

Article

Development of tourism and recreational activities in Istanbul Islands

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Abstract

The influence of the tourism movements started in mid 19th century in Europe as modern sense, reached the Prince Islands, which is very close to Istanbul, almost at the same time it reached the world. Tourism and recreational activities in the islands have become evident by the transformation of small-scale residential areas, which were permanent residents and not yet associated with tourism before, into use for tourism. As tourism and recreational activities are linked with the sea, developmental changes are mostly visible on the coastline. Tourism in the islands has begun to develop during the period when physical attractions are not influenced by special facilities. In this period, the most obvious effect of physical attractiveness of tourism and recreational activities towards the island is that the air of the islands is good for some diseases. As Islands are visited by the most important statesmen of Turkey, they became popular among Turkish society and investments increase during this period as it was during Ottoman Empire period. Last period which includes the time extending from 1980's to today, the tourism and recreational activities of the islands constantly developed, just like in the past years, only paused for a short while.

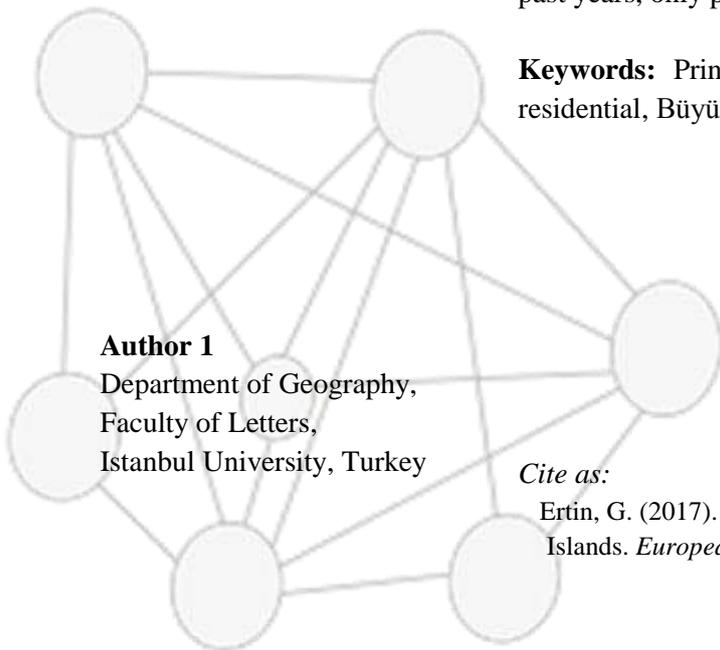
Keywords: Prince Islands, tourism and recreational activities, second residential, Büyükada, Heybeliada

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INTRODUCTION

The influence of the tourism movements started in mid 19th century in Europe as modern sense, reached the Prince Islands, which is very close to Istanbul, almost at the same time it reached the world. In fact, the islands were discovered as recreation areas by foreigners living in the Ottoman Empire long before this date. As a matter of fact, while the houses of the Ottoman bureaucrats are located on the shores of the Bosphorus, summer houses belonging to the non-Muslims are noticed in the islands. The development of tourism and recreational activities on the islands, since the Republican era, paralleled the development of tourism in Turkey, but in some periods it has declined and sometimes it has been ahead.

Tourism and recreational activities in the islands have become evident by the transformation of small-scale residential areas, which were permanent residents and not yet associated with tourism before, into use for tourism. The first effect of tourism was that some of the houses were turned into hostels or hotels towards the end of 1800's. The fact that construction of piers, small number of hotels and erection of secondary residences along the shoreline and through the hills – in the very early stages – are the effects of tourism noticed in terms of appearance and land use of islands. As a matter of fact while forestland, maquis shrublands and already limited agricultural areas have turned into secondary residences, even the plant species of the island have taken its share from this change, mostly the plants of tropical origin grown in the gardens of the mansions.

Another feature arised by the development of tourism and recreational activities is the diversification of the small-scale central business area within each residential settlement to serve the needs of tourists, and some of which turn into "seasonal" or "temporary" workplaces only operating during the summer months, most of the recreational business areas (restaurants, cafes, etc.) located along the shoreline are only active during summer months.

As tourism and recreational activities are linked with the sea, developmental changes are mostly visible on the coastline.

As a matter of fact transformation has become quite clear - beaches, which become fashion trends in recent years – and include various recreational activities, can be regarded as positive in terms of beach regeneration. The sea clubs serving to their members changed the coastal areas into "beaches" with landscape planning.

Changes in the islands mentioned above can be examined in different historical periods:

Early Period (1846-1923)

Tourism in the islands has begun to develop during the period when physical attractions are not influenced by special facilities. In this period, the most obvious effect of physical attractiveness of tourism and recreational activities towards the island is that the air of the islands is good for some diseases. As a matter of fact, the British traveler Makferland, who had come to Büyükada for a long time in 1828 because of his discomfort, said *"I would recommend islands to anyone who is unlucky to get sick in Istanbul. The climate here is truly exceptional. The mountains around Anatolia are protected by the islands. In this respect, the cold winds of the Black Sea do not show any violence until the island. The air is warm and sweet. There was no way to find this air in the villages of the Bosphorus* (Erdenen, 1962).

On the other hand, the reason for Islands being chosen as recreation areas is that local and foreign minorities of upper class desire to spend their spare time in some other places than their residences in Istanbul, besides Islands have favorable geographical conditions and close to Istanbul.

However, transportation and accommodation requirement for incoming tourists has brought the fact to the agenda that special facilities are necessary for tourism. First convenience was provided in 1839 by the Rescript of Gülhane which gives right to foreigners to own property in Islands, and according to this law firstly the French chose Islands as the settlement place. Another important convenience was the commencement of regular ferry services between the islands and Istanbul from 1846 onwards. These two important developments have been very effective in turning the Islands into resort by Istanbul's rich minorities and foreigners.

Among the foreigners, firstly the French who arrived at the end of the 18th century after three hours of troublesome journey with boats, used the island as a summer resort. However, tourism and recreational activities are developed in the mid-19th century, when they provide transportation by ferryboats. After this period, English and Italian foreigners also choose the Islands for summer, treatment and sick leave. At the end of 19th century Turkish intellectuals, aristocrats and senior state officials as well as non-Muslim rich people and embassies, started to come to the island. First constructions and recreation activities in the Island started during the same period. As regular ferry services started to the Islands and foreigners' possession is accepted, large pavilions and hotels started to be built in 1885. (Tuğlacı, 1989).

In this period, those hotels proved that the Islands are one of the main touristic centers of Istanbul. In the afternoon and evening hours – especially in Büyükada – clubs, theater shows, liquor and seafood restaurants and the branches of famous pastries centered in Istanbul support the recreation activities in Islands and many landscape planning have been made for this purpose. The area of Municipality club opened in 1917 was built on a filled land which was a pier before, where boats brought coal, fruit and liquor. In the same way, the coastal harbor covered with clubs built on the sea.

Firstly Greeks started to benefit from the sea, there is a famous beach called Yörükali in Büyükada which include two beaches with few cabins surrounded by sacks and a beach built on the sand. But especially in the 1920s, white Russians who escaped from the Russian revolution settled in Büyükada and opened beaches here, and sea tourism developed (Erdenen, 1962).

Summer houses, which are very common today, have begun to appear in the islands before 1900's. Because the people who came to the island during this period - especially the foreigners - have built summer houses in the islands with the conveniences brought by the Rescript of Gülhane. The summer houses, which have grown in a way that can not be avoided and cause concrete formation in almost all tourism centers, may have created a rather dispersed layout with gardens and created an artistic image in the architectural sense. These mansions create the typical image of the island, and mostly have large gardens and bear the characteristics of European architecture of the time, still maintaining this characteristic today. The first action for summer houses starts in Büyükada, in which tourism is mostly developed. Indeed, in the mid 19th century, the Maltese aristocrat Signor Giakomo built twelve summer houses on the estate of Hristos monastery to be sold to wealthy aristocrats. Nizam neighborhood, Çankaya location - Büyükada's second residential area shows that this area, which is increasing in number by others, has developed (Zorer, 2005). In addition to the summer houses, the more modest-looking houses belonging to tradesmen, officers and fishermen started to be built on the same period.

The 1900s have been the beginning of a new era in the islands. This includes a period in which there is a serious increase in the number of houses and the islanders who want to earn additional income from their houses by renting them to people coming to Islands for summer vacations as a habit. Sometimes hosts rent only a part of the house or they rent the entire house and move to outbuildings. This habit has become a tradition nowadays. There is no doubt that the low number of accommodation in the islands encouraged hosts to rent their houses. Because the most economical way for those who want to spend an entire summer with their families is to rent a house. French

traveler L.Enol who were in Büyükada in 1850, tells of this lively life of Büyükada: "*Daytime Büyükada is like a desert lying under the sun. Life begins with evening cozyness and supper elegance overflows, women, girls take a walk in front of the Hungarian castle* (Erdenen, 1962).

However, the fun for recreational purposes in the islands is not limited only to Büyükada. "The Ottoman Sultans were especially entertaining arrangements in other islands during the feast days. Especially during Sultan Hamit's time in Kınalıada, lanterns were hung during the holidays and sugar was distributed. On such days, the Jarden location of Kınalıada is very festive. Romanian musicians came to Pier Club. There were wooden barracks built on the sea. Music was played around here. Today these half century old barracks and houses were sold, burned or demolished."(Erdenen, 1962). These narratives reveal that the recreational activities of the islands were much more active and diverse than today.

It should be stated that, toursim and recreation activities were only held in summer as today, and in winter enterntainment facilities, pastries and restaurants opened as a branch in Islands take down the shutters until the next spring for judas trees.

DEVELOPMENT PERIOD (1923-1980)

Despite the fact that the islands have lost their foreign minority, the period of the most active tourism last around 57 years. As a result of the difficult living conditions brought by World War I, most of the Greek Cypriots, who were reflected on the island and settled in the islands, migrated to Greece. Both war environment and loos of population cause deceleration of tourism and recreation activities. However, tourism has begun to revive towards the 1930s. As the leading administrators of the state, high bureaucrats and rich class of Islands chose them as holiday resorts and as a result tourisim reactivated in Islands.

Undoubtedly Mustafa Kemal Atatürk is the head of these statesmen. On August 8-9, 1928, when he taught new Latin letters to Sarayburnu community, he came to Büyükada with motor boat, then he visited Anadolu Club and Büyükada in various years (1929, 1930, 1934, 1935, and 1936) and Heybeliada in 1933.

Another famous statesman who brought attention to the island again like Atatürk is İsmet İnönü. İsmet İnönü preferred Heybeliada and arrived there in 1924 for the firt time, than he bought a house in 1930 and came to Heybeliada every summer from 1950 to 60. This became quite effective in the revival of tourism. Despite the fact that accurate statistics about this period can not be reached, in the 1940's Büyükada's accommodation facilities and summer houses accommodate 20-25 thousand people in the summer season, Heybeliada welcomes 12 thousand in 1935 and 20 thousand in 1945. It is estimated that even in Burgas, which has 1,000 people in winter, reached 2,000 people in the summer months of 1930's. As Islands are visited by the most important statesmen of Turkey, they became popular among Turkish society and investments increase during this period as it was during Ottoman Epire period. These investments include hotels, motels, lodgings, summer houses that became increasingly popular, and sports clubs, clubs, theaters and movie theaters serve as complementary services for recreational purposes.

As it is in the Ottoman period, in the first years of the Republic, the most developed islands are the Büyükada and Heybeliada. It is noteworthy that the accommodation facilities were also collected on the same islands. In Burgazada, which has only a few accommodation facilities today, had only one accommodation facility during this period. The increase in the number of rich and middle-class Turkish families in the islands since the 1950s has accelerated the construction of summer homes or second homes in the islands.

This is the reason why the island of Sedef is already settled is tourism. The housing cooperative, which was founded in 1956 by the family named Şehsuvaroğlu, has become a tourism area with 60-70 two-storey houses where elite people live.

The island of Burgas, first of all, attracted the interest of Jewish businessmen. As a matter of fact, since the 1950's, second houses have started to be built on the slopes overlooking Heybeliada in the eastern-northeastern part of the island, in the north-northwest direction facing Kınalıada (Gülen, 1982). At the same time, with the increasing use of the island for marine tourism, it is noteworthy that a large number of luxury boats anchored to small bays - especially those looking to Heybeliada.

The increase in the number of houses used as the summer house, is also linked to the increasing incidence of renting houses that started in the period before Republic. As a matter of fact, most of the houses were demolished and the gardens were parceled or the apartments were built instead of the burned old mansions and flats. This process continued in the 1950s as the residential areas prompted other areas of use (pastures and meadows) and fill with apartments. Since the forests are small and open to the winds blowing from the north, the climate is harder than the other islands, and even in Kınalıda, which is not demanded so much, summer houses have started to be built since 1950s. As a matter of fact, only one contractor built nearly 40 buildings in 20 years in Kınalıada (Şevki, 2004). Especially in Kınalıada with the destruction of old mansions or the effect of fires, in 1980's number of apartments increase rapidly.

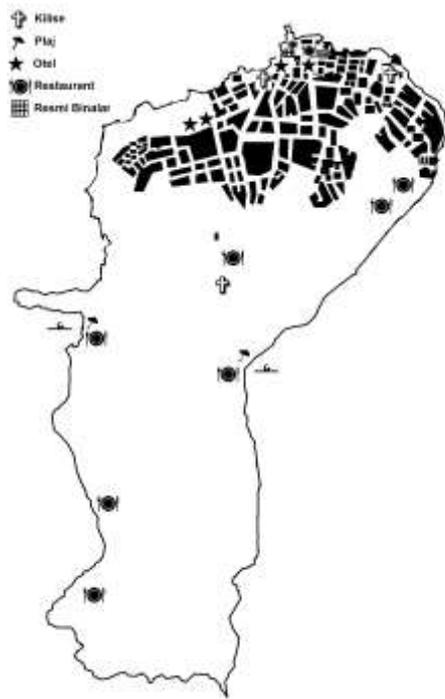


Figure 1: Land Use of Büyükada in 1940

In this period, there have been significant increases in the number of facilities complementary to tourism and recreational activities, and arrangements have been made in existing facilities. The clubs that protruded into the sea, the facilities operated as sea baths transformed into modern beaches, filling the shore for club constructions, the opening of the countryside clubs, and the start of excursions with phaetons are some of the developments marked this period.

The arrangements for tourism and recreational activities in Heybeliada have developed somewhat differently from other islands. Because the military school on this island has become the impetus for the existence of other facilities and some of the beaches belong to the Naval Forces Command. After the 1960s, this institution, which increased its activity in the island, opened private

beaches for the members of the army, built the army house on the grounds of Aya Yorgi Monastery and resting facilities around Şafak club. In this way, accommodation facilities belonging to the official institutions have been established.



Figure 2: Land Use of Heybeliada in 1940

The use of the islands for marine tourism in the summer months, has enhanced the establishment of maritime clubs for the members of the upper class who pay high dues. In this way, social life has become more active in the islands. The water sports competitions organized by those clubs and the balls have made an important contribution to the revitalization of the touristic activities of the islands. As a matter of fact, it is expressed that in 1925, all the hotels on the Büyükada were filled the day before the ball. (Tuğlacı, 1989).



Figure3: Land Use of Burgazada in 1940

In this period, tourism has been revitalized with competitions and festivals organized in the islands. Flower fair celebrations, islands beauty contests, dance contests, masquerade balls and contest of the most beautiful phaeton adorned with flowers firstly organized in 1931, made island ferries more crowded than ever (Tuğlacı, 1989). Perhaps one of the most interesting complementary service in tourism is the Burgazada zoo, which opened in Burgazada in the 1970s and is the first private zoo in Turkey. The zoo established in the part of the island called the Club and closed in 1983 after the person who founded it passed away.

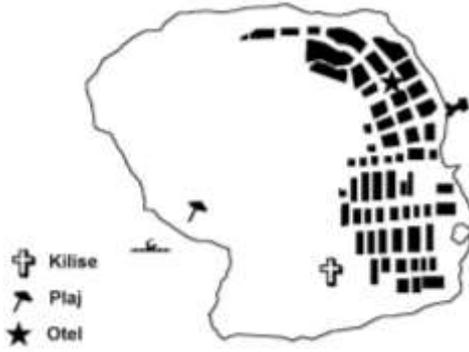


Figure 4: Land Use of Kınalıada in 1940

INTERRUPTING AND RETRIEVAL (1980-2017)

In this period which includes the time extending from 1980's to today, the tourism and recreational activities of the islands constantly developed, just like in the past years, only paused for a short while. Significant features distinguishing this period from other periods are noteworthy. These features experienced all around Turkey in the same way that it has been typical. Events that distinguish this period are, enhanced summer housing constructions and expansion of the settlement areas due to spreading summer vacation desire among people, habitat and cultural heritage destruction, problems about infrastructure and urban sprawl, lack of water in summer, and finally social problems. Today, the number of houses in the islands are around 20.000. However, almost 90% of these dwellings are used as summer houses and a large part is left empty in winter months. Houses belong to business owners, politicians, bureaucrats, and artists (some of whom are also leased), have increased considerably between 1980 and 1990. The most typical bad settlements example of villas and apartments built in almost all empty areas in Büyükada, Maden district, Heybeliada and Kınalıada, where the construction has increased dramatically since 1984. While the old harbor is completely filled with the houses built in the place of old timber mansions standing along the southern coast of the pier, the shore is concreted with gardenless houses, ruined the traditional settlement texture of the Islands like Kınalıada.

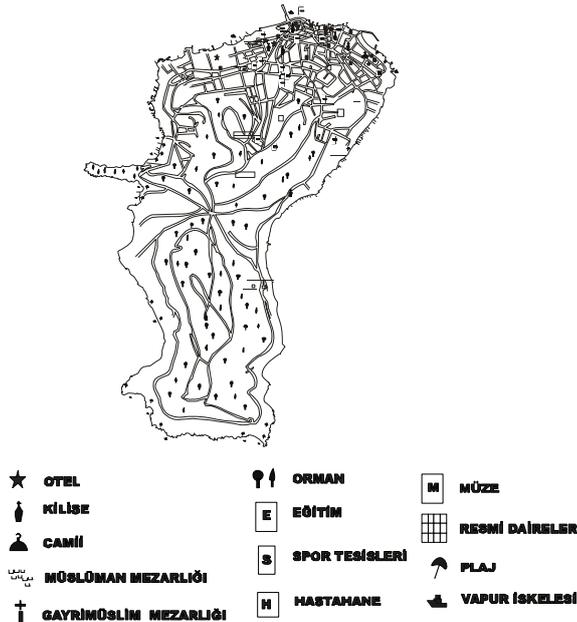


Figure 5: Land use of Büyükada in 2017

The summer houses located in Burgazada and Sedefadası are different from the other islands, with beautiful and elegant architectural structures. Burgazadası'nda Gezinti, Gönüllü and Mehtap streets, as well as the old wooden villas are remarkable. There are small yacht quays in the villas. Islands were very important for Istanbul with its beaches, ponds and mentions until 1980's, however on-going tourism and recreation activities cause urban sprawl and decrease their value. Particularly as a new way of life, they have lost the upper income group - sometimes part of their vacation outside the island - in the fashion of going to tourist facilities in the south and contamination of the Sea of Marmara. However, the main blow that caused a stagnation in the tourism and recreational activities of the islands occurred after the big earthquake of 1999.

This history and the following several years the ongoing nature of the fault, which is still on the agenda-near the islands, and the speculation on the path of the great Istanbul earthquake have reduced the island's value as a tourist and recreation area. As a matter of fact, after the earthquake, the outsiders close their homes and leave the island, even the following year they do not come to their houses and the number of day trippers falls seriously in the same year, these reflected in tourism and recreation activities in the short term. In addition to the decline in the building prices, today number of annual reconstruction licenses reduced to 10 from 250 – however it is gratifying because of the diminishing craze of acquiring housing in the islands – and it was interpreted as the long-term effect of reducing interest in the Islands.



Figure6: Land use of Heybeliada in 2017

Both reasons mentioned above and visitors preferring to own a residence or rent a house to spend their holidays, prevent long-term holiday visitors stay in facilities. As a natural consequence of this, the number of accommodation facilities within the scope of commercial tourism has been seriously decreased compared to the period including 1923-1980. As a matter of fact, while there were total of eight hotels and five hostels in Büyükada and Heybeli in the 1980s, there were only one hostel in Kınalı and Burgaz where there are no hotels (Tuğlacı, 1989). Decreasing number of accommodation facilities in the islands undoubtedly caused by the loss of foreign tourists staying in the hotels in the past. As a matter of fact the number of foreign tourists on the island, except for the Greeks who visited the Aya Yorgi monastery in Büyükada and the daily Arab visitors who came since 1985, are always very few.

Today, the islands are once again becoming the tourism and recreation area of Istanbul. There is no doubt that this situation has a great effect on the people of Istanbul defeating the fear of earthquake. Especially during the summer of the last two years, the summer population of the islands is about ten times higher than the winter population. This movement is mostly felt in Heybeliada and Büyükada district center. Because there is less transportation to Kınalıada than Heybeli and Büyükada.

In Burgaz and Sedef, the private areas are very spacious. In 1957, the Şehsuvaroğlu family opened the settlement in the first stage as 50 units, today reached 110 houses and $\frac{3}{4}$ of Sedefadası is closed to the public. The fact that people use only a restaurant, a beach and a small area of a grocery store considerably limits the number of visitors.

Tourist certified facilities in the Islands in 1980.

Name of the island	Hotel	Hostel	Restaurant
Büyükada	6	4	9
Heybeliada	2	1	7
Kınalıada		1	3
Burgazada		1	3

Kaynak: Tuğlacı, 1989

Burgazada is much calmer than Büyükada and Heybeli. Majority of the people living in Burgazadası are our Jewish and Armenian citizens also a very small number of German and Italian descendants stay there, and they often spend their entire vacation between their own home and the sea club. Although the island's pier has turned into a public beach due to the fact that the coasts have been opened to the public in recent years, the main part of the sea side is Kalpanzakaya, which is behind the settlement areas behind the island. The number of people who came to Burgazada is less than Heybeli and Büyükada.

Summer and winter populations in January

	Winter	Population	Summer	Population
Büyükada(including sedef sland)	7.074	6.418	7.335	65.000
Heybeliada	6.085	5.673	5.529	45.000
Burgazada	2.311	1.541	1.578	15.000
Kınalıada	3.943	2.539	3.318	25.000
Total	19413	16171	17760	150.000

Kaynak:Adalar Belediyesi

The Islands have regained the artists, writers, businessmen and politicians belonging to most of the upper income groups which have gained importance especially in the last two years as tourism and recreation area of Istanbul again. In fact, there have been significant increases in the number of people who want to be hosted in the islands. However, it is not suitable to open a new reconstruction area, it is possible to buy and restore old houses. This means that the retro-specific texture of the islands will be renewed soon. Those who belong to the middle and lower income groups, who are the island's daily visitors, make important contributions to the increase of the summer population by filling the maritime transportation vehicles, especially the island ferry, on weekends.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The islands, located 25 km from the port of Istanbul, have been a favorite tourism and recreation area for foreigners living in Istanbul since the end of the 18th century and have been a recreational area for many years with stone buildings, summerhouses and mansions. Today it still keeps its nature, history and culture mosaic effect coming from past. Islands should be used today for

recreational purposes as it was in the past. However, some regulations need to be made. Especially for visitors who want to relax and have a good time, it is necessary to make the environmental regulations, to use the cordless vehicles, bicycles and electric public transportation vehicles to create a remote environment from the city, and traditional carriages have to be modern and high quality. Prince Islands have an important potential for private events and boutique meetings. In negotiations with hotel managers and organization companies, it is understood that both parties are willing to participate in these activities on the island. In order to reach this potential and purpose in the islands, meeting and organization fields should be developed.

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