Entertainment & leisure consumption in Istanbul

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CHAPTER 2

Legacies, Continuities and Breaks

Entertainment in Byzantine and Ottoman Empires
II. ENTERTAINMENT IN BYZANTINE AND OTTOMAN EMPIRES

In the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, as well as the Republic of Turkey, entertainment and leisure consumption were tightly woven into the larger socio-political, administrative, cultural and economic arrangements. In this chapter, I certainly do not intend to provide an exhaustive description or analysis of a wide array of leisure and entertainment practices and traditions spanning centuries. Instead, employing a *longue durée* perspective, I try to identify historical continuities and change in order to analyze the roles of and interconnections among the consumers, producers, governmental and non-governmental regulation (including mediation) in Istanbul’s leisure consumption and entertainment. Save for important continuities and overlapping legacies I will try to explain, I nevertheless distinguish three periods and identify the characteristics of which -via the elements in my theoretical matrix (as discussed above in Chapter I):

(1) **The Byzantine Period** which lasted from the 4th Century until the Ottoman conquest in 1453. I believe this period was mainly marked by -what I choose to call- traditional paternalism in terms of state regulation, housing an assortment of mediators that I classify and label as moralizers, legislators and aesthetes. In this period, processes of diversity including ethnic diversity were governed and managed by what I term regulation-based ‘othering’ and functional exocitization. As with other concepts provided in the periods below, I will explain them more thoroughly and explicitly throughout Chapter II.

(2) **The Classical Ottoman Period** from 1453 until the beginning of the 19th Century. This classical period, I claim was marked by communitarian traditional paternalism involving the continuing role of the mediators as moralizers, legislators and aesthetes. Mediators were helping the workings of regulation-based ‘othering’ whereby exocitizing the familiar was the dominant process in terms of the governing and management of diversity.

(3) **The Reform Ottoman Period** from the beginning of the 19th Century until the 1920s, after which the Republic of Turkey was established on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire. In this Reform period, the regulation
could be characterized by reformist paternalism aided by mediators who could be termed as moralizers, legislators and promoters who help sustain regulation-based ‘othering’;” and emergent forms of Orientalism, inner-Orientalism and Occidentalism in managing and governing diversity. Reform period of the Ottoman Empire coincides with “shy modernity” as discussed by Tekeli (2010). I will elaborate on these points later in this chapter and also in Chapter III.

At above three periods, I will concentrate on the roles of: a) Consumers, b) Producers, c) Regulation, (d) Mediators as well as e) Dynamics of Diversity and Ethnicity in Entertainment and Leisure. A detailed table on above three periods and four actors and dynamics is presented at the end of the Chapter (Table 1).

II.1. THE BYZANTINE PERIOD

In terms of the state regulation of leisure consumption and entertainment, Byzantine rule (spanning, with an intermission, from the fourth century A.D. to the Ottoman conquest in 1453), in Constantinople (or Byzantium and later, Κωνσταντινούπολις in Greek1) was chiefly characterized by what I term Traditional Paternalism. Basing its legitimacy and power on the Emperor’s respected person aided by a constellation of noble and non-noble elite, it was akin to the “Traditional Authority” typified in the writings of Weber (1958 [1922]). The emperor is at once the patriarch, legitimately perceived as the “eternal” as well as the “acting father” of the land2, which also characterizes his rule when it comes to help organizing people’s leisure and entertainment activities. The Patriarch certainly had ‘patriarchal powers’ and ‘duties’ in keeping under control the populace which has agreed upon its legitimate rule. In the Byzantine period, the Imperial authority had placed a lot of emphasis on the provision of both popular and elite forms of entertainment to show imperial wealth, prestige, strength and distinction, and had also developed various ways to regulate the entertainers’ work.

Regulatory powers of the leading elite and the emperor are self-serving in the sense that they are geared towards promulgating the image of ‘generous’ patriarchs. The prestige-based concern for providing leisure consumption and entertainment practically works to decommodify the provision of leisure consumption and entertainment but also to open up new avenues for its commodification. Decommodification occurs when -almost seen as

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1 For other names used historically for the city, see, Georgacas, 1947 and Sakaoglu, 1994a.
2 According to Weber (1958 [1922] & Bendix, 1977) ‘traditional authority’ “is based on a system in which authority is legitimate because it ‘has always existed’. People in power usually enjoy it because they have inherited it. Officials consist either of personal retainers (in a patrimonial regime) or of personal loyal allies, such as vassals or tributary lords (in a feudal regime). Their prerogatives are usually similar to those of the ruler above them, just reduced in scale, and they too are often selected based on inheritance.”

See URL: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Three_Types_of_Legitimate_Rule
the subjects’ rights—“the state or private organizations that operate at arm’s length from the state assume prime responsibility” (Esping-Andersen, 1990, Rath, 2002) for the provision of some public goods and services. For the Byzantine rulers, the symbolic powers of the patriarch extend both to the celestial and earthly domains and celebratory occasions are those connecting the two. Durak notes in Byzantine Greek language, *taksis* (*taxis*) meant both ‘ceremony’ and ‘order’, implying a seemingly contradictory yet, in practice complementary double function: “*Taksis* which is used to denote the order to comprehend meaning of the world, connotes [a larger] meaning, representing the harmonious hierarchy of components in state, church, society and even the universe all facing change which could potentially lead to chaos. Ceremonies were the concrete reflection of the ‘order’, which was necessary for the continuation of the state and the comfort of the society” (Durak, 2010: 54).

According to Auzépy, taxis, which she claims is “the exact equivalent of the Latin *ordo*—is an essential aspect of Byzantine civilization: it organized society in such a way that it would reflect the celestial society as closely as possible” (2008). In this sense, ceremonies are occasions in which order is being popularly seconded. To illustrate such a function, a pamphlet entitled The Book of Ceremonies commissioned by the Byzantine Emperor Konstantinos VII reads: “[…] highly appraised ceremonies make the power of the throne even more majestic, increases its prestige and at the same time, arouse feelings of admiration amidst both the populace and the foreigners” (Durak, 2010).

The Byzantine crown also placed a lot of symbolic emphasis on imperial feasts/banquets (*sumposion* or *symposion*, roughly meaning a ‘drinking party’) to ostentatiously show the glory of the empire (*İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, 1994: 140), a tradition which continued on under Ottoman rule as well (Tez, 2009: 250). The greek word *sumposion*, refers to the actual event of a ‘drinking-party,’ but it also points to the entertainment of its guests. Some sources claim that *sumposion* and *symposion*—which means a “convivial gathering of the educated”—share a common root. *Sumposion* served a social gathering function primarily for men, similar to the Ancient Greek tradition of holding debates accompanied by leisure consumption and entertainment-oriented activities and it was an important occasion for discussions on matters of state administration and economy, as well as cultural and literary topics. These functions of sumposion were later echoed in the Classical and Reform Ottoman as well as Republican Turkish traditions of *bezm* and *devlet sofrası*. 
Bezm literally means a “drinking assembly” and implies a “courtly banquet” while devlet sofrası means a “state banquet”. These points will be elaborated later under the sections on the Ottoman Empire.

*Sumposion* also constituted important events wherein pantomime-like, parody-based as well as dance shows were shown and music played. Especially during periods of increased political and communitarian influence of the Orthodox Church, women were not allowed to attend most *sumposia*, and had to dine separately together with the youth and children. Indeed Garland argues that women constituted a marginalized group in -what she calls- “a predominantly patriarchal” society. Women as such, were prevented from joining in “public displays of amusement” (2006b:165). This is yet another instance of traditional paternalism and its impact on gender dynamics. In this sense, Ottoman rule seems to have continued patriarchal tradition by adding more severe demarcations separating women and men socially and spatially, especially considering the impact of the gender policies of Islam.

While imperial sumposion participants were usually limited to richer and more elite circles, other feasts, carnivals and especially horse carriage races were important occasions for the entertainment of the general public (İstanbul Ansiklopedisi, 1994:140). In such leisure occasions, comedians, dancers, musicians as well as jugglers, magicians, acrobats, animal trainers, and others were given the duty of entertaining the people. Especially in the races, “[a]longside supplies of bread, the state also guaranteed public entertainment. […] [Competing teams] had become large, powerful bodies with full responsibility not only for racing but also for displays of gymnastics, athletics, boxing, wild animals, pantomime, dancing and singing, which filled the entr’actes between the races” (Herrin, 2007, emphases added).
This example illuminates the importance that the state had placed on the provision of public entertainment, and it also shows the key role of state in formation of organized groups of entertainers to be employed at such and other occasions. This vocational organization was later taken up by the Ottomans while adapting it to the *lonca* (trade guild) system. For Ottomans, however, we have more evidence of a detailed sectoral-vocational stratification along *lonca* (guild), *ocak* (corps) and *kol* (company) as I will discuss further (see, under II.3.2). In elite and popular occasions of entertainment, high-brow and low-brow entertainers were mobilized and lined up respectively. Serving at the court feasts or other gatherings was a great privilege. Indeed, Garland argues that for the entertainers, the “pinnacle was to become a court jester, or mime” (2006c:178). Higher-brow entertainers such as *epithalamia* were better respected, partly because they were perceived as skilled successors of the Ancient Greek theater performers, and they were ‘ethnically’ Greek as well. Lower-brow *skenikoi* were looked down upon and were seen as mere buffoons involved in slapstick comicalities and grotesqueries.

Grotesque and carnivalesque are the characteristics of ethnicized Roma in leisure consumption and entertainment. They provide relaxing escapes from out the routinized life cycles. Carnivals 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. Byzantine festivals, celebrations and carnivals were also important in terms of promoting spending and reviving the economy. In these senses, Byzantine state regulation was symbolized by traditional paternalism whereby the state kept a close on leisure consumption and entertainment in order to increase the allegiances of the populace, by providing (thus decommodifying) free services at public ceremonies, festivals and the like. By directly organizing, mobilizing and paying the entertainers the state is the patriarch that revives the economy as well…

*Moralizers, Legislators and Aesthetes: Mediators shaping public functions of entertainment*

An assortment of mediators that I classify and label as moralizers, legislators and aesthetes provide additional support for this traditional paternalist regulation by the state. Assessing the long historical surface which is only sporadically documented I could infer that regulatory roles of mediators seem
to have wavered between “hard” and “soft” types of mediation in different periods considered. Those moralizers are also at once either regulators with directly administrative powers, such as the imperial bureaucrats or religious personalities who have authority. These I call moralizers and legislators. Moralizers are usually the members of the Church hierarchy, who support, promote, limit or ban some forms of leisure consumption and entertainment. The legislators are mostly imperial bureaucrats and administrators who have a direct role in launching and changing rules of the leisure consumption and entertainment. Certainly, legislators and moralizers are overlapping groups since most of the time imperial and church-based regulation and mediation were intertwined. Aesthetes, in turn, are those individuals that we can see similar in their function to “the cultural intermediaries” as discussed by Bourdieu (1984) or “the cultural specialists” that Featherstone describes (1991:35). Byzantine intellectuals, artists and chroniclers had an important mediating role between production of leisure and its consumption in the Empire. They not only had a considerable impact on influencing taste choices of the Crown, aristocrats and richer circles but also on middle and lower classes in shaping public attitudes and preferences.

Based on studies illuminating various aspects of Byzantine entertainment (Garland, 2006), I argue that Byzantine festivals have important public functions. Those could be discussed under carnivalesque functions à la Mikhail Bakhtin (1984) [1941 & 1965] or a ‘tactical’ potential to subvert social order ‘strategies’ à la Michel de Certeau (1980), expressions of which had to be subject to religious and administrative fiat and other sorts of regulation, including excommunication, banning, imprisonment or communitarian pressure.

3 ‘Carnivalesque’ and ‘Grotesque’ are key concepts for Mikhail Bakhtin, based on his re-reading of Rabelais, French Renaissance intellectual and writer (1984) [1941 & 1965].
Firstly, Bakhtin argues: “[A]ll were considered equal during carnival. Here, in the town square, a special form of free and familiar contact reigned among people who were usually divided by the barriers of caste, property, profession, and age”. (1984 [1941 & 1965]: 10). Such “suspension of all hierarchical rank” opens up doors to an informal type of communication termed by Bakhtin as “marketplace speech” (1984 [1941 & 1965]: 80-81). Some researchers claim that the Byzantine Emperor Mihael II personally acted in a carnival play, imitating himself. (İstanbul Ansiklopedisi, 1994: 141). Byzantine carnivals as “parades of infamy” (Garland, 2006b: 169) provided such “temporary liberation from the prevailing truth” (Bakhtin, 1984 [1941 & 1965]: 80-81) by briefly allowing otherwise non-permitted challenges to the social order, criticisms or ridiculing of authorities. But at the same time, such temporally and spatially limited occasions of criticisms and satire eventually solidified the power structure.

Secondly, Michel de Certeau argues that as opposed to ‘strategies’ which require authority and a particular spatial locus, ‘tactics’ emerge in the quotidian life almost spontaneously by the participation of urban dwellers coming from separate spatial locations (1980). Such spontaneous, community-based mass catharses of sorts may have also constituted spatial touchstones allowing dwellers to cross or transgress the ‘boundaries’ through the opportunities carved out by the comical and the grotesque and giving the illusion of temporarily subverting the order by satirizing it.

It is important to remember, however, that when the grotesque or such tactics were deployed to the extent of bordering political or social criticism, mob violence or sacrilege, Byzantine Church and the imperial authorities were there to restore the order and remind everybody of the ‘boundaries’. The Church’s impact was also strong in administratively regulating popular forms of entertainment such as the carnivals, which sometimes were becoming too banal, out of line or outright threatening. In some instances, for example, entertainers were reportedly banned from imitating the imperial administrators or clergy members. Pitarakis argues that in the 7th Century, the Church Council excommunicated theater artists and banned plays (1994: 342). Tokalak notes that “during the rule of Emperor Iustinianos (685-695 & 705-711 AD), women were banned from dancing in public and wearing men’s clothing. Men were also banned from wearing women’s clothing” (2006:493). In these senses, the Church clergy has a moralizing function vis-à-vis leisure consumption and entertainment.
Channeling grumpy feelings or critical energies into the relaxing outbursts of perhaps not ‘mass’ but definitely en masse forms of entertainment (a notion that could have been perhaps interesting for the Frankfurt School\(^4\)) such as festivals, horse races or carnivals certainly needed to be accompanied by other types of religious and administrative regulation. I argue later in the text that, both notions were further echoed practically under some entertainment forms during the Ottoman Empire discussed below (see, under II.3.3).

Casella argues that theater plays especially were the “laboratory of public opinion and administrators had to take them seriously” and that treatises by intellectuals were important in helping classify and hierarchically categorize entertainers, including dancers, pantomime artists and others (2007: 102). Since not only the Crown but also notable families financed various groups of entertainers, such a hierarchical categorization seem to have functioned as a clustering mechanism to determine which groups of entertainers were –or were not, or no longer were- ‘worthy’ of support and encouragement. Lawler’s work also discusses the role of intellectuals and chroniclers in evaluating the ‘value’ of various performative arts. In some periods, they speak of the dance “as a veritable ‘craze’- morbus” (1946: 246), in others, they claimed that “pantomimic dancing was not included in the public competitions, as being too high and solemn for criticism” (1946: 244). However, Lawler argues that “in the days of Libanius, dancers were held in such low esteem that, that distinguished author plumes himself not a little upon his courage in daring to defend them in public!” (1946: 247). Lawler argues that intellectuals attempted to deny “the repeated charge that the pantomimic dance was seductive and had a bad moral effect upon spectators” (1946: 246).

Since appreciation of entertainers work was directly translated into monetary gain on their part, Casella mentions that entertainers were hiring ‘applauders’ to help increase interest to and appreciation of their work (2007: 102). Walter (1966) and Daş (2011) argue that rival ‘circus factions’ had applauders and cheerers to increase their prestige and approval vis-à-vis the public and dominate over their competitors. As these discussions also suggest, intellectuals and chroniclers were influential in evaluating the social worth of certain entertainment forms and in shaping the tastes of the public as well as the elite. One could also talk about a similar role of mediators (intellectuals and chroniclers) in the Classical period of the Ottoman Empire serving a similar role of “soft” mediation as it will be discussed further below (see, under II.3.3).

\(^4\) Various Byzantine forms of entertainment show the character of being having been conducted en masse and thus had related functions vis-à-vis the masses. While this is certainly different than ‘mass cultural’ forms that fell under the intellectual interest of the Frankfurt School (Arendt, 1973 [1962]; Horkheimer & Adorno, 1972; Swingewood, 1985). I argue that a closer look at Byzantine forms by espousing theoretical tools of the Frankfurt School could be potentially very fruitful.
**Diversity**

During the Byzantine period, diversity, including ethnic diversity was governed and managed by what I label regulation-based ‘othering’ and functional exocitization. Regulation-based ‘othering’ means that the regulators, aided by the mediators, help carve a stratification based on diversity. In this scheme, by basing itself on the social attitudes and perceptions, diversity is functionalized whereby an “ethnic division of labor” was sustained through the erection and sustenance of ethnic ‘boundaries’. In Byzantine leisure consumption and entertainment, ‘ethnic’ Greeks appear as a privileged and elite group of entertainers. Roma, on the other hand, are administratively clustered either as “skilled exotics,” or as “slapstick entertainers”.

In order to discuss diversity, we need to identify the two major entertainment types that seem to have been prevalent during the Byzantine period: (a) Popular forms of the lower and middle classes. (b) Imperial/elite forms prevalent among the crown and rich circles. Note that this division appears to have continued to some extent under the Ottoman rule after the conquest in 1453. It was complemented by further stratification lines conditioned by socio-economic status and ‘ethno-religious’ administrative cluster (*millet*)

5 Ottoman *millet* system will be discussed further, later in this chapter (see, under II.3.1).

When I refer to ethnicity, I do not mean ethnic groups as isolated entities and with fixed characteristics or identities but rather, ‘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. Barth 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 claim that Byzantine—and later, Ottoman—leisure consumption and entertainment were characterized by important levels of ‘ethnicity’-based vocational specialization.

This ethnic specialization was prevalent in Byzantine Istanbul. Above (under section, II.1.), I stated that two types of entertainers existed under the Byzantine rule: higher-brow and better respected *epithalamia* and the low-brow and ridiculed *skenikoi*. While we do not clearly know the situation of other ‘ethnic’ groups (White, 1999-2000), Roma appear to have been mainly part of this latter type. Socially marginalizing gaze seem to have placed them under the low brow and ridiculed category of entertainers. However Byzantine Roma have also taken part in populating the first type at least as musicians or as illusionists, magicians, acrobats and other tricksters leaving richer and noble Byzantines in awe, signifying another mainstream gaze upon them. Since ‘high’ and ‘low’ brow forms of having fun existed, those lined up and placed separately in social and spatial terms, were to fulfill these demands. Roma, with strict regulations placed on where they could reside (Freely, 2002: 90), were among those. We know that there were Byzantine Armenians and Jews for sure, and some Balkan and Arabic peoples, but we do not know if they had a non-negligible role in entertainment.

For example, Duygulu claims that magicians and snake charmers were mainly coming from among the Byzantine Roma (1994: 514). White also argues that the Roma worked as magicians, snake-charmers, acrobats, fortune-tellers and illusionists (1999-2000). Freely also claims that the Roma were involved in music, fortune-telling, dance and ‘bear-dancing’ (2002: 90). 17th Century Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi claims that *Karagöz*, one of the most famous traditional shadow theater figures (based on the possibly 12th or 13th century’s Anatolian comical stories of *Karagöz ve [and] Hacivat*) was based on *Kambur* (Humpback) Bâli Çelebi who was purportedly a *Kıbtî* (Gypsy) Byzantine imperial stableman (Tez, 2009: 291).

According to Marsh, Roma were brought to the capital in the 12th century onwards⁶ (2006) in line with the demographic policies of the empire, but were, with a 13th century imperial decree, required to live outside of the city walls (Freely, 2002: 90). Roma’s social and administrative situation as marginalized-peripheral outcasts seems to already exist during the Byzantine period. Especially considering the carnivalesque character of

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⁶ Some other sources claim the Roma were brought to the capital earlier, in the 11th century. See Duygulu (1994), p. 514.
the festivities as discussed above, their situation as social outcasts and their role as entertainers, require more—and potentially highly promising and interesting—research.

The idea of Roma as sorcerers also plays a part in the apparent confusion between the Atzinganoi (the Roma), and the Athinganoi, a 9th century heretical sect, who had been accused of practicing magic and fortune-telling (White, 1999-2000). It is interesting to note that Byzantine Roma were (either knowingly or erroneously) confused or conflated with such a heretic sect accused of being involved with magic. This point strengthens the argument that they were seen as constituting a marginalized or outcast group. I claim that this may have constituted one of the earliest manifestations of the development of an ‘Orientalizing,’ sexualizing, criminalizing and paternalistic gaze upon the Roma as musical, fun-loving, talented, yet feared-by group, watched simultaneously in awe, pity and fear. This gaze was initiated under Byzantine Istanbul, but it certainly was fully entrenched in administrative practices and socio-cultural attitudes during Ottoman and the Republican periods. This point also illustrates that important continuities existed among these three historical periods. Let me now summarize some basic parameters for change and continuities below.

II. 2. Intermezzo: The Bases for Byzantine-Ottoman Continuity and Change:

A recent generation of scholars challenges the long-held belief that Ottoman rule implied a distinct break with the Byzantine past (Kitsikis, 1996; Tokalak, 2006). Apart from other overlaps in state institutions and culture, continuities between the Byzantine and Ottoman worlds in terms of leisure consumption and entertainment are numerous. Some of these have to do with the city’s location as a maritime and land trade center as well as the longitudinal bearing of the Byzantine and ‘Italian’9 or Latin forms of culture and consumption (Aytar, 2011). Changes mostly had to do with the demographic and population-related dynamics as well as urban spatial transformation.

Basic Parameters for Continuities:
Port City Characteristics and ‘Ethnic’ Vocational Specialization

The port, especially, was an important and strategic source in terms of political economy as well as a crossroads of naval trade. The port city
character of Byzantium/Constantinople-Galata continued on under the Ottoman Empire and this character has contributed to the development of a related leisure consumption and entertainment setting in Istanbul. Türker (2007) argues that the “triangle of port – bank – brothel” centered in Galata underlined the long-term interconnectedness of maritime, financial and leisure consumption-oriented activities.

Also in Köstantinoúpolis, and especially in Galata and around the Golden Horn, among other popular types of leisure consumption and entertainment, various ‘watering holes’ such as kapeleios figure prominently. Working in close proximity to the “triangle of port – bank – brothel” discussed by Türker (2007), kapeleios were early taverns of sorts, serving alcohol and food, sometimes accompanied by music and dancing by men and women alike and they purportedly later degenerated into ‘seedy dens’ (batakhâne) (İstanbul, 1994: 140). The port brought numerous sailors, traders, ex-convicts, disguised pirates and others into the city, further drawing multi-ethnic and multi-confessional men into kapeleios, other drinking/entertainment establishment as well as brothels. Those were especially abundant around the Genovese trade colony of Galata, active since the eleventh century and which, later, had become a separate walled city across the historical peninsula.

The other important factor underlying the continuity between the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires has to do with the continuing ‘ethnic vocational specialization’ especially in drinking and entertainment establishment. In this sense, I argue that kapeleios and other such local ‘watering holes’ have provided a basis for the later development of Ottoman meyhâne10 and ‘westernized,’ or alafranga11 drinking establishments and patterns. Judging from an almost total domination by ‘ethnic’ Greeks (Rum or Urum, denoting ‘Roman’), especially Sakızlı -those from the Aegean island of Chios (Sakız)- along with Armenians (Ermeni) over the alcohol retail, meyhâne, eating-out and music sectors starting from the first century after the Ottoman rule (Sakaoğlu, 1994b: 169), we could infer a similar ethnicization among the entrepreneurs or the employees of the kapeleios. Zat argues that Kıbiti (gypsy) youngsters also worked at meyhâne or at later forms such as baloz (1994: 435) and the Roma presence could have similarly been the case in Byzantine watering holes.

An additional dimension of such an ethnic vocational specialization had to do with the continuing impact of ‘Italians’ over the leisure consumption and entertainment scene. Although after the Ottoman conquest, there

10 Although meyhâne could be translated as “wine house,” technically speaking, it literally means a ‘house of fermented drinks,’ derived from the Farsi words, mey (fermented drink) and hâne (home or house).
11 Alafança was derived from an Italian word, alla franc, denoting initially ridiculed, imitative styles by the modernizing Ottoman middle classes or the rich to copy European Frenk (literally meaning, Frank, or French, but generally denoting ‘all things Western’) bathroom habits and technologies, and later, etiquette and cultural consumption patterns. Later, alafança gained a more positive overtone denoting progress and other higher values. I also discuss this notion in more detail, later in this chapter as well as in chapter III.
seems to have been at least a slight decrease in the overall share of the Genovese, Venetians, Neapolitans and other ‘Italian’ city states’ citizens, Christian Galatians nevertheless had kept their previous trade privileges which were later extended to the French and others. Indeed, Arkan describes the lively activities of such Latin merchants in the 17th century, who were assembled under what was then called the Magnifica Communita (Magnificent Community) (1998: 98). In this sense, the Latin presence continued on in the life of the city and in its leisure consumption and entertainment setting. It is perhaps illustrative to note that since the early periods of the Ottoman rule, meyhâne-owners were first known as barba (an Italian word literally meaning ‘bearded man’). Barba were usually kind, talkative, humorous, yet paternalistic older men (Zat, 1994: 434 and 2009: 96, Aytar, 2011:31). Apparently, there is an alternative etymological root for barba in Anatolian Greek which implies fatherliness. This warm, dependable fatherliness seems to be also close to barba’s characteristics as a kind and well-humored older man.12

‘Italian’ impact continued on through the following centuries (Aytar & Çavdar, 2006), as expressed in the later development of a particular form of restaurant, lokanta13 derived from the Italian word locanda, which means ‘inn’. Since the Byzantine period, caravan stops included such eating and drinking establishments known as locanda. Arkan argues that in the twelfth century, locanda were providing Christian merchants food, drinks, entertainment and other services (1994:221). As these examples suggest, Ottoman leisure consumption and entertainment sat on the legacy left by the Byzantine Empire, as well as the traditions of the ‘Italian’ city states which had set up colonies in the previous ‘Roman lands’ (Rumeli or Diyar-ı Rum in Ottoman Turkish), including the walled city of Genovese Galata, across from the historical peninsula.

Basic Parameters for Change: Demographics and Urban Space

Istanbul -or Kostantiniyye as continued to be alternatively referred to under the Ottoman rule after 1453- became subject to various demographic regulatory policies by the crown which also helped shape leisure consumption and entertainment. Forced or voluntary population movements, such as these, were an important characteristic of the demographic and urban spatial policies of the Empire whereby different groups were moved to various regions and/or neighborhoods to ‘balance’ one another (İnalçık, 1997). Various ethnic Turkish, Turcoman and

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12 This alternative etymological interpretation was suggested by Noyan Bahit via Mehmet Ali Bahit, both of whom I am grateful. For a longer discussion of barba, see Aytar 2011.

13 Out of the lokanta tradition which currently continues on, other forms such as aşevi (soup kitchen/eatery) and içkili lokanta (lokanta with alcoholic drinks) originated since the seventeenth century and nineteenth century, respectively.
other Muslim groups were brought into the new capital to re-populate the historical centre and to encircle and to balance out non-Muslim residential clusters, but these were not the only groups who were relocated. From within a longer-term perspective spanning from the 15th, until the early 20th century, population movements and various relocations and displacements constituted the main parameters of change in the city.

For example Byzantine Sulukule’s Roma-dominant population increased after the Ottoman conquest in 1453, when other Roma groups -involved in basketry, metalwork and horse-raising- were sent here by the Sultan’s orders in order to help revive the local economy (Yılgür, 2007). (Fatih/ Conqueror) Sultan Mehmed II brought other Roma groups and had them settle at Balat, Aysansaray and Kasımpaşa around Haliç (Golden Horn) (Schick, 1986; Duygulu, 1994: 514). Jewish (Yabudi) groups were brought to settle at Balat and elsewhere. Armenians (Ermeni) were settled to a few neighborhoods. After the Inquisition in the late 15th century Iberian Peninsula, judo-espanyol or ladino-speaking Jewish groups took refuge and found permanent home in Istanbul (Deleon, 1997).

Although not part of the direct imperial regulation, since at least the 17th century, Europeans living in Istanbul such as Levanten14, or Frenk15 increased (Scognamillo, 1990). Istanbul continued to be subject to demographic and migratory waves over the centuries, some of the latest under the Ottomans being the flooding of various Caucasian groups following the Russian occupation in the 19th century, Turkish and Muslim groups pouring in after the territorial losses of most the Balkans in 1911-12, forced deportation of a few thousand Istanbul Armenians in 191516 and the exodus of over a hundred thousand ‘Beyaz Rus’ fleeing the Bolshevik Revolution (Toprak, 1994: 344). All these changes in Istanbul’s population certainly added new dimensions into the city’s complex leisure consumption and entertainment setting.

II. 3. Classical Ottoman Period (1453-19th Century)

Sitting on, transforming and adding on to this legacy, and subject to above demographic and migratory policies and movements, leisure consumption and entertainment continued to be of interest for and subject to administrative regulation under the Ottoman rule. I argue that Classical Ottoman period borrowed the traditional paternalism of the Byzantine period in terms of state-led regulation. What was added into the mix, however, was the

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14 Literally meaning ‘Levantine’. Originally, ‘The Levant’ was meant to point out to the ‘lands east of Venice,’ (originating from the soleil levant in French, meaning the ‘[land of the] rising sun’) but was generally used to denote the non-European Eastern Mediterranean lands. Numerous Levanten lived in the Ottoman Empire and elsewhere.
15 See footnote 13.
16 While Anatolian Armenians were subjected to what some call “genocide” or “ethnic cleansing” in 1915 by the then ruling İttihad ve Terakki Fırkası (Committee of Union and Progress), only carefully selected notable and politically active Istanbul Armenians were subjected to forced deportation.
communitarian notions which cluster and stratify various groups based on their mainly confessionally-demarked communities (which would later be called the *millet* system). The palace was the main regulator, similar to the Byzantine crown, as a way to increase allegiance and promote the power of the state, promoted, supported and hosted leisure and entertainment events. The palace was also the main power source to stratify groups of entertainers and putting limitations or altogether banning or criminalizing some forms with the aid of the Islamic clergy. It should be noted that the Islamic clergy was bifurcated between the official palace clergy and volk [folk] clergy who have sometimes different roles in terms of regulating and mediating leisure consumption and entertainment as I will discuss later, below.

In the Classical Ottoman period, the Sultan invited state officials and others to drink- and food-accompanied discussions on matters of the state, economy and culture. This tradition of *bezm* ("drinking assembly or "courtly banquet") was certainly inspired by *sumposion*, Sakaoğlu notes that it also was a continuation of pre-Ottoman [Turkic] Seljuk Imperial tradition of holding state banquets accompanied by food and drinks (including alcoholic drinks) whereby the ruler asked the opinions of state officials and others and everybody was free to express them openly and even raise criticisms (2010:66).

Various types of regulation were similar to the Byzantine spectrum and helped shape and effectively ‘ethnicize’ leisure consumption and entertainment. Directly ordered by Şeyh-ül İslam’s17 fetva (fatwa) or Islamically-motivated Imperial decrees, governmental regulation accorded the right of selling alcoholic beverages, engaging in the practice of prostitution, dancing, performing stage arts and most leisure consumption and entertainment-oriented forms only to the non-Muslim (*gayrimüslim*) groups18 whose respected religious precepts allowed such practices which were sinful for Muslims (Sevengil, 1998 [1927]: 20-21).

This situation is clearly seen in the nearly total domination by the Greeks, Armenians and Jews in these sectors (Zat, 1994: 435). Some ‘Italians’ continued to be active in performative entertainments. Together with ‘Italians,’ Levantines were not only among the consumers and producers, but also members of the mediators, helping shape public taste, especially since the 19th century with the introduction of newspapers and public opinion (Akın, 2002). Roma appear to be in an interestingly precarious situation since they were considered Muslim (although ‘genuineness’ of

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17 Şeyh-ül İslam is a superior authority on Islamic issues. In the Ottoman Empire, this position was of great value and its holders regulated the religious affairs of the state.

18 Although in some instances, such as briefly under Kanuni Sultan Süleyman (Suleiman the Magnificent) even non-Muslims were banned from selling alcohol. A total ban on alcohol, tobacco, coffee and other stimulating substances was instituted under Murad IV’s rule, during which, interestingly enough, Sultan himself was reportedly involved in a rather heavy use of all of those (1623-1640) (Sevengil, 1998 [1927]: 39).
their faith was always doubted by the authorities and the mainstream society) yet they were quite active in these sectors. I argue this may have to do with their continued social marginalization. I should also note their perceived past ‘talents’ under the Byzantine rule allowed them to carry on with their activities and control particularized niches.

**Diversity: Millet system, Non-Muslims and the Roma**

The locus of non-Muslims and the Roma within the leisure consumption and entertainment economy in Ottoman Istanbul, in this sense, should be debated in particular and should be placed within a more general context of Imperial demographic policies and social economy which were organized along a functional ‘ethnic division of labor’ of sorts, whereby different communities were channeled to particular vocations and localities. However, note that the use of the word ‘ethnic’ is quite problematic and anachronistic in Ottoman times, where confessional divisions based on a millet system was rather at place. But I am using ethnicity in the sense that I discussed under the Byzantine Empire above.

While in modern Turkish usage, the term millet is a ‘nation,’ in the Ottoman Empire it meant an administratively clustered confessional community. It was loosely based on Islamic shari’ah law’s acknowledgement of non-Muslim groups’ (dhimmî) rights. In the Ottoman Empire, at the beginning, only the most visible and sizeable non-Muslim confessional groups such as Orthodox Greeks, Gregorian Armenians and Jews were officially recognized as millets. They were accorded a degree of autonomy whereby they could set up separate legal courts especially and exclusively dealing with intra-millet civil issues. Muslims were not given such a status and were not administratively differentiated along ethnic or confessional/sectarian divisions.

Although this did not include any forced vocational, sectoral or employment-based clustering of various millets or other confessional / ‘ethnic’ groups, it was still the case that there were some economic ‘expectations’ from them. Greeks, Jews and Armenian millet were usually channeled to some particular jobs or employment niches. Armenians, for example, were known as being clustered in vocations such as stone carving, ironworking, jewelry and furniture making (Özdoğan, Üstel, Karakaşlı & Kentel, 2009:79). While Millet system existed mostly in practice before, it was codified clearly in law in the 19th century (Anagnostoulu, 1999: 2). Roma as a Muslim, non-

19 For various discussions on the *millet* system, see, Braude, B. & Lewis, B. (eds.) (1982). In the Empire, notions around ‘ethnicity’ only appeared in late nineteenth century, with the influence of westernization and modernization and the advent of French Revolution-inspired nationalisms. In the Republic of Turkey, the notion of ethnicity remained a highly controversial one, mainly due to the staunch republican insistence on supposedly mono-ethnic, nation-state based political, administrative, economic and cultural centralism and fear of ethnic separatism. For these reasons, numerous non-Turkish groups, including the Roma, carefully stayed away from identifying themselves as an ‘ethnic’ or ‘minority’ group.
millet group was mainly involved in basketry, metalwork, horse-raising, entertainment and other service and consumption-oriented services. However, non-Muslims’ or Roma’s ‘inclination’ towards consumption-oriented services should be thought of in relation to larger socio-economic forces and administrative arrangements.

Roma of the neighborhood of Sulukule became more visible in the ‘entertainment’ life since the 17th century, as musicians, dancers, fortune tellers, acrobats and illusionists. According to Evliya Çelebi, ‘Entertainment Patrols’ (mobile ‘troops’ of entertainers, musicians, dancers and other performers dispatched to various social occasions, celebrations, weddings, etc.) were dominated by the Roma (Kayaoğlu, 1996). Akçura claims that such patrols constitute the historical bases of ‘Entertainment Houses’ (Eğlence Evleri) set up in Sulukule (2007). Public celebrations, gatherings, feasts and other such events as well as more privatized spaces of entertainment and consumption were dominated by Roma performers, dancers, musicians and others.

Numerous Roma personalities also served in the Ottoman court and elite family circles as music instructors, composers and performers, some even becoming famous in the early recording industry, while in the popular circles and especially at weddings and various feasts, Roma musicians, performers, dancers, fortune-tellers and others continued to remain active. Muslim Roma peopled a ‘parallel,’ complementary position to Christian Greeks and Armenians who were widely involved in restaurant, meyhâne, and other drinking/entertainment businesses. Usually, it was not ‘appropriate’ for Muslim groups to be active in such sectors. Roma’s role as caterers to the Ottoman -and later, Turkish- entertainment world remained strong through the 1920s.

**‘Ethnic’ Vocational Specialization & Guild Structures**

Ottoman Imperial authority, similar to the Byzantine crown, placed a lot of emphasis on the provision of public entertainment and leisure consumption to show imperial strength, wealth and prestige. The Ottoman court continued on with the Byzantine tradition of holding imperial banquets, religious or non-religious public celebrations and festivals. *Surnâme* are among important historical sources of such imperial weddings, crowning ceremonies, celebrations and feasts (Atasoy, 2010). They detail parades by various trade guilds (*lonca*); some structured or stratified along or across
ethno-religious lines. In some festivals various guilds organized exhibits or demonstrations of their trades or talents, similar to the logic of a modern industrial or world fair (Tez, 2009:245). Similarly, Işın notes that, “[Ottoman] Imperial festivals were social events that are noteworthy as concrete examples of the cultural profile of everyday life in the classical period. These festivals, which gathered the entire populace of the city around a cultural activity for weeks on end, also reflect the economic and aesthetic level of society” (Işın, 2008).

Set usually at the central At Meydanı (Horse Square) or Sultan Ahmet Meydanı (Blue Mosque Square), such parades were important public events and sources of leisure consumption and entertainment as well as occasions of economic vitality (İstanbul Ansiklopedisi, 1994:141; Tez, 2009:247; Atasoy, 2010:342). Terzioğlu describes such parades in a 1582 Imperial circumcision ceremony whereby the “participants in the procession also put on various shows, and dancers, jugglers and the like often paraded with the artisans” (1995:85). He also argues that “[a]fter 1582, artisan processions underwent further formalization as a more elaborate guild structure emerged in the course of the seventeenth century” (Terzioğlu, 1995:90). 17th century traveler Evliya Çelebi richly detailed one parade, whereby numerous lonca orders, including various types of entertainers took a long walk in front of the crown and the public (Freely, 2002). 19th century Cabinet Minister Ali Rıza Bey who wrote on the history of the quotidian, leisure consumption and entertainment life in Istanbul details various kol (companies) organized under different employment categories such as dancers, musicians and others (Çoruk, 2001).

Guild structures have been in operation among entertainers. Sevengil describes lub‘iyyat toplulukları (entertainment groups) made up of around two hundred-strong ocak (corps), whose members lived, worked and earned together. They were named after their leader (kolbaşı, or the head of the corps), such as Yanaki Kolu (a Greek [Rum]-led corps) and they included musicians, singers, dancers, Karagöz shadow theater masters, meddâh (a performative, folk raconteur of sorts, also known as kisسابان), imitators, comedians, zorbaz (performers showing muscular strength or enduring physical duress), acrobats and others. He argues that lub‘iyyat toplulukları members included Greeks, Armenians, Jews, Gypsies and Muslims (1998 [1927]: 63). While Karagöz and meddâh shows were relatively more under Muslim or Turkish domination, other groups of entertainers were predominantly made up of non-Muslims and the Roma (Sakaoğlu & Akbayar, 1999).
The Imperial authority similarly shaped the ethnicized structure of the court entertainers and artists, which could be placed on the “high-brow” end of the spectrum. Most court music instructors and musicians were made up of Armenians. Puppetry and performative entertainments such as soytarı (harlequin) and palyaço (clown) shows were dominated by the Jews, who according to some scholars had brought such practices in the 15th century from the Iberian Peninsula and via ‘Italy’ with some sprinkles of commedia dell’arte elements\(^\text{24}\) on the way (Terzioğlu, 1995:89; And, 1999:128; Tez, 2009:294). 17th century traveler Jean de Thévenot reported that Istanbul’s puppet masters were exclusively coming from among Jews (Tez, 2009:294). In Istanbul, Jews continued to control this sub-sector until the 20th century (And, 1999:129). Later, at least since the 18th and 19th centuries, Europeans were invited to the court, some given military or civilian ranks of Paşa\(^\text{25}\) (Pasha) or Efendi (Master).

Note three interesting and meaningful details: Tez argues that during the festival in 1539, Jewish esnaf (artisan/craftsman/small shopkeeper) made and paraded with a big dragon puppet which apparently had seven heads and attracted huge public attention and awe (2009:285). Terzioğlu notes that at the Imperial circumcision ceremony in 1582, Jewish dancers were made to appear in “Persian attire” (1995.86). Similarly, in a public festival in 1836, during the reign of Mahmud II, Jewish merchants paraded by wearing ‘representative’ costumes of the peoples of various European nation-states (Tez, 2009:266).

\(^{24}\) Commedia dell’arte or ‘comedy of art,’ is a particular form of popular professional theatre that was initiated in Italy in the mid-16th century. See, Katritzky, 2006.

\(^{25}\) One such example is the ‘Italian’ Donizetti Paşa who was instrumental in the court’s musical education and in setting up of a new system of music and orchestra (Arkan 1998:181).
These incidents are illustrative of the particular dynamics of consuming the ‘Other’ within the symbolic economy of the Empire. Interestingly enough, one could even suggest that this may be one of the early examples of an *en masse* touristifying gaze upon an ethnic group. I will argue that such ethnicizing consumption dynamics are related to an Orientalizing and Occidentalizing gaze upon the ‘Other’ subjects of the Empire or peoples from the lands east of the Empire\textsuperscript{26}, manifestations of which were witnessed under the Byzantine gaze upon the Roma, and similar gazes upon them and others under the Ottoman and Republican Turkish rule. However, what seems to be a novel development, was the way in which regulation-based ‘Othering’ that was already prevalent under the Byzantine rule was complemented by exocitizing the familiar which meant that Roma, as well as the non-Muslim communities such as the Greeks, Jews and Armenians were seen as familiar groups (who were either neighbors or frequently seen other urban dwellers) but due to their place within the leisure consumption and entertainment were exocitized. Ethnic division of labor through the erection and sustenance of ethnic boundaries was strong. Only ‘ethnic’ groups (non-Muslims and the Roma) were allowed to operate in alcohol sector and in most performative entertainment forms while Muslims as producers were involved in more local/traditional forms.

In providing such public occasions and variously respected employment opportunities, the Imperial authority was also partially showing its ‘ethnicizing’ regulation upon the humanscape of the leisure consumption and entertainment setting. As with “high-brow” forms and entertainers, this was also the case for “low-brow”: According to Evliya Çelebi, Bear Dancers’ lonca was made of up Sulukule Roma (Freely, 2002: 89). Let me separately note that according to him, most if not all *meyhâne* were owned by the *Rum* (Greeks) providing employment for over six thousand people (Zat, 1994: 21). *Köçek* (male dancers dressed up as women) were reportedly mainly coming from among the *Rum*, Jews and the Roma (Tez, 2009: 178) and served important ‘substituting’ (or *ersatz*) sexual functions in the absence of female dancers (Beşiroğlu, 2011). Kılıç suggests that while *Köçek* were, at the beginning, recruited from among the various peoples, including the Christians, Rum from *Sakız* Island, Jews and Gypsies and even Muslims, later on it became an exclusively *Rum*-dominated vocation (2007: 91).

These points certainly strengthens the argument that only the non-Muslims and the ‘suspect Muslim’ Roma were allowed to people such
‘inappropriate’ yet still popularly demanded employment niches. Apart from Muslim Roma, Ahmed Rasim’s account provides some anecdotal hints to the presence of some Muslim Habeşi (Ethiopian) Arap (literally ‘Arab,’ but meaning Black African) groups in leisure consumption and entertainment (1922 [1881]), but understanding the real extent of their activities requires more research.

**Public Functions of Entertainment, Regulation and the Mediators**

Similar to the Byzantine period, leisure and entertainment had important public functions during the Ottoman classical era. Public festivals and celebrations were significant vehicles of social cohesion and markers of imperial wealth, prestige and strength. Terzioğlu notes such a function for Imperial circumcision ceremonies: “The festival was no doubt meant to distract the population with its displays of imperial generosity and power as well as to impress the great number of foreign dignitaries in attendance” (1995: 84). He notes that the Imperial circumcision ceremony of 1582 took place during “[…] a time of crisis” and economic duress (1995: 84), implying that this show of prestige was a way to show to the populace the continuing sustenance of the Imperial grandeur, wealth and justice. Terzioğlu also underlines the attempt to impress foreign dignitaries as follows: “a prominent theme was claim to world domination. In making this claim, the Ottomans used a set of devices similar to their Habsburg rivals: displays of exotic animals like elephants and giraffes, and performers from all over the globe […]. The automata, technological extravaganzas often associated with European-master craftsmen, were an essential part of the international language of ‘wonder and power’” (1995:87).

While usually closely regulated, thus serving as important social control mechanisms, including the use of surveillance methods, some such festivals also had a carnivalesque character, albeit under different forms and extents than in **Byzántion** and **Kōnstantinoúpolis** as discussed above. The religious ban on pictorial depictions was suspended during festivals, drinking limitations were lightened, and even in some instances, rowdier behavior and mockeries as well as imitations of state officials or religious authorities were tolerated (Tez, 2009:250 & 264). Terzioğlu notes that “suspension of moral judgment characterized the official attitude towards the festival in general” (1995: 92). He claims that “İzni ‘ammet (public or general permission) was the Ottoman term for this suspension of moral judgment”. In the instance of 1582 Imperial circumcision ceremony, religious authorities (ulema) were

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27 The descendants of African slaves were certainly active in the capital. Some of them were assigned to the Ottoman court, especially as servants or eunuchs in the harem. They were known as haremaga (harem-aga/chief) or hadımağa (eunuch-aga/chief). They were also active outside of the court. Unfortunately, research on Africans under the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey is still quite limited.
furious that a kadı (qadi, Islamic judge, sometimes with municipal duties as well) figure was seated backwards on a donkey. However, the Grand Vizier defended such acts within the confines of public permission (Terzioğlu, 1995:92).

Ethno-religious celebrations by various groups were also allowed. Rum-dominated Tatavla district (which was later renamed Kurtuluş) became well-known for its yearly carnival and other regular secular or religious public festivals and celebrations (Türker, 1998). There is significant evidence showing carnivalesque characteristics of Tatavla carnival. As with their colorful and socially relaxed and tolerant festivals, non-Muslim neighborhoods had become ‘havens’ for some Muslim individuals and groups. Tatavla, Galata, Pera and other non-Muslim neighborhoods developed as entertainment and leisure consumption districts dotted with various establishments of different natures catering to non-Muslim and Muslim alike (Akin, 2002).

Indeed, non-Muslim operated meyhâne have long been de facto refuges of the alcohol-consuming Muslims in the face of continuing formal prohibitions which were variedly enforced over the centuries and depending

on the conservatism or toughness of the Emperor in rule (Sakaoğlu, 1994: 168; Zat, 1994: 434; Sevengil, 1998 [1927]: 31). A similar de facto ‘havenly’ function seems to have been shoudered by eğlence evleri (entertainment houses) of the Roma, which was initiated during the Ottoman period and became even more important in the Republican period (Aytar & Kırca Schroeder, 2011) as I will discuss below. One of Sulukule’s most important spatial markings was established through its tradition of managing such informal ‘listen and drink’ establishments (Akçura (2007), whereby consumers were entertained by male and female musicians, dancers and served by food and drink caterers.

Apart from ceremonies and festivals, the Imperial authority also regulated the use of mesire yerleri (popular outdoor excursion or picnicking spots) such as Kağıthane, Çamlıca or numerous Boğaziçi (Bosphorus) villages. Mesire yerleri took on the function of fairgrounds especially in spring and summer months and Sevengil notes that the Imperial court banned putting cattle to pasture on or near such spots and issued behavioral codes especially to curtail ‘inappropriate’ relationships between men and women (1998 [1927]: 23). In some instances Roma musicians, fortune tellers and street sellers were seriously warned and they were ‘reminded’ of the ban against facilitating such romantic encounters by helping transfer scribbled notes or other types of communication (Sevengil, 1998 [1927]: 178).

Festivals and night-long forms of leisure consumption and entertainment during Ramadan were also among important outdoor occasions for the Muslims although non-Muslims also joined in some festivities. Karagöz, meddâh or ortaoyunu28—all of which were performative shows—have originated in Ramadan festivals and in coffeehouses. These otherwise ‘family-friendly’ performances occasionally took alternative yet ‘dangerous’ routes, engaging in erotic, racy, controversial or socially critical and politically satirical subject matters, sometimes tolerated, while constantly being under the risk of administrative/religious penalization and/or criminalization.

Among indoor leisure consumption establishments, coffeehouses (kahvehane) were of key importance. Özkoçak argues that together with meyhâne, kahvehane was a vital scene for sociability among men, Muslims or non-Muslim and rich and poor alike (2009:21). According to Yaşar, coffeehouses were criticized and at times penalized by the Court or the ulema for this very reason: “allowing social mixing and erosion of social hierarchies, coffeehouses were seen as a source of threat for authorities”

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28 Metin And argues that: “Not based on a written text, ortaoyunu, [literally, ‘central play’ or ‘middle play’-VA] with Kavuklu and Pişekâr in the lead roles, is one of the fundamental genres of traditional Turkish theater. Besides the other forms of traveling theater, such as the Karagöz or shadow theater which uses puppets and the coffeehouse stories told by a single narrator. Otaoyunu is staged with live players that it is staged without relying on a written text. There are different views concerning the origin of ortaoyunu, which dates back to the thirteenth century. In content, this theater resembles the Italian Commedia dell’Arte, a theatrical genre which was followed by Turks who traded with Venice and Genoa and which they called ‘Arte Oyunu,’ a term that may have become corrupted over time to ‘ortaoyunu’. Still another theory is that ortaoyunu is connected with the ‘Yeniçeri Ortaları’ or Janissary Divisions. If we consider that the ortaoyunu was Indeed performed among Janissary troops, this view does not appear all that far-fetched. Furthermore, by an interesting coincidence the Janissary divisions were also called ‘Orta’. But since it would appear impossible to arrive at definite proof of any of these theories, it is of course better to limit the meaning of ortaoyunu to ‘a play performed in the open’. http://www.turkishculture.org/performing-arts/theatre/traditional-theatre-ortaoyunu-288.htm
(2009:41). Kahvehane also served other important roles; as nodes for commercial networking, employer-employee interface, migrants’ solidarity, as well as the formation of the ‘public opinion’ and political opposition (Kırlı, 2009:100). Kırıl (2000; 2004; 2009) and Yaşar (2009) argue that coffeehouses were frequently subject to heavy handed regulation by the state and religious authorities.

Together with coffeehouses, pudding shops (muhallebici) allowed other types of sociability and networking, this time, helping erode gender barriers. Sevengil notes that in the 16th century, pudding shops of Jewish sweets-masters became highly popular and colorful leisure spots and that the Sultan and the religious authorities “had to issue formal warnings” asking the establishment to curtail “inappropriate” behavior by male and female customers. Subaşı, military/public officers in charge of overseeing pudding shops and who were purportedly turning a blind eye to such practices because they were taking bribes, were also disciplined accordingly (Sevengil, 1998 [1927]:23-27).

As these examples suggest, although the Imperial authority placed a great importance on the public provision of leisure consumption and entertainment-related services, it was also careful to closely regulate such services in order to protect public morality and order. While patriarchal and gendered arrangements were already present under Byzantine rule, with the impact of Islam-oriented regulation and social conservatism, stricter codes were announced and enforced in the Ottoman classical era. In this sense, both the crown and the religious authorities were the main regulatory actors.

Mediators: Moralizers, Legislators and Aesthetes:

However, I should note that their regulatory role was not continuously restrictive or strictly punishment-oriented. Rather, their role differed according to various historical periods or contexts. Also, especially the clergy whose regulatory power was relatively more limited than the Sultan’s direct authority had a more ‘mediating’ role between production and consumption of leisure and entertainment. At times, the attitudes of the Crown and the clergy vis-à-vis leisure and entertainment were complementary. During the time of highly orthodox Ebussud Efendi (1490-1574), the Şeyh-ül İslam under the reigns of Suleiman the Magnificent and Selim II, fatwa and Sultan’s decrees were equally harsh and harmonious with one another in terms of criminalizing the consumption of alcohol while at others (Terzioglu,

Additionally, the bifurcation within the clergy, namely, the split between the official, higher-level, ‘palace’ clergy (Ulema-i Rüsûm) and the lower level clergy—which may be seen as part of the volk-Islam tradition—(Mardin, 1990:23) is also meaningful in comprehending the differences in attitudes. Mardin notes that closer to the public, and sometimes as “impoverished lumpenulema” (a reference to lumpenproletariat as defined by Marx & Engels), lower class clergy were the representative channels of sometimes rough or violent popular feelings, disgruntlements and reactions. He also suggests that, especially Sufi sects worked as powerful “information networks” with a strong power among the populace (1990:24).

It seems like while the higher-level ulema was usually—but not necessarily always—in synch with the decisions of the Crown, lower-level, popular volk ulema espoused more shifting or varying stances vis-à-vis leisure and entertainment, among other societal issues. In cases such as the conservative-popular revolt against the ostentatious Lale Devri31 (‘Tulip Age’ between 1718 and 1830), lower level ulema were among the main forces initiating the violent reaction of Istanbul’s urban poor against the “gratification and pleasure” (zevk-ü sefâ) of the state bureaucrats and the richer circles which were not only morally condemned, but also a source of contempt in the face of widespread poverty (İstanbul Ansiklopedisi, 1994:242; Sevengil, 1998 [1927]: 91; Altınay 1973).

As an example to contrary cases, the Bektashi sect (which was particularly strong among the Janissary corps) espoused a quite ‘heterodox’ and permissive attitude towards alcohol consumption as well as enjoyment of life and entertainment (Mardin, 1990:24). The purported popular stories and jokes of folk heroes such as Bekri Mustafa (‘Mustafa the Drunkard,’ who reportedly was also a full memorizer [hafiz] of the Quran) (Koz, 1994:129) constitute important elements of such ‘witty’ or ‘tactical’ permissiveness that may have been otherwise curtailed. As these examples suggest, ulema had espoused varying stances in terms of not only directly regulating, but ‘mediating’ between production and consumption of leisure and entertainment.

Another group that constituted the mediators between production and consumption were the intellectuals and the chroniclers. Intellectuals

31 Also known as the Patrona Halil insurgency, this violent uprising caused the execution of the then Sadrazam (Prime Minister) and the replacement of Sultan Ahmed II with Mahmud I. Interestingly enough, Patrona Halil, a Janissary officer who had called up the urban poor to ‘defend Sha’ia’ and to rise up against the immoral and entertainment-infested lifestyles of the state bureaucrats, had reportedly formed his initial networks in meyhâne circles and was a heavy alcohol consumer himself (Altınay, 1973).
and chroniclers who were supported and financed by the Crown, state bureaucrats and richer circles were quite instrumental in deciding on the acceptable leisure and entertainment choices. Intellectuals and chroniclers in this sense complemented the role of the ulema as mediators who acted as moralizers, legislators and aesthetes. Sevengil notes that leisure and entertainment forms of the palace and elite circles were popularized by the intellectuals and the chroniclers and caused emulation of those forms among the middle and lower classes (Sevengil, 1998 [1927]:57). In the case of conservative-popular revolt against the ‘Tulip Age,’ court poet Şair Nedim as well as other artists and intellectuals were targeted by the angry masses for their promotion of unethical behavior (Altunay, 1973).

Intellectuals were also functional in helping extend the limits of freedoms against restrictive social, political and cultural standards, including those in leisure and entertainment. Intellectuals and some chroniclers were critical of the restrictive and morally condemning attitudes of the ulema and requested larger liberties. Sakaoğlu mentions the case of canonical Divan literature poet Feridun Bey who uttered: “Why shall we support the rules? They would make the social body constipated. They’d [society would] ask for freedoms… And whatever our dear Sultan would decide on, those shall be the merry news” (1994:169). Here, this ‘double’ language of requesting more liberties while at the same time, acknowledging the ultimate authority of the Sultan is also interesting. This attitude is different than that of the intellectuals of the Reform period as we will see below (under II.4.2.). Now, in this vein, let me concentrate on the Reform period in Istanbul.

II. 4. Reformist Paternalism (19th century-1920s)

Although the ‘modernization’ and ‘westernization’ of the Empire did not begin in the 19th century, they certainly became more important for the state and started to be codified into law and administrative practices as well as social mentalities. This period I believe could be characterized by reformist paternalism whereby the Empire embarked on a route to modernize, rationalize and westernize itself. Tekeli’s periodization of the Ottoman-Turkish modernization (2010) is quite helpful in contextualizing this particular period and the following periods I cover in my study, and in placing them in a larger context. Tekeli argues that modernization efforts in the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey should be seen as parts of a longer line. According to Tekeli, on this line, four historical
periods of modernity could be discerned: (a) 1840s-1923: “shy modernity;” (b) 1923-1950s: “radical or fundamentalist modernity;” (c) 1950s-1980s: “populist modernity;” and, (d) 1980s onwards: “the erosion of modernity” (2010). I will espouse this periodization in analyzing Reform and the Republican periods in Istanbul.

The “shy modernity” spanning between 1840s and 1923, the year modern Republic of Turkey was established, also coincides with the Reform period in Istanbul, namely 19th century until early 1920s. In this period of “shy modernity,” modernization and its instruments were introduced into the daily life of the city, urban “tempo” speeded up and the urban forms were remarkably different than those of the previous Classical Ottoman era (Ünlü Yücesoy, 2011: 17). However, different than the following period of “radical or fundamentalist modernity,” this did not entail a top-down cultural modernization instituted with a heavy administrative fiat or strict nation-state based centralization. Instead, the advent of modernity went hand in hand with previous forms of urban living and it was integrated into urban life in a ‘trial and error’ basis. As I will try to explain and argue below, during this period of “shyness,” while modern, rational and instrumental forms of regulation and westernized mentalities certainly started to take root, former types of quotidian living were still allowed to exist in the eyes of regulatory authorities and public perceptions.

Both modernization and westernization were projects of the crown: Sultans like Mustafa II (1757-1774); Abdülhamid I (1774-1789); Selim II (1789-1807) and Mahmud II (1808-1839) initiated modernizing, westernizing reforms starting with the military and educational system. During the rule of Abdülmecid (1839-1861) Tanzimat Fermanı (Edict of Ordering) an important piece of reformist legislation was announced. This constituted the bases of modern citizenship and recognition of various ‘ethnic’-religious groups’ rights in the Empire.

In, 1876 I. Meşrutiyet (First Constitutional Monarchy) and the Meclis-i Umumi (‘General Assembly,’ or Parliament) were instituted. This period would be halted by a regressive and far longer period under Abdülhamid II until 1908, although even during this period some modernizing reforms continued on. Genç Osmanlular (‘Young Ottomans’) or Jöntürkler (derived from their French appellation, Jeunes-Turcs, ‘Young Turks’), bringing together reform-minded civilian and military bureaucrats, intellectuals and political opponents concerned with saving the dismantling and ailing
Empire, were active since the 1860s and were instrumental in both I. Meşrutiyet in 1876 and II. Meşrutiyet (Second Constitutional Monarchy) in 1908.

Jöntürkler were by then styled under the ruling İttihat ve Terakki Fırkası, İTF (Committee of Union and Progress), espousing French revolutionary ideals and combining into them elements of German-type of ‘blood’ nationalism. This experiment in parliamentary system had been initiated by alliance between the İTF and Armenian parties which were increasingly becoming Armenian nationalist (Minassian, 1995; Tunçay & Zürcher, 1995) in search of a new Ottomanism (Osmanlıcılık) that would bring together all citizens of the Empire regardless of religion and ethnic background.

However, turning increasingly towards ethnic Turkish nationalism and with an increasing alliance with the Germans, İTF high-officials and statesmen Enver, Talat and Celal Pashas who were then ruling the country brought catastrophe by dragging the Ottoman Empire into the First World War siding with the Germans and Austro-Hungarians and ordering and conducting what some call ‘genocide’ or ‘ethnic cleansing’ on the constitutional citizens of their own country, Armenians (Dadrian, 1995; Akçam, 2008). Following the defeat in the War, İTF leaders fled the Empire and Istanbul was temporarily occupied by the Allied Forces in 1918. After this brief historical summary, let me concentrate on the development of ‘modernity’ and ‘governmentality’ in Reform period in Istanbul in order to shed light on the transformation of leisure consumption and entertainment.

Sultanate to Governmentality: Modernization of Regulation

The Ottoman Reform period since the 19th century signified a shift from absolute monarchy to modern ‘governmentality’ as discussed by Foucault (1991 [1978]). Transformation in the Ottoman Empire was similar to the historically earlier advent of ‘governmental states’ in Europe which defined population, not merely as Imperial ‘subjects,’ but as a ‘datum,’ as a field of intervention, and as an objective of governmental techniques (Ó Tuathail, 1996: 55). In order to counter the fast dismantling of the Empire, the Imperial authority and its administrative cadres instituted various political, military, cultural and educational reforms which changed the country deeply and helped develop centralized state structures replacing older
and more traditional forms of administration. In this period, successive Emperors’ support for modern forms of education, performing arts and music also increased (Akin 2002: 8).

Mardin argues that towards the end of the 19th century, Ottoman bureaucracy was transformed from a hereditary or Sultan-based form towards a “rational” one (1990:45) and that new schools similar to French Revolutionary grandes écoles (Bourdieu & de Saint Martin, 1989) were established to train a fresh generation of reformist bureaucrats who placed defending the interests of the state as their first and main priority (Mardin, 1990:46). In this sense, a big transformation towards governmentality, modern citizenship and more rational and scientifically calculated state logic were instituted. Kadioğlu argues that in this period, “progress for order” (nizam için terakki) was the main driving logic of the state elites, different than the following Republican logic of “order for progress” (terakki için nizam) (1998:24-29).

In the 19th century, modern principles and policies of municipality administrations were also instituted. In 1848, a modern urban planning decree was issued and various building and zoning codes were introduced (Akin, 2002: 19). Tekeli argues that the city administration of the Classical Ottoman period which was based on the orders of the kâdi (Islamic judge also in charge of urban administration) and later, ihtisâb-ağası (executive officer in charge of territorial and/or urban affairs) took on the modern form of municipality in the second half of the 19th century (2010:34). According to the city ordinances (nizamnâme) of 1857 and 1858 and based on the jurisdictional divisions of Paris municipality, the first modern municipality of Pera (later, Beyoğlu) was set up as the Altıncı Daire-i Belediye (Sixth Chamber of Municipality). Interestingly enough, although the Sixth Chamber was the first-ever formally established modern municipality in Istanbul and in the Empire, it was labeled as the “sixth” as the reference to “Parisian sixième arrondissement” as the most thriving and prosperous quarter of the city of Paris out of a total 14 district municipalities that were planned to be established in Istanbul.

Rosenthal argues that the Sixth Chamber was a “model laboratory” through which important urban reform initiatives were conducted (Rosenthal, 1980). This experimental district was a creative force in urban reform, surpassing far beyond its role in transmitting the European conceptions and techniques of municipal administration to the other sections in the city and to the other

33 Note that in Ottoman Turkish, the root of the word ihtisab stems from the Arabic word, muhtesib, which means the person who ‘asks for good deeds’ and ‘forbids bad deeds’. Such an ‘ethical’ function is also interesting, especially in terms of the later development of modern municipal administration and services.

34 See, the website of Beyoğlu Municipality: http://www.beyoglu.bel.tr/beyoglu_belediyesi/default.aspx?SectionId=16.
provinces. The pioneering and somewhat ‘fumbling in the dark’ character of Pera may also be illustrated with the fact that the first Ottoman law on Municipalities was enacted only in 1877 twenty years after the Pera Municipality was established. Tekeli argues that even the Municipal Law of 1877 did not provide much in terms of accumulated experience that the following Republican municipalities could be based on (Tekeli, 2009).

Together with urban planning efforts, the municipality undertook new policies directly on or indirectly helping shape the public provision and regulation of leisure consumption and entertainment. For example starting in the 1850s, modern urban squares and larger boulevards were built and old ones were renovated or reorganized. At these squares, the municipality opened up kiosks similar to those in Paris and elsewhere. Such kiosks were rented to private entrepreneurs (Akın, 2002: 20-21). Also in mid-1850s, ferry services were initiated between the coasts of the Bosphorus. In the privatized yet public-serving ferries there were sale of refreshments and food and in some trips music bands were hired to play for the riders (Akın, 2002: 26).

The municipality also increasingly regulated the drinking and entertainment establishments beyond the past exclusive emphasis on public order and taxation. Licensing procedures and documents were standardized and employment permits were issued. Employment permits were also classified based on various vocational and professional categories: On top of municipal efforts to collect information and develop regulation on various employment categories, the records of *Annuaire Oriental* and later, of Istanbul Chamber of Commerce show the detailed vocational and professional categories described for record keeping purposes (Bilgin, et al., 2010).

Imperial and municipal authorities closely regulated urban, outdoor and ferry-based consumption by issuing price lists and ‘codes of behavior’ especially to curtail inter-gender relations (Akın, 2002: 26). Zat reminds us that these codes remained to be enforced in the following periods and, as late as the 1950s, there were municipal and police efforts to stop alcohol consumption and sexualized behavior in the ferries (2009: 200). Similarly, Kırkı discusses governmentality-oriented social control and surveillance efforts such as dispatching undercover agents of confidential informants by the Imperial authority at neighborhood *kahvehane* (coffeehouses) to inform about and curtail potential political opposition to the Sultan’s authority (2000; 2004; 2009).
We also see in the same period, the increasing impact of other forms of regulation, such as those stemming from the foreign embassies. Especially balo (ball or ballroom dancing) organized mainly by European Embassies, luxury hotels or high-class entertainment establishments provided important elite spaces of entertainment for women and men alike (Aytar & Keskin, 2003). In this sense, both the reformist Sultans—who also fiercely supported performing arts and music, not to mention their ostentatious parade on the main boulevards to reach the venue (Akin, 2002)—and the foreign Embassies were sources of demand, as well as of regulation. They were allowing, organizing, creating or channeling demand for, symbolically or materially supporting public events based on leisure consumption and entertainment. They were also providing the formal/informal contours within which such activities would take place. They were providing the necessary spaces for such activities as well (Aytar, 2011).

Modernizing and westernizing reforms not only implied a large and long transformation into the modern state apparatus, they also changed the social and cultural perceptions (Özer, 2006) as well as the leisure consumption and entertainment habits (Aytar, 2011). In this vein, let me now shift the focus to the transformation of public functions of entertainment, the transformation of the customer base and the development of mediating factors between the production of leisure and entertainment and their consumption.

Public Functions of Entertainment, Customer Base and the Development of Modern Mediation

Different to the Classical Ottoman period, the public functions of entertainment in the 19th century, as well as the customer base for leisure consumption and entertainment were transformed considerably, and a form of modern mediation emerged. This was different to the earlier forms of public functions of entertainment and mediators as I have discussed under the Byzantine (II.1.1) and Classical Ottoman (II.3.) periods. While in the Byzantine and Classical Ottoman periods, entertainment mainly fulfilled the functions of showing off Imperial prestige and providing public channels for ‘acceptable’ public disgruntlement in terms of the carnivalesque; during the Reform period, it got bifurcated into separate and competing strands of tarz-ı hayat (life styles), as were expressed in alafranga and alaturka forms. Here, I would claim that these supposedly binary opposite positions implied not only conflicting ‘styles of life’ but
they also created their respective, allying and supporting mediators in a more modern sense of the term.

The split between *alafranga* and *alaturka* took place mainly during the 19th century, paralleling the modernization and westernization of the Empire as discussed above. Since at least the Reform period, *alafranga* attitudes and consumption styles had become more fashionable (Çoruk, 1995; Özer, 2006). *Alafranga* was derived from an Italian word, alla franca, denoting initially ridiculed, imitative styles of the modernizing Ottoman middle classes or the rich copying European *Frenk* (literally, ‘Frank’ or ‘French,’ denoting ‘all things Western’) bathroom habits and technologies, and later, a wide range of etiquette and cultural consumption patterns. 19th century intellectual and literary figure Recaizâde Mahmud Ekrem's realist novel, *Araba Sevdası* (A Passion for Carriages) illustrates, in a mocking way, the upper class Muslim Ottoman's imitative interest for *alafranga* forms, including ostentatious types of leisure consumption.

In this sense, *alafranga* was usually positioned against *alaturka* (*alla turca*) styles which were associated with older, more traditional, ‘modest’ or conservative social and cultural forms. Westernizing districts of Galata and Pera with their majority non-Muslim population represented *alafranga* while most of the centre of the historical peninsula inhabited by Muslims stood for *alaturka*. This is different than the sense of ‘our non-Muslims’ who represented the familiar ‘Other’ and the ‘forbidden’ yet, still ‘readily available,’ ‘accessible’ fruit. As discussed above (especially under II.3.3), in the Classical era, non-Muslim neighborhoods had become ‘havens’ for some Muslim individuals and groups allowing them to experience out of ordinary situations. However, under the Reform period, cultural meanings attached to the non-Muslim neighborhoods and *alafranga* leisure and entertainment forms differed to establish a more ‘grand’ and seemingly unbridgeable cultural and life-style-based rift (Ahıskal, 2005).

The splits between the European-style *café* (or, *alafranga kahvehanesi*) and the traditional (*alaturka*) *kahvehanesi* (Georgeon, 1992), or between *çalgılı meyhâne* -or *kafeşantani–* and neighborhood *meyhâne* (Zat, 1994; 2009; Arkan, 1998) were indicative of the *alafranga-alaturka* division. Similarly, *gazino* (a word adapted from *casino*, but referring to an entertainment establishment with music and dancing) was referred to as *alafranga meyhâne* or *çalgılı* (instrumental) *meyhane*. However, Exertzoglou's discussion of the reaction to the introduction of such *alafranga* forms and their associated
symbolisms alerts us to the fact that alafharga–alaturka split should not be reified and be seen as respectively representing ‘westernized’ non-Muslims and ‘traditional’ or ‘conservative’ Muslims.

According to Exertzoglou, a 19th century Greek writer uttered: “Since we have decided to become Franks \(^{35}\) (\textit{na frangepso¯men}), that is, to change our way of life […] we have adopted the most harmful elements of European culture and dropped our Christian and ancestral tradition.” (2003:83). The same writer also “expressed his indignation by stating that luxurious outfits embarrassed him to such an extent that he consciously avoided visiting fashionable places in Istanbul, such as the casino and the café, where women exposed themselves in [unacceptable] ways” (2003:86). According to such approaches: “[Imitating the fashions of European women] is a sin and shame for those bearing the name of Greek Woman” (2003: 92). These examples show that westernized consumption forms and their associated symbolisms were met with resistance in numerous circles, including those among the supposedly modernized non-Muslims, not necessarily among ‘traditionalist’ Muslims.

In time, \textit{alafranga} gained a more positive overtone denoting western- and rational- oriented progress and other higher values. In this sense \textit{alafranga} started to be associated more closely with ‘high-brow’ tastes and lifestyles, while \textit{alaturka} was assigned as the ‘lower-brow’ and uneducated, crude tastes and lifestyles. This last linguistic turn of the meaning could perhaps explain the longitudinal impact of the Occidentalist (Garbiyâtçi, Garp being the Occident) aspirations also expressed in cultural inclinations, consumption patterns and an entire range of habitus-related faculties (reminiscent certainly of Bourdieu, 1984) which stamped the Republican period as well (Ahı̈ska, 2005). This turn is also important in the sense that, this was the first time ever, in which in the elite and popular psyches, the ‘Occident’ became ‘superior’ to the ‘Orient’ as represented by the Ottomans. This was certainly a great ‘change of gears’ considering the previous image of grandeur and prestige associated with the Empire.

In this reformist period, previous (classical) period’s sexualizing, criminalizing and paternalistic gaze upon the Roma as musical, fun-loving, talented, yet feared-by group was also transformed. This gaze was initiated under Byzantine Istanbul, but it certainly was fully entrenched in administrative practices and socio-cultural attitudes during Ottoman and the Republican periods.

\(^{35}\) It is interesting to note that this Greek authored criticizes (imitative and excessive adaptation to) “Western ways” by calling the process as “to become Franks”. This reference to France is very reminiscent of—and was certainly informed by- \textit{alafranga} in Ottoman Turkish usage.
The Reform period also saw a gain in strength of the customer base for leisure consumption and entertainment (Exertzoglou, 2003:80) and the introduction of what may be seen today as mediators as individuals and groups that mediate between consumption and production while also helping shape public taste and preferences. Akın notes that in Istanbul, especially in the westernized district of Pera—which was a point of attraction for non-Muslims and westernizing Muslims who constituted the customer base of alafranga products—modern newspapers and other periodicals emerged and multiplied since early 19th century (2002). Ünlü Yücesoy also terms the second half of the 19th century as a period of major transformation whereby previous “taboos were demolished” (2011:18). Koloğlu argues that especially the 1840s represented the beginnings of modern advertisement in the Ottoman Empire, whereby, advertisement went beyond merely ‘providing information’ and took up roots as a responsible role of ‘agency’ between the consumer and the newly sprouting social service sector (1999:69).

By the 1860s, in Pera alone, ten daily newspapers—four of which were in French—were published (Akin, 2002: 47). Newspapers such as *Journal de Constantinople, La Turquie, Le Moniteur Oriental* or annals such as *Annuaire de Commerce* or *Annuaire Oriental* not only published advertisements by and review of leisure consumption and entertainment establishments, but were also functional in promoting new lifestyles and consumption trends. Such publications were central instruments of the development of new ethics and
practices of consumption and were culturally ‘guiding’ for the Levantine and non-Muslim trade and financial bourgeoisie and westernized Muslims of Pera and elsewhere (Akın, 2002: 45). Exertzoglou argues that: “related to new perceptions of leisure, particularly among the middle classes. Equally important, consumption was used to define social status. The abolition of sumptuary laws opened new areas in consumption but also sharpened the need for new status symbols, particularly among the rising middle class” (2003:82).

**Mediators: Moralizers, Legislators and Promoters**

During the period when this new status-based ethics of consumption started to take deeper roots in society, the role of intellectuals in helping popularize these trends as well as in mediating between consumption and production also increased. Different than the Classical Ottoman period’s mediators serving the role of a “soft” mediation, the Reform period intellectuals took on new roles as part of a modern (“hard”) mediation (Aytar, 2011). French-inspired Ottoman novels were instrumental in transforming societal attitudes towards modern forms of consumption and entertainment (Çoruk, 2995). Numerous books on ‘proper etiquette’ (âdâb-ı muşeret) were published and literature on ‘modern lifestyles’ multiplied (N. Meriç, 2007). Similarly, Kocabasoğlu notes that the role of the Ottoman press at this period was one of providing “enlightenment and discipline” (tenvir ve terbiye) for the public (1990, Cf. Ünlü Yücesoy, 2011:32). Intellectuals, through various publications including books and the press, in this sense, were instrumental in promoting and frequently trying to dictate what the society should do in terms of modernizing itself. In this sense, intellectuals of this period were mediators that could be termed as promoters of the new civilizational orientation that the Empire was embarking on.

This is certainly reminiscent of Bauman’s discussion of the role of intellectuals in the modern period. He claims that, “[d]uring the period at which it was assumed that there were ready ways of assessing the truth of beliefs, intellectuals used to ‘legislate’ about opinions for the rest of the community” (1987). Whether or not they had a direct role and power in legislating for the society, they still emerged as “legislators” in the sense that they were aiming to ‘train’ the society in the ways they see them fit. Ottoman and later, early Republican mediators made up of intellectuals, publications and press could then be seen in this role as “legislators” à la Bauman. Mediators took on a ‘guiding role’ with such ‘regulatory’ (legislating) tones as well. While
intellectuals had a pioneering role in promoting modernizing/westernizing/alafranga styles of leisure consumption and entertainment as ways “to become more civilized as in Europe” (Akın 2002), they also had a parallel role in condemning ‘excessive’ modes as is the case for Ahmed Rasim, 19th century writer who criticized kanto dancing as “centers for harlotry” (Cf. Hiçyılmaz, 1999:17). In this sense, Reform Ottoman mediators replaced and transformed the classical Ottoman mediators (ulema, intellectuals and chroniclers) in radical new ways.

Exertzoglou argues that in also this period: “No less important was the acknowledgment that the appeal of Western products rested on novel needs and demands; hence, they were commonly referred to as novelties. The demand for Western products for clothing or home furnishings, along with the demand for services, such as interior decoration, European-language lessons, and piano and dancing classes, were related to the reshaping of social boundaries in a period of high social mobility. Material and cultural products of Western origin were used –at least to a degree– to mark the boundaries dividing middle-class families from other urban groups” (2003:83, 86). Where there was such a demand, there were also local and international ‘knowledge and talent providers’ to fill in such slots. The newspapers of the period published numerous advertisements by dance instruction schools who “guaranteed” that customers would learn ballroom dancing “in less than 24 hours” (Akın, 2002). Indeed, an interesting cosmopolitanism of sorts seems to have existed in Pera, whereby numerous European or American expatriates placed advertisements on daily newspapers, soliciting to teach various classes, languages, music instruments, talents and provide a whole array of services (Akın, 2002).

**Diversity: Orientalism, Inner-Orientalism and Occidentalism**

During the Reform period, gender and ‘ethnic’ dynamics of leisure and entertainment were also transformed. Muslim women’s –especially public– participation in leisure consumption and entertainment had remained limited during the Classical era. While there are important examples of women’s participation in the leisure consumption and entertainment sectors as consumers, entrepreneurs and employees (Sevengil, 1998 [1927]; Çoruk, 2001) these remained usually informal, domestic-based, or, were restricted exclusively to women’s environments such as the harem or hamam (Çoruk, 2001). Non-Muslim women were better represented in all these categories at least until the 19th century.
With the advent of European-inspired entertainment novelties such as kafeşantan, gazino, kulüp or balo, formerly strong public separations between men and women started to erode, and women too became consumers of leisure and entertainment. Especially Pera’s leisure consumption and entertainment establishments catered to a mixed customer base. Apart from eating, drinking, singing and dancing establishments and avenues, theater plays were modernized and westernized with the introduction of jolly kanto sing-and-dance shows (derived from Italian cantare, or singing) by female performers (Hiçyılmaz, 1999). While most female theater players and kanto dancers were Armenian or Greek, some Muslim women took the stages under non-Muslim pseudonyms or aliases. For example Ms. Kadriye had taken up the Greek ‘screen name’ Amelya and had apparently “successfully convinced the spectators that her [non-Muslim-sounding] accent was genuine” (Hiçyılmaz, 1999:9, emphasis added).

Kanto shows did not only imply transgressions of gender separation rules but were also instructive for a sexualizing and occidentalizing gaze upon the non-Muslim women employed. Hiçyılmaz notes that such shows became hugely popular not because of their ‘artistic’ content, but because of the opportunity they provided for the customers to “see scantily-dressed women dancing and singing” (1999). Indeed, I argue that this sexualizing, Occidentalizing gaze has been a continuous characteristic of leisure and entertainment consumers as we will see later on during the Republican era. One important point is worthy of noting: Kanto also illustrates the “hybridity” between alaturka and alafranga forms. M. Meriç argues that kanto should be seen as a cross-over between the two, in the sense that it “combined a western form with an eastern content” (2011:56). Indeed, Sevengil similarly describes kanto shows as a “farce of confusion” (Sevengil, 1998) [1927]:143). In this period, with the increasing strength of westernization and Occidentalism, Ottoman intellectuals were prone to ‘Orientalize’ the Ottomans. In a parallel development, what I term inner-Orientalism emerged as Roma have been administratively and mentally earmarked as ‘the Other’ within the Otherized self.

![Picture II.7: Virjin, one of the most popular Greek kanto performers, cf. Sakaoğlu & Akbayar, 1991](image-url)
Diversity: From familiar exotics to ‘enemy within’

The last decades of the 19th century and early decades of the 20th century brought about important social and demographic changes for Istanbul... With successive territorial losses in the Balkans, hundreds of thousands Muslim and Turkish peoples poured into the city. Previously, Caucasians had fled the Tsarist Russia’s spread and taken refuge and found permanent home in Istanbul. In the late nineteenth century Ottoman Empire, non-Muslims were the pioneers of the development of ethnically-based bourgeois and working classes, as well as various types of nationalisms. Noutsos notes that non-Muslims were instrumental in integrating the Empire with the international economy of the period (1995:113). With the defeat of Ottomanism and rise of ethnic nationalisms in the Empire, however, the “ideological cement keeping various groups together, quickly fell apart” (Ögün, 1995:163). When Ottomanism was dethroned and Turkism / pan-Turanism were quickly entrenched in the policies of the İTF, non-Muslims were increasingly seen as “alien” entities (or, “the enemy-within”) which hampered the territorial and political unity and worked to the detriment of the “national economy” (Koraltürk, 2011).

In a similar fashion, stigmatization of the non-Muslims as the “alien” / “enemy-within” was to be continued under Kemalism of the 1920s and 1930s which espoused the pioneering Turkish nationalist sociologist Ziya Gökalp’s idea of “minorities”. Gökalp argued that “the European ready-to-wear clothes fit our non-Muslim citizens like a perfect envelope. Greeks, Armenians and Bulgarians within quickly adapted themselves to the European manners and social characteristics. We, the members of Islam, however, do not need such pre-cut, ready to wear clothes, but require proper rules suitable to our very selves”. Gökalp had even written a poem: “O, the Land, where the capital being exchanged in the marketplace belong to the Turk / The science illuminating the path of its crafts belong to the Turk / Shipyards, factories, ferries and trains belong to the Turk / O, Son of the Turk, that is where your motherland lies!” (Gökalp, 1976 [1912]).

Gökalp in this sense, conceptualized “non-Muslims” akin to the Latin American type of “comprador bourgeoisie” (Aktar, 2011:15)... In this sense, non-Muslims were seen as non-productive ‘parasites’ and the Kemalist understanding of the nation was largely based on Gökalp’s conceptualization to define nation according to religion and language.
According to Aktar (1996), Gökalp posited “culture” (hârs) and “civilization” (medeniyet) against one another.

Following the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, more than one hundred thousand ‘White Russians’ (Beyaz Rus) poured into the city... ‘White Russians’ were pro-Tsar and otherwise non-Bolshevik, primarily middle and upper class groups as well as aristocrats and bureaucrats who flew from or were displaced by the Communist Russian government. During the Armistice and ‘National Liberation War’ (Milli Mücadele) Years (1919-1923), Istanbul saw occupation by the Allied Forces: British and French and Italian. The occupying soldiers’ demands, superimposed on the presence of numerous new Muslim and non-Muslim displaced persons from various backgrounds changed the landscape of leisure consumption and entertainment and helped create an interesting constellation of establishments, groups and individuals catering to the rising and changing demand.

In this context, historically-rooted entertainment establishments such as Baloz (derived from bâlo, ball or ballroom dancing) were getting more popular in Galata and Tophane districts. They constituted a particular form of a drinking establishment serving food and alcohol, providing music, dance shows, and the company of ‘ladies,’ especially for the sailors, soldiers, merchants, migrants and esnaf. Baloz (as well as kafeşantan and alafrangalçalgılı meyhane) later became inspirational model for various forms such as gazino, pavyon, taverna or kulüp. While baloz were physically and socially separate from the brothels, Toprak claims that these were suitable grounds for the initiation of ‘business deals’ between the customers and the providers of such ‘services’ (1994:345). Indeed, during the First World War and Armistice years the numbers of such baloz and brothel women increased with the impact of poverty and mass exodus discussed above.

Not all women entertainment or sex workers, and certainly not all konsomatris (derived from the French word, consommatrice) denoting ‘only in-house’ ‘escort lady’ for the night, helping increase the customers’ intake of overpriced drinks or food were ethnic Greeks but they were among the most populous in the konsomatris ranks, along with other non-Muslims. Rasim mentions some Gypsy women working at baloz (1922) [1881]. However, sex workers were from a far more diverse array of backgrounds. An ‘internationalization’ of the leisure-service providers similar to the
knowledge and talent providers as discussed above seem to occur in this particular labor section. However, in order to make sense of the general parameters of this development, let me now finally shift my focus to the culture and political economy of alcohol provision and entertainment in Reform period Istanbul. This field is particularly important not only in drawing such general parameters, but also in illustrating dynamics that cannot be simply narrowed down to the polarization between alaturka and alafarga.

**Formality, Informality and Entrepreneurial Dynamics**

**Culture and Political Economy of Alcohol Provision and Consumption:**

For most of the time, sale and serving of alcohol and its consumption were formally prohibited to Muslims by religious/regulatory rules. Usually, however, rules were not severely enforced and the imperial authority provided some formal and informal avenues to allow for consumption of alcohol by Muslims, particularly amidst *Yeniçeri Ocağı* (Janissaries corps, the central formation peopling the army and state bureaucracy) and *esnaf* (artisans/craftsmen and in some instances refers to small shopkeepers). However the formulation and enforcement of the laws were different according to the time in question: Sometimes only *Yeniçeri* were banned from consumption and sale of alcohol and sometimes only *Yeniçeri* were exempted from public non-drinking laws.

Refik argues that for the state, taxation of wine and other alcoholic drinks constituted a very important income item for the state budget. He noted that the state taxed fifteen akçe per barrel of wine brought into the city. The monopoly rights of wine and *şıra* (a non-alcoholic, grape-based refreshment) were at times given to Sipahi (cavalry officers, some of which were also members of *Yeniçeri Ocağı*) and *Subaşı* (officers in charge of public order) who issued permissions to individual entrepreneurs to process grapes and produce alcohol (1998:45). He also notes that some state officials themselves owned some meyhâne or were partners to the profits.

Byzantine *kapeleios* and other such local ‘watering holes’ had constituted the basis of meyhâne, neighborhood-based small wine houses which served alcohol and food -although they were different than *restoran* (restaurant) or *lokanta* where food service and consumption occupy the central position - and where at times there was music playing and singing (although these

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36 Toprak notes that according to a toll taken during the Armistice Years, among the non-Turkish registered or ‘certified prostitute’ (*vesikalı fahiše*) there were: 171 Russian, followed by 90 Greeks, 23 Austrians, 21 Romanians, 12 Italians, 5 French, 5 Serbians, 5 Bulgarians, 3 Germans, 2 Polish, 2 Arab, one Croat, one American and one Iranian (1994:435). During the Allied Occupation, out of 2171 certified prostitutes, 1367 were Christian and Jewish, 804 were Muslim (Toprak 1994:346).
developed later, with the coming of çalgılı meyhâne, meyhâne with music or instrumental meyhâne, or kafeşantan (café-chantant), a more westernized version of this former in the 19th century. At meyhâne, in time, rakı became the staple drink, displacing wine which remained to be consumed mainly by non-Muslims and the Roma.

Gedikli meyhâne (entrenched meyhâne, or meyhâne with constant frequenters) were officially acknowledged, ‘licensed’ (although sometimes no formal licenses were issued) establishments whose owners were also the maitre d’hôtel of sorts known first as barba, later as meyhâneci ustası or usta meyhâneci (master of meyhâne). Such usta were usually Rum and to some lesser extent Armenians (Ermeni) and even less frequently, Jews (Yahudi). We don’t know much about the participation by the Roma (Çingene) into the entrepreneurial ranks of usta. Here the service personnel were known to come usually from among Sakızlı Rum. Greek sâki, servers of alcohol were described by Zat as “cute boys with or without hair” for whom homoerotic poems (Sâkinâme) were written and songs were composed. Some Sâki also sang at meyhâne. (Zat, 2009: 88). A sexualizing and Occidentalist gaze upon those Greek boys seems to have developed in such leisure consumption and entertainment establishments.

Two other types of meyhâne were koltuk meyhâne (armchair meyhâne), an informal, unregistered meyhâne of sorts, still tied to a spatial fix, yet for quicker serving and drinking, and ayaklı meyhâne (meyhâne on foot) those individuals equipped with a portable alcohol container, walking around in the streets or standing near small grocery shops to serve quick raki shots to city dwellers or esnaf. Ayaklı meyhâne were usually coming from among the Armenians (Tevfik, 1991 [1881]). It is interesting that Ottoman authorities turned a blind eye to most such ingeniously entrepreneurial yet highly informal practices. In its turn, gedikli meyhane later gave way to an elite offshoot, known as selatin meyhane, denoting a type of meyhane directly ‘approved’ by the Sultan and frequented by state officials, richer circles and other notables. Selatin meyhane was similar in its social function to the âb âlemleri (sprees near the water) as discussed below. Küplü meyhane (meyhane with cruse) and gemici meyhanesi (sailors’ meyhane) are seen as sub-types of the formalized gedikli meyhane while their clientele were mostly coming from among lower strata of society (Koçu, 1947; Tevfik, 1991 [1881]). These two sub-types were inspirational in the formation of baloz. As well as kafeşantan (café-chantant, or literally, ‘singing-café’), gazino, bar, payvon, kulüp (club) and others. The formal and mainstream gedikli meyhane was
Later transformed into what is today known as klasik (classical) meyhane, and in the nineteenth century also gave way to the formation of Western-style birahane (beerhouse) as an offshoot (Duhani, 1990).

Around meyhâne and other types of drinking/eating/entertainment establishments, important social networks were formed. Küfeci (carriers with large wicker baskets) served those guests who had too much drink and had to be carried home. In a sense, they were the taxis of that period. But more importantly, around meyhâne, genuine human relationships as well as a stridently followed etiquette (racon\(^{37}\)) were forged. Regular meyhâne-goers were known aksamci (literally, ‘eveninger,’ denoting tipplers of the evening periods) those who were engaged in non-excessive yet habitual drinking almost every evening\(^{38}\).

Sakaoğlu argues this practice may have been facilitated by the dark of the evenings, enabling Muslims to go to meyhâne when state controls were lessened (1994:168). During Ramadan most meyhâne would close down voluntarily by their owners sometimes to conduct needed renovations, but in any case usta would still send unutma beni dolması (‘forget-me-not dolma,’ usually stuffed mussels or stuffed mackerel, which are typical meze items) to their regulars. Regulars would indeed return on the second or third day of the Ramadan feast. It is certainly interesting to notice such entrepreneurial, ‘public-relations’ or ‘customer relations’ based tactics by usta and the willingness by aksamci and others to become regular meyhâne-goers despite conservative social pressures and regulatory bans.

Convivial meyhâne chats served important social gathering and male-bonding functions (since, until the Reform or Republican periods women would not join such meyhâne settings) which also sometimes served additional intellectual functions. Together with kahvebâne, traditional, neighborhood-based coffeehouses, they became incubators of semi or full-fledged intellectual discussions. Similarly, âb âlemleri (‘sprees near water’ denoting joyful outdoor drinking and eating sessions usually near water) became more popular among the state officials, middle and later, popular classes. Those of the officials were organized at yali and konak, luxurious residences of the bureaucrats. Sakaoğlu notes that such a gathering in the 19th century sabihâne (seaside summer house or ‘beach club’) of statesmen Ali, Fuad and Mehmet Pashas “looked like the cabinet meeting” whereby social, cultural political issues were discussed, humor and music were deployed (1994:1).
Ab alemleri or sabihane gatherings should be seen within the tradition of Greek/Byzantine sumposion, as well as Seljuk/Ottoman bezm and devlet sofrasi and were also influenced by Embassy events in Istanbul and the French Salon practices. Reform Ottoman and Republican periods’ devlet sofrası which means “state banquet” had the similar format and function with bezm and were key events providing occasions to discuss and decide on modernizing and westernizing reforms. Salon tradition in France and elsewhere in Europe that spanned from sixteenth century onwards (Goodman, 1994; Kale, 2006) was inspired by Sumposion. Goodman argues that Salons were at “the very heart of the philosophic community” and was “integral to the process of Enlightenment” (Goodman, 1989:230). Especially French Salon tradition was important in shaping Reform Ottoman and Republican Turkish devlet sofrası, as well as Reform Ottoman ab alemleri and sabihane gatherings which later gave way to Republican period’s Kulüp (Clup) forms, where bureaucrats and elite/richer circles met to spend time with one another, eat, drink, enjoy music and converse on topics on state administration, economy and culture.

![19th Century Ottoman raki setting attended by political, social and cultural elite, yielding to intellectual discussions (cf. Sakaoğlu & Akbayar, 1999).](Image)

The founder of modern Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s raki-based gatherings or devlet sofrası could also be placed within this context
of intellectual discussions yielding into reformist state policies (Zat, 2009; Sakaoglu, 2010, Granda, [1959] (2007). The important functions of such gatherings will be discussed in more detail in Chapter III. Atatürk was certainly part of the reformist civilian and military bureaucrats who placed increasing emphasis to find a solution to the ailing Empire’s problems. The re-shaping of the leisure consumption and entertainment was an important part of this reformist agenda, which took on a heavy administrative and cultural fiat under Kemalism since 1920s. This point brings us to the next subsection and the formation of the Republican Turkey, in the next chapter.

II. 5. Conclusion: The Legacy of Leisure Consumption and Entertainment in Istanbul by the Onset of Republican Turkey

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. Below is not an exhaustive list of all the discussions and analyses I have carried out throughout the chapter, but rather an effort to analytically classifying their commonalities and differences as well as their impact on the Republican period in three separate yet related points. Those are also directly related to three sets of questions I had raised at the beginning of this chapter:

(a) Consumers and Producers: In comprehending and contextualizing the demands by various types of consumers and the ways in which such demands were fulfilled by various types of producers, Byzantine, Classical and Reform Ottoman periods provide important hints. 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 (as also discussed below, under the sub-section, Dynamics of Ethnicity).

During the Reform Ottoman period, while vocational organization of entertainers continued on, with the impact of modernization, westernization and rationalization of the Empire, its administrative (regulatory) principles and practices, as well as the changing social structure (and the changing groups of consumers), there was the introduction of more vocational mobility and flexibility in crossing over among different groups of entertainers. One result of this new mobility and flexibility had to do with the advent of “cosmopolitans” as producers and consumers alike. Also in this period, among the producers, modern forms of entrepreneurship emerged and became stronger. Those new forms of modern entrepreneurship started to replace older forms of artisanal or state-led production of leisure consumption and entertainment. This trend seems to have continued under the Republican period as well.

Also in the Reform period, groups of consumers were diversified further and other dynamics of symbolic/cultural rifts (as illustrated by the supposed opposition between alaturka and alafranga forms) started to underwrite such added divisions. This trend also continued on under the Republican period, while centralist, top-down modernizationist nation-state policies also promoted homogenization among the consumers. This promotion of homogenization created mixed results, as I will try to discuss in the following chapter.

(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.
In the Reform period Ottoman Empire, leisure consumption and entertainment became among the important arenas whereby westernization, modernization and rationalization processes were tried out. The Reformist state administrators instituted modern municipal practices that helped more rationally shape the leisure and entertainment fields. The bearing of these two last points are important also for the coming Republican period, especially for the early Kemalist period whereby modernization took a more authoritarian and top-down form, and during the National Developmentalist period when state was involved in molding the fields of leisure and entertainment in social, political and cultural terms. The influence of religious authorities in directly regulating leisure consumption and entertainment lessened under the Reform (and later, Republican) periods because of modernization, westernization and rationalization of administrative practices and socio-cultural attitudes.

Apart from the states and the religious authorities, mediators also played important roles in bridging supply of and demand for leisure and entertainment. During the Byzantine and Classical Ottoman periods, I chose to term those bridging actors as ‘softer’ mediators to separate them from the Reform (and later, Republican) periods’ ‘harder’ mediators with legislative/regulatory overtones. For both periods, mediators (i.e. intellectuals and chroniclers) not only had a considerable impact on influencing taste choices of the Crown, aristocrats and richer circles but also on middle and lower classes in shaping public attitudes and preferences. Also in both periods, religious authorities had a role of not only regulating but also mediating between consumption and production, which was lessened during the Reform period. However, different to the Byzantine and Classical Ottoman periods’ intellectuals and chroniclers who were mere mediators, the Reform period’s intellectuals (alongside the media) took on new roles as part of a modern mediation, by promoting the acceptable cultural forms of consumption. Intellectuals, various publications including books and the press, in this sense, were instrumental in promoting and trying to dictate what the society should do in terms of modernizing itself. This new, modern role of mediation continued on but also got ‘hardened’ under the Republican period as well, as I will discuss in the next chapter.

(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.

Under the Byzantine period, ‘ethnic’ Greeks constituted a privileged and elite group of entertainers and were placed more to the top of the group of entertainers perceived as being involved in ‘higher-brow’ forms. ‘Ethnically different’ Roma were either also placed on top (‘higher-brow’) as skilled ‘exotics’ or at the bottom as slapstick (‘lower-brow’) entertainers. A similar ‘ethnic division of labor’ continued to exist and indeed was to be further fortified during the Classical Ottoman period. This type of division of labor has gotten more complex and was also enmeshed with lonca (trade guilds) and millet (‘ethno-religious’ administrative cluster) systems whereby various ‘ethnic’ or ‘ethno-religious’ groups were channeled to particular vocations, including those leisure consumption and entertainment ‘niches’. Here, with the impact of state and religious regulation, certain vocations (especially those being seen unfit for Muslims) were reserved for non-Muslims and the Roma whose Islamic identification always remained ‘suspect’.

During the Reform Ottoman period, with the institution of constitutional citizenship and –formal– equality between the Muslims and non-Muslims, lonca and millet-based stratifications as well as state and religious regulatory bans and limitations were eased. Reform laws and changing societal attitudes allowed Muslims to become more active in entertainment sector and this situation helped flourishing of more flexibility in crossing over among different groups of entertainers. ‘Ethnicization’ worked also at different levels and under different dynamics in Byzantine and Classical Ottoman periods than in Reform Ottoman period. While Roma in the Byzantine period and the non-Muslims and the Roma in the Classical Ottoman period were seen as the ‘Others,’ and were functionally exocitized in various ways, they were still not commodified in the modern sense of the term. They were rather seen as different yet familiar producers of forms and establishments serving as ‘havens,’ or escapist environments.

During the Reform period, however, ‘ethnic’ difference started to serve different functions in terms of consuming the ‘Other’. A grand split between the alafranga and alaturka forms symbolized the advent of
‘Occidentalism’ whereby Western forms were elevated to a higher level through which non-Muslims were made a different sort of ‘Others’ and were thus assigned to one side of a supposedly civilizational rift. As I will discuss under the Republican period, such an assignment would make them both ‘models’ as well as an ‘ostracized’ group.