

# Growth and spatial distribution of art galleries in Istanbul between 2000 and 2022

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## Abstract

In this paper, we illustrate the growth and spatial distribution of art galleries in Istanbul at the beginning of the 21st century. Previous studies have attributed the decentralization of urban activities from the old CBD to sub-centers as a result of population growth, economic and transportation development, and globalization in Istanbul. The present study begins by explaining the spatial distribution of Istanbul's cultural infrastructure within the urban macroform, followed by an investigation into the emergence and development of art galleries within the cultural ecosystem, providing a spatial focus as well as a historical context. We then analyze the growth and spatial distribution of art galleries from 2000 to 2022, with reference to the spatial characteristics of the cultural infrastructure and CBD in Istanbul's macroform. The results indicate that over two decades, the number of art galleries increased, with a tendency toward centralization in the historical CBD of the city, while decentralization also occurred at the borders of the historical CBD. Additionally, new clusters of art galleries emerged following the extension of the CBD and singular redevelopment projects specializing in cultural and artistic functions. This study contributes to the literature on Istanbul's urban growth and cultural studies by presenting a spatial assessment of the art galleries, which is a relatively underexplored component of cultural infrastructure. Additionally, by analyzing the relationships between the galleries and the urban macroform, specific revitalization and redevelopment projects, and cultural policies, the study highlights the role of art galleries within urban growth processes and the cultural infrastructure.

**Keywords:** art galleries, cultural infrastructure, Istanbul, urban structure, urban growth

## 1. Introduction

Culture and the arts are becoming important parts of the creative economy; while supporting cultural or artistic industries, cities can become more competitive in the global market. A significant body of research examines the role of artists and art museums in urban growth and regeneration in North America and Western Europe (Kim, 2007), while other studies trace these processes back to the 19th century examples in Paris and London (Lorente, 1995). However, there are not many studies in the geography of art galleries acting as intermediaries for the marketing of artworks. Thus, the present study examines the spatial distribution of art galleries in Istanbul, which form the main arteries of the city's cultural infrastructure, in the years 2000 and 2022. Within this context, the spatial distribution of art galleries is analyzed for these two time periods in relation to the urban macroform, existing cultural infrastructure, and urban regeneration projects.

During the postmodern era, the emergence of regions and new cities has created new horizons for the art markets. Although these organizational complexes were concentrated in large Western cities, such as New York and London, Istanbul's rank increased in this market due to the organization of international exhibitions, biennials, and the opening of new museums (Molho, 2014). Major

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industrialists of Turkey, by financially supporting these art events, not only provided benefits for themselves but also stimulated the local art markets.

At the international level, in the 1980s, as part of the postmodern culture, there was an increase in the number of art galleries due to economic development, spending more time on entertainment and consumption, and increasing importance of aesthetics. Furthermore, the development of art districts has consequently become a central focus of both policy initiatives and analytical efforts at the local and regional levels in the United States and Europe. Actors across different levels promote arts enclaves as catalysts for social and economic revitalization (Cameron & Coaffee, 2005). These studies demonstrate that the art and the neighborhood did not merely emerge simultaneously by coincidence but were fundamentally interconnected in their existence (Molotch & Treskon, 2009). Bain (2018) provides another example by analyzing the role of artists as urban developers through a critical examination of the relationships among artists, property ownership, and development in the mid-sized, post-industrial city of Hamilton, Ontario.

Adeli's (2011) more in-depth study shows that India, with its growing art scene, is one of the best examples of recent changes in its changing cultural and financial centers. The contemporary Indian art world is depicted as a 'new subsystem' of Indian society, emphasizing the structural transformations that have occurred over the past two decades. As another example from Asia, Kim (2007) describes urban art clusters and locational characteristics of art galleries in Seoul and their role in the creative industry in Korea. In Italy, Montalto (2010) explains that the Youth Ministry promotes contemporary arts and provides decentralization by encouraging responsible management of existing local projects. Some studies, drawing on the case of Athens and particularly Psiri, suggest that cultural clusters provide significant benefits for cultural facilities, including art galleries, by enhancing visibility, attracting visitors, and fostering shared audiences and networking opportunities (Karachalis & Deffner, 2012; Gospodini, 2006).

Despite the growing importance of art events at the international level, Anagnost's (2020) comprehensive study of New York's art world during the period 1960-2010 showed the end of affordable space for artists' studios, galleries, and community art centers in the urban centers of US cities due to rent increases. These results are also supported by Molotch and Treskon's (2009) paper on New York's Soho and Chelsea quarters for evidence of how art and place interact over time. They argue that the decline of New York's SoHo as a gallery district and the simultaneous rise of Chelsea cannot be explained solely by increasing property rents, as is often assumed, which are said to have displaced artistic activity. One of the reasons is that the city government has become a player in the effort to preserve Chelsea as an arts district. As a result, between 1990 and 2007, while the number of galleries increased from 16 to 303 in Chelsea, they decreased from 275 to 104 in SoHo. In another study, Zukin and Braslow (2011) conducted a comprehensive analysis on the life cycle of New York's creative districts, examining the unforeseen repercussions of unplanned cultural zones.

The paper by Molho (2014) explains the emergence of Istanbul's art market as a Middle Eastern art center with the financial and organizational support of the major industrialists of the country. At the same time, the spatial distribution of art galleries in Istanbul and their contribution to the value and revitalization of their neighborhoods are given. According to the results of this paper, the major concentration of art galleries was in a revitalized quarter, Beyoglu. Kahya and Ataöv (2019) examined clustered art organizations in Istanbul's contemporary art scene, revealing that these organizations promote complex social interactions among artist communities, despite inefficiencies in spreading this interactive networking across different social groups. Additionally, Polo (2015) claims that in the 2000s, contemporary art institutions in Istanbul flourished mainly due to the private initiatives of large industrial enterprises and wealthy families, frequently supported by political endorsement.

To further clarify these general dynamics identified across different countries, outlining the main factors influencing the location choices of art galleries will provide a clearer analytical framework.

The location choices of art galleries are a multidimensional urban process where various socioeconomic, cultural, and spatial factors converge. Art galleries may prefer to cluster in affluent neighborhoods and business-shopping districts. These areas are considered appealing because they allow galleries to establish close contact with potential buyers (Debroux, 2017; Molho & Sagot-Duvauroux, 2017). Another factor influencing the location of art galleries is the presence of cultural infrastructure. Areas with museums, art centers, and cultural institutions create a hub for galleries (Molho & Sagot-Duvauroux, 2017). From an economic perspective, affordable rents are also a determining factor in art galleries' location choices (Debroux, 2017; Molho & Sagot-Duvauroux, 2017). Old industrial areas with low property values and peripheral areas offer economic advantages for art galleries. Former industrial buildings, warehouses, or large empty buildings are preferred for such uses, as they offer spatial flexibility. Since these types of areas are also open to gentrification processes, they can become the focus of cultural production and exhibition areas in the long run (Molho & Sagot-Duvauroux, 2017).

Another critical factor in site selection is the need for collaborations and network structures among the actors in the art world. Galleries tend to be located close to each other for reasons such as access to shared resources, increased visibility, shared audience traffic, and the creation of opportunities for collaboration. These tendencies may facilitate the development of the natural clustering of art galleries in particular areas. Additionally, art galleries can use their location choices not only functionally but also as a means of strategic differentiation. Galleries may prefer to emphasize their aesthetic perspective or market positioning by placing themselves at unexpected locations (Molho & Sagot-Duvauroux, 2017). In conclusion, the concentration of art galleries in particular regions is shaped by the interplay of a range of factors, including cultural infrastructure, economic priorities, real estate market dynamics, social networks, and strategic location choices. This multi-layered structure paves the way for the emergence of art districts defined by galleries of different scales and characters within the city.

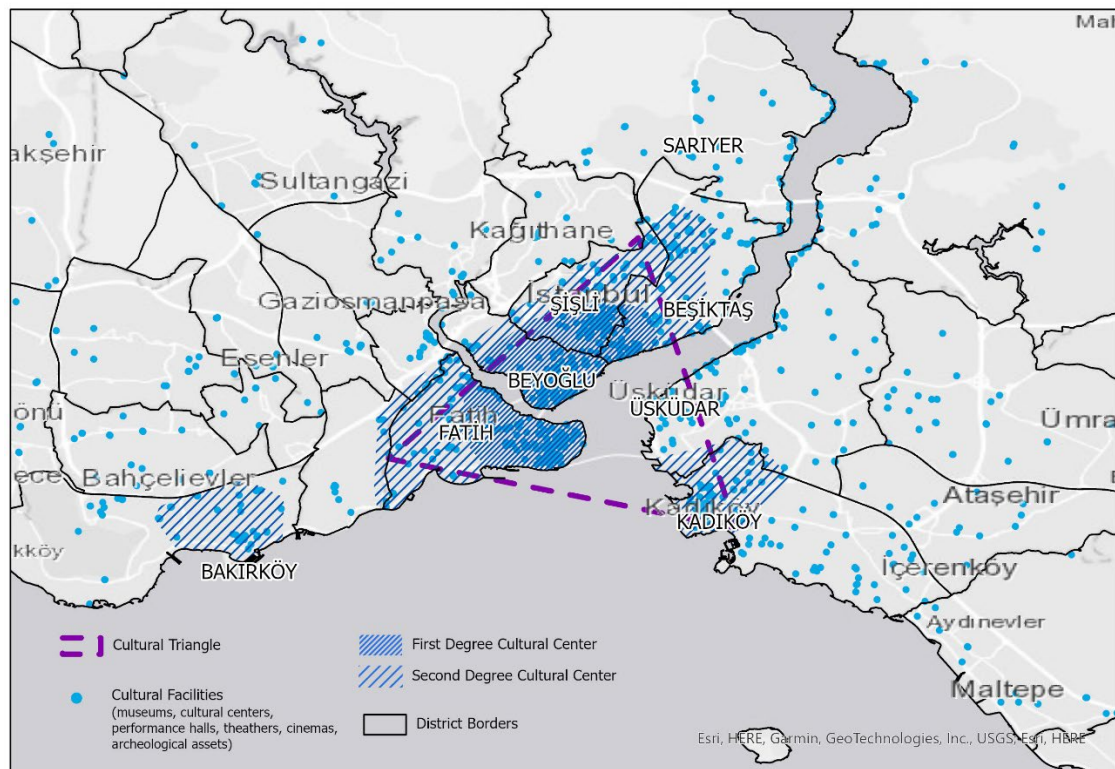
The review of the literature reveals that there are not many studies about the growth and location of art galleries in developing countries, and the present study investigates the spatial distribution of art galleries in Istanbul and compares their locational trends over the last two decades, from 2000 to 2022. Within the paper, background information about the city and its cultural infrastructure and earlier locational information about art galleries are given in the second section. A comparison of the growth and spatial distribution of art galleries during the last two decades was explained in the third section. This comparison is held at two levels. First, a general evaluation of the spatial distribution of art galleries in Istanbul's macroform is provided for the two different periods. Second, this evaluation is followed by an analysis of the growth and spatial location of art galleries at district levels. The final section of the paper is devoted to a conclusion.

## **2. Background: Art Galleries within the Cultural Infrastructure in Istanbul**

Istanbul's cultural infrastructure comprises distinct components, each with unique cultural and artistic values and organizational and management structures. These include a broad range of establishments, such as historical and monumental works, museums, cultural centers, exhibition and concert halls, cinemas, and art galleries. Several studies concerning the spatial distribution of Istanbul's cultural infrastructure have revealed that cultural facilities form a cluster concentrated in the historical center of Istanbul, standing out and specializing in its economic value as well as its cultural and historical values (Aksoy & Enlil, 2011; Enlil et al., 2011; Koramaz & Kısar Koramaz, 2009). Enlil et al. (2011) introduced the term "cultural triangle" for Istanbul's historical center and its extension in the north direction, where the cultural infrastructure is spatially decentralized. The cultural triangle refers to the Fatih and Beyoğlu districts as the historical core of the city; the region within the borders of the Şişli-Beşiktaş and Sarıyer districts referring to the extension of the historical CBD; and the Kadıköy and Üsküdar districts on the Anatolian Side. Cultural centers, museums, and historical monuments with national and international importance are concentrated

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in Beyoğlu and Fatih. Kadıköy, Üsküdar, and Şişli are regarded as second-degree sub-centers in terms of cultural infrastructure, as they have cultural facilities that serve the entire city as well as their immediate surroundings. Beşiktaş and Bakırköy are the other second-degree sub-center districts having a similar cultural infrastructure pattern (Kısar Koramaz & Koramaz, 2017; Koramaz & Kısar Koramaz, 2009). Another pillar of the cultural triangle is the Levent-Maslak axis, which lies within the borders of the Şişli, Beşiktaş, and Sarıyer districts (Figure 1). This area is significant, as it is home to enterprises that support cultural economies by providing services in creative industries such as printing, advertising, architecture, music, radio, and television (Aksoy & Enlil, 2011). Studies on Istanbul's spatial development have revealed that the city had a monocentric structure for a long time, with Beyoğlu and Fatih at its center. However, after the 1990s, the CBD, known as the first ring, began to expand outward from the center and displayed a polycentric development trend (Dökmeci & Berköz, 1994; Dökmeci & Çıracı, 1999). The spatial distribution of the cultural infrastructure and the enterprises in the creative industries also overlaps with the polycentric structure of Istanbul. On the other hand, Istanbul's cultural infrastructure also tends to spread along the coastline of the Golden Horn through the adaptive reuse of historical buildings and regeneration projects (Aksoy & Enlil, 2011).



**Figure 1** Centrality and spatial distribution of cultural infrastructure (First- & second-degree cultural centers are adapted from Koramaz & Kısar Koramaz, 2009; cultural triangle is adapted from Enlil et al., 2011)

Cultural centers, established and operated by local governments and increasingly common since the 2000s, have been effective in the decentralization of cultural infrastructure to the periphery of the city. The cultural infrastructure in the peripheral settlements is operated with people-oriented programs that appeal mostly to the local population residing in those settlements. In addition, cinemas in shopping malls constitute another component of the cultural infrastructure of peripheral settlements (Kısar Koramaz & Koramaz, 2017; Aksoy & Enlil, 2011; Enlil et al., 2011; Koramaz & Kısar Koramaz, 2009).

For a specific evaluation of the artistic production and the emergence of art galleries, it is beneficial to start with 19th-century Ottoman period Istanbul. During this time, interest in art among upper-class families grew due to the Westernization movement and visits from world-famous European painters, such as Melling in 1819, who came to admire Istanbul's beautiful image.



In the Ottoman period, there were only a few painters due to Islamic religious constraints, and only a few Ottoman elite people were interested in painting. During this period, the establishment of Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi (School of Fine Arts) in 1882 marked the first step toward institutionalizing art education. The institution was located on the Historical Peninsula and became a hub for artistic and cultural production and exhibition. However, during the 19th century, İstiklal Street and its surroundings, known as Grand Rue de Pera, were the most prominent cultural and artistic centers in Beyoğlu. Grand Rue de Pera had been a popular destination where both local and foreign artists accommodated and established their art studios. The cafes, restaurants, entertainment venues, and shops located on Grand Rue de Pera had been places where works of art are exhibited in a spontaneous routine, while works of art and artists meet and interact with the art dealers, art buyers, and other interested audiences (Köksal & Sinanlar Uslu, 2023; Sinanlar Uslu, 2021).

During the Republican period, Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi moved to Fındıklı in Beyoğlu and was transformed into a higher education institution under the name of “State Academy of Fine Arts.” In 1937, Istanbul’s first art museum was established under the name of “Museum of Painting and Sculpture” in Dolmabahçe, located within the borders of Beşiktaş. These had been significant establishments held by the state in terms of institutionalization of culture and arts education, artistic production, exhibiting of arts, and opening these processes to the public (Aliçavuşoğlu, 2010; Sanul & van Heur, 2018). During the Republican period, although the number of painters increased, there were only a few art galleries in the most modernized districts, such as Beyoğlu (Polo, 2015). The most critical development in terms of art galleries taking their place in art life in Turkey, as well as the involvement of non-state independent actors in this process, was the establishment of Maya Art Gallery in the 1950s. Maya Art Gallery, established on İstiklal Street, supported the artist through the exhibitions it organized between 1950 and 1955 and brought art to the audience (Köksal & Sinanlar Uslu, 2023; Savaş, 2008). After the 1950s, the number of art galleries started to increase in the most modern and higher-income districts, such as Beyoğlu and Şişli, due to economic and cultural development. After the 1970s, this trend continued in the organization of entertainment facilities and art activities, biennales, festivals, and the construction of modern art museums by prominent industrialists (Polo, 2015).

During the 1970s, the number of art galleries grew within the boundaries of the Şişli district in affluent historical neighborhoods such as Nişantaşı and Maçka. Parallel to the spatial flourishing of art galleries, the art market, led by the art galleries, also started to grow (Öz, 2013). In the 70s, banks and wealthy family-owned enterprises began to invest in and support culture and arts, with new cultural venues and organizations clustered in the city center. With its contributions to international cultural and artistic organizations and festivals, the founding of the Istanbul Foundation of Culture and Arts (İstanbul Kültür Sanat Vakfı IKSVA / IFCA) in 1973 marked a significant turning point. This trend continued in the organization of entertainment facilities and art activities, biennales, festivals, and the construction of modern art museums by prominent enterprise owners (Mayer 2020; Polo, 2015). Another important event in terms of the development and internationalization of the culture and art world in Istanbul was the first Istanbul Art Biennale organized by IFCA in 1987. While the first biennial was held in historical places in the Historic Peninsula, in the following biennials, public spaces and art galleries in the Beşiktaş, Şişli, and Beyoğlu districts were also used as exhibition venues (Sanul, 2020; Mayer, 2020). Art galleries were crucial in providing support to artists and representing Turkish modern art in both national and international art arenas during the 1990s in Istanbul, as the city did not yet have a modern art museum (Üner Yılmaz, 2021).

The 2000s have significance as they brought about a shift in the way the city's art and cultural scene was organized, as well as the spatial organization of the related infrastructure. Istanbul strengthened its position in the international art market during the 2000s and gained a prominent position among global cities for its art market as well as the events it hosts. Especially in 2004, the sale of the Orientalist painter Osman Hamdi Bey’s painting for \$3.5 million increased the rank of

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Istanbul's art market to the 10th level in the world (Molho, 2014). Another major milestone of 2004 was the foundation of the Istanbul Modern Museum, the city's first modern art museum, by the investment of one of the country's leading wealthy industrialist families. Private museums founded by banks and other industrialist families came after this. It can be stated that with the opening of new museums, the cultural infrastructure, which was formerly concentrated in the city center, was spread to various parts of the city, albeit with singular projects. Istanbul Modern Museum, located in Karaköy, triggered the spread of cultural facilities from their concentration on İstiklal Street to Karaköy. During this period, art galleries increased in derelict areas such as Cihangir, Galata, and Tophane on the outskirts of Beyoğlu. The role of the initiatives put forward by young artists and curators in structuring art galleries is also striking in terms of the diversification and independence of the art environment (Sanul 2020; Sanul & van Heur, 2018; Polo, 2015).

### **3. Art Galleries in Istanbul: An Analysis of the Years 2000 and 2022**

In the following sections, the spatial distribution and the growth of the art galleries are analyzed and compared for years 2000 and 2022. Within the scope of this analysis, the general distribution of art galleries on Istanbul's macroform was first examined, and the areas where they were particularly concentrated and decentralized were evaluated comparatively for both periods. For this analysis, the address information of art galleries located in Istanbul in the years 2000 and 2022 was used and analyzed using the Kernel Density Analysis method. Subsequently, using the same database, an evaluation was made at the district level based on the number of art galleries, and comparisons were made for the years 2000 and 2022, revealing the change in the number of art galleries with figures and based on district boundaries.

One of the main challenges that research on Istanbul's cultural infrastructure currently faces is the absence of an extensive database that catalogues the city's culture and arts facilities based on their attributes, such as type, location, and organization and management structures, as well as a catalogue that keeps track of cultural events. It is much harder to analyze art galleries holistically due to their distinct organizational structures and operational characteristics resulting from their status as independent, privately owned enterprises and their spatial dispersion throughout the city. One of the main resources in Istanbul is the Istanbul Kültür Sanat Haritası - Istanbul Culture and Art Map which offers a calendar of events related to culture, arts, and entertainment in Istanbul as well as a list of relevant venues along with addresses and other details. The main reason for employing this resource is that, since this website began publishing in 1995, it has been a constantly updated source of information on cultural events and venues. This website was the main resource to compile the list of art galleries and the details of their addresses for both periods (Kültür Sanat Haritası, 2000; 2022). Similarly, the data for the art galleries in 2022 was gathered in December 2022 from Istanbul Kent Rehberi - Istanbul City Guide's website's cultural event venues—art galleries section (Istanbul.net.tr, 2022). Consequently, a comprehensive database containing the district and address details of art galleries for the years 2000 and 2022 has been created.

#### **3.1. Spatial Distribution of Art Galleries in Istanbul**

In order to understand the spatial distribution and concentration of art galleries in Istanbul, a Kernel Density Analysis is carried out using the ArcGIS program. Within the analysis, the address data of art galleries is used to generate spatial distribution maps for the years 2000 and 2022. The resulting maps provide insights into how the spatial distribution of art galleries has evolved and highlight significant areas of growth and spatial concentration (Figure 2 and Figure 3).

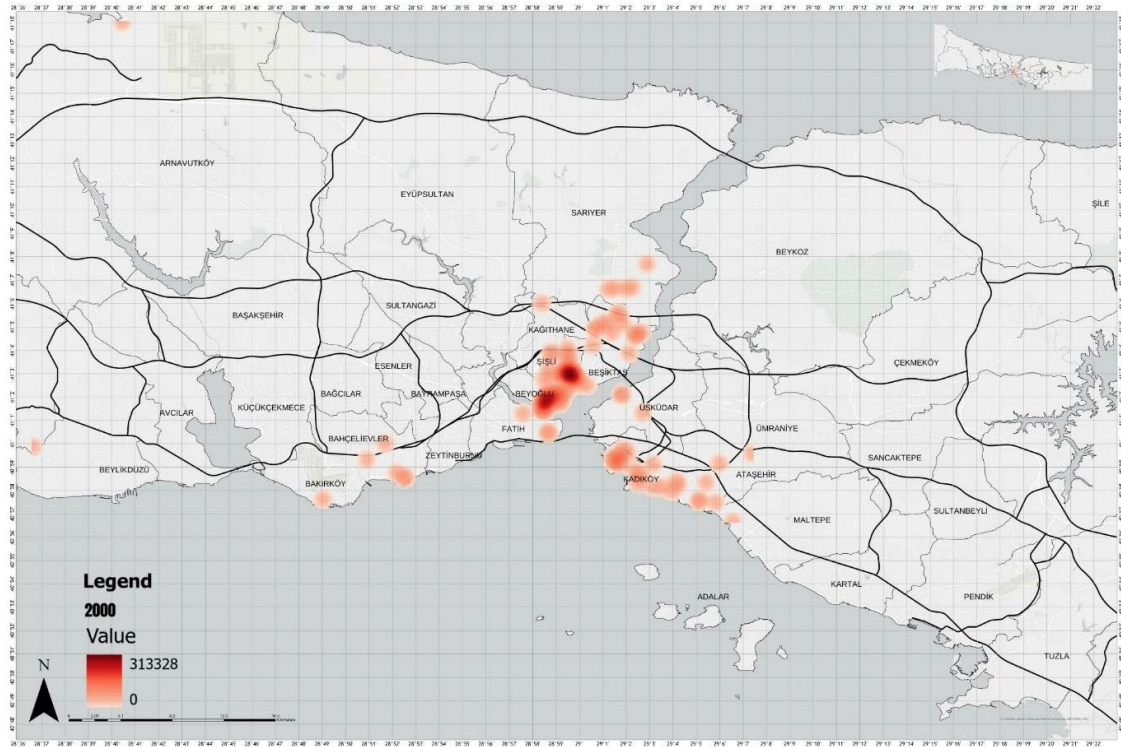


Figure 2 Spatial distribution of art galleries in Istanbul-Year 2000

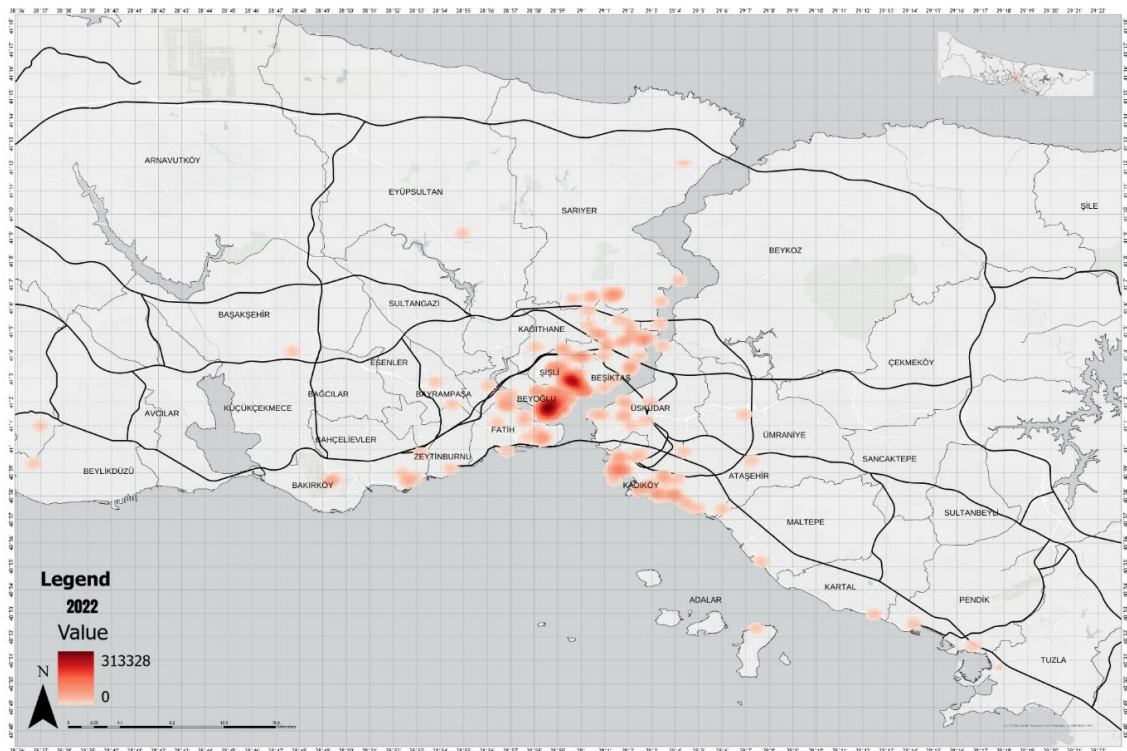


Figure 3 Spatial distribution of art galleries in Istanbul-Year 2022

The spatial distribution of art galleries in both 2000 and 2022 indicates a concentration within the city center, specifically in the Beyoğlu and Şişli districts. This area, where art galleries are concentrated, also coincides with the first-degree cultural center of the city, which refers to the area where cultural infrastructure and culture and arts events are concentrated. This area, located within the borders of Beyoğlu district and its extension in Şişli district, stands out in terms of accessibility and provides favorable conditions for the clustering of art galleries, especially due to

the continuity of pedestrian access. In the previous section, it was explained that since the 1990s, the new CBD of the city has expanded northwards along the Şişli-Maslak axis. The cultural infrastructure has followed this trend, particularly concentrating around Büyükdere Avenue and its surroundings. Similarly, the spatial distribution of art galleries in both periods indicates a spread from the center to the north along Büyükdere Avenue, apparently. The maps also indicate that the art galleries have been present in both periods along the coastline parallel to the Marmara Sea within the borders of the Kadıköy District on the Anatolian side. In other words, this region, which is one of the sub-centers of Istanbul's cultural infrastructure, maintained its continuity in terms of the presence of art galleries. Comparing the spatial distribution of the two periods, however, it can be stated that the growing number of art galleries from 2000 to 2022 decentralized both around the center within the Beyoğlu-Şişli borders and in other concentration areas (Figure 2 and Figure 3).

The spatial distribution of art galleries in 2000 shows that the concentration in the Beyoğlu district tended towards the Karaköy area, while the centralization in the Şişli district took place in the Nişantaşı area. However, based on the spatial distribution shown on the map, it can be stated that a concentration along Büyükdere Avenue within the borders of the Şişli, Beşiktaş, and Sarıyer districts also began during this period. Additionally, a cluster of art galleries is also observed along Nispetiye Street within the Beşiktaş district. On the Anatolian side, art galleries are located in the Kadıköy district's center and along the Marmara Sea coastline. Apart from these aforementioned areas where art galleries are concentrated, there are also various singular points where galleries are located, such as in the districts in Üsküdar and Ataşehir on the Anatolian side and Fatih and Bakırköy on the European side (Figure 2).

As the spatial distribution for 2022 is examined, it is observed that the centralization of art galleries within the borders of the Beyoğlu and Şişli districts still continues. However, a decentralization of art galleries around these centers is also observed. In addition, new areas of concentration for art galleries have also emerged throughout the city. The intensified and expanded area extending southwest from Beyoğlu's İstiklal Street towards the Karaköy region and along the Bosphorus coastline indicates that art galleries have spread into these areas. The centralization trend of art galleries in the Nişantaşı area within the Şişli district has shown a tendency to spread within the inner regions of Şişli. The map also indicates the spatial integration of galleries in the Şişli district with the ones in the Beşiktaş district through the corridor in the Maçka area, while advancing towards the Bosphorus coastline with increasing concentration (Figure 3).

Another finding revealed by the 2022 spatial distribution map is the presence of art galleries along the Bosphorus coastline, starting from Karaköy and continuing within the boundaries of the Beşiktaş and Sarıyer districts. In other words, by 2022, the results indicate that the European side of the Bosphorus has emerged as a new attraction zone for art galleries. Another finding revealed by the 2022 spatial distribution map is the concentration of art galleries along Büyükdere Avenue and the trend toward decentralization around this axis. This finding clearly indicates the importance of Büyükdere Avenue as a sub-region that has developed over the last 20 years and stands out in terms of the presence of art galleries and Istanbul's cultural infrastructure.

In the Fatih district, which is part of Istanbul's cultural infrastructure on the Historical Peninsula, the number of art galleries, which were few and scattered in 2000, increased by 2022 and shows a tendency to spread along the Golden Horn coastline. On the Anatolian side, the concentration of art galleries along the Sea of Marmara continues within the boundaries of the Kadıköy district. In addition, there is a noticeable concentration in the central neighborhoods of Kadıköy, especially towards the north in the Yeldeğirmeni region. In the Üsküdar district, the number of art galleries increased in 2022, with a tendency to be located both in the inner areas and along the Bosphorus. A general assessment of the spatial distribution for 2022 indicates that art galleries are densely located and form clusters in the above-mentioned areas, while they are scattered in other areas, where they are less numerous (Figure 3).



As a result, the maps created using the address information of art galleries in 2000 and 2022 reveal that art galleries in Istanbul are centralized in Beyoğlu-Şişli, where the cultural and artistic infrastructure is also concentrated. Over the past 22 years, this centralization has continued, but there has also been a clear tendency to expand around these centers. New areas of expansion and concentration have also emerged, such as Büyükdere Avenue, the coasts of the Bosphorus and Golden Horn, and the central area of Kadıköy. It is also observed that the sparse presence of art galleries continues in other parts of the city, where they are almost non-existent.

### 3.2. Presence and Growth of Art Galleries by District in Istanbul

The comprehensive database containing the district and address details of art galleries for the years 2000 and 2022 is used to analyze art gallery distribution in numbers and at the district level. In addition, art galleries' address information is used for an evaluation at the neighborhood scale to identify the possible clusters within the districts.

A descriptive evaluation of the number of art galleries indicates that the number of art galleries in Istanbul increased from 189 in 2000 to 331 in 2022. It is seen that 142 new art galleries were added to the total number of art galleries throughout the city between 2000 and 2022, and in other words, the number of art galleries increased approximately 3 times. The table and the map below show the distribution of art galleries by district (Figure 4, Table 1).

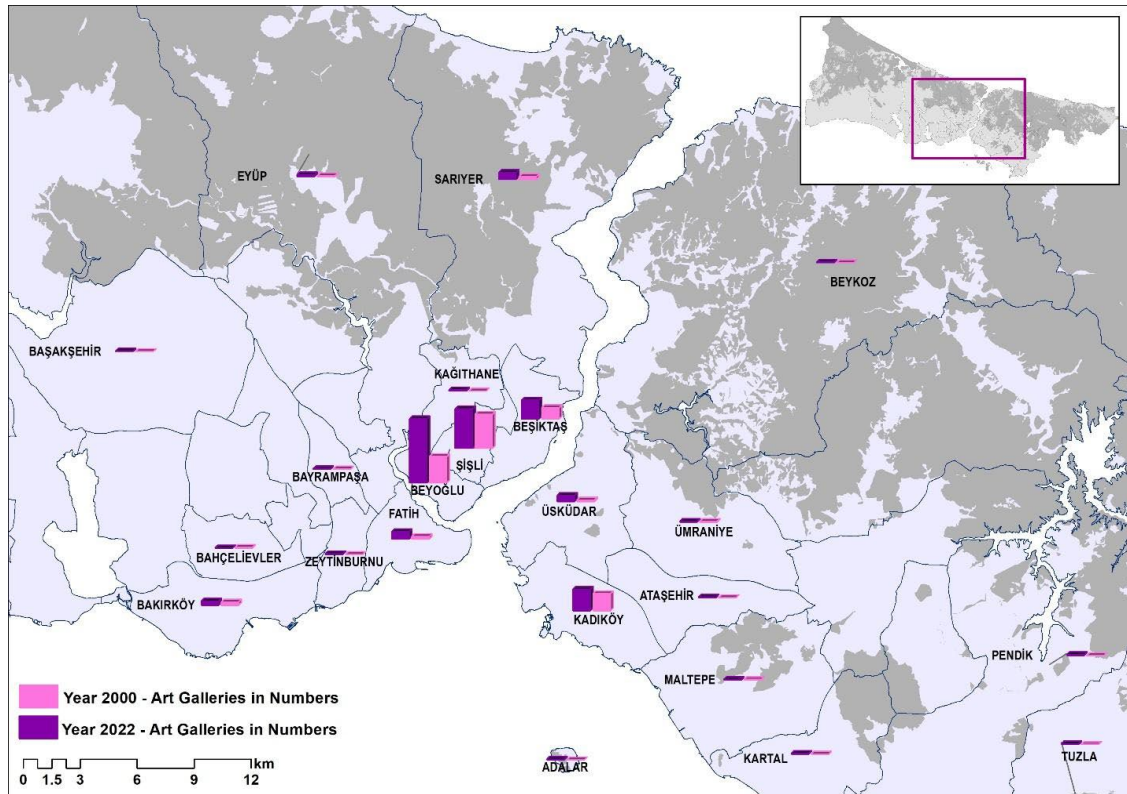


Figure 4 Number of art galleries in districts-2022 and 2000

In 2000, art galleries were located in the Beyoğlu, Şişli, Kadıköy, Beşiktaş, Fatih, Üsküdar, Sarıyer, Bakırköy, Eyüp, and Bahçelievler districts. The figures indicate the concentration of art galleries, especially in the Beyoğlu, Şişli, Beşiktaş, Kadıköy, Fatih, and Bakırköy districts, which fall in the region defined as the cultural triangle of Istanbul. Among these districts, Beyoğlu district, the first-degree center in terms of the city's cultural facilities, contains 25.9% of the art galleries. By 2022, the number of art galleries in Beyoğlu increased to 119, which constitutes 36% of the art galleries in Istanbul. The results indicate a significant increase in the number of art galleries in Beyoğlu, with a figure of 10%. In addition to these results, it is striking that almost half of the increase in the total number of galleries took place in Beyoğlu (49.3%) (Table 1).

Şişli, Beşiktaş, Kadıköy, Fatih, Sarıyer, and Üsküdar are the other districts that have a relatively higher share in the total increase in the number of art galleries in Istanbul. Almost 10% of the increase in the number of art galleries took place in Beşiktaş. The share within the total increase of art galleries in Istanbul for Şişli is 7%, and for the Fatih, Sarıyer, Kadıköy, and Üsküdar districts is almost 6%. These results indicate that, over the past 22 years, the concentration of cultural facilities within the cultural triangle has also been reflected in the distribution of art galleries. Nevertheless, Beyoğlu has become more centralized and distinct within this concentration due to the rise in the number of art galleries. Although art galleries are centralized in Beyoğlu, their address data shows that they are decentralizing within the Beyoğlu district borders. In 2000, art galleries were mostly concentrated along İstiklal Street and its surroundings. By 2022, galleries had expanded from central areas such as İstiklal Street, Galatasaray, and Tünel to the waterfront area of Karaköy. By 2022, the number of art galleries in Karaköy had significantly increased, extending to the Fındıklı region. The distribution of galleries from İstiklal Street to Karaköy is especially noteworthy. Neighborhoods such as Tomtom, Tophane, Firuzağa, Cihangir, and Çukurcuma have seen an increase in the number of art galleries. The Galataport project, which was developed on the Karaköy waterfront and was completed in 2022, has been one of the factors triggering the concentration of art galleries towards and around Karaköy. Additionally, Dolapdere has gained attention as a new hub for art galleries in Beyoğlu, which would have been triggered by various redevelopment projects, including a private university and a cultural center named as Arter.

**Table 1** Number of Art Galleries in Istanbul, 2022 and 2000

| Districts   | Art Galleries / 2022 |      | Art Galleries / 2000 |      | Increase in art galleries from 2000 to 2022 |       | Share within Total Increase |
|---|----------------------|------|----------------------|------|---|-------|-----------------------------|
|   | N                    | %    | N                    | %    | N   | %     | %                           |
| Beyoğlu   | 119                  | 36.0 | 49                   | 25.9 | 70  | 10.0  | 49.3%                       |
| Beşiktaş  | 35                   | 10.6 | 21                   | 11.1 | 14  | -0.5  | 9.9%                        |
| Şişli   | 73                   | 22.1 | 63                   | 33.3 | 10  | -11.3 | 7.0%                        |
| Fatih   | 14                   | 4.2  | 5                    | 2.6  | 9   | 1.6   | 6.3%                        |
| Kadıköy   | 40                   | 12.1 | 32                   | 16.9 | 8   | -4.8  | 5.6%                        |
| Üsküdar   | 11                   | 3.3  | 3                    | 1.6  | 8   | 1.7   | 5.6%                        |
| Sarıyer   | 13                   | 3.9  | 5                    | 2.6  | 8   | 1.3   | 5.6%                        |
| Bakırköy  | 8                    | 2.4  | 6                    | 3.2  | 2   | -0.8  | 1.4%                        |
| Eyüp  | 3                    | 0.9  | 1                    | 0.5  | 2   | 0.4   | 1.4%                        |
| Kağıthane. Pendik (2 districts)   | 2                    | 0.6  | 0                    | 0.0  | 2   | 0.6   | 1.4%                        |
| Adalar, Ataşehir, Başakşehir, Bayrampaşa, Beykoz, Kartal, Tuzla, Zeytinburnu (8 districts)  | 1                    | 0.3  | 0                    | 0.0  | 1   | 0.3   | 0.7%                        |
| Büyüçekmece, Maltepe, Ümraniye (3 districts)  | 1                    | 0.3  | 1                    | 0.5  | 0   | -0.2  | 0.0%                        |
| Bahçelievler  | 0                    | 0.0  | 1                    | 0.5  | -1  | -0.5  | -0.7%                       |
| Arnavutköy, Avcılar, Bağcılar, Beylikdüzü, Çatalca, Çekmeköy, Esenler, Esenyurt, Gaziosmanpaşa, Güngören, Küçükçekmece, Sancaktepe, Silivri, Sultanbeyli, Sultangazi, Şile (16 districts) | 0                    | 0.0  | 0                    | 0.0  | 0   | 0.0   | 0.0%                        |
| TOTAL   | 331                  | 100  | 189                  | 100  | 142   | -     | 100                         |

Şişli district is another important focal point for cultural facilities in Istanbul. Due to its locational and functional integration with Beyoğlu, Şişli serves as a cultural hub demonstrating historical continuity and also extends as part of the CBD to the north. Şişli maintains this characteristic with the number of art galleries in its borders. In 2000, the number of art galleries in Şişli was 63, constituting 33% of the city's art galleries. This number increased to 77 in 2022, but this number refers to 23% of the city's art galleries, indicating a decrease in percentage (-11.3%). Only 7% of the increase in the total number of art galleries during the past 22 years took place in Şişli. Still, the numbers indicate that Şişli has a unique position in terms of the existence of art galleries since it is

the district within whose boundaries the first art galleries of Istanbul were introduced to the cultural ecosystem of the city. In 2022, art galleries in the Şişli district are concentrated in the Teşvikiye and Harbiye neighborhoods, particularly on Vali Konağı, Abdi İpekçi, Hüsrev Gerede, Halaskargazi, and Maçka Streets. Examining the physical location choices of Istanbul's art galleries over time reveals that their continuing presence in these regions demonstrates the city's cultural ecosystem's historical continuity. Bomonti, a neighborhood in Şişli with a tiny cluster of art galleries, has become one of the city's important cultural venues through the adaptive reuse of an ancient beer factory. Furthermore, Büyükdere Avenue and its surroundings, going through Şişli and serving as an extension of the CBD since the 1990s, constitute another notable region with the presence of art galleries.

Beşiktaş is another prominent district that has experienced a rise in the number of art galleries from 2000 to 2022. The number of art galleries in the Beşiktaş district, which was 21 in 2000, increased to 35 in 2022. In 2022, Beşiktaş constitutes 10.6% of the total number of art galleries in Istanbul. The proportion of art galleries in Beşiktaş to the total number of galleries in Istanbul appears to have decreased at a negligible rate (-0.5%). When the address information of the art galleries in the Beşiktaş district in 2022 is examined, it is seen that there are generally clusters in several different regions. It is seen that an extension of the cluster in the Teşvikiye and Maçka regions within the borders of the Şişli district continues in the region that forms its neighborhood within the borders of Beşiktaş. Şair Nedim Street stands out in this region, and Akaretler is another area where art galleries are concentrated. Other prominent areas where art galleries in Beşiktaş are located are Büyükdere Avenue and its surroundings and Nispetiye Street in the Levent and Etiler neighborhoods. Finally, neighborhoods such as Bebek, Arnavutköy, and Kuruçeşme along the Bosphorus coastline appear as another cluster where art galleries are concentrated in the Beşiktaş district.

The number of art galleries in the Sarıyer district, which was 5 in 2000, increased to 13 in 2022. Art galleries in the Sarıyer district, which are spread over a wide geographical area, are concentrated in two different regions. According to address data, in 2022, art galleries in the Sarıyer district are concentrated on Büyükdere Avenue and in the Maslak region. There are also art galleries located along the Bosphorus coastline in Sarıyer, which is a continuation of the Bosphorus coastline in the Beşiktaş neighborhoods.

The increase in the number of art galleries from 2000 to 2022 in the Fatih district, which refers to the Historical Peninsula of Istanbul and forms the pillar of the cultural triangle in the historical center, is striking. There were only 5 art galleries in the Fatih district in 2000, and this number has increased to 14 in 2022. However, the art galleries in the Fatih district still account for only 4.2% of Istanbul's art galleries. According to the address data for 2022, art galleries in the Fatih district are clustered in the center of the Historical Peninsula, as well as in the Balat and Ayvansaray regions on the coastline of the Golden Horn.

The number of art galleries in the Kadıköy district, which represents the Anatolian side of the Istanbul culture triangle, increased from 32 in 2000 to 40 in 2022. Kadıköy, the Anatolian side pillar of Istanbul's cultural triangle, has the third highest number of art galleries in Istanbul. In 2022, the art galleries in Kadıköy constitute 12% of the art galleries in Istanbul. Despite the increase in the number of art galleries it hosts, it is seen that the proportion of Kadıköy district among the art galleries in Istanbul has also decreased (-4.8%). 2022 art gallery address data indicate that in Kadıköy, the Moda district, Kadıköy center and pier area, and Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood stand out as a region where art galleries are clustered. Another area where art galleries are concentrated is the Suadiye, Fenerbahçe, and Caddebostan neighborhoods and Bağdat Street. The Hasanpaşa neighborhood came to the agenda in 2022 as another region where art galleries are located.

Üsküdar, another district on the Anatolian side that stands out with its historical assets, is one of the sub-centers of the city in terms of spatial distribution and accessibility of the cultural facilities

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it hosts. The number of art galleries in Üsküdar, which was 5 in 2000, increased to 11 in 2022. In 2022, the share of art galleries in the Üsküdar district in the total is 3.3%. The spatial location of art galleries in Üsküdar indicates that art galleries are concentrated in two different locations: the Altunizade neighborhood, which can be defined as a focal point for local cultural services, and neighborhoods along the Bosphorus, such as Kandilli and Kuzguncuk.

Bakırköy district is another sub-center serving its immediate surroundings in terms of spatial distribution and accessibility of cultural infrastructure. It is seen that the number of art galleries in the Bakırköy district did not change much from 2000 to 2022, increasing from 6 to 8. In the Bakırköy district, art galleries coexist with other cultural institutions in the settlement and are also located within large-scale fair and trade organizations that the district hosts.

The other districts, located on the periphery of the city, have fewer art galleries. In Kağıthane and Pendik there were no art galleries in 2000, and by 2022 there are 2 art galleries in each of these districts. In the Büyükçekmece, Maltepe, and Ümraniye districts, the number of art galleries has not changed since 2000, and still, there is 1 art gallery in each of these districts. In 8 districts of Istanbul—Adalar, Ataşehir, Başakşehir, Bayrampaşa, Beykoz, Kartal, Tuzla, and Zeytinburnu—there were no art galleries by 2000, and by 2022 there is 1 art gallery in each of these districts. According to the figures in the Bahçelievler district, there used to be 1 art gallery in Bahçelievler, but by 2022 there are no art galleries in this district. In 16 districts of Istanbul, there are no art galleries. These districts are mainly on the periphery of the city, with low integration into the cultural infrastructure both in terms of spatiality and accessibility.

#### **4. Discussion**

In this study, a comparison was made regarding the number of art galleries in Istanbul and their spatial distribution to districts between the years 2000 and 2022. Art galleries, a component of the cultural infrastructure with their unique organizational and management structures, play a crucial role in supporting artistic production and artists, facilitating the public's engagement with culture and art through exhibition practices, and ensuring the promotion of artists.

The literature on the spatial distribution of Istanbul's cultural infrastructure indicates that the cultural infrastructure and the culture-arts facilities are concentrated in the historical city center of Istanbul and on the CBD, which is an extension of the city center that developed in the 1990s. The region within the borders of Beyoğlu, Fatih, Şişli, Beşiktaş, Kadıköy, and Üsküdar districts, also known as the cultural triangle of Istanbul, includes cultural centers, theaters and performance halls, museums, historical monuments, and creative industries that support and nourish this entire cultural ecosystem.

Consistent with the research findings on the cultural infrastructure of Istanbul, the distribution of art galleries in 2000 revealed the spatial concentration in the Beyoğlu and Şişli districts. These two districts stand out in terms of the historical development of exhibition practices and the gallery sector in Turkey and Istanbul. Exhibition practices in Beyoğlu date back to the Ottoman Empire period, and the first art gallery of the Republican period was opened on İstiklal Street. In the latter half of the Republican period, art galleries began shifting from Beyoğlu to the Şişli district, where well-established galleries preferred to be located. Research results indicate that this historical trend continued into the year 2000. By 2022, it is seen that there is a significant increase in the number of art galleries in Istanbul, and this increase is particularly concentrated within the borders of the Beyoğlu district. However, while Beyoğlu is centralizing in terms of art galleries, it is noticeable that there is a decentralization within the district borders. Art galleries in Beyoğlu, on the one hand, maintain their presence around İstiklal Street; on the other hand, they are increasingly clustering in the Karaköy region. Additionally, between these two locations, new clusters have emerged in areas such as Tophane and Cihangir, situated on the hills of Beyoğlu. Several factors can be attributed to the decentralization of art galleries from İstiklal Street and its surroundings to Karaköy. The first of these is the opening of Istanbul's first modern museum, Istanbul Modern, in Karaköy in 2004. The Galataport project would be the other triggering factor, which was first brought to the



agenda in the 2000s and whose construction started in 2016 and was completed and inaugurated in 2021. Galataport is a controversial urban redevelopment project that brings together major cultural institutions such as Istanbul Modern and the Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture, alongside other recreational, commercial, and touristic uses along the Karaköy waterfront. Since its initial proposal, the project has catalyzed significant functional and qualitative transformations in its immediate surroundings. Galataport and the Istanbul Modern Museum located within it are private-sector initiatives supported and facilitated by the state. This case provides a striking example of the prominent role played by the state and the private sector as key actors in shaping and directing Istanbul's cultural infrastructure. In addition, it is seen that art galleries have preferred areas in regions such as Tophane, which had been predominantly residential and were open to gentrification due to their lower use values compared to land values, and that functional and socio-cultural changes in these regions have been triggered by these new functions. This pattern in Tophane also overlaps with the tendency of art galleries to prefer areas open to gentrification as one of the factors influencing their location choices. In addition, it indicates a tendency for art galleries to position themselves in close proximity to other components of the cultural infrastructure—and to one another—thus forming clusters.

The capital-driven urban transformation that accelerated in İstiklal Street and its surroundings after the 2000s, characterized by gentrification, rising rents, and the replacement of cultural venues with more profitable commercial functions, began to transform the area's use and everyday life, leading to the loss of culture-related functions along İstiklal Street. Following the 2010s, the reconfiguration of the area for global tourism and international brands further accelerated this process (Kartal, 2021; Tekin & Akgün Gültekin, 2017; Erdi-Lelandais, 2015; Adanalı, 2011). Particular events such as the loss of the Emek Movie due to a shopping-mall-oriented redevelopment, the closure of the Atatürk Cultural Center for renewal, and the Gezi protests contributed to the deterioration and commercialization of cultural spaces in and around İstiklal Street. However, the research findings indicate that there has been a continued concentration of art galleries on İstiklal Street and in its surrounding neighborhoods in 2022, suggesting a gradual return of cultural activities to the area over time.

The findings indicate that art galleries are also spatially concentrated within the borders of Şişli and Beşiktaş, providing spatial integrity with Beyoğlu. Şişli holds a distinct position, as it is the primary central location where the art galleries sector, developed in the latter half of the Republican period, remains concentrated and continued to play its role in 2022. Within the borders of the Beşiktaş district, there is a concentration, especially in locations that have spatial integrity with Şişli. Additionally, the concentration of galleries in these areas can also be explained by the tendency, as highlighted in the literature, for galleries to locate in affluent neighborhoods. However, new clusters emerge in connection with adaptive reuse and regeneration projects in various locations in Beyoğlu, Şişli, and Beşiktaş. These clusters include the Dolapdere region, which experienced development concurrent with the inauguration of the Arter Cultural Center in Beyoğlu; the Bomonti region, which underwent gentrification following the opening of the Bomontiada Cultural Center, established through the adaptive reuse of the former brewery in Şişli; and the Akaretler region, which saw substantial growth subsequent to the renovation of its historic apartment buildings in the Beşiktaş district. These are private sector-led projects with specialized architectural and design features, and they contribute to the cultural infrastructure or support cultural activities.

Büyükdere Avenue and its surrounding areas also have a high concentration of art galleries. Since the 1990s, this area has been characterized by high-density vertical development as Istanbul's central business district, and it now includes mixed-use spaces such as modern office buildings, shopping malls, and residential projects. Büyükdere Avenue and its surroundings stand out as Istanbul's recently developed cultural hub, hosting national and international events through its cultural venues, theaters, concert halls, performance halls, and exhibition spaces. In 2022 Büyükdere Avenue and its surroundings have become one of the focal points of art galleries within

the borders of the Şişli, Beşiktaş, and Sarıyer districts. The findings also indicate that art galleries have also concentrated in the Bosphorus settlements of the Beşiktaş and Sarıyer districts on the European side of Istanbul. It can be stated that galleries' tendency to locate in these areas arises from both their tendency to cluster with other components of the cultural infrastructure and their preference to be within reach of other actors—like potential audiences and art-related investors—who are concentrated in these affluent neighborhoods.

On the Anatolian side of Istanbul, Kadıköy district and, more recently, Üsküdar district, stand out in terms of the presence of art galleries. Clusters with distinct characteristics are observed on this side of the city: one around the Kadıköy center, Moda, and Yeldeğirmeni neighborhoods, and another one along the Marmara Sea, particularly in affluent neighborhoods such as Suadiye, Fenerbahçe, and Caddebostan. In Üsküdar, art galleries are situated in the Altunizade neighborhood and along the Bosphorus coastline. In terms of the spatial distribution of art galleries, this pattern on the Anatolian side may be seen as an indicator that the Anatolian leg of the cultural triangle is expanding in various directions.

Despite these relatively central districts of the city with the briefly summarized spatial distribution characteristics, the presence of art galleries in other parts of the city is practically non-existent or very minimal. Undoubtedly, factors such as proximity to existing cultural infrastructure, accessibility, and affordable real estate values play a crucial role in the location choice of art galleries. Art galleries tend to prefer areas with existing cultural infrastructure that already offer these attributes. However, in peripheral areas that do not provide these features, collaborations with various stakeholders such as local governments, public institutions, artist initiatives, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector are crucial in the effort to bring art to the public. In addition to using the existing cultural infrastructure in these areas, implementing alternative exhibition practices that also utilize public spaces is crucial in introducing the arts to the public, increasing their interest and awareness, and integrating art into daily life. However, it is striking that the Bakırköy district, which in previous studies had been considered a cultural sub-center in Istanbul due to the cultural infrastructure it hosts, has remained quite overlooked in terms of the presence of art galleries. This finding points to the necessity of supporting sub-centers to ensure a balanced distribution of cultural and artistic activities, which often tend to be centralized in Istanbul.

## **5. Conclusion**

As a result, this study has demonstrated an increase in the number of art galleries in Istanbul in 2000 and 2022, with a tendency for galleries to centralize their spatial location choices. This trend follows Istanbul's existing cultural infrastructure and aligns with the historical continuity of art gallery locations. This finding is consistent with the statement that art galleries tend to cluster in culturally and artistically vibrant cultural hubs to foster cultural engagement and interaction. In addition, research findings have revealed that new art gallery clusters have been formed in the peripheries of the central regions of Istanbul, triggered by the recently implemented adaptive reuse and redevelopment projects, which also demonstrate the influence of private-sector-led cultural investments on the reconfiguration of cultural spaces. This finding is consistent with the argument that art galleries tend to concentrate on areas revitalized through cultural and economic regeneration and redevelopment projects. The study also reveals that cultural production and consumption spaces in Istanbul are developing within a trend shaped and stimulated by large-scale cultural investments led by the private sector.

This study contributes to the urban planning and cultural studies literature by comparatively revealing the spatial transformation of art galleries in Istanbul between the years 2000 and 2022. The assessments regarding the overall distribution of art galleries across the city's macroform and the locations where they tend to cluster provide initial insights into the factors influencing their location choices, offering a data-driven framework for developing a balanced and inclusive cultural strategy.

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As this study focused on art galleries at the city scale, it was inevitably not possible to capture in detail the localized conditions that emerge at the cluster level. Future research focusing on smaller-scale clusters could more clearly reveal the relationships between urban dynamics, gallery location patterns, and the spatial, social, cultural, and economic impacts that galleries generate in their immediate surroundings. Examining galleries' organizational characteristics and the networks among relevant actors would also help explain their location choices and the specific dynamics of each cluster. Such studies could support the identification of how art galleries' roles within the cultural infrastructure and cultural ecosystem vary across clusters, thereby providing a basis for policies that enhance and support their activities. Furthermore, understanding the spatial, social, cultural, and economic impacts of art galleries within the clusters would make it possible to develop policies aimed at managing and guiding these effects.

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## CRedit Authorship Contribution Statement

Elif Kısar Koramaz: Conceptualization, literature review and writing, methodology, data curation, analysis and results, writing, review and editing. Vedia Dökmeci: Conceptualization, literature review and writing, methodology, data curation. Numan Kılınç: Methodology, visualization and spatial analysis.

## Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing monetary interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

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## Data Availability

The data that support the findings of this work are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.



## Ethics Committee Approval

Approval from an ethics committee was not required for this research.

## Resume

Elif Kısar Koramaz graduated from the Department of City and Regional Planning at the Faculty of Architecture, Istanbul Technical University, in 2000. She completed her master's and doctoral studies at the Institute of Science, Istanbul Technical University, in the Master's Program in Landscape Planning and the PhD Program in City and Regional Planning, respectively. She completed her dissertation on topics of urban green areas and quality of life. Kısar Koramaz has been a member of the Landscape Architecture Department, ITU, since 2020. Her research areas, at the intersection of planning and urban design, include housing studies and urban renewal, public spaces, urban green areas and quality of life, cultural infrastructure and cultural policies, as well as environmental psychology.

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