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Changing the identity of a place by changing street names: The process of renaming the streets of Üsküdar between 1927-1934

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Abstract
Street names are part of our everyday lives. People constantly encounter street signs during their daily practices. Their visible position in the urban landscape makes street names suitable to use as visual/linguistic signifiers of cultures, histories, values, and ideologies. Renaming streets is one of the first actions of the new regimes to create their ideological hegemony in the territories they rule. It is essential to resolve the conflicts between urban memory and the sovereign's history to legitimize their geographical claims by changing anything that does not match with their mental constructs in the urban landscape. This article provides a critical discourse analysis of the relationship between space, place, identity, urban memory, and street names by examining the alteration of street names in Üsküdar, a district of Istanbul, between 1927 and 1934. Even though Üsküdar was one of the regions where the minorities lived exceedingly in the Ottoman period, in the current Üsküdar identity, there are only a few traces left of its former inhabitants. Hence, in terms of redefining identity, Üsküdar can be considered a prominent example compared to the other regions the minorities lived in Istanbul. The primary source for this inquiry is Osman Nuri Ergin's *İstanbul Şehri Rehberi (Istanbul City Guide)*, which was published in 1934. Archival documents and newspaper articles about street name changes are also used in this research. The relationship between socio-political transformation in Üsküdar and changes in urban toponymy is investigated in this study.

Keywords
Place, Urban history, Urban memory, Üsküdar, Toponymy.

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1. Introduction

Space is always under construction; it is open, multiple, relational, unfinished, and always becoming (Massey, 2005). Street names are part of space; just like space, they are not fixed, always in the process of being made. They are constituted with space. In the natural process, street names appear as reflections of local people's spatial knowledge, which they gained with everyday practice. City planners usually assign the names that are already in the use of local people to describe the street. Local people determine these names based on their experience with the place. As Massey (1995) mentions in *Places and Their Past*, we think of places mainly in spatial terms when we are asked about them. There, in front of that, across that, near this. These are the words we use to address the location of a place, and "that" and "this" are the reference words used in the street naming process. In that sense, street names are valuable data sources where characteristic information about the city can be read.

In *Arcades*, Walter Benjamin (1999) says that street names turn the city into a linguistic cosmos. However, street names are not only linguistic elements of a city but also a part of spatial politics because spatial knowledge is not the only thing considered in the street naming process. The city can also be read as a topography of a collective memory of mnemonic symbols and traces (Weigel, 1996). Street names can be used to remind specific historical events, figures, and ideologies and reference a static slice of time. Nation-states use street names to create nation's political space. According to Anderson (1983), nation-states are imagined communities that are not based on territories, but rather on mental constructs. The reproduction of the collective memory of the past is one of the critical elements of the nation's imagined identity (Mills, 2010). Nation-states use the power of symbols, images, narratives, monuments, and street names to build a shared identity, i.e., in Berlant's words "national fantasy" (Berlant, 1991).

At the end of the 19th century, with the establishment of nation-states, the extensive nationalizing processes of place names began. Large-scale renaming processes that occurred in the Turkish, Greek and Bulgarian nation-states established with the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire can be given as an example. The name changes in this period are essentially the result of political changes and national identity problems. In this respect, changes in street names are essential in understanding the political process in cities at the end of the 19th century and in the 20th century.

Nation-states change street names to avoid the conflict between urban memory and nation's history. Nationhood expresses the idea of people who share the same culture, usually the language, history, and sometimes religion (Barnard & Spencer, 2010). Shared history, altered by the nation-state, often clashes with the urban memory of the space the nation-state claims. Collective amnesia supported by the state creates conflicting memories of the struggle for representation in the city (Mills, 2010). Therefore, except for the shared cultural and historical values determined by the nation-state, others must be deleted. Everything that expresses otherness should be changed, rendered meaningless, or destroyed. The cultural structure and the built environment, which are based on the natural environmental conditions and social environment, produce the urban identity together (Ünlü, 2017). The state tries to alter urban memory by changing street names, which also leads to a change in urban identity.

To illustrate, during the Early Republican period, the newly established Turkish nation-state aimed to redefine Turkish culture and nation by erasing the traces of the Ottoman Empire and promoting a new modern-secular lifestyle. The modernization of Turkey under secularism aimed to transform Ottoman society with reforms, destruction of political figures, symbols, and institutions related to its past. In this regard, one of the most significant changes was rewriting the new nation's history. Similar to the other revolutionary regimes, the Kemalist regime saw the urban landscape and architecture as visual indicators of cultural mod-

ernization (Gül, 2009). New planning schemes were put into the republican reform agenda, which meant the transformation of the urban landscape spatially, economically, and socially. Also, the street names and public squares were renamed to impose the new language of the secular republic, which is a sign of the rewritten history for the new generation in the urban landscape. The new public spaces had a political significance in making the national history of the new republic.

The Ottoman Empire was a multinational empire where people from different *millets* lived together. The *Millet* system was an administrative structure in which religious dignitaries governed each religious group within the framework of their religious rules. Individuals in the community lived according to the spiritual, financial, and administrative authority of the *millet* they were born in. *Millet* leaders were responsible for the fulfillment of the duties of the community members towards the Sultan. With this system, which lasted until the First World War, non-Muslim communities who lived under the Ottoman Empire's rule could preserve their religion, traditions, cultures, customs, and languages (Kenanoğlu, 2017). At the end of the 19th century, 56.4% of Istanbul's population consisted of Turks; 22.3% were Greeks; 15.3% were Armenians; 4.4% were Jews; and the remaining 1.6% consisted of Albanians, Kurds, Serbs, and Christian Arabs (Karpat, 2010). In the following period, with the advent of nation-state movements, internal turmoils, the First World War, and the occupation of Istanbul by the Allied Forces, minorities in Istanbul started to be identified with the economic, political, and social problems that accelerated the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. After the proclamation of the new republic, they were perceived as traitors and unpleasant reminders of the Ottoman Empire. The existence of minorities conflicted with the state's Turkish-Muslim nation ideal. The new nation-state was organized under the concept of one flag, one nation, one homeland, and one language. In the 1920s and 1930s, anti-minority linguistic and economic policies of Turkification were effective. Significantly, the Turkish language was seen as a key to being an actual Turkish citizen. "*Vatandaş Türkçe Konuş!*" (Citizen Speak Turkish!) campaign and the change of the non-Turkish or non-Muslim street names are the results of this understanding. Changes in urban space result in urban memory changes (Ringas & Stefanidakis, 2011). The contact between individual memory and urban memory is interrupted by alterations in street names. This mass identity erasing operation excluded the ethnic minorities who lived in the places they were born, raised, and lived. Mental boundaries created by the nation-state were imposed on the streets, and they redefined urban memory and identity in these places.

According to the 1914 census, Üsküdar, which once had a non-Muslim/Turkish minority of 38.89% in its population, was one of those places in Istanbul (Sakin, 2008 as cited in Erkan, 2015). Based on the latest municipal election results [1], today, people who live in Üsküdar dominantly favor conservative, nationalist, and religious (Islamic) rhetoric. As for the built environment, except for the few churches, synagogues, and an Armenian High School, which are certainly not the first significant structures that come to mind when one mentions Üsküdar, traces of the former non-Muslim/Turkish residents have been lost from the urban space. Therefore, Üsküdar can be taken as a noteworthy example in terms of redefined urban identity.

This article uses a trans-disciplinary approach that draws on any discipline that deals with space, place, identity, urban memory, and street names: mainly geography, urban studies, toponymy, and social sciences. It provides an approach that rests on the idea of a constitutive and dialectical relationship between street names and urban identity. The main data source of this study is *İstanbul Şehri Rehberi (Istanbul City Guide)* written by Osman Nuri Ergin (1934). The article analyzes the lists of Istanbul's old and new street names in this book. The main focus of the article is the street name changes in Üsküdar between 1927 and 1934. The article classifies these changes under six categories: changes made to delete

non-national names, to replace recurring names, to correct names, directions and typos, to shorten long names, to change vulgar names, and to reference the nation's identity. In addition, Presidency of the Republic of Turkey's Ottoman Archives and the archives of Cumhuriyet, Akşam, and Hakimiyet-i Milliye newspapers were searched to find related documents and articles to support the inquiry. The reason why Üsküdar is the focal point of this research is that although it was one of the regions where the non-Muslim population lived predominantly during the Ottoman period, there is very little information about its former inhabitants in the identity and landscape Üsküdar has today. This research examines the relationship between this social change in Üsküdar and the changes in urban toponymy.

2. How are street names determined?

Signs of street names are reference points of a place. Street names usually reflect spatial knowledge with one to three words, which local people gain through their everyday practices in a place. Personal relations and experiences are significant for remembering places (Gürleyen, 2018). To illustrate, imagine a street where bookstores are usually located. While passing through this street, the first piece of information one will learn about the street will be that there are mainly bookstores on this street. Of course, this information will also be obtained and remembered by other users of the street. When one wants to describe this street (for an address or any other purpose), they will probably say: it is the street where the bookstores are located. Other users will also repeat this, and the street will begin to be described as a street of bookstores at one point. While determining the street names, the words used by the public to describe the street are primarily the first choice of the planners and public officials. However, these words may have been used to describe more than one street in the city. In such a case, what is done would be to refer to secondary words describing the street or to add the name of the region where the street is located. For example, if there is also a famous florist on the street of bookstores, this street may be named Flower Street. However, in the absence of such secondary information, the possible confusion is resolved with "Neighborhood Name + Bookstore Street" formulation. This spatial information-based street naming process considers the morphological elements that define the street. When these elements change, the street names based on them change as well. The formation and change of the city can be read through the street names as well as the physical environment (Ayataç & Zıvalı Turhan, 2018).

On the other hand, morphological elements and spatial knowledge about streets are not the only factors that are considered during the street naming process. Streets are political areas in which the ruling regime's ideals and vision are inscribed into the landscapes of quotidian life (Rose-Redwood et al., 2017). Nation-states use street names to alter urban memory and create the political space of the nation. The intervention of sovereignty aims to change the collective memory about a place to prevent possible opposition between the nation's shared history and urban memory. In this way, ruling regimes legitimize their spatial claims.

3. Changing the identity by changing street names

National identity, national memory, and national belonging are complementary to each other (Figure 1). The nation-state defines a national identity, and national belonging is determined through this identity. Individuals who are part of the nation have ethnocultural characteristics that include them in the definition of a national identity. National memory is shaped according to national identity and belonging. Although the shared national memory appears to be collective, it hides inequalities for groups excluded by the sovereign; thus, it contains conflict with individual memories; because of this conflict, national memory cannot be considered as a collective formation (Mills, 2010). Individual memories are formed under different conditions for individuals with national identity and for the

ones that are excluded. Nationality includes certain conditions that shape memory. For the person recognized by the state as a member of the nation, national belonging determines how to talk about inequalities and injustices against minorities; for minority groups, belonging requires the denial of knowledge and experience of inequalities and injustices outside of their own community. (Mills, 2010). Apart from the collective memory shaped by social, cultural, and political influences, physical reminders of urban history also contribute to the formation of urban memory. Physical reminders act as memory evoking sensory elements in urban space. Urban identity and memory often clash with the created national identity and memory (Figure 1). Physical reminders have the potential to stimulate urban memory and point out the friction with the national memory. Therefore, these reminders are destroyed or modified to cause a loss of meaning.

Street names are one of the elements to be changed due to their relationship with urban memory and identity (Figure 1). Urban memory is a representation of collective memory that has evolved over time in a specific space; it expresses relationships between the past and present of the place (Ringas & Stefanidakis, 2011). In the natural formation processes, street names emerge through the spatial information and identity of the urban space. They contain information about a place's past and present. Under normal circumstances, although they change with the space over time, it is possible to observe continuity while comparing the street names of the same place at different times. Nevertheless, broad name changes policies implemented with the establishment of nation-states have created serious disconnections between the space and its past (Hacısalihoğlu, 2008).

According to Todorov (1982), the naming ceremony is one of the first gestures of possession. Naming streets is frequently used to express authority in battles over symbolic control over public space (Rose-Redwood et al., 2017). Marking places with names belonging to the new ruler's culture, history, and ideology is essential to reflect its political identity. One of the prominent examples of the reflection of nation-state policies on the countryside is the change of the names of villages, towns, and geographical places. As for urban places, street names are seen as the visual/textual indicators of sovereignty.

In Turkey's case, the transformation of toponyms into Turkish started after the defeat in the Balkan War. The Union and Progress Administration started a campaign to turn Greek and Bulgarian names into Turkish in 1913. For instance, the change of Atranos to Orhaneli in Bursa, Lefke to Osmaneli in Bilecik, and Ayasluk to Selçuk in İzmir happened in that period (Nişanyan, 2010). According to a notification document from the Ottoman Archives (Figure 2), besides the names of the villages and towns, the establishments such as schools, casinos, and the streets and avenues with the old Greek names in and outside of Istanbul were also forcibly changed into Ottoman names.

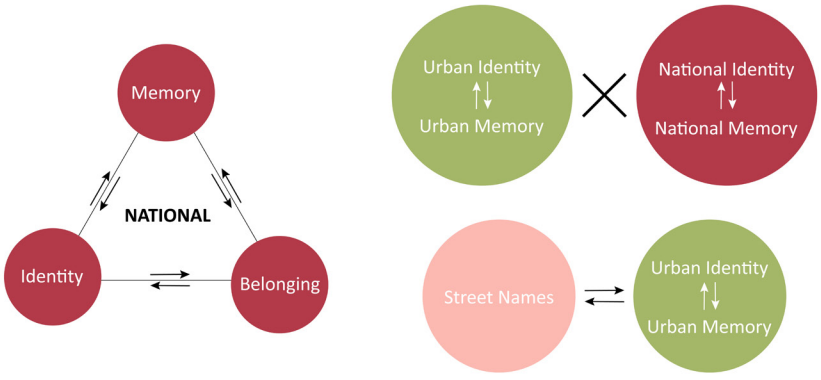


Figure 1. *Diagrams about the relation between identity, memory, and street names.*

On the opposite side, the names of the towns, villages, and streets in the regions that were no longer under the Ottoman Empire's rule were also gradually altered by new sovereign regimes. To illustrate, during the occupation of Cyprus by the British forces, the names of some streets of Nicosia and Limassol were changed. As per a record from the Ottoman Archives (Figure 3), this situation was seen as an unauthorized change to the Ottoman Empire, which still saw Cyprus as its territory. The newly established nation-states formed after the Ottoman Empire's disintegration, such as Bulgaria, and Greece, tried to forge links between political legitimacy and national identity. The legitimacy of a modern state is predicated on the notion of the nation's self-rule (Hart, 1999). Hence, during the 1920s and 1930s, they employed various techniques to implement their national identities in their claimed territories. For example, in Bulgaria, almost all non-Bulgarian toponyms, most of which were Turkish, have been changed since the independence of Bulgaria (Hacısalihoğlu, 2008). In 1934 alone, by ministerial directives, two-thirds of all Turkish place names were altered (Koledarov & Michev, 1973 as cited in Mahon, 1999). The change of place names has been justified in different ways in each country. In Bulgaria, it was a sign of the abolition of the Turkish/Ottoman yoke in Bulgaria (Hacısalihoğlu, 2008).

As for Turkey, after the Independence War, the government of the Turkish Republic aimed to create a modern and secular nation-state that gathered under the understanding of one nation, one flag, one homeland, and one language. With Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's words, "Anyone who lives within the borders of the Republic of Turkey and says 'I am Turkish' is a Turkish citizen." The generation of "citizens" by "nations" requires a symbolic and practical embodiment of a public mindset (Berlant, 1991). This public mindset is created by symbols, narratives, and a shared history. Nation-state constantly exposes its "citizens" to these mental constructs consciously/unconsciously during their daily lives.

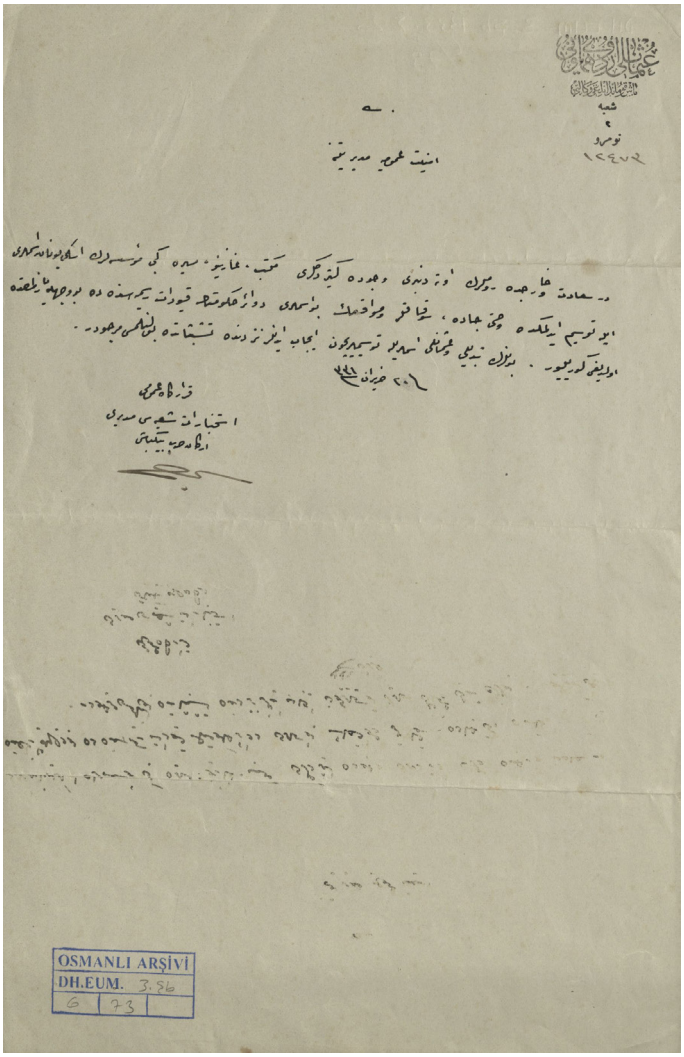


Figure 2. *A notification document about the replacement of Greek names with Ottoman names (03 July 1915).*

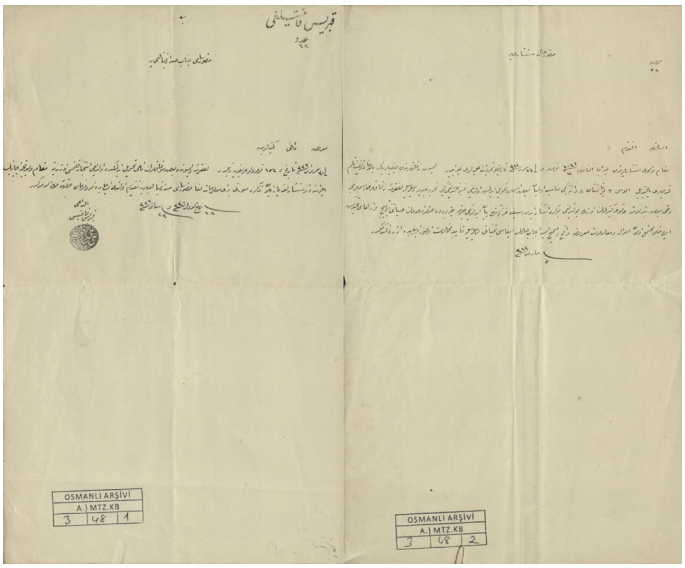


Figure 3. *A document about the unauthorized renaming of some streets of Nicosia and Limassol (07 March 1912).*

As the former imperial capital, Istanbul represented the Ottoman cultural heritage. At that time, Istanbul's

culture and daily life were characterized by mutually recognized differences and shared urban space through multiple cultural practices and languages (Mills, 2010). For this reason, Istanbul has been seen as an important place to declare and represent Turkish national identity. The process of renaming streets in Istanbul was carried out to delete the repetitive, vulgar, and non-national names that contradict the national memory in progress. The street names, which emerged as a result of the relationship between the local people living in that area, were changed because they contradicted the new urban identity that was created by the state. The bonds locals formed with the place were damaged by the erasure of their names and memories from the streets. Üsküdar district, one of the regions of Istanbul where the non-Muslim population has lived predominantly since the Ottoman era, is affected by this process with irreversible identity and memory loss. According to the Üsküdar Municipality's website, today Üsküdar's social structure is mainly composed of conservative people who have migrated from the Black Sea Region and are committed to the Islamic faith and culture. The minority population living here emigrated to a large extent, especially after the events of 6-7 September. Past occurrences have no bearing on the present unless they are mentioned in history books, monuments, various shows, and signs that remind us of the past (Tuan, 1977). When the Turkish national identity became dominant, and almost nothing remained to remind us of the minority identities, so the loss was inevitable for Üsküdar.

4. History of Üsküdar

Üsküdar, located on the Anatolian side of Istanbul, is a district that spreads from the southern shores of the Bosphorus to the east inland. Khrisopolis, which means Golden City, is the first known name of Üsküdar. There are various rumors that this name may have been given by Khrisen, the son of Agamemnon, king of Mycenae, to denote the wealth it once had or the color the sun painted the city's horizons when it went down (Yılmaz, 2017). It is also said that the name Üsküdar came from skutary (shielded soldiers) who served in the region during the Crusaders period (Ayverdi, 1966). Another claim made by Evliya Çelebi is that the name Üsküdar derives from the "eski (old) dar (narrow)" (quoted in Haskan, 2001).

Üsküdar has been an important transportation and trade center since the Byzantian times due to its geopolitical location. During the Ottoman period, Istanbul was divided into four administrative districts: *Dersaadet* (the region inside the city walls) and *Bilad-ı Selase* (Three Regions). Along with Eyüp and Galata, Üsküdar was one of the tripartite regions. It was managed as a separate administrative district until 1926. Üsküdar was one of the places where the zoning works and mosque constructions were mostly concentrated outside the city walls. For this reason, it was also referred to as "Istanbul's Medina" (Yılmaz, 2017). Another name of Üsküdar was "*Mercü'l-Berreyn*", meaning "the place where two lands shook hands" because of its role as a bridge in the transition between Asia and Europe (Yılmaz, 2017). It was also called "Belde-i Tayyibe" as the Surre procession and the pilgrims were sent off from Ayrılık Çeşmesi (Fountain of Separation). Üsküdar has been one of the regions where the Islamic identity has come to the fore since the Ottoman period. However, besides its Islamic identity, Üsküdar was one of the areas that non-Muslim/Turkish folk predominantly lived in Istanbul.

Due to the Ottoman laws, non-Muslim people could not live near a mosque, and their sanctuaries should not be close to the mosques. Hence, non-Muslim neighborhoods were usually established out of the Üsküdar's center. Beylerbeyi (old name was Istavroz), Çengelköy, Kısıklı, Kandilli, and Kuzguncuk were those neighborhoods where non-Muslim folk mainly lived. In the center of the district, in neighborhoods such as Selamsız, Bağlarbaşı, Yeni Mahalle, Hayreddin Çavuş, Murat Reis, and Pazarbaşı, both Muslim and non-Muslim people lived together (Erkan, 2015). According to the 1914 census, there were 70,447 Muslims, 19,832 Greeks, 13,296 Armenians, 6836 Jews,

and 1232 other non-Muslim millets in Üsküdar, 63. 10% of the Üsküdar's population consisted of Muslims, and 36.89% of non-Muslims people (Sakin, 2008 as cited in Erkan, 2015).

Increasing minority revolts and internal conflicts in the last period of the Ottoman Empire affected the social structure of Üsküdar. For example, during Babıâli Nümayişi (the Babıâli Protest), which was called Ermeni Patırtısı (Armenian Rumble) by the Turks, raids were made on Armenian churches and houses in Üsküdar, and ammunition was seized (Haskan, 2001). Babıâli Nümayişi, which started to protest the massacres in Anatolia, grew because of the harsh intervention of the state and turned into an internal turmoil that caused the death of many people. In addition, with the 1915 events and the ensuing deportation law (Techir Kanunu), the minority population in Üsküdar started to leave their places due to the increasing tension, even though the forced migration law did not include them. Due to the changes made after the Tanzimat and the increasing political conflicts, Üsküdar clung more to its Islamic identity and became increasingly conservative. Due to social and political events, the balance between Muslim and non-Muslim identities in Üsküdar was disrupted. As a result of those events, the conservative Turkish-Islamic identity was ascendant, while the minority identities were evaporated. French writer Gerard de Nerval describes the 19th century Üsküdar as follows: Üsküdar, the shelter of old Muslims, generally saw the innovations in Istanbul (inside the city walls) as a danger; they believe that European Turkey was going to be a victim of Christians in the near future (quoted in Yılmaz, 2017).

The big fires at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century have also accelerated the departure of minorities. During the 1887 Yenimahalle Fire, many buildings and an Armenian school burned down. With the 1926 İcadiye Fire and 1927 Great Selamsız Fire, Selamsız (Selamiali) neighborhood was almost completely destroyed; 600 houses in Yenimahalle, İcadiye, and Sultantepe were also destroyed in this disaster (Haskan, 2001). The immigration of minorities kept increasing after the proclamation of the republic. Especially after the 6-7 September events in 1955, most Greek, Armenian and Jewish inhabitants of Üsküdar left. On the other hand, new settlements of Muslim Turks, mainly from the Black Sea region, continued to increase. The traces of the minorities who left Üsküdar were meticulously erased. As a result of the renaming process that started in 1927, minorities' ties with the place were cut off. People's names and memories were deleted from the streets; they were excluded from the places they were born, raised, and lived.

Today, Üsküdar is a region known for its mosques, lodges, dargahs, fountains, and according to Üsküdar Municipality's website, its religious and conservative people [2]. The following two examples are weighty for understanding the identity change of Üsküdar. On the website of the Üsküdar Municipality, Üsküdar's culture is as follows: " Üsküdar is very rich in terms of culture. Thanks to the richness of its historical heritage, a unique Üsküdar culture has emerged over time. This culture shows a multicultural structure in the center of Turkish tolerance." In other words, Üsküdar's culture is built around Turkish tolerance, as long as the Turkish culture permits the other cultures, they can exist in Üsküdar's "multicultural" structure. In addition, the book set titled *Yüzyıllar Boyunca Üsküdar (Üsküdar Through the Centuries)*, published by the Municipality of Üsküdar provides valuable information about Üsküdar's history, from which this article benefited. However, in these three volumes, the section devoted to the non-Muslim culture that once existed in Üsküdar is relatively short. The place of non-Muslim folk in social life, their structures, and their culture is only mentioned in the sections gathered under "Değişik Konular" (Various Topics) at the end of the third volume.

5. History of Üsküdar's street names

In the Ottoman period, the smallest unit of the city division was the neighborhood (mahalle), and the neighborhood organization was called "nahiye". Neighborhoods were

divided by the main street, which were connected to dead-end streets. These streets helped to ensure privacy and security by preventing outsiders from secretly entering the neighborhood (Canatar, 2015). Neighborhoods were physical places without sharp boundaries, and they functioned almost like a big house. Streets worked as the corridors of this house, and their dimensions were narrow like house corridors. Neighborhoods were shaped around the identity of the community that lived there. These identities were mainly related to religion, ethnicity, occupation, and marital status. In most cases, it is possible to say that the neighborhood was equal to the community in the Ottoman Empire. Istanbul neighborhoods were generally sanctuary (mosques, churches, monasteries, synagogues) centered

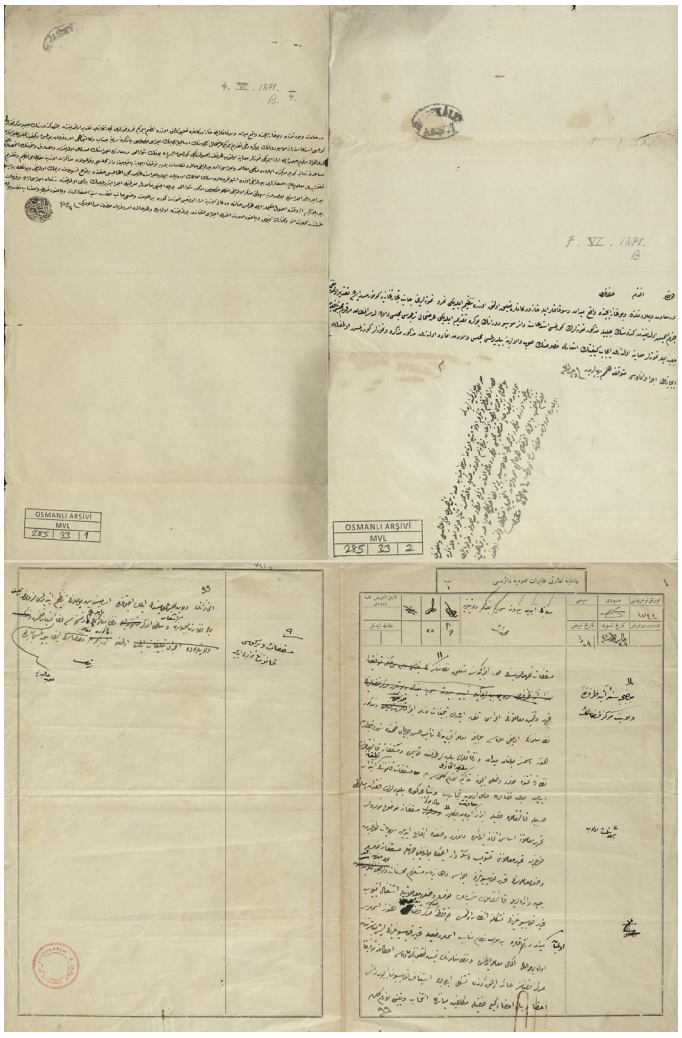


Figure 4. *On top Monsieur Devra's request about the signs to be hung on the streets (25 February 1855) and at the bottom a document about giving proper names to unnamed streets (11 January 1911).*

living spaces and administrative units (Canatar, 2015). Commercial and residential zones were often separated from each other. Commercial areas were primarily under the supervision of the state, and the people of the neighborhood managed the neighborhoods. Commercial districts functioned as public, and neighborhood districts functioned as private spaces.

As part of the modernization movements made after the proclamation of the Tanzimat, some changes were made in the direction of the development and regulation of the city administration. New developments for Istanbul came to life with the Order of the City Commission (İntizam-ı Şehir Komisyonu), which was established in 1855 and consisted mainly of Muslims, non-Muslims, and merchants who knew foreign languages (Ölçer, 2014). Monsieur Devra's request about the signs to be hung on the streets and a document about giving proper names to unnamed streets by district governors and municipalities can be seen in Figure 4. From 1855 on, the city administration was transformed into a municipal organization. Municipal units such as Üsküdar, Beşiktaş, and Fatih were created, and neighborhoods were connected to these municipalities. The street names started to be assigned with *A Regulation Concerning Streets (Sokaklara Dair Nizamname)* in 1859. Signs with street names hung just like European countries. Before that, without street names and signs, people were given addresses using phrases like "across from this neighborhood" or "near that neighborhood". In previous periods, neighborhood names could be examined as a linguistic representation of the identity of a place.

After the Turkish War of Independence, the government of the Republic of Turkey passed the "Law on Numbering Buildings and Naming Streets" in 1927. The purpose of this law was to prepare the organization of the planning census. According to a newspaper article from the newspaper Hakimiyet-i Milliye about this issue (Figure 5), it was decided to hang street signs on all Istanbul streets and to give new numbers to the houses as of September

1, in preparations for the census. The readability of urban space is crucial for the surveillance functions of the state (Yeoh, 2017). Osman Nuri Ergin was the person responsible for this process in Istanbul. First, the existing street names were determined, and names were given to the unnamed streets. Street names are usually given according to the spatial information of the street; hence common names such as Cami Sokak (Mosque Street) and Mektep Sokak (School Street) have been determined. They had been renamed mostly using the formulation "Neighborhood Name + Repetitive Name + Street". In addition to repeating names, vulgar, non-national, and non-Muslim street names have been changed. As a result of this process, nearly 6,000 of the estimated 10,000 street names in Istanbul were changed in a brief period, like five months.

A new perspective on Turkish history and linguistics was established on 01 November 1928, with the Script Reform (Harf Devrimi). Latin script began to be used instead of Arabic alphabet. Therefore, the renaming process took place again in 1929. The budget request and a newspaper article about the process can be seen in Figure 6. During the renewal of the street signs from old letters to new letters, Osman Nuri Ergin found a chance to complete the incomplete job that he had done in a great rush to finish up until the 1927 census (Ölçer, 2014). According to a newspaper article in Cumhuriyet (Figure 6), on 19 January 1931, the committee of Istanbul Municipality accepted the street name changes. During the renaming process, street names thought to be incompatible with Turkish history, language, and customs, as well as repetitive street names such as Kuyu (Well) and Çeşme (Fountain) were changed. Names of people who served Turkish literature, music, and their homeland, as well as names thought to be catchy because of pronunciation were given to the streets. In total, 6,129 streets were renamed.

The changes in street names of Üsküdar mainly took place between 1927-1934. In the following years, street names continued to be changed for particular purposes, and they still do.

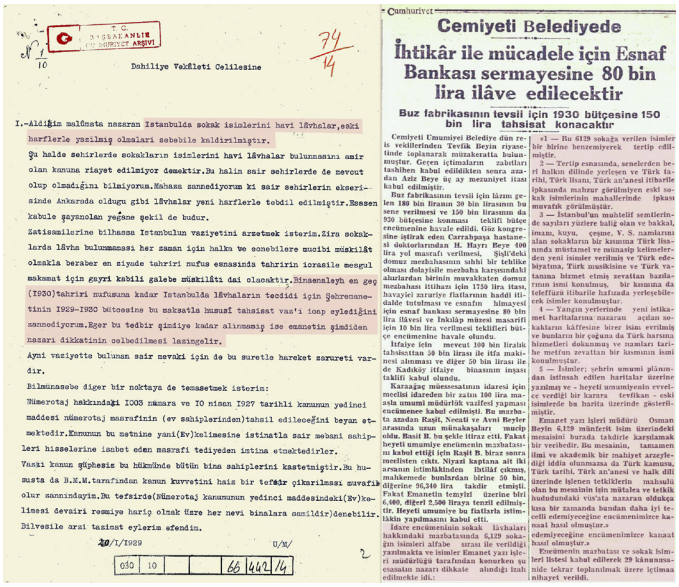
Figure 5. *A newspaper article about the numbering committee and census preparations in Istanbul (21 August 1927).*

6. Street name changes in Üsküdar

According to the data from *Istanbul City Guide*, the names of 447 of 620 streets in Üsküdar were changed between 1927-1934. Of these 447 streets, 300 were changed for replacing repetitive names, 42 for correcting names, directions, and typos, 14 for shortening long names, 7 for referencing the nation's identity and history, 2 for replacing vulgar names, and 62 for deleting non-national names. The reason for renaming 20 streets could not be identified. In this process, new names were also given to the newly opened streets in addition to renaming the existing streets. According to Istanbul

City Guide, 20 newly opened streets in Üsküdar were named, and 11 of these 20 streets are located in Selamsız. The highly possible reason for more new streets openings in Selamsız compared to other neighborhoods is the 1926 İcadiye and the 1927 Great Selamsız fires, which caused significant damage to the neighborhood.

The map of the distribution of the changes made in the renaming process in Üsküdar can be seen in Figure 7. As can be observed from the map, the changes aimed at deleting non-national names are concentrated in the neighborhoods where minorities predominantly live. This situation also reveals the mutual relationship between street names and local people. According to this map, it is possible to determine the areas where minority groups live the most in the neighborhoods. The maps from the Istanbul City Guide 1934 were used while drawing this map.



Dahiliye Vekâleti Celîlesine

Cemiyeti Belediyede

İhtikâr ile mücadele için Esnaf Bankası sermayesine 80 bin lira ilâve edilecektir

Buz fabrikasının tevsii için 1930 bütçesine 150 bin lira tahsisat konacaktır

Figure 6. *The budget request for the renewal of street signs (21 January 1929) and a newspaper article about the street name changes (20 January 1930).*

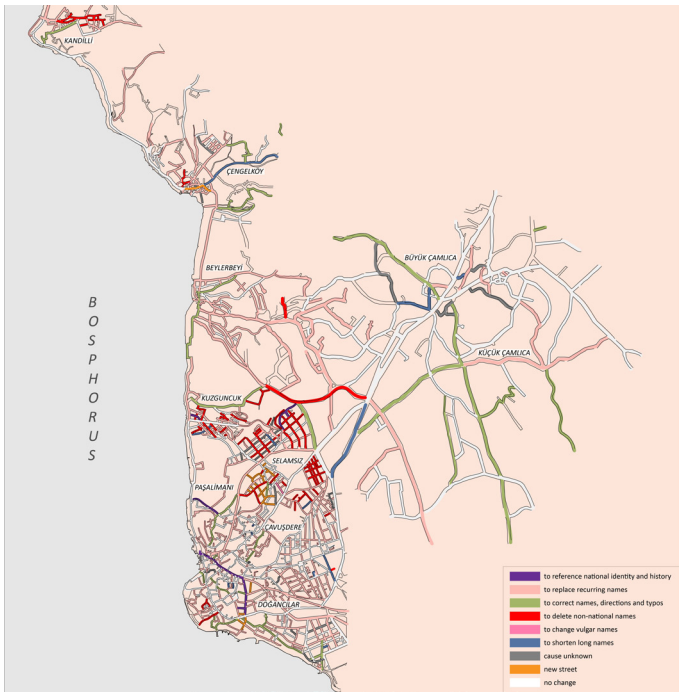


Figure 7. *The map of the distribution of the name changes made in Üsküdar.*

While making the classification regarding the reasons for the change of street names, it was considered whether there was a loss of meaning in new names, whether the same treatment was applied to names with similar problems, and the relevance of the newly given names with spatial information. To illustrate, while changing repetitive "Cami Sokak" (Mosque Street) names, whether the full name of the mosque was given or the name of the neighborhood was added to make it unique. However, for repetitive "Kilise Sokak" (Church Street) names, the word church was utterly deleted, and names that were given are irrelevant to spatial information. Similar to this, while all of the Aziziye Sokak (Sainte Street) changed with irrelevant names, variations of Aziz Sokak (Saint Street) were used without significant meaning changes. Considering the close-to-church locations of Aziziye Sokaks, it can be deduced that Aziziye has been considered as a reference to the Virgin Mary and deleted. Therefore, while classifying the reason for the changes, it was chosen to " to replace recurring names" for "Cami Sokak" (Mosque Sokak) and "to delete non-national names" for "Kilise Sokak" (Church Street) and "Aziziye Sokak" (Saint Street). Examples of these changes can be viewed in Table 1.

Moreover, while determining the changes for shortening long names, correcting names, directions, and typos, whether there was a loss of meaning is considered. If the street's name did not repeat more than once and a word was removed from the name without causing a situation that would greatly affect the meaning, this was considered a change made to shorten long street names (Table 1). Likewise, if there wasn't any repetition and the

street's name was changed with a name containing reference to national history and identity, this situation was evaluated as a change to reference national history and identity.

Some points stand out in the changes made to delete non-national names. As can be seen in Table 1, the place of minority proper names such as Kirkor, Manok, Oskiyan have been replaced with Turkish proper names such as Mümin and Mahmut or wholly removed. To determine whether proper names in street names belong to minority groups, the Nişanyan Dictionary of Names website and Zafer Işık's (2020) "Guide to Armenian and Greek Names in the Ottoman Archives" were used. Another notable situation is that the new names, which are replaced by non-national names that have been changed in a way that can be interpreted as overcompensating, make direct references to Turkish identity, history, and mythology (Table 1). Moreover, it is observed that the changes made for

Table 1. *Examples of street names changes.*

Old Name of The Street	New Name of The Street	District	Reason of Change
Cami Sokak (Mosque Street)	Hacı Hesna Camii Sokak (Hacı Hesna Mosque Street)	Üsküdar	to replace recurring names
Cami Sokak (Mosque Street)	İhsaniye Camii Sokak (ihsaniye Mosque Street)	Üsküdar	to replace recurring names
Cami Sokak (Mosque Street)	İnadiye Camii Sokak (İnadiye Mosque Street)	Üsküdar	to replace recurring names
Kilise Sokak (Church Street)	Görümce Sokak (Sister-in-law Street)	Üsküdar	to delete non-national names
Kilise Sokak (Church Street)	Tanrıverdi Sokak (God Gave Street)	Üsküdar	to delete non-national names
Aziziye Sokak (Sainte Street)	Azizbey Sokak (Mister Saint Street)	Üsküdar	to delete non-national names
Aziziye Sokak (Sainte Street)	Peltek Sokak (Lisp Street)	Prince Islands	to delete non-national names
Abdi Efendi Sokak (Mister Abdi Street)	Apti Efendi Sokak (Mister Apti Street)	Üsküdar	to correct names, directions and typos
Nişan Taşı Caddesi (Nişan Taşı Avenue)	Küçük Çamlıca-Nişan Taşı Yolu (Küçük Çamlıca-Nişan Taşı Road)	Üsküdar	to correct names, directions and typos
Su Yolu Çıkmazı (Waterway Dead-end Street)	Sulu Yol Çıkmazı (Watery Way Dead-end Street)	Üsküdar	to correct names, directions and typos
Hacı Şevket Bey Sokak (Mister Hadji Şevket Street)	Hacı Şevket Sokak (Hadji Şevket Street)	Üsküdar	to shorten long names
Bekarderesi ve Su Yolu Sokak (Single's Creek and Watercourse Street)	Bekarderesi Sokak (Single's Creek Street)	Üsküdar	to shorten long names
Meyhane Sokak (Tavern Street)	Üzüm Özü Sokak (Grape Essence Street)	Üsküdar	to change vulgar names
Çarşıboyu Caddesi (Çarşıboyu Street)	Hakimiyet-i Milliye Caddesi (National Sovereignty Street)	Üsküdar	to reference the nation's identity and history
Kefçe Dede Sokak (Grandpa Kefçe Street)	Halk Caddesi (People Street)	Üsküdar	to reference the nation's identity and history
Gülşen Sokak (Gülşen Street)	Nevcivan Sokak (Nevcivan Street)	Üsküdar	unknown
Hamam İskelesi Sokak (Bath's Pier Street)	Kaynana Sokak (Mother-in law Street)	Üsküdar	unknown
Kürkçü Kirkor Sokak (Furrier Kirkor Street)	Kürkçü Mümin Sokak (Furrier Mümin Street)	Üsküdar	to delete non-national names
Taşçı Manok Sokak (Stonemason Manok Street)	Taşçı Mahmut Sokak (Stonemason Mahmut Street)	Üsküdar	to delete non-national names
Topal Oskiyan Sokak (Crippled Oskiyan Street)	Topal Oskiyan Sokak (Crippled Street)	Üsküdar	to delete non-national names
Ayazma Adası Arka Sokak (Ayazma Island Back Street)	Kurt Bağrı Sokak (Wolf Chest Street)	Üsküdar	to delete non-national names
Eleni Sokak (Eleni Street)	Yeniçeri Ağası Sokak (Janissary Agha Street)	Beyoğlu	to delete non-national names
Araplar Sokak (Arabs Street)	Araplar Sokak (Arabs Street)	Fatih	-
Kürtler Sokak (Kürts Street)	Kürtler Sokak (Kürts Street)	Fatih	-
Arnavut Çıkmazı (Albanian Dead-end Street)	Bozacı Çıkmazı (Boza Seller Dead-end Street)	Üsküdar	to delete non-national names
Piyer Loti Caddesi (Pierre Loti Avenue)	Piyer Loti Caddesi (Pierre Loti Avenue)	Fatih	-
Krepen Pasajı (Krepen Passage)	Krizantem Geçidi (Chrysanthemum Passageway)	Beyoğlu	to delete non-national names
Frederiç Pasajı (Frederic Passage)	Frederiç Geçidi (Frederic Passage)	Beyoğlu	to correct names, directions and typos
Haçopolo Pasajı (Hazzopulo Passage)	Haçopolo Han Geçidi (Hazzopula Passageway)	Beyoğlu	to correct names, directions and typos
Hafız Ahmet Efendi Sokak (Mister Hafiz Ahmet Street)	Hafızı Kurra Sokak (Hafiz-i Kurra Street)	Üsküdar	to delete non-national names
Tekke Sokak (Dervish Lodge Street)	Bedevi Tekkesi Sokak (Bedouin Dervish Lodge Street)	Üsküdar	to replace recurring names
Tekke Arkası Sokak (Behind the Dervish Lodge Street)	Tekke Arkası Sokak (Behind the Dervish Lodge Street)	Üsküdar	-

erasing non-national identities concentrate on minority groups that left the Ottoman Empire and established new nation-states and were perceived as traitors by being associated with the occupation forces by the Turks. To illustrate, while the names of Albanians, Greeks, Armenians, and Jews were erased from the streets in this process, the names of Arabs, Kurds, and Tatars were preserved (Table 1). In addition, the name of Pierre Loti, who is approached as a friend-of-Turks person, has not changed despite being a foreigner. Also, even if there are non-Turkish names, the names of the passage streets are mainly left unchanged.

The names that are thought to contradict the Turkish national identity, history, and values are not only the names of minorities. The name of the Hafız Ahmet Efendi, who gave the Ankara fatwa that declared it was legitimate to kill the Kuvay-i Milliye people and was seen as a name standing against the Turkish national independence struggle, was also changed in this process (Table 1.) However, contrary to the secular national identity that was tried to be established, the names of the dervish lodges and zaviyes that were closed in 1925 were preserved.

Between 1927-1934, throughout Istanbul, the number of street names that were changed to delete non-national names is determined as 410. The first three where the most changes are made for this purpose are Beyoğlu with 126 changes, Üsküdar and Fatih with 62 changes, and Adalar (Prince Islands) with 61 changes. The map in Figure 8 shows the distribution of the number of changes district by district to delete non-national names. In this map, the areas where the changes of non-national street names were intensified were the districts where minority groups lived predominantly during that time. It is possible to say that one can determine the districts where minority groups live the most by looking at the street names, thanks to the street names-identity relationship. Istanbul City Guide 1934 was used while drawing this map.

To identify the objections to these changes, the news from the two of the newspapers with the highest circulation rate [3] in the Turkish press, Cumhuriyet and Akşam, were searched from August 1929 to March 1930, from the announcement of the comprehensive change in 1929 to the completion of the changes. After this search, only one article (Figure 9) was found that mentioned objections. The article did not specify what the objections were

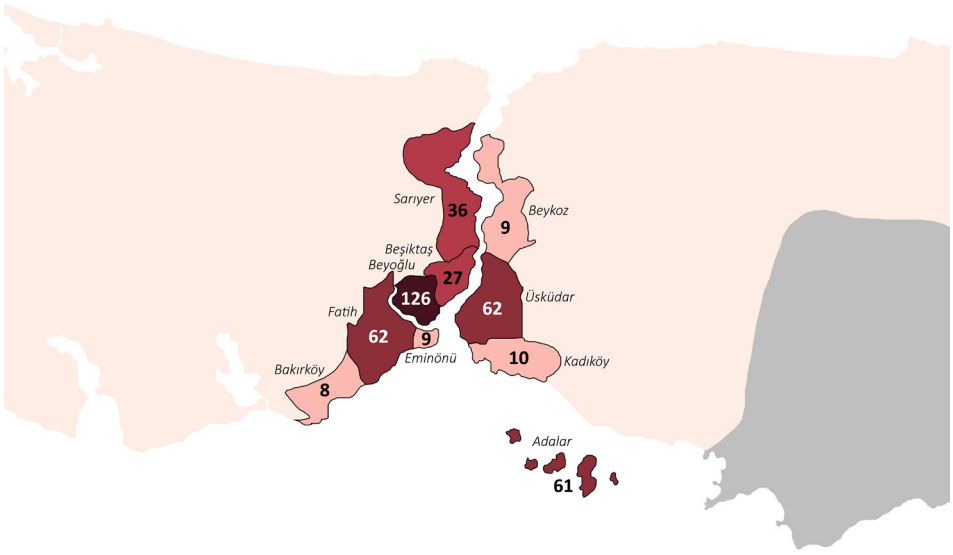
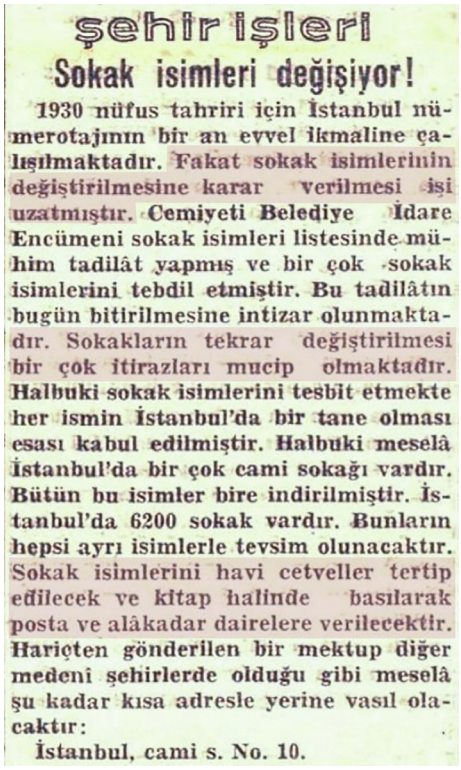


Figure 8. *The map of the numerical distribution of the changes to delete non-national names in Istanbul.*



şehir işleri

Sokak isimleri değişiyor!

1930 nüfus tahriri için İstanbul nümerotajının bir an evvel ikmaline çalışılmaktadır. Fakat sokak isimlerinin değiştirilmesine karar verilmesi işi uzatmıştır. Cemiyeti Belediye İdare Encümeni sokak isimleri listesinde mühim tadilât yapmış ve bir çok sokak isimlerini tebdil etmiştir. Bu tadilâtın bugün bitirilmesine intizar olunmaktadır. Sokakların tekrar değiştirilmesi bir çok itirazları mucip olmaktadır. Halbuki sokak isimlerini tesbit etmekte her ismin İstanbul'da bir tane olması esası kabul edilmiştir. Halbuki meselâ İstanbul'da bir çok cami sokağı vardır. Bütün bu isimler bire indirilmiştir. İstanbul'da 6200 sokak vardır. Bunların hepsi ayrı isimlerle tevsim olunacaktır. Sokak isimlerini havi cetveller tertip edilecek ve kitap halinde basılarak posta ve alâkadar dairelere verilecektir. Hariçten gönderilen bir mektup diğer medeni şehirlerde olduğu gibi meselâ şu kadar kısa adresle yerine vasıl olacaktır:

İstanbul, cami s. No. 10.

Figure 9. *An article about the objections to street name changes (05 January 1930).*

about. However, it is also mentioned that changing the street names will prolong the numerical work of streets for the upcoming census. For this reason, it can be interpreted that the objections mentioned are directed towards this prolong. In the same article, that is also mentioned that to avoid possible confusion, Istanbul General Assembly decided to issue a city guide, Istanbul City Guide 1934, written by Osman Nuri Ergin, which is used as the primary data source in this research. Unfortunately, a similar search was not possible to conduct in minority newspapers on the subject because there were no archives open to access in Turkey for the three minority newspapers with the highest circulation rate [4]: Apoyevmatini (Greek Press), Zhamank (Armenian Press), and Le Journal D'Orient (Jewish Press).

7. Conclusion

Urban space, as the basis of everyday practices, is an essential element of social memory and urban identity (Boyer, 1996). Urban identity is a non-physical concept that emerges related to the city's physical, cultural, historical, and socio-economic characteristics (Erdoğan&Ayataç, 2015). Urban identity becomes with the urban space; hence alterations in the urban space lead to a change in urban identity.

In this respect, the relationship between street names, a part of the urban space, and the urban identity shows a dialectical and constitutive structure. Street names appear as a result of the bond that the local people establish with that place and the spatial information they learn from there. Street names contain information about the characteristics of a place; they can provide morphological, social, political, and cultural information. Also, due to their position in the urban landscape, they have the power to remind past events, significant personas, and ideologies to large audiences. Space serves as a conduit for connecting to society through emotions and memories (Gürleyen, 2018). The nation-states alter urban space to impose their national history, culture, and values on the everyday life of the society. Therefore, while modifying the urban space, street names can be used as a tool by the ruling regime to reflect their identity and history. Nation-states use street names to create the political space of the nation.

In the Turkish Republic's early periods, streets provided a virtual space for the government to promote the new Western lifestyle and Turkish identity. Street names, an essential part of the urban landscape, were also used for this purpose. Between 1927 and 1934, a grand renaming process occurred in Istanbul. The purpose of the street renaming process is defined as changing the repetitive, vulgar, and non-national names. Changing recurring names was essential for the planned census, and changing vulgar and non-national names was necessary to create the "nation's shared identity" and values. During the process, 410 street names were replaced to delete non-national names in Istanbul. One of the regions where most changes occurred for this purpose was Üsküdar. During this process, the name of 447 streets was changed in Üsküdar. Most of these changes happened because of repetitive names. The second leading reason was the erasure of non-national names. It is possible to say that the urban identity of Üsküdar grounds on the conser-

vative Turkish-Islamic identity, based on the last municipality election won by the conservative-nationalist alliance candidate in Üsküdar and the declaims made on the website of Üsküdar Municipality regarding the conservative Islamic characteristics of the local people. Even though once it was one of the regions where minority groups lived exceedingly, in the current Üsküdar identity, they are only mentioned as a diverting feature, and for the urban space, most of the traces of these old inhabitants are gone. Hence, in terms of redefined urban identity, Üsküdar can be seen as a notable example. The most significant reason for this situation was most possibly the overpowering Islamic identity that Üsküdar owned for a long time in addition to the non-Muslim identities, which the other areas where non-Muslim folk also lived predominantly do not have, such as Adalar (Prince Islands), Beyoğlu, Galata, and Samatya. This identity, which had a balance with non-Muslim identities for a long time, started to get overpowered after the social incidents and internal conflicts in the last period of the Ottoman Empire. The process of changing street names in the early years of the Turkish Republic dealt the final blow to the minority identities that oppressed against Turkish-Islamic identity. Traces of its former inhabitants have been largely erased as if they had never lived in Üsküdar. Social and physical changes in Üsküdar's urban landscape lead to urban memory and identity changes.

Although studies on broad-scale changes in place and street names, such as this inquiry, are mainly based on those that occurred in the late 19th and 20th centuries, we see that the renaming strategy is still used for the same purposes today. A process that can be shown as an example of this situation recently took place in Ukraine, which was invaded in late February 2022 by Russia. Name of the streets and subway stops that are related to the Russian Empire or the Soviet Union started to change as a "decolonization" movement (Solomon, 2022). According to an article from the New York Times, Ukrainian officials perceive this process as a defense of the country on the cultural front lines (quoted from Solomon, 2022).

The use of street names to spread national discourse in urban space continues today as in the past. In urban space, the identity of the space is tried to be compatible with the national identity by changing the street names. Street names provide us with various clues about the culture and ideology of those who live in a place, and the change in street names gives us a picture of the social and cultural change in the place. In this sense, it is possible to obtain valuable information about the city's history and trace the urban identity change through studies on street names.

Endnotes

[1] According to the results from Yüksek Seçim Kurulu (Supreme Election Council), in the 2019 local governmental elections, the candidate of the Cumhur İttifakı (People's Alliance), which has conservative, religious and nationalist political tendencies, won in Üsküdar with 48.25 percent of the votes.

[2] Based on the information from Üsküdar Municipality's website, under the section of "Sosyal Durum (Social Situation)" https://www.uskudar.bel.tr/tr/main/pages/sosyal-durum/30

[3] Rıfat Bali, Tarih ve Toplum Dergisi, "Gazete Tirajları", (May 2002), pp.18-19

[4] a.g.e.

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