Mediation: In the early Republican period between 1920 and 1950, the state's role shifted from reformist paternalism towards radical modernist paternalism. While in the previous period westernization was a powerful line of reform, it had not yet attained the early republican period's programmatic, decidedly radical and top-down modernization character. Atatürk's macro-civilizational target of overall westernization incorporated a careful yet fragile recasting of both *alafranga* and *alaturka* by harmonizing them with the requirements of cultural modernization and westernization. Radical modernist paternalism also involved a reconstruction of the Turkish *Volk* whereby the masses who were to be adequately trained were expected to find their own dormant potentials as well as to appreciate the high cultural taste of western forms of leisure consumption and entertainment. They were also to steer away from the dangers of excessive *alafranga*. This double-strategy has underwritten the coming-of-age of the new, republican consumers.

(c) Dynamics of Diversity: Processes of diversity and ethnicity at play were largely underwritten by two key societal dynamics that had jointly stamped the period between 1920 and 1980 were: **(1)** the continuing and dramatically speeding-up decimation of the non-Muslim ethnic minorities, that was also discussed above, under consumers and producers; and **(2)** the rural to urban migration and the out-migration to Germany and other foreign destinations. These two major transformations shaped

new diversities –including ethnic diversity- which contoured the scenes of leisure consumption and entertainment to a considerable extent.

Chapter IV discusses the last three decades of Istanbul’s major transformations. I argued that they could be seen as having developed as a result or under the institutional wings of two successive types of regulation that I suggested to term: 1) Pro-Market and Managerial Paternalism launched in 1980 by two radical breaks; pro-market reform and coup d’état. This period continued until 2002. 2) Neo-Liberal and Conservative Paternalism that was initiated by *AK Parti* since 2002.

(a) Consumers & Producers:

In the period of 1980-2014, Istanbul has grown considerably in space and population. Increasingly more diverse groups from myriad geographical backgrounds poured into the city. The city map became a patchwork with numerous ethno-confessional, socio-economic and cultural concentrations of clusterings with demographic and commercial functions. In this diversity-laced environment, economic income levels, social status, cultural and economic capital, lifestyle considerations all play out in the diverse shaping up of consumers groupings and, in turn, providers who run to fulfill those demands. Infrastructural and transportation work by the central and municipal regulators and their global city branding policies have also radically transformed the map of leisure consumption and entertainment in Istanbul.

(b) Regulation & Mediation:

The two sub-periods, 1980-2002 and 2002-2014 were marked by Pro-Market and Managerial Paternalism and Neo-Liberal and Conservative Paternalism respectively. Both sub-periods transformed the role of the state in consumption, radically altering the model under the national developmental /

populist paternalist period between 1950 and 1980. The transformation was in some senses a continuation of 1950-1980, in the sense that the ageing ideological orthodoxies of early republican Kemalism (1920-1950) were further relaxed. However, 1980-2002 was also a break in terms of the regulation, in the sense that Fordist, Keynesian and populist consumption policies were dethroned by the pro-market, managerial, neo-liberal and conservative policies. Central and municipal regulatory policies critically re-shaped what Engelen calls the 'structure of the market', 'locality of the market' and 'the mode, level and object of regulation' (2001).

(c) Dynamics of Diversity:

Processes of diversity and ethnicity at play were largely underwritten by two key societal dynamics that had jointly stamped the period between 1980 and 1980 were; the increasing share in Istanbul of Kurds who were displaced from out of Southeastern Anatolia, fleeing the conflict between the state and PKK; and the rising globalization and transnationalization of the population in the city. These two major transformations shaped new diversities –including ethnic diversity- which contoured the scenes of leisure consumption and entertainment to a considerable extent.

Kurds and other provincial newcomers colored both the consumer base and the laborscape of leisure consumption and entertainment in the city. They most constituted the 'invisible' workforce and those consumers whose voices were not so much heard of or uttered at mainstream media or by other mediators. While their ethnicity was mostly 'functional' in terms of their steering to the 'back' and 'bottom' of the laborscapes, a new type of ethnicization was at play at the 'front' and 'top' parts. In terms of the

bifurcating stratification of 'ethnicization,' I would claim that those on the top of the bifurcated laborscape of leisure consumption and entertainment compose of a stratum of what I would call 'chic ethnics,' who are in the 'front' of the top 'slice' of the leisure consumption and entertainment laborscape in Istanbul. Chic ethnics are highly visible, and are consciously deployed there to form the façade of the enterprises by the entrepreneurs and owners.