

# Change In Fear Of Crime In The Renovated Old City Center Of Istanbul

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## ABSTRACT

*Beyoglu, which is one of two most important historical centers in the 17 million Istanbul, and where a gentrification process is being implemented since the 1980's.it has recently been observed that this image of the district is changing and the crime rate and fear of crime are decreasing.*

*In parallel with the aim of the study, the 1998-2007 data, obtained from the Istanbul Police Department, was sorted on the basis of Beyoglu district and related survey data was collected from the inhabitants in the gentrification areas in 2006, 2008, 2010 and 2014.*

*The purpose of this study is to map the citizens' fear of crime in Beyoglu streets and to reveal that the planning and design implemented as part of the gentrification process has contributed positively to the reduction of crime and fear of crime, and tangible evidence was found, indicating the fact that although there has been no displacement of the inhabitants, crime and fear of crime can be reduced with the help of regulations and controls. These findings suggest that similar studies should be conducted for other districts of Istanbul.*

**Key Words:** Crime, fear, city center, renovation, Istanbul,

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Improving the quality of life in big cities is one of the hottest issues of our day and high crime rates in urban areas are one of the things that impair the quality of life in big cities. In order to be able create healthy living environments, reducing fear of crime is essential, as well as preventing and reducing crime itself. Istanbul, the biggest city of Turkey with a population of 17 million people, is a city where both the negative and positive effects of urban life standards are intensely experienced. Along with problems such as migration from rural areas to urban areas, rapid population growth, unemployment and squatting, crime rates have recently been observed to go higher. In the studies about distribution of crime in Istanbul, show that due to several factors there are differences in spatial distribution of crime and that the districts with the highest crime rates are Eminonu, which is a commercial center with a low night population but a high user population, and Beyoglu, which

is an entertainment center (Ergun et al., 2011, 2007, 2003; Yirmibesoglu et al., 2007). In addition to being large administrative, commercial and entertainment centers, these two districts have a rather multifaceted and contrasting nature; rich life styles on one side and poor on the other; one side presents a cultural potential whereas the other suffers from indifference; while one side has a high rate of unemployment, the other has all the potential and necessary means. What is more, these districts accommodate a complex social fabric constituted by immigrants from Anatolia.

However, this image seems to be changing especially in Beyoglu, due to the recent gentrification and renovation processes (Uzun, 2003; Ergun, 2004; Islam, 2005), restoration of some of the buildings and urban design practices on certain streets and it has been observed that the number of crimes and fear of crime are decreasing. This study aimed at

investigating the reasons for this decrease, particularly the decrease in fear of crime in Beyoglu.

## 2. FEAR OF CRIME

Ferraro (1995) defined fear of crime as "an emotional response of dread or anxiety to crime or symbols that a person associates with crime". Garofalo (1981) suggests that fear of crime is an emotional reaction typified by a sense of danger and anxiety created by a threat of physical harm and that it is raised by some perceived signs that relate to crime in the environment .

Reducing fear of crime has recently become as much important as preventing or reducing crime since it is not only crime, but also fear of crime that requires our attention. In order to create healthy living environments, one of the most important issues is reducing fear of crime, as well as preventing and reducing the crime. Because the problem isn't just about crime, but also with the fear of crime.Scweitzeret al. (1999) indicates that although crime has started to decrease in the USA since 1994, it cannot be eradicated altogether, due to the fact that crime is a fact of life, and that fear of crime affects people more than the crime itself. Fear of crime negatively affects quality of life. The issue of safety is on the top of the list of priorities both in developed and developing countries (Napier et al, 1998; Vanderschueren, 1998; Miceli, et al., 2004; Renauer, 2007; Karakus et al., 2010) and it requires a sustainable urban environment which poses no threats to the safety of its present and potential inhabitants and which fuels no fear about personal and property safety.

Fears over safety hinder outdoor activity and prevent people from using the environment. When frightened, people change their routines and tend to stay indoors more than usual. When they are outside, they avoid public transportation, certain streets and certain people. Therefore, fear of crime has a substantial effect on individuals' physical and emotional well- being and quality of social life (Smith, 1989).

In addition to creating some "forbidden territories", fear of crime might lead to disappointment in the law and justice system and people might move to safer areas to avoid victimization and because people who move out are generally from a wealthier class, criminal areas are relocated.

It has been suggested by many studies that there is a difference between the actual amount of crime and the perceived amount of crime and that perception is always of greater value (Jackson, 2011; Gray et.al, 2008). Fear of crime increases unless controlled. It increases due to environmental factors such as garbage, graffiti, noise, abandoned buildings, damaged cars, anti-social factors such as drunk people and gangs hanging around, lack of confidence in the police (Salmi et al., 2004), urban areas of criminal disrepute and the severity of criminal attacks in these areas (Figure 1).

High crime level, Low fear of crime <b>Learning zone</b>	High crime level, High fear of crime <b>Crime reduction</b>
Low crime level, Low fear of crime <b>Ideal</b>	Low crime level, High fear of crime <b>Fear reduction</b>

**Figure 1.**Rising Levels of CrimeSource: Kitchen et al. (2006)

McCrea et all's survey included 140 citizens living in Brisbane City and they aimed to find factors in predicting fear of crime. Possible factors that could influence the fear of crime were selected as the followings: (1) demographic characteristics such as age and gender (2) Neighborhood disorder such as vandalism and cleanliness of the neighborhood (3) social processes such as involvement, friendliness, and sense of community (4) neighborhood structure such as social/economic status, urbanization, population turnover and ethnic heterogeneity. Fear of crime

which is a dependent variable was measured by asking “How safe do you feel when you are walking alone in your neighborhood after dark?”. They found that gender was the first and neighborhood disorder was the second predictors of fear of crime (McCrea, 2005).

In many publications, it can be seen that crime and fear of crime are linked with people’s education, income level, race, age, length of habitation, their feeling of belonging somewhere; but most of all, gender. Mc.Millan et al. (2000), Mc Crea et al. (2005) revealed in their studies that females experience more fear of crime.

Some researchers are believed that physical characteristics are more important than demographic characteristics when it comes to reducing the fear of crime. In his research, Painter (1996), conducting a survey among pedestrians before and after street lighting, discovered that street lighting decreases crime and fear of crime. Thomas (2000), on the other hand, indicates that in city centers, it is a bad influence that all workers leave the center at 5 pm in the afternoon, and that creating a 24/7 active city center helps in preventing fear of crime.

Good urban design and effective use of the built-up environment can help reducing fear and repeat of crime and improving environmental quality (Crowe, 2000).

One of the most important studies related with the spatial mapping of fear of crime was done by William. His survey included 309 households in the selected eight streets in Abbey Ward, London and he used MapInfo. The aim of that study tended to be around one of two themes spatially, e.g. where fear was most prevalent and (Dora et al., 2012) thematically, e.g. how an area felt about different crime types (such as burglary, drugs, robbery and car crimes) (Williams, 2007).

McCrea et all's survey included maps created using GIS system showed the spatial distribution of fear of crime for Brisbane City and fear of crime distribution according to citizens' socio-economic status (McCrea, 2005).

Doran and Lees (2005),Wollongong city in Australia, Pain et al. (2006) in Northumberland, England, They used GIS behavioral geography techniques and analyzed place-based information of fear of crime.

Also in Turkey, there are studies made in the area of mapping fear of crime. The study that Bilen et al. made in 2013 in İstanbul is one of these studies. The purpose of this study is to map the citizens’ fear of crime in Istanbul using GIS. With the face to face survey methodology, results of four questions answered by 1,837 responders were used as a measure of fear of crime. Results showed that individuals feel themselves safe during daytime both in neighborhoods and home. Similarly, they never feel themselves unsafe after dark (Bilen et al., 2013).

Yirmibesoglu and Ergun (2013) mapped fear of crime according to streets, and showed the variation in fear of crime in the research that they made in 2006 and 2008 in Istanbul, Beyoglu. In this study, the survey study that was performed between 2010 and 2014 was repeated,the variation of fear of crime according to streets between 2006-2008-2010-2014 was mapped.

### 3. FEAR OF CRIME IN BEYOGLU

Beyoglu is one of the oldest settlements in Istanbul’s European side in the Marmara Region, Turkey. Beyoglu district is surrounded from the north, by Şişli; from the east, by Besiktas and the Bosphorus; from the northeast by Kagithane and Eyup, and from the south, by the Golden Horn. The area of Beyoglu is 8.76 km<sup>2</sup>, consisting of 45 quarters. Beyoglu, being a commercial, cultural and entertainment center, with a settled population of 225.000 (map 1).Beyoglu is a distinctive settlement, especially considering the fact that its population reaches millions during the day and night.



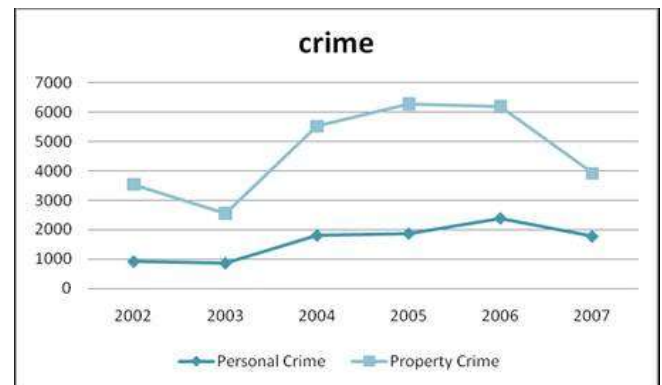
**Map 1.** Location of Beyoglu in Istanbul

Until the 1950s, Beyoglu was the most preferred district, with its movie theatres and theatres, restaurants and pastries, art galleries and luxurious shops. However, after the 1950s, the excessive growth of Istanbul as a result of rural migration and rapid urbanization; the development of new districts, the shifting of entertainment venues, businesses and wealthy families to those newly improved modern sub-districts, and society's cultural change decreased interest in Beyoglu. A nearly 30-year-era between 1960s and late 1980's has been the darkest period of Beyoglu.

After 1980, especially from 1990 onwards, nostalgic restorations and some kind of revival have been observed in the Beyoglu district. During this renovation process, which includes some of the back streets of Beyoglu, which became rather depleted and slumped between 1950 and 1980, old buildings and houses were purchased by interested buyers, artists and intellectuals in particular, and restored and some publishing houses were moved from Beyoglu to Cagaloglu. New cafes and restaurants, hotels, cultural structures, bookstores, movie theaters showing quality movies and the "International Istanbul Cinema Festival" contribute greatly to this revival. Istiklal Avenue, which has been pedestrianized and has become a center of shopping and cultural activities, and the tram line between the Tunnel and Taksim, which has recently been put into operation again, the area has become much livelier and more outstanding than it was 10 years ago. Some old bakery shops,

restaurants, hotels, etc. have been restored and re-opened; more and more cultural activities have started to take place in this area.

According to data (from 2008) obtained from the Istanbul Police Department, personal and property crime declined in Beyoglu district, especially in 2007 (Figure 3).



**Figure3.** Crime Against Property and Person

As these changes were taking place, a sharp increase in property crime was observed because of the fact that wealthier people were entering the area in the 2000s. As from 2004, an analysis concerning crime in Beyoğlu district was conducted, showing that during the first periods, burglaries and extortion occurred more frequently; crimes against the person transpired more in and around bars or similar venues, related to alcohol and drugs. If the interventions made in this period are analysed, it can be seen that; the street, square and historical building lighting process that had started in 2004 and completed in 2006; a major campaign against drugs and thief gangs have been implemented; surveillance cameras have been installed; moreover, restoration of old public buildings in the area have begun, together with construction of new buildings.

The district became a residential area not only for Anatolian emigrants because of its central location and its being one of the oldest districts in Istanbul, but also for foreign immigrants from Africa and Central Asia. Thanks to a law that came in to effect in 2004, renewals in historical locations have begun and the people who live here and who

are seen as the major cause of crimes were removed and evicted.

In order to explore the fear of crime in the Beyoglu district, a total of 300 surveys (100 surveys per neighborhood) have been conducted on the users of the area in Cihangir, AsmalıMescit and Galata neighborhoods, all of which had been recently renovated in 2006 (Figure 4). This survey was repeated in 2008, 2010 and 2014 in order to present the change in fear of crime. The rates of females interviewed in 2006 and 2010 are close to each other (approximately 43-44% and 50% in 2014).



**Figure 4.** Cihangir, AsmalıMescit and Galata neighborhoods in Beyoglu

Concerning the years 2006, 2008, 2010 and 2014 the survey was conducted, it is observed that mostly the young population (ages 20-40) were surveyed. 55.7% of the participants of the survey were born in Istanbul. This rate shows a tendency to decrease in 2008. It is seen that the rate of students increased in 2010 (25,7%).

Renovation process in Asmalı Mescit between 2000-2006



Renovation process Cihangir between 2000-2006





Renovation process Galata in between 2000-2006



According to the 2006 statistics, when the duration of settlement in Istanbul is evaluated, rate of new arrivals (0-5 years) turns out very low, 13.7%. In 2008, this rate decreases to 7.3% and in 2010 this rate increases to 21.3%, in 2014 this rate increases to 42%. According to 2006 statistics, rate of settlement for 10 years or more is 73%. In

2008, 2010 and 2014, settlement for ten years or more is between approximately 84-63-65%.

Evaluating where the participants of the survey live in Istanbul, 2006 and 2014 statistics show us that the rate of people living in city centers is considerably high at 46.7% in 2006 and 50% in 2014. In 2008, this rate decreases to 36.7% and %18,3 in 2010. It is regarded that the rate of people who live in city centers or within 10 km of city centers is high (76.4%, 62.4%, 65,0% and 77,3% by order of survey years) (Figure 5).

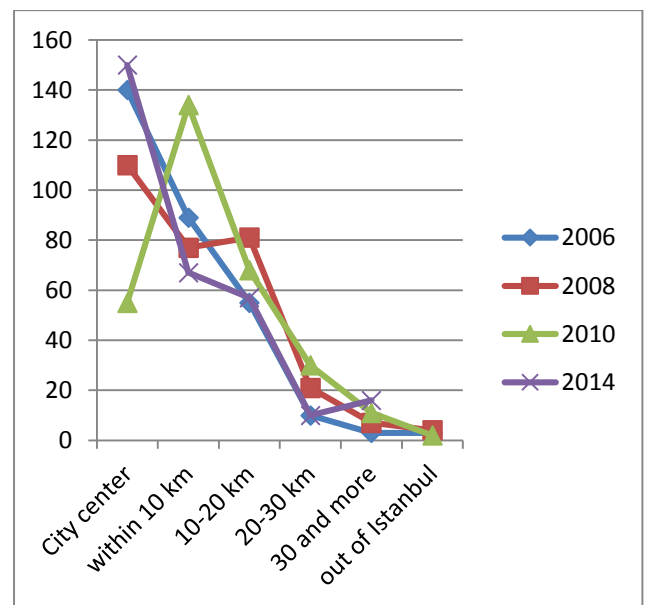


Figure 5. Where people live

As far as educational backgrounds, persons who participated in the survey in 2006, have a high educational level (43% high school, 29% university, %19.7 secondary school graduates). But in 2008 and 2010, these levels are found to be decreasing.

Evaluating occupational groups, 2006 data (29.3%) and 2014 data shows us that the highest rate (39%) belongs to scientific and technical self-employed professionals. Commerce and sales professionals are second at 16.7%. Employees of the service sector turn out at 15.3% and non-agricultural employees at 11.7%. In 2008, commerce and sales professionals appear at a higher rate at 37.7%. It is

seen that the rate of students increased in 2010 (25,7%) and 2014 (22%).

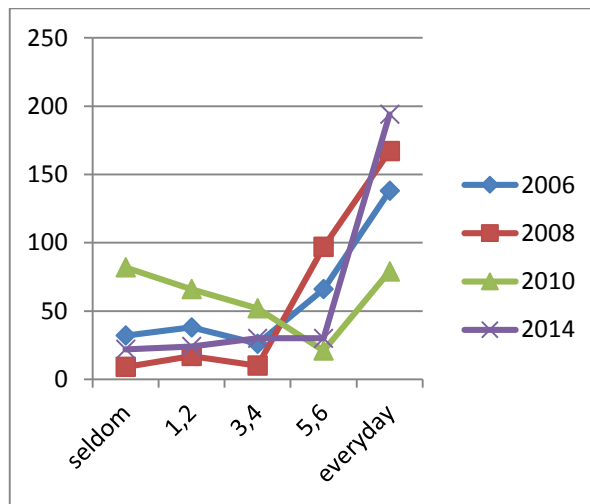
According to the reasons why participants come to Beyoglu, it appears that a high rate of 37.3% comes for residence in

2006, and 57% comes for business purposes in 2008. As can be seen in the table, the rate of people who came to Beyoglu for entertainment and shopping purposes in 2010 is 63,0%. it appears that a high rate of 42% comes for residence in 2014 (Appendix 1).

**Appendix 1.**The Reason for Coming to Beyoglu

Year of Survey	2006		2008		2010		2014	
	Number of People	%	Number of People	%	Number of People	%	Number of People	%
Entertainment, shopping	96	32,0	27	9,0	189	63,0	71	23,7
Business	92	30,7	171	57,0	97	32,3	102	34,0
Residence	112	37,3	102	34,0	14	4,7	127	42,3
Total	300	100,0	300	100,0	300	100,0	300	100,0

The participants' of the questionnaire, weekly usage of Beyoglu appears to be quite frequent. In 2006, maximum 46% visited Beyoglu daily. In 2008, daily usage had risen to 55.7%. In 2010, this level is found to be decreasing to 26,3%. In 2014, daily usage had risen to 64.7%. (Figure 6).



**Figure 6.**Weekly Usage of Beyoglu

Concerning daytime safety in Beyoglu, most of the participants state that Beyoglu is safe during the day. It is observed to be 69.7% , 71.7%,79,7% and 81,7% safe respective to survey years (Appendix 2).

**Appendix 2.**Daytime Safety

Survey Year	2006		2008		2010		2014	
	Number of People	%	Number of People	%	Number of people	%	Number of people	%
Safe	209	69,7	215	71,7	239	79,7	245	81,7
Unsafe	91	30,3	85	29,3	61	20,3	55	18,3
Total	300	100,0	300	100,0	300	100,0	300	100,0

As far as nighttime safety in Beyoglu, a very large number of the participants state that Beyoglu is not safe at nights. Beyoglu is considered safe at a rate of 24.7% and 22.3% respective to survey years. Especially in 2008 and 2014, the rate of feeling of safety seems to decrease. The table 3 also presents that the rate of people who think the neighborhoods are safe at night increased in 2010 (47,3%) and 39% in 2014(Appendix 3).

#### Appendix 3. Nighttime Safety

Survey Year	2006		2008		2010		2014	
	Number of People	%	Number of People	%	Number of People	%	Number of People	%
Safe	74	24,7	67	22,3	142	47,3	117	39
Unsafe	226	75,3	233	77,7	158	52,7	183	61
Total	300	100,0	300	100,0	300	100,0	300	100,0

Evaluating if people are afraid of walking alone in Beyoglu; most of the participants state that they are not afraid of walking alone in Beyoglu (approximately 82% to 72%). In 2008, there is a decreasing tendency. The table also presents that the rate of people who think the neighborhoods are safe at night increased in 2010 (47,3%) and 2014 (39%)(Appendix 4).

#### Appendix 4. Fear of Walking Alone

Survey Year	2006		2008		2010		2014	
	Number of People	%	Number of People	%	Number of People	%	Number of People	%
Safe	241	80,3	217	72,3	247	82,3	244	81,3
Unsafe	59	19,7	83	27,7	53	17,7	56	18,7
Total	300	100,0	300	100,0	300	100,0	300	100,0

Evaluating whether Beyoglu has major problems with crime, most of the participants had not experienced any in Beyoglu, (around 74% to 62%). In 2008, crime rates decrease significantly, so the rate of crime in Beyoglu has decreased. Those who did face crime had experienced crimes mainly against property. It has been observed that those who did not experience any crimes increased dramatically in 2010 (87,7%) and in 2014 (74,7); that is, the rate of crime in Beyoglu decreased (Appendix 5).

#### Appendix 5. Issues About Crime

Survey Year	2006		2008		2010		2014	
	Number of People	%	Number of People	%	Number of People	%	Number of People	%
Personal	5	1,7	11	3,7	3	1,0	28	9,3
No	222	74,0	186	62,0	263	87,7	224	74,7
Property and Personal	5	1,7	29	9,7	13	4,3	14	4,7
Property	68	22,7	74	24,7	21	7,0	34	11,4
Total	300	100,0	300	100,0	300	100,0	300	100,0



People who were exposed to crime reported that they were mostly exposed to property crime.

It was determined that most of the participants turn out to be exposed to crime once or twice a year, (around 24% to 29%) and this rate seems to have remarkably decreased in 2010 and 2014 (figure 7).

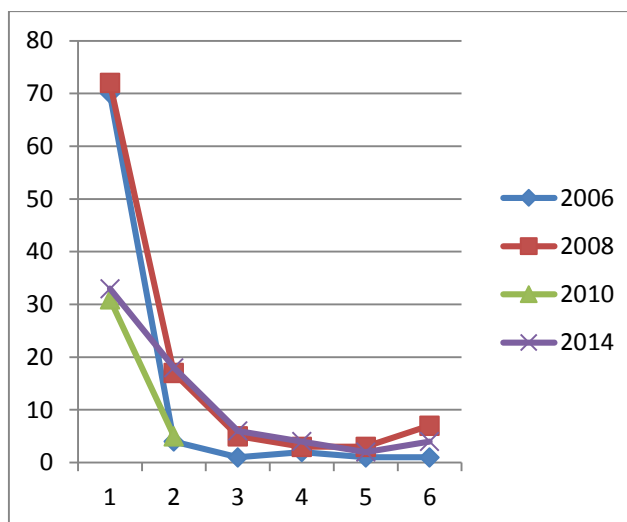


Figure 7. How Many Times a Year (Facing Crime)

When asked if relatives or friends of the participants of the Beyoglu survey had experienced any problems, it was found that those who replied in the negative have increased in 2008 to 46.3%, in 2010 to 76.3% and in 2014 to 63.7. Most of those crimes had been crimes against property.

When questioned how many times a year relatives or friends face problems; the rate was found to be once a year, 47% in 2006 but fell to 17% in 2008 and this rose to 18.3% in 2010, 23.7% in 2014.

When we examine factors which caused insecurity in 2006, participants had chosen other humans at only 8.3% in order of priority. In 2008 this rose to 41%. In 2010 fell to 7.3% and 8.3% in 2014. On the other hand, as can be seen in the table below, whereas the most effective factors that cause insecurity were users, urban decay, and poor lighting in 2006, these rates decrease in 2008 and 2010 after renovations and restoration which took place in the district (Appendix 6).

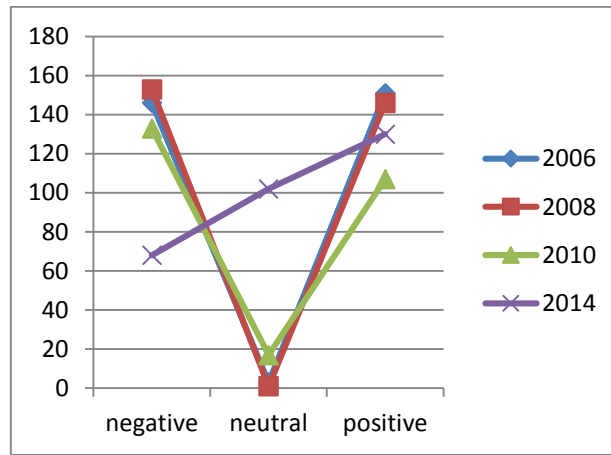
**Appendix 6. Factors that Create Insecurity According to Priority**

Survey Year	2006		2008		2010		2014	
	Number of People	%	Number of People	%	Number of People	%	Number of People	%
Humans	25	8,3	123	41,0	22	7,3	25	8,3
Users	134	44,7	129	43,0	7	2,3	134	44,7
Urban Decay	125	41,7	118	39,3	16	5,3	125	41,7
Poor Lighting	150	50,0	138	46,0	81	27,0	150,0	50,0
Unemployment	122	40,7	92	30,7	83	27,7	122	40,7

In terms of whether or not Beyoglu has become a safe place after the renovations, it is seen that the rate of participants with a negative view is high in 2006, 2008 and 2010 whereas this rate is 55,7% in 2014, which is a clear decrease.

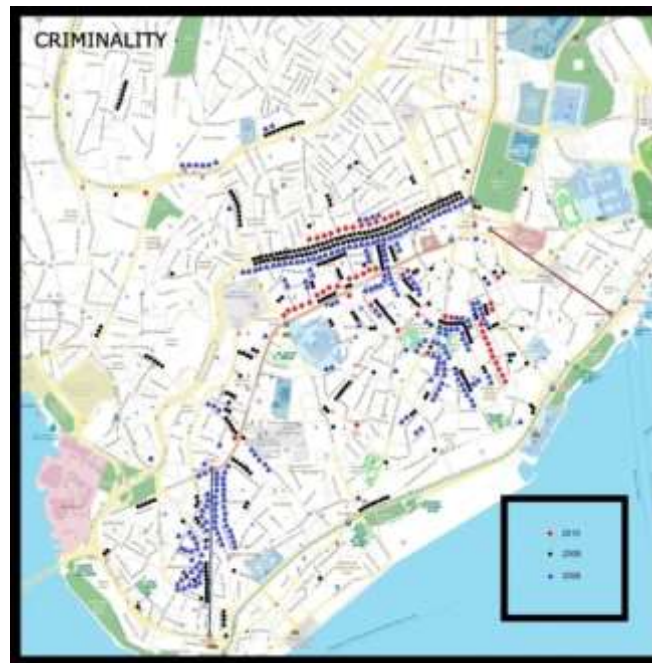
When we examine if Beyoglu is safe after the district was renovated, 50.3% of the participants stated that it is safe in 2006, but this rate decreases to 45% in 2008, 48,7% in 2010 and 44,3% in 2014.

Evaluating the reasons whether Beyoglu is safe or not after the renovation of the district, negative views about the area was 48.7% in 2006, and 51% in 2008, 44,3% in 2010, 22,7% in 2014 (Figure 8).



**Figure 8.** Safety After Restoration

Streets where the participants feel unsafe can be seen below (Map 2 and Map 3).



**Map 2.** Streets where the participants feel unsafe in Beyoglu in 2006, 2008 and 2010



**Map 3.** Streets where the participants feel unsafe in Beyoglu in 2014

These streets are streets that;

- are especially preferred by low income class, and the national/international migrant population. Eg. Tarlabasi, Tophane etc.
- are dark and more desolate backstreets. Eg. Arslanyatagi, Sadri Alisik etc.



- are main streets and crowded streets Eg. Tarlabasi, Istiklal, etc.



- have steep slopes enabling the criminal to run away easily. Eg. MeclisiMebusan



#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It seems that the crime rates are on a decline in Beyoglu, which is one of the two historical centers of Istanbul, a 17-million people city, and which has been through a gentrification process since the 1980's, as a direct result of recent urban design applications. In order to understand the impact of this decline on fear of crime, 900 people were interviewed in three different years about their impressions of the area.

The analysis have revealed that the rate of fear of crime in the 2006 survey turned out to be less than that of 2008, owing to the fact that the number of the respondents who actually lived in the area were less than the ones who happened to be visiting the area at the time.

In the 2008 survey, the numbers of visitors were more than the number of people who lived in the area. Although there has been a decline in crime rates as a result of the renovation applications, no such decrease has yet been found in the rate of fear of crime. It is seen that the inhabitants in Beyoglu still suffer from fear of crime depending on whether or not they themselves or one of their relations or friends were exposed to crime (Yirmibesoglu and Ergun, 2013).

In the 2010 survey, it is seen that the majority of the respondents were visitors to the area, 63,0% of whom were there for entertainment or shopping purposes, and that as the crime level decreases the fear of crime also decreases.

In the 2014 survey, the crime level decreases the fear of crime also decreases.

A general comparative analysis of the 2014 survey and the surveys of preceding years shows us that;

2006 – 2008 survey indices	2010 survey indices	2014 survey indices
The frequency of everyday use of Beyoglu is high (46%-55,7%)	The frequency of everyday use of Beyoglu is low (26,3%)	The frequency of everyday use of Beyoglu is high (64,7%)
The rate of people who go there for work is high (30,7%-57%)	The rate of people who go there for work is low (32,3%)	The rate of people who go there for work is low (34%)
The rate of people who go there for entertainment and shopping is low (32%-9%)	The rate of people who go there for entertainment and shopping is high (63%)	The rate of people who go there for entertainment and shopping is low (34%)
The rate of being exposed to crime is high (26,1%-37,1%)	The rate of being exposed to crime is low (12,3%)	The rate of being exposed to crime is high (22,3%)
The rate of people who find the area safe during the day time is high (69,7%- 71,7%)	The rate of people who find the area safe during the day time is even higher (79,7%)	The rate of people who find the area safe during the day time is even higher (81,7%)
The rate of people who find the area safe during the night is low (24,7%-22,3%)	The rate of people who find the area safe during the night is high(47,3%)	The rate of people who find the area safe during the night is high(39%)
The rate of people reporting that walking alone is safe is high (%80-%72)	The rate of people reporting that walking alone is safe is high (%82,3)	The rate of people reporting that walking alone is safe is high (%81,3)
The main streets are unsafe,	The main streets are even more unsafe	The main streets are even more unsafe
The streets which are densely populated by people of lower-income levels and people who migrated are unsafe,	The streets which are densely populated by people of lower-income levels and people who migrated are unsafe,	The streets which are densely populated by people of lower-income levels and people who migrated are unsafe,
The dark and desolate back streets are unsafe,	The dark and desolate back streets are unsafe	The dark and desolate back streets are unsafe
Steep streets, which make the offender get away easily, are unsafe	Steep streets, which make the offender get away easily, are unsafe.	Steep streets, which make the offender get away easily, are unsafe.

Finally, after the gentrification and renovation process in Beyoglu followed by environmental arrangements such as better lighting enabling increased usage of its streets, increased police presence and surveillance cameras, more efficient usages enabled by creating new functions (strengthening of the crime triangle) have reduced crime rates and fear of crime in Beyoglu. These applications would be good examples for other districts with high crime rates.

There has been an increase in the amount of people who come to the area for entertainment and shopping purposes, the commercial improvement in the area started to attract more people, and as Thomas et al.(2000) indicated, creating a city center that is alive 24 hours a day started to decrease

fear of crime. Although people participating in the surveys still have worries concerning abandoned buildings, deserted streets, and other environmental factors; it is expected for this to fade away as the district raises its appeal. However, in spite of the fact that fear of crime is decreasing among the people who do use the area, Beyoglu's notoriety is still effective among the city's other habitants who stay away from the area. Together with the positive interventions conducted, further strategies and implementations, that will attract those habitants and make them feel comfortable, are required.

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