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### Entertainment & leisure consumption in Istanbul

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CHAPTER

**1**

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**Scenes, Actors and Processes:  
Studying Istanbul's leisure  
consumption and entertainment**

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“Marx once said;  
‘one must force the frozen circumstances to dance  
by singing them their own melody’.  
The frozen circumstances of space only come alive  
when the melody of time is played”  
Nigel Thrift (1977:448)

# SCENES, ACTORS AND PROCESSES

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## I. PROLOGUE: WHAT'S IN AN AVENUE?

As you almost literally 'swim' amidst the sea of night-goers, you are struck by the diversity and multiplicity of the scenes and personalities on *İstiklâl Caddesi* (Independence -or Liberty- Avenue<sup>1</sup>) the axial pedestrian thoroughfare in *Beyoğlu* district, the current and historical entertainment heartland of not only Istanbul, but also entire Turkey -if not the geographical region of the country. Street musicians, dancers and puppeteers perform on this shiny avenue, connecting the central Taksim square to *Tünel* circle, each of which are transportation hubs and social meeting points on their own.

Beer-guzzling aficionados of the style proceed to dark metal live music bar *Dorock* and pass next to sleek stockbrokers who are on their way to bouncer-gated rooftop lounge *NuPera* overlooking the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn. At *Krependeki İmroz*, a classical meyhâne, the famous wine house/restaurant where the anise seed based, very strong spirit rakı is the staple item, Roma musicians circulate around tables to collect tips. Rock band members or House music DJs gulp down their energy drinks as they get ready to take stage at *Hayal Kahvesi*<sup>2</sup> the legendary live music establishment with a quickly commercializing yet cult following.

Lower class youngsters living in the peripheries and who get to be known under the strange epithet of *apaçi*<sup>3</sup> (apache) constitute distinct groupings strolling around in this city core, with their strikingly peculiar looks, mannerisms and popularly ridiculed dancing styles. African and Jamaican expats and immigrants walk towards Nayah Reggae Club while the latter group has certainly a slimmer chance to be admitted there... Electronic/house clubbers including Western expats are en route to *The Hall* (a cutting edge electronic music club opened up in the renovated barn of a rundown Armenian Church). As they walk, they rub shoulders with numerous sorts of families who are ostentatiously present almost at all times and usually go in and out of *Benetton*, *Sütiş*, *Mado* and the like. Some of those families are tourists of different nationalities -with a dramatic increase in Arab nationals recently. Some are liberal and secular citizens while others are conservative Muslims or recently migrated Kurds.

<sup>1</sup> This avenue was formerly known in Ottoman Turkish as *Cadde-i Kebir* (Grand Avenue) and in French as *Grande Rue de Pera*.

<sup>2</sup> *Hayal Kahvesi* literally means "Coffeeshouse of the Fancy"

<sup>3</sup> *Apaçi* refers to an urban personality. S/He is usually part of a group of youngsters originating from and mostly residing in what is called *varoş* (the poorer outskirts of the city) and who work in the city center (usually as barbershop trainees or as artisans' aides) or hang around there for entertainment purposes. They are usually popularly ridiculed. Note that while the current *apaçi* do not necessarily refer to this prehistory, especially in the 1960s, with Hollywood's Western movies getting popular in Turkey, some portions of the youth associated themselves with the plight of the 'red skins' (*kızılderililer* implying, Native Americans) and thus called themselves *Apaş* -a word adapted from the French pronunciation of Apache. For further debates see, Tekelioğlu, *Radikal İki*, 14/11/2010.

This pivotal and shiny pedestrian thoroughfare that strips for two kilometers is crosscut by many side streets housing a diverse assortment of cafés, bars, and clubs as well as numerous other leisure consumption and entertainment establishments. In these streets, it is not uncommon to see a Rock bar at almost an arm's length from a Trance/House club. Transvestite 'dating' and 'networking' hangouts –such as *1001 Discothèque*– are not far away from *Munzur Türkü Evi* –literary 'Ballad House' or sometimes referred to as *Türkü Bar*'– playing live Anatolian folk-protest music to an urban yet provincially anchored clientele. At *Umut Ocakbaşı* the grill restaurant where you sit, eat and drink stove-side, Kurdish waiters run tirelessly to serve customers fresh-out-of-the-grill kebab and top emptied *rakı* glasses. The neighboring *nargile* (waterpipe) cafés never serve alcohol and are frequented by youngsters ranging from Marxist intellectual types to female university students with elegant headscarves –or without any.

Around *İstiklâl*, up on the eye level and right on the very streets, you also certainly feel the creeping and at times overwhelming shadow of commercialization and corporatization illustrated by the sprouting shopping malls with controversial architectural designs such as *Demirören AVM* and renovated old buildings turned into luxury residences, fine dining restaurants or yet another branch of *Starbucks*. The municipal garbage collectors and street cleaners work around the clock in regular intervals to keep the avenue clean and attractive.

On huge billboards, the face of Beyoğlu's young mayor elected from the ticket of Prime Minister Erdoğan's AK Party (*AK Parti, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*: Justice and Development Party<sup>4</sup>), smiles towards this everyday flood of hundreds of thousands. There, he announces that "Beyoğlu is now a Global Brand" and lists all his 'innovative' projects, including the highly controversial one to turn the 'ugly' inner city slum of Tarlabası, Kurdish and Roma dominated neighborhood just a few blocks to the north of *İstiklâl Caddesi* where a significant portion of the laborers of the district's entertainment, dining and drinking establishments live, into the "next *Champs-Élysées*" (Demircan, 2009). This ostentatious avenue and its environs imply a focal locality whereby not only numerous groups come together for the purposes of leisure and entertainment, but also where the processes of diversity are crystallized.

*Asmalımescit* section of *İstiklâl* –which is at the very southern edge– that was notorious only a decade and a half ago because of the 'terrifying'

4 Note that due to their refusal to use a positive-sounding short form, most of the political opposition and some media outlets use the alternative and far simpler acronym, "AKP" instead of "AK Parti" which could also be translated as the "Clean (or White) Party". However, since AK Parti is the official acronym with which the party was also registered in the records, this book refers to Erdoğan's party with its official name and acronym.

presence of transvestite sex workers, crack dealers and glue-sniffing street kids, is now lauded in daily newspapers and various blogs as “Istanbul’s SoHo”<sup>5</sup>, bustling with art galleries, salsa dance courses and clubs such as Cuba, ethno-crossover live music clubs such as *Babylon* and gourmet café *Şimdi* which is certified by guidebooks -and endorsed in this claim by many international clients- not only for serving a delicious cup of coffee, but also for being a nice place to go “if you like to chill out and enjoy meeting local intellectuals”<sup>6</sup>.

### 1. 1. İstiklâl Avenue & Taksim Gezi Parkı Protests: “Two worlds colliding?”

Yet this seemingly trendy and glossy *İstiklâl* Avenue’s very “backyard” was the place where a rather unexpected burst of emotions took place, surprising many observers as well as residents... Since the closing days of the month of May and until at least late July 2013, *Gezi Parkı* (Promenade Park) a tiny public strip of green earth adjacent to the central Taksim square and within visible proximity to *İstiklâl*’s northeastern tip became the actual and symbolic center stage of what was variously referred to as *Gezi Park* Protests; Occupy *Gezi* / Taksim / Istanbul; *Gezi* resistance; *Gezi* movement; June resistance / uprising; #DirenGezi (#ResistGezi); or more negatively as *Gezi Tertibi* (Gezi Scheme / Setup) or *Gezi İsyanı* (Gezi Mutiny), by those who described it as carefully plotted and internationally supported near-coup initiative (*darbe girişimi*) attempting to derail an otherwise well-performing, stable and popular government of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s AK Parti.

This amalgam of positive and negative epithets would hardly suffice to summarize the events that unfolded and continued on with varying densities and severities. But, in way or the other, the protests emanated partly from the clash of two separate views of leisure consumption and entertainment. In this sense, it was not a coincidence that the *Gezi Park* Protests started out in the backyard of *İstiklâl* as the center of leisure consumption and entertainment. Certainly, I am not claiming that the protests broke exclusively over such a clash, but the events seem to have culminated after a long-standing dispute over the citizens’ lives in public spaces and their leisure and entertainment consumption habits.

<sup>5</sup> For a critical account, see

URL: [http://tanpelin.blogspot.com/2006\\_09\\_01\\_archive.html](http://tanpelin.blogspot.com/2006_09_01_archive.html)

<sup>6</sup> See URL: <http://www.istanbul-view.com/top-10-coffee-shops-in-istanbul/>

The longitudinal impacts and possible electoral repercussions of the *Gezi Park* protests which had spread to 80 out of 81 provinces of Turkey and

involving more than three million (Ministry of Interior, 2013) protesters (*bianet*, 2013) will certainly be tested in time. However, what I should underline here is the fact that, while the protests started out ‘technically’ as an outcry against *AK Parti*’s plans to demolish portions of *Gezi* park and re-build a late 19th century historical barrack (*Topçu Kışlası*) instead, what added to its quick spread reportedly was Erdoğan’s perceived top-down, authoritarian and paternalistic style (İnsel, 2013). Numerous protesters ranging from self-styled “anti-capitalist Muslims” to Kemalists, from *Beşiktaş* football club’s left-leaning *Çarşı*<sup>7</sup> group of fans to LGBT activists, from non-party simple citizens and seemingly hitherto ‘apolitical’ students to radical militants of Marxist factions argued that the ruling party and its leader “increasingly meddled with the citizens’ lifestyles” (Bilgiç & Kafkaslı, 2013).

The overbearing presence of the state was already a source of disgruntlement for those citizens with above concerns for years preceding the protests. As mechanisms of security, the practically useful yet controversially notorious MOBESE<sup>8</sup> security cameras and heavily armed riot police buses constantly driven up and down *İstiklâl* Avenue were suffocating in their over-presence for many citizens. Riot police constantly kept eyeing political demonstrators of countless stripes who no longer need to seek governmental permission to march, but have to compete with rival groups of militants of different causes to reserve the desired time slots so to ascertain the best popular impact.

Taksim square was already an emotionally highly-charged and controversial public space due to its history as the “May Day Square” (*1 Mayıs Meydanı*). Taksim was the location of a massacre during the May Day celebration on May 1st, 1977. The massacre was purportedly planned and executed tacitly by agent-provocateur operatives positioned in the midst of the shadowy state security networks dubbed as the “deep state”. After 1977, public demonstrations and marches were banned at Taksim and that was one of the reasons why in time, the square became a symbolic central battleground where the state power and its leftist opponents faced up to and fought one another. The ability and insistence to “get to the square” was a sign of ‘strength’ for the militants, where, in worse cases, almost macho bravado was displayed by the militants and the security forces. The state usually tested its power by not letting people to get to the square with the use of frequently violent security methods. Some long-sought liberalization was initiated when in 2008 *Ak Parti* legislated that May 1st was the “Labor and Solidarity Day”

7 For a thorough analysis of *Çarşı* as an “acoustic community,” see, Kytö (2011).

8 MOBESE stands for *MOBil Elektronik Sistem Entegrasyonu* (Mobile Electronic System Integration), an inter-urban surveillance and security system set up and financed by the Ministry of Interior at all of the 81 provinces. In 2012 the number of MOBESE cameras in Istanbul increased to over 4,700. Istanbul police hopes to eventually raise the total number of cameras to 10,000. MOBESE drew criticism from human rights activists who claimed that while system was heavily used to provide surveillance of political opponents, cameras inside or near police precincts were found to be “broken down” when cases of rights violations were reportedly taken place. For details, see: “Things the MOBESE could not record,” *Bianet* <http://bianet.org/bianet/insan-haklari/90594-mobesenin-cekemedikleri>.

celebration of which could be held in Taksim at well-regulated and heavily policed celebrations. In 2009 in a further sign of positive developments, May Day was announced as a public holiday. However, last year, the manifestations were proscribed again, on the basis of “spatial limitations” set by the construction debris and deep holes left by the highly controversial Taksim Pedestrianization Plan (*Taksim Yayalaştırma Planı*).

While not equipped with police powers or their instruments of brute force, *zabıta* (municipal uniformed officers in charge of enforcing city ordinances) recently rose to notoriety when they forcibly collected the tables and chairs of entertainment and drinking establishments on grounds of “unauthorized and informal invasion of pavements”<sup>9</sup>. The recently-legislated controversial law limiting the retail sale and advertizing of alcohol had added fuel to the claim that *AK Parti* was following through with a stealthily fortifying ‘moralizing’ agenda that had surfaced previously in numerous efforts to pass laws criminalizing ‘adultery,’ limiting women’s reproductive freedoms or even heavily regulating c-section procedures (*bianet*, 2013). The Municipal premises had already stopped serving alcohol after Erdoğan was elected the Metropolitan Mayor in 1994. The 2012 ban of indoor smoking had a significantly negative impact on leisure consumption and entertainment establishments. The controversial law on alcohol in 2013 was a more recent step that alarmed many in Beyoğlu and elsewhere in Istanbul and Turkey

In this context, it was not a coincidence that one of the most popular slogans during the protests -among the countless humorous others- was: “You should not have banned that last [glass of] beer<sup>10</sup> Tayyip!” (Angelopoulos, 2013), sarcastically referring to the Prime Minister with his middle name... Although drinking or sale of beer, or any other alcoholic beverage for that matter, was not technically ‘banned,’ this slogan became a continuously uttered summary of Erdoğan’s and *Ak Parti*’s purportedly restrictive policies on leisure consumption and entertainment (Gökay & Xypolia, 2013). Indeed, in surveys done during the *Gezi* protests, a significant portion of the respondents claimed that the government has a religiously-colored conservative agenda which they claimed not only effectively curtailed forms of free expression or free speech, but also proscribed drinking, smoking and partying, thus seriously meddled with citizens’ lifestyles (Bilgiç & Kafkaslı, 2013; GENAR, 2013).

Some national (Kongar & Küçükkaya, 2013) and international analysts (Levy, 2013) therefore claimed that what went on in Turkey was symptomatic

<sup>9</sup> For details, see URL: <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/id/25352309/>

<sup>10</sup> Note that, in the popular parlance, after drinking a bit too much, it is customary to utter the sentence: “[one] should not have drunk that last glass [of alcoholic beverage]” to denote that many disastrous repercussions were waiting to unravel after that...

of a prolonged “religious-secular clash”<sup>11</sup> where “contradictory worlds were colliding” (*New York Post*, 2013). Such approaches certainly simplify a far more complex phenomenon. Some of such analyses also borrow heavily from an Orientalist reading of Turkey’s recent history (Benhabib, 2013). However, it would be useful to have a closer look at the developments to comprehend why the highly promoted, “brandized” entertainment heartland of Istanbul was also the very place where riots were initiated.

Let’s not forget that all above developments were observed in the backdrop of the recent shift in Turkey’s international perception away from a “bridge between the West and the East” (*Newsweek*, 21 July 2005) towards an “increasingly conservative society” (*The Economist*, 11 February 2012), where smoking and drinking are reportedly heavily –and even, heavily-handedly regulated by the authorities and increasingly ostracized not only by the devout sections of the society but also by the Prime Minister himself in public statements.

Even more than a few years preceding the *Gezi Park* protests, when zabıta collected tables and chairs, many highly-educated, modern and secular Istanbulites were utterly alarmed, claiming their lifestyles are being intervened into (*yaşam tarzına müdahale*). Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was known for his staunch and somewhat crudely expressed anti-drinking and anti-smoking stances. He had “encouraged” his close associates, cabinet ministers and others quit smoking, sometimes at heavily televised instances where he grabs the person’s pack of cigarette and asking them to write down their names, the date and “their own statement that they are quitting”<sup>12</sup>. Alarming many upper and middle-class urbanites, including certainly Kemalists and leftists, he also frequently expressed his distaste for alcohol. On the other hand he refuted the concern by claiming that “his government has no interest in curtailing different groups’ lifestyles”<sup>13</sup>.

Some nevertheless saw his statement that “we have never curtailed anything. Look, they are already drinking to the maximum, until they cough and sneeze”<sup>14</sup> as a sign that he –at best– merely and somewhat unwillingly ‘tolerates’ drinkers, sees drinking as a public health danger. He purportedly feels that he almost has a “mission” to reduce the number of drinkers. Some analysts connect this to his staunch Muslim religiosity coupled with his “hyperactive” zeal to “serve the people” (İnsel, 2013). During his tenure as the Metropolitan Mayor of Greater Istanbul, he had reportedly referred to

**11** For example Levy (2013) claimed: “[Erdoğan’s politics] is a blend of state Islamism, Ottomanized Putinism, and stark fear of modernity that I believe could be likened to a form of dictatorship”. See URL: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/bernardhenri-levy/a-response-to-the-turkish-prime-minister-\\_b\\_3819539.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/bernardhenri-levy/a-response-to-the-turkish-prime-minister-_b_3819539.html).

**12** One of the most well known is the case of Efkan Ala then, Assistant Secretary of the Prime Minister’s Office who reportedly was “appointed to his current post only after Erdoğan made him swear that he did quit smoking”. See, URL: <http://yenisafak.com.tr/politika-haber/once-sigarayi-biraktirdi-sonra-mustesar-yap-ti-15.09.2007-68519>.

**13** Kimsenin yaşam tarzına karışmıyoruz,” daily *Yeni Asya*, 15 January 2011. See, URL: [http://www.yeniasya.com.tr/haber\\_detay2.asp?id=2585](http://www.yeniasya.com.tr/haber_detay2.asp?id=2585)

**14** “Erdoğan alkol yasağı tartışmalarıyla ilgili konuştu: Tıksırana kadar içiyorlar, karışmıyoruz,” daily *HaberTürk*, 14 January 2011. See, URL: [http://www.haberturk.com/polemik/haber/591577-tiksirana-kadar-iciyorlar-karismiyoruz.guncel\\_5/vv1.htm](http://www.haberturk.com/polemik/haber/591577-tiksirana-kadar-iciyorlar-karismiyoruz.guncel_5/vv1.htm).



himself as the “Imam of Istanbul”<sup>15</sup> and claimed that “among his duties include stopping people from committing sins” (Düzel, 1995; Görmüş, 2012)...

Numerous critics warn that his anti-smoking / anti-drinking stance is a sign of his larger -and yet “hidden”- agenda of injecting more morality into the daily lives of the members of society to the detriment of secular, republican, pluralist and democratic values. Certainly large sections of the society support his active “involvement” and some even find his guidance necessary in what they view essentially as a “public health” problem. It was in this atmosphere that the new law regulating the retail sale, consumption and advertizing of alcohol was passed from the national parliament to take effect in early September 2013.

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was thus immensely successful in mobilizing popular feelings against moralized, stigmatized and even criminalized caricatures of a whole array of anthropologically and sociologically meaningful cultural practices such as socializing through smoking, drinking and partying. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan seems to initiate what I suggest to call “conservative paternalism” vis-à-vis leisure consumption and entertainment. In that sense, *AK Parti’s* preaching, moralizing and conservative paternalism appears the emblem of the state’s heavy handed regulation of these sectors which gained more emphasis since the party’s coming to power in 2002.

Almost in contradistinction to the ruling party’s otherwise neoliberal policies when it comes to other economic sectors, *AK Parti’s* conservative paternalism is the top-down implementation of a regressive -and almost ‘ideological’- stance towards anything associated with bohemian and detested lifestyles of some sections of urbanities. Conservative paternalism is in some regards reminiscent of the republican Kemalist “modernist paternalism”. They both claim to know what is “best” for the citizens and deciding on their behalf and in [their] absentia. These points will be evaluated more deeply at Chapters III and IV and will be assessed thoroughly at the Final Chapter V. That is the reason why I do not want to go into details here. But it is certainly important to note that İstiklâl Avenue among many other things, was the battleground upon which clashing visions on leisure consumption and entertainment were fought. I hope that my study will help clarify why the center of entertainment was at once such a battleground...

<sup>15</sup> See, URL: <http://dosyalar.hurriyet.com.tr/tayyip Erdogan/tayyip.asp>. Also see, URL: <http://iibf.deu.edu.tr/internetgazetesi/arsiv/Haziran2007/Dokumanlar/guncel/>

## I. 2. Globalization, Glocalization, Spatiality and *longue durée*

One could legitimately make the argument that while certainly ‘interesting’ on their own regard, this immense diversity of persons and institutions; the complex interplay of actors such as consumers and producers of leisure and entertainment; the increasing power of the lifestyle media (Raisborough, 2011) or the other mediators sometimes referred to as “the critical infrastructure” (Zukin, 1991; 1995) in putting a city or city districts on the global map; the renovation and upgrading of the dilapidated parts of town into centers of attraction (Balsas, 2000); and increasing commercialization and corporatization such urban spaces (Habracken, 2004; Schmidt, 2004) are all ordinary staple items found in other global cities, and thus, at this general level, are not terribly original. Indeed, as numerous recent studies suggest, very similar –or at the very least, comparable– processes and transformations take place in numerous other cities including New York, London, Vancouver, Amsterdam, Berlin, Melbourne, Hong Kong (Mee Kam Ng, 2002; Fainstein, 2008; Novy, 2012) to name a few.

In this sense, Istanbul’s above-summarized diverse scenes may be seen merely as the ‘local’ expressions of ‘global’ phenomena and could perhaps be explained by generalized urban processes or transformations described and analyzed in various terms such as; as the rise of the service economy (Buera & Kabosky, 2009); the shift to urban neoliberalism (Brenner & Theodore, 2005), urban entrepreneurialism (Jacobs, 1984; Harvey, 1989; Markusen & Giawasda, 1994; MacLeod, 2002), creative cities (Landry, 2000; Florida, 2002); spatial clustering of creative industries (Hartley, 2005; Rae, 2007); and the refashioning as well as revalorization of the city centers (Zukin, 1995); and/or neighborhoods as places of leisure and consumption (Rath, 2007; Aytar & Rath, 2012), etc. Placed at the perspective of such global processes and in terms of social, cultural, ethnic and other types of diversities involved, today’s Istanbul can certainly and legitimately be compared to other highly diverse –and “more obviously global”– cities such as New York, London and Berlin but also face up competition from comparatively far less populated or historically far ‘recent’ cities such as Amsterdam or Melbourne.

However, placing the case of Istanbul within a longer historical line of transformations and looking closer on the ‘local’ specificities involved, a different, more idiosyncratic picture emerges. The administrative and cultural center of three world empires (Eastern Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman) Istanbul was the witness to the pains of transformation from a

shrinking multi-confessional, multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire towards the homogenized, nation-state bound and highly unitary Republican Turkey. The city has also experienced its own recent rise to fame as the “global city” and the “capital of culture” of its associated regions. As such, Istanbul narrates a story of continuities and breaks, of ebbs and flows. As a major city of the Near East, as a civilizational center of Islam or as the highly modernized and westernized metropolis of an otherwise socially communitarian, politically parochial and inward-looking Republic, Istanbul presents various facets. What is going on in here today cannot be simply explained away as mere reflections of highly deterministic, standardizing and homogenizing global processes.

Certainly, this does not exhaust the usefulness of comprehensive and analytical tools provided by comparatively studying global urban transformations for the case of Istanbul. Indeed, most of the changes taking place in the world economy in the post-1945 period and most notably the shift to urban neoliberalism in the last few decades provide basic macro and global parameters underwriting Istanbul’s rise as a metropolis of leisure consumption and entertainment, as well as a global service sector city aiming to “brandizing” itself (Babalık, 2011). In this sense, Istanbul and Beyoğlu as its shop window are arguably powerful reflections of this highly cramped register of numerous other global or branded cities and neighborhoods.

Glocalization, on the other hand, understood variously as the local adaptation to global processes (Swyngedouw, 1993; Robertson, 1995); as “internalized globalization” (Beck, 2002); or as a form of *métissage* (Lionnet, 1989; Bruna, 2006) which vividly and innovatively enmeshes local characteristics, peculiarities and specificities with those global structures<sup>16</sup>, certainly sheds light on the current leisure consumption and entertainment scene in Istanbul. Glocalization is also a helpful if one were to conceptualize it in inspiration from Marx’s discussion in *Grundrisse* (1857) whereby general processes and structures always appear in historically specific, local forms, and thus have to be always explained within their particularities and diversities.

The discussion initiated by Rath is highly helpful in this regard: “[O]nce one departs from general theoretical premises, the challenge is to look for explanations that address general trends as well as historically specific conditions” (Rath, 2007). Seen this way, neoliberal urban changes and the transformation of leisure consumption and entertainment in Istanbul could be interpreted as a form of glocalization which denotes a contingency-ridden

**16** In this context, I do not employ *métissage* as in the original conceptualization as an interval between and mixing of different cultures and languages (Lionnet, 1989; Bruna, 2006), but rather, as a highly transforming cross-fertilization between global and local processes and levels.

process of exchange between globality and locality in the particular spatiality of this city. This certainly reminds one of Lefebvre's discussion of 'spatial scales' whereby mutually constitutive and intrinsically related spatial 'levels' (be them macro, meso or micro) interconnect to form a world-encompassing socio-historical totality (1974; 1976).

However, current scene in Istanbul cannot be solely explained in such spatial (global/local; or macro/meso/micro) scales alone. The dimension that should be added involves 'temporality' because today's leisure and entertainment landscape cannot be understood by only looking at contemporary structures and processes. They are partly the result, partly a response to historical processes which explains the 'path dependency' of the case of Istanbul and its leisure consumption and entertainment.

I propose to develop a long-term perspective by learning from *Annales* school's study of *mentalités* (Mandrou, 1971); Braudel's *longue durée* (1958) and the historical sociology of Hopkins (1982) and Wallerstein (1991). Hopkins's notion of a "multi-level, complex system of social action that is comprehensive not only in scope [...] but also in time [...] [in its] non-arbitrary periodicities" (1982:148) is particularly useful in terms of acknowledging both continuities and breaks in Byzantine, Ottoman and Republican leisure and entertainment, as well as connecting particular spatiality of Istanbul to its *longue durée* temporality and path-dependent development.

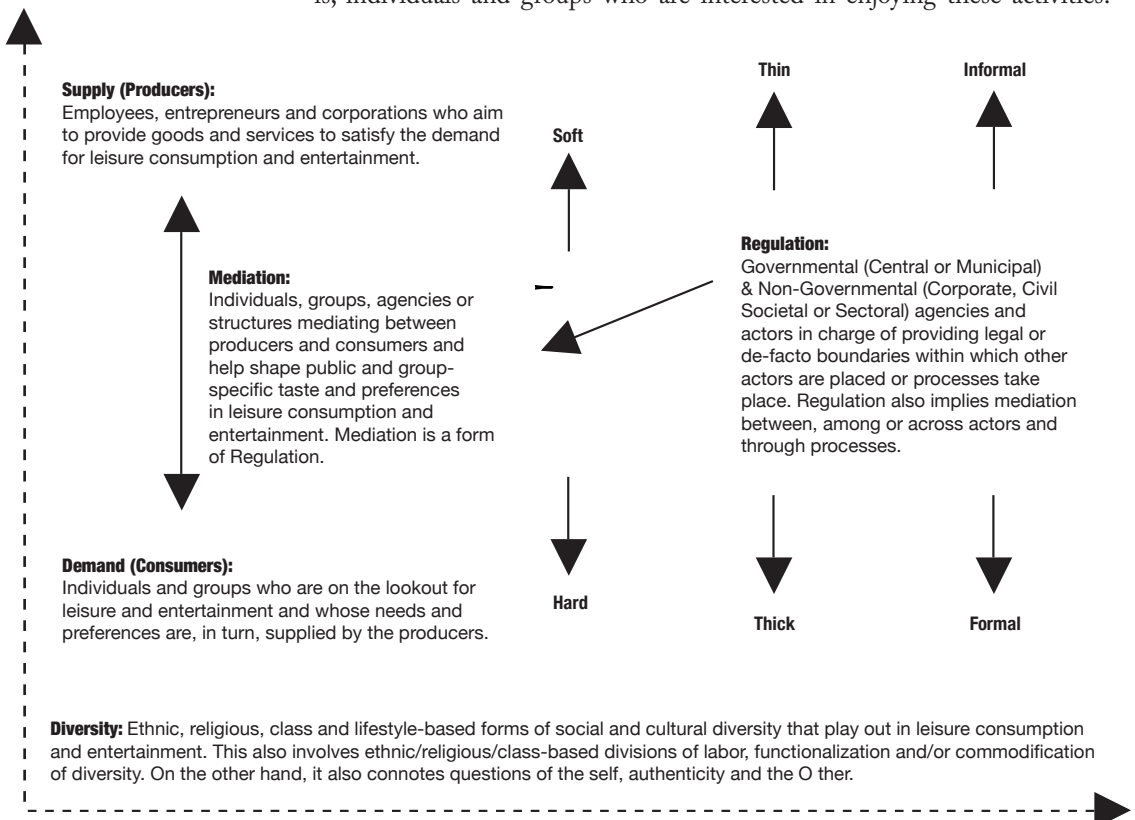
Here, one additional and potentially very fruitful connection could be drawn between Lefebvre's discussion of the "interconnectedness of spatial scales," including the resulting "world-encompassing socio-historical totality" and Braudel's spatial *ensemble*, elaborated richly in his seminal treatise of *économie-monde* that is constantly woven by the *longue durée* temporality. In short, I aim to shed light on the long term development as well as the recent global orientation of Istanbul's leisure consumption and entertainment.

### I. 3. Research Questions:

In this context, my key research questions are as follows: **(a)** How could we to comprehend and contextualize the demands by 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 this vein, I propose to visualize the actors and processes as well as dimensions involved as follows:

Above basic theoretical matrix provides a guideline for my study to historically and spatially contextualize the political and socio-cultural processes that make entertainment a site for ethnic and class relations as well as nation-state building. In this sense, entertainment is a reflection of a particular set of social relations including ethnic, class relations within which state and other actors intervene. I argue that leisure consumption and entertainment in Istanbul is usually studied in rather descriptive terms that lack analytical tools. Showing the dynamic interconnections among the actors such as consumers and producers as well as mediators and regulators by contextualizing them in their spatial and historical axes is the contribution I am striving to provide in my book.

#### **I.4. Bodies of Academic Literature:**

The questions I ask above are connected to a series of different yet overlapping theoretical debates that inform my research. Sub-section I. 4. 1., below, defines leisure consumption and entertainment. In this sense,

this sub-section delineates the general boundaries of my subject matter. Then I move to discussing the bodies of theoretical literature that further inform my study. Those are: I. 4. 2. Consumption studies and the ‘cultural turn’ and I.4.3. Regulation, mediation and diversity. If we were to follow the above theoretical matrix, the sub-section I.4.2. on consumption studies and the cultural turn, connect the supply side (i.e. producers) to the demand side (i.e. consumers). The sub-section 1.4.3, in turn, triangulates the respective dynamics of regulation, mediation and diversity as noted in the above matrix. However, I do not try to provide an exhaustive review of all these three bodies of literature. I rather concentrate on and aim to elaborate select debates that could be directly or indirectly connected to my own study in fruitful ways. These bodies of literature, then, will act as ‘theoretical anchors’ through which I will conceptualize and analyze leisure consumption and entertainment in Istanbul in the following chapters.

#### I. 4.1. Defining Leisure Consumption & Entertainment:

In order to clarify the subjects of my study, I need to elaborate what I mean by leisure consumption and entertainment. In doing so, I first learn from Elias and Dunning’s criticism of the sociological tendency to regard leisure merely as an “adjunct” or as an “auxiliary” to work (Elias, 1969; Elias & Dunning, 1986). According to them, in the mainstream approaches, “[s]atisfaction provided by leisure activities tends to be treated as a means to an end –to the end of giving relief from the strain of work and of improving people’s capacity for it” (1986:92). Emerging polarization is, then, between the auxiliariation of leisure (means) and the centralization of work (end),

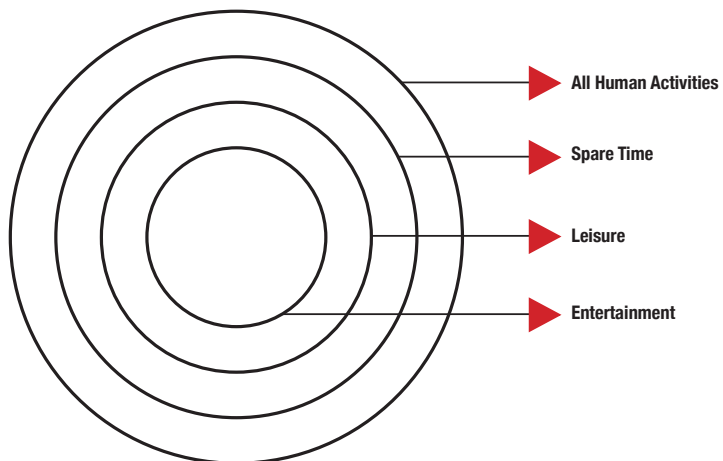


Figure 1.2: Representation of social fields in question and their relational location

respectively<sup>17</sup>. Similar to work which is rationally organized, leisure -as a means to that end- is at once conceptualized as a rationalized 'need' that as such is also commercially catered to. Leisure is merely seen as 'spare' time which is required for people, allowing them finding energy and fulfillment so that they could go back to working.

For the purposes of clarification and analytical clarity, I should underline that when I study leisure consumption and entertainment, I concentrate only on spatially-bound formal or informal activities that are not performed by solitary or isolated individuals, but as members of social, public or semi-public interactions. Those activities are demanded by consumers whose requests are met by producers who are employees, entrepreneurs or larger institutions and corporations. In this sense, consumers literally 'buy' a good or a service and the producers make money out of it. Leisure consumption and entertainment are thus always commodified to some extent or the other.

Defined as such, entertainment in my case includes; partying which includes some forms of social ceremonies, festivals, and other public vehicles for expressing joy; listening to live music; dancing; watching performances of various sorts and other forms of recreation that could fulfill the same need. Eating and drinking are included only if those occasions also incorporate functions of entertainment.

I propose to connect Elias and Dunning's criticism of the end-means pairing of work and leisure respectively as central and auxiliary activities to Weber's discussion of 'rationality' that bears a two-tiered embodiment: formal rationality and substantive rationality. According to Weber, formal rationality, as the dominant frame under modernity refers to a means-and-ends continuum, in which, for the sake of the continuum itself, the particular values assigned to either means or ends are overshadowed. Substantive rationality on the other hand, implies the value that a particular end bore. Weber claims that the growing subordination of substantive rationality to formal rationality brings about the domination of means over ends, in which the particular substantive meanings and values of either means or ends are less and less important (1978). This domination of formal rationality (Swingewood, 1991:162; Gellner, 1992:47; Weber, 2009 [1905]) is geared towards what Weber terms as "monetarization". Simmel also uses the concept of monetarization as a world-historical transformation (1990 [1907]). In this type of rationalization, "individual personality

**17** Aristotle seems to invert this work (end) – leisure (means) duality. He argued that "we work in order to have leisure; we work in order to have time for better and more meaningful things" (Elias & Dunning, 1986:77). In this sense, Aristotle did away with formal rationality.



[*Persönlichkeit*], that is, one's ability to sustain consistency of conduct" is erased<sup>18</sup>. When work is centralized, then leisure becomes a formally rationalized and -as such, commercialized and commodified- means to reach that end. However, as I will also try to show in my study, neither work could be explained away as a rationally calculated end, nor could leisure be seen merely as an auxiliary necessity geared towards that end.

A key point that should be kept in mind is that, such a dichotomization between work and leisure is a rather facile way of classifying the human world. I argue that in such a conceptualization, spare time and leisure time are necessarily conflated into one holistic entity and are thus confused with one another. Elias and Dunning make a similar point by suggesting that not all spare time activities could be counted as leisure activities. They argue that spare time includes the whole array of 'free time' from 'occupational work' but only a portion of that could be devoted to leisure time (1986:94).

In their conceptualization, work and leisure do not appear as dichotomous entities. Instead, they each include characteristics of the other. That is why they specify 'occupational work' in lieu of 'work' and also argue that some spare time activities show work-like characteristics<sup>19</sup>. What they come up with is not a hierarchical taxonomy but a continuum-like spectrum of spare-time activities. This spectrum certainly allows various shades of color, areas of grey, diverse configurations and fluidities. Based on their spectrum, I propose to place entertainment within leisure which is itself situated inside spare time as a portion of all human activities. See below for a representation of social fields in question, an extended categorization that I have developed based on Elias and Dunning's primary classification:

In this sense, leisure consumption and entertainment mean a set of human activities and practices that provides -often but necessarily always- socially approved, publicly expressed forms of what Elias and Dunning call "pleasurable excitement" (1986:63). Those activities and practices also involve sociability and self-expression. To clarify, our lives are conditioned and contoured by cyclically occurring and reoccurring "routines" (which include occupational work and a whole array of work-like activities, whether they are conducted during our occupational work time or spare time) and what they call "de-routinizing enclaves" (Elias & Dunning, 1986:107). In this sense, routines are part of both our occupational work time and spare time. Similarly, de-routinizing enclaves may occur during our occupational work time and spare time. I concentrate on leisure consumption and

**18** See Weber's "Politics as vocation," in H. H. Gerth & C. W. Mills, (eds.) *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, (New York: 1946), as well as M. Featherstone's *Undoing Culture: Globalization, Postmodernism and Identity*, (London: 1995), p. 63.

**19** In their primary categorization, they classify "Spare Time" under five headings: (1) Private work and family management; (2) Rest; (3) Catering for biological needs; (4) Sociability; (5) Mimetic or play activities which in themselves show great diversity (1986:68-69).

entertainment that make part and parcel of these de-routinizing enclaves situated within leisure time which should be placed inside our spare time as I discuss below.

In this sense, on the one hand, I place leisure consumption within the de-routinizing enclaves, whereby people, as part of their spare and leisure time, are involved in activities that provide excitement, self-expression and sociability; human faculties that make up -what Weber would have referred to as- *Persönlichkeit* that is, 'individual personality' that implies an ability to sustain consistency of conduct. However, it should also be noted that even those very de-routinizing enclaves or practices may have their own routines, ranging from entertainment, on the other hand, should be located under the leisure branch, within the '*Mimetic* or play activities' that are defined as those human activities "which provide not the representations of real-life events, but rather, the emotions [involved] are related to those experienced in real life situations, only transposed in a different key and blended with a 'kind of delight'" (1986:80). *Mimetic* literally means 'imitative' but in this larger sense points out to the re-representation of reality in some form or the other. In the context of entertainment, *mimetic* refers to a reconfiguration of reality as a way of recreating the emotions associated with that reality.

Hence, entertainment as *mimesis* would involve representation of anything that would raise particular human feelings in one way or the other. The notion of catharsis should also be added into the mix, in sense that entertainment at times could involve cathartic occasions and effects. Aristotle's use of the concept of *catharsis* involves "cleansing the body through a purgative movement of the soul (*kinesis tes psyches*)" (Elias and Dunning, 1986:87)... Bakhtin's discussion of the *carnivalesque* (Bakhtin, [1941 & 1965] (1984) is a way in which, for the sake of the power structures, social energies are let out (a process quite similar to *catharsis*) during entertainment *en masse* or in mass societal ways.

Thus, there exist four dimensions which constitute the bulk matter of entertainment.: (a) the representational dimension (*mimesis*); (b) the hedonic dimension of enthusiasm; (c) the escapist dimension pointing out to human beings' inclinations of being lured towards the different, and the exciting; which fulfils important sociability functions and, as in the case of inventing 'Otherness,' mars the social world by delineating boundaries; (d) the cathartic, the treatment-esque, or the therapeutic dimension. In this study, I will deal mostly with points (b), (c) and (d).

I now propose to turn to the above-cited dual existence of ‘dominating routines’ and ‘de-routinizing enclaves’ and connect it to the distinction de Certeau places between ‘strategies’ and ‘tactics’. According to him, ‘strategies’ are more formally organized structures usually maintained by those in power; while ‘tactics’ almost spontaneously emerge in the quotidian life of actual persons (de Certeau, 1980).

What I propose to infer from this seminal distinction is as follows: Leisure consumption and entertainment could be seen as de-routinizing enclaves of our lives which are conditioned by both:

- (a) Formal structures or patterns shaped by strategies -i.e. recursive guidelines imposed by those in power; and
- (b) Spontaneous tactics -i.e. informalities that are (at least in their initial stages) ‘improvised’ by urban dwellers.

It should be noted, however, that informalities emerging spontaneously as such, may –then- turn into tried-and-tested, iterative, and even generationally-transferred stratagem, thus may eventually lose their initial spontaneity or innovative *naïveté*.

In the context of leisure and entertainment, commodification by the market and decommodification by the regulators (Esping Andersen, 1997) serve as strategies, organized, institutionalized and enforced by the very same regulators (this point could certainly be more aptly addressed by a discussion of regulation as done below at section 1.4.3.). Tactics are the ways in which consumers and producers -who are sentient, real persons- experience, question, challenge, negotiate with, transgress and transform strategies. Deroutinizing tactics such as leisure consumption and entertainment thus help commodify or decommodify strategies.

In order to wrap up the discussion of leisure consumption and entertainment, let’s take carnivals as an example of a practical molding of an entertainment event from all these theoretical ingredients listed above: Carnivals are forms of “pleasurable excitement” with mimetic characteristics whereby authorities could be, in socially and administratively approved ways, ridiculed; and providing cathartic treatment for the society. Carnivals are also politically wiser ways to let feelings of excitement or social discontent express themselves.

They could be highly decommodifying events if those in power sponsor them in order to show their strength and in return, ask allegiance

from the populace. In some other cases, however, carnivals may have a commodifying thrust by promoting ‘market entrepreneurialism’ to help improve the economy and its actors. Carnivals also imply social enclaves “where excitement can be enjoyed without its socially and personally dangerous implications” (Elias & Dunning, 1986:93). This is the way in which I conceptualize leisure consumption and entertainment by touching upon and interconnect portions of a select theoretical literature on them.

#### I. 4. 2. Consumption Studies and the ‘Cultural Turn’:

In order to connect the supply side (i.e. producers) to the demand side (i.e. consumers) as two main actors of my above-discussed theoretical matrix, a selective reading of the consumption studies and the cultural turn is warranted. In terms of the both leisure consumption and entertainment, a closer look at Consumption Studies, as well as the formative influence of the Cultural Turn within it, would clarify some of the theoretical anchors that I am employing throughout this book.

The field of consumption studies is a rather new addition in social inquiry. Miles argues that “consumption did not emerge as a serious subject of concern until the second half of the twentieth century, and most dramatically during the 1980s and 1990s” (1998a:8). However, even before this late emergence, some previous seminal works are of interest for my study. Let me start by noting that, reminiscent to Dunning and Elias’ criticism of the mainstream approaches that see leisure as auxiliary or adjunct to the central area of work (Elias, 1969; Elias & Dunning, 1986), Simmel, too, refutes the idea that consumption is merely an auxiliary to production.

In Simmel, consumption is more than an incidental interest: It has an “instrumental role in structuring people’s overall experience of modernity” (Miles, 1998:19). It provides a launching pad of particularized identity and an individually customized way of experiencing a macro-historical process of monetarization (or commodification) that is otherwise de-personifying. Simmel also paves the way to rethink the contemporary metropolis as an important site of consumption<sup>20</sup>. What I argue in this work, when glanced over from a *longue durée* perspective, urban spatial setting of Istanbul has served as a major, key site of consumption in general, and leisure consumption and consumption of entertainment in particular.

<sup>20</sup> See, M. Featherstone, 1990 ‘Perspectives on consumer culture,’ *Sociology*, 24(1), p. 15.. See, D. Chaney, 1983, ‘The department store as a cultural form,’ *Theory, Culture and Society*, 3(1); R. Williams, *Dream Worlds*, (Los Angeles, 1982); T. Bennett, 1988, ‘The exhibitionary complex,’ *New Formations*, 4; and T. Bennett, et al, *Formations of Pleasure*, (London: 1983).

Liebertson claims that Simmel developed the notion of *Vornehmheitsideal*, or the “ideal of distinction” as an absolutely new value brought into existence by the challenge to personal values of the money economy (1988:141). This notion may be taken to connect economy to culture and personal identity in particularly fruitful ways. In Simmel, consumption also connects the individual to the rest of the modern society, which is otherwise hostile and competitive, through its ‘marketized’ and ‘monetarized’ conventions and ceremonies of buying. Defined in this way, Simmel’s discussion of modernity, urban life and consumption provides a way to conceptualize both the consumer society and the consuming individual without resorting to a prioritizing of structure or agency.

Many scholars borrowed from Simmel as well as from Walter Benjamin (1927-1940; 2002) to conceptualize cities as spaces of consumption and of modern experience. Benjamin views the city with its new department stores and arcades as a “dream world,” where capitalist and modernist drive for novelty plays itself out (Featherstone, 1990). Accordingly, both Simmel’s and Benjamin’s treatment of modernity and urbanism promoted many studies of urban spaces and consumption (Williams, 1982; Bennett, et al, 1983; Chaney, 1983; Bennett, 1988).

However, what we can learn from Weber is that the process of differentiation Simmel refers to is not necessarily an exclusively modern phenomenon. According to Weber, this process results in separate economic, political and aesthetic “life-orders”<sup>21</sup>. Weber’s contribution is that the “ideal of distinction” precedes the coming of modernity, which points out to a *longue durée* context similar to Elias’ notion of the “civilizing process” (1969). Weber’s discussion of status groups, which are communities of an “amorphous kind”, is also quite useful in terms of the dynamics of differentiation according to consumption.

Weber claims that status groups are shaped by ‘status honor’ which is “normally expressed by the fact that above all else a specific style of life can be expected from all those who wish to belong to the circle” (1946:187). He defines those expectations beyond economic and functional criteria, although stratification by status also rests on a monopolization of ideal and material goods or opportunities: “[S]uch honorific preferences may consist of the privilege of wearing special costumes, of eating special dishes, [...] the right to pursue certain non-professional dilettante artistic practices” (1946:191).

21 See especially Weber’s ‘Religious rejections of the world and their directions,’ in Gerth & Mills (1946: 355-357, and passim).

Status groups, in this sense, are stratified according to the principles of consumption of goods as represented by special lifestyles. Weber's discussions of the status groups and stratification by status are pointing out to a supra-economic need to distinguish oneself. I argue that this notion could be fruitfully related to discussions in Veblen as well as in Bourdieu and clarify the function of leisure consumption and entertainment in the span of my study.

Veblen reincorporates Weber's themes to argue for the prevalence of what he calls "conspicuous consumption" in modern life. In this analysis of the American *nouveaux riches* of the late nineteenth century, he saw consumer goods as markers of social prestige and status (Veblen, 1934 [1899]). He claimed that this group was the "new leisure class" that mimicked the lifestyles of upper-class Europeans. The fear of loss of social distinction and cultural distance, higher-status holding groups aimed to constantly 'upgrade' their consumption habits to "stay one step ahead of the *nouveaux riches*" (Miles, 1998). Consumption patterns constituted a battlefield to distinguish one against the pretenders and the *parvenus*: "[c]losely related to the requirement that the gentleman [sic] must consume freely and of the right kind of goods, there is the requirement that he must know how to consume them in a seemly manner" (Veblen, 1934 [1899]: 47, emphases added).

Weber's and Veblen's discussions of status groups, conspicuous consumption and consumption as marker of status and prestige were re-thought by Bourdieu (1984 [1979]). Different from them, though, he claimed that consumption was not merely reflecting or expressing, but also establishing social boundaries. According to Bourdieu, the demarcation between classes and groups were formed through distinctive acts of consumption. Habitus in this context refers to a "group-distinctive framework of social cognition and interpretation, [and] is reproduced between generations and thereby generates the schemes by which cultural objects are classified and differentiated" (Waters, 1994). Everyday cultural repertoire of groups and class fractions acts as an arsenal of a symbolic battle to distinguish oneself or one's group.

In this context, Bourdieu discusses various types of capital and more specifically distinguishes between two different kinds, namely economic and cultural capital (Lee, 1993:34). He defines the latter closer to Veblen's discussion of consumption as a marker of social status and standing. Cultural capital is to know not just what to consume, but how to consume in a proper

way. Cultural capital refers to the “possession of certain cultural competences, or bodies of cultural knowledge, that provide for particularly distinguished modes of cultural consumption” (Lee, 1993:33) and puts a social distinction between groups and class fractions. According to Bourdieu, “taste classifies and classifies the classifier” (1984 [1979]). It acts as a classifying framework of communication not only to make the world meaningful for social actors, but also to stratify them according to their particular constellations of taste and preferences. What he sees as the new consumption classes, and new class fractions employ and mobilize consumption and taste to demarcate social boundaries and distance, as well as to establish them.

Simmel’s ideal of distinction; Weber’s stratification by status; Veblen’s consumer goods as markers of social prestige and status; and Bourdieu’s discussion of habitus and cultural capital could be fruitfully extended to the domain of leisure consumption and entertainment. Leisure and entertainment, especially as they are experienced in urban environments, act as staples of individual and group identities to distinguish oneself/one’s group via acts of consumption. As noted by Weber, this is not a necessarily distinctively modern phenomenon, thus behind it, lies an important long term history. But especially in the modern metropolis the individual has on the one hand to defend him/herself from the hostility and competition of others and assert his/her distinctive individuality; and on the other hand, compensate for this very sense of loneliness by joining in ‘the social’ through various acts of leisure consumption<sup>22</sup>. In this sense, leisure consumption and entertainment provide both an anonymous shield as well as a distinction strategy.

After discussing such ‘classical’ approaches to consumption and their relevance for my study of leisure consumption and entertainment, now let me shift the emphasis to the historically more recent development of consumption studies as well as the cultural turn. I claim that the increasing interest in consumption is conditioned by the socio-historical, economic and cultural transformations that occurred around the 1970s.

The period in question is generally seen as a period of change for twentieth century capitalism, embodying a global, large-scale reorganization of work, international division of labor, and a wide range of social structures Hardt & Negri, 1994 [1967]: 28). Firstly, the decade that marks a critical and overall transition in terms of the organization of global, and individual national capitalism(s), repercussions of which have been deep and significant for

<sup>22</sup> In this regard, Simmel’s discussion of fashion is quite symptomatic. Fashion fulfills a double purpose of letting an individual distinguish him/herself, as well as securing his/her entry into socially accepted forms of commonality (Simmel, 1957 [1904]:62)

consumption patterns. It marked the opening of new consumption patterns distinctly different from pre-1970s patterns (Lipietz, 1986:19; Aglietta, 1979; Boyer, 1986). As I will discuss in Chapter IV, in the particular case of Turkey, this shift took place after 1980.

I believe that consumption studies helped develop a new vocabulary to discuss not only the still-evolving consumption patterns of the post-1970s, but also shedding a new light on previous, more historical forms of consumption and that is why the literature is highly relevant for my own study. Especially important in this context is what most refer to as the 'linguistic' or 'cultural turn' (Bonnell & Hunt, 1999). Previous paradigms of social explanation, whether they are modernizationist, positivist, historicist, economicist, or Marxist, were challenged on many fronts... According to their critics, all these approaches were relying on the 'primacy' of the social of the economic<sup>23</sup>. Bonnell and Hunt claim that the 'cultural turn' questioned the social as an explanatory notion; and aimed to displace it with culture as a symbolic, linguistic and representation system (Bonnell & Hunt, 1999: 6).

Jameson in this case, argued that, "the very sphere of culture itself has expanded, becoming coterminous with market society in such a way that the cultural is no longer limited to its earlier, traditional or experimental forms, but it is consumed throughout daily life itself, in shopping, in professional activities, in the various often televisual forms of leisure, in production for the market and in the consumption of those market products, indeed in the most secret folds and corners of the quotidian. Social space is now completely saturated with the image of culture" (1998:115).

With above theoretical contributions, one had to address the experience of consumption as a meaning-producing and conveying sphere of individual and social life, rather than merely reflecting the social order. I value and learn from such critics and I will try to show that in the case of Istanbul, leisure consumption and entertainment could not be seen a mere reflections of social or economic developments, but rather should be analyzed in the complex interconnections enmeshing such developments with the political, cultural and symbolic processes.

#### **I.4.3. Regulation, Mediation and Diversity**

The relationship between supply (producers) and demand (consumers), however, never takes place within a social vacuum. Rath and Kloosterman's

<sup>23</sup> This conviction was coupled with a confidence in the possibility and the very desirability of explanation as an act aimed to uncover underlying realities of social life.



theoretical contributions backed by sound ethnographic work are of great use here: They illustrate how the interplay of supply (production) and demand (consumption) is always embedded in wider structures. They also show that the same interplay is always mediated (Kloosterman & Rath, 2000, 2001 & 2010 and Rath, 2002 & 2007). In this vein, I will next discuss all those factors that either regulate or mediate between production and demand within which they both are anchored and embedded.

The matrix formed between supply and demand of leisure consumption and entertainment creates the conditions within which what Kloosterman and Rath refer to as the “opportunity structure” (Kloosterman & Rath, 2000, 2001 & 2010 and Rath, 2002 & 2007). But the opportunity structure never is the product of an unregulated and undifferentiated economy. Regulatory structures are always present, by promoting certain economic activities while inhibiting others. (Rath, 2005:242). In this sense, any interference into the mechanisms of supply and demand could be seen as forms of regulation, emanating and sustained by either state or non-state actors. However, it should be noted that the functional oscillation between “policing” and “governance” does not necessarily respectively assign “formality” to the “thick” forms of regulation while matching up “informality” with “thin” forms.

Regulation, as Rath warns, is “not the same thing” as mere “legislation” (2002). Engelen further distinguishes the latter, between “legislation per se,” and “carrots” (financial incentives and disincentives) -or “sermons” (persuasion) (2001). According to him, all such diverse forms of regulation, makes things ‘possible’ -or less possible- in a market (Engelen, 2001; Rath, 2002). One should not also infer that regulation is solely about state regulation. In this vein, Chatterton and Hollands argue that a “range of actors from the business world, the voluntary sector and citizen groups” (2005:46) are involved in what they call “the regulation of the night-time economy” (2005:3).

24 Here, Rath borrows Engelen’s notion of the subjects of trade which “are the ‘legal entities’ that are allowed to enter the market. They can be individuals, households, families, professionals, co-operatives, incorporated firms, NGOs, quangos or public agencies” (2002).

25 Rath notes that “regulation can be manifested in thick or thin ways or, in other words, can either be imposed or enforced or be a matter of voluntary action. They underscore that even in cases where legislation per se seems non-existent or is conveniently put aside, as might be the case in the informal economy (see Kloosterman et al. 1999; Portes 1994; Rath 1999), economic transactions by individuals are still regulated in one way or another” (2002).

Rath similarly notes that “[a] multitude of agents play a role in regulation processes, such as local, national or international governmental agents, unions, quangos, non-profit organizations, voluntary associations, and individual and their social networks” (Rath, 2002). As ‘legal entities’ allowed to be players in the market<sup>24</sup> all such actors people the ranks of state and non-state forms of regulation<sup>25</sup> ... Chatterton and Hollands include within this range of actors: “leisure merchants” and more sizeable and powerful “large entertainment corporations” (2005:59).

In this case, regulation includes non-state forms including the very providers themselves, which, in the lived, historical experience I am trying to make sense of, are immensely diverse and complex. What adds to this diversity and complexity is the fact that regulation is sometimes conducted in a concrete, formal form while “in cases where legislation per se seems non-existent or is conveniently put aside, as might be the case in the informal economy, economic transactions by individuals are still regulated in one way or another” (Rath, 2002, also see Kloosterman et al. 1999; Portes 1994; Rath 1999).

Most leisure consumption and entertainment forms are commercialized or commodified to (from) one extent to another. Even the most commodified ones are subject to some form of regulation, which could involve open or tacit state interference into the workings of the market. In this sense, commodification does not necessarily mean lack of regulation. No entertainment form is fully unrestrained by the regulators. In some cases, the regulators themselves would organize occasions of entertainment and thus decommodify the leisure consumption and entertainment scene. But even then, there still are processes of commodification involved.

Publicly-funded festivals may be a good example of such events. While the participants do not necessarily need to pay for such events, the very organization of festivals still require an economic dimension whereby the musicians, dancers and other types of entertainers need to be mobilized and in most instances be paid directly -in kind or in actual cash- by the authorities. The festivals are also occasions whereby different types of entrepreneurs aim to increase sales of goods and services, an effort usually supported by the regulatory authorities as well. As these examples suggest, even the most decommodified entertainment events are commodified to one extent to another. In this present study, then, I mainly aim to comprehend the role of regulation as variously performed, actor-oriented mechanisms involving formal, informal, thick, thin, commodifying and de-commodifying strategies.

Among the regulators, I concentrate not only on central and local governmental agencies, but also civil societal actors such as persons -including those active in the media- with religious and/or intellectual authorities. Many among such actors shoulder tasks akin to those shouldered by what are otherwise referred to as “mediators” ... To be more precise, I try to historically analyze the role of the central and local states as regulating

actors, as well as shed light on other, non-state forms of regulation, mostly those emanating from within the civil society, such as the religious authorities and intellectuals and those anchored in the “old” and “the new media:” the authors of guidebooks, contributors to newspapers, magazines, commercial websites and blogs. Those non-state regulatory actors are at once “mediators” and are variously referred to as “the critical infrastructure” (Zukin, 2001), “the cultural intermediaries” (Bourdieu, 1984), “the cultural specialists” (Featherstone, 1991:35) and by numerous other alternative names.

The type of mediation -I aim to study in this work- is by and large part and parcel of regulation and -in spirit- is better illustrated by notions by Bourdieu and Featherstone. The notion by Zukin is somewhat less useful considering its opaquely defined assessment of the actor in question. One has to admit that “critical infrastructure” as an analytical concept answers fewer questions than it leaves unanswered. Instead of it and in a more fruitful manner, Bourdieu’s and Featherstone’s actors could be placed in a *longue durée* setting that not only learns and borrows from Braudel (1984) but also from the socially embedded and mediated market mechanism delineated by Rath (2002; 2007). In such settings and in the course of historical time, they all appear as “mediators” with “regulatory functions” each implying highly varying levels of intensity and power.

Especially useful for me in this regard is the group Bourdieu refers to as “the new cultural intermediaries” who are involved in the dissemination of symbolic goods (1984). The new cultural intermediaries are, in a sense, bricoleurs who mix-and-match various cultural traditions and their products to produce and disseminate new symbolic goods. They also have to perform a double –and may be contradictory- task of keeping some symbolic goods as markers of social prestige, and popularizing and making them accessible to wider audiences<sup>26</sup>. Cultural specialists described by Featherstone (1991) shoulder a similar function by popularizing otherwise vague and cryptic consumption forms of the ‘pioneers,’ including forms of leisure consumption and entertainment<sup>27</sup>.

Inspired by and learning from such conceptualizations, one could perhaps aim to shed light on the historical forms leisure consumption and entertainment and more recently sparkling individualized consumption patterns, niche markets and “pluralization of lifestyles” (Amin, 1994:77) catered by the new service economy and its ‘fun’ sectors. Hebdige (1987) notes that the “consumer goods” lead a “double life” both as “agents of social control” and

26 Featherstone employs Bourdieu’s discussion of the new cultural intermediaries to argue that in the new postmodern era, their role increased. He claims that they learn from the lifestyles of the cultural and artistic avant-garde to ‘aestheticize everyday life’ and disseminate them to the general populace (1991:19).  
27 Featherstone’s discussion of Baudrillard’s and postmodernism’s connection to the global transformation and the cultural turn may be useful in clarifying the emergence of new consumption patterns. He claims that 1960s counterculture and the 1970s pop-art, postmodernism effectively lend itself into the project of the “aestheticization of everyday life” and a rethinking of the role of “cultural specialists” (Featherstone, 1991:35). Dubbing Bauman (1988), he claims that in the context of ‘polyculturalism’ and the loss of confidence in the feasibility and very desirability of establishing universal standards of truth, morality and taste, intellectuals found themselves unable to control the expansion and production of cultural goods and limited their roles to “interpreters”. He argues “the new tastemakers, constantly on the lookout for new cultural goods and experiences, are also engaged in the production of popular pedagogies and guides to living and lifestyle” (1991: 35). I will provide evidence of such work by the tastemakers in the case of Istanbul.

“as the objects used by ordinary people in constructing their own culture,” thus disempowering and empowering them at once...

Leisure consumption and entertainment ‘staple’ group and individual identities on top of one another, which seem to be the case both in the more or less rigidly- stratified societies alongside their more clearly visible and/or recognizable boundaries between classes and groups, as well as in the more recent case of the emergence of new group- or class-fractions as well as new conflicts between and among those<sup>28</sup>. Mediators are any type of mechanism that place boundaries among variegated groups, classes or fractions of those. Thus defined, in the present study, I aim to employ mediation as part and parcel of regulation operating on a historical surface of social and cultural diversity, ethnic and otherwise. The regulation and mediation of the leisure consumption and entertainment are at once management, government, governance or administration of diversity. A historically continuous element is present in each.

The historical route of leisure consumption and entertainment is always imbued with the processes of diversity, and most chiefly of ‘ethnic’ diversity. Certainly, referring to ‘ethnicity’ in the strict and modern sense of the term may be quite anachronistic and confusing while referring to a very long history ranging from the Byzantine, through Ottoman, to Republican Turkey. I am using it basically for analytical purposes and when I refer to ethnicity, I do not mean ethnic groups as isolated entities and with fixed characteristics or identities but rather, learn from ‘ethnic boundaries’ as discussed by Barth and others (1969). Barth focuses on the continuous negotiations of boundaries between different groups and interconnectedness of ethnic identities. He contends that: “[...] categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact and information, but do entail social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained despite changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories” (1969: 9).

Combining Barth’s notion of ethnic boundaries, with Lichter’s conceptualization of ‘ethnic division of labor’ whereby “groups have distinctive concentrations or specializations in particular lines of work” (2007), I aim to chart leisure consumption and entertainment to identify levels of ‘ethnicity’-based vocational specialization and other forms of “Othering”. To comprehend the nuanced workings of “Othering” in a *longue durée* perspective one has to learn from literatures illustrating various ways

<sup>28</sup> Featherstone makes the case for Britain where the Thatcherite-Puritan ‘old petite bourgeoisie’ found itself increasingly at odds with the ‘new petite bourgeoisie’ in their role as more progressive “artists, intellectuals, academics and cultural intermediaries” *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, (London: 1991). Here, he bases his typologies of new class fractions to P. Bourdieu’s now classic, *Distinction*, (Cambridge: 1984).

in which that differentiating mechanism could be performed: Whether motivated by diversity-inspired social or administrative stratification efforts (Braude & Lewis, 1982; Özdoğan, Üstel, Karakaşlı & Kentel, 2009); forms of “Orientalism” (Said, 1978); “inner-” (or “internal-”) “Orientalism” (Pan, 2009); “strategic self-Orientalism” (Umbach, 2008); “nationalist and/or conservative revanchism” (Schivelbusch, 2001) or “Occidentalism” (Ahıska), processes of “Othering” always dominate the ways in which diversity is imagined, executed and maintained.

Diversity imagination and regulation via Othering certainly preys on the two spotlighted dimensions of leisure consumption and entertainment: The hedonic and the escapist dimensions both connoting human beings’ supposedly ‘natural[ized]’ inclinations of being lured by the different and the exciting yet familiar as discussed above. Hedonic and escapist dimensions of leisure consumption and entertainment strengthen the already-strong sociability functions of each. In their search for “pleasurable excitement” (Elias & Dunning, 1986), leisure and entertainment consumers are being catered to by variously produced ‘Others’. State regulation conducted out for administrative purposes, non-state regulation shaping the cultural perception of the “Others,” and mediators critically impacting both the supply and demand always operate within an environment of exchange and negotiation whereby diversity is variously governed and managed by an assortment of actors.

### **I. 5. Methodology:**

By now it should be clear that this book aims to analytically identifying the historicity of the leisure consumption and entertainment forms that were formed alongside the temporal journey of *longue durée* in Istanbul. In line with this aim, I do not focus on or provide deep descriptive details or thorough analyses about individual forms of entertainment both as sociological/ architectural “spaces” –in this sense, any form ranging from *kapeios* to *meyhâne* from rock bar to *türkü bar*, and particular establishments such as *Serkildoryan*, *Taksim Belediye Gazinosu* or *Kemancı*. I rather strive to provide an analytical reading of the leisure consumption and entertainment spaces from within Istanbul’s *longue durée* development in order to identify commonalities that linger on or survive the bumpy ‘ride’ of temporality and spatiality. Commonalities, as well as transformations could be identified --as Thrift elegantly put (1977)-- only when the melody of time is played unto the frozen circumstances of space.

My methodology, then, necessarily had to involve the ways in which the “melody of time” could be inspiringly and sufficiently played to help animate the “frozen circumstances of space”. I selected a mix of historical and qualitative research perspectives in order to develop a ‘methodological diversity’ of sorts that seems to be required when dealing with a topic with such diverse facets. This more nuanced approach involved a ‘multi-dimensional’ reading of various secondary sources including the historical and the current materials roughly between those on fourth century until the closing months of 2013. All such sources have been examined to find ‘traces’ of continuities and breaks on the seldom sporadically inscribed and heavily corroded record of leisure consumption and entertainment practices in Istanbul over time. Those sources were ranging from fiction and non-fiction books, newspaper, magazine and journal clippings, written and visual advertizing materials and for more recent periods, online resources.

During my fieldwork between 2003 and 2013, I have scanned major Turkish dailies *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Sabah*, *Zaman*, *Akşam*, *Radikal* and *Vatan*. Weeklies *Beyoğlu* (now defunct), *Aktüel* and *Tempo* (both of which are currently published monthly); monthlies *Time Out Istanbul*, *Time Out Istanbul in English*, *Istanbul Life*, *Trendsetter Istanbul*, *Istanbul & Istanbul* and *Kadıköy Life*; bi-monthly *Atlas Tarih* and tri-monthly *Istanbul Kent Kültürü Dergisi* (Istanbul Journal of Urban Culture, now defunct) were also scanned. Sporadically published magazines such as *Taksimania*, *Taksim Life* and *Touch Istanbul* as well as the annual *Atlas Istanbul* were also scanned. Online city guides such as [www.istanbul.com](http://www.istanbul.com) (catering mainly to the Istanbulites and other citizen of Turkey and < [www.whattodoinistanbul.net](http://www.whattodoinistanbul.net)> geared towards the tourists and other foreign visitors, as well as the main Istanbul ticket master website <[biletix.com](http://biletix.com)> and the weekly online e-mail bulletin <[lecoolistanbul](http://lecoolistanbul)> were periodically scanned. The media material allowed me to identify salient characteristics as well as those transforming in time.

The consciously fetched methodological diversity had to incorporate at once the use of secondary sources summarized above, and primary sources such as semi-structured interviewing and participant observation at over fifty leisure consumption and entertainment establishments at *Beyoğlu*, *Beşiktaş*, *Fatih*, *Eyüp*, *Şişli*, *Gaziosmanpaşa*, *Zeytinburnu*, *Üsküdar*, *Kadıköy* and *Adalar* (Prince’s Islands) districts. At the same fifty establishments in ten districts a total of ninety-six semi-structured interviews were conducted. Fifty respondents were employees and entrepreneurs, and forty-six were consumers. I have also interviewed six regulators and eight mediators. Semi-

structured interviews allowed me at once to keep track of the main, pre-set bundles of questions, while remaining flexible enough to let the conversation flow onto unforeseen yet fruitful topics. Interviews lasted from one to four hours, depending on the availability and cooperativeness of the respondent as well as other temporal and/or spatial limitations. All interviews, fieldwork and media scanning were conducted at below three temporally separate research sequences:

The first one was conducted between 2003 and 2006; the second one was conducted between 2008 and 2010; and the final one between 2011 and 2013. Each tier sequence involving around a third of the research material, this temporally three-tiered approach had to be developed in response to necessary changes in my life in terms of personal or career-oriented matters. This three-tiered research sequencing, however, proved to culminate in a methodological strength in terms of my ability to tracking the salient elements and identify alterations or changes in various forms studied.

## **I. 6. Structure of the Book:**

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 at above Figure I.1: Basic Theoretical Matrix.

## **I. 7. Annexes and a Short Concluding Note on Historical Sociology of Leisure Consumption and Entertainment:**

Out of the scraped pieces of historical evidence, I have prepared two annexes to accompany each chapter: one involving a map of clusters of

establishments as well as another one on genealogical schematization of various forms, practices and spaces of leisure consumption and entertainment over time. I aimed to find amidst this plethora of highly variegated evidence a nevertheless meaningful and ‘unifying’ narrative. Such a narrative would certainly help make sense of the historical scene of leisure consumption and entertainment in Istanbul. This analytically unifying narrative, however, still had to be carefully steering away from simplistic efforts to homogenize and standardize highly complex forms and practices varying immensely over historical time... In order to keep the methodological diversity alive, I tried to conduct this multi-dimensional reading from within the variegated contributions by ‘new history movements’.

By ‘new history movements’ I refer to those who followed Le Goff’s call for a *nouvelle histoire* to challenge the traditional Rankean model of historiography in its state-centered recounting of events and ‘great men,’<sup>29</sup>. Those joining Le Goff’s call were incidentally also the ones running to help Braudel in his “battle in two fronts” –against the pitted “fronts” of history of events and the ‘very long term’ (*le temps des sages*)<sup>30</sup>. I claim those veterans fought under this banner include historical practitioners as diverse as *Annales* school’s ‘total history’ perspective (Braudel, 1958), microhistory of Ginzburg (1980), the approach to the history of ‘everyday life’ as proposed by the proponents of *Alltagsgeschichte* (Lüdtke 1999 & Medick 2000), analyses of quotidian life inspired by Lefebvre (1947; 1961; 1968, 1981) and “the history from below” perspective (Thompson, 1966 and Zinn, 1980).

Especially important for me was to comprehend the *mentalités* slowly simmering around leisure consumption and entertainment as historical forms. According to the *Annales* tradition *mentalités* are “patterns of behavior, expressive forms and models of silence into which worldviews and collective sensibilities are translated”<sup>31</sup>. As an “everyday plane of the ‘mental’” in a combination of anthropological and psychological senses<sup>32</sup>, the concept could potentially be deployed to uncover the stable, slowly changing ‘spirit’ of the said historical period) as a sense of ‘collective imagery’. Interestingly enough, the term *zeitgeist* was proposed by a pro-neoliberal columnist in 2011 to refer to pretty much the same thing.

One could place, as Schöttler does, *mentalités* on the same plane as ideology and discourse to make up a –what Ernst Labrousse termed– ‘third level,’ beyond the dual determinism of economy and society. This third level constitutes various forms of consciousness, habits of thought and worldviews. His suggestion that this plane may help going beyond the

<sup>29</sup> J. Le Goff, *La Nouvelle Histoire*, (Paris: 1978); J. Le Goff & P. Nora, *Faire l’Histoire*, (Paris:1974).

<sup>30</sup> F. Braudel, ‘Histoire Sciences sociales: La longue duree,’ *Annales ESC*, 13 (1958), pp. 725-53. According to him, the former history of events signify the ‘dust of history,’ while the latter is an atemporal construct that may only exist in the ‘time of the sages’ (*le temps des sages*).

<sup>31</sup> R. Mandrou, ‘Histoire/L’ histoire des mentalités,’ *Encyclopedia Universalis*, (Paris: 1971), p.436.

<sup>32</sup> P. Schöttler, ‘Mentalities, ideologies, discourses: on The ‘third level’ as a theme in social-historical research,’ in A. Lüdtke (ed.) *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life*, (Princeton: 1995), p.74.



objectivism- subjectivism binary opposition is quite interesting, and dubs Le Goff's statement that *mentalité* is about "the automatism of everyday life that escapes individual subjects in history because it reveals the impersonal content of their thinking"<sup>33</sup>.

Human beings can thus be seen as making history but mostly unconscious of making it, an assertion shared also by Marx. This three-layered experience of making/being made by/being unconscious of making history may indeed help us doing away with the false dichotomy of subjectivism- objectivism or structure versus agency. In the context of my *longue durée* study of Istanbul's leisure consumption and entertainment, this was hopefully translated into an attempt to go beyond the dilemmas of assigning economy, politics or culture the 'determining role' in shaping leisure consumption and entertainment patterns and changes over time.

The notion of the *mentalités* was at once a call for interdisciplinary alliance to bring together historians and social scientists. Le Goff defines it as referring to a kind of historical beyond, to "satisfy the historian's desire to 'go further' and it leads to a point of contact with the other human sciences"<sup>34</sup>. Against the faceless, lifeless history of the infrastructures, uncovering the life experiences of the human subjects of history requires a joint work of history and social sciences. In my book, I tried to dub this call for alliance from within a multi-methodical and multi-disciplinary research in order to relocate hidden dynamics between political structures, economic edifices, cultural constructs and active human agency.

<sup>33</sup> Faire l'histoire, vol. 3, p.80.

<sup>34</sup> In *ibid*, p.78.