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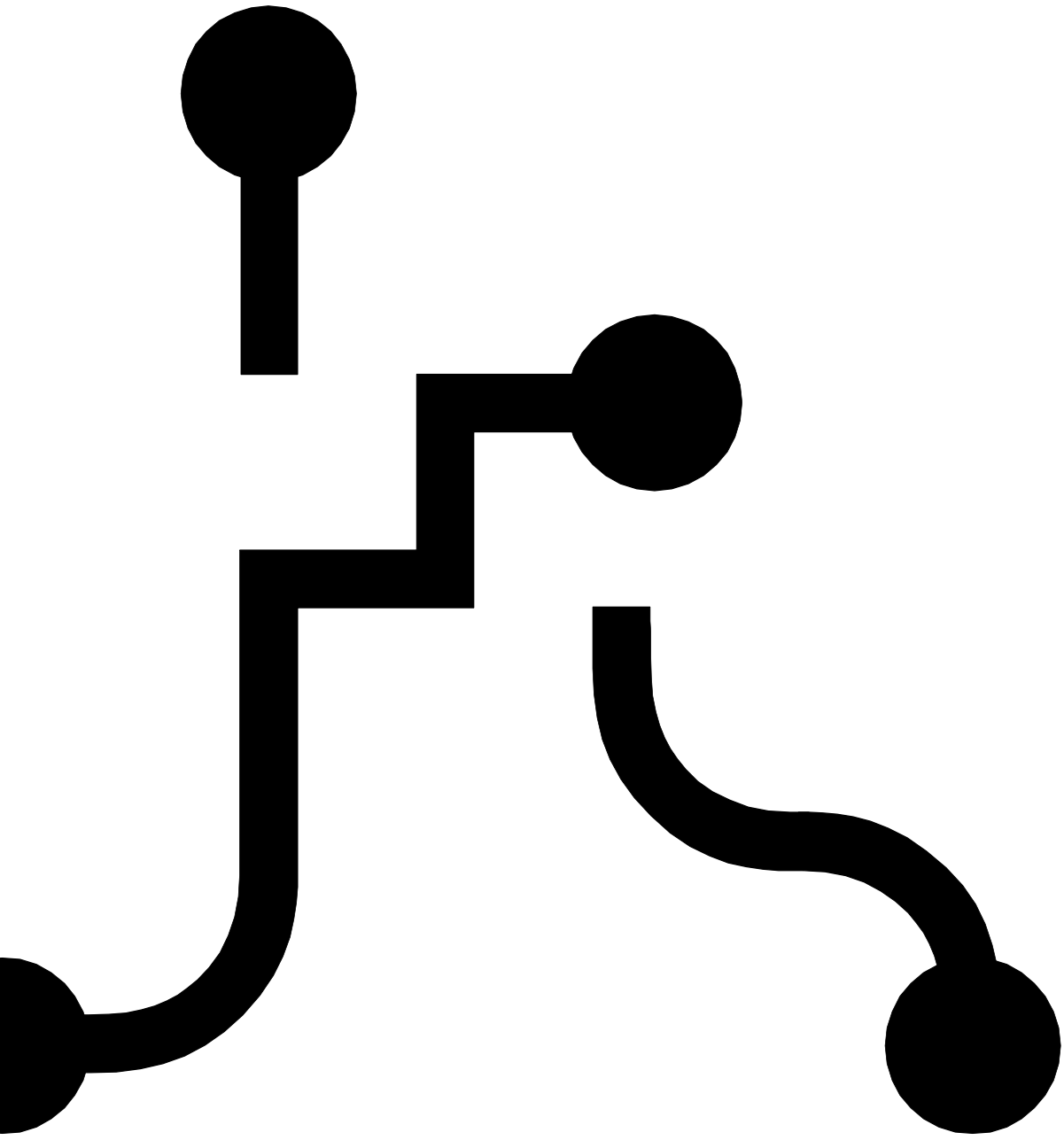

Branding industrial heritage in the wake of the cultural turn: the case of Santralistanbul*

Evinç Doğan**, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, Turkey
(email: evinc.dogan@gmail.com)

Abstract

This paper draws on a multidisciplinary framework by bringing heritage studies into focus from a cultural analytic point of view, also informed by relevant branding perspectives. It aims to examine how the advent of the cultural turn and the attendant economic and symbolic processes affect post-industrial landscapes to be repurposed and marketed in new ways. The old power plant of Silahtarağa, which was rebranded as *Santralistanbul* and transformed into a cultural space hosting the Museum of Energy, is studied within the scope of this paper to gain a deeper understanding of meanings, uses, and values as part of the broader social context. A social semiotic methodological avenue is pursued whereby the transformations undergone by the focal heritage site are addressed against the background of the three metafunctions, namely representational, organizational, and interactional, which are adapted from Halliday (1985) and applied to a museum setting through the multimodal framework developed by Ravelli and Heberle (2016). The paper begins with background information on the Silahtarağa Power plant and its transformation into Santralistanbul. It is followed by a literature review of the changes brought about by the cultural turn while reflecting on the relationship between industrial heritage and branding through cultural industries and the flagship projects that replaced heavy industries. After exposing the methodological framework, the multimodal semiotic analysis is applied to the case of the Museum of Energy.

Keywords: Santralistanbul, industrial heritage, heritage branding, social semiotics, multimodality, auto-ethnography

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** **Evinç Doğan** has a PhD in Management and Development of Cultural Heritage (IMT School for Advanced Studies Lucca, Italy). She holds an MSc in History of Architecture from Istanbul Technical University and a BA (Hons) in Tourism Management from Bogazici University. She has been a visiting PhD fellow at Regent's University London, The Regent's Centre for Transnational Studies (RCTS) (2011-2012), a doctoral research fellow at Istanbul Studies Centre, Kadir Has University, a post-doctoral research fellow at ASK Research Centre, Bocconi University (2015) and University of Belgrade (Urbanism Department) (2015- 2016), supported by TUBITAK BIDEB 2219 – International Postdoctoral Research Scholarship. Currently, she is an Assistant Professor at Bogazici University, Tourism Administration Department. She is a member of ESACH, Europeana, and Interpret Europe. Her research interests revolve around heritage branding, semiotics, industrial heritage, cultural routes and tourism.

0. Introduction

The relationship between the water and the city has played a vital role in establishing settlements and urban development (Hamamcıoğlu 2005). Golden Horn has been pivotal in the course of Istanbul's economic, cultural, social, and urban development ever since Byzantine times (Günay 2014, p. 102). Bezmez (2008, p. 817) notes that the first industrial establishments during the Ottoman period date to the fifteenth century. The waterfront area surrounding Golden Horn saw rapid and dense industrialization, starting from the late nineteenth century and continuing into the Republican era (from the 1920s to the 1980s) (Bakbaşa & Töre 2013; Günay 2014). The growing number of industries and the population increase due to migration from rural to urban areas transformed Golden Horn into the industrial center of Istanbul in the 1950s. Following the deindustrialization period in the 1980s (Bezmez 2008), the transformation of the Golden Horn has been oriented towards cleaning up the area suffering from industrial waste and pollution, initiated by the Golden Horn Waterfront Revitalization Project (Günay 2014, p.102). However, the project was aimed not only at cleaning the environment but also at the socio-economic cleansing of the area where many industrial buildings had been demolished in defiance of criticisms raised by conservationists and academics (Bakbaşa & Töre 2019).

The Golden Horn was transformed into a cultural valley in the 1990s (Günay 2014; Bakbaşa & Töre 2019). The goal was the reclamation and beautification of the waterfront by making it a new culture-led attraction zone with the pursuit of representing Istanbul globally (Günay 2014, p.102). Bezmez (2008, p. 820) questions this transition from a space of industrial production to an area of cultural consumption by taking a critical approach to the proliferation of museums, exhibition centers, and other tourist services. Cultural industries, taking over the former industrial sites through adaptive reuse, are examples of flagship projects communicating the symbolic values in their branding discourses (Bezmez 2008; Bakbaşa & Töre 2013). The government was the main driver behind such development projects, as shown in Istanbul's master and strategic plans in the 2000s (Günay 2014). The private sector was involved mainly through museums (e.g., the Rahmi Koç Museum in the old Hasköy Shipyard) and private higher education institutions, such as Istanbul Bilgi University (Santralistanbul in the old Silahtarağa Power Plant) and Kadir Has University (in the old Cibali Tobacco Factory).

Silahtarağa Power Plant, an urban-scale, coal-fired thermal power plant in Istanbul that operated from 1911 to 1983, has been transformed and rebranded as Santralistanbul through the public and private sector, as well as non-governmental organizations. It was allocated to Istanbul Bilgi University by the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources in 2004 (Istanbul Bilgi University 2018). The significance of the site is attributed to the preservation of its contents. The Museum of Energy was brought to life on the principle of minimal intervention to the original content, aimed at retaining intact the history and memory of the site.

1. Implications of the cultural turn for heritage branding

The cultural turn had a profound effect on the culturalization of the economy, in connection to value generation processes: “It is not that commodity manufacture provides the template, and culture follows, but that the culture industries themselves have provided the template” (Lash & Urry 1994, p. 123). Cultural industries and flagship projects as the precursors of culture-led regeneration, often targeting old industrial areas associated with high land values and attractiveness for investment, reflect the nature of social relations and the power dynamics shaping the urban space (Lefebvre 1991). Furthermore, mega-events and cultural flagship projects often act as a lever for the regeneration of urban landscapes and the revival of cultural industries. The European Capital of Culture program or cultural flagship projects such as Guggenheim Bilbao are among the most cited examples of the importance of culture and cultural discourses in formulating urban economic strategies (Ribera-Fumaz 2009, p. 451). The brownfields in post-industrial cities are perceived as potential areas for economic development, achieved through public-private partnerships and entrepreneurialism (Harvey 1989, p. 8). Cultural representations suggest that social relations are constructed through immaterial and material processes without reducing the economic to the cultural order and vice versa (Ribera-Fumaz 2009, p. 455). This takes a constructionist approach (Hall 1997) in which the meaning emerges through symbolic practices and processes. The culture-led urban regeneration processes in post-industrial cities reveal the complex relationship between culture and economy through the interplay of cultural meanings, symbolic content, and the semiotization of everyday life (Lash & Urry 1994). According to Landry (2000, p. 133), hard infrastructure (networks of buildings, institutions, and their support services) and soft infrastructure (human interactions and social networks) are nested together in a creative milieu. Scott (2001) comments on the cultural and creative clusters, in both spatial and symbolic terms, admitting the hard-branding of the culture city (Evans 2003). Lash and Urry (1994, p. 123) describe cultural industries as more innovation-intensive, and more design-intensive than other industries. In this vein, flagship projects function as the engines of culture-led urban regeneration, coupled with strategies for (re)branding places, as well as upgrading their image (Comunian & Mould 2014, p. 65).

Through city imaging, power relationships bring about places “selected, sanitized, commodified, and marketed to be consumed by target groups” (Colomb 2012, p. 21). Stoffelen (2020, p. 3) comments on the authorized heritage discourse produced by institutional agencies like UNESCO, as "some imaginaries are selected and retained at the expense of others." Due to the selective nature of heritage management, heritage dissonance (Tunbridge & Ashworth 1996) emerges as a result of "power struggles between groups of 'consumers' such as tourists (or external markets), on the one hand, and the 'community,' i.e., the residents (or internal markets), on the other" (Fredholm & Olsson 2018, p. 143). Accordingly, Waterton and Watson (2015, p. 549) argue that the genuine engagements with the past are

undermined by the processes of selection, commodification, and effective marketing of heritage sites.

The abandoned industrial sites are potential areas for cultural and creative industries to flourish with flexible spaces offering a variety of functions ranging from restaurants, cafes, and institutions, such as museums, to working spaces for artists and exhibition spaces (Lavanga et al. 2008, cited in Lavanga 2013, para. 12). In this vein, Lavanga (2013) suggests that the development of creative industries has become a tool for urban and economic regeneration and reimagining of cities that are oriented towards consumption in the post- industrial transition process. The conversion of old industrial places such as factories, mines, and power plants to museum quarters is indicative of a penchant for the revival of cities by "capitalizing on their traditional assets – art and culture" (Evans 2003, pp. 419-420). Cultural revitalization and adaptive reuse grant industrial heritage a second life and new meanings as an exhibition in itself (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2006, p. 168, cited in Bangstad 2014, p. 93).

Lash and Urry (1994, p. 15) define the process of branding in connection to semiotic transformation where the role of the agent (consumer or tourist who consumes services and experiences) is turning referents into signifiers. Branding can be applied to urban heritage tourism, in which perceptions, senses, experiences, and emotions are brought into focus as part of cultural and semiotic processes of subjective meaning-making (Su et al. 2018). Signs and symbols are essential elements of city imaging, as they influence the way people imagine the city. Mommaas (2002, p. 34 cited in Evans 2003, p. 420) sees brands as sources of identification, recognition, continuity, and collectivity, allowing for the ascription of meaning to places and products by evoking a sense of socio-cultural belonging. Thus, the meaning of place can be enacted through collective signs by "locating new art museums and centers in heritage sites and districts, or physically joining the modern extension with classical and industrial structures themselves" (Evans 2003, p. 436). Cummings and Lewandowska (2000) compare museums to department stores. In this framework, museums market themselves and license their collections, histories, and buildings as a brand (Cummings & Lewandowska 2000, pp. 22-23). Although museums are often perceived as storehouses of memory, playing a pivotal role in conserving and documenting material evidence of the past, they also construct and transmit meanings through visitors' experiences (Black 2011, p. 415). Graham (2002, p. 1004) claims that "selective material artifacts, mythologies, memories, and traditions become resources for the present" through their contents, interpretations, and representations. According to Lowenthal (1985, p. 210), past and present are entangled where the memory acts on selective reconstructions to enrich and manipulate the present. In this framework, Santralistanbul can be recognized as a site of memory (Nora 1989). The engagement with the content bridges collective and individual memories in the present time and enables new meanings to arise from this relationship.

This study focuses on the case of Santralistanbul due to its identity and symbolic value, along with its availability, accessibility, and affordability to host

a museum for contemporary arts, an energy museum, university facilities, and spaces for artists-in-residence (Lavanga 2013, para.16). The urban transformation directs our attention to the transformative role of culture and creative economy in place-based meanings. Thus, this research aims to examine how the advent of the cultural turn and the attendant economic and symbolic processes affect post-industrial landscapes to be repurposed and rebranded in new ways. The following questions were developed to guide the research process: 1) How does adopting a sociosemiotic perspective afford a different outlook to the analysis of the cultural function and repurposing of industrial heritage sites?
2) How is the meaning of heritage sites constructed through various modes? 3) How is heritage sites' meaning interpreted through bodily engagement with the spatial text?

2. Methodology

2.1 Social semiotics of multimodal spatial texts

This paper adopts a multimodal approach towards spatial texts while delving further into interpreting the meaning embedded in industrial heritage sites (Waterton 2014). Ravelli and Heberle (2016, p. 526) point out the challenging task of defining "what the text is" due to the complex nature of multimodality. A museum can be approached as a spatial text – a combination of building, space, content, and user (Ravelli & Mcmurtrie 2016, p. x). Spatial texts have meaning affordances, just like any written, spoken, or visual text (Ravelli & Heberle 2016, p. 525). Textual data are part of the experience that guides the visitor en-route. Spatial exploration aims to analyze both the visual qualities and the role of spaces in driving action and interaction (de Certeau 1993).

Jewitt (2013) stresses the interdisciplinary nature of multimodality deriving from social semiotics and explains different resources to construct meaning through the analysis of visual, aural, embodied, and spatial aspects of interaction and environments. Lindstrand and Insulander (2012, p. 31) apply a multimodal perspective to museum exhibitions by focusing on the social aspects of communication and the interplay between the different modes of producing signs. Various modes come into play in meaning-making as semiotic resources for representation, which are subject to signify other things in different social and cultural contexts (Lindstrand & Insulander 2012, p. 31). Jaworsky and Thurlow (2010) suggest a reciprocal relationship between people and landscapes in which socio-cultural interpretation plays a crucial role in making sense of place. Keisteri (1990) applies a tripartite "multi-level model for the concept of landscape": the 'material landscape' – the tangible, physical space as seen by the observer; the 'underlying processes' – the varying codes, modes, personal thoughts, experiences, etc. that shape the way the observer sees and understands the landscape; and the 'experience of landscape' – the emotional, intangible response felt by the observer upon viewing the landscape.

The perceived space refers to the collective production of urban reality as we sense it through the material world. In contrast, conceived space is represented on the textual level through knowledge, signs, and codes (Zhang 2006, p. 221). Borrowing the terms from Lefebvre (1991), perceived space is the actual space, where the exploration addresses specific interactions through movement. Conceived space refers to the conceptual space examined through textual analysis tackling spatial practice. While texts provide clues on representations of space, perceived space and conceived space merge into representational space through the mediation of mental images and narratives. In other words, the representational space (lived space) is formed dialectically in an interplay between spatial practice (perceived space) and representations of space (conceived space) (Zhang 2006, p. 221).

Multimodality was applied to analyze the *Museu da Língua Portuguesa* by Ravelli and Heberle (2016) by adapting the metafunctions to physical spaces. According to Ravelli and Heberle (2016, p. 527), the spatial texts need to be analyzed through intertextual references, their functions, and uses, as well as process types:

- What they *manifest* ("what we can 'see' in them and what they represent")
- What they *enable* ("what we can 'do' with them")

Thus, representational meaning includes the meaning of the content that is captured both on denotative and connotative planes. The relationship between the interactants and the physical space is essential to analyze interactional meanings. There are several factors affecting the position of interactants in relation to each other; involvement (ability to enter a room directly), contact (ability to see the exhibit easily), social distance (ability to touch objects or see them behind glass), control (if there is a navigation path to follow), and power (such as high ceilings) (Ravelli & Heberle 2016, p. 527). Furthermore, binding and bonding identify "what the interactants feel in the space" (Heberle et al. 2020, p. 411). Subsequently, how representational and interactional meanings are related to each other through information values (culturally-laden value of being the ideal by placing elements above others), salience (relative prominence) and framing (whether the components are shown separate or unified) refer to organizational meanings as the subject moves along the navigation path (Heberle et al. 2020, p. 411). The multimodal framework applied to Santraistanbul is explained in detail in the analysis and findings part of this paper.

2.2 Fieldwork and data collection

The data collection methods rest on the multimodal ethnographic tools proposed by Dicks et al. (2006) to explore the mediated heritage environment (Grist 2013, p. 3). Multimodal social semiotics, in combination with ethnography, focus on the experience with the aim of "understanding lived particulars of phenomena rather than generalizations or abstractions" (Ellis 1998). In this framework, different semiotic modes combine into "a social map

for understanding meaning-making in context" (Simpson & Archer 2017, p. 663). Accordingly, non-visual modes of texture, solidity, and weight were grasped by spending time in the Museum of Energy – "moving around the exhibits bodily, interacting with them and experiencing the physical flow that the space encourages" (Dicks et al. 2006, p. 87). Espelt and Benito (2005, p. 777) argue that knowledge, impressions, and values influence mental structures based on a series of perceptions. The visual experience of a museum features the viewing of images in sequence, whether tightly controlled or relatively undetermined, which eventually gives shape to a mental image (Brawne 1982, p. 11 cited in Tzortzi 2014, pp. 328-329).

Three field trips were made to Santralistanbul between 2006 and 2021. The site was in a state of decay in 2006 when the researcher paid a visit before the renovation. In 2008, the area was revisited after the Museum of Energy opened its doors. The interior was documented visually through photographs. The first two visits differed from the last one in 2021 for exploration purposes. In 2021, when this paper was written, photography was employed as an embodied ethnographic strategy. It was not intended to refresh memories; it was instead a new way of experiencing with some overlaps compared to the previous visits. It was more habitual and familiar with increased awareness, yet new feelings, thoughts, and understandings sprung up. Although data are treated as "forms of representation in their own right," where each affords a distinctive kind of semiotic potential, they have overlaps as well (Dicks et al. 2006, p. 87). Drawing on the concept of a new theme by Schütz and Luckmann (1974), Kesselring (2015, p. 10) suggests that the new experience is cognitive, which is built on the previous themes shaped by the relevant structure and content. When the experience becomes habitual through attendance and recognition, Kesselring (2015, p. 12) employs habitual knowledge (borrowing from Schütz & Luckmann 1974) and distinguishes the theme by highlighting the flow of lived, sensory and bodily experience.

Pink (2008, p. 178) introduces ethnography as place-making by drawing parallels to the phenomenological account of the sense of place and emplacement to understand how practices of everyday life, performance, and imagination are encapsulated in the production of both material and sensory worlds. The period from 2006 to 2008 reveals the transition process of the site, where different experiences are complementary to understanding change in a short time. The long interval between 2008 and 2021 helped the researcher digress and reflect on what has changed in an extended period, and what it means when looked at from a broader social context. Thus, the risk of losing the "ability to identify underlying patterns that quickly become taken for granted" can be eliminated (Simpson & Archer 2017, p. 659).

According to Spatz (2017, p. 4), the act of doing photography is an embodied process – "a bodily semiotic work of turning referents into signifiers." Pink (2011, pp. 271-272) terms this as sensory ethnography, where "image-making becomes a form of ethnographic note-taking – rather than a way of visually recording data." The corporeality of the photographer derives from the sensuous elements of the space, in which the place "must be considered not

only as a mental or social construct but as the sensuous experience of being in space and time" (Grasseni 2009, p. 8). Here, it connects to Merleau-Ponty's (2001) understanding of the field of presence and experience of time. The photographs as 2D images can be viewed at any time, which might evoke memories or attach different symbolic, cultural, or personal meanings, whereas embodiment is in the field of presence.

A single-lens reflex (SLR) digital camera (Canon EOS 500D) was used to record both visual and non-visual modes (interactions), as well as a tool for embodied practice in doing photography. While moving along, the camera becomes part of the body, and the viewfinder directs the gaze. A smartphone (iPhone 8) is used for taking photographs to capture different details and take field notes through photography. The use of smartphones also enables recording the time when the photo is taken. The museum entrance time was recorded at 10:45, and the last photo was taken at 12:30. Accordingly, the duration of the museum visit lasted 115 minutes.

Nevertheless, the two actions, one with a digital camera and the other with a smartphone, serve different purposes beyond their technical capabilities. Although the same object is captured, the result could be different due to framing and light in the composition. The control of the tool in hand and the sensual elements are also affected. The camera directs the gaze to the object of interest. It also limits the perception by disconnecting the subjects from the environment; by forcing them to look through the viewfinder. Such disconnection raises the concentration level and makes the process much more internalized.

On another note, the smartphone allows one to move freely and take instant shots more practically. The 2D images and 3D physical environments are intertwined without being forced to see through the viewfinder, especially when two hands need to be used for separate actions. For instance, when interacting with the exhibited objects, it was required to push buttons for demonstration, and the image should be taken simultaneously. Additionally, smartphones have become part of our body in the context of the *Internet of Things* (IoT). We control many devices around us connected to each other through Wi-Fi, just with a smartphone in hand. The smartphone is like remote control, making other objects accessible (the feeling applies to capturing images). The digital camera gives a more robust sense of embodiment as both sight and touch are affected by seeing through it, not only seeing on the screen. Thus, the camera takes control. The camera lens was 18-55 mm, allowing zooming in and out. Nevertheless, it was challenging to capture the right angle with such a camera because the whole body was moving instead of just the phone or the device.

3. Analysis and findings

The social semiotic analysis of multimodal texts enables exploring several strategies that facilitate engagement in the museum (Ravelli & Heberle 2016, p. 522). The findings are organized around the three metafunctions

and their respective meaning affordances while drawing on the multimodal resources for interactional engagement as applied by Ravelli and Heberle (2016, p. 526) to a museum setting:

1. Organizational meanings (textual metafunction)
2. Representational meanings about the content (experiential metafunction)
3. Interactional meanings about relations (dialogic metafunction)

3.1 Organizational meanings

The textual metafunction seeks to identify the relationship between the parts making up the whole. Since the space was used for production, the objects are organized to retain their relationships and make their functional values *salient*. The organization of space also abides by the function of production rather than the *navigation path* used for exhibiting objects. It is a vast and open hall filled with machines, and visitors can freely move from one place to another.

After entering the building, there is a space between the old contemporary art museum and the Museum of Energy. There are no entry and exit points to the museum, as it used to be organized around the large machines rather than the circulation of humans. Since the visit was made during the pandemic time, the spray sanitation cleaner, warnings to wear masks, and keep distance are the principal objects encountered upon entry (see Figure 1). No reception, information desk, or single person is available at the entrance. There is only a café and a souvenir shop. It is hard to remember how it was before the café was opened. It must have been an open space enabling more transitions in and out while serving as a meeting point.

Figure 1: "Stay safe" measures at the entrance (the sequence of images follow footsteps from right to left from the entrance to the escalator)

Since there is no direction for entrance, the visitors are left with free choice – whether to turn right and start exploring from the ground floor or take the escalator on the left and climb up. Since the escalator was tempting and it would have been more practical to begin from the top and then slowly go down, the researcher took the escalator to the second floor where the control room is (see Figure 2). All the levels can also be accessed by elevator. However, taking the elevator was not preferred to interact more with space. In the old power plant, the control room used to be only accessible by the stairs from the machine hall. During the visit, the control room was accessed directly through the catwalk and exited the stairs down to the machine hall (see Figure 3).

Figure 2: The escalator

Figure 3: Stairs to machine hall

In the machine hall, visitors can walk around the machines sitting on separate platforms, and they can see the details by getting closer to the objects (see Figure 4). The giant turbines and generators are the protagonists on the stage rather than humans. How they are positioned to each other manifests the organization of a workspace. In other words, they are not only the exhibition's items, but they are parts of the whole production system in the old power plant. Therefore, their relation to each other is not merely directed towards creating a curated experience, but they are interrelated through their functional role in producing electricity.

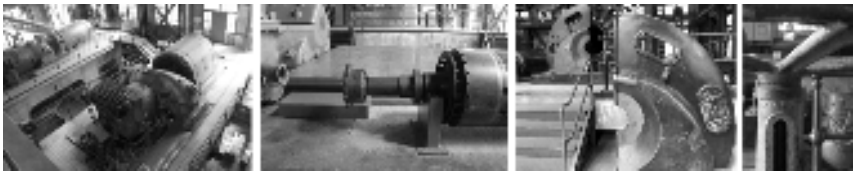

Figure 4: Machine-hall

The story of electricity continues at ground level through a playful setting (see Figure 5). Especially children are attracted to this area, and they learn through demonstrations. All visitors pay attention and interact, enabling them to engage actively. Usually, this area is the most crowded. Moreover, people spend time at each station trying "What's going on?" as explained on the informative panels on the walls. There were only a few visitors at the time of the visit due to the pandemic. No interaction with the demonstrations on the ground floor was observed. Nevertheless, this was an advantage for the researcher to freely move and interact with each artifact.

Figure 5: Exhibition on the ground floor: “What is going on?”

3.2 Representational meanings

The denoted meaning is searched through the objects and their intertextual references on the connotation level concerning cultural and symbolic values (Ravelli & Heberle 2016, p. 527). The control room on the top floor allows the visitor to understand how the production process is managed. The machines did the job, and humans managed the process in the control room of a power plant, unlike the factories where labor was included in the production process through assembly lines. That is why the control room is located on the upper floor overlooking the machine hall (see Figure 6). It feels like the subject commands a spaceship with lots of buttons and metering needles (see Figure 7). The output of the whole production process (electricity) is distributed to the city. District names such as *Zeytinburnu* and *Beyazıt* take visitors out of the fantasy world and bring them back to Istanbul (see figure 8).

Figure 6: Control room behind the glass overlooking the machine hall

Figure 7: Interior of the control room

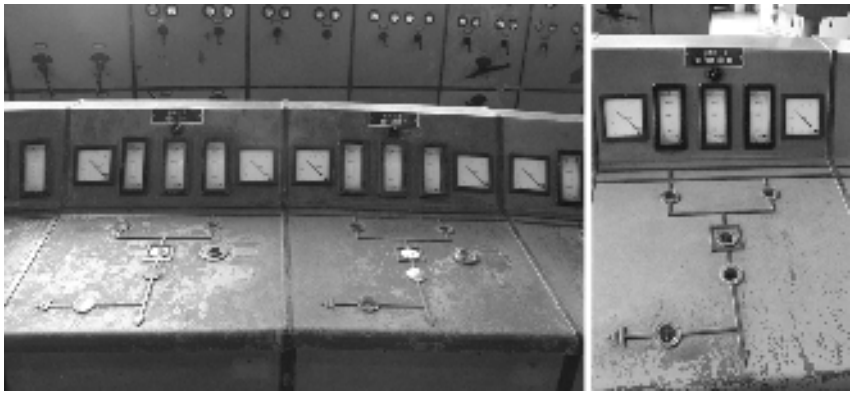

Figure 8: Electricity distribution to districts Beyazıt and Zeytinburnu

The meaning resides in the semiotic framework of the material culture (Hooper-Greenhill 2000) through the material manifestations of societal transformations (Kaeppler 1989, p. 86). In this framework, the meaning is socially assigned (Pearce 1990, p. 51), where the stationary objects without function are the transmitters of this meaning. The massive turbine-generator groups in the machine hall are branded as AEG, Siemens, Brown Boveri, and Thomson Houston, manifesting relationships to a European context and beyond in terms of suggestive symbolic processes deriving from the carriers. As the two fierce competitors and protagonists of the electrification of Berlin, AEG and Siemens connote technological progress and its spread across borders. The competition stage-setting between the two companies featured technology, design, architecture, and identity. The AEG branded turbine-generator group (see figure 9) brings to mind AEG Turbine Factory in Berlin by Peter Behrens, as a landmark of modern industrial architecture. Siemens owes its architectural identity to Hans Hertlein through the Schaltwerk highrise building and his corporate social policy for Siemensstadt. While Siemens found the right place for expansion in west Berlin (Spandau), AEG established expansion plans in the southeast of the city (Oberschöneweide), still recognized as AEGstadt. The social transformation was inevitable due to rapid urbanization; subsequently, social life was organized around industrial sites through the residential areas for workers. Cengizkan (2000, p. 53) comments on the refunctioning and reprogramming of the factory buildings and their environs intended to accommodate workers to meet the requirements of new ways of living according to rational principles of modernization. Moreover, the transformation processes display similarities in adaptive reuse projects in the aftermath of deindustrialization. The Wilhelminenhof Campus of the University of Technology and Economics (HTW) was established in the former industrial complex inhabited by AEG, with solid roots in innovation and technology. The old premises of the Silahtarağa Power Plant were also converted into a campus by Istanbul Bilgi University. However, the Museum of Energy at Santralistanbul today represents the role of culture connected to education and maintains the collective memory for the present and future generations.

Figure 9: AEG turbine

The exhibition on the ground floor represents the process of electricity production. At the representational level, the demonstrations are not about energy production in Silahtarağa. Instead, they are more experimental and educational, aimed at showing how electricity can be produced and what can be done with it (such as used for lighting, cinematography, motors and generators, hand batteries, magnets, energy bikes, and hydrogen rockets). These objects as interactants assume an agentive role and call for engagement.

3.3 Interactional meanings

Pavoni (2001, p. 17) explains the role of architecture as a semiotic reference and highlights the link between the container and contained in the architecture of a museum. The physical building and material aspects (container) are inseparable from the exhibition and narrative along with immaterial aspects (contained), which shape the meaning and the experience of visitors (Pavoni 2001, p. 17). Industrial spaces are associated with power reflected in the architecture with high ceilings, large areas, and cathedral-like forms with souring chimneys to the sky. Another analogy in terms of the brand narrative was used by the European Route of Industrial Heritage (ERIH) describing Santralistanbul as a "cathedral of technology":

> Broad daylight pours in through large-scale arched windows, illuminating a hall that proudly presents itself as a cathedral of technology. The control desks appear to be altars, some of them as large as cupboards, others arranged in a semi-circle as if imitating a sacred choir. (Bluhm, ca. 2019)

The ground-level ceiling is much lower than the machine hall, and it is darker, which makes the space firmly bound. Although, currently, it serves as the entrance level, it was filled with pipes to circulate water and steam under the machine hall when the plant was active.

The modality of the spatial text is high as it includes the original machinery. Therefore, both the form and content are present in space with possible material and immaterial implications, encouraging dialogic interactivity and revoking imagination to allow active negotiation of meanings (Ravelli & Heberle 2016 p. 528). Interactive participation is also enabled by pushing buttons to start the engine or to see how electricity is generated. The objects are touchable; the only barrier is set to keep people moving safely between the machinery.

The space in the Museum of Energy is organized to allow visitors to gaze upon the machine hall through a bird's eye view by adding a catwalk on the top floor. As such, the visitor can gain a unique vantage point of the totality of space. Nonetheless, de Certeau (1984) suggests ground level where the story begins, and interactional meanings occur, since standing on an elevated surface and gazing from above is associated with disembodiment and detachment from lived experience in which the observer is merely a spectator. Moreover, this also explains why the control room is located on the top floor associated with power and control.

There are tablet screens placed on the railings of the catwalk, which give information about the Silahtarağa Power Plant with old images displaying how it looked in the past. The sketches show architectural details (see figure 10). All the tablets have the same content merging visual and verbal manifestations. Therefore, the story begins on the ground floor and the top floor. The visitor moves along the catwalk and gazes upon the machine hall coupled with the information available on the tablets. There is a big screen on the wall at the entrance showing images of Silahtarağa Power Plant and giving information in the subtitles about the history and function of the site. Three screens are placed on the floor in a special case (it looks buried) and covered by glass (see figure 11). The information presented on screens supports the experience and enriches the visitors' understanding by telling the story visually and verbally. However, the experience becomes memorable and meaningful when the visitors actively engage with the space and establish a dialogic interaction with the

Figure 10: Tablets along catwalk

objects around them by maintaining high contact in a least controlled environment that allows them to move freely and become more involved.

Figure 11: Screens on the ground floor

Figure 12: Instructions: 'Try step by step'

On the ground level, the playful setting invites the users to bodily engagement, thus generating affective connotations on the interactional level. Instead of passively receiving the information provided by the detailed texts on the panels, visitors actively join and experiment with the demonstration about electricity production processes. The demonstrations are available through various activities, from pushing buttons, turning on, and activating the demonstration to following the instructions step-by-step (see figure 12). Moreover, a 3D model of the power plant presents its parts under the spotlight. It is activated by pushing the button and follows a sequence. Thus, it demonstrates a step-by-step process as well (see figure 13).

Figure 13: The model of Silahtarağa Power Plant (pushing the buttons)

4. Conclusion

This study approached signs as a collective of imaginaries, impressions, performances, senses, and meanings. The representational qualities created by the signs manifest a more significant concern for examining relations between identity and consumption (Barnett 1998, p. 380). In contrast, the performative turn can be characterized by non-representational qualities (Dirksmeier & Helbrecht 2008). Whereas representation was the central focus in the cultural turn, non-representational theory (Thrift 2007) considers the embodied experience (McCormack 2017). In this framework, the performative qualities of the representations are brought forward (Dewsbury et al. 2002, p. 438). The embodiment in physical space shapes experience in the present time. The sense of familiarity (Roe 2017, p. 347) could also affect the meaning derived from the experience. When we revisit the same place, our emotions might be different even if the signs are the same. Dirksmeier and Helbrecht (2008) draw on the social and physical intricacies of the present and argue for a complexity turn (Urry 2005) by reflecting on the processual aspects of performance theory against simple cause and effect mechanisms. The urban imagery brings about reimagining and rethinking the city as a transforming and mutating place by social, cultural, and physical means. The meaning is constructed and communicated through values and emotions, which could be cited as more than representational (Lorimer 2005). It takes the form of body, practice, and performativity in the field of heritage (Waterton 2014).

In this paper, ethnographic research builds on the interplay of emotions' positionality provided by self-reflection on the researcher's own experiences (Ellis & Bochner 2000). Ellis (2004, p. xix) posits that actions, emotions, embodiment, self-consciousness, and introspection realized by the researcher accommodate a connection by making "room for nontraditional forms of inquiry and expression" (Wall 2006, p. 146). In this vein, ethnography creates room for annotating the multidimensional nature of the social world through the researcher's eyes, introducing an insider perspective (Simpson & Archer 2017, p. 659).

Overall, the use of social semiotics in this paper aims to capture the meaning attached to space through the ethnographic experience on a

phenomenological level and connect it to broader cultural phenomena by shedding light on the relationship between socio-spatial change and post-industrial landscapes' branding. Nevertheless, further avenues for research may be afforded by different forms of data, such as visitor interviews and participant observation of visitors' movements and behaviors. This paper attempts to explore meanings through a mediated experience in a museum setting (Tzortzi 2014; Ravelli & Heberle 2016) by moving along the space and exhibits and taking an embodied action in doing photography. The idea of moving along can be practiced in different forms, such as guided walking or narrated walking, while a go-along walking interview (Carpiano 2009) may combine interviewing and walking. Furthermore, sound walks may enrich the sensory experience by providing sounds of a working factory and the engines. The role of storytelling has been well-recognized in connecting narratives and semiotics, which is helpful in branding heritage sites. Digitalization has radically changed the cultural industry, impacting how images circulate, stories shared, and meanings collectively produced. The heritage experience has also been altered through the proliferation of immersive technologies. Such developments offer potentials for multiple meanings, while they require advancing approaches in brand semiotics.

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