

ARTICLE / ARAŞTIRMA

Local Shopkeepers' Perspectives on an Attempt for Municipally-led Commercial Gentrification Via Pedestrianization

Yayalaştırma Yoluyla Bir Belediye Eliyle Ticari Soylulaştırma Girişimine Yerel Dükkân Sahiplerinin Bakışı

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ABSTRACT

This paper studies the interplay between shopping street revitalization and pedestrianization in Samsun in Turkey. The revitalization via pedestrianization of İstiklal Street—known in the vernacular as Çiftlik Street—was first welcomed by the local shopkeepers who formed a merchants association to support the municipal project. Yet the physical outcome of pedestrianization-led revitalization was the concretization and homogenization of facades throughout the street. The project caused a loss of social atmosphere and an economic downturn on the street. The successors of family businesses on the street criticized the top-down implementation as the main cause of this negative outcome. To answer this criticism and to understand what was done wrong in the revitalization of Samsun's high street, this study analyzed local shopkeepers' criticisms. Fifteen in-depth local shopkeeper interviews, one transnational migrant resident interview, and walking censuses revealed significant issues. These were deindustrialization, suburbanization, and opening of shopping malls in close distances as well as the socio-demographic changes in the city centre finalized by the arrival of Middle Eastern migrants after the 2010s. This research suggests that the simultaneous opening of shopping malls nearby heightened the street's deterioration by pulling away branded shops and customers. Pedestrianization, while being only the 'tip of the iceberg', was used as a scapegoat, and reversed. This study aims to emphasize the idea that conceived spaces might not always overlap with the lived spaces by showing that urban planning practices that are good at face value might create unexpected outcomes depending on the context.

Keywords: Ecosystem of shopping streets; pedestrianization; political centralization; shopping malls; suburbanization; transnational migrants.

ÖZ

Bu makale Türkiye'de Samsun'da alışveriş caddesi yeniden canlandırılması ve yayalaştırılmasının karşılıklı etkileşimini çalışmaktadır. İstiklal Caddesi'nin—yerelde Çiftlik Caddesi olarak tanınıyor—yayalaştırma yoluyla yeniden canlandırılması, belediyenin projesini desteklemek için ticari bir dernek kuran yerel dükkân sahiplerince başta olumlu karşılanmıştır. Ancak yayalaştırma yoluyla yeniden canlandırmanın fiziksel sonucu betonlaştırma ve cadde boyunca apartman cephelerinin türdeşleştirilmesi olmuştur. Proje caddede toplumsal ortamın yitirilmesine ve bir ekonomik gerilemeye neden olmuştur. Caddedeki aile işletmelerinin mirasçıları bu olumsuz sonucun ana nedeni olarak, yukarıdan aşağıya uygulamayı eleştirmişlerdir. Bu eleştiriyi yanıtlamak ve Samsun'un sosyete caddesinin yeniden canlandırılmasında neyin yanlış yapıldığını anlamak için, bu çalışma yerel dükkân sahiplerinin eleştirilerini çözümlemiştir. On beş derinlemesine yerel dükkân sahibi görüşmesi, bir ulus aşırı göçmen yaşayan görüşmesi ve dükkân sayımları önemli sorunları açığa çıkarmıştır. Bunlar sanayisizleşme, banliyöleşme ve yakın uzaklıklarda alışveriş merkezlerinin açılması ve ek olarak, 2010'lardan sonra Ortadoğulu göçmenlerin gelişyle sonuçlanan kent merkezindeki sosyo-demografik değişimlerdir. Bu araştırma yakında alışveriş merkezlerinin eş zamanlı açılmasının marka dükkânları ve müşterileri oradan uzaklaştırarak, caddenin bozulmasını arttırdığını ileri sürmektedir. Yayalaştırma yalnızca 'buzdağının tepesi' olsa da, günah keçisi yapılmış ve tersine çevrilmiştir. Bu çalışma görünüşte iyi olan kentsel planlama uygulamalarının bağlama bağlı olarak, beklenmedik sonuçlar yaratabileceğini göstererek, planlanan mekânların gerçekte yaşanan mekânlarla her zaman örtüşmeyebileceği düşüncesini vurgulamayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Alışveriş caddelerinin ekosistemi; yayalaştırma; siyasal merkezleşme; alışveriş merkezleri; banliyöleşme; ulus ötesi göçmenler.

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1. Introduction

This paper seeks to understand the wider urban change processes behind the municipally-led commercial gentrification of a local shopping street, İstiklal Street in the central İlkadım district in Samsun. İstiklal Street is more often referred to as Çiftlik Street locally in daily life; this vernacular name of the shopping street is used throughout this paper. More precisely, the paper endeavours to explore how the pedestrianization of this commercial street has contributed to gentrification. Through this case study, it aims to answer the following question: why can widely-approved urban policies lead to contradictory or unexpected outcomes? This question will be explored from a local and sociological perspective. This paper presents a context-specific case study; the methodology is thus based on observation and an analysis of long-term shopkeepers' narratives.

The top-down revitalization project of Çiftlik Street to the dissatisfaction of local shopkeepers was related to wider processes: deindustrialization, suburbanization along with financialization of housing, inner-city urban decay, centralization of urban policies and urban rent, 'mallification' (or opening of shopping malls nearby). These urban processes intertwine with the much disputed urban mobility changes that concerned local walking mobility and auto-mobility under the pedestrianization scheme, and international migrants' mobility as a result of the Syrian and Iraqi refugees' settlement in central Samsun in the last years. All of these were happening in the context of a recent economic backlash.

The revitalisation of Çiftlik Street, unwelcomed by its shopkeepers, also highlighted the urban dilemma of planned (conceived) versus lived spaces, borrowing Lefebvre's terminology. The conceived space is an architectural "representation of (...) space, one which is bound to graphic elements - to sheets of paper, plans, elevations, sections, perspective views of façades, modules, and so on" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 361). On the other hand, the lived space is the subjective, concrete space of everyday activities of users, their private realm in conflict with the public realm (Lefebvre, 1991). The same dilemma is defined in various fields of urban literature under different titles, such as: urban policy and architecture for people vs. for power (Flierl & Marcuse, 2009), a "disconnection between social and physical aspects" (Hulsbergen & Stouten, 2001, p. 328) of urban renewal, and the divorce of *cit * and *ville* (Sennett, 2019). This study exemplifies this dilemma by focusing on the implementation of a pedestrianization policy in the post-industrial urban context of Samsun from the local

businesses perspective. The paper considers Çiftlik Street's top-down pedestrianization as an example of 'conceived space', whereas reactions of the local businesses are considered to reflect the 'lived space'.

The paper first outlines the theories of commercial gentrification and mobility in the post-industrial era. Next, it provides some contextual information regarding the city of Samsun, before analysing local shopkeeper interviews. Finally, it concludes with a debate on the problematic of Çiftlik Street's pedestrianization and its eventual reversal according to the conceptual pillars of mobility, gentrification and centralization of power.

2. Commercial Gentrification and Mobility in the Post-industrial City

Urban scholars approached the post-industrial urban change under the rubrics of: gentrification, urban renewal, urban rehabilitation, restoration-renovation, urban regeneration, neoliberal urban restructuring, and mega-projects. The major shifts towards the post-industrial city were analyzed in a plethora of studies (see for instance Harvey, 1997; Shaw, 2001; Gospodini, 2006). Lees and Phillips (2018) and Krase and DeSena (2020) studied extensively the neoliberalization of the city after the 1980s and the following return of people and capital to the urban centre that is conceptualized as gentrification in their edited volumes¹. Recent works discussing the fundamental urban processes of the past 50-years also develop a critique of classical urban dichotomies, such as urban-suburban (Tzaninis & Boterman, 2018), formal-informal and Global North and Global South (Yetiřkul & Demirel, 2018; Gonzalez, 2019, p. 2–3).

Part of this gentrification research focused on the more specific changes in the contemporary city's commercial spaces, including shopping streets, marketplaces and malls². Retail or commercial gentrification studies explored the impacts of socio-economic and spatial shifts, such as abandonment, gentrification, standardization, touristification (Gravari-Barbas & Jacquot, 2019), foodification (Bourlessas, Cenere & Vanolo, 2021), gourmetisation (Salinas Arreortua & Cordero G mez del Campo, 2018), 'mallification' as an increase in the number of malls (Hubbard, 2017), and ethnicization (Hackworth & Rekers, 2005) on the existing aura of cities' commercial areas. Likewise, they tried to explore the relationship between consumption and gentrification (e.g. İlkuçan & Sandıkçı, 2005; Shaker & Rath, 2019). Urban researchers also defined the social conflicts that resulted from the restructuring of commercial spaces: tra-

¹ Gentrification has also become a visible theme in contemporary fictitious work, including novels (Rinke, 2019; Evaristo, 2020) and cinema (Hytner et al., 2015; Byers and Waite, 2019; Suleiman et al., 2019). This is enough evidence of how this urban change process has become so widespread and a matter of common knowledge.

² G ndođdu (2020) analyzed the political, demographic, economic and cultural developments that enabled the proliferation of shopping malls in Turkey after the 2000s.

ditional markets, becoming “contested spaces” (Gonzalez, 2018, p. 1); local shopping streets, turning into “forces of resistance against (...) standardization” (Zukin, Kasinitz & Chen, 2016, p. 26); retailers, developing reactive resilience strategies (Erkip, Kızılgün & Muğan Akıncı, 2014) or giving a *battle for the high street* (Hubbard, 2017).

A second matter of concern for this study is mobility; mobility is a multi-dimensional concept, encompassing practices, spaces, subjects (Cresswell & Merriman, 2011). Thinking about mobility implies exploring the role played by modes of transport, above and beyond the simple pedestrians’ or vehicles’ mobility in urban spaces. In recent years, urban mobility research has emphasized the urgency of developing sustainable modes of transport mobilities (Adey, 2017, p. 211–232), and flagged issues of transport equity (Zhao et al., 2020). This study touches upon issues of personal mobility, understood as pedestrian walkability (Hutabarat Lo, 2009) and also to some extent, immigrant mobility as part of a global issue of justice (Sheller, 2018), because of the high concentration of Syrian and Iraqi immigrants as residents and ethnic business owners at the particular study area of central Samsun.

Studies that connect mobility and commercial gentrification directly together are rather rare (see for instance Lagadic, 2019). Other exceptions include studies that interpreted gentrification-induced displacement as (forced) mobility (Mermet, 2017), and works that link gentrification and migration issues (Hatziprokopiou & Frangopoulos, 2016; DeVerteuil, 2018; Sakızlıoğlu & Lees, 2019). Past studies similar to this paper’s scope of pedestrianization and commercial gentrification had a different outcome. In a study on Kadıköy’s pedestrianization in İstanbul, Özdemir & Selçuk (2017) found that the increased shop rents as a result of pedestrianization caused the replacement of small, old businesses with local and international chain stores, whereas the opposite happened in Çiftlik’s pedestrianization in Samsun. Hence, this study seeks to examine a failed attempt of municipally-led gentrification through a double lens of shopping street revitalization and mobility, as current urban changes are highly influenced by changes in urban mobility regimes. For this purpose, it looks at how the two processes interact in the context of a secondary Turkish city instead of an over-studied city, such as İstanbul, as provincial cities have quite different socio-economic structures than large metropolises.

3. The Context: Samsun, Turkey

Samsun is a Northern Turkey port city of approximately 1.3 million inhabitants. Located in the central Black Sea region, it functions as a regional hub for the entire Black Sea region. Samsun is historically known as the starting point of the Turkish Independence War, because Mustafa Kemal Atatürk arrived first to Samsun by ferry on 19 May 1919 to organize the Anatolian resistance. The city’s economy used to rest on agriculture until the privatization of the tobacco industry in the 2000s. With the privatization of tobacco, TEKEL tobacco factories and buildings in the heart of the city were closed down and left unattended until they deteriorated. Then, they were either renovated into a shopping mall or demolished to build a new courthouse (Gökdemir, 2018). These events marked the shift of the city to a post-industrial economy with a renewed emphasis on trade and services.

As a result of these major economic changes, Samsun lost most of its economic competitiveness, and employment opportunities became scarce. Agricultural and industrial jobs were replaced by highly-skilled service jobs, unskilled service labour and public service. Samsun also displays an important young student population, associated with the two public universities located on the western and eastern hills of the city. In addition, the city sets itself apart by the importance of the health sector: it hosts a faculty of medicine as well as many other public and private hospitals. Based on my personal observations as a routine patient at the Ondokuz Mayıs University hospital, patients were coming to Samsun daily from neighbouring cities, such as Ordu.

Since deindustrialization, Samsun’s economy has evolved to “brick economy”. This concept, coined by David Harvey, is used to define national economies that prioritize the construction sector. New city areas, such as Atakum (Samsun’s recently developed suburb) and Duruşehir (a newly developed area in İlkadım as Samsun’s central district) developed rapidly in a short period of time starting from the 2000s until 2018, when the economic crisis put a halt to the construction sector. At the time, the newspapers extensively discussed the construction sector downturn which had resulted in a lack of housing demand³, a debt crisis for both developers and home buyers (Gündoğdu, 2019), and the increasing unemployment of construction workers⁴. Before the downturn, the construction boom had also entailed environmental hazards: forests and quarries were over-exploited for wood and stone, and the sea and the air had been polluted⁵. Noise pollution had also been noted.

³ Konut satışları yüzde 18 geriledi [Housing sales dropped by 18 percent]. (2019, May 16). Birgün. Retrieved from <https://www.birgun.net/haber/konut-satislari-yuzde-18-geriledi-256077>.

⁴ İnşaatta balon sönyüyor: 2 milyon insan işsizlik tehdidi altında [The bubble in construction is bursting: 2 million people are under unemployment threat]. (2019, February 19). Birgün. Retrieved from <https://www.birgun.net/haber/insaatta-balon-sonuyor-2-milyon-insan-issizlik-tehdidi-altinda-247494>.

⁵ Samsun Büyükşehir Belediyesi’ne uyarı: Görevinizi yapın bu halk sağlığı sorununu derhal ortadan kaldırın [Warning to Samsun Metropolitan Municipality: Do your job (and) resolve this issue of public health immediately]. (2019 May 28). Birgün. Retrieved from <https://www.birgun.net/haber/samsun-buyuksehir-belediyesi-ne-uyari-gorevini-yapin-bu-halk-sagligi-sorununu-derhal-ortadan-kaldirin-257276>.

Observation and informal communication with Samsun's real estate agents during personal apartment searches allowed me to learn more about this construction boom period. The new buildings that were constructed in Samsun before the bust had a high share of micro housing that targeted young, single professionals as well as students; this specific housing offer was concentrated on western edge of the city, where the older public university is located. A demand for purchasing micro flats was also noted in Atakum, where they were mostly bought for investment purposes. For example, an individual investor buys a micro (1+1) flat first by obtaining housing loans. Then, she/he rents this flat to a student or public officer. Next, she/he buys a second micro flat again with loans, which she/he then pays back through the rents that she/he acquired from the first investment. In this way, one person gradually owns two or more micro flats to rent out.

There were also independent apartments or gated communities above the tramway in Atakum and along a river in Duruşehir for both Turkish and wealthy, migrant families with children. Finally, urban renewal projects were implemented by the Housing Development Administration of the Republic of Turkey (TOKİ) towards the urban periphery far from the sea. It is very likely that the light railway system facilitated Samsun's geographical spread by creating a rent potential for the newly developing parts of the city, such as Atakum. The tramway started to operate in 2010, and next, it was extended further to the east in 2016 and to the Western side of the city and the University in 2019. This led to changes in the population of Samsun's central districts, as seen in Figure 1.

With respect to the changing demographics of the city, it is worth noting that Samsun ranks among the first ten cities that host the highest number of foreign immigrants in Turkey (Directorate General of Migration Management, 2020a). Approximately 1.5 percent of the total population of foreigners with residence permits in Turkey lives in Samsun as of 25 March 2020. Moreover, 6686 Syrian refugees under temporary protection lived in Samsun as of 26 March 2020 (Directorate General of Migration Management, 2020b). All in all, a total population of 23.625 foreign immigrants reside in Samsun, that is, about 2 percent of the city's total population of 1.348.542 in 2019 (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2019).

4. The study Methodology

This research used shop-counting and in-depth interviews with shopkeepers (Table 1) to explore the link between pedestrianization and commercial gentrification. Fieldwork took place from February 2019 to January 2020. This research focuses on the shopkeeper's outlook on the change they witnessed on their street. It thus sets itself apart from Avlar and Yazıcı's (2020) work that examined the same case from a physical perspective, through a survey of street use-

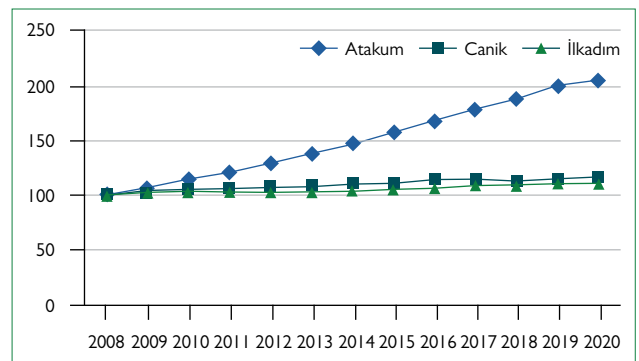


Figure 1. Samsun's central districts' populations (2008=100) (Source: Turkish Statistical Institute, Address-based Population Registration System Results).

ers. I decided to focus on shopkeepers as these people can be expected to provide the most detailed and accurate longitudinal information on the shopping street's changes over time. In the present study, Çiftlik's established shopkeepers were accessed using snowball sampling starting from local insider references.

The paper provides the background of the reversal of the pedestrianization of Samsun's primary local shopping street. It emphasizes that seemingly unobjectionable urban deeds such as shopping street revitalization and pedestrianization (as personal mobility) might prove troublesome. These urban practices might even fail to please the most affected parties, depending on their implementation and on local circumstances. Before examining this problem and the factors underneath, the story of Çiftlik Street's formation and fruition is shared in the next section according to shopkeepers' accounts.

5. The Development Story of Çiftlik Street

The current Çiftlik Street in central Samsun is a three-metre wide shopping street of approximately 700 metres; walking from one end to the other takes about nine minutes (Fig. 2). The street is located approximately 800 metres inland from the Black Sea and runs through five neighbourhoods. Five- or six-floor attached apartments with homogeneous facades are lined up on the street in blocks that are cut by seaward side streets. Almost all apartments on Çiftlik Street have shops of differing sizes below. After a pedestrianization project was initiated there in 2014, the street was reopened to vehicle traffic in the early days of 2020.

5.1. A More Elite and Social Street in the Past

Among the shopkeepers, there was a common view that Çiftlik Street used to be more "elite", when it first developed and prospered in the last few decades of the twentieth century. Samsun's inhabitants, who resided at the time mostly in the neighbourhoods of the central İlkadım district, went there for shopping and socializing, instead of just

Table I. Interviewee profiles of the Çiftlik study

Code	Age (as of '19)	Sex	Level of education	Employment condition	Occupation	Ownership status of work premises	Place of birth	Place of resid.	Interview date
G1	65	M	College	Retired	Professional (teaching)	Invalid	Samsun	İlkadım	20/02/19
G2	44	M	University	Full-time	Manager (retail)	Owner	Ordu	Atakum	27/02/19
G3	42	M	Graduate school	Full-time	Professional (health)	Owner	Samsun	İlkadım	20/03/19
G4*	29	M	University	Part-time	Public officer - Interpreter	Renter (for housing)	Mosul	İlkadım	08/05/19
G5	63	M	College	Full-time	Artisan (food processing)	Renter	Samsun	İlkadım	26/06/19
G6	56	M	High school	Full-time	Retail trade	Owner	Samsun	İlkadım	26/06/19
G7	41	W	University	Full-time	Semi-professional (health)	Renter	Ordu	Atakum	30/06/19
G8	28	M	University	Full-time	Professional (teaching) - retail trade	Renter	Samsun	İlkadım	03/07/19
G9	54	M	High school	Full-time	Artisan (food processing)	Owner	Rize	Atakum	08/07/19
G10	50+	F	?	Full-time	Administrator (lawmakers and high level managers)	Invalid	Trabzon	İlkadım	10/07/19
G11	47	M	High school	Flexitime	Manager (retail)	Renter	Samsun	Atakum	15/07/19
G12	52	M	High school	Full-time	Personal services	Owner	Samsun	Atakum	19/07/19
G13	56	M	High school	Full-time	Store, shop, etc. sales personnel	Company owned	Samsun	İlkadım	29/08/19
G14	52	M	High school	Full-time	Retail trade (food processing)	Renter	Rize	İlkadım	29/08/19
G15	50	M	University	Full-time	Personal services	Renter	Samsun	?	10/09/19
G16	60	M	University	Full-time	Manager (retail)	Renter	Samsun	Atakum	17/09/19

*G4 is the only interviewee who was not a shopkeeper, but a foreign migrant resident in a Çiftlik apartment.

spending time. When the street used to be open to car traffic, people from neighbouring towns, including the agrarian bourgeoisie, went there for shopping.

Some shopkeepers even said that people dressed up to appear on the street. A local market owner (G6) claimed that “The street in the past was after all a very decent, very beautiful place, a very tidy area in general...,” and he added, “Surely, when you said Çiftlik Street, (it was) known everywhere, and everybody, being curious, definitely wanted to... yes, definitely wanted to visit here, when they came.” A middle-aged local dentist (G3), who had his clinic on the first floor of an office building on Çiftlik, also remembered the old street as a better place: “There weren't so many (street fights) in the past, I mean, I know. Çiftlik was a place where families would visit, that was the case in my childhood, I know very well. We used to come up here to promenade with our mother and father, you see. That was a pleasure, you know.” I recall hearing very similar comments from the shopkeepers of İstiklal Street of Taksim, Beyoğlu in İstanbul. This resemblance of comments points to a similar urban decay that affected central shopping streets in Turkish cities.

One may wonder, however, if this common longing for Çiftlik's ‘good old days’ may be false nostalgia similar to

what Hentschel and Blokland (2016) mentioned for two transforming shopping streets in Berlin. In their Berlin study, they identified a “(...) racist discourse that glorifies the ‘good old days’ of German mom-and-pop stores, that ignores that things have changed, and misses the chance to make the most of current conditions in Karl-Marx-Straße, but may be a blessing disguised as ‘failure’ in Müllerstraße,” (Hentschel & Blokland, 2016, p. 122). Çiftlik's shopkeepers could be representing the past idyllically for having difficulty in adapting change.

Yet some long-term shopkeepers of family businesses in Çiftlik stated that they continued to benefit from the support of regular customers, who have always bought high quality goods from them even at a premium price. For example, a third-generation patisserie owner (G14) explained his insistence on making and selling good cakes with high quality ingredients for higher than the market price as follows: “It's difficult to keep the original, see, but they (customers) prefer it that way, as I said. But I resist, you see, otherwise I (will) lose. (...) there are plenty of them [cheap patisserie and cafés] (...) I need to set myself apart.” Therefore, the quality is sustained reciprocally by the collective efforts of both customers and providers of goods and services on Çiftlik Street.



Figure 2. Çiftlik Street on the map (Source: İlkadım Belediyesi city guide).

A record and second-hand book seller (G11), whose shop was located on a side street under Çiftlik before he closed recently due to the COVID-19 pandemic, recalled the street of his youth as a place for socializing with friends. He stated: “We spent our time here, you see. We toured around this street from morning to evening. (...) Maybe we went to the sea on the weekends, but if not, we would be here again.” A similar perception and use of the street seem to continue for young men today (Fig. 3). His description of the old Çiftlik Street as a meeting and socialization point counters local shopkeepers’ argument that the pedestrianization attracted non-consumers to the street. Hubbard (2017, p. 50) describes these populations who spend time in the shopping streets and malls without consuming anything as “non-consumers”. Yet this shopkeeper’s comment suggests that ‘undesirable’ bystanders might have already been at Çiftlik Street before pedestrianization, but they were not as visible because a smaller population lived under better living conditions at the time. One may argue that they became more numerous and more visible with the worsening economy and the increase in unemployment. Moreover, they are easily identified due to heightened surveillance in consumption spaces nowadays.

Regarding Samsun’s past productivity and employability, the baker (G9) also recalled that “State Hydraulic Works was there. Everyone went (to work) and returned on foot. TEKEL factory used to operate. For example, whoever quit- ted TEKEL or State Hydraulic Works (in the evening) toured the street once or twice, met someone, their friends. (...) It (Çiftlik) was a nice place to socialize.” His emphasis of Çiftlik, being a social space, even if it was not pedestrianized,



Figure 3. Today’s non-consumers, walking on Çiftlik on a rainy day (Photo by author).

is akin to Gonzalez’s (2018) description of traditional retail markets as social spaces for meaningful encounters between traders and customers. The baker (G9) underlined Çiftlik

Street's quality as a meeting point again when he told me the story of a Samsun-born university professor who returned back to Samsun after years of working in a different city. He recognized this bakery immediately, as it had been on the street since 1966–67. Even though his establishment was well located on the street, the baker believes that it somehow became inaccessible for visitors from outside, due to wrong traffic planning and pedestrianization.

5.2. The Simultaneous Presence of Traditional Versus Modern City in Samsun

The name *Çiftlik* actually referred to a farm that had existed in that part of the city before the area became more urbanized, starting from the 1970s. Up until the 1970s, *Çiftlik* had developed with the construction of two-storey houses by minorities, the majority of them being of Greek origin (Oktay, 2019, p. 31–32). In the 1970s, a “contractor craze”—to use a second-generation hairdresser’s (G12) words—got hold of the street, and all houses were replaced with apartment buildings that dominate the streetscape today. It was also in the 1970s that the street acquired its ‘shopping street’ character, as the majority of long-term shopkeepers interviewed settled at the time. Most of them were originally either from Samsun’s peripheral districts, such as Bafra and *Çarşamba*, or from other cities of the region, such as Ordu and Rize.

Major Turkish cities, including İstanbul, Ankara, and Samsun developed in such a way that they had both a traditional and a modern city centre (Koçak Turhanoglu, 2013, p. 204). In İstanbul, Eminönü-Sultanahmet is the old city centre, and Taksim-Beyoğlu represents the modern Republic. In Ankara, the same duality could be observed with Ulus (traditional) and Kızılay (modern) until very recently. As these cities expanded and turned into metropolises, they also became multi-polar with new nodes on new development axes. Yet during the initial phases of Samsun’s growth in the 1970s, there were still only Mecidiye Street as the traditional bazaar and *Çiftlik* as the modern and trendy shopping street. The local market owner remarked about the harmonious co-existence of these two shopping streets in Samsun by saying:

New buildings, constructed here; new constructions, new shops; shops being more decent, (and) inadequacy of Mecidiye directed people to *Çiftlik* Street. (...) That place and *Çiftlik* Street were at the service of Samsun’s people steadily and they served Samsun well, only until the arrival of these shopping malls, you see... (G6, 26 June 2019).

An optician (G7), who acknowledged *Çiftlik* as the *high street* of Samsun, chose to search for a location on *Çiftlik* for her business in the mid-2000s, despite higher store rents. She reckoned that her shop would appeal to more people on *Çiftlik* Street. This suggests that *Çiftlik* Street had come to



Figure 4. Shop closures: Shoes for 20-30 Turkish Liras! (Photo by author).

the fore in comparison to the older streets, such as Mecidiye Street or Gazi Street. Nowadays, these other streets function more like rural marketplaces, open only until 5:00 pm as stated by a chef and restaurant owner (G15). Yet regarding Mecidiye, he argued that “Even though it is closed to traffic, not a single vagabond visits that street.” For him, this traditional shopping street continues to be lively with customers who are willing and able to spend. The patisserie owner (G14) made a similar assumption about people visiting Mecidiye solely for shopping and said: “Have you ever seen anybody walking her dog in Mecidiye? Anybody, riding a bicycle? All the people who go there (only) have shopping in mind. That entire crowd has money in their pockets.”

Shop vacancy and turnover rates also suggest that Samsun’s traditional shopping streets fare better than *Çiftlik*. *Çiftlik* had nine vacant and three closing shops (Fig. 4) on 14 April 2019. Twelve shops were for rent; one shop was for sale; three shops were closing; two buildings were for rent, and three plots were abandoned as of 17 January 2020.

5.3. A Key Money to Take Over a *Çiftlik* Shop in the Past

When *Çiftlik* Street became very popular in and outside Samsun in the 1980–90s, entrepreneurs started to have trouble finding a shop to lease. During this peak time period, entre-

preneurs had to pay 'key money' to existing shopkeepers to empty out their shops, in addition to the rent they had to pay the shop owner. This past situation resembled the French system, where one pays both rent and the sum for a lease right to enter a shop (Mermet, 2017, p. 1172). A jewellery dealer (G13), who moved from Mecidiye to Çiftlik ten years ago, puts the situation in this way: "you couldn't find a shop for rent (...) (even) with key money. (...) Now sixteen, seventeen shops are vacant here. (...) See that restaurant across me (...) he closed down after three weeks. (...) Most shopkeepers are in debt, they are cross with the shop owners." He underlines that shop vacancies also mean a loss of tax income for the state. To him, it is a collective economic loss.

Nevertheless, Çiftlik's high shop turnover did not affect asset values. Buying a retail asset there is still very expensive and difficult. Current shop owners are reluctant to sell their assets, regardless of economic downturns and even if that implies waiting to rent vacant premises. For example, a large shop on rent has not been taken for about five years, because the owner is unwilling to discount her rental price; she does not sell either. Although most newcomers close down shortly after they open their shops, long-term shopkeepers can be more resilient because they own their shop, as found in other studies (Erkip, Kızılgün & Muğan Akıncı, 2014). The old businesses also have the advantage of relying on their regular customers' continuous demand, as well as, for renters, long-term relationships with shop owners allowing for negotiations.

While shop owners tend to retain their assets, many flats on the upper floors of these Çiftlik shops are on sale. The local market owner (G6), who resides on Çiftlik himself, noticed this remarkable increase in such apartment sales: "in general, people are already trying to sell their flats here. (...) They are trying to leave here permanently." For him, leaving the street as a shopkeeper or resident means impacting the quality of the street negatively. He promoted "staying put" and resilience to prevent the area's further deterioration, just as Jacobs once suggested for major American cities. Jacobs (1961, p. 271) pointed out the fast turnover of people in neighbourhoods under decay as the number one cause of those neighbourhoods' final demise.

5.4. Suburbanization of People, Capital and Public Institutions

Apartments that were constructed around Çiftlik in the 1970–80s have already become old. Based on observation during walks and interviews, these older apartments lacked car parks, and the area's narrow streets did not allow for car parking. According to interviewees, as the population of Samsun grew, the number of car owning households also increased. Car-owning households moved out to the newly developing suburbs, such as Atakum in the west and Duruşehir

in the east, where they could park their cars easily. A third-generation baker (G9) assumed that Çiftlik's former wealthy residents had moved earlier to the nearby 56'lar quarter to avoid Çiftlik's growing traffic jam and commercialization, that is, its loss of residential quality.

After the 2000s, Samsun's middle classes opted for suburbanization and segregated themselves in the city's newly-developed areas. This echoes Paton's (2009) discussion of middle-class segregation as "a purchasable commodity" (p. 439). What Paton showed in her Glasgow study was that middle-class people tend to actively search for middle class communities when deciding on their place of residence. This class-based segregation was thus much more than a simple physical reality, and also had political, symbolic and economic components. Hence, it is not uncommon to hear Samsun inhabitants say: "But the centre is all packed with Syrians now!" The spaciousness of the newer districts allowed these areas to have wider and more orderly streets between apartment blocks that were surrounded by small gardens and car parking spaces. In addition, the new apartment buildings provided more variety of flat design for different types of households, ranging from single dwellers, such as students, young professionals and single elderly households to more crowded families.

According to the interviewees, comparatively better housing and environmental conditions in the newer districts attracted not only the middle and upper-classes, but also the public institutions and private businesses previously located in İlkadım, leading to a deterioration of this area. The record and second-hand book seller (G11) made the following comment about the reasons for Samsun's unequal development: "houses (at the centre), being old, lacking elevator, having problems of heat insulation; streets, being narrow; everyone, already owning a car..." He also assumed that the tramway's development facilitated people's access to the suburbs with better air, more sunlight, and even a sea view. Çiftlik's neighbourhood representative (G10), who has been living in Çiftlik with her large family since 1979, and who was serving her third term at the time of the interview, argued that urban renewal could allow a reconstruction of Çiftlik's old apartments with car parks, and creation of neighbourhood parks. Indeed, the lack of green spaces is also considered to be an issue in the densely-built area. However, she did not have any hope for the centre's urban renewal in the near future.

The neighbourhood representative (G10) believes that the suburbanization trend that has been ongoing in Samsun for the last ten years affected public institutions as much as residents. Some shopkeepers and service providers supported the idea of, for example, removing schools from the Çiftlik area to relieve the traffic in busy hours, and to provide a better educational environment to children. On the other hand, she criticized this recent trend of public institutions

moving away from the city centre since the 2010s, because she interpreted this situation as a “ruralisation of the centre”. Institutions that have already departed included: established high schools, İlkadım Municipality, Samsun Courthouse, Samsun Police Department, and Samsun Training and Research Hospital, and water, electricity, and gas providers.

This flight from the city centre first started with the closure of the TEKEL tobacco factory in 1994. It was a significant trend, as it both contributed to the decay of the city centre and made people’s access to public services more difficult. In sum, Samsun’s centre was losing its charm, workers, and urban quality. Similar urban processes have been experienced in Western countries since the early stages of capitalism in the eighteenth century; this led Mumford (2019) to analyse capital’s escape to the suburbs and destruction for reconstruction as capitalism’s two methods to open new profit areas in the city. Like in most decaying inner-city areas, the vacuum that was created by this residential and institutional flight was filled by new members of society after the 2010s: transnational migrants. As this new migrant population settled in the neighbourhoods surrounding Çiftlik Street, new social dynamics developed.

5.5. The Change of Populations: Leaving Çiftlik to the Middle Eastern Migrants?

Syrian and Iraqi migrants settled around Çiftlik mostly in dilapidated apartments on side-streets. These apartments had been abandoned by their previous affluent Turkish residents who had, according to interviewees, left for 56’lar or Atakum. Transnational migrants’ preference to settle together for solidarity and to ease access to work opportunities and shops created almost a migrant neighbourhood in Samsun’s downtown area. In turn, this dominant migrant presence in the city centre led to a further abandonment of the area by local residents.

A certain level of social mixing was however preserved: interviewees noted that migrant families and the remaining Turkish households lived in the same buildings, even though without having much social encounters. The Çiftlik neighbourhood representative (G10) noted that Turkish residents were wary of these transnational migrants and found it hard to accept them, hence these limited social interactions. For example, her aunt refrained from sending her daughter alone to her school within walking distance. While the neighbourhood representative’s official duty is to represent the whole neighbourhood, it is worth noting the mixed nature of her discourse. Discussing her first encounter with an Iraqi woman who had begun to work in a local tailor shop, she expressed both benign feelings and discriminatory outlooks. This indicates that there is still a long way to go for a state of mutual acceptance between the Turkish and Syrian populations in Turkish cities, including Samsun.

I observed that the older, male shopkeepers usually had a more critical tone against transnational migrants than the more educated, younger, and female respondents. Nonetheless, even elderly male shopkeepers softened their criticisms by resorting to the religious cliché that the migrants were ‘God’s creatures’, too. Their general critical attitude arose from a clash of economic interests. The migrants were not buying any goods from them; this led local shopkeepers to associate them with the local, unemployed non-consumers. Together, these groups are identified as those who run counter to the shopkeeper’s economic interests. Moreover, migrants opened their own shops on Çiftlik’s side streets, and became the local merchants’ competitors. For this reason, most shopkeepers thought that the arrival of migrants did not benefit their businesses in any way.

In addition, the shopkeepers mentioned encountering more safety problems related to casual street fights on Çiftlik. These street fights were added to prostitution and drug dealing on side streets in the evenings. The baker (G9) expressed his safety concerns as follows: “When I walk around in my neighbourhood now, I walk around anxiously. (...) When I stay late, I sometimes even carry a gun, because there are (those) people whom I don’t know at all.” This expression might indicate embedded localism in the sense that the local shopkeepers used to always interact with similar people, who all came from Samsun and its vicinity. Ruggiero (2010) associated this kind of often exaggerated fear of social disorder with a lack of consumption: “social disorder (...) linked with the perception of certain groups as troublesome individuals, useless young people who fail to act as consumers,” (p. 164). The fact that some local shopkeepers decide to walk around the city centre with a gun is very concerning. This shows that shopkeepers themselves do also contribute to a deterioration of safety in the area.

Turkish businessmen are more welcoming to the wealthy Middle Eastern migrants who can afford luxurious flats in Atakum or mountain houses on the green plateaus of the Eastern Black Sea region. On the other hand, poor Syrian migrants are not welcomed because they are perceived as encroaching on public space for free, that is, without consumption from local shops. The record and second-hand book seller (G11) pointed out this double-faced behaviour against transnational migrants: “If he (an Arab) has money, he doesn’t disturb anyone. (But) the penniless; our power is probably limited to them; poor things... And they are the ones (that concentrate) at the (city) centre.” We could argue that the social class of the migrants mattered more than their nationality, ethnicity or religion in determining the locals’ attitudes towards them.

Interestingly enough, the locals’ attitude of differentiating among migrants according to social class was also adopted by a young Iraqi (G4), who arrived in 2014 after the Iraqi civil war. He initially settled in Mersin, and then followed his

elder sister's family to Samsun. Before the war, he worked as a civil servant back in Mosul, after obtaining a master's degree in agricultural engineering. Now, he works as an interpreter on a temporary basis, and assists other migrants with official procedures. The young Iraqi rented the attic of an apartment building located directly on Çiftlik Street from one of the local shopkeepers. It is worth noting that this shopkeeper was a supporter of the right wing parties, in spite of his disappointment in such a party's decision to render Çiftlik pedestrian.

This young Iraqi chooses to disassociate himself from other migrants in his neighbourhood because he found the atmosphere of Çiftlik's back streets "too mixed". He associated selectively with migrants from a similar social class; his example, considered together with the wider economic distinction made between Iraqi and Syrian migrants in terms of for example, home ownership potential suggests that transnational migrants in Samsun may not necessarily constitute a homogeneous group. The gentrification literature underlined this differentiation among migrants indeed; some transnational migrants adapt to their new environments better than the others. In the context of an Amsterdam shopping street, Sakızlıoğlu and Lees (2019) found that adapters could become part of the urban change processes such as commercial gentrification by resorting to the concepts of ethnic packaging and mixed embeddedness. As for Çiftlik, the concentration of Syrian and Iraqi migrants after the 2010s deepened the area's image of a decaying inner-city area. The resulting attempt for a municipally-led gentrification via pedestrianization could not help this situation much either. Next, the reasons for this unsuccessful attempt to revitalize Çiftlik Street and its locality are analyzed more deeply based on the shopkeeper accounts.

5.6. The Problematic of Municipally-led Commercial Gentrification Via Pedestrianization

Pedestrianization has been accepted as beneficial for the public and the environment since the early stages of capitalism. Mumford's (2019) ideas on the motor traffic and the grid plan as the two important planning mistakes of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries' commercial city provides an early example of this outlook. Pedestrianization is also an increasingly approved urban practice in post-industrial cities nowadays; this interest is mostly fuelled by environmental issues as nature is pushed to its very limits within the hegemonic political-economic order. Having noted that, I argue in this paper that normally unobjectionable urban practices, including pedestrianization might fall short of fulfilling their promises, depending on how they are applied and other local factors. This explains the situation in Çiftlik, where local shopkeepers blamed and mobilized against the municipally-led commercial gentrification via pedestrianization, mainly for its deviation from Çiftlik Street's primary commercial function. It was believed to have decreased the ratio of customers among the

street's visitors, and to have negatively impacted the street's livelihood in general. Jacobs (1961) disapproves pedestrianized streets, if they created unused 'border vacuums':

Planned pedestrian street schemes, if they throw formidable borders for moving and parked cars around inherently weak and fragmentary preserves, *can introduce more problems than they solve*. Yet this is a fashionable planning idea for downtown shopping streets and for the "town centers" of renewal areas. One of the dangers of devising city traffic schemes and arterial systems without understanding, first, how cities themselves work, is just this: The schemes, with the best intents behind them, can inject no end of border vacuums and discontinuities of use, and in places where these may do the greatest and most gratuitous harm (Jacobs, 1961, p. 269).

Local shopkeepers' disapproval of and resistance to pedestrianization were studied in earlier works (Castillo-Manzano, Lopez-Valpuesta & Asencio-Flores, 2014; Parajuli & Pojani, 2018). Castillo-Manzano et al. (2014, p. 197) studied Seville and laid out the main criticisms of the anti-pedestrianization movement there as follows: "(...) that it hampered access to the pedestrianized zones; the loss of surface-level parking space, which was to the benefit of shopping malls over traditional retail outlets (Guy, Bennison & Clarke, 2005); and, subsequently, post-pedestrianization, the problems caused by the coexistence of ordinary pedestrians, cyclists (CANP, 2011), street performers, street cafés and bars and the tram." On the other hand, Parajuli and Pojani (2018) enumerated various barriers against pedestrianization in their case studies of Brisbane and Kathmandu that ranged from the opposition of residents and motorists to institutional and political support issues. They also found that the type of shop and its corresponding clientele was most determining of local merchants' reaction to pedestrianization schemes.

The specific factors that brought about a mismatch between planned and lived spaces in the Çiftlik case were: frustrations created by the pedestrianization's top-down implementation; a loss of place identity with the homogenized streetscape and changing types of commerce after the revitalization, and the unfair competition of shopping malls that were opened in walking distance at the same time as the street was being revitalized.

5.6.1. Frustrations Against the Top-down Implementation

The most criticized aspects of Çiftlik Street's redevelopment – in practical terms, pedestrianization and a renewal of the building facades – were (i) its top-down implementation; and (ii) it rendering the street homogeneous and dull. Regarding the wider issue of centralization of urban policy and practices, Kuyucu (2018) hypothesized that "If a municipality secures the support of the center, which happens when there is congruence between the local and central governing

parties, its regeneration initiative is more likely to succeed compared to a situation where the local government clashes with the center;" (p. 1153). However, this could not explain the Çiftlik case thoroughly, because the political congruence between Samsun's local government and the central government created a disappointing outcome in Çiftlik rather than the expected revitalization. This divergence signifies that the same socio-economic and political structures underlying urban regeneration policies can bring about different outcomes, depending on the local circumstances.

The municipal revitalization project in Samsun led ultimately to Çiftlik's loss of place identity and attraction for potential visitors. The third-generation chef (G15), whose family has been managing the only remaining classical restaurant on Çiftlik since 1974 (the origins dated back earlier to 1933), felt so enraged against the top-down changes in his street after the 2010s that he expressed his frustration in strong words as follows:

That is, he (the previous mayor) came, closed this street, and left. I mean, have you ever done business on this street? Or do you know this street's chemistry? Has managing here for five years taught you this street's chemistry? We grew up on this street. (...) there have been many mayors (...) This street was closed at four; come and ask me! Ask what happened when the street was closed (to vehicle traffic) at four. What happened when it was closed at eight? It was closed for a month during the Ramadan, that (time) in the evenings, what happened? Ask me once; I'll tell you my opinion. (...) There are three to five (long-term) shopkeepers like me here, go and ask (them)... (G15, 10 September 2020).

Çiftlik's local shopkeepers claimed a "moral ownership" (Zukin, Kassinitz & Chen, 2016, p. 24–25) of their street, because their experiences there were longer than that of shortly-elected officials or migrant entrepreneurs on side streets. The third-generation patisserie owner (G14), whose family business "saddled him like destiny" in his own words, interpreted Çiftlik's pedestrianization by the former mayor as a (forced) change of the street's spirit, if not its chemistry. Mentioning spirit is reminiscent of Zukin's (2012) and Zukin, Kassinitz, and Chen's (2016) notion of the ecosystem of a shopping street. The shopping street ecosystem refers to the whole of social, economic and cultural networks, created by the various social groups that are present in a shopping street. However, the patisserie owner's notion of spirit corresponded more simply to an economic exchange function of the street. The forced change of the street atmosphere in Çiftlik echoes what Varlı Görk & Rittersberger Tiliç (2016) defined as "gentrification by force" (p. 23) in their Ankara study. To this shopkeeper (G14), this change of atmosphere, together with the economic crisis and the indoor smoking ban, affected his business negatively.

Despite the different opinions among shopkeepers on how Çiftlik Street's revitalization via pedestrianization actually unfolded, the narratives converged around the idea of distrust. There was distrust between Çiftlik's shopkeepers and the mayor, who communicated with the street businesses through a merchants association, and a resulting distrust among local shopkeepers themselves. The Association for the Protection and Beautification of Çiftlik Street was established following the same mayor's request so that he could communicate with Çiftlik's shopkeepers through a representative group. Distrust arose from a mismatch of shopkeepers' expectations from the redevelopment project, and the actual outcome of the project.

A telephone operator dealer, who also owned a café for a student clientele (G2), argued that the local government's initial promises regarding revitalization were not kept, and the street's pedestrianization was more an imposition on them than their own demand. He described the municipality's initial "street mall" project, which reminded one of the pedestrian malls in the U.S. context, by saying: "See it (the street) would have a large signboard at the entrance; it would have security guards. (...) Common campaigns would be made (...) painting exhibitions would be organized (...)". None of that happened, except for periodical breakfast meetings first among the local shopkeepers themselves, and then, with the mayor candidates before the March 2019 local elections to negotiate the local merchants' votes for reopening the vehicle traffic on their street. The local shopkeepers' mobilization efforts to become part of the revitalization process was limited to these periodical meetings and pro-vehicle traffic posters that they hung on Çiftlik's walls and shop windows after a while.

Çiftlik's neighbourhood representative (G10) touched upon the changing power geometry between the local and national governments when she mentioned about her narrowed scope of authority in her work. Although the diminishing authority of neighbourhood representatives is not unique to Samsun, it adds to the picture of power centralization in urban management. She remembered fondly that her neighbourhood's inhabitants queued in front of her office for paperwork, such as obtaining residency documents, birth certificates, declaring address changes or a loss of identity card. In this way, she had the opportunity to interact with her area's people and get to know about them. Since then, this paperwork has been centralized and digitalized through a system called *e-state*; as a consequence, people do not feel the need to visit her office any more, except when they occasionally ask her for directions. Thus, it was not only major urban policy and practices that have been centralized; public services at the neighbourhood level were also made redundant through the wider processes of digitalization and centralization.

5.6.2. *A Loss of Place Identity: The Homogenized Streetscape and Changing Types of Commerce*

Another point regarding the revitalization process that caused a lot of fury among the local shopkeepers was the standardization of facades through the municipally-led renovation of the apartment buildings on the street. Ironically, if the right-wing tradesmen associated the resulting grey facades to the Soviet socialist housing, others with leftist tendencies likened them to Nazi Germany. However, they converged in their dislike of these homogeneous facades, which rendered distinguishing one building from another almost impossible.

The record and second-hand book seller (G11) likened it to all people wearing the same clothes. For him, homogeneous 'clothing' for buildings killed their architectural identities, and left Çiftlik Street without character. It removed all possible connections to the street's past, and made it look just like any other. This interviewee cared actually more for Samsun's and Çiftlik's loss of identity and memory than Çiftlik's pedestrianization per se; this is interesting given that his business of selling second-hand books and records was mostly conducted online, and did not depend so much on being in a particular locale. Hence, he used his shop mostly as a meeting point with his friends and people, before he had to close it down during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The third-generation baker (G9) reinforced this homogenization critique by saying that his father who had Alzheimer could no longer find his way back home. The baker admitted that the revitalized Çiftlik Street looked neat at first glance; however, it lacked life. He made an analogy with funerals in foreign movies, where the well-dressed and made-up deceased was pictured in an expensive velvet coffin: "She can be ornamented, pretty, (but she has) no life, she's dead (...); the ones inside (the street) are dead!" He told this to the former mayor on one occasion, which greatly offended him.

Urban literature cautioned that over-planned, vast urban spaces were destined to become "dead spaces" (Cybriwsky, 1999, p. 230) that remained largely unused in daily life. These dead spaces are usually made of concrete in Turkey. Pedestrianization itself translates mainly as creating fully concrete urban spaces, whether it is a shopping street like Çiftlik or a public square like Taksim. The young bookseller (G8) commented that Çiftlik's renewed grey guise also felt devoid of life because it lacked trees. The past street's trees were replaced with potted plants (simulacra) after Çiftlik's redevelopment.

Çiftlik's loss of identity could be correlated further with some shopkeepers' claim of decreased shop variety. At a glance, the street seems to have many "döner" (a Turkish fast food) and telephone accessories shops. According to a second baker (G5), who took over a bakery from the 1950s approximately,

thirty years ago after he retired from his accounting job, fast food and drink shops dominate over today's Çiftlik Street. A walking census conducted before the reopening of the street's vehicle traffic (Fig. 5) in January 2020 confirmed that the highest number of shops pertained to the food-beverage-tobacco and information-communication equipment categories (27 each). For the bookseller (G8), this domination of (fast) food and telephone-accessory shops on the street gave a hint about the street customers' tastes and preferences.

Despite the dominance of certain businesses, I actually observed during my walking census that Çiftlik actually had various shops on the ground level that provided a wide range of goods and services, ranging from shoe sellers, apparel, accessory (including jewellery) shops and shops, selling food & beverages to opticians, pharmacies, booksellers (especially on the side streets or in passages), but also services, such as banks, an exchange office, beauticians, real estate offices, police, and so on.

All of this variety did not prevent the local market owner (G6) from suggesting that the municipality should limit business licenses for over-saturated sectors, such as the döner shops. This suggestion is compatible with Jacobs' argument that "The duplication of the most profitable use is undermining the base of its own attraction, as disproportionate duplication and exaggeration of some single use always does in cities" (1961, p. 245).

5.6.3. *The Opening of Shopping Malls Nearby*

For other shopkeepers, Çiftlik's problem was more a lack of branded shops than a lack of shop variety, as all branded shops moved away with the opening of the two shopping malls nearby. In their opinion, the departure of brands created a problem, because they pulled away their customers as well. This departure caused a decrease in the vitality and commercial quality of the street. People who remained in Çiftlik were mostly budget-conscious customers and they shopped from smaller and cheaper shops. Other public space users were people who strolled through the street without buying anything. This people's set was not enough for shopkeepers to maintain economic soundness, as they were used to customers with a higher purchasing power.

Therefore, one could even argue that the shopping malls affected Çiftlik as much as or more than its pedestrianization. This was noted by a sports equipment dealer (G16). G16 was a real entrepreneur; in addition to running his shop, he created and ran a mini movie theatre in Samsun. He later had to give up on that activity, located on the 1st basement of an office building on Çiftlik and on the major Lise Road that cuts Çiftlik Street. Indeed, the new malls contained comfortable movie theatre chains, which he thought he could not com-



Figure 5. Preparations for reopening the traffic on Çiftlik Street (Photo by author).

pete with. He used to manage the last branded sports shop on Çiftlik, before he closed down in autumn 2020. He told me previously in the interview that his “heart was not (yet) ready to close” his street store on Çiftlik, because this shop felt like his first child. He opened his second and third stores in Samsun’s new malls. It would be interesting to ask him now what he thought about moving away from Çiftlik Street, after the COVID-19 crisis caused shopping malls to dwindle.

Çiftlik Street, which lost many of its attractions through the development of these commercial alternatives, was not ‘creative’ enough anymore to be walkable by people (Bereitschaft, 2019). Despite the more optimistic studies on the effects of changing commercial spaces on traditional retailers in other Turkish cities, such as Ankara (Erkip, Kızılgün & Muğan Akıncı, 2014; Özüdü, Varol & Yalçiner Ercoşkun, 2014), shopping malls took away from Çiftlik Street its branded shops, customers who went after their brands, and even its creative industry, including movie theatres and street level bookstores.

5.7. The Reversal of Plans

While I was doing a walking census on 17 January 2020, the municipality workers were pouring cement into the middle of the street where they excavated to prepare the Çiftlik Street again for heavy vehicle traffic. On the same day, the optician (G7) seemed to be pleased with this reopening of the street

to vehicle traffic, and she expected me to share her feelings regarding this quick back step from pedestrianization. Vehicle traffic on Çiftlik resumed in late January; the baker (G9) noted that young (idle) men stopped gathering together on the street corners after the return of vehicular traffic, which he felt was a success.

After the reversal of pedestrianization, Çiftlik Street became overcrowded with people who walked in front of the shops on the narrow pavements on both sides of the street. The pedestrian walkways were demarcated from the car traffic in the middle of the street not through a height difference, but using benches and concrete rectangular pots, full of soil, and yet without any plants or flowers. The intensity of people and vehicles on the street tempted me to search for an alternative route on the side streets similar to ‘the road not taken’ in Robert Frost’s famous poem. Not to mention the immediate covering of the street with exhaust smoke...

My plans to visit the street again to look at the effects of the renewed situation were halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic that kept everyone confined to their neighbourhoods and homes. At the time, street businesses were either fully closed or had slowed down by adjusting their opening hours. According to some media reports, pedestrians were finding it hard to keep “social distance” on Çiftlik Street (Samsun Kent Haber, 2020; Öcal and Kara, 2021).

6. Conclusion

All of these considerations show that neither the municipal plan of Çiftlik's revitalization via pedestrianization, nor the street's current situation with the renewed car traffic were the best solutions for Samsun's main shopping street in turbulence. This is because the real problem was not pedestrianization per se, but how it was applied and under what conditions. The change, as it was applied, harmed the businesses of Çiftlik's shopkeepers, and thus, remained highly unsupported. This failed attempt should be considered together with the other major changes in Samsun that were mentioned in this study.

What could be the alternative? The pedestrianization practice could have been supported with other planning practices, such as covering the street with a glass roof as in the nineteenth-century *passages* (Mumford, 2019, p. 507–508) or Japan's traditional shopping streets (*shōtengai*) to mediate the effects of unfavourable weather conditions that study respondents mentioned. The establishment of shopping malls nearby and the new business entries to the street could have been controlled via planning mechanisms to avoid unfair competition and over-duplication. Pedestrianizing a wider area in Samsun's centre in a more circular fashion might have worked better than its linear application on a singled-out street.

Yet the Samsun case also reveals that the apparent causes of an urban policy failure, here pedestrianization, might point to deeper issues. Top-down urban planning created a homogenized and dull streetscape to advance further commercialization of the city, as it usually happens in commercial gentrification efforts (Zukin, Kasinitz & Chen, 2016). In this regard, Mumford's (2019) insights for the early nineteenth century city prove timeless. Mumford claimed that since social life forms had begun to be built by the totally unequipped and illiterate people, they also became totally incomprehensible to the cleverest of the society. The same can be said of today's cities' social life forms, where overcentralization of power downgrades the quality of the (re)production of urban space.

This study provides an example of how wrongly planned and implemented urban projects directly influence local citizens. Therefore, it warns against generic urban policies—conceived spaces—that contradict local users' expectations with respect to their place of affiliation—lived spaces. This recognition can enable urban scholars to shift the debate on urban regeneration from how and by whom, to: what is being done, what is the actual nature of regeneration? The study indicated the potential problem areas in creating pedestrianized, but at the same time, lively and economically sustainable shopping streets that is a common concern for many cities around the world from Paris to Montréal. Therefore, it also has implications for the development dynamics of pedestrian-friendly shopping streets as opposed to shopping malls that foster

auto-mobility. Finally, it provides insights for transnational migration's relation with urban decay and the resulting commercial gentrification efforts.

Overall, this paper seeks to inspire new studies on the interplay of the closely related gentrification and mobility that take into account other practices and actors of these contemporary urban changes.

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