

A VISUAL ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH TO ISLAMIC LIFESTYLES:
THE CASE OF BAŞAKŞEHİR

A Master's Thesis

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Ankara
September 2014

To my beloved sister Pelin

A VISUAL ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH TO ISLAMIC LIFESTYLES:
THE CASE OF BAŞAKŞEHİR

Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
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September 2014

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ABSTRACT

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This study, adopting the visual ethnography as a methodology by asking the participants to take photographs and comment on them, explores Islamic lifestyles that belong to different socio economic groups in Başakşehir 1. Etap (district) and 4.Etap. Başakşehir, as a gated community, is a place where the religious residents can freely lead their Islamic lifestyles with other religious people like themselves and enjoy many opportunities it has to offer. However, the class distinction between 1.Etap and 4.Etap creates a controversy in between. Especially their different lifestyles which manifest themselves most clearly in their consumption patterns lead a hostile relationship between two Etaps. While the most crucial factor of the differences in their lifestyles is the class distinction the others are the different interpretations of Islam and the modernity concern of Başakşehir 4.Etap residents with a higher economic level. This study provides an insight of these Islamic lifestyles differentiation depending on the

socio-economic status by the help of the photographs that Başakşehir residents have taken.

Keywords: Participatory photography, Visual ethnography, Islamic consumption, Islamic lifestyle, Gated community

ÖZET

İSLAMİ YAŞAM TARZLARINA GÖRSEL ETNOGRAFİK BİR YAKLAŞIM:

BAŞAKŞEHİR ÖRNEĞİ

Gürgün, Selin

Yüksek Lisans, İletişim ve Tasarım Bölümü

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Bu çalışma, katılımcılara fotoğraf çekmelerini ve ardından onlardan bu fotoğraflara yorum yapmalarını isteyerek görsel etnografiyi bir metodoloji olarak kullanıp Başakşehir 1.Etap ve 4.Etap'taki farklı sosyo ekonomik gruplara ait İslami hayat tarzlarını açılar. Başakşehir, bir kapalı site olarak, dindar sakinlerinin kendileri gibi yine dindar insanlarla birlikte İslami yaşam tarzlarını özgürce sürdürebildikleri ve her türlü isteklerine yanıt alabildikleri bir mekan. Fakat 1.Etap ve 4.Etap arasındaki sınıf farklılığı bu iki etap arasında bir çatışma yaratıyor. Özellikle, kendini en çok tüketim alışkanlıkları üzerinde gösteren yaşam tarzı farklılıkları bu iki etap arasında düşmanca bir ilişkiye neden oluyor. Bu yaşam tarzlarındaki farklılığın en önemli nedeni aralarındaki sınıf farklılığı olmakla birlikte, diğer sebepler, İslamın farklı yorumlamaları ve ekonomik olarak daha üst seviyede olan 4.Etap sakinlerinin modernlik kaygısı oluyor. Bu çalışma, Başakşehir sakinlerinin çektiği fotoğraflar yardımıyla, sosyo ekonomik duruma bağlı olarak şekillenen İslami hayat tarzlarına ilişkin içgörülerini ortaya çıkarıyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Katılımcılı fotoğraflama, Görsel etnografi, İslami tüketim, İslami hayat tarzı, Kapalı konut siteleri

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study is an application of photography into an ethnographic research in order to obtain reactions and knowledge regarding the lifestyle of religious people which might not otherwise become noticeable. By using photographs of daily life and showing them for deliberation within specific contexts, I have tried to establish a “verbal context delineating what should be attended to and what significances are located in the image” (Musello, 1980: 39). By doing so, I have attempted to get access to the meanings assigned to the symbols in the photographs shared by participants. Thus, by the help of the information provided by the participants through photographs, I got the chance to discuss my use of photography and visual ethnography as a method of gathering data.

In this study, photographs never speak for themselves. Responses to ethnographic photographs of a daily life of Başakşehir residents were recorded during interview sessions. That mentioned data is analysed in relation to additional ethnographic data gathered during a study that aims to examine the Islamic lifestyles of people who are in different socio- economic groups. This study suggests that, during the interview sessions, photographs bring out the personal narratives

which enlighten the participants' lives and experiences. The residents in Başakşehir comment on the photographs that they have taken, by telling memories or stories that are emerged from the elements in the photographs which draw their attention. The data arise from their comments is used to obtain information regarding their lifestyles. Rather than merely observing the visual elements, "the rhetorical contexts in which they are embedded" (Strecker, 1997:217) become important in order to obtain more authentic ethnographic knowledge from the interpretations of images as visual ethnography offers.

Pink (2004) believes that, in an ethnographic work, a hierarchical relationship between word and image is out of the question as they are no substitute for each other. According to Pink (2004:5), while images should not necessarily replace words as the dominant mode of research of representation, they should be regarded as an equally meaningful element of ethnographic work. In some cases, the visual may become more important than the word, in other cases it will not. However, in order to observe people's perception of the world, understand the power relations and discourses invested with representation, visual ethnography is an appropriate and credible methodology.

This methodology played a significant role in explaining a group of concepts specific to Başakşehir KİPTAŞ Houses field. It was considerably hard to get an inside look on Başakşehir which is a field that conservatism is attributed. The fact that the field is a gated community and its distance from the city made it much more unique for the study. This also caused Başakşehir to be relatively isolated and brought the homogeneity/heterogeneity notions into question.

Prior to the beginning of the research, as a gated community, residents of Başakşehir were expected to have homogeneity inside. However, the analysis on each

districts (hereinafter to be referred to as 1.Etap and 4. Etap) revealed the class distinction between them, which added a new level to the homogeneity of the community. The only element of the homogeneity in Başakşehir KİPTAŞ Houses was religion related. All the residents identified themselves as being religious and claimed to be living their lives in direction of their beliefs. These claims suggest that the primary reason why the residents chose Başakşehir is the conservatism attributed to it. On the other hand, great differences between lifestyles of both Etaps were evident, which is again why they felt different towards what Başakşehir meant to them. Consequently, the residents living in both Etaps have different reasons for moving to, feeling at comfort in and continue to live in Başakşehir. This study reveals these different reasons. It holds information on what Başakşehir and living in it means to the residents and their Islamic identity. Başakşehir is more than just a living space for them.

Class distinction observed between 1.Etap and 4.Etap of Başakşehir was of importance since they provided diverse information on Islamic lifestyles. As the images suggest, this class distinction was most notably evident in consumption patterns. While gathering information on consumption patterns of two religious groups with religion as their common ground, there were new concepts emerged such as taste, social stratification and conspicuous consumption. In addition to these, the biggest discussion was centred on religion and consumption. Particularly, different views on conspicuous consumption in Islam cause controversy between 1.Etap and 4.Etap. This controversy on religion and consumption brings about two groups of people laying claims to the religion as if it were only theirs. Thus, the question of “Whose religion is this?” becomes one of the main subjects of discussion in this study.

While the main distinction of consumption patterns between two groups remains to be class related, another important factor is the reason why Başakşehir 4. Etap consumes particular products. Modernity discourse shapes the consumption patterns of Başakşehir 4. Etap. The modernity concept is also up for discussion in this study. For contextual and periodical changes, the meaning of the “modern” is bound to be interpreted in different ways. The relation between the way both groups interpret modernity and class distinction is analysed in this study. Başakşehir residents interpreted the modernity differently based on economic levels. This study also discusses whether their different interpretations are related to modernization progress in Turkey or not. In order to explain the fact that modernity is appropriated by groups with Islamic identity, the study makes use of Nilüfer Göle’s multiple- modernities (Göle, 2000a) concept. The description of the notion itself suggests that modernity is not only limited to a group of people.

The initiative of all these discussions is the use of visual ethnography as the methodology which is an anthropological approach where visibility is incorporated in the ethnographic research process and it is used as a method of gathering information about the aspects of people’s lives and capturing the social realities by applying various visual elements. As an up and coming research method, visual ethnography (Banks, 2008; Emmison and Philip Smith, 2001; Harper, 1984; Mannay, 2010; Schwartz, 1989) has been utilized to record, capture, and understand lived narratives. Using visuals undertakes the task of leading the ethnographer to new openings and contributing to ethnographic knowledge. These kinds of use of visuals provide information for documenting, tracking and expressing perceptions of people and their social world. By using photographs, visual ethnography enables access to information that cannot be obtained through conventional ethnographic methods.. As Pink states

“by paying attention to images in ethnographic research and representation, it is possible that new ways of understanding individuals, cultures and research materials may emerge” (Pink, 2004: 13)

There are many ways to conduct visual ethnography in the field some of which are: Photo elicitation, which is asking the participants to discuss the selected photographs created by the researcher in order to elicit information ; Re-photography, which is collecting photographs taken in the past and taking the same photographs again today, so as to reveal what has changed and what has not; Visual narrative technique, in which visual materials are presented as narratives and Participatory photography, also known as photovoice, which is the technique that I have applied in this research.

Participatory photography is a collaborative approach to visualize research, in which ethnographers and informants work together supposedly in order to produce visual images. (Pink, 2004) While some ethnographers take photos themselves, (Bateson and Mead 1942) some ask the informants to photograph for or with them (Cavin, 1994, Perez, 1997) After the photographs are taken, the researcher and the participants gather together and discuss these photographs. In a way, the participants give voice to their photographs. This technique enables the researcher to gain perceptual access to the viewpoints of the world of the participants. In my application of the participatory photography, I asked them to photograph certain aspects of their lives. All the participants use their smart phones to take photographs.

Using visuals in ethnography does not mean incorporating a visual dimension to a methodology that is based on a scientific sociology, which already exists. According to Pink, this prevents the potential of the visual within the ethnography from being fulfilled. Therefore, social science should, as MacDougall (1997:293) has

suggested, ‘develop alternative objectives and methodologies’ rather than attaching visuals to existing methodologies. As much as that notion suggests abandoning the idea of the possibility of a completely objective social science and rejecting the idea that written word is the superior medium,, that that road does not reach to a place where images replace words entirely Images should function as a meaningful element of the ethnographic work. Pink questions the dominance of written words in ethnographic representation and suggests that “representation of ethnographic knowledge is not just a matter of producing words, but one of situating images, sometimes in relation to written words, but also in relation to other images, spoken words and other sounds.” (Pink, 2004: 115)

False assumptions regarding visual ethnography emerge from the relationship between the visual, the visible and reality. It is considered that visuals that are explained as verbal descriptions are less real than the visuals that can be observed as concrete. However, “the reality cannot necessarily be observed visually” (Pink, 2004: 23) and since images have no fixed or single meanings, they are not capable of capturing an objective reality (Pink, 2004: 24) Therefore, in order to gather more authentic and real ethnographic knowledge, it is important to obtain the information from the interpretations of images by the help of individual subjectivities rather than observing the visual elements alone. Strecker (1997) criticizes the view that ethnographers stand between the informants and the readers and translate the images to words. According to Strecker (1997), ethnographers miss the possibility of images that might possess multiple potential meanings, since they only present their own single interpretation. However, as the ethnography is intertwined with the image interpretations, “the rhetorical contexts in which they are embedded” should be paid attention to. (Strecker, 1997:217)

The best benefit of using photography that I have discovered during my research is that it creates sincerity between the researcher and the informants. The activity of photographing itself creates the aforementioned sincerity before even having discussed the photographs. Furthermore, the people interpreting the photographs, who in that regard produce the ethnographic information, are also the subjects themselves. Thus, in the process of producing information, the informants are able to claim the role of both the subject and the object at the same time. Through the notion of creating something together "agency becomes shared between the researcher and informant" (Pink, 2004: 44)

There are several distinctive contributions of using that approach. First, it helps to observe the world from the perspective of the participants. The emphasis is on what the participants find important, rather than what the researcher finds important. It values the knowledge of the people attending the research. Second, visual images become descriptive tools in the research. Things that cannot be expressed in words can be shown with the help of the photographs. Third, it is a technique that can easily be learned and used by anyone. Informants do not feel the pressure of having to know specific techniques and can focus only on the photographs. People who are nervous about using the right sentences and providing the correct information, felt much more at ease with the photographs. Fourth, it facilitates the sampling of their daily behavioural environment. Fifth, it becomes easier to draw other community members into the process. Because photography is a routine and also an entertaining activity, it attracts the attention of other members. Sixth, it improves the sincerity among the group. Photography makes it easier to get into houses and attend activities together with participants. Considering the fact that residents of Başakşehir, my field of research, are strongly holding to their traditional values, it is not easy to become close enough

or get their sincere attention for that matter as a stranger. Therefore, I assumed that photography might be a proper tool for me to establish intimate relationships and accordingly, it might help to share much more information with them.

This approach fitted the demands of my research since taking photographs is one of their routines and can facilitate the communication between us. By the help of photography, I captured some aspects of their lives and tried to understand their world from their perspectives.

There are also some limitations about this technique that I observed during my research process. First, the identity of the researcher, who is in the central position, is a limitation on its own; factors such as age, gender, ethnic background, religious beliefs etc. play a significant role. Therefore, it is not possible to establish the same level of sincerity with each participant. Second, the way I showed the photographs to the participants, during the process of showing the photographs, which were not organized in a specific order, to the participants, while I was looking at the photos with the participants I was involuntarily constructing an order. I did not organize the photos in a specific order, but showed them as they were on the computer. Doing this, I was involuntarily constructing an order. This was something that may affect their interpretation. Had the photos been spread out in front of them in printed form, they may have chosen the photographs in a different order and constructed their own meanings.

Visual ethnography underlines the fact that, the photographs alone are not sufficient sources to obtain knowledge. Since the photographs had no single meaning, in-depth conversations were beneficial for me to understand the meanings given to photographs. Since “there are no fixed criteria that determine which photographs are ethnographic” (Pink, 2004:51) any photograph per se may have the potential of having

an ethnographic interest. Discourse and content determine the ‘ethnographicness’ of photography. (Pink, 2004:50) I sought to understand the individual, local and broader cultural discourses. (Pink, 2004:51) As Pink (2004:68) argues visual images are made meaningful through the subjective gaze of the viewer, and that each individual produces these photographic meanings by relating the image to his or her existing personal experience, knowledge and cultural discourses.

The photographs were mostly taken for one reason. However, during the conversations, the photographs gained different meanings. As we switch the subject and also the context, the photographs were re-appropriated and given new significance and uses. These photos provided me the knowledge that establishes a creative dialogue with informants. Therefore, within the interview process in addition to their ethnographic characteristics, these photographs raised more questions to discuss and data to explore.

. The meaning of a photograph can be shifted in different contexts and also depends on who is looking based on the fact that the meaning is subjective and arbitrary. (Pink, 2004:51) In other words, these photos may have various meanings depending on the context and/or researchers. Also, the meaning is not passively perceived rather it is constructed by the informants actively. Since photographs can generate multiple meanings Barthes (1977) describes photographs as “polysemic”. Byers (1966) characterizes photograph as:

“the photograph is not a “message” in the usual sense. It is, instead, the raw material , for an infinite number of messages which each viewer can construct for himself. Edward T. Hall has suggested that the photograph conveys little new information but, instead, triggers meaning that is already in the viewer.” (Byers, 1966: 31).

Throughout the study, the issue is not solely asking informants to give information in response to the images and their contents. Instead, the informants use the content of the images as “vessels” to produce and represent their knowledge, self-identities, experiences and emotions through. (Pink, 2004:68)

The photos are not the records to show *what is going on there*. I analysed these photos within some concepts that I had some knowledge before. Since I am aware of the fact that as Clifford (1986) cited in Pink (2004:8) “ethnographies themselves are constructed narratives: in a word, ‘fictions’ I do not aim to capture the complete reality but “only tell part of the story” (Clifford, 1986:6). Therefore, by asking informants to comment on their own photographs, I was able to learn about the backstage of the photographs and gather some knowledge about the reasons behind the photographs. . Without having this conversation and by using solely visual texts I might have strayed from my way while doing the interpretation. The interview section enabled me to use the visual data as a source to explore and exchange meanings between me and the participants. This ethnographic understanding coming from the informants helped me to stay within some concepts. Therefore, I drew my framework by both interpreting the visual and interviewing the informants about the photographs. My main motive behind the idea of informants taking photographs was that it is not only easier to access the information that the informants provide through the photographs but also the information is easier to understand in pictorial form. (Pink, 2004; Rose, 2001; Mason, 2002)

1.1.Method of Data Collection

My research continued for approximately one year. I began my research in September 2012 and I intended to finish in August 2013. However after I finished collecting data in Başakşehir, the friends that I made in Başakşehir kept sending me the photographs. Therefore, I continued getting information for more than one year. I collected 259 photographs that represent participants' life styles in Başakşehir and outside of Başakşehir.

The photographs that I use in this study are a mixture of all kind of photos. Most of them were taken for this study. Some of them are either the photographs that were taken before this study or were taken by somebody else. These are specially indicated in the study. It was not easy to meet the residents and make them take photos and interview with them about the photographs. Since the collaborative photography requires for researchers to establish their trustworthiness (Pink, 2004: 65), first I needed to get to know the place and tried to associate with residents in Başakşehir. I already knew some people living in 1.Etap and 4. Etap so it was easy for me to start socializing. By using the snowball sampling technique, I got the chance to meet new people. Through the small group of people who I already knew, I was able to contact more residents. Throughout the research in Başakşehir, I found the opportunity to make in-depth interviews and observations.

I made interviews with 9 people from 1.Etap. 5 women at the ages of 27, 31, 39, 53, 46 and 4 men at the ages of 22, 23, 29, 30. Three of the women are elementary school graduate, one of them is college graduate and the other one is high school graduate. Two of the men are university students; one of them is a university graduate and the other one left high school.

My encounter with the people of the 1.Etap was through an acquaintance from the 4. Etap. This time, I attended activities and religious talks (*sohbet*). The Feast of the Sacrifice and Ramadan festivals were good opportunities for me to strengthen my relationships. I made a friend from the 1.Etap, who later on introduced me to his childhood friends and relatives in Başakşehir. Therefore, I had no problems finding peers.

I also made interviews with 8 people from 4.Etap. 4 women at the ages of 29, 22, 36, 44 and 4 men at the ages of 58, 34, 31, 24. One of the women is high school graduate, one of them is college graduate, one of them is elementary school graduate and the last one is a university student. Two of the men are university graduate, one of them is graduate student and the last one is high school graduate. All the names that are used in this study are anonymous.

As I will mention in greater detail in the chapter where I will describe Başakşehir, the reason for me to choose 1. Etap and 4. Etap was the socio-economic differences between the two. While the residents in 1.Etap who move to Başakşehir before it is established as gated community represent the middle class, the residents in 4. Etap represent the upper middle class. The residents living in both Etaps define themselves as religious and they prefer Başakşehir because of the religious identity attributed to it.

During my research elements such as gender, age, ethnicity, class and race were important for me. As Pink suggests:

“Ethnographers ought to be self-conscious about how they represent themselves to informants and they ought to consider how their identities are constructed and understood by the people with whom they work.”

(2004: 20)

Therefore, as a researcher I tried to maintain an awareness regarding the elements of my identity. Those aforementioned elements were very significant in the way I am situated and the way I situate myself. Therefore, at the first step I tried to clearly express my identity and status which was not very easy. This is a research in which the subjectivity of the researcher is included and effective. Since the process photo elicitation includes both the informants and the researcher, some questions regarding the relationship between the two, subjectivity and representation arise. Pink (2004) summarizes as:

“How do ethnographers and informants situate themselves and each other in relation to the photograph? How does the intersubjectivity between ethnographers, informants and the material/visual images ‘complete’ the identity of an information during an interview? How do informants create narratives with and around photographs and ethnographers?” (2004: 68)

It was difficult to establish an equal sincerity with everyone in Başakşehir, because of my gender, age and appearance. The first problem that I encountered in Başakşehir was regarding my external appearance. Not wearing a headscarf or the way I was dressed created a slight trust issue with the residents which made it difficult for me to communicate with the perspective participants as it was hard to earn their trust. On my first visit to the area I was alone and talked to the people that I already knew and to their friends, respectively. The 4.Etap was the most difficult part of the field for me to communicate with people and most of the people hesitated to talk to me. When I first mentioned my research, they assumed it was for a newspaper. They were all very reluctant and asked me inquisitive questions in order to get to know me.

Upon encountering this attitude, I realized that establishing sincerity would be difficult and take a long time. This led me to the idea to bring my aunt. My aunt knew

the people there beforehand; they trusted her better because she had been in contact with them before and because she wore a head scarf. Being introduced by her changed the attitude of the people towards me. In their eyes, I was not a researcher anymore, but a young girl trying to be among them. Initially, I tried to earn their trust by not mentioning my research. While I was gaining access to their homes, my mother and aunt were also inviting them to our apartment. I mentioned my research as they got to know me better, at which point they got interested and they offered themselves to help. Meanwhile, we started becoming friends with one of their daughters. This friend, introduced me to some of her other friends.

I had overcome the trust issue through the image of my aunt. Moreover, conducting this research as a woman has created an obstacle in communicating with men -specifically with my peers-. The spouses or the fathers of the residents did not hesitate to help me, as a person close to them had also asked them to help. To them, it was as though helping a daughter or a sister. My male peers however, hesitated on talking. One of them hesitated to talk to me alone, saying "somebody might see me talking to you here, let's go somewhere else". The friend that I made from the 1. Etap was a male, which made it easier to overcome my problems with male peers. Through him, I was able to gain access to his social activities and meet and talk to his friends.

My age caused another complication while talking to mid-aged or older people. Some of them did not take the research seriously as they think of me "too young". Prejudiced feedbacks to my questions, such as "you are not old enough", "you would not understand" made it harder to collect more data.

I made 34 interviews with them. I had only one interview with four residents. (Gülen, Zuhale, Erdem and Vedat) I interviewed each of the other participants two times. On the other hand, I had four group interviews. I had to talk to the women who

came together in “*sohbet*” in groups of two or three. During their gatherings for religious talks, I talked to the women in groups of two and three. (Gamze, Meral, Necla) I interviewed with Hamit and Erdal one-to-one. But I talked each of them through Ulaş since he is the one who introduced me to those men. Group interviews were not my preference, but as the people I talked to were neighbours or friends, we sometimes had to talk about the photographs as a group. Some interviews were not as I expected. Sometimes the participants do not talk about the topics regarding photographs or their photographs were insufficient to talk. Therefore I made second interviews with them. I discussed their own photographs with each one of them. This way, in a group interview, everyone was able to talk about each other's photographs.

The word “interview” refers to talks when we came together with the participants and talked about the photographs, however I kept in contact with these people throughout the study. The reason behind having participants take photographs as part of the data-gathering process was to obtain more information about their experiences in Başakşehir. Furthermore, it was hoped that taking their own photographs also might give the knowledge regarding their representation by their own eyes. That means I used photographs as mirrors reflecting them onto themselves. The photographs were also the visual representations of their own social experience. Sometimes, the photographs challenge the relation between reality and the desired reality. Informants told me that, they chose the frames carefully. For instance, a woman did not take the photo of their park since it was too dirty; instead she took the park that is far away which she does not use. By this explanation I learned how the informants wanted to represent themselves and the place that they live in. Moreover, in my interview process, I conclusively observed that the informants’ photographs worked not only a record of their experiences but also enhanced my existing knowledge. The

experience of this research also challenges the role of informants in the generation of visual data.

Interviews revolve around discussions of photographs. These interviews were mostly held in the informants' homes, and some in the cafes in Başakşehir. During the interviews, I tried not to guide or lead them. In the group interviews, only when the subject was forgotten or drifted away from did I intervene by asking a question or commenting. It was essential for me not to lead them, as I wanted the results to be their own unique opinions. I was pleased for not having intervened, when sometimes the conversations regarding the photographs went in a direction other than what I expected. What they did, was to explain the photographs they have taken and make them clearer. In a way, they were becoming the voice of their own photographs. While they were taking these photographs, I was taking field notes. Thereby, I had the opportunity to compare and contrast the given answers. The different interpretations of the photographs offered me new insights.

The informants were free to take all kinds of photographs about Başakşehir and their lives and what they thought reflected their lifestyle. Since they would not always take the photographs alone I would join them with my camera. Being with them while they were taking the photographs helped me get informed as to why they were taking them. In order not to influence the informants in any way, most of the time I tried not to be with them during the process though. I wanted them to feel as free as possible with their photographs and. At first, they were interested in the quality or the meaning of the photographs. They expected the photographs to be artistic or to produce a meaning. But once they were convinced this is not important, the photographs started presenting fractions of their lives.

It was hoped that taking their own photographs would be easy and fun, as it would be one of their routines. Also, it is been suggested that being involved in the research process, contributes to the quality and the depth of the data obtained. (Mariampolski, 1999; Pink, 2004; Rose, 2001) Harmonizing photographs into the data collection process, not only acts as a record but also the photographs and the interviews contribute to ethnographic knowledge. (Mason, 2002) Another contribution of the informants taking photographs is that the process of taking photographs bearing meaning rather than the photographs themselves. Some photographs function as a means of expressing their motivation to take them. In the group interviews, when they saw the others' photographs, they would focus on a certain object in the photograph; however, when they talked about their own photographs, instead of mentioning a certain object, they explicate the process of taking the photographs. Much of the data is obtained through these explications.

1.2.Analysing Photographic Materials

The analysis part was difficult to overcome since it is not only about the content of the visual but also about how the informants speak about both the photographs and the process. The photographs are indispensable to the discussions and analysis in visual ethnography. (Pink, 2004:101) Therefore, in the analysis section, I needed to use the narratives that are intertwined with the photos along with the reasons why they took them. Most of the times, the photos alone did not make any sense without the conversations. This way, I had information and observations both about their daily lives and the ideas and criticisms about Başakşehir from the residents. In addition, I

could also understand the synchronicity of the rising Muslim middle class and the gated community life style.

I found more appropriate to collaborate with informants in the production and analysing process. Collaborative photography seems to fortify the relationship between the ethnographer and the informants. In addition to that, since the informants have active roles in the visual production process, in a sense, the collaborative photography, gives informants an opportunity for representing themselves. It also facilitates researching informants' perspective by allowing them to express themselves. Therefore, by incorporating the visual texts into the ethnographic work, my aim was to enhance my knowledge regarding the concepts and also to deepen my analysis.

Photo- elicitation was also a term used for photographic interviewing. Even though Collier was good at applying this technique, this technique is limited because it is assumed that 'the facts are in the pictures' (collier and collier 1986; 106) and knowledge only about visual content can be elicited from the informants. However, in the approach which is developed by Pink, she uses images as prompts for better understandings.

Pink (2004) argues that, the purpose of analysis has long been "to translate the visual into words" however, she outlined a different approach that instead of establishing a hierarchy between the visual and the words, it aims to explore the relationship between them. (Pink, 2004:96) This approach assumes that, first, analysis will never capture the complete reality, second, in order to examine the relationship between subjectivities, intentions of the individuals and content of the visual and the context of image production should be analysed reflexively, third, analysis should focus on different meanings given by individuals in different context. (Pink, 2004:99)

The analysing process should not be separated from the fieldwork location spatially or temporally. Therefore analysis continues throughout the process. The research process is not only about the ethnographer going to the field, collecting data and then going home to analyse the data. There is no separation between field and home. The understanding that researchers go to the field, get images and after the fieldwork period is over, take them home for analysis and writing up is not always appropriate. (Pink, 2004:95) Researchers should interlink the fieldwork and analysis period. As Pink (2004:95) asserts

“Analysis is not a simply matter of interpreting the visual content of photographs and video, but involves examining how different producers and viewers of images give subjective meanings to their content and form.”

Therefore, for Başakşehir case, I used visual ethnographic method that enables me to reach the knowledge which is not accessible through other conventional methods. Since “using visual methods allows us to extend our research to incorporate knowledge that is not accessible verbally” (Pink, 2007:361) it is one of the most direct methods to describe the culture and make it more vivid and real. By using this approach, I did not aim only to study people’s social practices “but to explore how all types of material, intangible, spoken, performed, narratives and discourses are interwoven with and made meaningful in relation to social relationships, practices and individual experiences” (Pink, 2004:6)

I asked them several questions while talking about the photograph. Some of which are “Does this photograph represent life in Başakşehir?”, “How significant are the things that you see in this photograph?”, “Which are the most important photographs in your opinion?”, “Which ones are the least important?”, “If you were to

tell about this place to a complete stranger, which photographs would you use?”, “If you were to tell about the attributed Islamic characteristic of this place, which photographs would you use?”, “How can you prove that Başakşehir is a gated community?”, “What would you add to this photograph if you wanted to make it better?” I shaped my questions according to the answers. I should note that, the most useful comments did not arise from the answers of these questions since asking questions reminds them my researcher identity. While they were answering these questions, they were aware of the fact that their comments will be used in a researcher. However, the most useful comments arise from the chatting about the photographs without asking any specific question. After a while, they always needed photographs in order to answer and tried to base their answers on the photographs. The participants didn’t allow me to use some of their photographs. Therefore I could not use all of the photographs, but I described them.

I specifically did not analyse only the photographs since this lead me to use another methodology which is only about the visuals. It was essential for me to learn the meanings associated with these photos and reveal the narratives embedded with discourses. Without comments photographs might be meaningless or photographs might be misinterpreted.

While this study is an application of a newly emerged methodology, it also aims to contribute the studies of Islamic identities and life styles. Therefore, it is inevitable to explore and understand the researches about Islam such as Islamic identities, secularism, Islamic consumption etc. Also the developments in Turkey regarding religious identities contribute to form the basis for my discussions.

This study puts forward the differences in the life practises of religious people from different classes in terms of religion and economic level, using visual

methodology as a method of collecting information. For this methodology, I used two sources to guide me. One of them is Sarah Pink's "Doing Visual Ethnography" book in which the author offers an additional technique for conducting visual ethnography. The other important source is Dona Schwartz's "Visual Ethnography: Using Photography in Qualitative Research" article in which the author explains the use of photography in her ethnographic research that is conducted in a rural farm community. Apart from the visual methodology sources, Ayşe Çavdar's researches provided me with the information about Başakşehir and Nilüfer Göle's studies led me about the Islamic identities and secular modernity.

Upon the election of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), a conservative party, religious identities have become more visible. These religious people have begun showing their presence through the society and they have started to use goods created specifically for them. One of the most important places in which they reside is Başakşehir Houses. Başakşehir Houses is an example of a gated community phenomenon which is the result of spreading residential areas to the outskirts of the city as seen in Kemer Country, Bahçeşehir or Beykoz Houses many years ago. It was established as a community catering and as a gated community for religious people and therefore became one of the favourite places of these people.

Since it started as a mass housing project, later configured as a gated community, it accommodates people from all socio-economic classes. In this sense, Başakşehir is a very proper field to observe religious lifestyle differences and socio-economic distinction in a gated community and to study the relationships among religious people and their relationship with the seculars.

In order to observe the residents and obtain detailed information regarding their lifestyles it is important to find an appropriate methodology. Therefore I

especially chose to study with photographs. And photo elicitation is one of the most appropriate methods for this study since it makes it easier to create connections with the residents and to search for clues regarding their religious lifestyle codes.

The residents had a huge part in the research. Throughout the study, they lead me, through the photographs they have taken and their comments on the photographs. Although the research began with the sole aim to analyse religious lifestyle differences based on class distinction in a gated community, I had to also look into such notions as conspicuous consumption, modernity and monopolization of religion with their help.

Since lifestyle differences based on class distinction can be best observed through consumer habits, I initially aimed to obtain information regarding their consumer habits. The photographs they have taken provided me the information that I needed. Because the identities are expressed via consumption products, in order to learn more about their identities, I focused on their consumption habits in which the socio-economic differences best reveal themselves. The comments on the photographs showed that the main reason for their lifestyle differences based on class distinction was their modernity concern. Then, the photographs lead the research to the notion of modernity. The chapters were all established with the flow that the photographs lead me through.

In the first chapter, I aimed to find out what Başakşehir as a gated community means to its residents. My intention was to understand their reasons to move here, the meaning of the togetherness they have established and the homogeneity that they believe is present by presenting photos to the foreground. While the residents define their religious identities with photos through Başakşehir, they also define Başakşehir through their religious identities. Since Başakşehir is a space in which they establish

their own culture, it was important for me to comprehend what kind of a gated community Başakşehir was. Başakşehir is also an efficient field because it includes different kinds of socio- economic groups within itself. The differences in the ways of life between people who define themselves as religious but have different socio-economic levels could easily be observed.

In the second chapter, by observing the consumption habits of religious groups with different socio-economic levels, I aimed to reveal the differences between lifestyles, in the light of Veblen, Baudrillard and Bourdieu's concepts of taste, social stratification and conspicuous consumption by using their photograph of their daily lives. The photographs of consumer goods and the venues attended for consumption provide information regarding the religious identity of each group. This information also reveals the reasons why they specifically consume certain products. According to the study, the most important motive among these reasons is modernity concern.

The third chapter questions why modernity concern is important only in the lives of the higher socio-economic group. One of the most important keyword throughout the interviewing process was "modern". Thus, the word "modern" is worth analysing. While the chapter explains what the understanding of modernity since Tanzimat was, it also investigates what modernity means to the residents of Başakşehir through photographs.

Throughout the study I specifically chose the words "devout", "pious" and "religious" to define the Başakşehir residents. The important reason for me to choose these words is that the people used the word "dindar" (religious) to define themselves. The word expresses loyalty to Islamic rules and a strong belief in the religion apart from having a certain political ideology. The groups which are defined as "secular" in this study, refers to "secular bourgeois" who means groups that have high socio-

economic level and do not prioritize religion and live a life that is independent of it. The terms that Başakşehir residents use for “secular” during the study, are that “zenginler” (rich people), “sosyeteler/sosyetikler” (the jet set, belonging to high society), “CHP’liler” (people who support Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi/ Republican People’s Party which is the main opposition in the Grand National Assembly against AKP). The terms are mostly relate to their economic status; however they also emphasize not being religious. Therefore the term “secular” in this study do not only indicate being separate from religion but also having a high economic status.

Since solely ethnographic study might be limited one, visual ethnography is more appropriate. What is being done in this research is to examine some aspects of the lives of the people in a wider frame; how they see themselves, how they interpret the situations that they encounter and how they consider each other. Initially, as a researcher I have in mind some interests and questions, however these can transform or be refined over time. Throughout the research process, I prepare more focused questions due to the inquiry becoming more specific. What gives an ethnographic work a distinctive character is the data collection process being in a natural setting. (Atkinson, 2007:4)

In essence of focusing on the daily lives of the residents, this study directly aimed two things; the first one is to investigate the life styles of the residents living in a specific location, Başakşehir KİPTAŞ Houses 1. Etap and 4. Etap and the second one is to illustrate the usefulness of the qualitative method of visual ethnography in providing new insights regarding the specific people’s daily lives.

CHAPTER II

A GATED COMMUNITY: BAŞAKŞEHİR

2.1. The Concept of Gated Community

Gated communities, as a new housing phenomenon observed in the world's metropolitan cities in the 80s, have reached to the most significant level in the 90s. These new gated communities, isolated from outside by walls or fences, provided with all kinds of facilities, guarded with security cameras and personnel, promising hygiene, nature and sense of ownership have initiated a debate in the studies of city planning, urban sociology, political science and geography after the 90s. (Öncü, 1997; Bali, 1999; Bartu, 2001; Danış, 2000; Kurtuluş, 2005; Perouse, 2005; Geniş, 2007)

The emergence of the gated communities are based on several reasons, (Low, 2003; Blakely and Snyder, 1997b; Glazse, 2002; Caldeira, 2001) However it mostly reflects the desire of the middle class to get away from urban life, which they believe is corrupted, with a concern of safety.

Since there is no common consent on the definition of gated communities, they have been named differently. “Gated communities” (Blakely and Snyder, 1997a; Davis, 1990; Low, 2003), is the first and mostly used definition. “Gated enclaves” (Grant, 2005), “private city” (Goldberger, 1996) “security islands” (Danış and

Pérouse, 2005) “fortress city” (Low, 1997), “splintering metropolis” (Graham and Marvin, 2001) are also the terms that are widely used. According to “Fortress America: Gated Communities in the United States” (Blakely and Snyder, 1997a), the first written wide study about gated communities, the concept has been defined as “physical privatized areas with restricted entrance where outsiders and insiders exist” (Blakely and Snyder, 1997a:27). Definitions of gated communities underline the concept of boundaries that determines the borders as “inside and outside”. According to Low (2003:11) “a gated community is a residential development surrounded by walls, fences, or earth banks covered with bushes and shrubs, with a secured entrance.”

Residential gated communities appeared in U.S in New York, New Jersey and Brooklyn in the 19th century therefore there are many studies about urban segregation and gated communities in U.S (Low, 2003, Blakely and Snyder, 1997a, 1997b). However, studies about Australia (Gleeson, 2006); the Middle East (Glazse and Alkhayyal, 2002), South Africa (Jurgens and Gnad, 2002; Landman and Schönteich, 2002) England (Blandy, 2007) and Russia (Blinnikov et al., 2006) have also received significant attention in scholarly studies.

There are 3 dimensions that necessitate for approaching the newly emerged gated community according to Kurtuluş (2011):

“Firstly economic, social and global contingent factors that have led to new housing trends; secondly transformations in modern city and contemporary metropolitan areas and its possible results on modern society; and ultimately erosion of urban cohesion through the spatial segregation and the question of disintegrating public space under the threat of privatized urban lands.” (Kurtuluş, 2011: 51)

This housing phenomenon has started from U.S.A and then spread to Europe, Latin America, Asia and Middle East. In Turkey, it has not started in Istanbul and until the late 2003, it was also observed in Ankara, İzmir, Adana, Denizli, Bursa, Yalova as well. In the late 80s, cities have undergone a big transformation connected with the neo-liberal economical re-structuring process.

The emergence of a new housing market (Keyder, 1999), the increase in the value of the urban areas and its perception as a profit source (Öncü, 1988; Sönmez, 1996) are the factors that facilitates of their emergence. At the same time, as the population in cities has been growing, a decentralization process has been maintained over the years, not by the immigrants/urban poor and the practice of squatting, but by a coalition of the middle and upper classes, state actors and major developers. (Buğra, 1998; Türel, 1989).

Gated communities that reinforces the social distinction between middle-class and upper-middle-class, creates an exclusion and residential segregation in USA, (Blakely and Snyder 1997a; Low, 2003) also cause a segregation in Turkey in the same way. In a short period of time, these gated communities became an icon for a global consumer culture tendency for the urban and upper middle classes where they can show off their economic and cultural capital. (Bartu, 2001; Daniş, 2000). This “iconism” was also common in other countries of the world where these aforementioned classes prefer to live far from the urban poor, rumble, chaos and the crowd of the big cities. The gated communities were not only established as a solution for the dwelling problem of the cities (like “social housing” projects) but they have also furnished a promise of a different lifestyle for the residents.

Turkey also experienced this development densely. This process has become a remarkable phenomenon and started to attract the attention of researchers in recent

years. (Türel, 1989; Öncü, 1997; Bali 1999; Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001; Bartu, 2001; Daniş and Pérouse, 2005; Kurtuluş, 2005) For the last two decades Istanbul has witnessed spreading residential areas in the periphery of the city. This is the “gated communities” phenomenon seen as the examples of Bahçeşehir, Kemer Country, Beykoz Konakları. Ayşe Öncü (1997) explains this phenomenon as ‘middle and upper classes’ escape from the city centre in order to accompany the global consumer culture. She uses the new liberalization process in the 1980’s as a point of departure to explain the middle class’ changing living and resident style. Işık and Pınarcıoğlu (2001) explicate this process from the beginning of 1950’s by using economic changes as background. They also criticize this exclusionary nature of the gated communities.

The economic changes from the 1980’s generate the basis of the studies regarding gated communities. One of the most important reasons for the proliferation of the gated communities in Turkey is its solution to the housing problems for the urban middle class, especially the new middle class with highly educated people working in service industry, and its cater to the degradation of this class from the rest of the city by means of communities and spaces (Daniş, 2001: 153). Bali (1999) also mentions about Özal period and correlates gated communities with the newly aroused new riches.

Istanbul’s population has overgrown with massive migration in the 50s and new housing solutions have arisen with a laissez faire insight. Squatters and apartments were commonly observed in Istanbul perimeter. Apartments are legally erupted and referred to the middle class whereas squatters are built illegally on the outskirts of the city by the immigrants and they are referred to the urban poor living in the city. On one hand, apartments reflect a middle class urban lifestyle; on the other hand squatters represent a lower-class peasant lifestyle. (Öncü, 1997)

Istanbul has been “softly segregated” through the middle 80s (Güvenç and Işık, 1996) but towards the end of the era, both the housing market and the residential landscape have undergone a deep change with the impact of neo-liberalism. It was inevitably observed in Istanbul that the socio-economic inequality and the increase of wealth among the high-income groups have grown due to neo-liberal policies (Aksoy 1996). This socio-economic polarization is also the main reason for the birth of gated communities (Öncü, 1997) In the end of 80s, the state’s position for urbanization and housing market (Türel, 1989), has resulted in large housing projects with the involvement of the state in urban land market and large capitalists in housing sector.

A decentralization process in the city has started with the growth of options in housing facilities. A functional, spatial and a social dissociation came into existence, as the residential areas were built away from the working spaces, residential regions for different social classes also tended to drift away from each other. Gated communities in this sense, one of the main residential forms that emphasize the functional, spatial and social segregation. (Öncü, 1997; Bali, 1999; Bartu, 2001; Daniş, 2000; Kurtulus, 2005; Geniş, 2007)

This new housing style is different from the social housing projects in 70s in terms of numbers, use of land, land development and financing. These large housing projects, observed more in 90s, had another difference with social housing projects: they used to privilege the upper class. (Bali, 1999) Contractors do not only build houses but also they create a “total living spaces with privately provisioned services and governed communities” (Geniş, 2007: 780) This new housing trend has changed the representation of the classes and brought another dimension to spatial differences in Istanbul. (Kurtuluş, 2011)

Since the gated communities determine the insiders and outsiders by the help of boundaries, sense of belonging of the residents in Başakşehir is very strong. Boundaries, in this sense undertake two roles. As Rose explains:

“Firstly they work to establish insiders: those who belong to that place. Belonging can be a central component in senses of place. But belonging to one place means that it may be difficult to feel a sense of belonging for somewhere else; it may also mean that those who are perceived as belonging elsewhere are excluded from belonging to other places they may want to identify with. The second one establish outsiders; those who do not belong.” (Rose, 1995: 99)

Establishing an “other” is important for articulating an identity. Because, “identities are constructed through, not outside, difference.” (Hall, 1996: 4) Gated communities come into prominence in order to give a lot of information regarding the residents’ identities.

“Identity is about belonging, about what you have in common with some people and what differentiates you from others. At its most basic it gives you a sense of personal location, the stable core to your individuality. But it is also about your relationships, your complex involvement with others and in the modern world these have become ever more complex and confusing. Each of us live with a variety of potentially contradictory identities, which battle within us for allegiance: as men or women, black or white, straight or gay, able-bodied or disabled, ‘British’ or ‘European’ . . . The list is potentially infinite, and so therefore are our possible belongings. Which of them we focus on, bring to the fore, ‘identify’ with,

depends on a host of factors. At the centre, however, are the values we share or wish to share with others.” (Weeks 1990: 88)

According to Gillian Rose (1995) identity is "how we make sense of ourselves" and claims that each one of us have different identities on different scales. Since identity is about belonging, she also associates identity with place. However, the reason that identity and place are connected is not only because people feel that they belong somewhere, but also because they establish their sense of place and their identity by contrasting themselves with someplace else which is very different from them. (Rose, 1995:92)

A sense of place may work in two different ways. One of them is people establish who they are in terms of belonging to a particular place and the other one is, they establish this through contrasting with another place represented as alien. “Places are significant because they are the focus of personal feelings” (Rose, 1995: 88) therefore it has a strong tie with identity.

In this respect, Başakşehir is a very good example for such gated communities with its structure catered to middle and high classes, its far location from the city, the security provided by the private guards and the high number of facilities nearby. Since the residents define their identities through Başakşehir, the place becomes an important tool for the residents to articulate their identities. As Rose mentions, Başakşehir is a place in which the residents establish who they are in terms of belonging to Başakşehir by emphasizing their religiousness. They establish their identities contrasting with another place outside world.

2.2. Establishment of Başakşehir

During Mr. Dalan's mayorship term, it has been discussed to move the city's production centres into organized industrial zones. Başakşehir had been planned as a social housing project for the labourers working in İkitelli Organized Industrial Zone. The realization of this idea coincides with Islamist Welfare Party's (WP) success in local elections in 1994 and the rise of conservative capital accordingly. It was the first important experience of WP in the big city municipalities. Başakşehir is also an urban example which can be analysed how the liberated market mechanisms have turned into a neo-Islamist social pattern in the 80s since it was introduced "as the urban model of Islamist politics in the case of Istanbul." (Çavdar, 2011b: 1)

This project which in fact was considered to be a housing project for İkitelli Organized Industrial Zone was launched in the Welfare Party period as the housing projects was getting diversified. KİPTAŞ which has been established with a foreign capital partnership in 1987 in order to design construction plans and produce architectural projects under the name of İMAR WEIDLEPLAN, did not function properly at the time of its foundation however, after local elections in 1994 it was reconstituted as İstanbul Konut İmar Plan Sanayi ve Ticaret A.Ş. Its main service was to provide a solution for Istanbul's urban sprawl and started its activity after its reconstitution on March 8, 1995. Başakşehir was its first project.

With the advent of this project within the Welfare Party period brings various public discussion regarding the identity of the housing project. According to people I interviewed with, it has been a common propaganda that the Welfare Party was building a religious ghetto for the Islamists. It was even discussed that Başakşehir (Spike city) was named after the logo of Welfare Party (which is itself a spike). All these public discussions already bring a frame of mind about how they would look like

even before these projects were realized. KİPTAŞ, which was planning to start the project with the land provided from the municipality, could not be funded by the government because of these public discussions. Since the central government could not fund the project by itself, this project was started to be sold to customers even when the all of it was still on paper but the Welfare Party fans and rich supporters, willing to gain power in the state, invested in this plan. Most of them start buying these cheap houses, they start spreading the word to their neighbours, relatives and friends and Başakşehir really starts to be a Muslim ghetto. Due to circumstances of the day, Başakşehir differs itself from the other social housing projects with its conservative identity.

90s and 2000s became the years of shift in economic power, from the Kemalists and state-sponsored businessmen of the 80s, to the conservative capital, which had been supported during Menderes and Demirel governments (Laçiner, 2009) and the capital owners' ability to show their wealth in public spaces. As soon as Başakşehir was considered as a gated community –especially after the building of villas and luxury apartments after 2002- conservative groups started to show interest in the area due to the religious meanings behind. Although the most important factor for the development of gated communities has been considered in the context of economic reasons, Başakşehir's form of existence and its progression afterwards cannot only be explained in economic context – it contains different dynamics. Purchase of a flat in a gated community means more than acquiring a place to live – it means to buy a prestigious lifestyle. That is why; residents of Başakşehir 4.Etap also find themselves here for this promised lifestyle. The 1.Etap was erected as a social housing project but with the addition of 4.Etap in 2002, Başakşehir has evolved into a gated community. But for both of these districts, the most important reason to buy a flat in Başakşehir, is

the sense of belonging to a place which has a conservative identity and the will to create a community around these religious values. Participants' first answer to the question for main reason to stay here always leads to the conservative identity in here. Therefore, people living here usually have religious lifestyles.

It is merely impossible to deduce a homogenous way of thinking in such a big area with different structural manners since “communities too have internal structures” (Massey, 1994: 154). But that premise does not mean that we should ignore to observe the dominant conservation in Başakşehir which is the most apparent constituent, as mentioned before. Başakşehir is different from the other concurrent social housing projects in Istanbul with its conservative structure.

Before Başakşehir became a town itself, Başakşehir 1. and 2. Etap, Güvercintepe, Şahintepe, Altınşehir and Samlar Village had belonged to Küçükçekmece Municipality; Başak Mahallesi, Başakşehir 4. and 5. Etap had belonged to Esenler Municipality and Bahçeşehir had belonged to Büyükçekmece as district municipalities. Afterwards, all these small districts had been united and established the Başakşehir town¹

In 2008, Başakşehir town has been constituted with small neighbourhoods parted from Küçükçekmece and Esenler, with Bahçeşehir District Municipality and now it consists of Misistanbul Oyakkent, Başakşehir Public Hospital, Başakpazar, Onurkent, Başakşehir 5. Etap, Başakşehir 4.Etap, Başakşehir 2.Etap, Başakşehir 1.Etap. This thesis is concentrated on 1. and 4. Etap in Başakşehir.

¹ See also <http://www.Başakşehir.bel.tr/icerik/177?open=6>

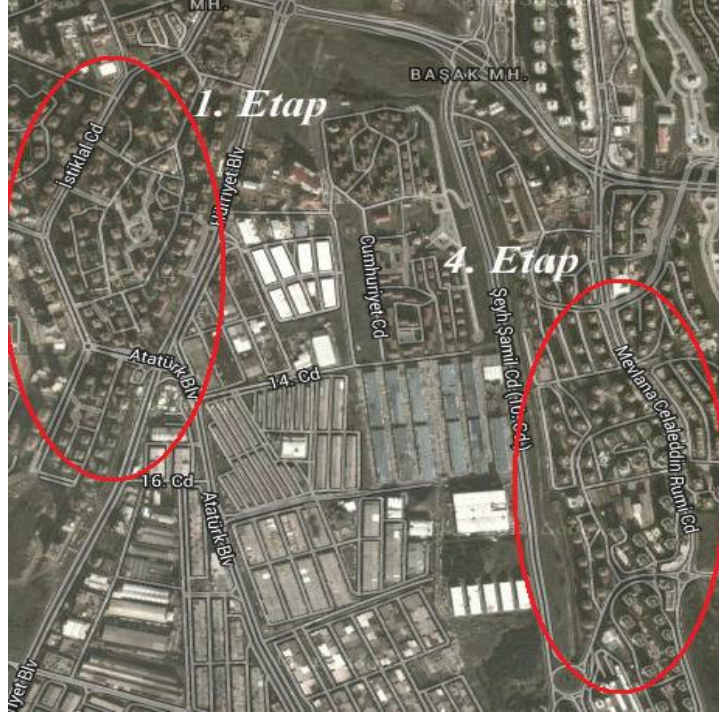


Figure 1: Başakşehir 1. Etap and 4. Etap map

Başakşehir 1.Etap was built on 47.3 hectare area with 79 blocks consisting of 6, 8, or 10 floors, and it adds up to 3004 apartments made in 4 different plans. Nearly 15.000 people reside in Başakşehir 1.Etap and it also accommodates a kindergarten, 2 primary schools, a boys' and girls' college with separate dormitories, 5 prayer rooms, 1 mosque, 1 gas station, 3 marketplaces and social activity areas.²

Başakşehir 4.Etap was built on 150 hectare field and it was planned as consisting of two different sections. The first one located in 114 hectare area contains 5.080 apartments in 159 blocks and 358 villas; this constitutes a habitat with a population of 27.000, appealing to different income groups. The second section is on 36 hectare area and consists of 52 blocks, 126 villas along with social gathering places for the 1. Etap that adds up to 2.142 apartments and nearly 10.000 residents.³ The main reason to choose these two “etap”s is their difference in the purpose, the target

² See also <http://www.kiptas.com.tr/tr/projelerimiz/tamamlanan-projeler/Başakşehir-1--etap>

³ See also <http://www.kiptas.com.tr/tr/projelerimiz/tamamlanan-projeler/Başakşehir-4-etap-konutlari/>

group and the apartment prices of these two projects. The socio-economic groups that these two districts represent are also very distinct from each other; however, in terms of residents' economic capital, each Etap, in itself, has certain level of homogeneity.

The buildings, constructed in 1994, look like a low-cost housing with at least 10-11 floors. The ones which were constructed after 2002 when the Justice and Development Party (Ak Party / AKP), a conservative party, became the governing party, either have more floors or are built as independent structures, like villas. These represent the neo-Islamic high ambitions and its consensus over the consumption culture. (Çavdar, 2010)

Although Başakşehir started to be built in 1994, it was structured as a gate community after 2002. This timing reflects the highly anticipated construction of gate communities and this led to the planning of Başakşehir as an enclosed, secured and guarded site for its inhabitants. After 2002, the constructed districts with luxury landscapes (villa type houses, walking trails, grass areas, amphitheatre, and swimming pools) began to be appealing to a higher profile.

The exclusionary nature of the gated communities that creates a spatial segregation is criticized by some scholars. Blakely and Synder (1997b), one of the first scholars who study on this issue, argue that the walls are temporary solution for protection from violence and any other criminal activities. They emphasize the citizenship notion and defend that differentiation created by the gated communities harm also the "citizenship" concept. Therefore they ask "If walls do not protect, if they do not build better neighbourhoods, and if they do not bolster civic life, are they worth it?" (Blakely and Synder, 1997b: 97). In response, they offer some alternatives such as neo-traditional design or the "new urbanism". They conclude their research with the evidence that in order to prevent crime and provide a quality of life, social structure of

a community is more important than its physical features. Gated communities were also criticized that they reduce street connectivity through traffic and street structure. (Burke and Sebaly, 2001)

Because of all these characteristics mentioned above, Başakşehir is a field worth researching. It was important to get to know the residents' reasons of moving Başakşehir in order to understand what Başakşehir means to them. Although they all have different reasons to come here, their common reason to choose this place is the religious identity of this place. The photographs were a tool for finding out their reasons to move here but the biggest purpose of the photographs was to gather information as to what they saw as the distinctive properties of Başakşehir. Also, they expressed what Başakşehir meant to them through these photographs.

2.3.The Motives to Move to Başakşehir

The motivations for living in a gated community change from country to country even from city to city. For instance, while the segregation in São Paulo stems from the concerns about security and hygiene of elites regarding to the workers (Caldeira, 2001) in the United States racism is a major contributor to the separation (Low, 2003), in Asia and Africa also gated communities are seen as solutions for criminal activities and ethnic controversies. (Landman and Schöntiech, 2002; Glasze and Alkhayyal, 2002; Jürgens and Gnad, 2004). Migration boom (Bali, 2004; Bartu, 2001) and diminishing green spaces (Sönmez, 1996) are also one of the main reasons to move a gated community

The reasons for the habitants in Başakşehir to move this place are not very different from the reasons mentioned in the gated community studies; but the

underlying reasons for those to come here differ from each other and to find these contrasts was my main motive during the study. There are several differences between the reasons why people moved to Başakşehir in the first years when the 1. and 2. Etap were first built, and the reasons they moved here after 2002, when Başakşehir started to expand and become a gated community.

The residents explained their reasons to move to Başakşehir and what Başakşehir meant to them through the photographs they had taken. These photographs include the landscape and the environment, facilities, daily life and public events and activities in Başakşehir. There are also some other photographs outside Başakşehir which tell the residences' social life outside the gated community. The comments on the pictures reflected the perception of Başakşehir according to the residents in 1.Etap and 4.Etap. Since the residents' profile living in 1.Etap and 4.Etap are different from each other, their comments vary from one Etap to the other Etap. These differences make this research a comparative one.

1. Etap residents explain their motives to move here through the photographs that they have taken. In order to describe Başakşehir better, they first want to talk about the uniqueness of the place. The elements in the following photographs are defined by the residences as “unique”, “peculiar to Başakşehir”, “makes Başakşehir a unique place”. These definitions provide me deeper and real information regarding Başakşehir. This photo is regarded as unique by Ulaş. By showing this photograph he said:

“You can see such a frame only in Başakşehir. Imagine a place that walking the dog, riding a bicycle is not allowed. You can only see this in here. ”

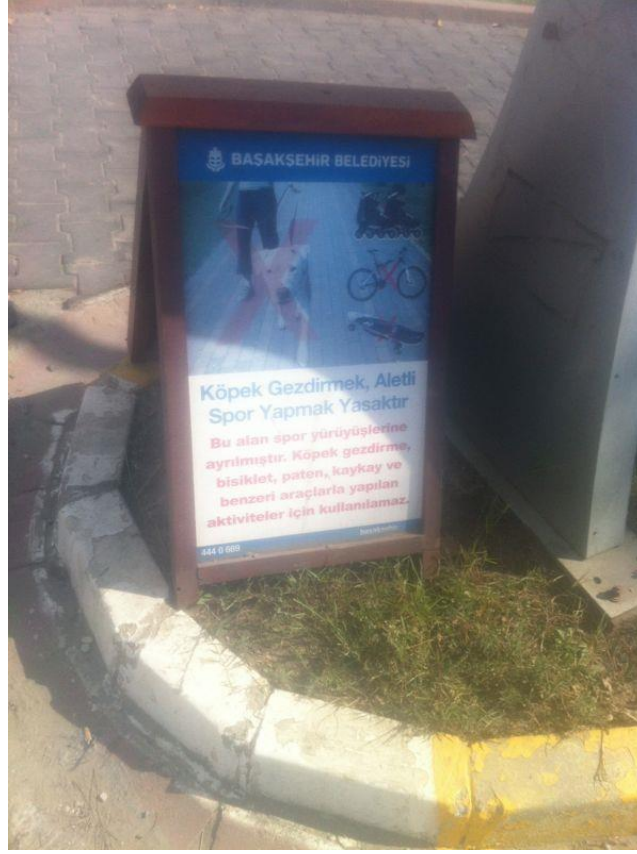


Figure 2: A warning sign

He also showed me another two photos that explains the uniqueness of Başakşehir. Ulaş commented on these photographs of a restaurant called “Tayyip Yemeği” with discontent:

“These are not edited photographs. They are real. I live in a place that has a restaurant called Tayyip Yemeği. I think, these photographs summarize Başakşehir. You cannot see anywhere this kind of things. You are very lucky that you see Başakşehir because you can tell your grandson about these photographs.”



Figure 3: “Tayyip Yemeği”



Figure 4: Menü “Tayyip Yemeği”

The other photo defines as unique come from Ahmet. He said that:

“During the religious days, Başakşehir is full of surprise. Everyone is in full of spirituality. For example Ramadhan started ten days ago and since then you can see Ramadhan’s spirituality in everywhere. This photo is from the mall right here and people in Başakşehir are so lucky that when they enter the mall they encounter such a beautiful view. These kind of views only peculiar to Başakşehir”



Figure 5: Semazens in a mall in Başakşehir

Cheapness is the most important reason for the 1. Etap habitants to move here at the first place at the time when Başakşehir was first built. Before Başakşehir was fully established, the flat prices were really cheap compared to other places. Thus, the first reason is expressed as “this was such a bargain to buy these houses with this amount of money” by the 1. Etap habitants.

Zuhal who thinks about moving into 5.Etap showed me the photo of prices. She said:

“I don’t want to move outside of Başakşehir. I’m looking an apartment in 5. Etap. I took this photo to show you the prices. Maybe you

think that the prices are normal but you haven't seen the houses. They are so large and they have so many facilities. So the prices are really cheap. You can't buy an apartment in anywhere but Başakşehir with such prices.”



SATILIK DAİRELER		
5.ETAP - 2+1 - 87m ² - 1.Kat - G.Dağı	172	
5.ETAP - 2+1 - 87m ² - 4.Kat - G.Dağı	180	
5.ETAP - 2+1 - 87m ² - 5.Kat - K.Dağı	180	
2.ETAP - 2+1 - 84m ² - 9.Kat - K.Dağı	165	
KAYASEHİR - 2+1 - 84m ² - 1.Kat - K.Dağı	165	
SALACAK - 2+1 - 95m ² - G.Giriş - G.Bahçe	209	
SALACAK - 3+1 - 115m ² - 1.Kat - K.Dağı	280	
İSTİNYE - 3+1 - 115m ² - G.Giriş - K.Bahçe	240	
4.ETAP - 3+1 - 125m ² - 11.Kat - K.Dağı	Satıldı	
4.ETAP - 3+1 - 130m ² - 2.Kat - D.Bahçe	325	
ORTAKÖY - 3+1 - 135m ² - G.Giriş - K.Dağı	307	
KAVACIK - 3+1 - 135m ² - B.Kat - K.Bahçe	240	
YENİKÖY - 3+1 - 150m ² - 1.Kat - D.Bahçe	315	
KALAMIS - 4+1 - 193m ² - V.Giriş - B.Giriş	650	
# KİRALIKLAR		
TARAYVA - 2+1 - 90m ² - 11.Kat - K.Bahçe	KİRALANDI	
KAYASEHİR - 3+1 - 138m ² - 21.Kat - G.Dağı	890	
Detaylı Bilgi ve Daha Fazlası İlon Kalve İmceye Bekleriz.		

Figure 6: The price table in front of a realtor

The second important reason is the relocating of the relatives or acquaintances to the same district for the habitants of 1. Etap. The first residents had found the place deserted with a lack of neighbours and so far away from the city that they called their relatives or friends to move in with them. Gamze who moved in with her mother to her aunt's flat in Başakşehir after her father's death, Ulaş whose father has moved after his uncles had found a place in Başakşehir and did not want to leave them alone, explain why in Başakşehir 1. Etap, the habitants live as a community. The will to move in together with their acquaintances can be read as a desire to live with similar people. The photographs also emphasize their similarity with their neighbours and friends. Kübra showed their photo from a day she called “girls night out” and explained:

“It’s very important to have friends in here. I know my friends for a long time and we are like sisters now. They are also from Başakşehir. Actually I heard Başakşehir from them and told my family and afterwards we moved here. We wanted to live with them or people like them.”



Figure 7: Kübra’s friends in a cafe in Başakşehir

Among the reasons for moving to Başakşehir, they also mention the desire of living with people with similar life styles. Those who rely on the public discussions that Başakşehir is created for Islamists told me that, the thought behind moving to Başakşehir stemmed from the will to find “devout” neighbours as they are one. According to the participants, Başakşehir is a place where they can keep on their conservative life style albeit it was stated that gated communities target people adopting secular and Western lifestyle. (Geniş, 2007). Gamze showed a photo of children’s playground and said:

“Başakşehir is secure place for my family. The neighbours are credible people. In somewhere else, you don’t know your neighbours. I feel safe in here.”



Figure 8: A children's playground in Başakşehir

Not knowing the people in the city makes them nervous and unsafe; therefore moving to Başakşehir means an escape from the obscurity and from the probable threats outside. Meral's comments on a shopping photo of her give a lot of information regarding her identity and her opinion about Başakşehir:

“I trust shopkeepers in here. I think that everything that I buy in here is the best. The shopkeepers do not cheat people in here, they are honest”.



Figure 9: A grocery shop in Başakşehir (Bakkal)

She emphasizes that she trusts markets and shops more in Başakşehir than the other places. This kind of trust is stated by some of the other residents. And while they are explaining their trust they all refer a verse of Quran, “weigh with justice and do not fall short in the balance.” (Haleem, 2005: 353) According to them, since the shopkeepers are all devout they do not cheat people. Therefore they trust them so much.

The other motive to come to Başakşehir is its safe environment. It is been said that gated communities are also selected by residents for safety and security reasons (Blakely and Snyder, 1997a, 1997b , Low, 2003) due to the consideration of the large cities’ danger (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001) increasing crime rates (Öncü, 1997). The gated communities in Turkey cater a safe environment. (Danış, 2000; Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001; Öncü, 1997; Perouse and Danış, 2005)

In Başakşehir the concept of safety and security do not refer to security guards or surveillance camera in the gated community. From a different point of view, as in Kemer Country (Kurtuluş, 2011) the neighbours are assumed credible since they are all within the same social class level. According to the people living in Başakşehir, socio economic status level is not important. What is important for them is to live with devout people since they think they are not able to commit an illegal act. Therefore, when the residents mention “alike people”, they mention the pious people.

Before mentioning the security guards around, the residents draw attention to the trustworthiness of their neighbours and the “fear of Allah” plays an important element in this determination. It has been noted that potential crimes, which are very common in big cities, such as molestation, child abuse, theft, fight etc. do not take place in Başakşehir because the residents have the “fear of Allah”. Çiğdem, showed a photo of her summer day and she commented:

“If I lived in another place, I would definitely be afraid of hanging out at nights. But in Başakşehir, especially in summer, I stay out until 1:00 a.m. with my friends without any fear”

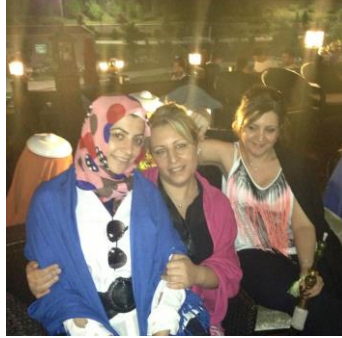


Figure 10: Çiğdem and her friends

Meral also defines Başakşehir as a peaceful place by this photo and she adds:

“There is no alcoholic or pervert in here. All the people living in here are like me or you who have the fear of Allah. The youth are well-educated and they are all gentle. We all know their parents.”



Figure 11: A garden in Başakşehir 4. Etap

Erdem also showed his photo taken after a wedding ceremony.

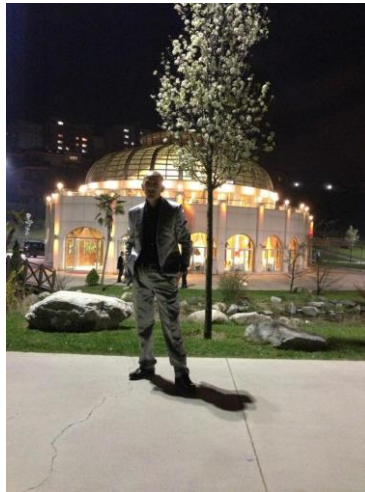


Figure 12: Erdem in “Sular Vadisi” in Başakşehir

Me: Do you go out at night? Is this photo from a night out day?

Erdem: No, we went to a wedding that night and while we were going home we took photos. My sister took this.

Me: Do you go out at night with your sister often?

Erdem: No. She goes with her friends and I go with my friends.

Me: Are you worried about your sister while she is out at night?

Erdem: No actually. We don't worry about her. If we lived in another place, we would be worried about her if she is bothered by someone. But in here, we trust the people here, they are all family.”

For the residents of 1.Etap, the neighbours' religious identity makes Başakşehir a safe place without any necessity of security guards and surveillance camera. In this sense, the concept of safety that they mention for this gated community is different from the concept of safety mentioned in the studies about gated communities. They protect themselves from non-Muslim or less religious people since they assume that they are capable of committing a crime.

The informants believe that there is homogeneity in Başakşehir with regard to the people's profiles. Therefore they feel safe in Başakşehir. Things that are against their conservative ideas are considered as a threat to this conservative homogeneity.

The following photos are taken after my question; "Can you prove that Başakşehir is a gated community with photos?" First one is taken by Ahmet and the second one is taken by Tolga. By showing his photo Ahmet explained:



Figure 13: Fences around Ahmet's apartment

Ahmet: By this photo I can show you that this is a gated community.

These gates say that this is a secure place and strangers are not allowed.

Me: Who are the strangers?

Ahmet: People from outside."

Tolga also said the similar things through this second photo he has taken.

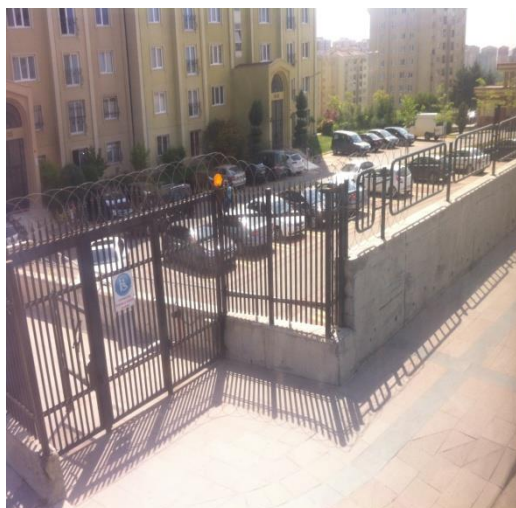


Figure 14: Fences around Tolga's apartment

Tolga: Gated communities have these kinds of gates. This is a gated community so there are a lot of gates like this within Başakşehir.

Me: What if they don't exist?

Tolga: Then I probably can't say that this is a gated community. Because, everyone enters and exits by using these gates. If they live in here,, they can use them without asking. But for strangers it is difficult to use them by not asking. When you go some different place, the first thing you do is to knock the door. It is the same here. They can't enter without knocking it.

Me: What if they do?

Tolga: They can't. If we see a suspicious man we can easily recognize him.

2.4.The Feeling of Belonging to Başakşehir

According to the participants, the borders in these pictures determine the “us” and “them”; “us” represents the people who are conservative, loyal, honest, reliable and have the “fear of Allah”. Since difference is something that people can define themselves through, this separation gives significant information regarding their identity. People articulate their identity using the separation created by borders. They believe that, since all the people inside the borders are “us”, there is nothing to be afraid of inside these fences. The threat exists on the other side of the gates. Therefore, gates represent the togetherness and homogeneity within Başakşehir. Their photographs and also the comments regarding the photographs point out that the residents define themselves as conservative and this is also the only identity they underline. The historicity of Başakşehir and also their representation of them assert that Başakşehir is a conservative habitat. People feel secure and have sense of community by the help of the gates. Therefore these gates are important in their community establishment process.

Başakşehir is also a territory in which its residents can live their conservative identities freely. Moreover, living in Başakşehir is something that reinforces that identity. The people are regarded as religious just because they live in Başakşehir. However, although the residents in 4. Etap do not like to highlight the conservative identity of Başakşehir as a reason to live in here, when they are asked “why did you move here and not in Kemer Country or Ataköy” they mention the compatibleness of the Başakşehir people with them. This refers to their conservative identity and also their economic level. The photographs that define Başakşehir also underline the fact that Başakşehir is a religious place and a supporter of AKP.



Figure 15: “A leader who respect his country, his nation and his flag”



Figure 16: A poster about the feast of sacrifice (left)



Figure 17: A “Yes” stencil to support AKP government (right)



Figure 18: Tables from the breaking Ramadhan Fast



Figure 19: A sign for Quran course

The belonging issue in Başakşehir is significant when they articulate their identity because they establish their identity in terms of belonging to Başakşehir. “Başakşehirlilik” (being from Başakşehir) means something for them.

The reason why the community concept is so strong is because the people here think of themselves as excluded from the outer, secular world and regarded as “others” when they go beyond the borders of their community. They assume that, since Islam is associated with irrationality and represented as a threat to the liberal Western traditions, they are the “others” of the secular Turkey. Since exclusionary accounts are made through the construction of others (Said, 1978), they feel like they are excluded. Just as Said mentions in his *Orientalism*, the representation of East is not quite an objective study, but the shared assumptions about the area of the West; these people think that they are regarded as a threat since Islam is represented falsely.

Territoriality in this sense helps them to deal with that feeling of exclusion because it reinforces the sense of community. If the boundaries are determined and the entries are controlled, the sense of community is more likely to develop. Therefore, in order to overcome this feeling, people regard Başakşehir as an area for them to create a community. Hence, people in Başakşehir feel more secure, happier and stronger here. The sense of community reinforces their strength. Because they do not feel alone, they feel like they can raise their voices against injustice regarding their identity.



Figure 20: "Rabia" parade in 4. Etap



Figure 21: "Rabia" parade in Başakşehir

These are the photos from Rabia protest in Başakşehir taken by Necla. The photograph of the protest marches is one the best images that shows the sense of community in Başakşehir apart from the activities. The reason of this protest is to support to civilian demonstrators who protest the ouster of Egypt's first democratically elected President Mohamed Morsi and the ensuing incidents that are end up with hundreds of people's death. The Rabia demonstration is named after Rabia Square in Cairo which is a place that witnessed one of the gravest massacres of recent years. In one of a rally of his AK Party, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan also supported the protests from all around the world flashing the Rabia sign which is made by raising four fingers with the thumb resting on the palm.

Rabia protests are also significant since the term of the demonstrations coincide with Gezi Park⁴ protests⁴. On one hand, participating Rabia demonstrations means to support to civilian demonstrators in Egypt, on the other hand it also means to come together with their “Muslim brothers” as a counter movement. According to Necla, religion is the only component that brings them together. She explained through the photographs she has taken during the protest marches in Başakşehir:

“See... We do not stay in silence. We can also raise our voices if we see any injustice. There are too many enemies who want to destroy our fraternity. And they are among us not outside as you think. But united we stand; therefore, everyone join these Rabia demonstrations in Başakşehir just to show them our strong fraternity bonds. If there is anyone else who want to damage the indivisible unity of our country, we show them through these protests that it is not that easy.”

When viewed from a point of social segregation argument, different social groups in cities are separated by spatial orientation and this leads to the dedifferentiation of those small communities. (Danış, 2001; 157) 4. Etap residents clearly state that the commercials for Başakşehir about strong neighbourhood relations and homogeneity played an important role in their decision. As Blakely and Snyder (1997a) state “developers [of gated communities] use ‘community’ as a term of art to discuss their products in promotional materials. Marketing brochures are written to convey a sense of community” (1997a: 18). Since a heterogeneous environment is

⁴ On the 28 May 2013, a group called themselves as environmentalists made camp in Gezi park in order to prevent its demolition. The protesters were suppressed by the police with tear gas and pressurized water. The resistance actions of the police were received wide attention. The protests were broadened under the titles of freedom of assembly and freedom of expression and spreaded to other cities in Turkey and protests were also seen in other countries including the European countries, the U.S. and the far-east Asia. Thousands of people were injured and according to TTB (Turkish Medical Association) 6 people lost their lives during the demonstrations.

considered as a dangerous habitat, they feel more secure and comfortable in a homogenous structure. A homogenous structure can be defined as follow:

“The residents of these “off worlds” not only share similar spatial arrangements, but also exhibit similar patterns in their daily practices, in their familial arrangements, and in their urban practices. These include a spatially and socially shrinking city, a bloating of the private sphere, the increasing centrality of family and children in their lives, a deepening isolation from the rest of the city and society for that matter, and the privatization of urban governance. (Candan and Kolluoğlu, 2008:34)

The homogeneity in the gated communities brings along a togetherness and provide a sense of belonging and community life which was regarded as lacking in Istanbul with the disappearance of old neighbourhood. However, in Başakşehir it can be clearly observed that a “Başakşehirlilik” conscious exists. The people come together and attend to a variety of activities with this conscious. The photographs taken in Başakşehir also show the togetherness of the people regarding Rabia issue.



Figure 22: "Rabia" sign in a cafe



Figure 23: "Rabia" sign on a real estate's window (left)



Figure 24: "Rabia" sign on a window (right)

The activities frequently carried out in Başakşehir gather all the people in Başakşehir together and therefore it boosts the community conscience. The residents mention that the activities are so important in the sense that they remind them of the importance of “togetherness” and being a community. These activities include, Ramadan activities such as iftar tables, concerts, Feast of the Sacrifice activities, various religious days activities e.g. holy birth week of prophet Muhammed and activities aimed at children in malls. The most common activity among women is *sohbet* (religious talks).



Figure 25: "Sohbet"



Figure 26: "Sohbet"

The women explain this activity as “educational, instructive and socializing”. In these meetings women talk about any topic such as Turkey’s agenda, personal problems, their children’s situation, their neighbourhood etc. When reading Quran and religious talk end, the woman who welcomes them prepares something to eat with tea. While the women are eating, they talk different topics than religion. These are the best moments for women to reinforce their fraternity bonds.

While the women in Başakşehir socialize this way, men mostly gather together at Friday prayers. There is one point that needs to be highlighted regarding the activeness of men and women in public spaces at Başakşehir. Although the participants do not mention about it, the photographs taken in Başakşehir show that, men are dominant in public spaces. Especially the photographs taken at nights women are rarely seen.⁵



Figure 27: A café in Başakşehir with boys

⁵ Başakşehir’deki gender issue için bkz. Ayşe Çavdar’ın tezi.



Figure 28: A café in Başakşehir with boys



Figure 29: Erdem's friends in a café in Başakşehir



Figure 30: A mosque's garden

Friday prayers are the most common activity among men in order to socialize. Ahmet told the importance of Friday prayers through the photographs he has taken in a garden of a mosque in Başakşehir as:

“Last week I saw Murat Kekilli (a famous singer) in Friday Prayer and I took his photo. Look at him. He lives in Başakşehir. My father also says that he always comes to the prayer. As you see, Friday prayer calls everyone including artists. Everyone is equal in here and every Friday we hug each other after praying. It also reminds me that we are all sisters and brothers.”



Figure 31: Friday prayer



Figure 32: A pop singer (Murat Kekilli) in Friday prayer

Also playing backgammon and okey and smoke water pipe are the other activities that gather men together.



Figure 33: A café in Başakşehir that Hamit loves.



Figure 34: A concert in Başakşehir



Figure 35: Ramadan activity

This conscious also determines a behaviour pattern that should be in Başakşehir. Not drinking alcohol, not staying out late at nights, avoiding discomforting

people (abuse etc), dressing in a convenient way (modest) are some of the behaviour patterns that everyone in Başakşehir should follow. The inner world is still more secure and peaceful according to the residents. The attribution of conservatism is always regarded as a “better world” by the conservative people. In spite of all their inner differences, they always hold a “conservative” person in higher esteem because conservativeness is the value which they hold dearest, that they glorify the most while articulating their identity. Meral explained this through this photograph:



Figure 36: A liquor store in Başakşehir 1. Etap

“It is very bad that there is a “Tekel bayii” (Tobacco Shop) here. We all have children. What if they see these bad things and become curious about them? What if they want to try them? What will happen? How can we protect our children? What if we start seeing drunk people in the street at night?”

There are also residents who feel very uncomfortable about this conservative homogeneity. Especially the activities in Başakşehir reflect the conservative identity of this gated community. Therefore, young people complain about not being able to

find a proper activity that suits them. Tolga summarizes this situation through his photos:



Figure 37: An event announcement



Figure 38: An event announcement

“Look at these activities in the photos and show me one seminar, conference, play or something that I can attend. You cannot find any. I work all day and I want to attend an activity at the end of the day, but I cannot find any. There is not any development in cultural activities in

Başakşehir although its population rises. Religious talks, religious plays, Ramadan activities, Prophet's holy birth week etc... I am not bothered from these activities do not misunderstand me. What I am saying that there should be some other activities targeting the youth. People say nothing to these conservative monotypic activities since they are all conservative. I do not have to attend same kind of activities just because I am conservative. Even the movies are different in here. You cannot find any movie includes sex scene or kiss scene. One scene does not harm their conservative identity..."

2.5. Class Distinction Within Başakşehir

Apart from the reasons that 1. Etap residents explain, 4. Etap residents mention different reasons of moving in Başakşehir. As 1. Etap residents, 4. Etap residents also define Başakşehir as unique. In addition to the explanations of 1. Etap residents they have one more reason to call Başakşehir as unique. For them, Başakşehir is a place where they can build their own culture and live their identities without hiding it. In her article, Nihal Bengisu Karaca (2001) presents her ways to swim as a turbaned woman. She states that, she gave up the struggle after meeting a lot of obstacles arising from her religious belief. She concluded her article as "without me, the water is cleaner". However, the residents in Başakşehir express that, they do not caught between a rock and a hard place as Karaca articulates. According to them, Başakşehir is a place that provides an alternative lifestyle and caters to both their religious identity and their personal needs. Therefore, they do not feel obligated to choose either their desires or their beliefs. In this sense, Başakşehir is different from the other places in Istanbul.

Apart from its uniqueness, 4.etap residents mention its “safety and comfort” for their family as a reason for moving. The issue of security plays an important role in their Başakşehir preference by 4. Etap habitants and it is the most important reason for them to move here. In addition to security, the fear of earthquake, the negative discourse regarding city and living with similar people as 1.Etap residents mention are among the reasons of moving.

“In the aftermath of the devastating earthquake of 1999, an intense public debate has taken place regarding the imminent massive earthquake and the extent of the city’s preparedness to deal with it.” (Candan and Kolluğlu, 2008: 17) In these circumstances after the Istanbul earthquake in 1999, people began to fear and therefore they began to think about their residential choices. The fear of another big earthquake and the search for strong and quake-resistant buildings has become one of the main reasons to move to Başakşehir for 4.etap habitants. As Öncü (1997) explains elaborately, overpopulation affects not only the environment but also the social and cultural fabric of the city. She states:

“Paradoxically, however, the optics of the global through which Istanbul's middle classes rediscovered the aesthetics of their city's historical heritage, giving overwhelming political support to the dramatic clean-up operations which transformed the physiognomy of the city, also rendered visible how disorderly, contaminated and polluted the familiar fabric of Istanbul’s everyday life had become. The middle classes of Istanbul discovered, in the accelerated cultural flows of the 1980’s, the chemical, social and cultural pollutants which threatened their daily lives.” (1997)

Also the negative impact of big cities (such as theft, bad habits, traffic and chaos) is another factor to choose Başakşehir. Zuhail mentioned about the negative discourse regarding the city by showing her photo in Ramadhan. She said:

“Look at the peace in here. There is no fight, no burglary, and no injustice. It is like outside Istanbul. Başakşehir is İstanbul’s peaceful and quiet part. Everyone I know who live in city centre complain about the life in city. I don’t.”



Figure 39: Zuhail's family in Ramadhan activity

By keeping the religion as common ground, Başakşehir provide togetherness for 1. Etap and 4. Etap people. Even though the behaviour that are peculiar to Başakşehir and the feeling of being “from Başakşehir” highlight that Başakşehir is homogeneous, the class distinction between the Etaps of Başakşehir threatens this homogeneity. The groups belonging to each class define themselves as religious, however, the economic differences define their reasons to move and live here.

As indicated in Rose’s aforementioned statement, some groups tend to exclude other groups, as they perceive them to belong someplace else. We witness that both of the 1.Etap and 4. Etap residents create a sense of community determining outer world as “other” as in Rabia protests. However, this community can be fragile with some of the economic factors.

On the one hand, they complain that they feel like an “other” of some groups, on the other hand, they create their own “others” and exclude them from the community that they have established. While the 1.Etap people do this by claiming that they are the true owners of Islam and accordingly, they have the authority to dominate others, the 4. Etap people do this by labelling the other groups as bigots. Within this scope, it can be observed that, the “other’s other” is established by the residents.

Living with similar people is also stated by the 4.Etap residents. However, when they mention about similar people they do not only mean religious individuals. While some participants explain clearly what it means to be “alike”, for the others, this could only be deduced from the subtexts of their expressions. Gated communities either aim to reach to the new middle class, upper middle, upper classes or to reach people with similar job-related backgrounds and/or religious connections.

The buildings in Başakşehir 1. Etap are cheap since they were established as social housing although they seem high rise luxurious buildings. Ayşe Çavdar, states that since the apartments are cheap, the first ones who moved here came from a post-squatter neighbourhood. (Çavdar, 2011: 55). While 1. Etap is a manifestation of the urbanisation idea against squatters; 4.Etap is established as a gated community for upper classes. Therefore, it is inevitable to see the economic based class difference between two Etaps. The residents in Başakşehir are aware of the fact that the class differentiation between 1.Etap and 4. Etap is apparent.

Erdal, who has a dental clinic in Başakşehir 4.etap and lives also in Başakşehir summarizes this economic based differentiation with these words:

“Everyone thinks that all devout people in Başakşehir are together because of their religious thoughts. One can say that, everyone in here is devout and therefore they come together. But can you show me, where is

togetherness? Here is 4.Etap and there –far far way- is 1.Etap. They do not live even closely... One might think that religion keeps people together but this is what it seems, the legitimate face. The thing that holds them together is definitely money. Look, everyone here have the similar economic status. If it is not so, why other women from Earthquake Houses (*The houses given by the municipality to the people who are suffered from 1999 Istanbul Earthquake*) are not exist in their *sohbet* (religious talking) days. Now tell me, is that the religion keeps them together?”

This class differentiation undoubtedly reflects on their lifestyle. While 1. Etap residents mention about only a devout life style instead of socio economic status, for 4. Etap residents this “life style” does not only refer to a devout life style but also a privileged, luxurious one. Especially the photographs taken by 4. Etap inhabitants, symbolize the privileged, peaceful, friendly environment in Başakşehir which is far away from the city life. The residents do not express their complaints about the city residents but they all agree on how prestigious their neighbours are, compared to those people, and they express this fact in their photos or subtexts.

Showing a photo of her house in construction, Gülen said:



Figure 40: A house from 4. Etap

“I’m very happy to live here. There is a different life in here. My neighbours are all understanding and polite. We are far from the city and its chaos. The life in here is very different.”

According to them, 4. Etap is a homogenous living place that accommodates people with similar perspectives and mindsets. Unfortunately, as a gated community, there is no socio-economic equality among all habitants in Başakşehir but the districts provide homogeneity in themselves.



Figure 41: 4. Etap

This economic homogeneity makes them feel more comfortable. According to Miraç, it is the first reason of choosing here to live. They want to be with people whose financial status is similar to them. First Miraç showed the photo of 4.Etap that he has taken and then mentioned about the peace around their neighbourhood. He starts to tell the story of moving here.

“We were living in Üsküdar before we came here. During that time, our financial status started to get better. I started to work in a reputable company and my father became a partner in a new business. Then things started go very well. We started making a lot of money. This was a noticeable change. Then my father bought a second hand Mercedes which he has been dreaming of for a long time. But all of a sudden, everyone in our neighbourhood, even our closest neighbours started to talk about our car. We began to feel very uncomfortable. Because all the gossips about us started to upset my family, especially my mother. At that time we thought about moving. We could not move to Florya or Bahçeşehir since my mother wearing a scarf and we are all conservative. Then my father learned about this place that we can live in peacefully with our conservative identity and also our Mercedes. Here, my father upgraded his car and no one talked about it. The people are better in here than Üsküdar. Everyone’s economic status is equal and no one gossips.”

He emphasized that Başakşehir fits their life style and economic status therefore they can fulfil their social needs in here. After their economic development, they did not feel that they belong to Fatih so they came to Başakşehir in which they can live with similar people. Çiğdem also showed a photo of 5. Etap and comments:



Figure 42: 5. Etap

“When we first came here, there wasn’t even a road to walk or drive. You couldn’t see any buses that stop by. There was only a minibus line that caters everyone. Every day we suffered from water service interruption. The buildings were started to be established but it was like a village. We came here at that moment just because it is cheap. We have waited very long for it to be developed and eventually it did. See? They are establishing new houses for the rich people. First, 4. Etap was established for them, the villas I mean. And now these buildings... We, newcomers are living in here. ”

This difference is clearly observed in the photographs related to consumption. These photographs are also the most efficient ones in terms of describing themselves. Since they mainly define themselves through consumption goods, these photographs give significant information about themselves. Since most of the photographs are related to consumption habits, the relationship between identity and consumption becomes a topic of discussion. They do not only express their class distinction through

the photographs, but also discuss their religious beliefs regarding consumption. The people of higher economic status get the most of the criticism.

CHAPTER III

CONSUMPTION PATTERNTS OF BASAKSEHIR RESIDENTS

3.1.Consumption: A Conceptual Framework

Consumption is a social and cultural process rather than only a simple economic process establishing differences between groups (Veblen, 1994; Bourdieu, 1984; Douglas and Isherwood, 1980). The goods are not only used for satisfaction and pleasure but also to designate the social relationships. Veblen (1994) and Bourdieu (1984) discuss the social distinction through the use of goods.

Veblen, reveals the motives behind status consumption that affects social stratification by analyzing consumption practices. The term "Conspicuous consumption" coined by Thorstein Veblen (1994) in his classic *Theory of the Leisure Class* indicates that the basis of one's good reputation in society is related to their pecuniary strength.

There are two ways for an individual to show its pecuniary strength: conspicuous leisure and the best way to achieve this is conspicuous consumption. Conspicuous consumption is the main venue of symbolic expression. In the preface of *The Theory of The Leisure Class*, Veblen gives attention to "features of social life that are not commonly classed as economic" (Veblen 1994, vii) According to him, the main motive for the purchase of luxury products is the will to present status an

prestige based on ware and wealth ownership. In his own words, "in order to gain and to hold the esteem of men, wealth must be put in evidence, for esteem is awarded only on evidence" (Veblen, 1994: 24). Therefore, the usefulness of the purchased product is not in the buyers' interest; instead the cost of purchase or product price becomes the prominent factor to the buyer. In conspicuous consumption, utility is defined through status rather than price. In this respect, the photos taken by Başakşehir 4.Etap and comments can be considered as conspicuous consumption. Status is the most important motive here because it is acquired from the judgments of other society members upon the individual's position in that society. This way, a hierarchical relationship is maintained based on ownership of property: the ones who actually own it and the ones who do not. The ones, who are in possession of such properties, also possess status and honour, a place in the hierarchy that would be respected by others. The others, with no property, would not hold such a status.

Veblen (1994) also argues that, wealthy individuals consume highly conspicuous goods and services in order to display their wealth. As they display, they gain greater social status. He assumed that the individuals who recognize this hierarchy want to emulate the consumption patterns of the individuals who are at the higher level within the hierarchy.

In Bourdieu's *Distinction* (1984), it has been discussed that the clusters of individuals develop various cultural peculiarities in order to separate themselves from the others. He examines how specific social groups have been used taste, cultural and economic capital in order to differentiate themselves from the rest. He suggests that different consumption patterns are used to distinguish one class's lifestyle from another. According to him, identities are established and reproduced by utilising the different kind of tastes and distinction. Different types of capitals lead to this

distinction between groups: economic capital and cultural capital. Economic capital refers to the wealth and financial assets that can be turned into money. Cultural capital is acquired mainly through education and social origin, and involves the up-to-date information along with the occupation of creating a cultural difference.

The concept of cultural capital is the most important non-economic resource for Bourdieu and that is an attempt to identify culture as a form of capital. The relation between economic and cultural capital can be in mutually different forms: they can be both high at the same time or it may be high in economic capital where it is low in cultural capital. Every social positioning has its own combination. Based on these thoughts, Bourdieu's definition of class division does not only refer to an economical difference. Bourdieu considers class as a theoretical construction where it is accepted that social groups with similar social conditionings and similar material conditions have the same tendencies. Instead of approaching this from an economical point of view, Bourdieu introduces "taste" which is a form of cultural capital and leads to differentiation between several status groups. According to Bourdieu: "Tastes are connected to major social divisions like class and gender. Divisions between provincials and cosmopolitans, or divisions between the highly and poorly educated create substantial barriers among the social groups."

The differences in tastes are also shaped by habitus⁶. Bourdieu (1984) defines the notion of habitus as a kind of a person. It is the set of dispositions acquired through the activities and experiences of everyday life which lead agents' behaviours in certain ways. The relation to table manners or the way of talking, eating, laughing and walking are all part of habitus. Being born into an elite family or a working class family,

⁶ For an elaboration on the use of the concept of habitus in relation to lifestyles, see Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Harvard, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984)

growing up in house with books all around, or having servants in a mansion, all these milieus shape our practices, perceptions and attitudes unconsciously in a taken-for-granted way. Taste in this sense, acts like as part of habitus and functions as an indicator of social distinction.

Difference in taste can be primarily observed in their practices of consumption which has a role in identity formation. These social groups are either differentiated or striving to present a differentiation by means of distinctive contents in their baskets. Even if the contents are the same, their functions and applications would be different – the groups would tend to acquire the same goods for very different reasons. It is not only limited by the material possessions, it also includes all experiences that are commodified. All everyday practices such as buying an event ticket, going to a holiday, where one spends his weekend build an identity.

Bourdieu states that these goods are expressive and different social groups use them for different reasons in order to proclaim their position in this social structure. (1984) These classes are in a struggle of superiority and these goods are used as their weapons in this context. Some of these goods can be characterized as “popular” or “distinguished”. The threat that any distinguished good would convert into a popular one is the permanent tension between these two accounts. Objects turn into vessels of meaning that an individual possesses via consumption. (Levy, 1959; McCracken, 1986). Levy (1959) also suggests that people do not only purchase products for their utilities but also for senses that they signify.

One of the most important reasons that consumption has a big role in the creation of such divisions is the effect of these products’ symbolic meanings (Baudrillard, 1998) on forming an individual’s identity through consumerism. It is not the products that are consumed but their meanings. Following Veblen in thinking of

commodities as having status or "sign" value, Baudrillard (1998) also believes that in a consumer society where the difference between real needs and artificial needs have been diminished, the individual believes that purchasing and displaying consumer products provides a social privilege and prestige. The person not only believes that he differentiates himself from others socially, but also gets integrated with the consumer society. Therefore, consumption becomes an obligation for the individual. Human relationships give way to relationship with commodities. He states that "consumption defines precisely the stage where the commodity is immediately produced as a sign, as a sign value and where signs are produced as commodities." (Baudrillard, 1981:147)

This shows that consumers designate a social class by their own expenses and gain a hedonistic benefit out of it. In that respect, the struggle between the social classes reveals itself in their consumption habits which is also be shaped by people's position within social classes.

Baudrillard assigns four levels of values to objects. They can be outlined as follows: The functional value or instrumental purpose of an object which is based on utility, exchange value or the economic value of an object which is based on equivalence, symbolic value which is the value of an object in relation to another subject or idea and lastly, sign value or the value of an object with a system of objects which means that the objects are also the signs of distinction, taste, and social status. To clarify, sign value involves practices of conspicuous consumption in order to achieve and maintain social status. Baudrillard is of the opinion that sign value is just as important as functional value; therefore, this is another reason for people to consume. Sign value becomes a building block of the consumption process. The whole of society had gathered around products that provide prestige, identity and status and prestigious products began to indicate a higher status.

3.2. The Development of Islamic Consumption

The notion of material consumption in Islamic societies have always been debated since the consumer culture is ‘often portrayed as a threat, harmful to religion as it privileges hedonism, pleasure, individualism and an excessive lifestyle’ (Wong, 2007: 451). Islam’s rules regarding waste and its emphasis on modesty cause the consumption context remains as debated. However, by the help of the emphasis on consumption of the modern era, there occurred different interpretations of Islam and accordingly new styles.

In the late 1980s, Islamists’, who gained power by the help of neo-liberalism, economic status has been developed and their visibility in public sphere was increased. This period is also the period that the globalization’s effects started to be seen in Turkey. By the help of globalization, new brands came into the Turkish market, their communication network was developed and accordingly creating different identities among different choices became possible. Given the division of labour, specialization, etc... individuals started to live different than they used to do.

The Islamists started to take advantage of being differentiated by reforming their lifestyles as the modern era requires. The most important motive of this reforming process was that, they began to get out of the traditional Islamic consumer patterns. They gained a chance to form a “unique” identity for themselves since the Islamic commodities are varying and differentiating.

Turkey’s economic structure has been reformed integrating into the global market economy. Due to the effects of neo-liberalism, individuals started to be more open to the influences of globalization, especially consumption. The 1980’s is a critical era of Turkey’s transition into neo-liberal development model. Turgut Ozal, who

became president of the Republic between November 1989 and April 1993, is the most important figure of this period. As Öniş observes,

“His moderate Islamist leanings enabled him to appeal to the conservative masses on the periphery of the Turkish society, whilst he could also appeal to the secular elites through his attractive projects aimed at modernization and economic reform through closer integration with the Western world.” (Öniş, 2004a:116)

During this period, Islamic business started to take part in all areas of business. Religious small scale businesses have become bigger companies. The economic conditions of the time as well as Özal’s Islamic roots have made this easier. These businesses created a new alternative religious market, differentiating from western goods. As Sandıkçı and Ger (2002) summarizes:

“As wealth accumulated among particular sections of the religious population, a bourgeoisie, conservative in values but avant-garde in consumption practices, started to emerge. As much as secular upper classes have developed a taste for bourgeois consumption, so have the religious upper classes.” (2002: 466)

3.2.1. Islamic Consumption Practices of Başakşehir Residents

The residents give detailed information regarding their consumer habits through photographs. The photographs provided information about taste, social distinction, participants’ perception of identity and social standing and the impact of consumption practices on cultural reproduction.

It is more convenient to observe the consumption patterns among the women since they are the decision-makers of a family in shopping and it is easier to analyse

the Islamic consumption commodity differences on them. Conservative clothing brands for women manifest themselves with their own product lines whereas it is harder to determine whether a brand for men's clothing has a conservative tendency or not. It can be deduced easily from a women's brand if their style is conservative but that is not the case for men's clothing. Ahmet summarizes this difference with this explanation after my question if there are any conservative male shops: "You cannot make this difference easily. They do not sell cübbe (Islamic robe)." Men from 1.Etap have not provided relevant information on this subject by themselves, as they point to women close by when asked for their shopping behaviour. That is also why; data for consumption habits has been collected from women.

In our talks about the photographs in Başakşehir, two points regarding consumption patterns are worth mentioning. The relationship between the 1. and 4. Etap residents and the seculars. 1. Etap residents, highlight their religious identities and differentiate themselves from the seculars through their lifestyle and consumption habits. They spend time in venues, go to shops and buy brands to which they feel they belong to. For the 4. Etap residents, the situation is more complicated. They differentiate their religious lifestyle from that of the seculars, however they do not prefer religious venues, shops or brands, rather higher socio-economic class venues. They feel that they belong to these luxury venues and shop at malls that target high economic class. But they also emphasize their religious identities in these venues.

The second one is the relationship between the residents of 1. Etap and 4. Etap, which also represents the relationship between religious higher and lower economic classes. 4. Etap people, accuse 1. Etap people of not living religion as they are supposed to and believe that they represent Islam in a bad way. For this reason, they avoid spending time where 1. Etap residents are. 1. Etap residents on the other hand,

do not find the lifestyles of 4. Etap people appropriate to religion. They believe that they are the ones who represent the religious lifestyle the best. They do not approve of their conspicuous consumption habits.

All extents can be elaborated using the photos taken by them. All of them are very significant in the sense that they all reflect the consumption patterns of Başakşehir and also underline the reasons of their consumption habits. These reasons lead us to think about the importance of their conservative identity and their economic status in the process of consumption.

3.3. Lifestyle Differentiation within Başakşehir

The first important point is how the religious residents of Başakşehir differentiate themselves from seculars. 1. Etap prefers religious goods and highlights their religious identity through these goods. The dominant characteristic of the consumption habits of 1.Etap that they would like to highlight their conservative identity as much as possible. Therefore, they shop from the brands that are called as conservative. Çiğdem, talks about her consumption habits and the effects of her religious “world view” to this habits through a photograph she had taken. There are two women with same headscarves looking at a computer screen. It looks like an office. Since Çiğdem did not allow me to use it, I could not put it in here.

Me: “Is this your work clothes? I mean the headscarves are also included?”

Çiğdem: “Yes, they have brought this in order to prevent people from wearing colourful things. But I think it’s good. There could be a person who tries to boast even about that.

Me: Doesn’t anybody boast now?

Belma: No, but there is something; all the people around here are at my level. We have a life style, we have a fixed income, so everybody wears in this way. Of course you can't wear everything if you are a covered person.

Me: Is it difficult to find clothing?

Belma: No, we have some places already that we usually go. They also appeal to our style and income. We always go to those places. For example there is a bazaar where the garments are sold merely for covered people. We always buy our garments from those places.

Hamit also mentioned that he and his family do not go to stores which sell alcohol. The places he goes for shopping are only devout places. He explained:



Figure 43: A grocery shop in Başakşehir 1.Etap

Hamit: “Here is the grocery we always go for shopping. We usually buy our all needs from here.

Me: It is not one of the biggest shopping malls. It looks too small. Do you also do your weekly shopping from here?

Hamit: No no. It is insufficient for this kind of weekly shopping. We go somewhere else in Başakşehir.

Me: As far as I am concerned, you don't go for shopping outside Başakşehir. Is that right?

Hamit: Yes that's right. We don't. We already knew these places. We have been going these places for ages. We trust them.

Me: Why don't you trust other shops?

Hamit: For example, when you go into the meat section you can find pork, Allah korusun. (god forbid) Or they sell alcoholic beverages. I don't feel comfortable when I shop from this kind of places. My mother and father are hajjis. They also eat the things that I buy. I can't make them eat things that I don't even trust.

Meral, who lives in 1. Etap has taken some photos of Olimpa. Through these photographs she explained her shopping habit. She said that she only buy from certain brands and those brands enter the Başakşehir market in a rapid progress nowadays. The brands she mentioned are the ones that are called as conservative.



Figure 44: Olimpa shopping mall in Onurkent



Figure 45: Olimpa shopping mall

“I usually go this place. So I took that photo. The places that I go are specific ones. If I buy clothes for myself I go to Tekbir, Kayra or I buy them from “Fatih”. My husband... He does not know any place for shopping I buy his clothes... These shops’ styles in Başakşehir are more appropriate to us. So I do not need to go anywhere else. As I said, sometimes I go to Fatih which I have lived for 9 years. ”

According to them, they give preference to such brands for they are in accordance with their “pious” characters unlike the other certain names. Tekbir, Armine, Kayra, Alvina, Zühre, Setrms are therefore the most mentioned brands. While mentioning the consumption habits about food or clothing, the phrase “in our way of living” was used very commonly. This usage has certain meanings: when food is concerned, it represents “*halal* food” (permissible to use or engage in, according to Islamic law) where it is not allowed to use any pork meat or pork-related substance in production, or when clothing is concerned, it usually represents fashion in a “veiling” style or “covering” in women’s clothes. The 1.Etap habitants, thinking that the other shops sell “improper” or “not too modest” clothes, state that the stores they use offer clothing that suits their taste, “their way of living” and has a higher quality. People living in 1.Etap choose their shopping preferences according to discounts, quality of products, reliability and appropriateness to their lifestyles and they reflect a distinction between themselves and the “secular” with an utterance of the concept “in our way of living”. With the same description, the “secular” becomes the “other” and they portray their own lifestyle as proper when compared to the secular lifestyle. They distinguish themselves by means of consumption habits.

Devout people in 4. Etap were not as precise as the 1. Etap people in the process of differentiating themselves from seculars. They describe their lifestyles as Islamic as 1. Etap residents, but their claim is that this cannot be observed by means of consumption habits. Even though they define themselves different from seculars and emphasize their religiousness, this differentiation is not observable in their consumption habits. Zuhail explained this during our talk, through a discomfort that she felt regarding one of my questions:



Figure 46: A cruise in Karaköy

Zuhal: “I saw this in Karaköy. It was huge and seemed gorgeous. I just like it and took that photo. It is so magnificent, isn’t it? I really want to go some time by this kind of cruises.”

Me: Do you feel comfortable during this kind of voyage?

Zuhal: Why don’t I feel comfortable? I’m sure there are lots of women with headscarves go this kind of trip. You can’t say it is not convenient to Islam. The life in my home can be Islamic, my thoughts can be Islamic or my clothes can be Islamic; but why the places in which I shop or I eat should be Islamic? I went to Russia, for example, because of my husband’s work. I did not eat any meat. I lived in an Islamic way during the time that I was there. It is not an Islamic place then I should not go there, right?

She objected to my “Do you feel comfortable?” question thinking that it was related to her headscarf even though I intended to ask the duration of the voyage. By her objection she highlights her belief that, she is able to get in any place she wants to, regardless to her religion.

Gülen also makes similar comments through a photograph of Bagdat Avenue. She showed me her best shopping place and states that she feels more comfortable in the

places on Bağdat Avenue. Her averseness towards Islamic brands is their growing liberal senses sharing the same space with the secular people and their senses of belonging to those places. Gülen explained this with her Bağdat Avenue photos:



Figure 47: A store in Bağdat Avenue (left)



Figure 48: Bağdat Avenue (right)

Gülen:“ I usually go to the malls but I also love window shopping in these kind of streets. So, I go to Bağdat Avenue. It is also the meeting point of me and my friends.

Me: “Do you go there for shopping or just hanging around?

Gülen: Do you think it is possible to go there and not buy anything.

Me: Do you find something that suits your style?

Gülen: Of course. There are too many options and also everything is so stylish.

Me: Can you say that, “It is my place”? I mean, do you feel comfortable when you go there?

Gülen: Sure. After a while the salesladies started to recognize me. I feel very comfortable.

Me: Your headscarf does not affect anything as far as I understand.

Gülen: No, it doesn't. The people in the places that I usually go are respectful to others' beliefs. In any of those big stores I have never been regarded as odd. I was also graduated from college, I came from a good family and we also make good money. There is nothing that can prevent me shopping from there. I do not understand why it is weird for some other people. They insist on telling “turbaned women in the jeeps”. Why not?

What is the difference? Devout women cannot drive?”

Gülen, mentioned her discomfort in such a division, i.e. “Islamic” vs. “Secular”, over the places. Once she counts some of her demographic characteristics, Gülen expresses that there is no such thing as “the other” and states that once the specific demographic features are determined and underlined, only then the “sameness” can be established. Therefore, even though there remains a tension between the secular and the devout people, no clear line can be drawn between the devout people who are in a higher status and seculars. When they feel that they are in a higher status in economic terms, they also feel self-confident and have the courage to extend their living place towards the public space.

Although it would be expected that Islamic way of living leads to the same shopping behaviour, the 4. Etap people's criteria are not of Islamic, reliable, or cheap – they prefer to visit the shopping centres organized for higher economic classes. The aforementioned Islamic brands also target those high economic classes but they are

not really preferable among those people. According to them, the main reason for that is the common idea that such brands do not produce any stylish outfit anymore and their styles are not modern at all. They rationalize the difference in their consumption patterns with these expressions. Although there exist some stylish Islamic brands that organize fashion shows in latest trends, the 4. Etap's tendency towards more expensive stores and not buying from these brands "anymore" can be explained by considering such brands as cheap and low-profile. They do not believe that those stores can provide adequate clothing for them.

In order to state that they belong in the same group with the seculars and to emphasize their socio-economic level, they purposely mention brand names. Zuhail, mentioned about her brand love through a birthday cake photograph. Her friends bought a specially designed cake for Zuhail, and since she really likes the cake she wanted to share the photograph of it.



Figure 49: Zuhail's birthday cake

Zuhal: “My friends bought me this cake. Look, how good it is; the details...etc. My friends bought this for me. They know best what I like the most. The brands... The bags...”

Me: You like shopping most then?

Zuhal: Yes. And also the brands they specifically choose them. Burberry, Hermes, Ipekyol...

Me: So they know which brand do you buy most?

Zuhal: Yes. The bags, my clothes... They know me better than I know myself.

The reason she highlights the word “brand” is that these brands are aimed for a specific economic status and not carrying a Islamic connotation. There are many photographs coming from 4. Etap that highlight some specific brands as mentioned below. However, the owners of the photographs avoided making comments on these photographs, saying “a photo from when I came back from shopping”, “a memory from our anniversary”, “a usual after lunch at Sunday”. These comments also give the opinion of that they do not think that having these kind of brands is something to tell; it is usual.



Figure 50: An anniversary cake



Figure 51: Shopping bags with brand names (left)

Figure 52: Leisure activity at a caf  (right)

On the other hand, the people in 1. Etap are aware of this brand addiction and they define it as “*sonradan g rmelik*” (*nouveau-riche*).  i dem criticized this kind of consumption habits and she talked about it through a photograph of her colleagues. I could not use the photographs since she did not let me to use. She explained her reason:

“The husband of one of the friend in the picture is very jealous. So please, if he had known about it, he would have killed me and my friend.”

Before telling me the reason, she showed me the photo and explained:

Çiğdem: “These are my colleagues. We also have fun while we are working as you see. But they started to leave their jobs. Showing the photo - This one and this one left.

Me: Why?

Çiğdem: I also think about leaving. It is very difficult to handle with people. Especially, recently the population increased and the profile of people has changed. I used to love my job but recently I have started to hate it.

Me: What kind of a change? Why did it affect you so much?

Çiğdem: I’m sorry to say that but there has been a lot of “*sonradan görme*” people appeared. The women with big sunglasses in their jeeps, do you imagine? As you can easily see, so many luxurious buildings started to be established recently. So the people living in these building come here. 5. Etap, 4. Etap Missİstanbul buildings... All of them are similar. They have iPhones and key of a luxurious car. They think they can buy anything with their money. Just because they have so much money they think that they can treat people how they want. So they insult us, they give orders. They want to show their wealth. For instance, when they go to the cash desk, they first put their iPhones and keys on the table to show that they are rich. It is the way to say that “Hey look I am rich and I have a Mercedes”. Let me tell you something. When one of them comes here to show her knee pain to doctor, she doesn’t just say that her knees hurt; she says “because

I live in a villa, going up and down the stairs makes my knees hurt” We are all fed up with this kind of people.

While 4. Etap habitants make a distinction by showing off the brands that they possess in order to reveal their economic capitals, 1. Etap residents regard this showing off as an opportunity to gain respect. When 4. Etap residents talk about their consumption habits, they refer to the brands of the products rather than their quality or utility. Brand addiction is mostly seen among the devout people in high economic status. As representatives of the newly developing Islamic identity, this group of people, called Islamic bourgeoisie, make use of these brands to express and prove themselves. The lack of sufficient tools to express themselves can be stated as a reason for such behaviour. The strongest tool for such a purpose is the economic capital. They also create their own spaces in order to express themselves. That is why; they create a strong bond with certain brands. The fact that each of those brands carries a sign value (Baudrillard, 1981) gives the people a chance to define themselves and diverge from the “others” they mention since the brands can be seen as meaningful symbols while creating consumer identities.

In order to attain their own identities, consumers prefer the brands which seem to fit to their images. This way, the meaning and value of those brands help them establish their own identity formations and express their own selves. (McCracken, 1986).

Accordingly, brands turn out to be carriers of cultural meaning and tools of social expression in such a society. The social meanings on these “brands” become the reflection of an individual’s way of expressing itself. For that reason, brands serve the purpose of creating an identity. Consumers build up a narration out of these brands, tell their own stories through them and communicate using such stories. Brands also

appear as institutions of meanings to consumers' life stories. In other words, consumers do not choose the brands but the lifestyles and meanings assigned to such brands.

Every aforementioned brand has a different meaning. Armine, Tekbir, Hilfiger, Gucci. They all represent a different lifestyle. That is why; the habitants of 1. Etap mention brand names such as BMW, Vakko or iPhone when they describe the high (economic) class devout people. These brands are unnecessarily expensive and ostentatious for a real devout person, according to them.

When the photos were examined and consumption habits –especially brands – were mentioned, the ostentatious display of wealth was the prominent issue. There are many motivational factors for the consumption of luxury goods. For example, people may buy expensive products for their rich content and outstanding craftsmanship. However, such consumerist behaviour usually is not caused by the quality of the product but the desire to fulfil the motivation regarding people's status and prestige. Hence, this way of consumption is not rooted from economic utility but the social one. Conspicuous consumption, which means the purchase of expensive goods and services, is described as the attainment and exhibition of products in order to display wealth and status. (Veblen, 1994)

Even though they do not try to emphasize their religious identity with luxury consumption products and brands, their religiousness inevitably separates them from the seculars at certain points. However, at these points where their lifestyles contradict, they come up with certain Islamic alternatives.

The best example in this context is a cafe named Huqqa, where Merve goes to with her friends frequently and mentions especially as a leisure activity. It is a cafe that opened in the Bosphorus and entered the market as an Islamic alternative to Sortie

which is a night club for upper class segment. Huqqa's target group is the upper class Islamic section. It has been introduced as a conservative bohemian bourgeoisie cafe (Hakan,2013) and as an alcohol free Reina with water pipes for the conservatives (Baştürk, 2013). It resembles a night club with the heavily-built bodyguards at the door and the expensive cars parked in the parking lot. When walked in, it is a luxury cafe with a view of the Bosphorus. It may drive one to think that the reason for it to be compared to night clubs is because it is situated in the Bosphorus, as it is decorated as an ordinary cafe. The elements that make Huqqa an upper class cafe stand out immediately: the view of the Bosphorus, the menus being presented in iPads, the rich menu with options from the world cuisines. It functions as a new consumption space where social distinction is reproduced by religious people. The most distinctive characteristic that separates Huqqa from other cafes in the Bosphorus shoreline is being Islamic. It gains this Islamic characteristic through the non-alcohol drinks in the menu with names of alcoholic cocktails (mojito), the prayer room inside, the music being turned down during call to prayer and the general profile of the customers.

Merve showed me the photos that they are taken in Huqqa. She explained this cafe as one of her favourite and she underlines the importance of the cafe for her and for other religious people. For Merve and her friends, Huqqa meant becoming "free". Merve told me:

"I no longer have to hang out in Fatih or Eminönü. Here, is somewhere that we can sit freely with our headscarves by having a good service. Sometimes we come to the Bosphorus for lunch or dinner. But I do not know why, here in Huqqa, I feel more comfortable. I remember the first time that I come here, I said to myself "Finally! We are free. It is also our right to come to fancy places in the Bosphorus." Why would we go to old

fashioned cafes just because we have headscarves? Insallah (*I hope*) these kind of places spreads and we can easily find places that suits us.”



Figure 53: The entrance of Huqqa



Figure 54: A view from inside of Huqqa (left)



Figure 55: A desert from Huqqa's menu (right)

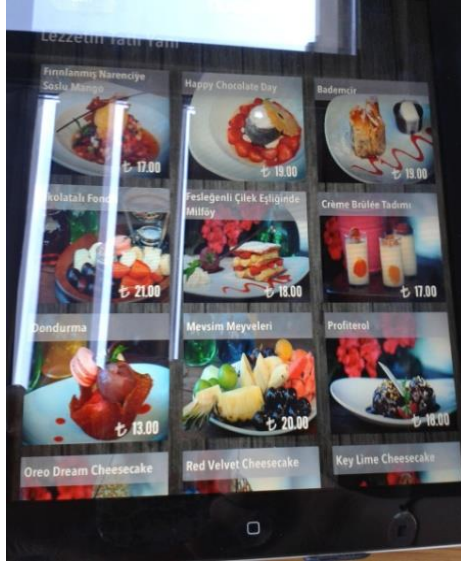


Figure 56: Huqqa's menu in an iPad

Figure 57: Merve and her friends at



Figure 58: The parking area of Huqqa

While we were commenting on photos with Merve, one of Merve's friends was also with us. She doesn't live in Başakşehir but she is one of her closest friend. She wanted to talk about Huqqa and I thought her comments were remarkable.

“Even though you have a lot of money or you wear fancy clothes still sometimes you cannot feel comfortable in some places. Still, there

are some people that looking at us as if they say “what are you doing in that place?”, can you believe it? *Still*. After Gezi Parkı incident, we come across them more frequently. But in Huqqa, there are so many girls with short skirts and everyone is okay with that. This place is more liberal. People do not bother each other by judging their external appearance.

Cihan Kamer, the owner, describes this venue as a place where everyone who says "I can go somewhere and not consume alcohol" can come to. According to him, Huqqa does not only appeal to conservatives. It is possible to see all kinds of people who can afford going to a cafe in the Bosphorus. Kuruçeşme, Ortaköy, Bebek line, was regarded as a ghetto that conservatives would not find the courage to enter. However Huqqa entered the market as a non-alcoholic venue where they could socialize while maintaining their habits and where they could be served well and enjoy nice meals. Merve summarizes that case by saying "now I know what the view in Reina, Sortie looks like", they feel more comfortable being served in this view. The opening of a venue which is defined as a "conservative cafe" in the Kuruçeşme, Ortaköy, Bebek line, the best location in the Bosphorus shoreline, makes this venue a hybrid place, where the secular urban upper class and the religious upper class people come together, where they do not come in conflict but interpenetrate.

3.3.1. Islam and Conspicuous Consumption

When the devout people are discussed, the secular people are usually described as “the other” but given the explanations of the research so far; “the other” of the devout people is not in a different social group but in the same one. On one hand, there are those who recognize the rich religious enthusiasts as "the other" just like the secular

people and call them "religion merchants" and on the other hand, there are other devout people who carefully desist 'othering' the secular, and believe and emphasize that they take place in the same social group together.

Studies have usually addressed that, "Islamists have come to identify themselves as such by buying and using things "distinct" from those used by secularists" (Yashin, 2002: 112), it's been expected that people in 4. Etap would set apart from the secular ones since they identify themselves with their Islamic lifestyles. However, on the contrary, it can be observed that their consumption habits are very similar to those of secular people and moreover, it can be seen that they make an effort to have such similarities. This can be analysed as a way of acquiring acceptance in the same social group with the secular.

It is also possible to affirm Bourdieu's argument here where he states that social groups with the same products in their shopping baskets have different reasons to acquire those products. The newly-emerged devout people with higher economic status tend to differentiate themselves with the traditional devout people, who wear headscarves by habit, rather than the secular. They refuse to reflect "covering", or at a broader level, an Islamic way of life as a cultural reactionism. As Islamic bourgeois, they aim to present themselves as an alternative to the secular elites that has traditionally been dominant in the public space. As Sandıkçı and Ger (2001) states:

"Constructing a "modern" Islamic identity within the local power network involves simultaneously negotiating multiple tensions; the tensions between the West and the East, the secular and the religious, the urban and the rural, the elite religious and the lower class or newly-rich religious, the urban religious and the rural religious and distancing itself from various internal Others." (2001:149)

The second point is the people in Başakşehir from different classes separating themselves from each other. While the people in 4. Etap want to differentiate themselves from the people in 1. Etap, the people in 1. Etap want to differentiate their consumption culture from 4. Etap residents. 4. Etap residents differentiate themselves from people who show traditional tendencies in their consumption habits, which are represented by 1. Etap residents. For instance, they do not prefer going to venues or shops in Başakşehir.

Gülen, on the photo that she had taken in Bağdat Avenue also did not mention any of the conservative brands that 1.Etap residents mention. She explained:

"I love to hang out in those places (showing the photographs) . When I hang out I also do shopping. The brands that you have mentioned (Tekbir, Armine, Alvina) are not only crowded in terms of stores, but they are also tasteless and their stores are not really in my circles. Therefore, I have no business with those brands."



Figure 59: Bağdat Avenue

The conversation between Tolga and me also underlines the fact that, some people do not prefer the brands that are sold in Başakşehir:



Figure 60: Tolga and his friends

Me: You look very nice in this suit.

Tolga: Thank you so much. We went so many places just to find this kind of thing.

Me: In Başakşehir?

Tolga: Oh, no (laughing) There are no such fashionable brands in Başakşehir. The brands in Başakşehir are old-fashioned.

Me: What are the fashionable brands then? Where do you find it?

Tolga: Massimo Dutti, Tommy Hilfiger, U.S Polo... You can find all those brands in the malls in *nezih* (decent) places. So I have to get out of Başakşehir for shopping.”

With the help of their comments regarding photos, it can be seen that the popular brands among the 1.Etap habitants are not commonly favoured by them.

Although these brands do not address the people with lower income, they are not really preferable, as they used to be a few years ago, among the 4.Etap habitants. For example, “Tekbir” brand was known to be the best and only one in its area of expertise for conservative women but nowadays it is accused of not changing their catalogues rapidly and selling the same styled clothing every year by 4. Etap residences. This is an important reason for people in their preference. Kübra, showing a picture she has taken in a mall states:

Kübra: “I usually go to this kind of malls. Başakşehir is not enough for my liking. Everyone is wearing the same clothes since they all buy them in these stores. I don’t like it.

Me: What are the brands that appeal to you. As I saw there is Tekbir in here.

Kübra: Tekbir is not what it used to be. It was one of the best brands of its time; but lately they dropped their quality for the sake of cheap sales. Everyone has it. I almost never go there anymore. I can find everything that I look for in other places anyway.

Me: Other places?

Kübra: I don’t know. There was a wedding the other day and I found my dress in Ipekyol.”

Some goods are trickled down according to them. The “trickle down” concept which was introduced by Thorstein Veblen in the book *The Theory of the Leisure Class* in 1899 is explained by George Simmel through fashion and personal style. (Simmel, 1904) According to Simmel (1904), that the lower classes emulate the clothing and life style of the upper classes in order to achieve upward socio-economic mobility.

This shows that, trends are created at the top of the social and economic pyramid and trickle downwards.

When a product starts being used by 1. Etap residents or when they start seeing lower economic group citizens in the shops that they go to, they stop using these products or going to those shops. They consider these products to have trickled down. They feel like these brands do not belong to them anymore, they belong to the lower socio-economic class.

Although they identify themselves with the traditional Islamic way of living, they do not feel obliged to dress up from the Islamic shops. In addition to this, they do not approve of the brands that are largely consumed by people living in 1. Etap. This shows that the habitants of 4. Etap, who are in a higher economic status, distinguish themselves with their lifestyles from other devout people.

Tolga, mentioned about the desire of differentiation of 4. Etap from 1. Etap through this photograph.



Figure 61: A parking area in 4. Etap

Tolga: I took this photo to explain you better what kind of a place this is.

As you can see the economic level is high in here. These cars belong to a one house for example.

Me: Did you prefer here just because everybody has high economic status?

Tolga: Not really. Lately our economic status has changed as I said. We started to live in that way. That does not mean that we wasted our money.

We met different people in connection with our work. Even we had guests from abroad and we went those countries. From then on, we started to take care about our appearance. Not only me, my family also. If we did not change our appearance or life style, we could only stuck in a particular circle and everyone call us “bigot”. Now we are living in that way and some people think that our life style is against Islam. What should we do?

I think, we live both what Islam requires and also our social and economic status requires”

It can be concluded from the participant’s sentences, since they changed their lifestyles, they felt the need to adapt themselves to a proper consumer culture. Tolga, finds their Islamic way of life more appropriate than anybody. According to him, he lives an ideal Islamic way of life. When he mentioned about 1. Etap residents, he is aware of that people in 1. Etap talk about them in a bad way. However, he does not care of this kind of talks, since he thinks that their life is inappropriate to Islam. According to him, being religious does not come along with being closed to everything.

The fact that both groups are religious and both of them lay claim on religion causes a hostile relation. When taking into consideration that religiousness brings along brotherhood, not discrimination etc., 4. Etap residents’ desire to separate themselves from 1. Etap residents is regarded hostile by 1. Etap residents. Vedat explained the reason of this relationship as: “Working hard, getting rich and helping

people in need exist in Quran; but this type of bigots put away the things Allah actually makes them *halal*.

According to the residents in 4. Etap, living Islam in a primitive way does not mean living Islam rightfully. They state that their ways of lives are appropriate to Islam and they are against the people who want to live Islam as the golden age which refers the time of prophet Muhammed's life. By saying so, they refer to the people who defend living Islam in a more modest way. The residents in 1.Etap are also against the people who call them as religious and live a high standard life. When consumption is on the carpet, they always refer the people who are religious and have high economic level. The closest people who suit this reference are the people in 4. Etap; therefore in our interviews they usually refer the people in 4.etap and 5. Etap. When the consumption practices are taken into discussion, the relationship between 1.etap and 4. Etap is getting tense.

Necla showed me the photos of the residents in 4.Etap have taken and comments:

“I do not wear those expensive headscarves or I do not use iPhone. I can talk using this phone so why do I spend so much money on it. I find much better headscarves in bazaar with a way cheaper price. My mother taught me this. Me and my neighbours love to search for a better price and more qualified products and we always find it.”

It is important for them to have a “good taste” rather than having a lot of money. According to them since the ones who live in 4.Etap are *sonradan görme* (nouveau riche), they do not have a good taste. Therefore according to them they wear old style clothes and look like *taşralı* (peasant). From the Bourdieusian perspective, according to 1. Etap residences, no matter how much economic capital 4.Etap residences have,

they never look like tasteful like them since their cultural capital is lacking. Gamze, showed a picture from a wedding and criticized the women in the picture:

“You cannot even recognize that they give so much money on those clothes. They look like *görgüsüz* (nouveau riche), with those expensive clothes. I spend less money and I look like more tasteful. Since they are *sonradan görme* (nouveau riche), they wear excessive clothes.”



Figure 62: A wedding picture

While she was showing the photograph in her cell phone she explained: “Look at this Quran. Even Quran is luxurious. What kind of devout people are they?”

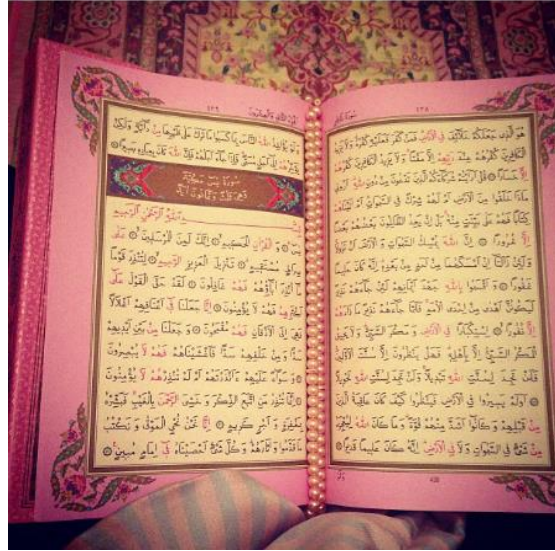


Figure 63: A pink Quran

Hamit, who describes himself as a “real religious” showed a picture of a *sünnet düğünü* (Circumcision Celebration) of his friend and reacted as:

“What could be more Islamic than a circumcision? They turn even a circumcision celebration into a show off. It is circumcision and it is a religious thing. How can you celebrate this with alcohol? How can you use a religious thing to show off to other people?”



Figure 64: A wedding ceremony in Başakşehir

He also mentioned about the pseudo-religious. According to him, most of the “rich Muslims” are pseudo-religious since they did not know anything about Islam until they started to take advantage of it. According to him,

“These people degenerate Islam. They jump into everything without knowing anything at all. Now they are messing with Islam. They started to make their women’s heads covered. They started to go to Friday prayer (Cuma namazı). And now they call themselves as religious.”

The people in 1 .Etap both highlight their conservative identity and their modest, economical characteristic and also they separate themselves from the ones who live in 4. Etap through their consumption habits. They consider spending so much money on clothes or objects as a waste.



Figure 65: A vase

The vase photograph is taken by Meral. Through this photograph she explained her bazaar habit. She showed me the photo of a vase and she said:

“Meral: Look at this vase. My neighbour bought the same vase from bazaar and I saw it in her house. Next weekend I bought the same. This vase –just behind you- from there. How beautiful it is, isn’t it?. Bazaars are way cheaper than shops and I can find anything I need in the bazaar.

Me: Anything? You mean also garments?

Meral: Yes. I also buy garments in this bazaar. Sometimes they bring well-quality clothes. I do not only buy clothes but also I decorate my house from this bazaar.



Figure 66: A bazaar area in Başakşehir (Başakpazar)

This answer underlines the fact that bazaar does not have any bad connotation for her and her neighbours. It is not very surprising to hear from a person who claims to provide all her needs from bazaar that it is only luxury and a waste of money to consult an architect for the decoration of her house or purchase fashionable clothing prepared by a fashion designer.

The most interesting example in this regard in Başakşehir is having a pet dog. According to the belief of the residents, Islam does not approve of having a pet dog in the house and sees it as a revolting act. There are also some hadiths saying that angels stay out of the house where there is a dog. In some religious sects of Islam, there are several rules regarding dogs. Keeping this in mind, one of the neighbours, Yusuf, told about why people feed dogs here and how people react.

“This house is my neighbour’s’. Actually the people poisoned a dog some time ago, since he was so loud, barks all the time. But their dog is very

quiet. They bought it maybe five months ago. First I found odd but my neighbour said that her daughter wanted it so much. They have a caretaker for the dog. She takes care of it. If you ask me why they bought this dog, I can only say they are wannabes. They are so rich. They want to emulate the life of celebrities. I do not think her daughter takes care of it.”



Figure 67: A house with a dog



Figure 68: A doghouse

Whatever the reason is for owning a pet dog, the opinion of the neighbours' is that, the family is a "wannabe" and trying to show off. So it can be deduced that, owning a pet dog in Başakşehir itself constitutes a social status and underlines the family's wealth. And also it represents a life style that is called “celebrity life style”.

Meral wants to see the photographs that 4. Etap residents took. She was so eager to see the photographs and tell them to her friends about it. I showed her some photographs. She looked at them and commented:

Meral: Some people live such a life. Do not misunderstand me I do not follow what they have or do not have. But still I wonder how do they make such a lot of money? I worked for 20 years and my husband have been working almost 30 years but we could only afford one apartment and a regular car. Thanks to Allah, we did not eat any *haram* (illicit) things.

Me: Do you think that this type of conservatism does not exist in those places? (Showing 4.Etap buildings photographs)

Meral: Everyone who has the headscarves is not religious. Our religion requires other things than wearing headscarves. These women are seductive. The faithful women in our religion are not like that.”

With those words, she thinks that the struggle between them is based not only on the economic context but also on religion, Islam. Hamit who also thinks the same way explained that conspicuous consumption is against Islam:

“If you were a male I would suggest you to go to a Friday prayer in here. Please, you should see the people. The men get out their luxurious Jeeps, wearing expensive suits and sunglasses. I am sure you will be surprised if you see them. What I understand is now, religion also becomes rich people’s toy. The Prophet Muhammad always underlines that enough is as good as a feast. But where do you see it? They are not ashamed of coming into Allah’s presence with suits with billions. They are not ashamed of meeting Allah with their billion liras suites.”

As it is stated up above, as much as the separation between the devout people and the seculars goes along with the criticism of religion and modernization, the division between different types of religious people happens to grow from the same roots. The emphasis of residents in 4. Etap on some of the devout people's non-modern lifestyles and their lack of knowledge about Islam underpins this fact. They claim that these religious people, who cannot keep pace with today's modern life and try to hang onto the old traditions, do not practice their religion in a true way when they still find enjoying this world's blessings as sinful. Religion is a concept that should be adaptable to the spirit of time, according to them. The inventions of today's world, which did not exist in Mohammed the Prophet's life time, make our lives easier and they should be utilized from, according to the people in 4. Etap. They see these people, who oppose such an idea, as narrow-minded and Muslim zealots. It is very interesting to observe that those definitions were also used by the secular people for the devout people when the Muslim identity has started to show itself more in public space. Calling another group of people as "zealots" shows the authoritarian attitude of those who claim to "know their religion" best.

The economical difference between Başakşehir tenants brings along the different consumption patterns. When this distinction in consumption habits is analyzed, different views arise on the relations between Islam and consumption. All these different views provide a contentious basis to discuss the issue on consumption culture in Islamic lifestyles.

However, this ethnographic research in Başakşehir contests this argument since both Etaps do not hold an attitude towards consumption and exclude mundane consumption. On the contrary, they use consumption as a tool to express their own identities, as it has been discussed before. The existence and ongoing construction of

over 30 big shopping malls and markets in Başakşehir shows that the place itself is a heaven of consumption and standards. That is why; the issue of consumption in Başakşehir has got more to do with the relation between conspicuous consumption and Islam than with the debates mentioned above. This relation brings another issue on the table and this is the power struggle over Islam, in other words, “whose religion is it, anyway?”

This stance has also been a much-debated subject among Islamic intellectuals. Islamic authors and columnists define this newly emerged Islamic bourgeois as “Abdestli Kapitalistler” (Wudu Capitalists) (i.e. capitalists who have performed and under the effects of wudu, the Islamic ablution necessary for many rituals) (Erdem, 2011; Eliaçık, 2013). They believe that Muslims’ interest in property has gone too far and Islam is against this collection of wealth and power by a certain group of people. They also claim that Wudu Capitalism is nothing but the re-creation of capitalism using religious arguments without considering the relations between property, money, labour and capital. For example, those, who only build prayer rooms in workspaces and provide food for “iftar” and “sahur” (times that mark the beginning and end of feasting in Ramadan days) but not rearrange the work and labour relations in the same business, are considered as Wudu Capitalists. Another example of a Wudu Capitalist is the landlord hajji, who disseizes a tenant of his freehold when s/he could not pay three months of rent, but hangs a scripture on the wall of his house that said “All Property belongs to God”. Those who say that “By God, I was introduced to this wealth and you were introduced to this poverty. We are both being tested in His mysterious ways.” are Wudu Capitalists. (Erdem, 2011).

This group propounds that the change in Islamic lifestyle in this respect, its gentrification does not correspond to the principles of Islam. Therefore, debates about

Islam and consumerism rotate around “Islamic modesty” – which is used as a term ‘opposed’ to the Western model of consumerism. (Sandıkcı and Ger, 2007). The source for this debate is the ‘those who squander are the brothers of Satan and Satan is most ungrateful to his Lord. (Haleem, 2005: 177) verse in Quran. It is clear seen in this verse that Islam essentially forbids ‘waste’.

Some studies suggest that the Western model of consumerism and market-driven modes of consumption are opposing the Islamic way of life. (Kahf, 1996; Ormanlar, 1999) They further state that consumerism supports individualism and hedonism, which are accepted as a threat for social associations and family values in Islamic culture. This move also makes it easier for the Western economic and cultural traditions to invade the Islamic societies. (Jafari and Suerdem, 2012) As Kılıçbay and Binark (2002: 501) maintains: ‘the capitalist system is powerful enough to assimilate religious institutions, ethics and the aesthetics of Islam into consumption, which is thereby considered a threat to the Islamic lifestyle’.

Accordingly, in fact, it is mentioned that consumption in Islamic societies should correspond to modesty and people should make self-sacrifice. Modesty is one of the primary notions in Islam and it is an inseparable part of the Islamic consumption discourse. Some of the studies, based on this view, support that no matter how much more money is being made, Muslim lifestyles should not be affected by this. (Kahf, 1996) But even such thoughts on modesty cannot be formalized as “This is the right thing to do!” and for that reason, this concept stays as a conundrum in itself.

When it comes to consumption, Islamism becomes an arena considering the religious discourse. This struggle takes place between the people who call themselves “the real devout people” and those who succeed in politics and trades using their Islamic identity. There is a certain pursuit for the definitions of difference, authenticity,

morality to build an Islamic identity and this can result in an attitude of exclusion e.g. Who decides what is Islamic? Who is a real Muslim? (Göle, 1997a: 76) The conflict between these two poles arises from the authority over Islam, which is built upon such pursuit. “Real religious” blame the ones who succeed in politics and trades with being “merchants of Islam” whereas by those “merchants”, their actions were seen as underdeveloped and they were accused of being unable to interpret of Allah’s words.

The consumption habits of the 1 Etap people are more conventional and they also refrain themselves from wasting. They reinforce their conservative identity by purchasing conservative brands to which they feel they belong to. They love to highlight their conservative identity. The dominant characteristic of the consumption habits of the 4. Etap people is their tendency for conspicuous consumption. Not only do they not prioritise highlighting their conservative identity, but also they situate themselves in the same social group with the seculars by their pattern of consumption. Unlike the people of 1. Etap, seeming to belong to higher level of economic status is of higher priority for the 4. Etap people than highlighting their conservativeness. Even though they do not prioritise highlighting their conservative identity, they consume products more suitable with their life styles, at points where their life styles are in conflict with those of seculars.

The difference between consumption habits of 1. Etap and 4. Etap resulting from economic reasons can be one of the deductions of this chapter. However, by the help of photographs and comments, this research also showed that there were other dynamics causing these different habits. The most important one of these dynamics was the modernity concern. “Modernity” was the most referenced word when 1. Etap and 4. Etap residents talked about their identities. Modernity was a notion that helped them differentiate themselves from the seculars or a reason for them to try to be in the

same group with them. This is why it is also important to analyse what the notion of modernity means to them and how it forms their religious lifestyles.

CHAPTER IV

MODERNITY

4.1. Modernization in Turkey

One of the most controversial terms among the comments on photographs was the word “modern”. The participants have used “modern” either as a defining element of their identity or as a distinctive expression in order to separate others from themselves. The proliferation of its meaning and the wide usage require an investigation regarding the emergence of the term “modern” and also the way it is constructed.

Modernity appeared as an enlightenment project and has come to the present day by changing over time. It has so many meanings that may refer to “a lifestyle, a culture, a discourse, a historical epoch, a movement, a project, a mind-set, an intellectual trend, capitalism, industrialization, democracy, constitutionalism, or secularism.” (Çınar, 2005: 1) Although it was born in Europe, non –European countries were also affected from the enlightenment idea and also modernity due to the colonialism and globalization. Turkey is one of the most affected countries even though it was not directly colonized. What modernity tried to impose was the sense

of uniformity and a sense of spatial homogeneity that indicates the exclusive European. This is exactly how Turkey is affected from modernity. The beginning of the history of modern Turkey is assumed to have begun in 1923 which is the date of the new name of the nation and its status as a republic was declared. However, the modernization project had started to put down its roots much earlier. The assumption in the literature regarding Turkish modernity is that, modernity in Turkey did not “start as an organic process” but was introduced from above first by the Ottoman state in the early 19th century and later imposed by the new state after 1923. (Çınar, 2005:3, Bozdoğan and Kasaba, 1997) According to Faroz Ahmad,

“Turkey did not rise phoenix-like out of the ashes of the Ottoman Empire.

It was 'made' in the image of the Kemalist elite which won the national struggle against foreign invaders and the old regime” (Ahmad, 1993:3)

The modernization project in Turkey was perceived as Westernization since it was constructed by willingly borrowing institutions, ideas and manners from the West. (Göle, 1997a: 83). It emerged as a project that internalizes all the cultural dimensions that make Europe “modern”. At that time, modernization and the “political will to Westernize” (Göle, 1997a: 83) was regarded as a successful process that constructs some of the essential social institutions. However, it was inevitable for Turkey to witness a drastic cultural shift between the West and itself throughout the modernization. One of the main reasons of this cultural shift to occur was that modernization was not being carried out as an organic process because “modernisation had typically been interpreted as being identical to Westernisation” (Öniş, 2004b) There is a difference that must be emphasized between the modernization process in the West and the modernization project in Turkey. (Göle, 1996).

The modernity that was understood as civilization was in fact French bourgeois culture itself. The modernization project was carried out by state elites superficially without understanding and internalizing the core values of modernity. What the ruling elites was trying to impose was their own perception of Western notions.

“Since its inception, Turkish modernity has been and still is a primarily and essentially state-centric political project.” (Keyman, 2007: 221) The modernization project did not lose its state-centric characteristic because Atatürk and the Kemalist elite carried on establishing necessary political and cultural institutions in order both to break with the Ottoman past and to reach the contemporary level of (Western) civilization. (Keyman, 2007, 220) Hence, during the modernization, some of the opposing notions such as East/West, modern/traditional, backward/advanced, barbarian/civilized, secular/religious, faith/rationality, individualism/community started surfacing.

The idea that modernity has not emerged as a social transformation but was introduced as the state’s top-down act brought a number of complications with it. First of all, modernization has failed to take root in society since it emerged as an imitation and a top-down act. It has been seen as an imitation and “has always suffered from incongruity with local practices and lack of popular support”. (Çınar, 2005:3) Secondly, the modernization project was neither unique, since it could not carry the uniqueness of Ottoman, nor Western, since it could not adopt all of the Western values. If the “western” had been fully adopted, the uniqueness would have vanished; however if the Ottoman uniqueness had been preserved, the modernization would not have gone through. As Çınar points out:

“Official Turkish modernity took shape basically through a negation of the Islamic Ottoman system and the adoption of a West-oriented mode of

modernization, yet it represents neither a blind submission to Westernism nor a totally imitative and inorganic adaptation from Europe” (Çınar, 2005:14)

Western modernity has been shaped by the effect of the enlightenment values based upon individualism, liberalism, rationalism and positivism. It managed to reach a pluralistic, heterogeneous social structure. On the other side, Turkish modernity was built on the values of civilization and nationalism. Therefore the Western modernity’s pluralistic feature does not exist within Turkish modernity. “On the contrary, it is a project of civilization by which local patterns and traditional values are dismissed and devalorized” (Göle, 1996: 132)

However, Islam was not one of the values that were dismissed and devalorized, and could not entirely be removed from social life. According to Bozdoğan and Kasaba (1997), Ottoman/ Turkish elites comprehended the reform as a top-down process in both the political and the ideological way. Therefore, they tried to change the Ottoman institutions and reform the existing circumstances. By doing so, they sought the ways to make these institutions more similar to that of their European counterparts (Bozdoğan and Kasaba, 1997) but that did not happen. Because religion has always been an important element for the Turkish society that had been governed by Islamic principles for six centuries. By the same token, “the outright rejection or suppression of religion was virtually impossible.” (Çınar, 2005:16). Accordingly, throughout the Turkish modernization project, instead of the exclusion of Islam, an inclusion of Islam within the modern system was observed.

Since one of the main constitutive principles of Turkish modernity was secularism, religion and politics have always been controversial issues regarding Turkish modernity since its inception. In order to establish a separation between the

state and religion, the Turkish state aimed to control and regulate the religious activities through constitutional and institutional means. (Keyman, 2007:225) The modernization was also associated with secularism and therefore, if the state had been built on religion and religious laws, it could not have been modern.

During the modernization, secularism is approached as a constitutive element of modernity and it is also a project that transforms Turkey into a civilized nation. However, in contrast with the expectations of Turkish modernity that Turkey is becoming more secular, more modern and more civilized, “Islam has always remained as an effective symbolic force and a strong cultural reference for the formation of Turkish identity” (Keyman, 2007: 224) Since, secularism functions as a political project for the state in order to govern the society and also one of the defining elements of modernity, it is not possible to think of Turkish modernity without reference to Islam and its contest with secularism.

The experience of secularism in Turkey is much closer to the French ‘laicism’. In fact, the term for secularism “*laiklik*” is also derived from the French “*laïc*”. According to this model, religion “is not separated from something called public life, but rather is dominated by a state that considers itself to be founded on principles not grounded in a ‘religious’ regime of power and knowledge.” (Silverstein, 2003: 512) According to Şerif Mardin (1993) “laicism was a concept which emerged from French constitutional practice in the nineteenth century and referred to the necessity that the state refrain from lending its positive support to anyone religious denomination.” (Mardin, 1993, 347) Keyman articulates the laicism as:

“...The Turkish state attempted to outlaw the presence of religion in public affairs and eliminate it from private and cultural life preferences and identity-formations of its people through initiating a set of regulations, from

educational reforms to new dress codes. In this sense, secularism took the form of ‘laicism’, a concept that indicates not only the ‘official disestablishment of religion’ from the state, but also the ‘constitutional control of religious affairs’ by the state.” (Keyman, 2007: 222)

Secularism in Turkey was attempted to be situated in a different way from France. While in France secularism is situated in a peculiar way by the help of laicism which is defined as the separation of church and the state, in Turkey the process manifested itself as the formation of religion as a requirement for civilization. Rather than fading away, Islam has remained evident as a dominant ideology. Therefore, the ambiguity and ambivalence embedded in the relation between religion and secular European modernity has always remained.

By the 1980s, the modernization project had started to be criticized by Turkish people who had supported the reformation of Turkey faithfully at first. These criticisms were actually concerns about the principles of secularism and the ethnic origins of the Turkish nation. One of the most important reasons of the increasing criticisms against the state was that the state had been involved not only in the public but also the private sphere through its interventions in order to be modern. Since civilization includes a broad field ranging from technology to eating and clothing habits, the state was involved “in matters from the clothing of its citizens to the music they were to listen to, from the type of leisure activity they would be engaged in to the type of family relations they would have.” (Çınar, 2005: 24)

It has been envisioned that, at the end of the modernization project Turkey would be as secular as the civilized nations of the West and also ethnically homogeneous. “Instead, the Turkish experience appeared to be culminating in economic backwardness and social flux, with Muslim and secularist, Turk and Kurd,

reason and faith, rural and urban—in short, the old and the new—...” (Bozdoğan and Kasaba, 1997: 18) The controversies between Islamists and Kemalists stem from these contradictions that have appeared throughout the modernization. According to this contradiction, while in Kemalists’ estimation the nation was straying from its idealist path by the forces reasserting the primacy of religion in Turkish society, Islamists found the goals of the Kemalist modernization contradictory to the essential qualities of the Muslim culture. (Bozdoğan and Kasaba, 1997: 18) Under those circumstances it can be observed that the modernization progress has become the means of the separation of backward and advanced.

The emergence of these many opposite ideas underpins the declining of the Turkish modernization. According to this point of view “the fruits of progress in Turkey have been not a rational and universally progressive middle-class society but an economically polarized, politically contentious, and ethnically divided people.” (Bozdoğan and Kasaba, 1997: 28) Kemalism started to be perceived as an “exemplary instance of modernization against Islam” (Bromley, 1994: 126) Because, according to Keyman, “the more the state has become involved in the institutional regulation, funding and administration of religious identity and its political, economic and cultural presence in Turkish modernity, the more it becomes subject to challenges and criticisms. (Keyman, 2007: 228)

On the other side, Islamism is not an interrogation of modernity. Even though there is a general tendency of designating Islam as anti-modern or anti-Western and even though the word “modern” is used as a synonym of secularism and therefore characterized as being in opposition to Islam, this perspective has not been arisen by Turkish secularist groups. As Edward Said has revealed in *Orientalism* (1978) this construction is the product of the Orientalist discourse. These mistaken oppositions

emerged because of the fact that modernity requires its opposite. This perspective demonstrates that “the traditional, the old, could be presented as “bad” in such a way as to encourage an exaltation of the modern, not simply as something new but also as something essentially “good.” (Bozdoğan and Kasaba, 1997: 202)

Islamism admits the opposition between Islam and the West, however it objects admitting the claim of superiority of the West since it believes that the spiritual values of Islam are superior to the earthly treasure of the West. Focusing on “how the Western ideal of modernity is reconstructed and internalized locally, and how the power relations between Islamic movements and modernist elites take shape” (Göle, 1997a: 70) will help to get a deep understanding regarding Turkey since Islamism had become a prominent issue against modernity.

The Islamist intellectuals have come up with an approach that suggests Islam and modernity cannot be evaluated through each other. They don’t evaluate Islam based on how modern it is nor modernity on to what extent it includes or excludes Islam. Instead, they are of the belief that Islam can be coded as an identity which is beyond and above modernity and it can offer some indigenous institutions. According to Göle, there exist multiple modernities other than the Western one since modernity is “re-appropriated, rejected, distorted or simply reshaped and produced in a plurality of contexts.” (Göle, 2000:91) Therefore, situating Islam against modernity and considering it “as a compass of life and as a means of management with modern society” (Göle, 1996: 138) will always be conflicting ideas.

4.2. Modernity Concept of Başakşehir Residents

Modernity has become a delicate issue for both Islamists and seculars. The definitions of modernity started to be differed from each other and contested. Until

recently, the secular and West-oriented definitions of modernity were the legitimate key to be accepted by the political and economic elites and also to acquire a social status. Hence, the sharp boundaries regarding the definitions of modernity have become open to multiple interpretations and contestations. Accordingly, in the 1990s the oppositional notions such as the Eastern and the Western, modern and traditional, modernity and Islam have been interlinked.

Since “modernity not only is about a particular lifestyle, institution, practice, or culture, but also is a widely used word in daily popular discourse” (Çınar, 2005:4) it was beneficial for me to accentuate the ways “modernity” is used by people who live in Başakşehir in order to understand the attributions of modernity.

According to the informants, the claim of living a modern life in Başakşehir is related with “the way of living”. They define modern by associating it with Europe. Vedat, who is a 58 year old retired man living in 4.Etap, said by showing the picture of villas and states:



Figure 69: 4. Etap Villas

“Europe also has these kinds of buildings, doesn’t it? As a matter of fact these buildings, malls and parks were all constructed by seeing the

counterparts in Europe. Did you see the walking trail? Everything was attempted to be made European in here”.

Necla, who is a housewife in 1.Etap also mentioned the modern structure of Başakşehir.



Figure 70: A park in 4. Etap

“They built these buildings just to be more modern. It is good. I mean clean, neat, organized and also safe. But sometimes I miss the village life. There are a lot of things to do in there. Here, I stay at home most of the time. These are for European women. Because they are working.”



Figure 71: A children's playground

“European” is one of the most used terms when defining modern. According to some people in Başakşehir, being modern is not a bad thing. It means being like a European which means keeping up with metropolitan lifestyle. This lifestyle refers to going to the gym, being gentle and cultivated, women workers, wearing modern clothes and hanging out in fancy places.

However, some people living in Başakşehir disagrees the idea of modern Başakşehir. When me and Ulaş talk about the modern life in Başakşehir. He argues by showing his photographs he had taken:

“They feed chicken in our building. Yes, *in our building*. I cannot sleep without my earplug. One day, I called the building responsible and complained about the chickens’ noises. You cannot believe what he said “Aren’t they beautiful? It is like village life in Istanbul.” Why would I live a village life in the centre of Istanbul? If they want to live, they can go back to their villages. In these circumstances how can I say that Başakşehir is modern.”



Figure 72: Chickens in a parking lot



Figure 73: Chickens in garden

When the informants explain the modern term through life styles they frequently emphasize a phrase “dünya görüşü” (world view) throughout the interviews. It refers to a “conservative way of thinking” which is the opposite of the modern way of thinking. It is defined by the informants as if it were typical since it addresses only “conservatism”. Ulaş defines this “dünya görüşü”, by showing the photo of the glasses of tea that they drank, as:



Figure 74: Tea in a caffè in Başakşehir 1.Etap

Ulaş: “Me and my friends always go to that cafe and play “okey” and drink tea. It is like a Başakşehir culture for us.

Me: Tea? Always? Why?

Ulaş: We like it. Besides, my friends here don't go out very often. So they don't know other stuff. Once, my friend told me that the girl she went out with ordered a "cafe latte". He was suspicious about the girl, if she went out with boys before. According to him, if she knows more than tea and Turkish coffee, either she is modern and meets with boys often or ... There is no or actually. See? His "world view" is this big. He is so introverted and here he is always with the people who have the same "world view".

Merve also explained the "dünya görüşü" as conservative and introverted too.

While she was showing the picture of her room with books and talking about what kind of books she read, she states:

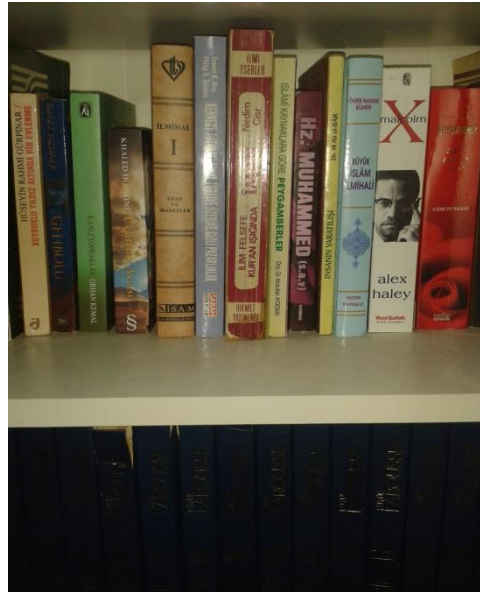


Figure 75: Merve's bookshelf

"Ever since my childhood, I have grown up among the same kind of books. My family has a "world view" and all the books are bought accordingly . Now I buy my books that fit my own "world view".

Afterwards, she also contrasts this “world view” with Europe by stating “Reading French literature does not make me more intellectual. I am learning my own culture. That’s better.”

Throughout the modernity project, one of the important key points was the reforms in education since it is the most important element in Western modernity. A state monopoly over education was established, the institution of the ulama was abolished and the alphabet was Latinized. These reforms were the means of establishing a Western type of education. Because, education is in itself is associated with the West. Education was a substantial part of the modernity project in Turkey but the informants, when asked about the factors of modernity, talked less about education in this context. Informants define education through the rules of “adab-ı muaşeret” (etiquette) rather than the educational level or the cultural artefacts.

Çiğdem, working in the health centre in Başakşehir and living in 1.Etap explained the importance of education through the photographs that she took in on a snowy day. While showing the photos she had taken, she starts to complain about the people in Başakşehir. The photos remind her intolerance and rudeness of the people living in 4. Etap in Başakşehir She criticizes them:

“No matter how rich and how modern they look, I do not call them modern so long as they do not behave civilized. At first, they need to be tolerant. Our religion also commands this. They have to be respectful to other people. Money does not provide everything, unfortunately.”



Figure 76: Traffic jam on a snowy day



Figure 77: Başakşehir 1. Etap in snow

She believes that being civilized is a prerequisite to being modern and she thinks the people in Başakşehir do not live in consistency with this idea. The information gathered from the other informants is in line with her belief, as they do not seem to regard modernity as the aim of reaching “the level of contemporary civilization” which was the initial idea behind the modernity project, but instead they use the term modernity when referring to external appearance. This calls for the conclusion that the people in Başakşehir regard being modern and being civilized as two separate things. As Göle states:

“The relationship between Islamic identity and Western modernity is a crucial one. At the level of discourse, modernity is

constantly criticized, but at the levels of individual behaviour, political competition, and social practice, the interaction between the two grows deeper and more complex daily.” (Göle, 1997a: 77)

Çiğdem also criticizes the understanding of modernity of the people in Başakşehir through the following photograph of a conservative supermarket chain. She starts to tell the story of this place while showing the photos. She uses the following words to describe her concern about intolerance of the people in Başakşehir:

“There used to be a Carrefour here, where alcohol was sold. The people reacted heavily to the store selling alcohol, so they collected signatures and started boycotting the Carrefour store until it was closed and replaced by a more conservative supermarket chain.”



Figure 78: The conservative supermarket

This shows that the people in Başakşehir see the western modernity as “bad” and moreover they think it is against Islam. For this reason, they have developed several tactics to preserve their culture against modernity.

The best example for this is the water pipe, which plays a crucial role in their entertainment culture. The water pipe culture was nearly extinct before it began to rise again after the 2000's. (Gürsoy, 2007) Some believe that the reason for this is the AKP

government trying to revive the "old Istanbul" traditions as a result of Ramadan activities and İstanbul tulip and redbud entertainments. According to my observations, the water pipe is presented as an entertainment consumption product in many cafes, from traditional locations such as Beyazıt and luxury venues such as Huqqa, to almost every cafe that adopts a conservative identity.

The water pipe has begun being used in the Ottoman Empire in the 17th century and gained a place in the ottoman culture ever since. In the western world, the water pipe is considered as a symbol of Eastern myth and Orientalism. The water pipe is one of the deepest and persistent symbols of the East, which is the biggest and richest colony of the West, the source of languages and civilizations and the biggest opponent of the West as Said mentions in his "Orientalism". In many works of 19th century romantics, the water pipe takes place as an important icon for the eastern life style. In this respect, the wide usage of water pipe is seen as a tendency to appropriate eastern customs against the west and trying to preserve and sustain these customs and moreover, an attempt to sustain traditions by forming a connection with the Ottomans.

Ahmet explained this better by showing one of the photographs he had taken in a water pipe cafe:

"My family is against smoking cigarettes; but they do not say anything about water pipe although they know that I smoke water pipe a lot. Even sometimes I smoke with my father. You know, because it is like a tradition coming from our ancestors. We are sustaining this tradition. Therefore, all the water pipe cafes are near Beyazıt etc... This culture comes from Ottoman Empire. When you smoke you feel like a sultan, sitting cross-legged on an Ottoman couch. Also, you cannot stay in a place for a long time drinking only tea. Smoking a water pipe takes very long, like one hour"



Figure 79: Nargile

It bothers Ulaş that the water pipe is seen as an icon of preserving and sustaining traditions against the west. According to him, the water pipe is not an element of entertainment against alcohol, but a way of entertainment that resembles alcohol as much as possible. Because he consumes alcohol, he states that he does not need the inebriating effect of the water pipe. He comments on the talks among his friends:

“They do not tell you directly but I want to say. Since they do not get drunk by consuming alcohol, they found the most innocent way to get high: the water pipe. Because, whenever we smoke water pipes, they always talk about water pipe as “water pipe makes me like drunk, I feel so high now, I feel like dizzy but I like it” etc. But when you ask them, “do you smoke water pipe to feel like drunk” it is impossible for them to answer “yes”.”

Water pipe is a mysterious entertainment image among conservative youth that takes place especially in traditional or conservative places. Its image is appreciated in order to sustain and preserve the culture of their ascendants, especially Ottoman culture.

The references of Ottoman Empire can be also found in some other photos. The photographs below were taken in “Başakpazar” (a bazaar in Başakşehir). Meral, who takes these photos, told that she had no idea why “Ottoman” references are too much. She comments: “I guess they mention it because they are our ancestors.”



Figure 80: A poster written “Ottoman Rice”



Figure 81: A poster written “Magnificent Ottoman Headscarves”

The Western modernity which is based on plurality, democracy, heterogeneity, liberty contradicts with the understanding of modernity and/or being civilized in

Başakşehir. Their understanding of being civilized is not based on the criteria of the western modernity, but on Islamic norms.

The modernity that 4. Etap people mostly emphasize is a type of modernity that is based on external appearances. The modernity project has begun with the aim of reaching “the level of contemporary civilization” and it progressed in this regard. However, the modernity that has been articulated by the informants is not in line with this understanding. They interpret modernity superficially. In their understanding, the way to modernity is through the external appearances.

According to women, modernity reveals itself mostly in fashion. While women in 4.etap define modernity wearing “plain and dark colour” as they wear, women in 1.etap define it wearing “modest and simple” clothes. Merve defines modernity by showing her friends’ photo and adds “to wear clothes that are compatible with each other”. The fashion has changed and they do not wear old-fashioned clothes or what they define as “their grandparents’ clothes” anymore. Therefore, according to them it is possible to be both modern and devout.



Figure 82: Merve’s Friend

The quality of the clothes they wear is also an indicator of how modern they look. For instance, Merve mentioned that there exist different styles of wearing a

headscarf. She told me that, she and her female friends in her class in university always talk about other girls' clothing, especially the way they wear their headscarves. She showed a photo of her closest friend and said: "What they wear and how they wear it give away information about their economic status and also their taste". By showing the photo of her headscarves, she starts to explain them. The most popular and "prestigious" headscarves are sold in İpekevi and each of them costs 100 TL. Merve has 25 of them. She told me that "It is important to buy from İpekevi. The others are fake."



Figure 83: Merve's silk headscarves

In order to explain the difference, she asked me to wear a headscarf and took my pictures. She showed me the first picture and told me that "this is how "varoş" (lowbrow) people wear it" and the second picture was how they, modern people, wear it themselves. According to her, most of the young people nowadays know how to look modern by wearing their headscarf in a "typical" way. They have attributed a modernity role to headscarves according to its quality and the way it is worn. Therefore according to them, the headscarf in this sense is not associated with being traditional or old-fashioned.



Figure 84: Me, with headscarf tied as varos



Figure 85: Me, with headscarf tied as modern



Figure 86: Me and Merve

The modernization project in itself involves a re-appropriation. Just as Turkey re-appropriates the values of the West throughout the modernization, Islamists also re-appropriate these values in accordance with their “world view”. It is the re-appropriation of the traditional by making it modern. “With regard to modernity, Islam is reconstructed and positioned in a new, conflicting and more confident role.” (Göle, 1997a: 87) And since Islam and modernity are both re-appropriated, the border between the tradition and modernity became blurrier. Zuhail, explained the variety of

conservative brands by showing a photo of her taken in a mall. She started her comment of the photo by explaining why she loves malls so much.



Figure 87: A cake in a mall

“I love this mall so much . There are so many brands, so many options for both clothing and eating. I spend most of my spare time in this kind of malls. If you are turbaned it is very difficult to find a store that suits you. But in the malls I can find anything I want. Especially nowadays, even in here there are a lot of options for turbaned women. We have our own fashion. Both tasteful, modern and “suitable for Islam”.

Describing modernity through fashion is mostly related to the economic status. This is best observed when the photos about fashion and interviews of 1.Etap and 4.Etap are compared. Going to a bazaar, dressing in a modest and unobtrusive way and spending less money on clothes are the common phrases for the women in 1.Etap. Except a university student, none of them were interested in fashion and concerned about being modern. The only thing that they give importance is the “taste” which does not depend on being modern but on how Islam requires. Gamze, explained her approach to fashion by showing a photo she has taken in a small mall in Başakşehir.

Me: Do you usually go shopping these malls in Başakşehir?

Gamze: Yes. Sometimes I find very cheap and top line clothes in these stores. I know most of the saleswomen in there so I get a discount while shopping.

Me: Do you like the style of the clothes which are sold in these stores?

Gamze: Yes I like it. They sell very tasteful clothes.

Me: Do they follow fashion? What is in or out?

Gamze: I don't care. I don't follow fashion. What suits me is fashionable for me.



Figure 88: A small mall in 1. Etap

On the other hand, the women in 4.Etap always emphasize the modern way of clothing. They give brand names, mall names and sometimes criticize the collections of certain brands.

Modernity concern is only deduced from the comments of women in 4. Etap. Especially Gülen's comments are important to understand how they choose their clothing. She showed me a photo from a wedding that she had taken which she did not allow me to use. In the picture, Gülen and her friends are sitting around a fancy table and smiling. They look stylish in their fancy clothes. She introduced me to the people in the photo and then she started talk about how good they look in the photo. She said:

Gülen: We were so beautiful that night. We searched for this blue headscarf for 3 days but we found it finally. Every good things have a price.

Me: Is it important to for you how do you look?

Gülen: “It is. I think not only for me for everyone it is important. For example why do you wear this red shirt because you think that it looks good on you. Same for me. It is because I wear headscarf wouldn’t I care myself? I try to look good. I try to be fashionable and look modern. Just because I wear headscarf, doesn’t mean that I want to look primitive. I can break down the prejudices.”

Merve also showed her photo in Çırağan Palace and she said:

“My friends and I went to Çırağan Palace and I can say that we were the most beautiful and fashionable girls in that palace. Headscarf doesn’t make you tasteless, if you have taste you can look more tasteful and modern than the ones who doesn’t wear headscarf.



Figure 89: Merve at Çırağan Palace

According to them however, “wearing modern clothes” is not a defeat of their own Islamic culture against the modern consumption culture. Because they do not believe they are making a sacrifice or a renunciation. It might only be a concession from time to time since they legitimize their daily life practices according to the norms of Islam. (Göle, 2013: 220)

Different constructions of what it means to be modern articulate themselves not only in fashion, but also in many aspects of daily life. There are a lot of indicators that reveal that the modernity has leaked into the Islamic community. Doing exercises, the eating habits, physical appearance are the criteria for superiority and modernity. Therefore, people who are concerned about being modern turn their “world view” towards this direction.

While among women modernity codes reveal themselves mostly in fashion, men avoid making such a sharp distinction. According to men, the appearance cannot give a clue regarding modernity, which can only be found within the behaviour of a person. When Vedat, showed his picture with his old colleagues, he underlines the importance of education and civilization. He said:

“These are my friends. We used to be colleagues. Now we all work in different places but we see each other once in a month. My friends and I get along well together because we understand each other. The reason that we are so indulgent to the different ideas is that we are all educated.”



Figure 90: Vedat and his friends

In spite of their statements regarding modernity, modernity codes among men can still be found. For example, in their way of living, there are so many indicators that make men modern such as, promiscuity, homosexuality, gambling and alcohol consumption. This is another indication to the fact that they do not regard modernity in a Western sense as a positive thing.

“The deepest intellectual and emotional chasms between the modern West and Islam exist at the level of gender relations and definitions of the private and the public” (göle quest 86) This is obviously observed in the photos of Başakşehir too. While women’s photographs are mostly related to cooking, shopping or their family, men’s photos are related to the cars, wealth and activities with their friends.

The Başakşehir case shows that Islamists define the word “modern” through secularists. As Yashin states: “When they have orientalised themselves and attempted to present themselves as modern, Islamist have drawn more inspiration from secularists and from the West than they have from the Islamic and Ottoman past.” (Yashin, 2002b : 248). Therefore, their modernization methods are carried out on the basis of secularists.

Since “a certain definition of modernity has indeed been associated with high status. (Yashin, 2002b : 249) it can be said that, there is a positive correlation between the modernity concern and economic status. “They would like modernity as a marker of class, to encapsulate the signs of Islamic life too for a woman wearing a veil to be perceived as ‘upper class’ as well. (Yashin, 2002b : 249) Therefore, the better their economic status is, the higher their modernity concern gets. To demonstrate, people with a lower economic status do not have a problem with their headscarves being designated as "traditional" or their lifestyles "Islamic", however people with a higher economic status make an effort to appear more modern. Therefore, people in 4th Etap is more concerned about the places that secular rich people go because they follow them.

Images of modernity concept show that the concept references to secular bourgeois. The more their lifestyle resembles that of secular bourgeois’ the more modern they are. Also, they label the modernity rank of the places they frequent based on the similarities the places have with those the secular middle class frequent. They create an Islamic and modern lifestyle by emulating the lifestyle of secular bourgeois. They do that in two different ways.

The first one is to appreciate modern values such as fashion, healthy living. They re-appropriate modern things and values by merging them with their understanding of Islam. As an example, fashion is based on looking good and attracting attention and therefore it stays in contradiction with Islamic norms. However, Islamic Fashion is nowadays widely seen and things such as expensive shopping routines and fashion shows with catwalks are becoming more common. (Yashin, 2002b: 221) Islamic holidays can be named as another example. There are

many Islamic Hotels country-wide that serve this purpose.⁷ Thereby, they show that modernity and Islam are not on opposite sides of the pole.

The second one is to modernize Islamic things such as mosques that converted into modern structures, luxurious *iftar* (fast ending meal in Ramadhan) meals, and different ways of wearing a headscarf. They attribute modernity to things that are recognized as "traditional" and/or Islamic. "While interested in reviving the traditional, the Islamist moderns are not traditional at all." (Sandıkçı and Ger, 2001: 148) They mostly do it by making them more luxurious. The things that are attributed as traditional or Islamic become more modern as their exchange value gets higher. The silk headscarf that the girl told me is a good example. It is also been witnessed that, everything relating to the Islamic culture is been modernized and penetrated into the secular market. However, part of the Islamists is against to this modernization. Islamic things started to go beyond its Islamic and/or traditional essence and be re-appropriated.

On one side, there are Islamists who define themselves as "real Islamist", devote themselves to "conserve" the essence of Islam and want to live the golden age of Islam; on the other side there are other Islamists who argues that religion should be modernized. The question of if the religion should be modernized or should be "conserved" remains as a conflict between the two poles.

They are against approaching Islamic principles in a Western point of view. They are of the belief that this re-appropriation issue stems from an inferiority complex towards the west and that this complex cannot be overcome by being westernised, but

⁷ See. Bilici, Mücahit. 2000. "Bronzlaşan İslam, Caprice Hotel Örneği" In Nilüfer Göle ed. *İslamın Yeni*

by creating a space with a lifestyle and culture that is unique to Islam that is not comparable to the west.

The most important part of this study is that, the crucial feature that separates these two poles is their economic status. Islamist elites, who think that they won the liberty of entering to same spheres with the secularists, defended that religion should be modernized as a result of the encounter between the Islamists and the secularists. On the other hand, Islamists with lower economic status see drawing near the lifestyle of the secularists as a show off attempt and moreover, they find this lifestyle inappropriate for Islam.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This study was set out to explore Islamic lifestyles in a gated community, Başakşehir Kiptaş Houses, using visual ethnography. It was very difficult for the residents with Islamic identities who were all aware of the attention on them, especially after the rise of AKP rule, to explain themselves in a gated and isolated community. For gathering information on the subject, visual methodology provided great help. This method, allowing the participants to take photos and talk about those photos, makes it possible for them to explain themselves from their point of view. This way, my presence as the researcher is easily ignored and it helps me collect more information on the participants as they explain themselves via a medium.

These said photos and the comments on them shaped my arguments. As a gated community, Başakşehir residents were expected to have homogeneity. However, financial inequalities between Etaps were creating a rift in this homogeneity. As a result, there were two different groups to analyze in Başakşehir. The first group belongs to the middle class and they live in Başakşehir Stage 1. The

Second group on the other hand, belongs to the upper class and they live in Başakşehir Stage 4. Başakşehir did not mean the same to these groups. To the residents that belong to a lower financial class as Başakşehir Stage 1, Başakşehir was a place they could live in peace with other religious people. As for the residents that belong to the upper financial class as Başakşehir Stage 4, Başakşehir was a place where they could live with other religious and affluent people. In this respect, the motives for moving to Başakşehir and living in it are different for each group.

So I attempted to find out what Başakşehir meant to these two groups. It is the religious side that attracts them both to Başakşehir. The Islamic identity attributed to the site makes Başakşehir more than just a place to live. According to the residents, Başakşehir is a place where they can freely practice their Islamic lifestyles and also enjoy all kinds of opportunities. Therefore, it is different from the other living spaces in Istanbul.

Even though both groups lead an Islamic lifestyle, these are some dissimilarities resulting from financial inequalities between them. These dissimilarities are best projected in images of consumption patterns. This study also analyzes the different consumption patterns of both groups. Başakşehir Stage 4's tendency of conspicuous consumption, in particular, creates a controversy between the Stages on how religion approaches conspicuous consumption. Başakşehir Stage 1 seems to believe that conspicuous consumption is frowned upon in religion and therefore Başakşehir Stage 4 residents are not "true Muslims". Whereas Başakşehir Stage 4 residents, already aware of the way Stage 1 sees them, claim that there are no such rules in Islam and that practicing Islam in the old ways is not completely right. Unlike when one would expect a controversy between secular and religious groups, it seems that the greatest rivalry is actually between religious and different financial classes. Başakşehir Stage

4 particularly tries to avoid the places Başakşehir Stage 1 residents frequent while favoring the places that secular middle class frequent. This justifies the sense that different groups belong to separate worlds. (Calderia, 1996).

What creates the conflict seems to be that both sides are willing to appropriate their common ground, religion. Both groups suggest that their way of practicing the religion is right and others should practice it the same way as they do. From Stage 1's point of view, Başakşehir Stage 4 residents practice the religion incorrectly because they enjoy extravagancy and pretension. Başakşehir Stage 4, on the other hand, thinks that Başakşehir Stage 1 is practicing it wrong because their lifestyle and thus their religion practices are way behind the times. The main point of Başakşehir Stage 4's views of Başakşehir Stage 1's practices seems to originate from the belief that Başakşehir Stage 4 practices are in synch with modern times.

Modernity was a concept very frequently referred by Başakşehir residents. Opinions on the concept were parallel with Turkey's modernization progress. One of the most dominant elements of modernity was secularism. However, in Turkey's modernization progress "Islam has always remained as an effective symbolic force and a strong cultural reference for the formation of Turkish identity" (Keyman, 2007: 224). A controversy between Kemalists and Islamists occurred on this subject. The source of this controversy was how both groups approached differently to modernity. While in Kemalists' estimation the nation was straying from its idealist path by the forces reasserting the primacy of religion in Turkish society, Islamists found the goals of the Kemalist modernization contradictory to the essential qualities of the Muslim culture. (Bozdoğan and Kasaba, 1997: 18) Under those circumstances it can be observed that the modernization progress has become the means of the separation of backward and advanced.

This is the exact point where the residents of Başakşehir take different approaches to modernity. When modernity is not a concern that shapes Başakşehir Stage 1 residents' lifestyles, it is a big concern for Başakşehir Stage 4 residents. Also, while Başakşehir Stage 1 residents think of modernity as vain and against Islam, it holds a positive place for Başakşehir Stage 4 residents. This modernity concern shapes the consumption patterns of Başakşehir Stage 4 residents. Synthesizing Islam and modernity, this group do not consider Islam and Islamic practices unmodern. They create a new trend for themselves by adopting secular middle class lifestyle since they consider modernity is imitating secular middle class as much as possible. They do this in two ways: first, mixing things attributed to modernity with Islam such as: Islamic luxury hotels, Islamic fashion... Second is modernizing Islamic stuff such as different ways of wearing a shawl, luxurious iftar dinners, modernized mosques... In doing so, they believe they lead both an Islamic and a modern life.

Approaching an issue regarding the lifestyles of religious people and having them talk about themselves would have been challenging without photographs. Using the photographs and their multiple meanings that they provide, I managed to obtain information regarding their lives and lifestyles. By using photographs for this research, I have attempted to reveal diverse Islamic lifestyles. Photographs, themselves did not inform; however the information arising from the responses to these photographs are much more than I expected.

It would have been impossible to observe the reflections of class distinction on the lives of people living in a gated community without infiltrating them. But this was difficult with a religious crowd. The biggest element that contributed collecting sincere information was using visual ethnography as a methodology. Verbal commentary was one of the main components that extended this study. The usage of

photographs as tools passivized my presence as a researcher from time to time and helped people comment on the photos without hesitating. Therefore, the comments appeared more realistic.

The most difficult part was obtaining the useful information after I've infiltrated them. But, by presenting photographs as mirror images of their subjects or aesthetic objects was very helpful. The photographs show concrete details of the participants' everyday lives. They also provide data about subjects such as the Islamic lifestyle, Islamic consumption practices, and secular modernity. Using visual ethnography as methodology enhances the ability to understand aforementioned notions.

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APPENDIX

LIST OF THE PARTICIPANTS

- 1- Hamit is 30 years old, single He left high school and works as a sales officer in Grand Bazaar. He lives with his family in 1. Etap.
- 2- Gamze is 27 years old, single and college graduate. She lives with her family in 1.Etap. She works in an insurance agent.
- 3- Ulaş is 23 years old and single. He is a university student and he is living with his family in 1.Etap.
- 4- Serpil is 39 years old. She is married and has one children. She is a high school gradute and now a housewife. She lives with her family in 1.Etap.
- 5- Çiğdem is 31 years old and elementary school graduate. She works as an assistant in a health center in Başakşehir. She is newly married.
- 6- Meral is 53 years old and elementary school graduate. She is married and has three kids. She is a housewife and has been living in Başakşehir for 11 years.
- 7- Erdem is 29 years old. He is engaged and university graduate. He works in a bank and lives with his family in 1.Etap.
- 8- Necla is 46 years old. She is retired from textile sector. She is graduated from elementary school. She lives with her daughter and husband in 1.Etap.

- 9- Ahmet is 22 years old. He is a university student. He has two brother. He lives in 1.Etap with his family. 10- Vedat is 58 years old and university graduate. He is retired from a bank. He has 4 children. He lives in 4.etap with his only single daughter and wife.
- 11- Miraç is 34 years old. He is a high school graduate. His family have a business about logistics. He is the manager of this business. He lives in 4.Etap with his son and wife.
- 12- Erdal is 31 years old and single. He is a dentist and also a graduate student. He lives in 4.Etap alone. His office is also in Başakşehir 4.Etap.
- 13- Gülen is 29 years old. She is married and have one kid. She is a college graduate and housewife. She lives in 4.Etap.
- 14- Merve is 22 years old and a university student. She lives in 4.Etap with her family.
- 15- Zühal is 44 years old and elementary school graduate. She is married with two children. She is a housewife. She lives in 4.Etap with her family.
- 16- Tolga is 24 years old and university graduate. He is a graduate student now. He works as a specialist. He lives in 4.Etap with his family.
- 17-Kübra is 36 years old. She is a housewife and high school graduate. She lives in 4.Etap with her 2 children and husband.