

The Role of Spatial Alienation in the Journey of Existence as an Actor in Contested Urban Areas: The Case of Kasımpaşa, Istanbul

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Abstract

Although alienation represents the arche of Marxist theory, it has also key role in the field of urbanism. In parallel with people's labour, their own life and alienation of human to human, the aggressive policies of production-oriented relationships in cities trigger the alienation of people from the city. This research investigates the levels and types of alienation produced by neoliberal urban policies in Kasımpaşa, one of the most chaotic neighbourhoods of Istanbul. A questionnaire survey was conducted with employees of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality's located in Kasımpaşa, a group chosen due to their institutional responsibility in urban policies. The findings reveal the levels and processes of alienation experienced by this group within the context of Kasımpaşa while also analysing the urban interventions contributing to spatial alienation.

Keywords: Alienation, Gentrification, Being Actor, Borders, Neoliberal Urbanisation

1. Introduction

Alienation comes to the forefront as one of the main issues discussed in philosophy, sociology, psychology, political science and perhaps most importantly in urbanism. It is inevitable that this concept should be defined by various disciplines, and that this concept should be the product of an interdisciplinary discussion, as there can be a physical alienation with the built environment as well as socio-cultural layers of alienation (Sahan, 2021). What separates people from the environment they live in is the loss of their sense of belonging to that environment; The disappearance of memories of that environment with physical, social and cultural impositions creates a great story of disconnection from space. One of the crucial reasons for this break is that capital's own interests are produced through urban space, and moreover, space becomes a part of the production process. In that case, it is important to analyse the policies of capital on space and to discuss the views of Marxist and post-Marxist theory on alienation in order to understand the processes of breaking up from urban space.

Although the definition of Marx's concept of alienation as alienation from one's own labour continued for many years, it began to take a different form with Lefebvre. The French school and Lefebvre tried to create a synthesis of the concept of city and alienation, which Marxist literature ignored for a long time. Lefebvre (1991) speaks alienation was defined as the separation of human from life blessed with primitive fragility, joy and wisdom: "The human, stripped bare and projected outside of itself, was and remains at the mercy of forces which in fact come from the human and are nothing but human—but torn apart and dehumanized" (Lefebvre 1991, p.276). And it points to the relations of production as the basis of this alienation. Monetary policies have formed the basis of class and social divisions and these policies have revealed a deep alienation. Such a transformation stemming from the internal dynamics of the relations of production denied the existence of the urban dweller as an actor on the street (Lefebvre 2003), redefined it as a commodity and transformed it into individuals who only pass by, do not wait, and do not have a deep relationship with the space.

With the destructive interventions created by neoliberal economic policies on urban space, the increase in crime rates, irregular urbanisation, increase in urban violence and, in parallel, the increase in the control of neoliberalism in the city triggers urban rupture and alienation (Geis&Ross 1998). Alienation is the product of a set of neoliberal policies and gentrification efforts in the areas of cities that are subject to conflicts, causing the deep

relationship between the city and the urbanite to be damaged. In developing or unconsciously developed cities like Istanbul, where alienation is felt at such an aggressive level, the attitude of the local government is at the centre of the problem in the parameters that cause alienation. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize the importance of local governments and, moreover, the planning departments in local governments in understanding the trends and policies underlying the problems that cause alienation and in solving the problems that arise. Thus, understanding the alienation process of Kasımpaşa from the perspective of the employees of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, which has an aggressive construction area in the region, constitutes the key point of this study. The process and degree of alienation of local administrators provides deep and meaningful conclusions about the spatial alienation of residents. Therefore, this study aims to understand the level of alienation of municipal employees from the environment they live in and the types of alienation they are exposed to and seeks answers to the following questions: To what extent do the commodification processes of neoliberalism affect the physical, cultural and social alienation between urban dwellers and space? Which type of alienation has a deeper relationship with wrong urban policies and chaotic urban space? To what extent does alienation affect the ontological existence of the individual in urban space?

2. Anatomy of Alienation

Marx(1844/2016) says that alienation has many layers, and the first stage of it begins with economic alienation due to the inability to access what one's own labour produces. The object produced by labour appears to man as a foreign substance that does not belong to her/him. In the end, the worker relates to the product of her/his own labour as if she/he was communicating with a foreign object. Therefore, the more labour the worker exerts, the more alien her/his attitude towards the product she/he produces. In addition to the alienation of the worker from the object produced by her/his labour power, Marx also speaks of the alienation of the process of production, that is, the process of activity. The production process is a process in which the workers are active, in which their body, mind, abilities work. The workers' alienation from this process of activity ultimately leads to their alienation from own self. According to Marx (1844/2016), human beings, as a species, turn the activity of their lives into an object of their own consciousness. The human being's life is a conscious activity, and this is the most significant feature that distinguishes it from other animals. The human beings are a conscious being and therefore their life is also their purpose. However, with alienation, man's own life activity ceases to be a goal and becomes a means of her/his essence. The detachment of human beings from their species-being and purpose of life leads to their alienation from others—ultimately, from fellow human beings (Marx 1844/2016). Healy explains the process as follows: "When we are denied control and use over the product of our labour, when it becomes alienated from us, appearing to have power over us, we are in effect alienated from our own species-being; alienated from our own humanity and from the world we inhabit (Healy 2020, p.15)."

In Marxist theory, the process of alienation (Marx 1844/2016) is fundamentally rooted in the worker's labour power (Figure 1). Labour power constitutes the foundation of capitalist production and serves as the primary determinant of the production process. Within this system, the worker is compelled to sell her/his labour to the capitalist in exchange for a wage. The capitalist class, holding private ownership of the means of production, maintains control over the productive assets necessary for labour. Although the worker engages with and activates these means through her/his labour, she/he remains perpetually excluded from ownership, regardless of the intensity of her/his work — a dynamic that generates surplus value (Marx 1867/1990). Consequently, the worker becomes alienated from the product of his labour, as her/his wages are insufficient to purchase the very commodities she/he produces. While the products circulate globally as part of international trade, they largely remain inaccessible to the worker, symbolising his profound alienation from the outcomes of her/his own productive activity. As a result of alienated labour man actually alienates her/his essence. Creativity is inherent in man, and man is essentially a practical being. With the alienation of these creative activities from himself/herself, man loses self-worth. The human being who maintains the purely individual existence of the generic self-worth by working continuously and continuously ceases to be a human. Man's alienation from own essence leads to a direct result: man's alienation from other people (Figure 1). Every relationship that a person establishes with herself/himself finds expression in her/his relationship with other people. In that case, the person who is alienated from herself/

himself becomes alienated from other people and the person who is social by nature turns into an asocial being (Petrović, 1963).

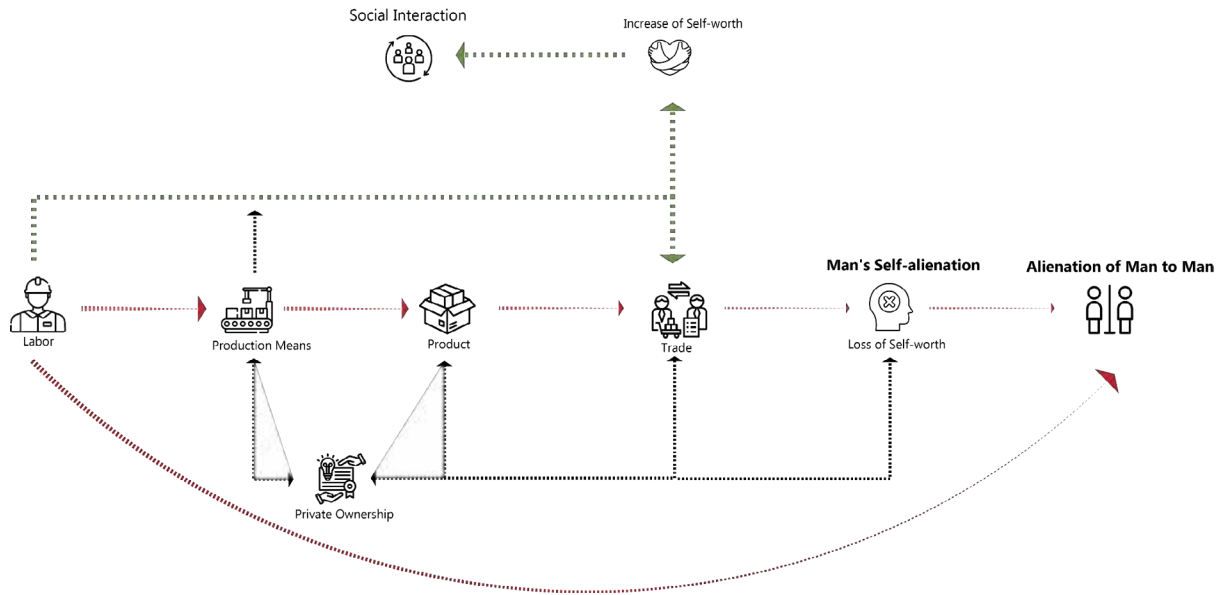


Figure 1: Alienation Process in Marxist Theory (Marx, 1844/2007; Petrović, 1963).

Marx's concept of alienation can be defined as a social and economic process that starts with the alienation of objects as a product of labour, alienates from one's own essence, and ultimately results in alienation from human to human. The main subject of this research is to analyse the alienation of social and physical space to human and human to social and physical space. In this context, analysing an intellectual synthesis of the concept of urban alienation and Marx's concept of alienation will form the basic theoretical framework of this study. Based on Marx's theory of alienation of labour, we first see the integration of space into alienation. Starting from the alienation of objects as products of labour, Lefebvre extends the concept of alienation to the dimension created by capitalism in the production of space and social relations. That is to say, capitalism has transformed cities into centres of production; moreover, it has commodified space itself, eliminating the classifications based on the historical, social, cultural, and natural values that space holds, and replacing them with classifications based on use value. Just as the private ownership of the means of production leaves the labour with the product it produces, the private ownership of the urban land alienates the city dweller from the city both subjectively and objectively (Diaz-Parra and Jover 2021). Right to the city (Lefebvre 1971), one of the most important concepts written by Lefebvre, claims that spatial alienation must be eliminated in order to people for claiming their environment. Ownership also includes the residents taking an active role in the construction of the city. Residents create the city, transform it on a conscious level, transfer their own culture and lifestyle to the city and subsequently shape their own personalities (Lefebvre 1971).

Although the policy of the citizen to build the city directly was common for the pre-capitalist cities, which transformed into places where capital only produced as a commodity tool and moreover, the centre of production. Capitalist institutions, private property, and the expansion of the land market have obliterated the pre-capitalist form of the city. The commodified product (including the space itself) replaces urban structures, the living space replaces the settlement, and alienation is imposed. Thus, while the inhabitants of the city are alienated from the city they have produced and transformed, they are actually expelled from the centres of the city. As city centres

are centres of production, only the working population begins to concentrate in the centre of the city. The commodification, displacement and gentrification processes of historic city centres are at the root of modern urban alienation. For instance, Lefebvre defines the profound interventions and changes that Haussmann created in Paris as the product of these alienation processes. Haussmann's intervention is clearly a series of projects that undermine the organizing power of the proletariat, displacing them and further alienating them from the environment in which they live. For this reason, Lefebvre refers to the re-enactment of workers in urban centres as an important part of the right to the city. (Diaz-Parra and Jover 2021).

While capitalism commodifies the city itself and subject it to a deep and concrete change, it tries to abstract all its policies in order to prevent the perception of these concrete changes. Lefebvre expresses this fact that capitalism has tended to transform the space into an abstract space by removing the diversity, vitality and life-recognizing structure of the space, placing it in an abstract context. Capitalism is in an effort to separate space from the real thing and isolate it in order to cover up the urban reality, the struggle for life in the urban slums, the class war and its contradictions. The space of capitalism is an abstract space. As for capitalism, the exchange value is important, not the concrete use of space. For this reason, neither the historical production and use of space nor the social values it represents have a value in itself for capitalism. They are only important to the extent that they contribute to the exchange value of the space in question. What makes one of the two different historical places more valuable than the other - for the capitalists - is the high trade-off value (Lefebvre 2003). Due to the that fact, capitalism wants to commodify the vitality of the space, the life that continues in the space, and the common values, and to ensure that the masses are alienated from these values. With modernist urbanism urban space has become commodified, and standardization has become the basic principle instead of diversity that constitutes the spirit of that space. Lefebvre's criticisms of Le Corbusier's street imagination as the pioneer of modernism are actually based on this basis. According to Lefebvre, street is not only a place where people pass by and move without stopping. The street is the place where people meet, socially exist and interact with each other, connecting places such as cafes, theatres, reading clubs, and moreover providing a continuous relationship amongst these places. The street is a spontaneous theatre, and sometimes a person who was just a spectator suddenly becomes an actor, occupies the street, and turns the street into a battle for her/his unheard voice to be heard. For this reason, the street is a place where people, who tend to be one as a species, are together and establish meaningful relationships with the other (Lefebvre 2003, p.22).

The lack of control over the production process itself exposes the individual to alienation and ultimately leads to alienation from the workplace/street where the individual spends the majority of her/his daily time. The individual's inability to control or predict the consequences of her/his own behaviour ultimately undermines her/his relationship with space. While the behaviours of the individual find themselves in the relationship with the other, the inhibition of these behavioural patterns by alienation detaches them from social life itself. The fact that the rules of the society and social environment she/he lives in are based on the morality of commodities disrupts the semantic integrity of the individual's relationship with others and space. Moreover, when the social norms determined by the world of commodities clash with the individual's value judgments, a social isolation may result. The class culture of the bourgeoisie, such as consumer culture, individualization, globalization, gentrification, elitism, and more importantly, the individual's rebellion against these cultural norms, which are necessary for the uninterrupted continuation of the capitalist production system, also pushes her/him into alienation. In the end, the individual is not only alienated from the society and social environment, but also from the space itself where all these processes take place and continue.

As a catalyst of urban alienation, rapid, unconscious and aggressive urbanisation policies, vandalism, drug use, lack of safety regarding criminal issues have profound effects on the individual's relationship with space. In contemporary urban landscapes shaped by neoliberal capitalism, aggressive urbanisation policies not only exacerbate economic inequalities but also produce conditions of social abandonment, where marginalised groups are increasingly pushed towards acts of vandalism, drug dependency, and violent resistance against the alienating environment (Madden and Marcuse 2016; Rolnik 2019; Watt 2021). Vandalism contributes to the deterioration of shared urban spaces, eroding residents' emotional attachments to their environment and fostering a sense of alienation

(Taylor 2011). Similarly, the prevalence of drug use in urban areas accelerates social fragmentation and generates an atmosphere of distrust, undermining individuals' sense of belonging within the city (Sampson 2012). An increase in criminal activities further compromises residents' feelings of safety, leading to a withdrawal from public spaces and intensifying experiences of urban alienation (Jacobs 1961). Collectively, these dynamics expedite the process of detachment from urban life and weaken the identity bonds individuals form with their cities (Wacquant 2008).

Wirth (1938) argues that increasing urbanisation weakens the connection with place and this triggers spatial alienation. One of the most important reasons triggering urban alienation is the destruction of local ties and neighbourhood relations as a result of complex urban living. Aggressive urbanisation, moreover, the transformation of space into a commodity that is produced and consumed, pushes the limits of control over the environment in which the urban dweller lives. The urban dweller's loss of control over the environment leads to a loss of a sense of belonging and as a result, social isolation emerges (Massey 1996; Geis and Ross 1998). According to Simmel, the chaotic sights and sounds of the city, crowds and noise are the main factors in the deterioration of social control (Simmel 1969). Increasing negative stimuli in cities create an uncontrollable perception of physical environment on citizens. As a result, people living in the city learn that they cannot control the social and physical environment in which they live. This whole experience results in helplessness, that is, the loss of their sense of belonging. Massey argues that spatial alienation is mostly a result of economic relations. He concludes that poverty, especially concentrated at the scale of neighbourhoods, is effective in the deterioration of public order, which in turn triggers the process of alienation. Contrary to many other urban sociologists, he states that this alienation starts at the neighbourhood scale, not at the city level, and that the physical and social environment has a direct impact on people. He claims that the demographic structure of the people living in the neighbourhood; ethnicity, gender, income status shape social life and have a profound impact on alienation (Massey 1996). In line with Massey's view, the necessity of a neighbourhood-scale analysis to understand urban alienation is among the conclusions reached through the literature research. In this context, Kasımpaşa, as one of the most controversial neighbourhoods of Istanbul, has been the focus of this study.

6. The Study Area: Kasımpaşa Neighbourhood

The historic neighbourhood of Kasımpaşa is located in Istanbul's Beyoğlu district. It was an important hub for naval operations throughout the Ottoman era, especially in the 18th and 19th centuries. The neighbourhood had a commercial and military organization throughout this time. The population of Kasımpaşa increased significantly throughout the Industrial Revolution, making it one of Istanbul's most significant residential areas (Çelik 2019). As the economic structure changed in the 20th century, problems including poverty and rapid urbanisation started to appear.

Kasımpaşa has had a swift urban transformation and gentrification trend in recent years. Although the historic fabric of the neighbourhood is at risk, this process has also attracted significant investments and the development of high-end homes and offices (Taşan 2020). Real estate prices have significantly increased due to its close proximity to Galata and Beyoğlu which have high land values. The original residents of the neighbourhood, especially those from lower-income groups, have been displaced as a result of the significant socioeconomic divide brought about by urban transformation (Karaman 2017).

Throughout this process, civil society organizations (CSOs) like Beyoğlu Kent Savunması (Beyoğlu City Defense) and İstanbul Kent Savunması (Istanbul City Defense) have vigorously campaigned against the detrimental impacts of urban transformation while promoting the rights of the locals. These organizations have called for a more equitable transition process and have opposed displacement and the loss of cultural identity (Yılmaz and Kaya 2018). The Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects, or TMMOB, has contributed knowledge and oversight to Kasımpaşa's urban transformation initiatives, guaranteeing that urbanisation is executed in a safe and healthy way.

Considering the current situation of Kasımpaşa, the relationship of these new projects with the urban identity and context should be expressed. Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Kasımpaşa Additional Service Building is

one of the urban interventions in Kasımpaşa (Figure 2). Among the notable uses in the area are Istanbul Bilgi University and Arter Art Gallery, representing the significant educational and socio-cultural interventions in Kasımpaşa. In addition, the first phase of the Piyalepaşa Mass Housing projects created a deep physical boundary between the neighbourhood and the other part of the city. The urban policies of the neoliberal economy try to isolate the city of space by breaking the city out of its real and concrete context, evaluating it as a commodity according to its use value and breaking the solid bond with the city dweller. In this respect, the real relationship between the concrete space and the human being is taken out of its context and it eliminates the possibility of the urban dweller to live as a social being in the space, to be an actor. The removal of many ethnic groups like Romani citizens from their homes for the second phase of the Piyalepaşa Mass Housing project is also the product of such policies. At the same time, the construction of new hotels and office buildings that are disconnected from the identity of the city are similar activities of these policies. The main reason why Kasımpaşa was chosen as the study area was that the ruptures, social isolation, cultural clusters, differences and various urban functions frequently mentioned in the literature were experienced. Although the gradual decrease in the presence of open and wide green areas as a product of aggressive urbanisation is seen in Kasımpaşa, it is still possible to talk about the existence of some large parks. Sururi Park and Hacı Ahmet Cideresi Park are the two largest neighbourhood parks of Kasımpaşa. (Figure2).

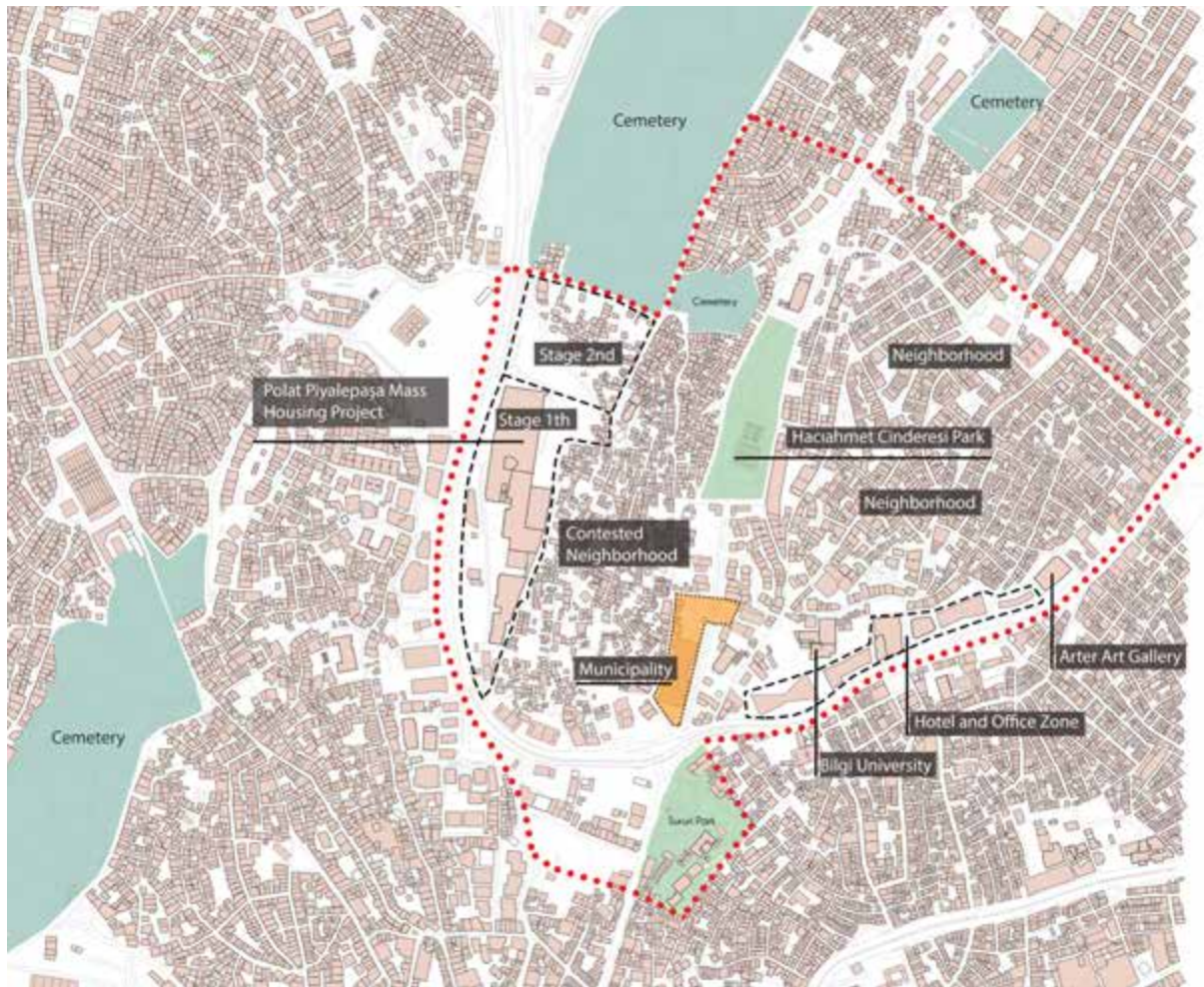


Figure 2: Existing Functional Urban Areas in Kasımpaşa

The first photo seen in Figure 3 and 4 depict the modern exterior façade of the municipal building. The photo on the right, taken from the roof of the municipal building, reveals the chaotic structure of the neighbourhood. On one hand, neglected wooden and concrete buildings stand out, while on the other, high-rise apartment blocks illustrate the picture of unplanned urbanization.



Figure 3: Municipality Building and overhead view of the neighbourhood



Figure 4: An overhead view of the neighbourhood

The photos in Figure 5 illustrate a typical scene of gentrification. The newly completed housing area has been constructed with a façade style that reflects a highly parametric design approach, creating an evident contrast with the surrounding buildings. While it would be inaccurate to describe the existing building stock as structurally sound, it can still be stated that the new developments are incompatible with the existing architectural identity (Figure 5). The photos in Figure 6 reveal the gentrification process at a deeper level. Along Kurtuluş Deresi Street, one side features wealthy, well-maintained, and ornate hotel and office façades, while directly across from them stand small workshops and old buildings with neglected façades—exposing a striking paradox (Figure 6). Figure 7, once again, presents a striking image of Kasımpaşa, featuring small auto repair workshops and commercial units set against a backdrop that is both historical and chaotic (Figure 7).



Figure 5: An overhead view of the neighborhood



Figure 6: On one side, gentrification; on the other, the old urban texture



Figure 7: An image reflecting the chaotic urbanization of Kasımpaşa

"The Arter Art Gallery continues to exist in Kasımpaşa as part of the gentrification process. A pool, constructed as a decorative element at the gallery's entrance, acts as a physical and symbolic barrier between the gallery and the city (Figure 8). On one side of the pool lies art; on the other, Kasımpaşa in all its raw reality. Photographs taken from within the gallery reveal the historic and chaotic urban fabric of the neighbourhood just behind it—historic façades, bay windows, and wooden and brick buildings. Another striking photograph depicts Kasımpaşa as a grim reality behind an abstract work of art (Figure 9).



Figure 8: A photo from in front of Arter Art Gallery



Figure 9: A view of the city from the inside of Arter Art Gallery

6.1. Methodology

The aim of this study is to understand the process of alienation in Kasımpaşa from the perspective of the residents living in the area. One of the dominant subjects of the region is undoubtedly the employees of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IMM). The social and spatial relationships, sense of belonging, and alienation processes of IMM employees with their surroundings were analysed using a questionnaire survey. Due to the ongoing security problems in the neighbourhood, the existence of introverted groups, and the security problems experienced at the entrances and exits to the all part of the neighbourhood, this study could not address the other dwellers of the neighbourhood as a sample group. However, municipality employees are a useful sample group in many contexts to measure alienation. This group both experiences the urban space due to their long working hours

and carries out direct works on public spaces. In this context, municipality employees are considered to have opportunities in terms of measuring alienation. The concepts that emerged as a result of the literature review have been a guide in the preparation of the survey questions. In the table below, we can see the relationship between the concepts that are part, cause, and result of the alienation process and the survey questions (Figure 10).

The literature states that security, vandalism, aggressive urbanisation, gentrification, loss of physical and social control established with the urban environment due to various reasons are the indicators that trigger alienation. As a result of alienation, urban dwellers turn into individuals who cannot socialize in their environment and others with poor communication and put them in social isolation. In that case, the questions trying to understand the relationship between the citizen and the environment he lived in and being an actor were also the subject of the survey. The survey results were subjected to Principal Component Analysis, and mean values (see appendix for the descriptive statistics) were presented to illustrate the overall evaluation of the relevant components grouped under each extracted factor across the sample.



Figure 10: Relation level of the survey questions to some parameters triggered the alienation.

6.1. Interpretation of Results

The level of participation in the survey consists of 156 people. The first four questions aim to obtain information about the demographic structure of the participants. It is seen that the majority of the participants are female (Figure 11), but there is not a deep difference between the proportion of female and male participants. The majority of the participants have at least a bachelor's degree, although there are a few participants with primary and high school education (Figure 11). Although there are participants from almost every age group, the results show that the most intense age group is 31-40 (Figure 11). When we look at the occupational distribution of the participants, we encounter a very cosmopolitan view. Although it is seen that the participants belonging to professions such as Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Urban and Regional Planning, which are prominent in the field of urbanism, are dense, there are also participants from Civil Engineering and other engineering branches and professions with a wide variety of perspectives such as art historian, archaeologist, film director, restorer, cinema writer (Figure 12).

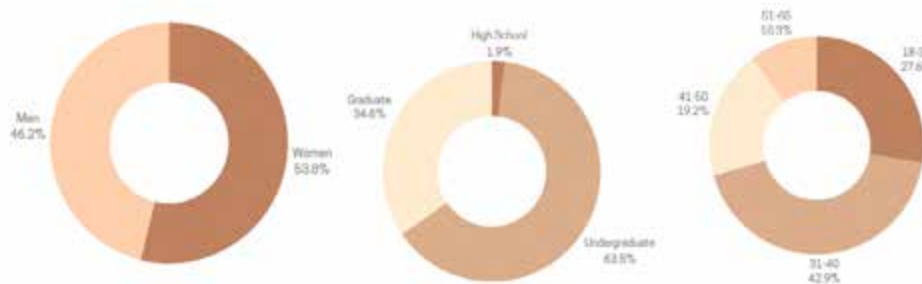


Figure 11: Gender, Education Level and Age Group of Participants

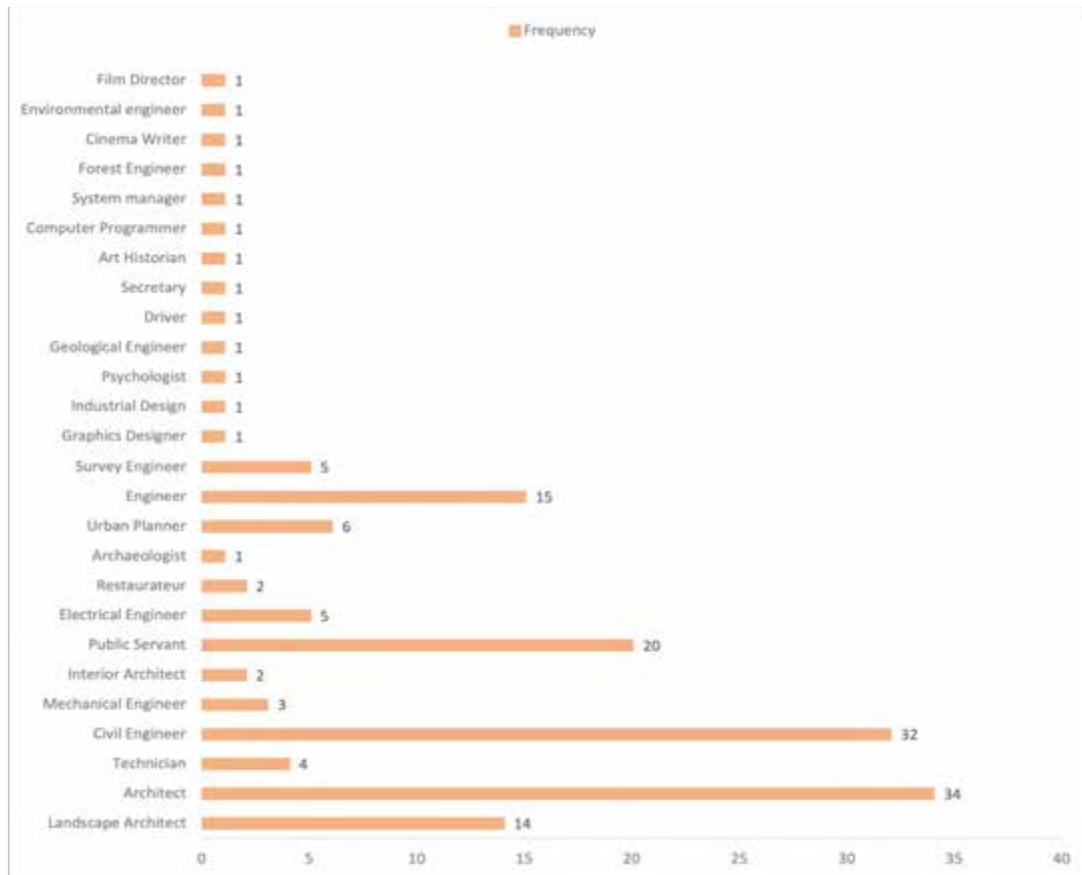


Figure 12: Occupations of Participants

The survey questions were evaluated in two separate sets, and two distinct Principal Component Analyses (PCA) were conducted. The first set of questions aimed to measure respondents' evaluations based on their perceptual evaluations and experiences within the neighbourhood. These questions addressed aspects such as integration into neighbourhood life through use social and cultural facilities, feelings of safety and powerlessness, evaluations of accessibility, and the effects of gentrification processes. The PCA, applied to 14 questions from the first set, revealed five factors that together explain 64,92% of the total variance. These factors reflect urban alienation, related to the use of social and cultural facilities, socialization, sense of safety, environmental quality, accessibility, compatibility of newly developed projects with the urban identity, gentrification, and spatial integration.

Accordingly, the following factors were identified to assess the levels of spatial alienation (Table 1). The first factor is titled **"Inclusion Through the Use of Social Facilities and Infrastructure & Physical Environmental Quality Assessment"** and explains the largest proportion of the variance. This factor consists of includes questions measuring respondents' frequency and tendency to use recreational and social opportunities and shopping facilities in Kasımpaşa after work and during leisure time, as well as their evaluations of physical environment quality and accessibility in the neighbourhood. The average value measuring whether users consider the socialization spaces in the area, such as cafes and restaurants, to be sufficient was recorded as 2.36. When asked whether they use these spaces for socialization outside of work, the average usage level was quite low at 1.75. Similarly, despite the presence of two large parks and green spaces near the municipal building, the results indicate that these parks are rarely used (mean value: 1.69), even though they could be ideal recreational spaces during lunch breaks. There are two large parks close to the town hall. Although one of these parks, Hacıahmet Cinderesi Park, is closer to the municipality and more accessible, when the participants who said that they use the parks were asked which park they use more frequently, Sururi Park, which is less accessible, was predominantly answered as Sururi Park. In parallel, street markets, which are among the most common and fundamental urban functions in Turkey, are set up twice a week in Kasımpaşa. While these markets are considered an essential part of everyday urban life, the responses regarding their usage frequency, although relatively more positive, do not indicate a wholly favourable outcome. In this regard, it can be concluded that the frequency of use of street markets in Kasımpaşa is relatively low. The responses to questions about the accessibility of the municipal building and the overall environmental quality of Kasımpaşa were recorded at 2.35 and 1.71, respectively.

Another factor with a high contribution to the total explained variance has been titled **"Perceived Safety and Powerlessness"** This factor includes questions that assess respondents' feelings of safety both in the immediate vicinity of their workplace and in the broader Kasımpaşa area, as well as the perceived impact of this sense of safety on their relationship with the neighbourhood. The responses to whether municipal employees feel safe in their daily interactions with people in the surrounding area had a low average value of 1.99. Similarly, responses to the direct question of whether Kasımpaşa is perceived as a safe environment yielded a low average score of 1.94. Responses to whether users feel empowered or powerless in relation to environmental factors were relatively more positive, with an average value of 2.62.

The third factor, which has a moderate level of explanatory power, is titled **"Assessments for Pedestrian Experience"** It is composed of two questions: one that evaluates perceived safety during pedestrian movement, and another question that assesses the impact of recent street upgrading projects on pedestrian accessibility. When asked about the effects of the pavement and road lane improvement project on pedestrian accessibility along Kurtuluş Creek Street, one of the main axes of the region, the response of the participants was very positive. However, despite this, responses regarding whether they feel safe as pedestrians when walking or using crosswalks were relatively negative, with an average score of 2.23.

The fourth factor, titled **"Assessment of Spatial Integrity and Inclusiveness of New Urban Interventions"** is based on a single question. It measures respondents' evaluations of whether recently implemented projects in Kasımpaşa – such as mass housing, hotels, and other developments – are compatible with the surrounding area's physical and social characteristics and overall urban identity. When asked about the integration of new urban projects (such as hotels and office buildings that can be considered as part of the gentrification process) with the existing urban identity and built environment, the average of the answers given by the users remained at a low level with 1.94. The fifth factor, titled **"Inclusion Through Use of Cultural Facility"** also consists of a single item and refers to the use of the Arter Art Gallery, which is a prominent cultural and architectural component of the study area. The respondents' level of engagement with this facility represents a distinct dimension of social inclusion (Table 1). The average of the answers given to the question about the frequency of visits to the Arter Art Gallery is below average with 2.25.

Table 1. Principal component analysis results for alienation related to concepts of socialization cultural integration, accessibility, safety powerlessness, gentrification

		1	2	3	4	5
Factor 1:						
Inclusion Through the Use of Social Facilities and Infrastructure & Physical Environmental Quality Assessment	Would you prefer to have meetings with your colleagues or other social circles in Kasımpaşa after the end of the working hours?	0,648				
	What level do you think is the ease of access to your workplace with public transportation networks?	0,63				
	Do you use the city parks in Kasımpaşa for recreation or socialization?	0,71				
	Would you use the street market in Kasımpaşa for your shopping needs?	0,58				
	Do you think that there are enough social venues (cafes, restaurants, etc.) in Kasımpaşa for social activities you can do with your colleagues during your lunch break or at any time of day?	0,499				
	What level do you think the physical environmental quality of Kasımpaşa is?	0,643				
Factor 2:						
Perceived Safety and Powerlessness	When you go out of the municipality building, do you feel safe in every contact you have with the people around you?		0,665			
	Do you think the physical environment of your workplace is safe?		0,721			
	Crime incidents have not weakened my relationship with the environment.		0,723			
	What is your level of feeling strong or powerless against external factors (social environment, physical environment) especially when you are alone in Kasımpaşa?		0,797			
Factor 3:						
Assessments for Pedestrian Experience	Do you think that the new street project (expansion of sidewalks, arrangement of vehicle lanes) implemented by IBB on Kurtuluş Deresi Caddesi facilitates pedestrian circulation?			0,833		
	When you walk as a pedestrian in Kasımpaşa, do you feel safe considering the traffic density, pedestrian axes and crossings?			0,747		
Factor 4:						
Assessment of Spatial Integrity and Inclusiveness of New Urban Interventions	Do you think that the mass housing, hotel and other new projects recently built in Kasımpaşa are compatible with its surroundings (in terms of urban identity, physical environment harmony)?				0,841	
Factor 5:						
Inclusion Through Use of Cultural Facility	What is your level of use of Arter Art Gallery in Kasımpaşa for social and cultural activities?					0,887

Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy: 0,775 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity sig.: .000

Each variable comprises an evaluation by the respondent made on a Likert scale where 1 is "completely disagree" and 5 is "completely agree"

In the second set of questions, which included five items, a separate PCA identified three distinct factors explaining 77.9% of the variance. These factors relate to respondents' alienation through dimensions such as workplace preference and satisfaction, intention for social integration and sense of belonging, and perceived intrusiveness

in local life (Table 2). The first factor, **“Workplace Preference and Satisfaction from the Workplace Neighbourhood”** explains 33.18% of the variance individually and consists of questions that assess respondents' satisfaction with working in Kasımpaşa (mean value is 2.62) and their willingness to relocate their workplaces elsewhere (mean value is 3.95).

The second factor, titled **“Intention for Social Integration & Feelings of Belonging”** comprises items that evaluate respondents' willingness to take part in a joint activity with local residents as representatives of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IMM), and the extent to which they perceive themselves as genuine members or residents of Kasımpaşa. Both items capture aspects of alienation in terms of belonging and the perception of oneself as a social actor within the neighbourhood. When the participants were asked about their willingness to participate in a joint activity with the neighbourhood, the average value of the answers given is 2.64, which is a relatively low tendency. The answer to the question about whether the municipality employees consider themselves as a real subject of Kasımpaşa expresses one of the lowest levels with an average value of 1.63.

The final factor, **“Perceived Intrusiveness in Local Life”** includes the question: “Do you think IMM employees have a negative or intrusive effect on the living spaces and lifestyles of the residents living in the vicinity?” This question measures perceived social distance and the potentially disruptive role of institutional actors in everyday neighbourhood life (Table 2). The average value of the answers to the question is 2.25, which is quite neutral.

Table 2: Principal component analysis results for alienation related to concepts of sense of belonging and perception of oneself as an actor

		1	2	3
Factor 1: Work- place Prefer- ence and satisfac- tion from the work- place neigh- bourhood	<i>Are you satisfied that your workplace is in Kasımpaşa?</i>	0,846		
	<i>Would you prefer your workplace to be in a neighborhood other than Kasımpaşa?</i>	-0,894		
Factor 2: Intention for social integra- tion & feelings of be- longing	<i>Would you support IBB employees to organize a joint activity with the residents / public in Kasımpaşa?</i>		0,913	
	<i>As a final question, do you see yourself as a real subject, resident of Kasımpaşa?</i>		0,577	
Factor 3: Per- ceived Intrusive- ness in Local Life	<i>Do you think IBB employees have a negative or intrusive effect on the living spaces and lifestyles of the residents living in the vicinity?</i>			0,979

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy: 0,537 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity sig.: .000
Each variable comprises an evaluation by the respondent made on a Likert scale where 1 is “completely disagree / lowest satisfaction” and 5 is “completely agree / highest satisfaction”

7. Conclusion

Neoliberal urbanisation, where space is considered as a commodity that can be bought and sold, strives to distance space from the concrete realities of society. The concrete reality of everyday life, real problems, emotions, ideas and being a real subject are the most valuable parameters that shape space as human. However, capitalism endeavours to remove the urbanite from real problems and to create masses who can be free only within the confines of their own homes, not on the street. In this respect, spatial alienation can be the product of capitalism's efforts to abstract urban space, as well as its tool.

Kasimpaşa is one of the oldest but also most chaotic neighbourhoods of Istanbul. The scale of the neighbourhood sets an important boundary for understanding and deepening the effects of alienation. This boundary is not only a physical boundary but also a social and emotional one. Kasimpaşa is the living space of various ethnic groups such as Romani people, immigrants, who are the weighty subjects of the neighbourhood. The cosmopolitan character of the neighbourhood has further deepened with the addition of new structures such as the municipal building, art gallery, university campus, large-scale housing complexes, hotel, and commercial facilities.

The cosmopolitan structure of Kasimpaşa acts as a catalyst for spatial alienation in the face of aggressive urban development and transformation. Ultimately, the results of the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) have allowed us to obtain concrete indicators of this alienation. The emergence of five distinct components from the PCA applied to the first set of questions demonstrates that alienation is not a one-dimensional experience; rather, it involves multiple layers such as spatial usage, sense of safety, compatibility of spatial interventions, and cultural integration. This reveals that individuals' relationships with the urban environment—or the lack thereof—should be understood in a multidimensional way.

That the strongest factor relates to the use of recreational, social, and commercial spaces shows how everyday spatial practices shape individuals' feelings of belonging or alienation. If individuals do not engage with these spaces, they may not feel emotionally or socially connected to them, even if they are physically present. This finding aligns with Henri Lefebvre's view that space is produced and experienced through everyday practices. Public space, as a disrupted yet integral part of daily life, becomes a crucial tool in making sense of individuals' existence as social beings in the city. Sometimes a person is an observer; other times, an actor. However, the individual—alienated first from their labour, then themselves, then their ontological existence, and finally from others—also experiences a deep rupture in their relationship with space.

In the case of Kasimpaşa, the predominantly negative responses regarding the frequency, willingness, or motivation to use public spaces indicate a growing spatial alienation. The emergence of "Perceived Safety and Powerlessness" as a distinct and strong dimension highlights how critical the subjective feeling of safety is in fostering a sense of urban belonging. The sense of safety influences how individuals experience the city, how they relate to others, and whether they form emotional connections with their environment. Conversely, the feeling of powerlessness reflects a lack of agency, which is a powerful indicator of alienation—particularly in the context of gentrification or rapid transformation processes.

The factor concerning the compatibility of new spatial interventions—such as mass housing or hotels—with the local urban fabric reflects the tension between development and continuity in the city. That this factor emerges as an independent dimension indicates that participants are highly aware of the spatial identity mismatch and its relation to alienation. Notably, the factor related to the use of a cultural institution like Arter emerges independently, suggesting that cultural participation functions as a bridge that enhances spatial belonging—perhaps even more effectively than physical infrastructure. This provides a meaningful insight into how symbolic spaces (e.g., galleries) affect individuals' feelings of inclusion, visibility, participation, or exclusion.

The second PCA confirms that alienation is not only spatial but also institutional and emotional. The three resulting dimensions—job satisfaction, social integration, and perception of intervention—show that:

- Some individuals may feel alienated despite being satisfied with their jobs;
- Others may feel excluded due to a lack of social or emotional integration;
- A separate group (e.g., municipal employees) may perceive themselves as intervening forces, even if that was not their intention.

Notably, the fact that nearly half the participants acknowledged this intervention as a reality provides significant empirical insight. These findings reflect the multilayered nature of urban space undergoing transformation. Public employees may be physically present in the area, yet their levels of social and symbolic integration vary. Spatial interventions like infrastructure projects or gentrification shape individuals' emotional and perceptual boundaries within the city. Emotions such as safety, participation, and authenticity play a decisive role in whether individuals feel inside or outside the urban system.

To conclusion, this study shows that there is spatial alienation in Kasımpaşa as a result of neoliberal urbanisation. The alienation experienced in Kasımpaşa prevents the physical, social, emotional, artistic and cultural existence of the individual.

Although this study focuses on a significant and well-established sample group – municipal employees – the inability to reach the Romani community, who have been the historical subjects of the neighbourhood for centuries but are now marginalized, due to various safety concerns, constitutes a major limitation of the research. A further, long-term study involving a separate survey with the Romani residents, employees in nearby commercial areas, and staff from art gallery would be necessary for a comparative analysis of the levels of urban alienation among all neighbourhood stakeholders.

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Appendices

Descriptive statistics:

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
What is your gender?	156	1,00	2,00	1,4615	0,50012
What is your education level?	156	2,00	4,00	3,3269	0,51007
What is your age?	156	1,00	4,00	2,1218	0,93217
What is your occupations?	156	1,00	27,00	6,8462	5,90806
Are you satisfied that your workplace is in Kasımpaşa?	156	1,00	5,00	2,6218	1,18780
Would you prefer your workplace to be in a neighborhood other than Kasımpaşa?	156	1,00	5,00	3,9551	1,03077
Do you think that there are enough social venues (cafes, restaurants, etc.) in Kasımpaşa for social activities you can do with your colleagues during your lunch break or at any time of day?	156	1,00	5,00	2,3654	1,11925
Would you prefer to have meetings with your colleagues or other social circles in Kasımpaşa after the end of the working hours?	156	1,00	4,00	1,7051	0,78055
Do you use the city parks in Kasımpaşa for recreation or socialization?	156	1,00	5,00	1,6987	0,95323
If your answer is positive, which of the following parks do you prefer?	72	1,00	2,00	1,0556	0,23067
Would you use the street market in Kasımpaşa for your shopping needs?	156	1,00	5,00	2,2500	1,28828
What is your level of use of Arter Art Gallery in Kasımpaşa for social and cultural activities?	156	1,00	5,00	2,2500	1,33743
What level do you think is the ease of access to your workplace with public transportation networks?	156	1,00	5,00	2,3590	1,04695
What level do you think the physical environmental quality of Kasımpaşa is?	156	1,00	3,00	1,7179	0,62004
Do you think that the mass housing, hotel and other new projects recently built in Kasımpaşa are compatible with its surroundings (in terms of urban identity, physical environment harmony)?	156	1,00	5,00	1,9487	0,84849
Do you think that the new street project (expansion of sidewalks, arrangement of vehicle lanes) implemented by IBB on Kurtuluş Deresi Caddesi facilitates pedestrian circulation?	156	1,00	5,00	3,1218	0,95946
When you walk as a pedestrian in Kasımpaşa, do you feel safe considering the traffic density, pedestrian axes and crossings?	156	1,00	4,00	2,2308	0,93565
Would you support IBB employees to organize a joint activity with the residents / public in Kasımpaşa?	156	1,00	5,00	2,6410	1,18566
When you go out of the municipality building, do you feel safe in every contact you have with the people around you?	156	1,00	5,00	1,9936	0,95375
Do you think IBB employees have a negative or intrusive effect on the living spaces and lifestyles of the residents living in the vicinity?	156	1,00	5,00	2,2500	1,06937
Do you think the physical environment of your workplace is safe?	156	1,00	5,00	1,9487	0,93529
Are there any criminal (theft, extortion, violence, etc.) incidents you have witnessed in Kasımpaşa?	156	1,00	2,00	1,4295	0,49660
If so, do you think these events weaken your relationship with the region?	125	1,00	5,00	3,8800	1,08211
What is your level of feeling strong or powerless against external factors (social environment, physical environment) especially when you are alone in Kasımpaşa?	156	1,00	5,00	2,6218	0,88968
As a final question, do you see yourself as a real subject, resident of Kasımpaşa?	156	1,00	5,00	1,6346	0,82764
Valid N (listwise)	63				