

Article

Permanences Against Cultural Amnesia: Reconstructing the Urban Narrative of the Rum Community of Fener, Istanbul

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Abstract

In this article I reconstruct the place narrative of the Rum community (Greeks of Turkey) in Fener, Istanbul through unrest, displacement, and gentrification, and how the urban fabric, everyday life, and encounters transformed through different phases of urban change. Fener was a neighbourhood where cultural groups coexisted with mutual respect. This environment started to deteriorate when societal unrest towards non-Muslims resulted in a city-wide assault in 1955 and a subsequent displacement of many non-Muslims from the neighbourhood. The neighbourhood decayed and later became an attractive spot for gentrifiers because of its multicultural history. This implicated a massive physical change after an unimpemented regeneration project leading to gentrification. I theorize this narrative mainly based on Whitehead's "permanences," the stabilities in the physical and non-physical presence of Rums in Fener and Bhabha's "in-between temporalities" as complements of permanences, defining space-time envelopes that signify both adjustment and resilience, but also amnesia as a result of urban unrest through social and physical change. The Rum urban narrative provides a complex story of challenged community identity; therefore, it necessitates the use of several qualitative research methods: interviews with older residents, historical investigation with documentation, and personal observation. The study results show that the Rum community's daily practices and placeworlds were lost; however, the community remembers permanences better than in-between temporalities. Linking fragmented narratives by reconstructing them fights cultural amnesia and leads to a better connection with place and past contexts.

Keywords

cultural amnesia; displacement; permanence; Rum heritage; urban change

Issue

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1. Introduction

More than 60 years after the displacement, old Rum (Greeks of Turkey) residents' connections with Fener remain in their collective memory. Fener, a historic neighbourhood located on the eastern shore of the Golden Horn in Istanbul, has been their home and the place to build and maintain their collective identities. How they once related to the neighbourhood can be understood from the delicacy of the words they use when they recall everyday experiences in Fener. "During the summer nights, everyone in the neighbourhood [Rums, Jews and Muslims] took their seats in front of their building. They would spend time together drinking tea or coffee, chatting until midnight, especially when there

was a full moon" (Respondent 2). These words belong to an old Rum resident talking about the experience of an inviting, informal yet traditional evening ritual for all neighbours—Rums, Jews, or Muslims.

In this study, my goals are: (a) to reconstruct Fener's urban narrative through the lens of Rums, as a displaced community from a historic neighbourhood of Istanbul; (b) to explore how urban change, whether it is in the form of physical destruction or societal intervention, constantly redefines place and breaks the place narrative in the case of Fener; and finally (c) to explain how the broken narrative creates cultural amnesia.

My general approach is to examine phases of the Rum presence and non-presence through a diachronic approach. Permanences provide stabilities in the

physical and non-physical presence of Rums. In-between temporalities signify change. I use various qualitative methods to tackle the research problem. I reference photographic and cartographic documentation, Rum narratives of Istanbul from previously published books, and academic articles. I interpret the semi-structured interviews that were conducted by myself with Rum residents who spent a part of their childhood in Fener. My observations as an academic who worked in the region also contribute to the findings. I finally provide a semantic interpretation of these qualitative inquiries. A combination of these methods provides a robust remaking of a Rum urban narrative—a specific one that involves the disappearance of a particular culture from a place.

This article contends that considering permanences offers a fresh way of looking at the unique and frequently odd connection between the sense of community and a changing urban environment. Despite the fast changes in urban settings, community identities appear to persist. This study answers such an issue by emphasizing the evolution and formulation of permanences and complementary in-between temporalities. Additionally, although there is extensive research on cultural amnesia, most studies neglect cultural amnesia and heritage loss—or decay—after the displacement of a particular group. This research offers a significant contribution to the field of cultural amnesia by proposing a novel view for cultural heritage studies by investigating change in a neighbourhood through a series of destructive events such as pogrom, displacement, and gentrification through the lens of a single cultural group.

After examining the case, I argue that the Rum community, who dealt with displacement, remembers and reconstructs a new narrative that helps mend broken narratives through storytelling. However, not recalling feels comforting to avoid facing trauma. Urban change causes placeworlds to disappear and results in cultural amnesia when there is no prevention for protecting the community identity and the tangible, and intangible heritage of displaced communities. Finally, although the physical heritage of the Rum community still exists, Fener lost the daily practices of Rum culture.

2. Theoretical Background

Places are bounded territories that comprise a collection of people and economic activities while offering a platform for collective action (Ong & Gonzalez, 2019). The residential neighbourhood is a characteristic place of the urban fabric. Places are more than the sum of their parts since and serve a variety of functions (Ong & Gonzalez, 2019). Any place has a variety of meanings, interpretations, and even multiple identities tied to it. This fact arises from activities conducted there, the cultural history of the place, and the personal experiences of a person from there (Taylor, 2010). Physical spaces of a place may remain as they are. However, places are not

defined with any fixed identity, they are constructed and reconstructed flexibly as multiple narratives (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Taylor, 2010).

Place narratives hold spatiotemporal multiplicities, making it possible to understand the relationship between places and events (Sennett, 1992), and require dynamic accumulations of knowledge. The poststructuralist history approach doubts whether there is such a thing as a well-ordered, self-defining, self-regulating, and self-transforming system. Historical eras are just transitory, each regarded as a web of discourses that is eventually replaced by another (Groat & Wang, 2001, p. 149). Rhythmanalysis (see Lefebvre, 2004) illustrates this thinking successfully because it tries to diversify our perceptions of time (Degen, 2018) as opposed to viewing it as a linear elasticity that accelerates and retards processes that manifest spatially (Blunt et al., 2020; Harvey, 1989). I argue that a place contains multiple narratives, each holding complexities—such as overlapping and dissociating discourses, timeframes, and spatialities belonging to different cultural groups.

I propose a theoretical interpretation of narrating places concerning change based on temporal, spatial, and cultural multiplicities around Whitehead's (1946) concept of permanence and Bhabha's (2004) in-between temporalities, using, additionally, Massey's (2005) throwtogetherness to explain overlapping histories of different cultural groups and Gordon's placeworlds to explore collective memory and cultural amnesia.

2.1. Permanences and In-Between Temporalities

According to Whitehead (1925, p. 112), permanences are “innumerable” and “practically indestructive objects.” Permanences are entities that, for some time, acquire stability in their internal ordering of processes that create spaces as well as their boundaries (Whitehead, 1925). Whitehead (1925, p. 112) states that a favourable environment and “enduring organisms of great permanence” are essential for evolution. Harvey (1996, p. 55) interprets permanences as “relatively stable configurations of matters and things,” and as formations that eventually occupy a space exclusively (for some time) and designate it as being in that place (for a time; Harvey, 1996, p. 261). No matter how solid they may seem, permanences are susceptible to time as “perpetual perishing,” and are carved out during the process of place formation; additionally, they are vulnerable to the processes that produce, maintain, and eliminate them (Harvey, 1996, p. 261).

My interpretation of permanence is spatiotemporally defined stability that constructs an unstable whole. Permanences, as Harvey (1996) interprets them, embody a multiplicity of processes, including processes that destabilize them. I will refer to these destabilizing processes later as in-between temporalities. Referring to Massey (1995), all places convey a notion of a disturbance where we perceive the place's past as embodying

the location's true essence. Massey (1995, p. 184) criticizes practices that attempt to freeze a specific aspect of a place at a particular moment or refer to places as "unspoiled"—as they get spoiled when they no longer carry their true essence. In Whitehead's permanence, the attempt is not to freeze but to emplace spatiotemporal entities in a dynamic narrative. It is helpful to think of places not as physical locations but rather as dynamic expressions of social relationships over time "open to a multiplicity of reading," as Massey refers to as an "envelope of space-time" (Massey, 1995, p. 185).

I develop a counterpart—but also a complement—of permanence based on Bhabha's in-between temporality concept. Bhabha (2012, p. 321) defines in-between temporality in the context of postcolonialism as "a moment of transition, not merely the continuum of history." He also discusses it as "a strange stillness that defines the present in which the very writing of historical transformation becomes uncannily visible" (Bhabha, 2012, p. 321). Bhabha dwells on the cultural and often diasporic meanings of in-between temporality. He proposes that spheres of social experience connect through an in-between temporality that bridges the stillness of home—the moment, with the discursive image of the world (Bhabha, 2012, p. 19). I also refer to these in-between states in a similar way that Bauman puts forward in liquid modernity in the context of postmodernity. In-between states capture the interdependencies, perpetual change, and mobility characterizing relationships and identities (Angouri et al., 2020; Bauman, 1997, 2000). Again, based on Bauman's (2000) thinking, social, political, cultural, occupational, religious, and sexual identities are all constantly shifting in the contemporary world.

Therefore, in-between temporalities shift permanences, like the liquid state that Bauman describes (Bauman, 2000). They are either diasporic shifts, following Bhabha's thinking, or contemporary shifts, following Bauman's thinking. Either way, they create change, uncanniness, and contradiction, while eventually ending up transforming reality or uniting with it in the long run. Studying in-between temporalities allows looking deeply into transitions—such as the transitions that I will tackle in the case of Fener—that damage the sense of place and unity of communities, particularly with displacement, forced migration, and gentrification.

Diasporic shifts create the first type of in-between temporality. Namely, displacement and forced migration are oriented towards a specific ethnic or cultural group, creating unrest within that group and can eventually result in significant political assaults. When the unrest grows more prominent and reaches a breaking point, it may lead to offences in public spaces, traumatic experiences in affected groups, and disruptions in the composition of the social fabric. It can result in the destruction and decay of the physical environment, damage, and loss of their tangible and intangible heritage.

Contemporary shifts create the second type of in-

between temporality. Gentrification is the current and the most common type of such shift in urban environments. At the start of the 21st century, gentrification had spread worldwide (see Lees et al., 2016). Gentrification eventually creates a gradual in-between temporality as social, physical, cultural, and economic change slowly (sometimes, even not so slowly) transforms the social fabric. There are always winners and losers depending on social class disparities. Because of the varied types of individuals who live there and engage in different activities, areas that have undergone gentrification feel different. Also, neighbourhoods have generally become less affordable (Gurney, n.d.). Therefore, gentrification also includes processes such as displacement.

2.2. *Overlapping Histories: Thrown-togetherness*

Place narratives also hold cultural multiplicities. Places constituted by various cultural and ethnic groups might have complementary or contradicting social identities. A group's social identity is the self-image generated from group affiliations and the meanings attached to those affiliations, like symbols, values, and ideologies (Blokland, 2017; Hamilton, 1985, p. 8; Verkuyten, 2014). Bauman (2001) argues that the definition of community—which constructs social identity—is sameness, denoting the absence of the other. However, societies produce social identities and, as such, they are neither stable nor inevitable. They depend on social processes, even though they frequently appear, feel, and seem substantial and overwhelming (Verkuyten, 2014). A more inclusive understanding of cultural multiplicities is thrown-togetherness. Massey (2005) used this term to explain the "whirl and juxtaposition of global diversity and difference" (Amin, 2008, p. 9) in today's world. It generates a social ethos with potentially significant civic overtones manifested physically as the relatively unrestricted movement of several bodies in a shared physical space (Amin, 2008). Thrown-togetherness is an effort to encourage people to think of places as porous and to live in them as a "constellation of trajectories" (Massey, 2005, p. 151).

Thrown-togetherness also proposes a fresh way of framing the subject of belonging (Massey, 2005). An uncanny side of thrown-togetherness is significant for Istanbul's belonging issues. Mills (2010, p. 211) states that "the price of belonging, in Turkey, comes at a cost—the forgetting of particular histories at the expense of frequent retelling of the others and silencing of the particular memories that cannot be entirely repressed." The past is romanticized, historical landscapes are commercialized, and the multicultural *mahalle* culture has been embedded in the contemporary consumer culture. Mills (2010) challenges us to think about how stories about the neighbourhood's heterogeneous pasts also legitimized the practices of erasure and displacement that drove minority populations out of their neighbourhoods.

2.3. Exploring Meaning, Memory, and Cultural Amnesia Through Placeworlds

Places are spaces in which people have given meaning or feel some connection (Cresswell, 2015). Eric Gordon refers to placeworld as the accumulation of a group's place-bound values and practices (de Waal, 2014; Gordon & Koo, 2008). Deriving from Habermas's life-worlds, he states that a placeworld emerges when individuals achieve a shared knowledge of a location, just as a lifeworld does when people reach a shared understanding of something. Collective meanings develop alongside the function of a space, and they construct a particular group's cultural repertoire relating to one or several places. A communicative action creates a placeworld "when a group brings a place into shared relevance" (Gordon & Koo, 2008, p. 204). For instance, a placeworld reveals information about a hidden cemetery entrance or street corner, resulting from unique local knowledge of a specific community (de Waal, 2014).

Placeworlds and memories have an intricate connection. All memory is socially constructed with the concept of space: Space has the stability to allow a person to discover the past in the present (Halbwachs, 1950, p. 23; Hebbert, 2005). We associate memories with places (de Certeau, 1990). People are attached to places they live in (or have lived in the past) and create placeworlds because they accumulate memories associated with those places. Halbwachs (1950) considers memories "are as much the products of the symbols and narratives available publicly—and of the social means for storing and transmitting them—as they were the possessions of individuals" (Olick, 1999, p. 335; see Borer, 2006). From a Bergsonian point of view, memory does not only derive from a person's past but goes back further than his lifetime (Burton, 2008). The ability to navigate, mediate, and create connections between temporal fields comes from the action of remembering (Keightley, 2010). Therefore, memory is not only about the past but also about the present and the future. Similarly, placeworlds exist if the memories and narratives that created them persist. We can examine disruptions and continuities by excavating historical and forgotten occurrences (Keightley, 2010) and identifying placeworlds. "Memorial publics" can also be created (see Hammond, 2020; Igsiz, 2018; Navaro, 2012) by constructing placeworlds of shared trauma.

"Placeworlds require constant attention: without tending, they, like memories and experiences, retreat into the mundane stuff of everyday life" (Gordon & Koo, 2008, p. 207). Cultural amnesia occurs as we lose placeworlds, as a memory disturbance when collective memory weakens by historicist reconstructions that seem fragmented and disconnected in the city due to disruptions (Boyer, 1996). Cultural amnesia is a process of disremembering (Landzelius, 2003) or incrementally forgetting the past in the context of a historical place. "The collective memory...functions not only to remember but also to forget selectively or to

'fail' to recall, or even to disremember" (Alpan, 2012, p. 204). It creates collective memory that involves selecting which memories to remember and which to forget. Dis-remembering, selective forgetting, and loss of collective memory can result from disruptions or "processes of othering such as displacement, exclusion, and detainment" (Landzelius, 2003, p. 215), deportation, or population exchange. Amnesia can sometimes involve a double forgetting: "a forgetting even of the very act of forgetting" (Lampropoulos & Markidou, 2010, p. 1). Connerton (2008, p. 59) describes seven types of forgetting: "repressive erasure; prescriptive forgetting; forgetting that is constitutive in the formation of a new identity; structural amnesia; forgetting as annulment; forgetting as planned obsolescence and forgetting as humiliated silence." Types of forgetting are profoundly political and diversify according to different cultures across phases of community identity.

Placeworld is endangered when disruptions happen, and when it can only be told through narratives, it will not be experienced again in the same way. It is difficult for communities to transfer the knowledge that conveys the meanings of places "as they know it" to outsiders because "memories built around places cannot easily be shared with outsiders" (Harvey, 1996, p. 304). For Harvey (1996, p. 315), "experience...becomes incommunicable beyond certain bounds because authentic art and genuine aesthetic sense can only spring out of strong rootedness in place." When the rootedness in place is lost, "places become the sites of incommunicable othernesses" (Harvey, 1996, p. 315). In some cases, placeworlds cannot be transferred from generation to generation; thus, cultural amnesia is more likely to happen. As soon as placeworlds are no longer present in daily urban interactions, urban spaces lose their attribute of place and become subjects of forgetting because they no longer carry certain place narratives, even if they still physically embody spatial traces of that particular narrative of the past. According to Netto (2017, p. 72), "spaces 'mean' as much as our acts, precisely because they are performed, semanticised by our acts," and "meanings cannot simply be attributed to things, but are enacted in practices" (Netto, 2017, p. 73). Based on this thinking, the spaces that cannot allow the enactment in practices—as they are not performed in specific ways they used to, but in metaphorical ways or not performed at all—become sources of cultural amnesia.

We forget some narratives of a place because of other dominant narratives. Diverse perceptions of a place's identity, each distinctly dependent on the socio-geographical situations of the organizations that support them. We tell the history of a place, how we tell it, and whose history ends up being dominant all have a significant role in shaping that place's identity (Massey, 1995). The remains of such forgotten sites become potential areas of spatial restructuring of capitalism (Landzelius, 2003), as illusions and historicist reconstructions (Boyer, 1996) of the past as spaces of nostalgia. According to Iris

Marion Young (2011), dealing with historical injustices, recognizing them, and acknowledging them are ways to get started. Although avoiding remembering is a cultural practice, dealing with memories is necessary to progress and move forward. It mends societal ties between communities and is an issue of accountability for injustice (Young, 2011).

3. Methodology

I present Fener as a relevant case of neighbourhood involving collective memory and cultural amnesia for two reasons. First, I consider Fener a historic neighbourhood with many layers of collective memory and a sense of belonging in different cultural communities, such as minority groups. Fener also possesses cultural traces of these groups. Secondly, Fener illustrates a variety of memory disruptions followed by cultural amnesia processes. I reconstruct Fener’s urban narrative based on the Rum experience. While doing so, I try to establish Rums’ narrative of permanence and in-between temporalities. Permanences investigate stabilities in memory and collective experiences of a community in places of the past. I attempt to analyze these permanences by interpreting: (a) the articulations of social relations in a particular place, how people interact with each other and with the place; and (b) the place memory—namely placeworlds, specific aspects of places only known with place experience. I explore in-between temporality as a process of change. This process includes the narratives of loss and disruption of the 1955 assault, regarding traces as remains of the Rum community. Some traces are tangible, such as buildings and the semantic aspects of the built environment. Despite their physical permanence, these historical sites that persist for a long time cannot be seen as Whitehead’s permanences because they do not offer a spatiotemporal continuity. Instead, they exist in fragmentation: in states of permanences and in-between temporality. I interpret how the impacts of urban change gradually turned Fener into a fragmented site by excavating in-between temporalities. This excavation involves many phases of the urban fabric, such as decay, rehabilitation, renewal attempt, and gentrification (see Figure 1).

I used various methods to excavate the permanences and in-between temporalities in Fener. First, I discussed

the neighbourhood historically with written sources such as books and articles on the Rum community in Fener and recent discussions about Istanbul of similar interest. I supported my arguments with visual sources, including photographic and cartographic documentation that allows a comparative interpretation of the area. I also investigated and elaborated on previous Rum narratives of Istanbul from books and academic articles, especially about the community identity of Rums.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with old Rum residents who spent a part of their childhood in Fener and still reside in other places in Istanbul. Some respondents lived there for a while, whereas others only recall their experiences in Fener as they visited their family members who used to live there. Some others only attended school in the area and had no family members in Fener. There are now a deficient number of Rum residents in the city. Therefore, one of the study’s limitations was that there were a limited number of respondents. I interviewed six people through snowballing, of which four were male participants, and two were female participants. All participants were from the Rum community, meaning they are Greek Orthodox and possess Turkish identification. The respondents had in-person experience in Fener, with most having experienced Fener before 1955, so although age information was not explicitly asked, most participants were over 60 years of age. The interviews were conducted through video calls, varying from 20 minutes to 65 minutes. The interviews were semi-structured, and although there was a list of questions that I referred to, I felt the need to change the plan and ask other appropriate questions at times. I intended to continue the conversation where the respondents would feel at ease, and the flow of the exchanges continued naturally. The official question list included questions such as:

1. Please explain your relation to Fener. In what years and for how long have you or your family members been there? Have you been there as a resident/student or employee?
2. Referring to the past and your memories, could you give me some insights about the daily life and everyday experiences of a Rum in Fener?
3. How do you think the neighbourhood experiences of a Rum in Fener changed after the 1955 trauma?

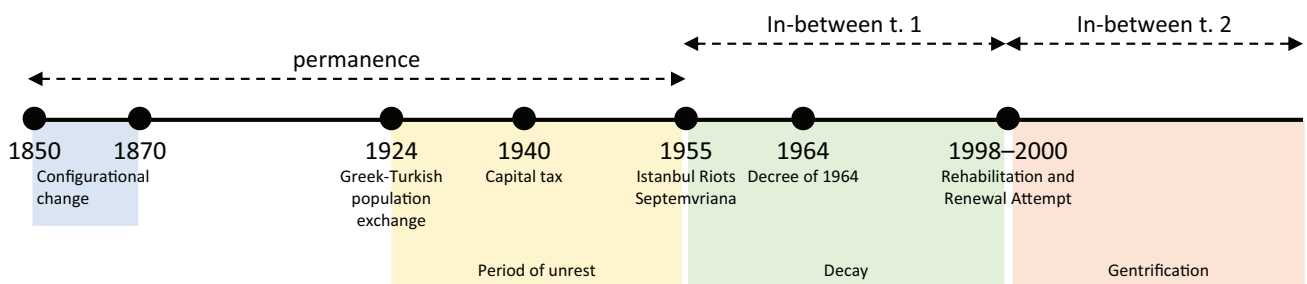


Figure 1. Fener’s permanences and in-between temporalities.

Please also refer to any other dates that are a threshold in the Rum experience of Fener.

4. Do you think Fener still reflects Rum culture? Please explain why yes or no.

I analyzed my observations of Fener as an urban scholar who worked at a nearby university between 2018 and 2020. I delivered a current interpretation of the neighbourhood, especially on the effects of gentrification on the community experience. Finally, semantic analyses bridge the interpretation of these qualitative inquiries back to the main concepts of the article. I discuss how permanences, in-between temporalities, throwntogetherness, and placeworlds work together in Fener’s specific case.

4. Case Study: Fener

Eckardt (2008, p. 17) refers to the “multifaceted dimensions” of Istanbul as “complex, diverse, multilayered, antagonistic and overlapping homogeneous and heterogenous at the same time, the same place.” Turkish *mahalle* (neighbourhood) is an “urban cultural space created by social practices of neighbouring” (Mills, 2004, p. vi–vii). The concept of *mahalle* encloses collective memory and familiarity. Recently, cultural change has been influential in Istanbul, but historical landscapes, such as the old *mahalle*, still signify the collective memory of its residents. Social practices are decreasing in contemporary Istanbul (Mills, 2004). Most of the historic neighbourhoods in Istanbul comprise several layers of lived experiences and urban morphologies. The reason behind this is the historical accumulation and articulations of social relations that the city collected through centuries (Massey, 1995). Some of these cases presuppose the past as the natural character of the place (Massey, 1995).

Fener is approximately 15 km to the west of Istanbul’s city centre. Fener was mainly a Greek Orthodox neighbourhood that was inhabited by Phanariots, an Ottoman Christian elite group that ascended to power in Ottoman politics from the 17th to the 19th century (Philliou, 2009). Çelik (1986) discusses that in the pre-Tanzimat Ottoman city, before 1839, the religious leaders of ethnic groups oversaw the neighbourhood. This situation changed with the Tanzimat era, where a centralized gov-

ernment replaced the ethnic leaders with a reform that brought systematization and control over neighbourhood units. Fener has been part of Fatih, the third District of Istanbul, since the late 19th century (Çelik, 1986).

4.1. Permanences of Fener

Reconstructing a Rum urban narrative, I propose that Fener has only one permanence phase ending in 1955. Until the mid-20th century, Fener was a predominantly Rum neighbourhood. Rums and other non-Muslim communities were assigned the shoreline neighbourhoods of the Golden Horn, while Muslim communities settled in the inner lands (Çelik, 1986). Rums have been historically situated in Fener. The Rum community is Orthodox Christians, their ancestors have lived in Turkey, and they hold Turkish citizenship. Romain Örs (2006) discusses that the Rum community has frequently been classified as Greeks in Turkey and Greece. She illustrates how Rums relate to Greek and Turkish cultures by giving two examples from her interviewees. She reports that one respondent feels both Turkish and Greek, simultaneously relating to, and distancing from both nationalities. The other feels neither Turkish nor Greek, preferring the title Rum Orthodox.

During the late 19th and early 20th century, Fener was primarily inhabited by non-Muslim groups, Rums, and Jews, with some Muslims. There has not been a significant societal change during this time. Fener underwent a significant urban configurational change between the 1850 and 1870s in the context of westernization processes for controlling the fires that happened in the 18th and 19th centuries. Orthogonal plans were designed and implemented after a long period of organic incremental planning (Figure 2). The most considerable effect was that the neighbourhoods’ spatial layout changed radically (Çelik, 1986) from an organic self-grown to a planned orthogonal street pattern in the area.

During the early to mid-20th century, the Rum community of Istanbul, along with other non-Muslim minority communities, suffered from multiple attempts of economic, political, and social obstacles and offences that already started unrest in Rum society. The first was the forced population exchange between Greece and Turkey in 1924. This population exchange involved 1,200,000 Anatolian Rums being sent to Greece and



Figure 2. Orthogonal planning implementation: Comparative city maps from 1853 to 1922. Source: Tuzcu (2022).

400,000 Rumeli Muslims living in Greece being sent to Turkey in return (Aktar, 2000). Igsiz (2018, p. 27) refers to the population exchange as segregative biopolitics. The second was introducing the Capital Tax (or the Wealth Tax): To fund the army, Turkey enacted a contentious wealth tax in 1942. Minorities were disproportionately affected by this tax which had a detrimental impact on development and productivity but assisted in nationalizing the Turkish economy (Ağır & Artunç, 2019).

During that time, the daily life of Rums was peaceful. Most of Fener's grocery shops and bakeries were run by Rums, but the neighbourhood also had several Jew and Muslim residents who owned some shops. Jews, Rums, and Muslims coexisted in the neighbourhood peacefully. The tolerance for each other in these groups fostered neighbourhood attachment and cohesion. The neighbourhood mainly consisted of minority groups, and inter-group relations were favourable because many people identified as others themselves—hence they had a sense of belonging, empathy, and security in the neighbourhood through a unity formed around otherness. This unity defines a new way of belonging while being other, embedded in the concept of throwntogetherness. Respondent 1 says that he experienced Fener as a place where all residents had neighbourly relations. When he and his family lived in the neighbourhood, everybody held these neighbourly relations before the 1955 trauma. Moreover, he continues with an anecdote describing intercultural relations in the neighbourhood during the 1940s and early 1950s:

Every year at Christmas time, my grandmother made a tray of Christmas buns and sent them to the bakery with a sheet with our name. Every tray baked with the name tag burned would get mixed up....Before everyone offered some buns for sharing, my grandmother used to pack a bun for our *muhtar* [the neighbourhood headman], and I used to take it to him. Also, during Eid, Muslim neighbours sent meat to us [the eid involves the sacrifice of a veal or a lamb and to share the meat with neighbours is traditional].

Also, Rum children had memories of safe public spaces in Fener. Respondent 3 says he used to play ball with the other kids in the neighbourhood, especially around the Fener Rum Highschool and Ioakeimeion Girls' Highschool, but also in Karapapak Street behind Taksiarhi Rum Church. He adds that the Rum community had many students back then (around 5,000 students), and Fener Rum Highschool used to compete with other prominent Rum schools in Istanbul—such as Zappeion and Zografeion. These schools were minority schools, and only Rum students with Turkish IDs could attend. He also remembers the most critical communication they had was with the neighbouring Girls High School, where he and his friends intended to communicate with the students.

4.2. In-Between Temporalities of Fener

The first in-between temporality includes trauma, displacement, and decay after 1955. On 6–7 September 1955, the Istanbul Pogrom (or the Istanbul Riots) was a tangible and intangible offence towards Istanbul's non-Muslim people, especially towards Rums. Fener was one of the places where this incident was devastating because of its high number of non-Muslim residents. Many houses, shops, and cultural buildings, such as schools and churches, had been slaughtered. Non-Muslim women and children had been abused. Respondent 1 shares that his grandmother has narrated memories of that day:

My grandmother had a neighbour right across the street; they were close and fond of each other. Her name was Z. (Turkish Muslim woman), and on the morning of that day, she came to my grandmother and said, 'K., do not ask questions, take all your important belongings and come to my house.' My grandmother went to her house and survived, but she suffered looking from just across the street as the offenders destroyed her house. A Turkish neighbour on the street came out and shouted at the offenders, and only then they stopped. My grandmother did not want to leave the house or the neighbourhood; she repaired the house and moved back in. The Turkish government paid a minimal compensation—17 liras for repairs. She lived there from 1955 until the 1970s; then she moved in with my family.

Many Rum residents left the area after this incident (Mills, 2004), unlike Respondent 1's grandmother. The neighbourhood suffered for a long time from the trauma that this incident caused. This incident was significant regarding the balance of non-Muslims and Muslims in the area. Most non-Muslims, especially the Rums, left the affected neighbourhoods—such as Fener, Balat, and Samatya, and moved to newer neighbourhoods like Beyoğlu and Kurtuluş.

Mainly after the 1955 trauma, and because many non-Muslims felt unsafe and decided to leave either the neighbourhood or the country, the neighbourhood decayed. Around the same time, in the 1960s, a significant trend in migration was towards larger cities like Istanbul and Ankara, where employment opportunities increased because of rapid industrialisation. During that time, many Anatolians settled in the neighbourhood in the vacated buildings by the displaced communities. Dinçer and Enlil (2002) discuss how Fener decayed based on in-migrant attitudes who would use these places as a stepping-stone before going to the city fringe to improve living conditions, depending on their abilities, experience, and mentality. Those unable to relocate would stay in these regions, becoming more deprived (Dinçer & Enlil, 2002).

With the Invasion of Cyprus and the Decree of 1964, which involved the forced migration of Rums

holding Greek passports to Greece, almost no Rum remained in Fener in daily life. There was also a great deal of Greco-Turkish tension in Cyprus (see Navaro, 2012). Many respondents agreed that the remaining Istanbul Rum community moved to Kurtulus, Beyoglu, and Prince's Islands after 1955; only those who came to school or work visited Fener regularly. Rum churches and schools decayed. During the early 20th century, there were 58 Rum schools, with 7,213 students, 352 teachers, and 222 school managers, but now there are less than 200 students and five schools in total. Ioakeimeion Girls Highschool shut down in 1988 due to the lack of students, and its building became disused. Respondent 2 states that he was giving courses to the "two or three" remaining students of the Ioakeimeion Highschool before it eventually closed its doors. There are less than 50 students at Fener Rum Highschool (Kotam, 2016).

The neighbourhood lost the placeworlds of Rum culture within this timeframe. Respondent 4 comments about the disappearance of the daily life experiences of Rums giving this example: "There were theatrical performances in a building near the Fener Rum Patriarchate, everyone would join these entertainments, but now nobody even lives there to attend these, just a few gatekeepers." Fener lost rhythms, habits, and urban daily life experiences with the Rum community's displacement. Respondent 1 says that the Rum newspapers came at 1 PM, and taking that newspaper was a ritual for his grandmother, who impatiently waited for it every day. Also, habits and codes formed around certain urban functions, such as restaurants, shops, or meeting areas, disappear. Respondent 5 mentions an *Iskembe* (*rumen* soup—a typical late-night food of Turkey) restaurant run by a Jew resident, which residents frequented closed after 1955, and that habit disappeared. The neighbourhood, therefore, lost countless placeworlds, which is one of the reasons leading to cultural amnesia.

The second in-between temporality involves rehabilitation, renewal, and gentrification. Historical neighbourhoods quickly transformed after the first wave of gentrification in Istanbul in the 1980s. Because of state-initiated gentrification, these changes accelerated in the 2000s since these regions were abandoned by their original owners and neglected for sixty years (Dinçer, 2010; İslam, 2009). Fener and Balat quarters were considered for the rehabilitation projects not only because of the influence of the recent restoration of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchy—a significant political domain in Fener, but also the presence of physically decayed buildings (Dinçer, 2010). Two urban regeneration initiatives were undertaken in the area in the 2000s: the Fener Balat Rehabilitation Program, funded by the EU, and the Fener, Balat, Ayvansaray Urban Renewal Project, ordered by Fatih Municipality. The initiating agenda is where the conflicts between the projects originate. The latter effort aimed to turn the neighbourhood into a cultural and tourism hub, paving the way for gentrification and urban eviction, while the former prioritised improving

socioeconomic conditions rather than physical restoration (Aysev Deneç, 2014).

Gentrification has occurred in Fener in several forms. First, after the failed renovation projects, gentrifiers saw the area's growing potential and started to invest. They renovated buildings for commercial use, third-wave coffee shops, yoga studios, restaurants, art and exhibition areas, and small business shops. The neighbourhood experience is also popular on social media and is perceived as a colourful and welcoming neighbourhood. Most of the renovated houses are painted in different colours. Although decayed buildings are still abundant, the neighbourhood changed its appearance to make it more inclusive. It also gives the illusion of the past, that some new shops seem nostalgic. An example might be a soda shop that sells nostalgic sodas. The soda shop confirms the ideas of Landzelius (2003) and Boyer (1996) that forgotten spaces carry potentialities for spatial restructuring of capitalism or as counterfeit spaces of nostalgia.

Some of the remaining buildings still exist as traces of the Rum culture—schools and churches are either decaying or preserved with care, some becoming a tourist attraction from a distance while staying defensive to outsiders, such as the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and the Fener Rum Highschool. Although these buildings carry their meanings and uses, they lose some of the placeworlds attached to them. Most decaying heritage lost their authenticity as meanings, functions, and uses altered with the disappearance of the community that spatialised them, whereas some of the decaying buildings are temporarily reused. For example, Ioakeimeion Girls' Highschool has been used as an exhibition space for Greek artist Kalliopi Lemos' work "I Am I Between Worlds and Between Shadows" at the Istanbul Biennale in 2013 (Figure 3). Lemos described her work at this exhibition as representing young girls struggling with psychological and physical oppression. The othering theme is based on young girls' experiences compared to the experience of former students during the years before school closure (Altug, 2013).

5. Concluding Thoughts: Communities Lose Placeworlds But Remember Narratives

Fener faced several traumatic events over the 20th century through the lens of the Rum community, and permanences shifted to a recurring in-between temporality series. This shift resulted in two main issues: The Rum community's daily practices and placeworlds were lost. However, some were repaired but not maintained in the collective memory for long as the community who made them was away. Some in-between temporalities may exist as healing periods and healing places, and keeping placeworlds could be possible through resilience (like the resilience of Respondent 1's grandmother rebuilding her house). However, other times resilience fails to protect a community's identity in someplace. Secondly, Fener lost



Figure 3. Photo from Lemos' exhibition at Ioakeimeion Girls' Highschool. Source: Madra (2013).

its innate essence, as losing placeworlds. Losing placeworlds resulted in long-term amnesia and the romanticisation of the multicultural history of the neighbourhood with gentrification. Spaces of romanticisation are not only the potential objects but also the subjects of cultural amnesia. Also, the forced migration of the Rum community resulted in the pressure to forget; narratives were forgotten, not spoken, and therefore not reconstructed.

Fener Rum community remembers. They create a narrative that supports fragmented healing narratives through storytelling, even though it is more soothing not to remember to avoid suffering from trauma. Their remembering is essential for reconstructing the urban narrative. It is also indispensable to excavate the forgotten narratives to establish the truth, which may lead to justice. According to the case study results, the Rum community remembers permanences better than in-between temporalities. Because of loss, trauma and grief, liminal phases are more complicated and less pleasant to remember. Their memories were based on intercultural communication, the peaceful, friendly, and secure environment before 1955, and less on hardships after it. According to Bauman (2001), security is a prerequisite for intercultural dialogue. Without security, there is little likelihood that groups will open up to one another and strengthen their empathy for one another (Bauman, 2001). However, more is needed to base our remembering on permanence. Remembering in-between temporalities is crucial, especially the destructive ones that create disruptions and injustices. Working on linking those fragmented narratives leads to a better connection with place and its past contexts of it. Forgotten narratives should be communicated to deal with cultural amnesia, and only then can we decrease the potentiality of

restructuring spaces of capitalism or spaces of counterfeit nostalgia.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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