

## Body, Experience, Sense, and Place: Past and Present Sensory Mappings of Istiklal Street in Istanbul

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**Abstract :** An attempt to recognize the undiscovered bounds of Istiklal Street in Istanbul between its sensory experiences (intangible qualities) and physical setting (tangible qualities) could be taken as the first inspiration point for this study. 'The dramatic physical changes' and 'their current impacts on sensory attributions' of Istiklal Street have directed this study to consider the role of changing the physical layout on sensory dimensions which have a subtle but important role in the examination of urban places. The public places have always been subject to transformation, so in the last years, the changing socio-cultural structure, economic and political movements, law and city regulations, innovative transportation and communication activities have resulted in a controversial modification of Istanbul. And, as the culture, entertainment, tourism, and shopping focus of Istanbul, Istiklal Street has witnessed different changing stages within the last years. In this process, because of the projects being implemented, many buildings such as cinemas, theatres, and bookstores have restored, moved, converted, closed and demolished which have been significant elements in terms of the qualitative value of this area. And, the multi-layered socio-cultural, and architectural structure of Istiklal Street has been changing in a dramatical and controversial way. But importantly, while the physical setting of Istiklal Street has changed, the transformation has not been spatial, socio-cultural, economic; avoidably the sensory dimensions of Istiklal Street which have great importance in terms of intangible qualities of this area have begun to lose their distinctive features. This has created the challenge of this research. As the main hypothesis, this study claims that the physical transformations have led to change in the sensory characteristic of Istiklal Street, therefore the Sensescape of Istiklal Street deserve to be recorded, decoded and promoted as expeditiously as possible to observe the sensory reflections of physical transformations in this area. With the help of the method of 'Sensewalking' which is an efficient research tool to generate knowledge on sensory dimensions of an urban settlement, this study suggests way of 'mapping' to understand how do 'changes of physical setting' play role on 'sensory qualities' of Istiklal Street which have been changed or lost over time. Basically, this research focuses on the sensory mapping of Istiklal Street from the 1990s until today to picture, interpret, criticize the 'sensory mapping of Istiklal Street in present' and the 'sensory mapping of Istiklal Street in past'. Through the sensory mapping of Istiklal Street, this study intends to increase the awareness about the distinctive sensory qualities of places. It is worthwhile for further studies that consider the sensory dimensions of places especially in the field of architecture.

**Keywords :** Istiklal street, sense, sensewalking, sensory mapping

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