



Passages as in-between Spaces of the City

ABSTRACT

This study examines passages as “in-between spaces” that blur the boundaries between public and private areas in the spatial organization of cities. The first section discusses the relationship between urban space and daily life, addressing the physical and social dynamics that shape individuals' experiences within the city. The second section evaluates the concept of the arcade as a type of in-between space where public circulation gains continuity within private property, adding a different dimension to urban life through its functions of transition and encounter. In this context, the role of passages in the reorganization of urban life, both economically and socio-culturally, is examined. The final section comparatively compares examples of passages in Western cities with 19th-century passages in Turkey, particularly Istanbul. The evaluations reveal that while Istanbul passages share formal and functional similarities with Western examples, they have developed a unique identity influenced by the local context. In conclusion, the study emphasizes that passages are hybrid spaces of critical importance within the urban fabric in terms of publicness, continuity, and social interaction.

Keywords: Space, Urban Space, in-between Space, Everyday Life, Passage.

Beyza Onur¹

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INTRODUCTION

The formation of spaces is closely related to the social, economic, and cultural conditions in which they exist. However, spaces also play an active role in the transformation of social structure. In other words, while the socio-economic and ideological structure of society shapes spatial arrangements, these spaces contribute to the shaping of daily life, cultural practices, and social relations. Spaces are shaped in accordance with the urban and architectural understandings of the period in which they emerge; at the same time, they reflect the social structure, lifestyle, culture, and ideological orientations of the era to which they belong. With the increase in industrial production in the 19th century, the need for new commercial areas where diverse and proliferating products could be displayed and sold led to the emergence of large-scale commercial spaces. Technological advancements, social transformations, and the spread of consumer culture gave rise to passages as a new spatial typology that allowed for the display and sale of products. Passages first appeared in Western Europe at the end of the 18th century, simultaneously with economic, socio-cultural, and political transformations (Kıral Kurt, 2020).

This type of structure, which became widespread in Western cities, was built in the Ottoman territories in the second half of the 19th century, especially in the Galata-Pera region of Istanbul. In Ankara, however, the emergence of passages coincides with the mid-20th century as a result of changes in the city's economic and social structure. During this period, urban policies and planning decisions determined the spatial organization of the passages; after their opening, these structures became one of the important focal points of daily life. While contributing to the city's economy with their commercial functions, passages also influenced the reshaping of urban and social relations. In addition to shopping, thanks to their unique architecture, characteristic typologies, and spatial structures that enable public continuity within private property, they have gained a privileged position in city life (Kıral Kurt, 2020).

SPACE AND EVERYDAY LIFE

Spaces are shaped by the social, economic, and cultural conditions in which they are located, while also contributing to the transformation of these conditions. In other words, there is a two-way, dialectical interaction between space and social structure. The socio-economic and ideological structure of society transforms the formation and use of space; while space plays an active role in shaping daily life, social relations, and cultural organization (Kıral Kurt, 2020).

Passages redefined social and urban relations through the spatial configurations of their periods; they supported the vitality of the city economy, especially through their shopping functions. Ankara passages,

¹ Assoc. Prof. Dr., Karabük University, Safranbolu Başak Cengiz Faculty of Architecture, Department of Architecture, Karabük, Turkey, ORCID: 0000-0001-8246-9571

which became an important part of consumption processes in a certain period and reflected the cultural practices of daily life, became characteristic urban spaces representing the city's identity with their unique spatial typologies and architectural features. The socio-economic, cultural, and political dynamics of the period influenced the emergence of the passages; their spatial formations were guided by urban development policies and planning decisions. However, it is not sufficient to evaluate these structures solely through their physical forms. To understand the emergence and spatial characteristics of passages, it is necessary to consider them together with the social dynamics, urban development processes, and planning policies that determine them. In this context, the elements influencing the shaping of space, the relationship between daily life and space, the formation process of urban space, and the building conditions constitute the conceptual framework of the study (Kiral Kurt, 2020).

The concept of space has been one of the fundamental areas of debate in philosophy and science since Aristotle. Aristotle (1997:149) defines space as "something in which an object is located, completely surrounding that object, but not identical with it." According to him, space and time are among the categories of existence; however, they do not have a direct relationship with matter or form. Descartes (1996), with his Cartesian understanding of space, rejects this approach of Aristotle and defines space as a measurable, calculable, three-dimensional structure. However, Descartes treats space as a phenomenon independent of the individual. Hegel sees space as an abstract surface defined by lines, planes, and coordinates (Avar, 2009). Kant (2008), on the other hand, separates space from the experiential, explaining it as a category that exists a priori in the human mind, comprehensible not through the senses but through intuition.

Norberg-Schulz (1996) defines space through its physical qualities, making a distinction between indoor and outdoor spaces. According to her, outdoor space encompasses public areas and urban environments, while indoor space represents the private spaces of the individual. In his work "Consuming Spaces," Urry (2015) argues that an absolute definition of space is impossible, and that it should instead be evaluated in relation to economic, social, and cultural processes. De Certeau (2008), in his work "The Discovery of Everyday Life," suggests that space is a phenomenon related to time and experience, gaining meaning through everyday practices. According to him, a place only becomes a "space" when it is used. Among Marxist thinkers, Castells, Lefebvre, and Harvey emphasize that space should be considered in conjunction with the social processes of the city. Castells (1997) explains the relationship between social processes and space within the framework of "spatial unit-social unit." Harvey (2012), adopting Lefebvre's approach, argues that space is not merely a physical entity, but a social phenomenon that shapes and is shaped by the individual. Harvey also notes that conceptions of space and time are shaped through ideological uses.

Lefebvre (2014) argues that space can never be considered as something "empty" or "neutral," but rather a phenomenon produced within the totality of social relations. In his work "The Production of Space" (1974), he puts forward the idea that "social space is a social production." In his approach to space within a political and social context, Lefebvre bases his understanding of space on Marx's conception. According to him, space cannot be considered independently of ideological and political processes; because space is an area where historical and natural elements combine with political processes, and social relations are shaped. Castells (1997) supports this view, arguing that urban analyses should be conducted taking into account social classes, power relations, and political dynamics. Harvey (2013), on the other hand, views space as a social structure produced and shaped by humans. Space not only differs between individuals and social groups but also changes over time.

In Lefebvre's concept of "the production of space," production encompasses not only economic objects but also knowledge, city centers, public spaces, and social life itself (Elden, 2004b). According to Lefebvre, space is produced within a threefold dialectical process: perceived space (spatial practices), designed space (representations of space), and lived space (spaces of representation). This threefold structure aims to explain the physical, mental, and social dimensions of space simultaneously. The dialectical relationship between the representation of space and the spaces of representation produces "spatial practices" that reveal the dynamics of daily life (Lefebvre, 2014). Therefore, a comprehensive analysis of a space requires an understanding of its relationship with daily life.

The concept of "everyday life" is a fundamental one, explored in depth in the works of Lefebvre and De Certeau. Both thinkers view everyday life as a space where experiences hidden within the ordinary practices of society, and the ordinary or extraordinary forms of these experiences, can be revealed (Gürel, 2011:1). De Certeau (2009) aims to uncover the hidden meanings behind the seemingly ordinary structure of everyday life by analyzing it. According to him, everyday life is the relationship that individuals living in the city establish with "place"; this "place" is a complex and mysterious field of experience where visibility is diminished. Lefebvre (2010a), on the other hand, defines everyday life as a space that can be understood through the

ordinary actions of the society in which it is lived, making the social order visible. Everyday life encompasses not only the routines of individuals but also cultural and social relationships. In this context, the everyday is both known and unknown, both open and hidden, both ordinary and extraordinary (Highmore, 2002).

Esgin (2018) defines everyday life as a whole that connects human actions and includes the differences between them. Similarly, Burkitt (2014) argues that everyday life is linked to routines in which social relations are produced and reproduced. Crow and Pope (2008) also state that everyday life is a social space woven with the seemingly ordinary and insignificant behaviors of individuals. Therefore, everyday life is not only a space where daily repetitions occur; it is also an interaction field that contains all the complexity and multi-layered relationships of the social world created by individuals (Esgin, 2018: 28–29).

Lefebvre associates the concept of everyday life with modernity. According to Gardiner (2016:122), modernity directs the individual towards an introverted, specialization-based, profession, family, and class-based way of life; thus, it creates the need for the concept of leisure time. Lefebvre (2013a) states that in the modern period, everyday life also includes leisure time, and that there is both unity and tension between these two areas. Gardiner (2016:123) states that in modern society, leisure time has been transformed into a regulated, controlled, and commercialized form; therefore, individuals establish a passive, easily manipulated relationship with the world. Lefebvre (2010a), on the other hand, argues that the modern world directs individuals through practices of rest and entertainment by making leisure time a necessity. The transformations in technology and production that occurred with the process of industrialization have changed the form of daily life. The power relations of the capitalist system affect not only the formation of urban spaces but also the organization of daily life. As cities are rebuilt in accordance with the policies determined by power, large-scale investments and consumption-oriented spatial arrangements have emerged. Thus, power shapes social life by organizing the phenomenon of consumption, which is at the center of daily life, through space. These strategies, which regulate production and consumption relations, make visible the use of space as a political tool.

PASSAGES AS IN-BETWEEN SPACES IN URBAN AREAS

In the 19th century, with the Industrial Revolution, technological advancements, and modernization processes, passages emerged as a new spatial type in cities. These structures were built as urban elements with the characteristic of "in-between spaces," located between public outdoor and private indoor spaces. The word "passage" is of French origin; it began to be used in the 13th century to mean "road" or "passageway," and in the early 17th century to mean "the corridor of a building." Its Latin origin is the word "passus," meaning "step," and it indicates a space with a defined beginning and end. In English, the term "arcade" means "a passageway located between rows of shops or galleries covered with arches" (Geist, 1989).

From the beginning of the 20th century, the term "passageway" began to be used for narrow passageways connecting the interiors of large building blocks or development islands. MacKeith (1986) defines passages as long corridors lined with shops on one or two sides and covered with glass roofs. Walter Benjamin describes the arcade as "the interiorization of the boulevard"; in other words, he sees it as an in-between space located between the street and the interior. Oskay (2000) similarly characterizes the arcade as "a covered market-type structure consisting of shops and stores arranged around an inner courtyard covered with a glass ceiling." Various concepts corresponding to this type of structure are used in different languages: terms such as passage or galerie in French and arcade in English are preferred to describe the same typology. By the mid-19th century, the word "arcade" had become a general concept to describe interconnected corridors, enclosed exhibition spaces, or shopping galleries. "Galerie," on the other hand, refers to an enclosed passageway, usually arranged in the form of a long corridor, that allows for walking and shopping. All these words commonly include the meanings of passage, road, lane, or narrow street. In architectural terms, a passage is considered a pedestrian crossing with a defined starting and ending point (Geist, 1989).

Geist (1989) discusses the view that Western arcade typologies were inspired by Eastern bazaars, noting that these claims are mostly based on engravings and depictions found in 18th and 19th-century travelogues. However, Geist emphasizes that this inspiration did not constitute a direct transfer at the architectural level, meaning there is no evidence of a significant influence of oriental models on Western arcade architecture. Examining bazaar types in Muslim cities such as Isfahan and Istanbul, Geist states that these structures differ from passages in terms of their functioning and spatial arrangement. Bazaars have street systems open not only to pedestrian traffic but also to animals and carts; commercial relations were regulated by guilds and craft associations. Passages, on the other hand, are associations of shops established through capital partnerships. In this context, bazaars and medieval markets are associated with the guild system; passages and department stores are associated with the retail forms of the capitalist economy. Benjamin (2004) establishes the

relationship between passages and Eastern markets particularly through the experience of interior space; he notes that the Egyptian motifs in the decorations of the Passage du Caire, one of the first examples in Paris, reflect this oriental connotation.

The formation of urban spaces is shaped by the interaction of economic dynamics, social structures, political processes, cultural values, and geographical conditions. Economic and social transformations have led to the emergence of new needs in cities; this has resulted in spatial expansion and the formation of new areas with different functions. Commercial activities follow a course parallel to developments in production methods and social organization. It is stated that the role of trade in the spread of civilization and art among different peoples and continents is universally accepted (Cezar, 1985). In this context, passages can be considered a unique form of retail trade, formed by the aggregation of individual shops. Therefore, to understand the historical development of passages, it is necessary to consider the history of trade holistically.

The period in which passages emerged coincided with the social and economic upheavals following the French Revolution, which were distinctly felt in Paris. Famine in rural areas triggered massive migration from villages to urban centers, leading to an increase in social problems within the city. With the formation of new social classes in the post-revolutionary era, individuals' daily lifestyles, consumption habits, and socialization practices also changed. In this transformative environment, passages gained importance both as new public spaces where social interaction took place and as commercial areas catering to luxury goods. Benjamin (2004: 87) defines passages as "one of the starting points for the development of retail sales and economic growth." Passages have undertaken functions such as creating a public interior space, regulating heavy pedestrian traffic, providing protection from bad weather, offering shortcuts, and creating safe circulation areas.

These functions have provided economic advantages to both shop tenants and property owners. However, the sustainability of an arcade depends on its urban context; its location in the city center and its connection to two busy streets are decisive factors in its commercial success. As Geist (1989) also points out, the appeal of the arcade is not only economic but also based on a spatial illusion: the interior space is designed like a covered outer street, and the exterior aesthetics are transferred inside. In this respect, the arcade can be considered both an aesthetic and economic "object of speculation."

Passages are urban commercial spaces directly related to the economic, political, social, and technological developments of the 19th century. Benjamin (2004) describes the large department stores as... Benjamin notes that the precursor passages primarily catered to the urban middle and upper classes. These spaces featured meticulously designed interiors showcasing luxury goods and carefully curated window displays. He attributes the emergence of passages to two main factors: firstly, the growth and increased variety in the textile trade, which increased the quality and quantity of products offered in stores; and secondly, the new construction techniques made possible by the introduction of iron and glass as building materials. According to Geist (1989: 62), the main reasons that accelerated the emergence of passages were:

- ✓ The increase in the production and consumption of luxury goods parallel to the development of trade;
- ✓ The fact that the streets of Paris, under the conditions of the time, were dirty, dusty, and neglected, making them unsuitable for strolling.
- ✓ Security problems in the city during the French Revolution (1789–1799) and the resulting increased need for alternative routes of movement,
- ✓ The need for new public spaces in the city where people could move around and socialize comfortably.

Spatial Characteristics of Passages

Geist (1989) states that passages offer versatile opportunities to their users with their structural and functional characteristics. These qualities include:

- ✓ Well-lit ceiling arrangements designed to suit consumption habits,
- ✓ A continuous and uninterrupted shopping experience,
- ✓ Large and eye-catching display areas,
- ✓ Stepped pedestrian walkways that resolve level differences,
- ✓ A safe interior space organization that protects against noise, traffic, and weather conditions from the outside environment,
- ✓ An urban tool that supports economic mobility through rentable shops, and also a public gathering place where socio-cultural interactions take place.

Benjamin (2004: 88–89) describes passages as “a small world” and “the glittering caves of Imperial Paris.” According to him, passages offer individuals functions such as “a place where everything can be found,” “a shelter from the rain,” “a safe promenade,” and “a meeting point with vendors who are the subjects of commerce.” Geist (1989) emphasizes that passages are considered “objects of speculation” within the scope of private property and have no direct management connection with the municipalities. This situation shows that if passages cannot adapt to changes in fashion and social transformations, they may become unable to compete with other commercial areas in the city. Historical research reveals that the success or failure of passages cannot be explained solely by their physical characteristics; factors such as environmental context, user profile, and social perception are decisive. Geist lists the necessary conditions for a passage to exist under the following headings in his studies:

- ✓ Location: The passage should be located in a central point with constant human circulation. In this way, it gains continuity by attracting different user groups during the day and night.
- ✓ Position: Passages should also function as pedestrian axes, connecting different streets with one or more entrances. Without this connection, the functionality and commercial success of the passage decrease.
- ✓ Interior Layout: In the design process, not only the density of shops but also the attractiveness and inviting nature of the space are important. Narrow and deep shops on both sides reinforce the feeling of a bazaar. The life of the passage should run parallel to the street's activity. Food, cultural, and entertainment events transform the ordinary visitor into an active user.

Through such activities, the passage becomes an integral part of urban life. The passage should preserve the anonymous identity of the street, creating a "street illusion" between its interior and facades. In this respect, glass roofs offer an ideal solution, creating a sense of independent and light space that connects with the sky. MacKeith (1986) analyzed the spatial arrangement of passages in Britain in his study. According to him, these structures were planned in a way that would maximize land use and provide high rental income. Since the 19th-century urban fabric still maintained the narrow street layout inherited from the Middle Ages, these limited space conditions were decisive in the shaping of the passages. In this context, passages are characterized by rectangular or square plan typologies with glass-roofed corridors, sometimes integrated with large courtyards; circulation areas articulated in the shape of Y, L, H, or T; and shops on the ground floor and offices or workshops on the upper floors. MacKeith emphasizes that passages are spaces that transform urban life not only physically but also socio-economically and culturally. Geist (1989: 91–99), on the other hand, systematically classified passages in terms of their spatial organization, building types, cross-sectional features, and ceiling forms. According to him, the internal circulation of passages can be evaluated in four different types depending on the number of entrances:

1. Type opening only to the street,
2. Type with a street and a central courtyard,
3. Type designed only around a central area,
4. Island-shaped type that allows circulation between the street and the block (MacKeith, 1986; Kurt Kiral, 2020).

Examples of Passages

After examining many passages in Europe, Geist classified them into six periods:

1. The Invention Period (until the 1820s)
2. The Fashion Period (1820-1840)
3. Development and Progress in Other Cities (1840-1880)
4. The Monumental Phase (1860-1880)
5. The Movement of Gigantism and Imitation (1880-1900)
6. The Decline/Fall of the Architectural Concept (1900s and beyond)

Between 1800 and 1830, at least 17 passages were built, and similar ones spread to cities in Europe and America (MacKeith, 1986). The first passages in Paris were symmetrically arranged side-by-side in the interior, with shops on the lower floors and residential units on the upper floors. The passageways between these passages were a maximum of three meters wide. The Galerie de Bois and Passage Faydeau did not have overhead lighting; they only received light from the sides at a fairly high level. No information is available

about the roof of the Passage du Caire. The Passage des Panaramas, on the other hand, is covered with a wooden roof with light holes, similar to the Burlington Arcade in London (MacKeith, 1986; Kurt Kiral, 2020) (Figure 1).

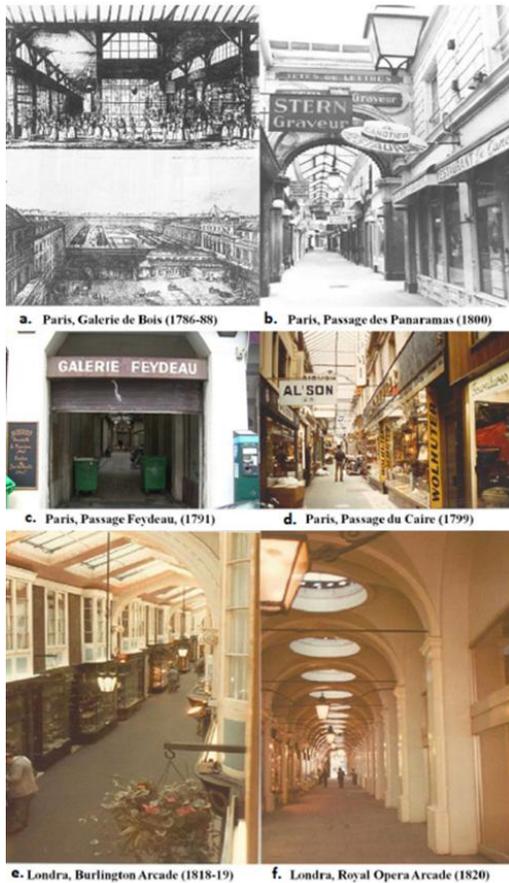


Figure 1. The first passages built in Paris and London
Source: MacKeith, 1986; Kurt Kiral, 2020

As Gülenaz (2011) points out, 19th-century Istanbul passages exhibit similar spatial and functional characteristics to their Western counterparts. These passages are generally located in central areas of the city, offering direct access to different surrounding streets thanks to multiple entrances, thus functioning as transitional spaces connecting different urban axes. In this respect, they facilitate intra-city circulation by creating a shortcut. The passages have an enclosed space structure that protects users from adverse weather conditions and street traffic. Commercial and social interaction takes place simultaneously within these sheltered interior spaces; therefore, the passages function as semi-public spaces where not only shopping but also social gatherings occur.

In most passages, the upper floors are used as residences, giving the structure a mixed-use (commercial + residential) character. In terms of spatial arrangement, the passages have a street-like interior space structure. The interior sections create a street illusion through the perspective effect created by the front facades; This arrangement allows the space to create a symmetrical and rhythmic street feel. This type of arrangement has made it possible to build more shops and residences on narrow plots, while also making the interiors of the building blocks visible. The ceilings of the passages are generally fitted with glass coverings that let in natural light. This allows daylight to reach the interior, creating a bright and airy atmosphere. These passage-like structures are formed by the clustering of individual shops; this creates a foundation for the development of retail trade and the formation of shopping environments offering a variety of products.

Although located within private property boundaries, these passages are important because they offer a public circulation space. The buildings surrounding the passages are generally two or three stories high. These structures are situated among apartment blocks with ground-floor shops, and they combine both passage and residential functions. Stylistically, the facades of the passages, dating from the late 19th century, show the influence of an eclectic architectural approach. Neoclassical, Neo-Renaissance, and Neo-Baroque stylistic elements are particularly prominent in the facade designs. The passages are generally covered with glazed roofs sloping in two directions, while in enclosed sections, wooden-supported and tiled roof systems are preferred. Structurally, iron-framed vaulted ceilings or iron-ribbed systems are used in the ceiling slabs.

Rectangular openings with stone jambs or arches are common on the facades. Furthermore, French-style balcony windows and decorative facade ornamentation stand out as characteristic elements reflecting the architectural understanding of this period (Gülenaz, 2011, Kurt Kırıl, 2020). The passages in Istanbul, just like their Western counterparts, share similar characteristics in that they have a covered space layout, the interior facades are designed with equal care to the exterior facades, and they function for retail trade (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Samples from Turkey (Şark Aynalı, Avrupa and Çiçek Passages)
Source: Turkish Touring and Automobile Association, 2018; Kurt Kırıl, 2020

CONCLUSION

Passages are in-between spaces located at the intersection of public and private areas, where the boundaries between these two spaces were redefined with the emergence of modern urban life. This type of structure, originating in 19th-century Europe, brought the intense commercial and social activity of the city into a protected interior space; over time, it became not only a shopping area but also a social meeting place where urban life was experienced.

The passages built in Istanbul during the late Ottoman period are also a product of a similar transformation. While these structures bear formal and functional parallels with their Western counterparts, they have gained a unique identity influenced by the local urban fabric, commercial culture, and social relations. With their covered structures, street-like interior layouts, and multifunctional uses, passages stand out as hybrid spaces where both public circulation continues and remain within the boundaries of private property. Today, the meaning of passages is evaluated not only through historical heritage or commercial function but also in terms of urban memory, social interaction, and spatial representation. Within the transforming fabric of cities, these in-between spaces have become important interfaces through which urban continuity, memory, and daily life practices can be read.

Consequently, passages, being neither entirely public nor entirely private, exist as interstitial structures between these two extremes, reflecting the multifaceted nature of urban life. With these characteristics, they continue to be indispensable urban typologies for understanding the historical development, economic transformation, and social dynamics of cities.

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