

STIGMATIZATION AND CRIMINALIZATION OF URBAN POOR THROUGH
NEWS DISCOURSE IN TURKEY:
PORTRAYAL OF PURSE-SNATCHING AND 'TROUBLED' LOWER CLASS
NEIGHBORHOODS

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ABSTRACT

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PORTRAYAL OF PURSE-SNATCHING AND ‘TROUBLED’ LOWER CLASS
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This thesis analyzes the portrayal of purse-snatching incidents and ‘troubled’ lower class neighborhoods in the 2000s in the news reports in relation to the changing urban policies and urban transformation projects in the case of İstanbul. New patterns of urban segregation are discussed in relation to the changes in the penal policies and policing strategies in order to understand the logic of security that underpins both. The thesis aims to understand the dynamics of stigmatization and criminalization of certain segments of the urban poor through portrayal of crime news in the newspapers. Thus, the thesis tries to understand and analyze the relation between the ‘moral panic’ on purse-snatching in the big cities and concomitant police operations to certain lower class neighborhoods that are included within the scope of urban transformation projects. To do that, the thesis examines the news reports from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis and the concept of moral panic to discuss the underlying mechanisms of new patterns of urban segregation and urban transformation projects in İstanbul.

Keywords: Urban crime, purse-snatching, stigmatization, crime news, urban transformation

ÖZ

TÜRKİYE’DE KENT YOKSULLARININ HABER SÖYLEMİNDE
DAMGALANMASI VE SUÇLULAŞTIRILMASI:
KAPKAÇ OLAYLARI VE ‘SORUNLU’ ALT SINIF MAHALLELERİNİN
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Bu çalışma 2000’li yıllarda kamuoyunda ve basında geniş yer bulan İstanbul’da gerçekleşen kapkaç olayları ve ‘sorunlu’ alt sınıf mahallelerinin gazete haberlerindeki temsillerini değişen kent politikaları ve kentsel dönüşüm projeleriyle ilişkili olarak incelemektedir. Yeni kentsel ayrışma biçimleri, arka plandaki güvenlik mantığını kavrayabilmek için ceza politikalarındaki ve polislik stratejilerindeki değişimlerle ilişkili olarak tartışılmıştır. Çalışmanın amacı kent yoksullarının belirli kesimlerinin damgalanma ve suçlulaştırılmalarının dinamiklerini gazetelerdeki suç haberlerinin temsilleri yoluyla anlamaya çalışmaktır. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma büyük şehirlerde kapkaç üzerinden ortaya çıkan ‘ahlaki panik’le kentsel dönüşüm projeleri kapsamına alınan belirli alt sınıf mahallelere yapılan polis operasyonları arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektedir. Bunun için, bu çalışma İstanbul’daki yeni kentsel ayrışma biçimleri ve kentsel dönüşüm projeleri söylemini Eleştirel Söylem Analizi ve ahlaki panik kavramı çerçevesinde suç haberleri üzerinden tartışmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kent suçları, kapkaç, damgalama, suç haberleri, kentsel dönüşüm

In The Memory of My Father

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
ÖZ.....	v
DEDICATION.....	vi
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	viii
LIST OF TABLES.....	xi
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. NEOLIBERALISM, TRANSFORMATION OF URBAN SPACE AND PENAL POLICIES.....	7
2.1. Spatial Manifestations of Social Segregation and Exclusion in Relation to the Changes in the Penal Paradigm in the Neoliberal Era in the West.....	8
2.1.1 Patterns of Urban Segregation from the Post-War Period to the 2000s.....	10
2.1.2 Changing Approach to ‘Crime’ and Transformation of Penal Paradigm in the 1980s: New Right and ‘Punitiveness’.....	12
2.2 Patterns of Urban Segregation in Relation to the Changes in the Punitive and Policing Measures in Turkey-Periods and Tendencies...	22
2.2.1 Gated Communities: ‘Letting the Right Ones in’.....	27
2.2.2 Urban Transformation Projects: “Getting Rid of the Gangrene”.. ..	34
2.2.3 From ‘Gecekondu’ to ‘Varoş’: The Discursive Criminalization of the Urban Poor.....	48
2.2.4 The Punitive and Policing Measures in the 2000s: Legal Regulations on the Definition of Street Crimes, Sentences and Discretionary Power of the Police.....	58

3. CRIME, NEWS AND CRIME NEWS.....	70
3.1. Theories of Crime and Deviance.....	70
3.2 Critical Discourse Analysis as a Method for Interpreting Social Reality.....	74
3.3. Discourse and Discrimination in the News.....	80
3.4 Representation of Crime in the Media and the Role of “Moral Panic” in Social Exclusion and Stigmatization.....	91
4. AN ANALYSIS OF THE NEWS REPORTS ON PURSE- SNATCHING INCIDENTS AND ‘TROUBLED’ NEIGHBORHOODS OF THE URBAN POOR: CRIMINALIZATION, STIGMATIZATION AND RE-ORGANIZATION OF URBAN SPACE.....	103
4.1. “Invasion of the Purse-snatchers”: Background of a Moral Panic.....	106
4.1.1. Kurdish Migration as a Major Cause of Purse-Snatching as Displayed in the News Reports.....	114
4.1.2. From Thinner-Addicts to Purse-Snatchers: Young Kurdish Migrants and Children as Folk Devils.....	117
4.1.2.1. Purse-Snatching Gangs: Methods of Recruitment, Training, Organization and Ways of Ensuring Loyalty.....	127
4.1.2.2. Profile of the Purse-Snatchers: Character Traits, Moral Values and Political Views.....	142
4.1.3. Assessment.....	153
4.2. Portrayals of 'Troubled' Neighborhoods in the News Reports.....	155
4.2.1. Depictions of Police Operations to ‘Troubled’ Neighborhoods.....	159
4.2.1.1. Vivid descriptions of police operations.....	166
4.2.1.2. Representations of the Police Taking Part in the Operations and Working in ‘Troubled Neighborhoods’.....	172
4.2.1.3. Descriptions of the organization of space conducive to illegal activities.....	183
4.2.2. Intra-neighborhood conflicts.....	188

4.2.3. Profile of the residents.....	200
4.2.3.1. Living Conditions.....	201
4.2.3.2. Activities: Crime as Family Business.....	203
4.2.3.3. Identity.....	211
4.2.4. Assessment: Urban Transformation Projects as a Remedy to the Urban Crime.....	225
5. CONCLUSION.....	230
REFERENCES.....	240
APPENDICES	
A. CRIME RECORDS.....	251
B. CARICATURE.....	254
C. TURKISH SUMMARY.....	255
D. CURRICULUM VITAE.....	272
E. TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU.....	274

LIST OF TABLES

TABLES

Table 1 Sub-oppositional categories.....	90
Table 2 Neighborhood-scale operations reported by Sabah and Hürriyet.....	165

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to study the relation between two interrelated neoliberal logics in Turkey in the last decade: the logic of capital in the case of changing urban policies and urban transformation projects, and the logic of security in terms of the transformations in penal policies and policing strategies based on a discourse on increasing street crimes. This discourse is mainly based on the increasing purse-snatching incidents in the big cities, especially in İstanbul. During that period, purse-snatching incidents are presented in the media as an object of fear, an imminent threat to the whole society, mainly attempted by the young Eastern and Southeastern migrants or children. It is argued that a kind of ‘moral panic’ related to incidents of purse-snatching rose in the mid-2000s and it is accompanied by changes in the penal and policing regime based on “tough-on-crime” strategies. In relation to purse-snatching incidents, certain neighborhoods in İstanbul were displayed in the media as “‘crime nests’ harboring Eastern and Southeastern (Kurdish) purse-snatching gangs and Romany drug-dealers”. Especially in the mid-2000s, there have been concomitant police operations to these neighborhoods accompanied by a large group of heavily armed Special Forces Units and Riot Police wearing snow masks and carrying battering rams and specially trained dogs. Escorted by helicopters, these exaggerated operations are presented as imperative for “national security” and as if they were carried out against “terrorist cells”. In the same period, re-organization of urban space through urban transformation projects came to the agenda. Such projects targeted decaying inner city neighborhoods and some gecekondu areas mainly inhabited by Kurdish migrants and the Romany people. These projects are justified by a discourse that evoked the risks of an eventual earthquake and that would help combatting against criminal activities.

The major concern of this thesis is to analyze the relation between the three above-mentioned developments as concrete cases portrayed in the news reports. It can be summarized by such a statement: “The need to rehabilitate the ‘criminal’ neighborhoods through urban transformation projects, in which Kurdish purse-

snatchers and Romany drug-dealers nested”. In other words, it can be argued that the urban/street crimes are displayed as a major motive for the neoliberal urban policies in the form of urban transformation projects and such street crimes served as a matter of justification for the urban transformation projects and the concomitant legal arrangements.

The news reports on these three occurrences are analyzed in the thesis with the claim that they have provided an ideological framework for the adoption of necessary legal arrangements and policies to be followed. The news reports are analyzed from within the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis which stipulate that the media texts play a key role in justifying and imposing new policies to the society and tend to create a consensus on the targeted policy orientation. As a matter of fact, in this study media texts are claimed as not objective representations of reality as the liberal media theories suggest, but on the contrary, active agents of the formation of social reality.

The basic statement that provides the starting point of the thesis relating urban transformation projects to street crimes in relation to certain groups of the urban poor embodies certain claims that need to be analyzed in detail to explain the major paths of the present study. First of all, it is claimed that purse-snatching and drug dealing are identified with certain social groups, namely, the Kurdish immigrants and the Roma. The common characteristics of these groups is that they are ethnic minorities and constitute a major segment of the urban poor. Consequently, it can be argued that the two major groups of urban poor in İstanbul are stigmatized as major actors of criminal activities in the media. Though, the dynamics and the manner of such a stigmatization differ for the two groups in question.

As a matter of fact, it can be claimed that the Kurdish migrants became a major element of discomfort and fear in the urban middle and upper classes since “waves” of a compulsory migration had started in the early 1990s. This was a sentiment that revealed itself in two major facets. First, the Kurdish migrants were identified with the terror acts and armed conflicts in the Eastern and Southeastern regions and perceived as a political threat to the “national unity” and, second, they are also perceived as a “class threat” for they constituted a part of the poorest societal segments of urban lower classes living in the big cities.

The stigmatization of Roma, on the other hand, has its own peculiar dynamics and centuries-old history. The Roma have always been considered as a community that needs to be “kept under control” and “disciplined” in the eyes of the official authority due to their different lifestyle. In that sense, there is a long history of their identification with criminal activities. The main reason for them to be included in this study is that they form a second major social community identified with crime together with the Kurdish migrants and are defined in the news reports as “innately inclined to commit crimes”.

As stated above, certain neighborhoods mainly inhabited by Kurdish migrants and Roma are portrayed and thus defined in the media as “hotbeds of crime”. The neighborhoods in question are either centuries old Roma settlements, as in the case of Hacıhüsrev and Sarıgöl, or major destinations of the last wave of Kurdish migration, as in the case of Tarlabası in İstanbul. In fact, in most of the cases, the same neighborhoods accommodated the Romany and Kurdish population together. It is a fact that certain unlawful activities take place in these neighborhoods; however, exaggerated interventions of security forces are portrayed by the media in a manner to blame all residents of the concerned neighborhoods and thus, they are stigmatized as shelters of criminality.

It is a striking fact that all the neighborhoods depicted as “crime nests” are all included in the scope of urban transformation projects. In the light of such observations one can easily argue that the media discourse on purse-snatching incidents and depiction of certain locations as “criminal neighborhoods” played a key role for the re-definition and re-organization of the urban space within a framework of neoliberal logic, and enabled the public authorities to employ harsher penal and policing measures.

The major reason in this study for choosing news reports in the media to analyze the phenomena in question is the presumed role of the media in defining the reality. Yet, another motive of this choice is pertinent to the particular nature of the crime news. As argued by Hall et al. (1978), media is already “secondary definers” in the newsmaking process due to their structural dependence on various official news sources. However, in terms of crime news, and due to the very nature of the crime issue itself, that first-hand witnessing is very rare for the reporters and there is a powerful consensus in the society on “being against crime”, which makes the state

officials, the police and the judiciary not only the “primary definers” of crime news, but in many cases, their perspective is directly expressed in the news reports. In most of the cases, the newspapers publish police bulletins as the news report itself. In that sense, apart from the particular role of the media in the construction of social reality through the reproduction of social conventions, hegemonic definitions and identifications, crime news are one of the most viable sources to trace the official discourse.

With the considerations in mind, two national daily newspapers, namely *Hürriyet* and *Sabah* are selected to investigate in this study. The major reasons of this choice is that they are two national newspapers appealing to the general interests at the time of inquiry and have the highest circulations in the country. Within the scope of the thesis, news reports are analyzed in the web versions of *Sabah* and *Hürriyet* on purse-snatching incidents and ‘troubled neighborhoods’ in İstanbul, including Bursa and Sarıgöl in Gaziosmanpaşa, Tarlabası and Hacıhüsrev in Beyoğlu and Karabayır in Esenler from the late 1990s to May 2012. The cases are chosen from İstanbul since the media gave the greatest coverage to urban transformation projects in İstanbul and the hottest debates on increasing crime rates took place in the case of İstanbul.

Two major theoretical frameworks are used in the analysis of the news reports on two cases, namely purse-snatching incidents and ‘troubled’ neighborhoods. In the first case, the concept of “moral panic” as proposed by Stanley Cohen in the early 1970s for the media coverage of some deviant youth groups and developed by Hall et al. in the late 1970s in their analysis of the mugging cases in Britain is used to understand the peculiar dynamics of the media portrayal of purse-snatching. Moral panic basically refers to the stigmatization and criminalization of a certain social group or groups in the times of crisis and their portrayal in the media as a threat to the whole society. Moral panic relies on some factual data; the crime rates are actually increasing. However, it exaggerates the facts in a fashion that the problem is displayed as more serious than it is and a symptom of a bigger, underlying problem. In the case of the purse-snatchers, the increasing street crimes in the cities are identified with young Kurdish migrants and children, and they are displayed as a symptom of a larger problem, that is Kurdish migration.

In the analysis on the news reports on troubled neighborhoods, Van Dijk and other Critical Discourse Analysis theorists are referred in terms of the discrimination in discourse. Certain social groups are constructed within the discourse as different from “us” and “their” deviant behavior is related to some innate deficiencies, mistakes and even a propensity to crime. In this basic “us” vs. “them” opposition, some sub-oppositional categories are used such as “legality vs. illegality”, “order vs. chaos”, “peacefulness vs. violence”, “rationality vs. irrationality”, “responsibility vs. irresponsibility” and “self-reliance vs. dependence”. In that sense, everyday activities of these groups, cultural differences, their mostly informal jobs and an image of “a burden on the state and the society” through practices such as using illegal electricity are displayed in the news reports to justify the harsh policing measures they are subjected to and even their dislocation from living spaces.

The first chapter examines the urban aspect of neoliberal policies in Turkey after the 1980s in relation to the changes in the patterns of urban segregation in the western world. Within that context, the transformation of urban land regime in Turkey in line with the neoliberal re-structuring is discussed with references to the legal regulations aimed at the commercialization of urban land. Then, patterns of spatial segregation in the big cities are examined in terms of the emergence and proliferation of gated communities and urban transformation projects. To understand the process of stigmatization and criminalization accompanying this process, the replacement of the term ‘gecekondu neighborhood’ with that of ‘varoş’ is discussed in reference to the relevant literature. Transformation of the penal regime from correctionalism to punitiveness is the other topic of this chapter. The main tenets of the punitiveness is discussed through its discourse on crime and security, changing definitions of ‘crime’, ‘criminal’ and the ‘victim’, and ‘zero-tolerance policing’. Then, the legal regulations made in Turkey on the penal law and discretionary powers of the police is discussed since they are deeply related with the transformation of the urban sphere and marginalization of the urban poor.

The second chapter analyses the theories on crime and deviance, discourse analysis theory and discussions on the analysis of crime news. After discussing the major approaches to crime and deviance, Critical Discourse Analysis is examined to understand the role of discourse in the social construction of crime and deviance.

After a discussion on the structure of the news text and the discursive mechanisms of discrimination, in the final part of this chapter crime news is analyzed in reference to the relevant literature. In this part, the concept of ‘moral panics’ is elaborated through the works of Stanley Cohen and Stuart Hall et al, which plays a key role in the analysis of purse-snatching news and the discourse of fear constructed in reference to them.

The third chapter examines two cases, namely purse-snatching incidents and ‘troubled’ neighborhoods through news reports in Sabah and Hürriyet newspapers in the last decade. Within the scope of the study, a total of 1736 news reports on purse-snatching and 738 news reports on ‘troubled’ neighborhoods are analyzed. In the analysis, the whole news text is evaluated to trace certain ethnic and class stereotypes, ascribed character traits that gave way to criminal behavior, organization of living space and everyday activities of the purse-snatchers and residents of troubled neighborhoods to produce the existing relations of power that stigmatizes and criminalizes certain social groups and their living spaces to justify the neoliberal restructuring of urban space through urban transformation projects. The thesis ends with a conclusion discussing the relation between changing urban regime and penal policies based on the criminalization of the urban poor in the official and media discourse.

CHAPTER 2

NEOLIBERALISM, TRANSFORMATION OF URBAN SPACE AND PENAL POLICIES

The changes in the state's urban land regime in Turkey in the last decade is part of a broader social, political and economic transformation that dates back to the late 1970s. 12 September 1980 military intervention, which was a turning point in Turkey's history, was designed as a remedy to crisis of hegemony that Turkey faced in the 1970s. 24 January 1980 economic measures aimed at a radical transformation of economy and restoring order through a new hegemonic project, however, under the conditions of such a hegemonic crisis and high levels of social mobility it could not have been achieved with ordinary methods (Kaya, 2009: 236). Differing from the former military interventions, 1980 military intervention aimed at achieving a radical restructuring of political, economic and cultural spheres in Turkey (Tünay, 1993). An export oriented economic development strategy; emergence of a new form of individualism; centrality of unleashed market forces; economic and financial liberalization; an authoritarian political and constitutional regime which narrows down rights and freedoms of individuals and groups such as Kurds and Alevis; and cultivation of conservative values were the cornerstones of Turkish new-right's attempt at hegemony (Tünay, 1993; Kaya 2002, 2009; Özkazanç, 1997, 1998; Timur, 2004).

In that period, the neoliberal transformation also reconfigured the urban space by gradually opening it to the market and limiting the informal housing strategies of the urban poor such as building *gecekondu*s and taking refuge in desolate houses in the decayed inner city neighborhoods. The expulsion of the poor from their living spaces and resulting patterns of increased spatial segregation are in fact experienced in many countries that underwent a neoliberal transformation and accompanied by a change in the strategies of 'policing the poor' through harsher methods. In that sense, the transformation of urban space and shifts in the penal policies are two interrelated aspects of neoliberal restructuring which should be discussed together.

This chapter examines the patterns of spatial segregation in Turkey that emerged since the 1980s in relation to the changes in the policing strategies and penal policies within a broader framework of neoliberal transformation. In other words, two aspects or two interrelated logics of neoliberal transformation in Turkey is problematized: the logic of capital and the logic of security. The penal paradigm of the neoliberal era is based on remaking and reconsideration of urban space alongside with the idea and principle of security. In other words, the logic of capital is deeply tied up with the logic of punishment, stigmatization and marginalization. After a brief discussion on the relationship between neoliberal economic transformation and transformation of urban space with reference to the changing penal paradigm in the Western world, urban transformation and segregation in Turkey is analyzed. The legal regulations made for the restructuration of urban space are discussed together with the changes in the penal policies and the discretionary powers of the police. Within this context, the emergence of gated communities, gentrification of the city, expulsion of the poor from city centers, stigmatization and criminalization of urban poor are analyzed in details.

2.1. Spatial Manifestations of Social Segregation and Exclusion in Relation to the Changes in the Penal Paradigm in the Neoliberal Era in the West

In the recent decades the decomposition of urban public sphere was underpinned by the rise of a new ideal – separateness, undermining the ideals of commonality and universality which define public space. Caldeira (1996: 55) defines separateness as separate homogeneous living spaces for different social groups. As Sennett (1992b: 3-4) argues, in today's world, few people can enjoy the cosmopolitan city, because, as the world of strangers, the city itself became to be fantasized as a threatening place. Instead, the private sphere became people's sole refuge and "the fact of being in private, alone with ourselves and with family and intimate friends [became] an end in itself". Since the belief in the stranger means a belief in the immediate encounter as the only source for knowledge, today's intimate world based on reciprocal disclosure of inner psyches is not compatible with the spontaneity of the city life.

The inevitable result of a community lacking a strong public sense is a search for purifying their existence by rejecting and excluding those who are ‘different’. The only shared action turns out to be maintaining the community itself and purging the others. In Sennett’s (1992b: 265) words:

Outsiders, unknowns, unlikes become creatures to be shunned; the personality traits the community shares becomes ever more exclusive; the very act of sharing becomes ever more centered.

The city is seen as the source of evil and this anti-urban bias leads to a conspiracy preaching for some plotters against the intimate community’s well-being. Therefore, the contemporary organization of cities and dwellings reflect a ‘fear of exposure’ – the fear of being hurt - and different classes and ethnic groups tend to build both real and mental walls in between, since differences are seen as ‘mutually threatening than mutually stimulating’ (Sennett, 1992a: xii). Consequently, urban identity is replaced by partial spatial multi-identities and secluded urban spaces appear either by choice or by sanction (Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu, 2008: 41). Young (1999: 19) defines the contemporary spatial segregation along socio-economic differences with the term “cordon sanitaire”:

A clear line is created between the core group and those outside by a whole series of measures: by town planning, by road networks which divide cities, by the gating of private estates, by the blocking off of areas from easy access, but above all by money: the cost of public transport downtown, the price of goods in the shops, the policing of the core areas, whether suburban shopping mall or inner-city development, and whether it involves private or public police, is aimed at removing uncertainties, of sweeping the streets clean of alcoholics, beggars, the mentally ill and those who congregate in groups.

In that sense, urban segregation and increased policing measures are two interrelated phenomena that have characterized the contemporary organization of the cities based on the exclusion and punitive containment of the ‘disfavored’ segments of the society. These practices go back to 1950s in the West, to the first traces of suburbanization. Thus, suburbanization can be defined as the first wide scale urban segregation movement based on socio-economic differences in the contemporary capitalist world.

2.1.1 Patterns of Urban Segregation from the Post-War Period to the 2000s

In the western world after the World War II, the metropolitan and industrial growth has soaked the rural countryside of labor power and concentrated them in the industrial urban centers. The eventual increase in population and change in the demographic and sectorial composition of the cities led the middle classes, who have been empowered and enlarged by the welfare policies, to move to the outskirts of the city – namely, the suburbs (Fishman, 2006: 28).

Suburb or the derived term ‘suburbia’ to represent everything pertaining to suburb became the symbol of middle-class way of life. Fishman (1996: 23) defines suburbia as the “archetypical middle-class and triumph of bourgeois capitalism”. Exalting major bourgeois values like domestic life and family, it also asserts class distinction through wealth and privileges. The idea of suburbia embodies distancing, if not isolation. It is a refuge from the threatening and undesirable elements in the rest of the city, such as the working class and their workplace – urban industrial world. Therefore suburbia should be defined by what it excludes, as well as what it includes. As Fishman (2006: 24) tells, principle of exclusion lies at the core of bourgeois life – “work was excluded from the family residence; middle-class villas were segregated from working-class housing; the greenery of suburbia stood in contrast to a gray, polluted urban environment”:

But whatever the theoretical questionings, the dominant image remains: the move to the suburbs; the old urban centres deserted and left to the socially marginal; a high degree of separation and exclusion within the city. All this sounds familiar to critics of decarceration. This is precisely their scenario for 'community care and treatment': decayed zones of the inner city inhabited by the old, confused and ill dumped from their institutions and left to rot in broken-down welfare hotels or exploited in private nursing homes; psychotics wandering the streets 'locked in or locked out' of dilapidated boarding houses, barely able to cash their welfare checks, the prey of street criminals and a source of nuisance and alarm to local residents too poor to leave; an increasing ecological separation into 'deviant ghettos', 'sewers of human misery', garbage dumps for 'social junk' lost in the interstices of the city. (...) All this might be termed exclusion through 'zones of neglect' (Cohen, 2007: 227).

However, in the 1980s, classical middle-class suburbs transformed and new tendencies emerged in the metropolitan areas. Deindustrialization of the urban centers and increasing urban rent resulted in the lower classes to leave the central

neighborhoods and move to the suburbs. The suburbs have become increasingly heterogeneous of class, race and ethnic composition. Losing their *raison d'être*, suburbs ceased to be 'bourgeois utopias'. Therefore middle classes began to leave suburbs and return to urban centers. On the other hand, changing economic policies undermined the relatively wealthy position of the middle classes and gave rise to a polarization of upper and lower classes. The atmosphere of crisis, uncertainty and social decay, and "proximity" of different social classes and groups combined with a discourse of fear of crime, gave way to new forms of discrimination (Caldeira, 1996: 59). Therefore a new type of suburbanization emerged, targeting upper middle and upper classes, and built on the principles of isolation, security and exclusion, which makes them intrinsically different from the classical middle class suburbs (Kurtuluş, 2005a: 78; Kurtuluş, 2005b: 162). Fishman (2006: 33) defines this new kind of suburbs as "technoburbs", which are based on an advanced technological infrastructure with all the functions of a metropolis – shopping malls, hospitals, schools, universities, recreational centers, etc. Thanks to these facilities, upper classes enjoy the company of 'their likes' in a "warm, sincere and secure" environment and a sense of exclusiveness (Danış, 2001: 155; Kurtuluş, 2005b: 162). With the emergence of technoburbs as a result of a new kind of decentralized city, classical middle-class suburbia came to an end in USA and Western Europe. On the other hand, the settlements of lower classes and other disadvantageous groups became more condense, more identified with crime and fear and more walled up against the outside world both through a self-protective reflex of the residents and the exclusionary policies of the state. Wacquant (2008: 3) defines this 'new' lower class settlements as hyperghetto in which the notions of race and class mingle to form the basis of social exclusion resulting from the neoliberal policies that increased the social inequalities and bring together the disadvantageous groups in the society:

the historic shift from the communal ghetto of the mid-twentieth century, a compact and sharply circumscribed socio spatial formation to which blacks of all classes were consigned and bound together by a broad complement of institutions specific to the group and its reserved space, to the fin-de-siecle hyperghetto, a novel, decentered, territorial and organizational configuration characterized by conjugated segregation on the basis of race and class in the context of the double retrenchment of the labor market and the welfare state from the urban core, necessitating and eliciting the corresponding deployment of an intrusive and omnipresent police and penal apparatus.

The new pattern of spatial segregation centered on the idea of (in)security is in line with the changing penal paradigm in the 1980s based on empowering the coercive apparatus of the state and harsher punitive measures which mainly targeted the lower classes, ethnic minorities, illegal immigrants and other marginalized social groups – the ‘unlikeable’ residents of the city.

2.1.2 Changing Approach to ‘Crime’ and Transformation of Penal Paradigm in the 1980s: New Right and ‘Punitiveness’

As a part of a broader governing structure and social ordering, the penal systems in the western world as well some other developing countries undergone a major transformation in terms of the institutions of crime control and the criminal systems starting from the late 1970s. In the last three decades, the coercive and punitive apparatuses of the state strengthened and became a major instrument in the restructuring of the social domain. During the period, there have been major changes in the legal systems including re-definition of certain offences and their scope, sentences, and structure of the police force as well as the role and function of private actors in the area of security. All the transformations and alterations underlined one thing: the state became more punitive and ‘intolerant’.¹

The socio-legal re-arrangements made in the last three decades, which is defined by many authors writing on social control and crime as “late modernity” (Young, 1999; Garland, 2001), are put forward as the total opposite of the previous paradigm and claimed to be built upon the ‘lessons learned from the mistakes of the past’. The past, here, referred to the period between the late 19th century and the late 1970s, named by Garland (2001: 3) as “penal welfarism” or ‘correctionalist approach’,² which defined criminals and deviants as “social problems”; the

¹ According to Neocleous (2007: 133), “the dominant mode of ‘governmental rationality’” of the liberal state has always been security, not liberty, in the Foucauldian sense. What makes Neocleous’ perspective crucial is his stress on the tendency towards securitization of social and economic problems in modern capitalist societies. In this sense, Neocleous reminds Marx’s note in *On the Jewish Question* that “security is the highest social concept of civil society, the concept of police, expressing the fact that the whole of society exists only in order to guarantee to each of its members the preservation of his person, his rights, and his property.” Thus, for Neocleous, security, securitization and criminalization are not incidental, or undesirable aspects of modern capitalism. On the contrary, they are indispensable and systemic elements which are essential for reproduction of the system of capital accumulation.

² The institutional structure and arrangements matured especially during the welfare state period, so to speak, its golden years. But many scholars, Foucault being the most prominent one, argued that

criminals and deviants were defined as outcomes of failure to provide social security, conservative moralism, punitive mentality with over-policing, and a general social anxiety turned into aggressiveness. The ideology of welfare state, which is defined by Young (1999: 1) as one of “assimilation and incorporation” and elimination of any differences, successfully incorporated structures of discipline and normalization reinforced by a growing sector of professionals from attorneys, prosecutors and parole officers to criminologists and forensic psychologists within a correctionalist and rehabilitative discourse on crime. However, welfarism lost its grip as the penal ideal to be replaced by a punitive, retributive mentality in the period of late modernity. As Young (1999: 59) states, even though late modernity celebrates differences, it cannot endure any threatening elements and tends to first isolate, then deal with them:

The modern world is intolerant of diversity, which it attempts to absorb and assimilate and is relatively tolerant of difficulty, of obdurate people and recalcitrant rebels whom it sees as more of a challenge to rehabilitate and reform. The late modern world celebrates diversity and difference, which it readily absorbs and sanitizes; what it cannot abide is difficult people and dangerous classes, which it seeks to build the most elaborate defences against, not just in terms of insiders and outsiders, but throughout the population.

Since the correctionalist and rehabilitative approach of the previous period depended on the premises and institutions of the welfare state, its crisis led to the

the roots of the correctionalist approach date back to the 18th century when a paradigm shift took place in the judicial system from “a desire to punish” to “the shame of imposing punishment”. In contrast to reformers and ‘Whig historians’, Foucault (1995: 11) claimed that this was not an humanitarian progress but a shift from penal process being a spectacle based on the offender’s body to a disciplinary power aimed at the convict’s soul. Individual liberties were the target of this new penalty. Body was now only an intermediary through which the rights and liberties of the individual are suspended. Marked by the process of punishment to become the most hidden part of the penal process, the judicial body distanced itself from the act and “entrusted it to others, under the seal of secrecy”. This distribution of roles within the penal process was part of a new conception of punishment based on “correction/cure”. Psychiatrists, psychologists, educationalists, magistrates and members of the prison service were all extra-judicial elements of the penal procedure. On the other hand; a change in the definition, margin and hierarchy of offences accompanied this process. In Foucault’s (1995: 254) terms, “a ‘positive’ knowledge of the delinquents and their species” was established in time in order to provide a ‘scientific’ explanation for the offence. The complex transformation process, nevertheless, indicates a well-accepted truth about crime and deviance: within the power relations in the society, “those who are different from the dominant group are readily made invisible, lesser or deviant” (Wykes, 2001: 10). In Victorian criminology of the 19th century, any sign of difference from the dominant norm was associated with criminological investigation. The focus was the physical indicators of difference backed up by a kind of Darwinian biologism. The undisputed standard was that of the “white, heterosexual, mature, middle-class masculinity”, deviance from which was considered ‘suspicious’ (Wykes: 2001:10). Captive criminals were seen as “degenerate form of the human species”, who possess “constitutional abnormality, mental deficiency, weak moral conscience, and emotional deficits” (Sumner, 2004: 10). Even though this approach is obsolete today, its implications on individual pathology are still influential on both theoretical level and popular agenda.

crisis of the penal paradigm of the period. Wacquant (2001: 405) argues that the welfare state “whose mission was to counter the cycles and damaging effects of the market, to ensure the collective ‘well-fare’ and to reduce inequalities”, was replaced by a “Darwinian state that makes a fetish of competition and celebrates individual responsibility (whose counterpart is collective irresponsibility), and which withdraws into its kingly functions of ‘law and order’, themselves hypertrophied”. Neoliberalism based on the maintaining of free market principles by withdrawing the state from economic domain and neo-conservatism based on the reaffirmation of moral values like the family, traditions, social hierarchies, discipline, etc. to sustain social order by making the coercive apparatus of the state stronger and more authoritarian constituted the two major components of the hegemonic political project of late modernity.

After indicating immoral behavior as one of the major reasons of the social and economic crisis, the new right discourse linked it with the lower classes, presenting them as the actual source of social disorder that needs to be under permanent control and discipline in terms of both social conduct and economic activities. This new “culture of control” as Garland (2001) defines or “the exclusive society” in Young’s (1999) terms leaned on the massive structural transformation of the labor markets which resulted in high rates of unemployment for the lower classes while providing economic advantages to the upper and middle classes; in other words, neoliberalism polarized class divisions through “making the rich richer and the poor poorer”. Thus, a defensive, controlling, disciplinary and even punitive discourse targeting the poor became a prerequisite of the new regime, in which increasing crime rates would be an inevitable result:

The regulation of the working classes by what Pierre Bourdieu (1998) calls “the left hand” of the state, symbolised by education, public health care, social security, social assistance and social housing, is being superseded– in the United States – or supplemented– in Western Europe – by regulation through its ‘right hand’, that is, the police, courts and prison system, which are becoming increasingly active and intrusive in the lower regions of social space. The sudden and obsessive reaffirmation of the ‘right to security’ by leading politicians of both Right and Left, concurrent with the quiet dereliction of the ‘right to employment’ in its traditional form (that is, to full-time work, with a complete entitlement package, for an indeterminate term and a liveable wage), and the growing interest in and increased means devoted to law enforcement also come in handy to compensate the deficit in legitimacy suffered by political leaders, owing to the very fact that they have renounced the established missions of the state on the economic and social front (Wacquant, 2001: 402).

In that sense, lower classes and other social groups marginalized by the new right discourse are designated as the major agencies of increasing crime rates. In fact, since the late 1960s, crime levels have been on the rise in the USA and most of the Europe. Due to the economic crisis in the 1970s, levels increased rapidly and the 1980s came with a panic and increased sensibility in the public about crime. In fact, in such a polarized society where the contours of the included and excluded are so bold, it is hard to be surprised by the fact that crime rates steadily rose among the lower classes and marginalized groups. As Young (1999: 9) states, the source of crime and punishment is the same in late modernity; they “both stem from the dislocations in the labor market: the one from a market which excludes participation as a worker but encourages voraciousness as a consumer, the other from a market which includes, but only in a precarious fashion”. Wacquant (2001: 401-2) poses a similar argument by saying that social deregulation and rising precarious working conditions are complementary with the punitive state: “the ‘invisible hand’ of the casualised labour market finds its institutional complement and counterpart in the ‘iron fist’ of the state which is being redeployed so as to check the disorders generated by the diffusion of social insecurity”. What is striking here is that the way the issues of crime and security were integrated to the new right discourse stigmatizing certain social groups as ‘potentially dangerous’ by criminalizing particular behavioral patterns or life styles attached to them.

The excluded segments of the society including single mothers, racial and ethnic minorities, drug users, prostitutes, etc., which are called “the outgroup” by Young (1999: 20), are blamed for all the ills of the society in general and become excluded, “hold at bay”. Contrary to the penal-welfarist paradigm which related crime with deprivation, now crime became a matter of discipline and control, to be more precise, the lack of them. The persons who does not embody such traits themselves or cannot be controlled by the social norms are prone to crime no matter what and should be punished severely to make an example and be deterrent.³

³ In line with the transformations mentioned above, the understanding and definition of the criminal has changed. In the period until the 1970s, ‘deprivation’ was the central theme to explain criminality. Crime used to be seen as a problem caused by people being deprived of ‘proper’ education, family, cultural norms or material means. In the last decades, crime ceased to be a matter of deprivation and became a matter of ‘control’. Garland (2001: 15) argues that ‘control theories’ that have been dominating the official and criminological discourse in the recent decades emphasized ‘inadequate control’ as the major cause of crime. The basis of control theories stem from a certain definition of human nature that is “much darker” in the sense that in the lack of

As Özkazanç (2011: 166) argues, the criminal figure of the welfarist paradigm which is defined on the grounds of “normalizing, deterring and rehabilitating” is replaced by “populations” and “risk categories” which have to be “re-organized and controlled”. In that sense, policies of crime control aimed at marking the ‘suspicious’ segments of the society by both increased punitive measures and the spatial policies that aims to ‘contain crime’ in the places where they originate from and prevent it from spreading to ‘decent’, ‘orderly’ middle class neighborhoods.

Among measures that should be taken against crime are harsher penal policies, increased social control, emphasis on traditional and familial values that should provide the necessary discipline to avoid any tendency to criminal behavior and even spatial segregation to keep away the dangerous segments of the society that are beyond moral control. In this period of transformation, what can be termed as a transition from “social state” to “social control” policies, several re-arrangements were made and discursive shifts took place. Punitive measures began to replace the rehabilitative actions within an understanding of “just deserts”.⁴ A retributive, vengeful, shaming and humiliating discourse, which was considered as an outdated, obsolete approach by the previous welfarist paradigm, became popular again, leading the politicians to advocate “tougher-on-crime” programs and pass harsher laws, usually backed by victim stories of anguish and anger (Garland, 2001: 10).⁵

proper, powerful control mechanisms, the individuals would be prone to anti-social, criminal behavior. Once needy, broken image of the criminal is replaced by “dangerous predators”, and the sympathy directed towards them in the previous period now focused on the victim. The mechanisms that should provide control to prevent crime are the family, the community and the state. Therefore, the focus has shifted from rehabilitation and correction to sanction and discipline. Abandoning the idea of crime as a consequence of false socialization or abnormality in the sense of a pathology led to seeing crime a part of the natural order of events but not a sporadic deviance from the normal. This new approach, therefore, targeted ‘criminal event’, or “criminogenic situations” as Garland (2001: 16) puts it, as its new focus instead of criminality or the criminal. The idea is that criminal events would happen anytime and anywhere in the absence of proper control mechanisms, so, preventive mechanisms should be strengthened instead of focusing on rehabilitation or correction.

⁴ Transition to punitiveness re-defined and restored the position of the prisons; not as a reformatory and rehabilitating institution as in the welfarist period, but as a retributive and disciplinary mechanism for the wicked, threatening elements of the society (Garland, 2001: 14).

⁵ An elaborate list of the changes in the penal system in the western world is not within the scope of the thesis, however, they can be summarized briefly. First of all, a series of arrangements were made to disregard the subjective conditions of the crime and criminal such as “Truth in Sentencing” in the USA and “Honesty in Sentencing” in the UK. They refer to the abolishment or curbing of abatement, parole and probation. “Mandatory minimum sentences” limit judicial discretion and make it compulsory to give the minimum sentence required by the law. A type of mandatory minimum sentences is known as “Three-strikes laws” in the USA referring to the harsher sentences on crimes repeated three times or more. Özdek (2000: 38) argues that another important rationale behind the penal reforms is the exploitation of prisoner labor, which is “the cheapest and most

The punitive discourse fueled by the vivid victimization stories altered the perception of crime. In the previous period, crime was seen as a ‘misfortune’ that fell upon some ‘disadvantageous’ members of the society, to whom one should approach with ‘compassion’ and ‘humanity’; and in that sense, it was a ‘localized’ and individual matter. However, recently, crime turned out to be one of the major social problems, and even a defining characteristic of the contemporary societies. As Garland (2001: 10) states skillfully, “Fear of crime has come to be regarded as a problem in and of itself, quite distinct from actual crime and victimization, and distinctive policies have been developed that aim to reduce fear levels, rather than to reduce crime.” In this re-conceptualization of crime, the society is portrayed as on the edge of its nerve and demanding strong punitive measures from the state.

An emphasis on the victim appears as another characteristic of the new punitive discourse. Garland (2001: 11) argues that in penal-welfarism individual victim cases were treated as a part of the general public interest and were not put forward separately. Yet, with the transition to punitive approach, the stories and experiences of the victims are frequently referred to justify the harsher legal measures and sentences. Similarly, Cohen (2006: xxiv) indicates that crime and deviance issues covered in the media in the last decades tend to emphasize the ‘victim’ by arguing that crime is no longer a threat only to the vulnerable, but to everyone – the ordinary citizens. In what Garland (2001: 11) defines as “it-could-be-you” metonym, every victim story is displayed as the ‘story of us all’. In line with that, crime policy became a crucial part of the populist discourse and highly politicized – a matter of ‘what everyone knows’ (Garland, 2001: 13). A strong sentiment on ‘protecting the public’ in the face of the imminent dangers began to mould the penal policies of the state. Garland (2001: 12) defines this paradigm shift as “a replacement of the call for protection *from* the state by the demand for protection *by* the state”.⁶

disciplined form of labor”. Compulsory work of ‘at least’ 7-hours-a-day for prisoners was accepted in the USA and in the case of refusing to work, they are faced with longer sentences, deprivation of rights or solitary confinement.

⁶ Trimming the exclusionary rule (the prohibition of the use of evidence against the suspect gathered illegally by law enforcement officers) in the USA and the defendant’s right to silence in the UK can be counted among such measures in addition to the increasing number of surveillance cameras in many parts of the cities.

In line with that, law enforcement mechanisms, or the mentality they are governed and structured with transformed into a kind of managerialism, in which the actions of the officers were scored on a performance basis and resources are utilized in the most efficient sense such as creating crime maps and targeting certain “hot-zones” (Garland, 2001: 18). The term ‘risk-management’ became the motto of the law enforcement developed on the idea of “calculating what is likely to cause disorder and discontent”. In that sense, a crime control policy based on the ‘harnessing’ of disorderly behavior that would inevitably lead to crime if not controlled that characterizes the last decades found its expression in the ‘zero tolerance policing’.⁷ It is based on the ordering of ‘low-level’ public order offences such as loitering, public drunkenness, panhandling, etc. by coercive police power to avoid them from becoming more serious crimes. Innes (1999: 398) argues that if the prior policing methods were defined as “an iron fist in a velvet glove” because they included “a discrete blend of charismatic and legal authority [...] and the imposition of coercive enforcement was a last resort”, then zero tolerance policing is characterized by “an iron fist in an iron glove” – the veiled coercive power of the police is replaced by open force.

Zero tolerance policing is based on ‘Broken Windows Theory’⁸, which basically argues that, in terms of the duties of the police, maintaining social order is as important as solving crimes; and to realize this, the number of police on the streets

⁷ Zero-tolerance policing was implemented first in the New York City in the 1990s by the famous Mayor Giuliani, and later in Britain to be followed by many other European and non-European countries on different scales. During Giuliani’s term, recorded crime levels have decreased by 37% between 1994 and 1997 in New York, homicide particularly dropping over by 50%.

⁸ It was put forward by James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling in their article “Broken Windows”, published in 1982. By referring to the “broken window” metaphor, they argue that “unchecked disorderly behavior” in certain neighborhoods, which are not necessarily illegal, would eventually lead to criminal acts if they are given rein to. The “broken windows theory” is described as follows: “Social psychologists and police officers tend to agree that if a window in a building is broken and is left unrepaired, all the rest of the windows will soon be broken. This is as true in nice neighborhoods as in rundown ones. Window-breaking does not necessarily occur on a large scale because some areas are inhabited by determined window-breakers whereas others are populated by window-lovers; rather, one unrepaired broken window is a signal that no one cares, and so breaking more windows costs nothing. (...) We suggest that “untended” behavior also leads to the breakdown of community controls. A stable neighborhood of families who care for their homes, mind each other’s children, and confidently frown on unwanted intruders can change, in a few years or even a few months, to an inhospitable and frightening jungle. A piece of property is abandoned, weeds grow up, a window is smashed. Adults stop scolding rowdy children; the children, emboldened, become more rowdy. Families move out, unattached adults move in. Teenagers gather in front of the corner store. The merchant asks them to move; they refuse. Fights occur. Litter accumulates. People start drinking in front of the grocery; in time, an inebriate slumps to the sidewalk and is allowed to sleep it off. Pedestrians are approached by panhandlers” (Wilson and Kelling, 1982: 2, 3).

should be increased. According to Wilson and Kelling (1982: 1), the only way to maintain order in the streets is “to remove undesirable persons” from the area, which includes “panhandlers, drunks, addicts, rowdy teenagers, prostitutes, loiterers, and the mentally disturbed”. In that sense, one may ask the validity of “criminalizing” some vagrants or panhandlers who did not harm anyone. However, the authors find the efforts to “decriminalize” such disorderly behavior wrong. According to them, the ‘first broken window’ is those “disorderly people”, who are “disreputable or obstreperous or unpredictable”. And, when disorderly behavior is not controlled, either by the police or the fellow citizens, it would most probably instigate street crime by encouraging the potential offenders to act:

Arresting a single drunk or a single vagrant who has harmed no identifiable person seems unjust, and in a sense it is. But failing to do anything about a score of drunks or a hundred vagrants may destroy an entire community. A particular rule that seems to make sense in the individual case makes no sense when it is made a universal rule and applied to all cases. It makes no sense because it fails to take into account the connection between one broken window left untended and a thousand broken windows (Wilson and Kelling, 1982: 6).

In response to possible criticisms about the “supposed” neutrality or fairness of the policemen, Wilson and Kelling (1982: 6) claims that with all the selection and training process, “the police will be inculcated with a clear sense of the outer limit of their discretionary authority. That limit, roughly, is this—the police exist to help regulate behavior, not to maintain the racial or ethnic purity of a neighborhood”. On the other hand, they also underlined the importance of “informal control mechanisms of the community itself” in the form of “citizen patrols” in the neighborhoods.

Moving from the Broken Windows Theory, zero tolerance policing presupposes that particular areas with signs of dilapidation and decay are criminogenic (meaning a tendency to cause crime or criminality) if they are not monitored closely. Such places may have an effect of intimidation on the ‘decent’ residents, leading to the loosening of the informal control mechanisms which are defined as the *sine qua nons* of an orderly public. In turn, retreat of the law-abiding citizens from the public space would eventually lead to an increase in illegal activities in such areas (Innes, 1999: 398).

Introduction of CCTV and other computerized management systems in the police forces can be considered as parts of zero tolerance policing. By increasing the

operational effectiveness of the law enforcement, it is aimed to “police the ‘quality of life’ crimes”.⁹ Innes (1999: 401) argues that by disguising and trivializing the actual causes of crime, zero tolerance policing provides the politicians and law enforcers with simple explanations by focusing on the effects rather than causes and allows them to present periodical and circumstantial decreases in crime rates as an evidence of the accuracy of their policing strategy, which is based on “enforcement and containment”.

Under zero tolerance policing, certain social groups deemed by the public and the state as dangerous and uncanny are readily stigmatized and become the targets of coercive policies. Innes (1999: 408) claims that zero tolerance should be seen as a part of the general transformation of social control mechanisms which are increasingly guided by moral classifications rather than social or economic conditions. As Özkazanç (2011: 165) states, the figure of the criminal is “dehumanized” by discursively constructing him/her as a “violent, incorrigible other”. In that sense, Young (1999: 110) argues that “demonization” is a key concept to understand the moralization of penal policies and criminalizing discourses in the sense that the ‘demonized’ segments of the society are easily blamed “as being on the ‘edge’” and become the source of all problems. In other words, “all the problems of society are because of the problems themselves. Get rid of the problems and society would be, ipso facto, problem free!” Such a tautology attributes crime only to the criminals and disregards any underlying social and economic structures or motives. By implying that the deviants “voluntaristically chose their deviance”, they are designated as the reasons of the society’s problems, not the vice-a-versa. According to Young (1999: 113), demonization is based on ‘blaming the victim’ and composed of three components. First one, ‘distancing’, explains crime by rejecting any causal links with the core values of the society. Secondly, in relation to distancing, the criminals are attributed a “deviant essence” that is displayed as the real cause of criminal behavior; since it is in ‘their’ essence, it has nothing to do with ‘us’. Essentialism is crucial for social exclusion: “It furnishes the targets, it provides the stereotypes, it allows the marshalling of

⁹ In that sense, Young (1999: 18-19) argues that introduction of CCTV “is more effective in dealing with incivilities than with serious, planned crime”.

aggression and it reaffirms the identity of the in-group – those with power and handy rhetoric” (Young, 1999: 117).¹⁰

In relation to essentialism, the third and the final component of demonization is the ‘reaffirmation of normality’, sharpened by the contrasts between the ‘normal’ and the deviant; for example, the image of the normal family, father is the breadwinner, mother is the nurturer of children is sharpened by the single mothers. In some cases, single examples step out of demonized groups as ‘monsters’. Young (1999: 114) states that individual cases of violent crimes are usually handled in the context of their social, ethnic, racial or class identities and displayed as a symptom of the pathologies of marginalized groups and lower classes.

The new focus on crime prevention is reflected on communal practices as well as punitive and retributive measures on the state level. In what Garland (2001: 17) calls “preventative partnerships”, people began to establish informal control mechanisms to protect their neighborhoods as well as other broad level spatial exclusionary practices called by Young (1999: 18) as the “privatization of public space” such as the increase in the number of gated communities, shopping malls, private parks and leisure facilities or expulsion of marginal segments of the society or the underclass¹¹ from the ghettoized decaying inner city areas. Furthermore,

¹⁰ On the other hand, essentialism may become “self-fulfilling” on the side of the deviant groups in the sense that the actors labelled as deviant would adopt these essences “to compensate for the lack of identity”: “For example, a man forced into a situation where he has little means of earning a living other than thieving, can come to believe that he truly is a thief, while the onlookers can find their prognosis confirmed” (Young, 1999: 118). Young calls this self-fulfilling effect as “bogus of essentialism”. However, considering this ‘bogus’ in terms of ‘reality’ or ‘illusion’ is not quite right according to Young (1999: 119): “Herein is the deceptive nature of essentialism. For, on the one hand, conservatives insist that these essences are reality (a thief is a thief, the feckless are without drive, young blacks are violent) whilst on the other more liberal commentators will insist that these presumptions are mere illusions. They are prejudice invoked against poorer parts of the community and more vulnerable individuals whilst in reality people are more or less similar. In reality, the social system produces people who appear as if constructed as an essence. It is neither essence nor illusion but a world of appearances which appears as if it's constructed of essences, whose very reality has a stolid, stereotypical quality.”

¹¹ The term ‘underclass’ was proposed by the American scholars in the 1960s to denote the marginalized, excluded segments of the society. Bauman (2005: 72) argues that the term was invented during a time when the Cold War was losing its pace, gradually making the ‘outside enemy’ obsolete. Even though there has been a hot debate over the concept in terms of stigmatizing, degrading certain social groups in the society, the term surely made its way in many sociological analyses and even political discourses on the marginalized and subordinated groups. Bauman (2005: 76) argues that the link between underclass and poverty is explained as a matter of ‘choice’; people are underclass because they deny any means to reach out and choose to be poor. In that sense, they have the responsibility for their own condition. The term also “normalizes” poverty by comparing the members of the group with the other, “decent” poor, who manage to make both ends meet somehow and do not resort to any ‘illegal’ or ‘intolerable’ ways. Since poverty is a matter of choice,

there has been an increase in the number of private security companies and various self-security products, which points to the ‘commercialization of security’.

In that sense, it can be argued that the changes in the policing strategies and perception of crime is closely interrelated with the re-organization of space in the last three decades. Stigmatizing certain areas as criminogenic, developing certain protective strategies such as gated communities and private parks, and expelling lower classes and marginalized segments of the society like immigrants and ethnic minorities from decaying inner city and squatter neighborhoods to open them to the market through gentrification and urban transformation projects, in short, new forms of urban segregation are reinforced by the new perceptions of crime and criminal – dangerous, uncanny masses with a ‘potential to do harm’ that should be kept under control or contained in certain areas. In that sense, the changes in the patterns of urban segregation in Turkey is also parallel with the changing logic of security and perceptions of threat regarding the changing demographic composition of the urban poor due to the recent migration waves from the Eastern and Southeastern regions.

2.2 Patterns of Urban Segregation in Relation to the Changes in the Punitive and Policing Measures in Turkey - Periods and Tendencies

In Turkey, urban segregation dates back to the 1950s, to the first mass migrations from the rural areas to the cities. However, until the 1980s, cities displayed a more or less heterogeneous character in terms of the living spaces of different social groups. The import substitution and developmentalist policies of the period impeded the sharpening of class polarizations and gave the working class a vital role in the survival of industrial sector.

more precisely, making the wrong choices, the ‘decent’ poor always have the chance to alter their positions and rise up in the ladders of social hierarchy. Fear is another crucial component in the mixture of feelings they evoke. They are deemed dangerous; the dangers they carry “range from outright violence, murder and robbery lurking in a dark street, through nuisance and embarrassment caused by the conscience-disturbing sight of human misery, to the ‘drag on common resources’” (Bauman, 2005: 72). Bauman (2005: 82) argues that rising crime rates have turned poverty a matter of penology instead of social policy. And with that they are excluded from the moral responsibilities of the rest of the society for ‘taking care of the weak’.

In the post-war period, Turkish economy articulated to the world capitalist system as a result of the new division of labor and restructuring of the world economy. A new agricultural policy backed by the Marshall Aid supported the rural areas against the cities. A large amount of landless peasantry created by mechanization of agriculture and disappearance of petty producing migrated to cities to constitute a great part of urban working class for the young industries. Due to the lack of infrastructural investment in the urban areas, this new excess population created their own way of accommodation – gecekondu (Şengül, 2000: 12-13).¹²

Gecekondu were built up in the outer layers of the city on public or private lands to meet the migrants' demand for shelter. From the 1950s to 1970s, cities continued to grow as 'sprawls' from center to periphery as gecekondu around different industries (Kıray, 1998). Even though there was a tension between the middle-classes and squatters at the beginning (Işık, 1995: 790-91),¹³ gecekondu soon became a settled urban phenomenon because they provided cheap labor costs for the industry. Some of the factory owners constructed and supported gecekondu around their factories (Acar, 1988: 1996). In time, the state brought infrastructural services and issued building amnesties for some gecekondu. The informal market for housing emerged as a solution to absorb the growing urban working class in need of shelter in the absence of a formal social housing policy (Kuyucu and Ünsal, 2010: 1483; Türkün, 2011: 63). Therefore, the first gecekondu built solely to provide accommodation to the new members of the working class had a "moral legitimacy" (Erder, 2001: 19; Buğra, 1998: 306).

Yet, through the end of the 1970s the position and perception of gecekondu and squatters began to change. Due to the several building amnesties on irregular housing as part of the state's populist policies¹⁴, gecekondu began to turn into multi-story apartments which made the landowners of gecekondu proprietors of

¹² Gecekondu literally means 'built-over-night' and is a peculiar Turkish term to denote squatter houses.

¹³ Akbulut and Başlık (2011: 15-16) describe the perception of gecekondu in that period as "almost paradoxical"; because it harbors both compassion and anger. Gecekondu areas were defined in terms of the degeneration of urban space and culture. Şenyapılı (2004: 9) claims that the only optimism about the gecekondu of that time was their supposed transience.

¹⁴ For a discussion on the legal amnesties on informal housing, see Ataöv and Osmay, 2007: 66.

several apartments.¹⁵ The process of apartmentalization continued in line with the middle classes' demand for housing who have fled from the urban core due to increasing rents, economic crisis, erosion of social state, and dramatic decline of wages (Türkün and Kurtuluş, 2005: 15); a process which turned gecekondu into subjects of land speculation (Akbulut and Başlık, 2011: 22).

Building amnesties and the pre-title deeds given to squatters also aimed to open these 'informal' housing areas to the market (Türkün, 2011: 65). For the 1980s were the years of adopting export-oriented, free market based economic policies. Adoption of neoliberal principles required a change in the urban form which commoditized the urban space itself. Increasing value of the urban land and the promotion of service sector resulted in the relocation of the major manufacturing industries from center to the outskirts of the city, and an appreciation of gecekondu lands. The result was the end of the 'symbiotic' relationship between the manufacturers and some of the squatters. Therefore, it can be claimed that "the main rationale" or the "moral basis" for legitimizing the gecekondu was lost (Karaman, 2008: 521; Buğra, 1998: 307).

In this new urban regime, which can be defined as a transition from a populist to a neoliberal mode in urban housing policy (Kuyucu and Ünsal, 2010: 1480), urban land is reproduced in order to be put into the market. Increasing populations of urban metropolises is one factor. In line with this, public land available for new gecekondu was depleting (Merey Enlil, 2011: 18). Once peripheral lands for gecekondu building became primary sites for urban growth, and therefore too valuable to be left to the squatters (Karaman, 2008: 521). As Buğra (1998: 311) states, the gecekondu areas "ceased to be the site of a precarious existence of marginal segments of the population". They became an invaluable source for urban land market. Rehabilitation plans for gecekondu areas were designed and implemented.

Through the 1980s and 1990s, legal reforms on urban policy pointed to a gradual decrease in central planning (Dinçer, 2011: 44). Local government reforms

¹⁵ Buğra (1998: 310) argues that tolerance, clientelism and reciprocal interests characterize the state's attitude towards gecekondu, or the informal housing sector in general. The building amnesties even became part of the state's social and redistributive policies, which in turn served to legitimize the social order and integrate the squatters to the system who sided with the leftist political organizations in the 1970s (Erman and Eken, 2004: 58; Demirtaş and Şen, 2007: 90).

increased the authority of the metropolitan municipalities and gave many powers to district municipalities, which in turn gave them an entrepreneurial role (Kuyucu and Ünsal, 2010: 1482).¹⁶ Establishment of public institutions like Mass Housing Fund (Toplu Konut Fonu) and Mass Housing Administration (MHA/TOKİ) and public banks like Estate Bank (Emlak Bankası) aimed to finance mass housing investments. However, it should be noted that the loans issued by these institutions mainly aimed middle classes, and lower income groups could not access them (Uluşan and Dülgeroğlu Yüksel, 2011: 6).

The socio-spatial segregation in the period between 1980 and 2000 had a different characteristic than the former period. Before the 1980s unsystematic sprawls in the outskirts of the city as gecekondu resulted in segregation, yet they soon integrated to the city as the gaps were filled by settlements in time (Kurtuluş, 2005b: 181). Istanbul of that period could be defined as a “softly segregated city” (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2003) because there was a kind of heterogeneity in the urban settlements in terms of the residents’ social class and status (Geniş, 2007: 775). This structure was partly carried to the 1990s when historical inner city areas were under gradual gentrification without any state intervention, therefore still embodying mixed income and class structure (Dinçer, 2010: 2). However, with the 2000s, integration ceased to be a concern for the new middle class and upper classes and became nearly impossible for the lower classes in Istanbul, which can be defined as a “shrinking city”.¹⁷

The neoliberal transformation of urban regime was not fully instituted until the term of the Justice and Development Party. The legal and institutional reforms following the economic crisis in 2001 reinforced the structural change of the system. As stated above, capital accumulation through the reproduction of urban land is a crucial strategy of neoliberal economic policies. Therefore, in this new urban regime, the aim is to renew urban space through large capital investments. Accordingly, the notion of ‘public land’ disappeared since the state announced that

¹⁶ With the Law on Development passed in 1984, the authority of planning and approval was transferred to the local authorities from the Ministry of Development and Housing (Dinçer, 2011: 44). Furthermore, legal provisions in the municipal administrations opened the way for levying new taxes and increasing existing ones (Merey Enlil, 2011: 14).

¹⁷ Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu (2008: 31) use the term to point to the increasingly concentrated living spaces for different social classes and groups.

the public lands will be sold to private persons, which eradicated any possibility for land occupation and gecekondu building (Keyder, 2005: 130). The rising property values in the urban centers¹⁸ accompanied this process and shifted focus to the historical inner city neighborhoods as potential investment areas for capital (Dinçer, 2011: 46). Thus the term ‘urban transformation’ came to the agenda for the first time in the early 2000s. New legal arrangements in the zoning law and urban planning were made for the state to fund and support the private sector to re-shape and restructure the urban space, and to facilitate the operations and enlarge the available spaces for capital (Aksoy, 2008: 2).¹⁹ The MHA was restructured and became one of the major real estate actors in the country after the amendment in the MHA Law. It gained immense regulatory and financial powers and turned out to be a primary agent of neoliberal land regime (Kuyucu and Ünsal, 2010: 1485).²⁰

Consecutive laws accelerated the commodification of urban land and facilitated the capital’s entry to the area. The (new) Criminal Code passed in 2004 (Law no. 5237) made gecekondu construction a criminal offence to be punished by five years of prison sentence, and usage of unregistered electricity would be sentenced to imprisonment from three years to seven years. One year later, in 2005, Act on the Renewal and Re-use of Deteriorated Historic Building Stock (Law no. 5366 – ‘Law on Renewal’ hereafter) and the new Municipality Law (Law no. 5393) are issued to overcome the legal restraints on the local authorities to transform unproductive urban land (Aksoy, 2008: 6-7), and allow for the state to intervene when “market forces alone are not sufficient or too slow to gentrify them” (Merey Enlil, 2011: 21).

Housing finance sector was also a part of this broader transformation and restructuring process. With the Law no. 5582 passed in 2007, the ‘mortgage system’ is institutionalized, which resulted in the exclusion of the lower classes from most of the housing market due to high inflation and interest rates (Kuyucu and Ünsal,

¹⁸ The property values in Istanbul tripled between 2001 and 2008 (Karaman, 2008: 521).

¹⁹ After the broadening of the powers of Privatization Administration in 1994, an amendment transferred the authority to make and approve plans of privatization from the local authorities to the High Council of Privatization. With this amendment, property owners in the city centers gained exceptional rights *vis-à-vis* the legal planning authorities (Dinçer, 2011: 44).

²⁰ Among these powers are ‘the authority to construct ‘for-profit’ housing on state land’, ‘the power of planning and zoning in gecekondu transformation areas’ and ‘the right to expropriate property there’ (Kuyucu and Ünsal, 2010: 1485).

2010: 1485). Furthermore, the mass housing projects designed for the urban poor on the outskirts of the city are too far from the city center and away from their workplaces, which adds another dimension to the unavailability of the housing in question for the lower classes (Uluşan and Dülgeroğlu Yüksel, 2011: 9).

In short, in the 2000s, state's role in the reformation of urban space turned into a facilitator of capital accumulation in the inner city areas with their great potential of cultural, historical and geographical value. The fact that the JDP has been a majority party during its terms made it a lot easier to pass laws on urban politics without any concession or compromise. Accordingly, the legal reforms were made smoothly and ensured the clearance of barriers for the private investments to enter these areas. Gecekondu areas and decayed inner city areas are renewed and transformed to open space for middle and upper classes in search of secured, homogeneous living spaces leading to the sharpening of urban segregation. During the process, however, socio-economic and cultural conditions of the current inhabitants are totally ignored and they are excluded. JDP's harsh deregulation policies and neoliberalization of the system further deepened the problem of poverty. As Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu (2008: 41) state concisely, neoliberal urbanism creates both "spaces of exclusion" and "exclusionary spaces".

Gated communities and urban transformation projects in decaying inner city and gecekondu neighborhoods are the two particular manifestations of urban segregation in Turkey. In both of them discourse of security played a key role in their advertisements and presentation. Gated communities are presented as 'secure islands' vis-à-vis the dangers posed by the uncanny, threatening urban poor in the city centers, and urban transformation projects are defended on the grounds that they would put an end to the illegal, even terrorist activities in the decayed inner city and gecekondu areas. In that sense, they are both presented as remedies to the increasing urban street crimes that have been terrorizing the cities in the last couple of decades.

2.2.1 Gated Communities: 'Letting the Right Ones in'

In the early 1990s, in Turkish metropolitan areas and especially in İstanbul, a new form of urban settlement emerged. Built for the new middle class and upper classes, these "satellite towns", "gated communities" or "fortified enclaves"

(Caldeira, 1996: 55) furthered and solidified socio-spatial segregation²¹. The proliferation of gated communities is commonly explained by many authors in terms of the rise of a new middle class working mostly in service sector (finance, tourism, public relations, etc.) and their demand for social and spatial segregation from the traditional middle class as well as meeting the demands of an upper class integrating to global consumption patterns and in search for distinction (Danış, 2001: 153; Bali, 2004; Kurtuluş, 2005b; Geniş, 2007).²² These new segments of the society have global consumption habits and life styles, in that sense they are in search of spending their time in homes, shopping malls, restaurants, recreational places that are the replicas of the ones in other globalizing cities of the world (Keyder, 2005: 124; Bali, 2004). Furthermore, disturbed by the sharpening class polarization, rapidly impoverishing lower classes, their threatening potential and “vivid images of poverty” (Ayata, 2002: 28) in the city, the new middle class and upper classes created their own private urban spaces “surrounded with mental and real walls” (Gürbilek, 2001). However, that very exact segregation makes the gated communities post-urban, if not anti-urban:

These satellite towns are both post-urban and post-urbane. It is post-urban in that it promotes the idea of a kind of composite of suburban and rural living – the “refined” country life of Western Europe and the US, of course, not the “backward” and “ignorant” country life of Anatolia. It is post-urbane because it is turning its back on what has, historically, made metropolitan Istanbul a civilized and challenging culture in which to live (Aksoy and Robbins, 1994: 68).

The state of “post-urbanity” is also what makes gated communities “non-places” as Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu (2008: 32) states; places with no individual history and identity which makes them replicable endlessly.

The number of gated communities only in Istanbul is estimated to be around 650 by the end of 2005 (Geniş, 2007: 776), and another 552 were put on the market

²¹ Another option which became popular among the new middle class and upper class single young professionals or couples with no children since the 2000s is the luxurious, multi-story residences, built closer to the city center. Defined as “fully serviced condominium flats”, “gated towers” or “vertical gated developments”, residences are multi-functioned and secured like satellite towns, but concentrated in one or two buildings (Gökgür, 2006: 143; Pérouse, 2012: 85). By 2012, 90 luxurious multi-story residences were recorded in Istanbul, excluding the ones under construction. In Pérouse’s (2012: 92) words, multi-story residences offer a “remote and protected consumption of the city”.

²² It is argued that after the 2008 crisis, construction companies reduced the price of the houses and widened their customer profile to include the middle classes such as middle-ranged professionals, civil-servants, and other paid laborers. Of course, this brought a reconceptualization and reorganization of the image of gated communities (Aydm, 2012: 97).

between 2005 and 2009 (Aydın, 2012: 97).²³ In İzmir, the number has reached to 310 by 2012 (Akyol Altun, 2012: 49). They could be defined as ‘semi-autonomous’ from public urban authority, in which urban governance is mostly privatized (Kurtuluş, 2005b: 164; Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu, 2008: 5). They are even defined by their designers as “self-contained citylings within the city” (Bali, 2004: 121).²⁴ Geniş (2007: 778) argues that the proliferation of gated communities is related with the large public investments made to urban infrastructure starting from the mid-1980s. It enabled the large companies to “colonize the periphery” – formerly closed to building like green areas, agricultural lands, water basins, etc.- as well as the low-income inner city areas. Working closely with international firms, they acclaimed certain titles and prizes which reinforce the global iconic image of the gated communities.

Living in gated communities provides a sense of shared identity for its residents on the basis of income. The offered life style claims to homogenize an otherwise heterogeneous new middle and upper class through “buying a spatial identity” (Kurtuluş, 2005a: 101)²⁵, which plays a key role in the integration to the new global consumption culture. Aksoy and Robbins (1994: 62) argue that “the sanitized image of elite urbanity” is a crucial prerequisite to be a part of the global culture. In that sense, gated communities became a cultural icon and a global commodity to be consumed by urban elites (Geniş, 2007: 771). Etöz (2000: 49) defines the new middle class and upper classes within these new consumption patterns as

²³ For the types of gated communities in Istanbul according to their physical structure and land use, see Baycan Levent and Gülümser, 2004.

²⁴ For example, Bahçeşehir, the first example of gated communities in İstanbul became a town municipality in 1998. Yet until then, from the first settlements in 1994, many urban services like water and natural gas, collecting garbage, transportation and security were provided by YÖNAŞ, a private company (Danış, 2001: 152). Similarly, Kemer Country became a district of Göktürk municipality in 1994. It has its own governing body, security forces and infrastructural services (Geniş, 2007: 788).

²⁵ The ‘shared identity’ claimed to be offered to a select elite is ensured through the admission procedures of certain gated communities. For example, in Kemer Country unknown applicants have to undergo a strict evaluation process in which their economic, cultural and symbolic capital is scrutinized. Education level and occupation as well as income are parts of this process. Most of the time references are required to assess the applicant’s credibility (Geniş, 2007: 784). And if the residents do not like the neighbor candidates, they have a right to veto the sale (Bali, 2004: 118). It is reported that in some gated communities, houses were sold to the *crème de la crème* of the society with a very low profit margin to make the housing complexes more attractive (Bali, 2004: 112). However, it should be noted that the so-called identity is also conflictual because many case studies conducted on the residents of some gated communities reveal that there are certain “intra-class conflicts”: culture, education, hometown, etc. (Tanülkü, 2012; Doğan, 2012).

“consumption aesthetes”. The end of the 1990s witnessed the real boom in gated community projects, which also marks Turkey’s integration to the global markets (Kurtuluş, 2005b: 165). In this sense, identity, or ‘myth’ as Öncü (1999: 95) states, of “a true Istanbulite” is constructed through spatial consumption patterns.

(In)security is presented as a major motive behind the gated communities.²⁶ As Caldeira (1996: 55) states, urban fear is a powerful legitimizing tool for spatial segregation. New middle classes’ aspirations for a “secure” environment range from avoiding the pollution of the streets to prevent any type of violence and crime. Since street is a heterogeneous space, open to everyone, it always embodies a potential threat. In Ayata’s (2002: 38) words, “urban masses are defined as instinctive, highly emotional, high-tempered, ill-mannered, and therefore insufficiently civilized”. The disturbance created by this crowd was even expressed by defining them as “the freaks coming from the mountains” (Bali, 2004: 136). There is a strong emphasis on “order” in both physical and metaphorical sense and the street in particular and city in general is on the opposite side. As stated in a presentation of Kemer Country, “The city has deteriorated willy-nilly under the pressure of the dark crowds” (Bali, 2004: 117). Especially in the 1990s, when urban metropolises in Turkey, and İstanbul particularly became more heterogeneous than ever, city became a potential threat to the new middle classes’ so-called “cherished purity of ‘Westernized’ way of life” (Öncü, 1997: 69). As a “jungle”, city is a “densely populated place of immense variety, constant struggle and great disorder, where contact with strangers can be dangerous” (Ayata, 2002: 29). In this sense, segregation seems to be the cure to “disorderliness”:

In the fragmented city, encounters between different groups are increasingly marked by tension, suspicion and discrimination, and the promise of incorporation tends to wane as groups emphasize their irreconcilable differences (Ayata, 2002: 25).

New strategies of protection emerged from changes in the urban landscape to everyday use of the streets and public transportation (Caldeira, 1996: 60).²⁷ Being

²⁶ Earthquake risk in Istanbul can be counted amongst other security concerns. It is especially underlined in many advertisements of gated communities that they were built on firm ground and they are earthquake-resistant (Öncel and Özeydin, 2012: 63).

²⁷ For example, Kemer Country is connected to the highway by a newly-built junction, which enables the residents to by-pass the local settlements while going to the city (Geniş, 2007: 781). Davis (2006: 118) defines highways as the “*sine qua non*” of suburbanization in the sense that they provide ways for the residents of the suburbs to break away from the city.

part of these strategies, the gated communities are defined as “isles of security” (Pérouse and Daniş, 2005: 92) or “security enclaves” (Geniş, 2007: 790). In order to protect this new way of life, these settlements are all walled-up and illuminated against the intrusion of undesired outsiders. Private guards control the entrances as well as patrolling the area 24 hours a day. And they are protected by high-technology security systems and surveillance mechanisms like CCTV or thermal cameras. There are even moats around some of these residences (Pérouse, 2011: 143). In collaboration with the local legal authorities, parts of the city are put under the protection of some paid, private keepers.²⁸ Referring to their closed, even sealed nature, Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu (2008: 30) define gated communities as “inward-looking spaces”.

Even though need for security is used to legitimize segregation and isolation, ethnic, racial or class violence is rare in Turkish metropolises compared to the US, South America, or Africa (Kurtuluş, 2005b: 168). Many authors argue that security is a secondary motive for gated communities compared to the necessities of integration to global consumption patterns and appreciation of urban space due to neoliberal economic policies (Kurtuluş, 2005b; Geniş, 2007). For example, in Kemer Country, residents did not count ‘security’ among their prior motives in choosing to live there (Geniş, 2007: 791). It is even argued that search for new security measures and technologies deepen as a result of a threat of urban violence created by this new social exclusion at first; so, ironically, fear turns out to be the result of living in a gated community (Kurtuluş, 2005b: 184; Geniş, 2007: 773). In a similar vein, it is reasonable to claim that gated communities are turned into possible targets by fencing, walling them up (Pérouse, 2011: 170). On the other hand, the spatial proximity of some gated communities to low-income settlements or *gecekondu* neighborhoods appear threatening at first sight; yet it should be noted

²⁸ It is worth noting here the role of the private security companies in the discourse of fear. Pérouse (2011: 170) reminds that security companies increase their endorsements not because of increasing crime rates but because of increasing fear of crime. However, as one could guess easily, when the definition of crime and the criminal is left to some private sectors instead of the public authorities, a very dangerous social defragmentation should be expected (Pérouse & Daniş, 2005: 119). In a similar vein, Bora (2007: 58, 60) argues that private security means the privatization of the monopoly of violence; even though the private bodies authorized to use violence are subject to public authority, they are still responsible to an employer. The rationality behind the private security is that security ceases to be general public service and turns into a commodity to be sold and bought by the people who have the means. In the same framework, different standards for security are publicly acknowledged, undermining the principles of equality and justice.

that the lower classes of these areas provide a cheap labor stock for the residents of the gated communities (Geniş, 2007: 777). In parallel, in a case study conducted in upper class residences in Göktürk, it is observed that while the residents are indifferent to lower class people working in their service in the compounds, their perception of the ‘other’ members of the lower class are shaped by anxiety and fear, mostly directed by the representations in the media (Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu, 2008: 34). An interviewee living in Göktürk residences expresses these feelings in the following words:

Once I was in the car driving up Hacı Hüsrev towards Dolapdere. There was traffic. I sensed that this young boy, who looked as if he was high from sniffing glue, was walking towards my car. I felt that he was not going to pass me by. As he was closing in, I immediately checked the rear mirror and saw that his friend was approaching from the back. All this takes place in a matter of seconds. Neither of course will be able to break my rear window or windshield. But still they will be able to upset me and get on my nerves. I drove away so fast and you know I am a good driver and can control the car very well. Of course there was the possibility of driving over the foot of the boy standing nearby, but still, knowing that possibility I pushed hard on the gas pedal. I did not care a jot if I were to run over his foot because at that moment I was thinking only about myself. It was not important at all if the boy was to be run over (Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu, 2008: 35).

For the upper class residents of Göktürk, the people living in the nearby Göktürk village are a source of danger and they are potential criminals. They by and large ground their perception on the people’s ethnic background and their lower economic status:

They lack norms and values, in a way they are worthless people. He lives in a gecekondu and wears a fake Rolex watch that he bought for one lira. This boy is capable of doing everything to my daughter (Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu, 2008: 36).

The notions of security and order intersect at the ideal of home and family. As Fishman (1996: 24) indicates middle-class house is the core of bourgeois society. In satellite towns like Kemer Country and Bahçeşehir, most of the residents are nucleus families rather than careerist, bohemian, single professionals (Danış, 2001: 155, fn. 5). The ‘quartered life’ (Öncü, 1997: 58) at home, meaning a kind of functional division between different rooms/quarters, is reflected on different living quarters within the city. In what can be defined as “zoning logic”, the once multi-functional spaces within the city are becoming increasingly fragmented and segregated (Aksoy and Robbins, 1994: 58). Öncü (1997: 61) defines the “ideal home” as follows:

It is the symbol of middle class desire and aspirations for “a homogeneity of a life-style cleansed of urban clutter – of poverty, of immigrants, of elbowing crowds, dirt and traffic – a world of safe and antiseptic social spaces with clean air, clean water, healthy lives.

Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu (2008: 39-40) argue that bourgeois ideal of home turns the gated communities into “homes” – the “ideal homes of neoliberal urbanization” (Aydın, 2012: 101):

A new kind of “urban freedom” which is actually the reverse of anonymity, heterogeneity, invisibility, and the riches that cosmopolitan existences offer. Instead, freedom is searched and found in intimacies, familiarity and new forms of visibility that makes surveillance possible. One can observe the neighbor’s life not only from the window, but also at the club house, at the gym, at one’s children’s basketball practice, in the shopping mall, or the restaurant (Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu, 2008: 39-40).

The notion of ‘health’ is crucial in the advertisements of the satellite towns. Recreational activities usually focus on the maintenance of the body. Geniş (2007: 787) claims that a healthy and disciplined body is presented as a marker of cultural and moral superiority. And on the opposite side of the healthy and orderly body of the residents of gated communities lies the “loose, dirty and weary appearance of the urban crowd” (Ayata, 2002: 39). Öncü (1997: 63) argues that contrast between ‘nature’ and ‘pollution’ is a frequent theme in the advertisements. The notion “dirty-fied” implies “everything that is wrong with” the city: “air pollution, traffic pollution, noise pollution, and, most important, cultural pollution” (Öncü, 1997: 65).

The ‘sense of neighborhood’ is a common theme in advertising gated communities. As Bali (2004: 114) states, the new elite are yearning for the old neighborhoods of Istanbul. For example, unlike its counterparts in the USA, Kemer Country is presented as “a new neighborhood”, not a “bedroom community” (Bartu, 2001: 146). However, the advertised particular life style based on this “sense of neighborhood” is an exclusionary, isolated one and represent segregation as a marker of social status and distinction even though “plurality”, “diversity” and “difference” are frequently emphasized (Bartu, 2001: 149). Ayata (2002: 28) argues that the new middle classes favor a kind of diversity and plurality that are found in the cosmopolitan European and American cities, not the unstable and unpredictable environment of the ‘uncivilized’ masses in Turkish metropolises. There is a great sensitivity about “letting the right ones in and leaving the others

out” (Danış, 2001: 155).²⁹ In this sense, being very close to Istanbul but still outside of it is a common and crucial notion (Öncü, 1997: 62). The city is portrayed as a “cursed, unlivable” place, a mixture of every possible and imaginable danger in the advertisements (Pérouse, 2011: 166).³⁰ Fear of and anxiety about the ‘dangerous outsider’ is explicit in these lines from the advertisement brochure:

Being so close to İstanbul is an important problem for Kemer Country. This may both be an advantage and a danger. We have to do our best to protect Kemer Country from a possibility of invasion from the city. It is not enough to create a civilized neighborhood. The real skill is protecting it (quoted in Bartu, 2001: 148).

In that sense, it can be argued that all the security measures taken including walls, fences, guards, surveillance systems are installed to protect a certain way of life with all its facilities from unwanted guests – the lower classes – and promote the sense of exclusiveness, rather than protection from crime. Ensuring exclusiveness turns out to be “a financial and administrative necessity”, as defined by Geniş (2007: 791).

2.2.2 Urban Transformation Projects: “Getting Rid of the Gangrene”³¹

Rise of the service sector in the post-1980 period also turned attention to decaying historical inner city neighborhoods which have been left unattended for so long. A process of deindustrialization has begun in the inner city because industrial sector ceased to be a principal economic activity to be replaced by finance and service

²⁹ The same exclusionary discourse is produced on a higher level in terms of Anatolian migrants and Istanbul. Pérouse (2011: 387) gives examples from various plans and projects about controlling the entries to Istanbul since the 1970s: placing barriers to city entrances, requiring a “document of native-born of Istanbul” for benefiting from social security, etc. The project aiming for the Kurdish migrants to return to their villages in the East can be considered within this context.

³⁰ Pérouse (2011: 183) claims that the advertising principle of the gated communities is built on a “discourse of risks”. The risks include theft, physical assault, technical and environmental risks and social difference risk. The risks might even be considered as the gated communities’ ‘principle of existence’.

³¹ Quotation from Beyoğlu Mayor’s statement describing the urban transformation project in Tarlabası: “We especially chose 278 buildings in Tarlabası which are abandoned, scarcely inhabited, on the verge of collapsing. They would perish any moment. Therefore, we should get rid of the most gangrene part first.” (Kentsel dönüşüm başladı, Sabah, 26.08.2010)

sectors.³² Hence large factories and other manufacturing complexes moved to the outskirts of the city (Şen, 2011: 2, 10). In time, inner city areas decayed rapidly and turned out to be the refuge of lower classes including Kurdish migrants and Romany people, illegal foreign immigrants³³, and marginalized groups such as transvestites, transsexuals, prostitutes and drug traffickers. They formed neighborhoods similar to the lower class ethnic and racial minority ghettos in the west.

However, as a result of the neoliberal economic restructuring that made urban space an actor of capital accumulation, deindustrialized, scarcely inhabited, historical inner city areas' potential for large urban projects is discovered in the early 2000s. And when it is combined with an aim to make Istanbul a global financial and touristic center, the need to 'advance' its image and make it 'marketable' as a world city,³⁴ or "aesthetized commodity" as Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu (2008: 13) put forward, emerged.³⁵ Thus, decayed inner city areas are considered as "eyesores that actively undercut Istanbul's global city bid" (Karaman, 2008: 518), which needs to be cleared and rebuilt. Within this aim local governments sought to attract the capital and the new middle class and upper classes back to the urban core through renewing and gentrifying these areas.³⁶ For

³² Between 1980 and 1990, employment in finance increased by 37%, insurance by 36%, real-estate and business services by 220%, consumer services by 65.5% and retailing activities by 77.5% (Merey Enlil, 2011: 15).

³³ Foreign immigrants constitute a considerable amount of the urban poor in İstanbul. Since the 1980s, Turkey has been a bridge in illegal international immigration. The illegal immigrants concentrate in the inner parts of the city, in neighborhoods like Harbiye, Elmadağ, Tarlabası and Cihangir. Mostly African and Northern Iraqi migrants form new ghettos in older neighborhoods (Türkün and Kurtuluş, 2005: 16). Özdil (2007: 104) argues that illegal immigrants hide in the corners of the city that are far from the gaze of the dominant classes to avoid social exclusion.

³⁴ The debate on Istanbul being a global city dates back to the early 1990s (Keyder and Öncü, 1993; Keyder, 1994). Within this model, increasing income polarization is presented as an outcome of the process.

³⁵ It can be argued that the aim to integrate Istanbul to the global markets dates back to early 1980s, to the Act on the Promotion of Tourism in 1982. With this law, the central government gained the authority to declare certain sites as 'Tourism Centers' and by-pass local regulations (Merey Enlil, 2011: 15).

³⁶ Urban renewal projects in the historical inner city areas are not peculiar to Istanbul. For example, Fevzipaşa District, a historical Roma settlement in Çanakkale by the Marmara Sea, was declared as "a special project area" in 1996. Ever since, the main street was pedestrianized and the surroundings turned into touristic centers (Başaran Uysal et al, 2011). A similar urban transformation project is currently at work in Samanpazarı and Hamamönü, and another one in Çiçin Bağları has recently come to agenda, which are historical neighborhoods around Ankara Castle and sheltering urban poor for decades. These areas are also among the most popular destinations of Eastern and Southeastern migrants, who live under extreme conditions of poverty (Altuntaş, 2003: 165).

there emerged a need for housing in the city center for the new middle class, in order to be closer to their offices in the newly developing sectors and to the socio-cultural activities (Baykal, 2009: 127).³⁷ On the other hand, gecekondur neighborhoods located at the outskirts of the city before turned out to be areas close to the center due to increasing population and expanding borders. Therefore, a second tendency in urban transformation is the renewal of the gecekondur neighborhoods, values of which keep increasing every day. In both cases, one can speak of “a new political and elite consensus” which insists that both the gecekondur areas and the decaying inner city neighborhoods are in need of transformation and urgent action (Türkün, 2011: 65).

First traces of urban transformation in Istanbul are the gentrification of old historical neighborhoods by the artists and intellectuals. Gentrification is defined as the socio-spatial transformation of decayed historical inner city areas through physical rehabilitation and the eventual dislocation of lower class and marginalized groups by a new middle class or upper classes.³⁸ This inwards move also has to do with the increasing costs of urban expansion and reaching the outer limits of the city (Şen, 2005: 129). Gentrification in Istanbul dates back to the 1980s to be seen in Kuzguncuk and Ortaköy, initiated by some artists and architects. Then it spread to Beyoğlu in the 1990s, to be followed by other neighborhoods in the Historical Peninsula such as Galata, Cihangir, Asmalımescit and Fener-Balat³⁹ (Ergun, 2004: 393; Baykal, 2009: 127), which are all located at the shores of Bosphorus and Golden Horn and in that sense, very valuable.⁴⁰ Nearly all of these neighborhoods

³⁷ Luxurious multi-story residences located in or near the city center are counted as another indicator of the upper classes' aspirations for returning to urban centers (Pérouse, 2012: 86). Contrary to the discourse of “escape from the city”, returning to it is promoted; because parallel to the advance of international tourism, historical urban centers become new areas of investment and consumption (Pérouse, 2012: 93).

³⁸ The term was first used to describe the process of middle class invasion of the London's inner city working class neighborhoods in the 1960s (Behar and Pérouse, 2006: 2).

³⁹ Among these, Fener-Balat has a special position because a project was first designed and funded by UNESCO in 1997, called “Fener-Balat Rehabilitation Project”, to protect the district's historical and cultural heritage. Later on, a different transformation project came to the agenda in the 2000s during the term of the JDP. Despite of the decree of nullity issued by Istanbul 5th Administrative Court in June 2012 on the grounds that “there is no public interest” in the project, the Council of Ministers decided to apply urgent expropriation in the district, just as they did in Sulukule and Tarlabası (Fener-Balat-Ayvansaray'a acil kamulaştırma, Sabah, 12.10.2012).

⁴⁰ The shores of Golden Horn have been an important center of industrialization since the 1950s. The ‘cleansing’ of industry started during the term of Mayor Dalan, when most of the manufacture

were inhabited by non-Muslim communities such as Jews, Greeks and Armenians until the 1960s. When these communities left, the districts were taken by migrants from Anatolia, who later moved to gecekondü districts in the periphery. After then, they became home to (mainly Eastern and Southeastern) migrants with no strong networks, illegal immigrants, the Roma, and marginalized groups which put them into the process of dilapidation and decay.⁴¹

An important aspect of gentrification is real estate speculation. Needless to say, there has been a huge increase in the price of land and property in these neighborhoods. And the speculators have been persistent on the idea that renovation of the residents was as important as the renovation of buildings. The gentrification process is usually accompanied by an Istanbul nostalgia; a yearning for “past people and empty buildings, and vilifying today’s repulsive Istanbul full of “vulgar” people” (Pérouse, 2011: 21).⁴² The target of old Istanbul nostalgia was mainly South-Eastern migrants and their peculiar culture – sometimes defined as Arabesk culture. Pre-migration period is wrongfully assumed as peaceful and unproblematic; the migrants are defined as troubled people ‘ruining the order’

and industrial business were sent away to the outskirts in the mid-1980s (Merey Enlil, 2011: 17). The newly opened lands were turned into wide roads and green spaces. The aim was to make the surroundings of Golden Horn a touristic area (Bezmez, 2008: 817).

⁴¹ The social groups in question can be defined as the “new urban poor” and their socio-economic conditions display a rupture between the old “urban poor-gecekondü” pair. The new poor are unable to afford the rents of gecekondüs owned by previous migrants, let alone building their own ones due to the new land regime. In that sense, taking refuge in the desolate, nearly-wrecked buildings in the old historical neighborhoods turns out to be their only option. As Karatay (2000a: 434) expresses wittily, “The new urban poor are not rich enough to live in gecekondüs!”

⁴² In the mid-1990s, the then Istanbul Chief of Police Necdet Menzir’s “cleansing operations” in Beyoğlu before the Habitat II Conference in 1996 can be considered as part of this attitude. In order to get rid of the ‘dirt’ which destroys the delicate fabric and view of the city, the transvestites and transsexuals, thinner-addict children, beggars and the underclass poor were expelled from the city center. A newspaper article elaborated the event as follows: “The policemen acting on the Istanbul Chief of Police Necdet Menzir’s order that, “All the dirt will be removed. Beyoğlu will be a place where gentlemen wearing neckties walk” (smashed) the locked iron doors by (tools like) hatchets and sledgehammers” (quoted in Kozanoğlu, 1995: 107). Nevertheless, it is known that Beyoğlu has been a center of entertainment since the Ottoman period and therefore included both elegant night clubs and cheap brothels at the same time. The process of decaying started in the early republican era after many foreigners and Levantines abandoned the area. Especially after the 6-7 September incidents in 1955, the Greek population have left the area and Beyoğlu turned into a center of “honky-tonk” (Ünlü et al, 2000: 21). And after the WWII, there was an increase in prostitution to meet the demand of the nouveau riches that flooded the neighborhood. Luxurious brothels were soon replaced by cheaper and more ‘local’ ones. In terms of the transvestites and gay prostitutes, Selek (2011: 116) mentions a group of houses serving as gay brothels in Tarlabası. The area was commonly known as “The Dumpster” (*Çöplük*) and eventually shut down by the 12 September coup. The point here is that the nostalgic discourse on Beyoğlu and its vicinity reads the history in a selective manner, ignoring any “disturbing” parts and elements.

(Pérouse, 2011: 107). In that sense, gentrification “sanitizes” the historical inner city and opens it to the use of the new middle class and upper classes (Tok and Oğuz, 2012: 4). For example, a member of Volunteers of Fener and Balat Association Board, Hikmet Bardak mentioned that the current residents of the area did not fit with its fabric and they are ‘invaders’. He stated that highly-educated people would move to the area and make it a popular cultural center like Cihangir. That’s why they have been choosing ‘Istanbulites’ while selling or renting houses.⁴³ The discourse on the ‘incompatibility’ of current residents with the ‘desired and aimed urban culture’ for gentrified areas is observable in many field researches conducted in these areas. Impressions from two different researches in Fener-Balat are good examples of this discourse:

People of this area seem to have socially and religiously conservative values as a result of *socio-cultural backwardness*. In Balat and Fener, *where ladies with mink furs used to walk*, most women wear long skirts and blouses made of cotton in summer and flannel in winter. Most of them wear traditional cotton headscarves; some wear long black garments and some other prefer long surcoats and turban. It is said that women with modern clothing are not welcome. (...) *Similar to a socially conservative rural town*, in Balat and Fener people do not lack urban culture. But it is hidden deep down, and you can only see it as you get to know them. Admitting us to their homes, answering our questions, showing us their houses and telling their problems frankly *in a civilized manner*, these people could be integrated to urban culture with a project which would *sanitize their houses* and provide them with urban equipment (Narlı, 2006: 121).⁴⁴

One of the prominent tradesmen of Balat expresses his hope that Eastern people who came to the area with the last migration waves would be unable to survive in the neighborhood as a result of the UNESCO project. Several times during the interview, he said that these Eastern migrants do not consume; they are even unable to read the price tags. Thus they do not constitute a consumer profile for Balat tradesmen (İlyasoğlu and Soytemel, 2006: 133).

With the 2000s, the unsystematic, spontaneous process of gentrification turned into a state policy. As mentioned before, a series of legal reforms were made to open the inert urban land to capital investments. With the Law on Renewal, public plots, old industrial zones, harbors, historical neighborhoods and old gecekondü areas are included in urban renewal; and with the new Municipality Law, district municipalities are given the authority to carry out transformation projects in the indicated parts of the cities (Kuyucu and Ünsal, 2010: 1484).⁴⁵ The most debated

⁴³ 18.05.2003, Akşam.

⁴⁴ Emphases are mine.

⁴⁵ “According to the Law on Renewal, local authorities are the sole decision-makers in determining the boundaries of renewal areas, establishing the general framework of the project, selecting the

and contested part of the Law on Renewal is that the local administrations are given the authority to realize ‘urgent expropriation’ if an agreement could not be reached with the property owners according to the Article 3 of Expropriation Law (no. 2942). It is important to indicate here is that urgent expropriation is designed to be used in case of natural disasters and war. Although the law asserts that mutual agreement between the property owner and the legal authority is required for removing tenants or demolishing buildings, it also opens the way to expropriation if no agreement is reached. In that case, the public authorities gain the right to confiscate property and sell it to the third parties (Dinçer, 2011: 47). Therefore, dwellers of these areas are subject to voluntary or involuntary displacement with respect to their agreement conditions with the local authorities. And since the urban poor living in the decaying urban core have limited means for housing options, they are displaced and driven into new zones of poverty.

Either voluntary or involuntary, displacement narrowed job opportunities for the lower classes and marginalized the inhabitants of these areas. Informal jobs they commonly do like peddling, house cleaning, childcare and scavenging are mostly concentrated at the city center (Şen, 2011: 17).⁴⁶ Neglect of socio-economic and cultural outcomes and the eventual lack of social programs exacerbate the difficult condition of the inhabitants. On the other hand, deindustrialization did not move some small and medium-sized sectors from the central areas such as subcontractors of textile and clothing, which provide living for an important part of the working class in Istanbul (Türkün, 2011: 65). Therefore, urban transformation projects have an accelerating effect in the deepening of urban poverty by impoverishing the urban poor further and even making them “invisible” by driving them away to the farthest corners of the city (Özgen, 2001: 89; Şen, 2005: 128).

There are currently various urban transformation projects in Istanbul at work and many are planned including the ones for Hacıhüsrev, a Roma neighborhood near Beyoğlu, various parts of Gaziosmanpaşa including Bursa and Sarıgöl

institution that will implement the project, and choosing the financial modal within which the project will be carried out” (Dinçer, 2011: 47).

⁴⁶ For example, a study made on the children working on the streets of Ankara revealed that Kurdish and Roma children dominate the scavenging business in the most central areas like Kızılay, Bakanlıklar and Tunalı Hilmi (Altıntaş, 2003: 179). Altıntaş (2003: 241) states that among various jobs children do on the streets, Kurdish migrant children do the worst and hardest ones such as scavenging and selling tissues.

neighborhoods and Karabayır in Esenler. Among the ones continuing in decaying inner city neighborhoods, two examples, namely Sulukule and Tarlabası step forward due to the publicity of the process and the socio-cultural identity and economic status of their inhabitants. Urban transformation project in Sulukule has been carried out under the jurisdiction of Fatih Municipality.⁴⁷ The neighborhood has been a Roma settlement for centuries and was declared as an area under protection in 1995, and a regeneration area in 2006. Its central location and proximity to main axes makes it very valuable. The physical and social decline of the area dates back to the early 1980s, to the migration wave from the Eastern regions. Some of the residents claim that the newcomers were the reason for the “moral corruption” of the neighborhood and the ‘entertainment houses’⁴⁸ because “they were destitute enough to be willing to engage in prostitution” and petty crime (Karaman and İslam, 2012: 235). Entertainment has been the main economic activity since most of the Roma have been making their living as musicians and dancers. Therefore, the area’s economic decline accelerated with the closing down of entertainment houses by the end of the 1990s on the grounds that they have become centers of illegal activities like prostitution and drug-dealing. And the impoverished and unemployed forced migrants from Eastern regions took refuge in some of the desolate entertainment houses (Somersan and Kırca-Schroeder, 2007: 101). This added a new dimension to the increasing stigmatization and criminalization of Sulukule by the official authorities (Dinçer, 2011: 49). The criminalization and stigmatization of the Roma people and their uneasy relationship with the official authorities have a long history,⁴⁹ and even appear in legal

⁴⁷ There are various urban renewal projects in different neighborhoods of Fatih such as Süleymaniye and Fener-Balat. They have been accommodating migrants from various parts of Anatolia. Especially the vicinity of Cibali and Balat are inhabited by migrants coming from Siirt and Batman. They are different from the migrants of Tarlabası or Gazi, and so is their portrayal in the media. Different from the politicized Kurdish migrants of Tarlabası or Alevi in Gazi, the Siirtans and Batmanians are close to the illegal Islamist organization, Hizbullah. They are supported by some local associations close to Islamist communities, which also make them different from the isolated, deprived migrants in Tarlabası (Çavdar, 2007: 62-63).

⁴⁸ Entertainment houses are “composed of rooms where groups of customers are served food and drinks as they are entertained by young girls dancing to the tunes of Roma music bands. Prototypes were established in the early 1940s and remained popular among both tourists and locals alike, providing a vital source of livelihood for the neighborhood until the late 1980s” (Karaman and İslam, 2012: 235).

⁴⁹ Somersan (2007: 726) makes note of the periodical demolitions of some of the houses in Sulukule after the 1950s emphasizing that the Roma here is trapped in a vicious circle of poverty and exclusion.

documents.⁵⁰ And in terms of Sulukule, this stigmatization gains a spatial dimension.⁵¹ There have been recurrent police raids, breaking into houses without necessary permissions, beating up and arresting residents (Somersan, 2007: 726).⁵² Somersan defines the way the Roma of Sulukule are treated as ‘structural violence’.⁵³ Their long-termed problematic relation with the state and being treated as “*persona non grata*” (Tok and Oğuz, 2012: 14) fed their feelings of insecurity and expendability worsening the ‘ghetto effect’ (Karaman and İslam, 2012: 240). People of Sulukule have a deep ‘mistrust’ for the state because they believe that they are dispensable in the eyes of the state. A Sulukule resident expresses the feeling of being discriminated by the state through referring to Sulukule as an “open prison”:

[...] two people were in an armed fight here; two women and two children were shot and lying on the street. We called the police but the police wouldn’t come...people were dying on the streets. When we asked the state [officials, for explanations], it became clear to us that they had done a prison trick to us. [i.e. just like letting two inmates fight and kill each other in a prison, *they do not interfere in our fights hoping that some of us will die*] They applied this policy to us. To be frank, this area has always been seen as an open prison. *This is an open prison in the minds of the state* (Karaman and İslam, 2012: 240).⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Until 2006, the Settlement Law of 1934 was in effect which forbid the entry of immigrant Roma to Turkey. The same law precluded citizenship to foreign Roma besides “anarchists, spies, and those who do not belong to the Turkish culture” (Somersan and Kırca-Schroeder, 2007: 102). In addition, “in the “Ordinance regarding the public duties of police chiefs” (Polisin merasim ve topluluklardaki rolüne ve polis karakolları teşkilatlanmasına dair talimatname), “Gypsies without a real occupation” are listed among individuals “who are inclined to commit a crime” and against whom “necessary precautions should be taken”” (Karaman and İslam, 2012: 238).

⁵¹ It is a common attitude for the Roma people to hide their ethnic identity and their neighborhood to prevent being identified as potential criminals. The words of a Sulukule Roma summarize their wary attitude outside the community: “...our grandparents told us not to reveal our true identities. They also told us not to speak Romani. Because if you tell other people you are Roma, they will call you thief, they will accuse you of dealing with drugs and prostitution. Nobody will be friends with you.” (Baykal, 2009: 134).

⁵² In the early 1990s, the notorious police chief of the district Süleyman Ulusoy, a.k.a. Hortum (Hose) Süleyman, terrorized the Sulukuleans by randomly raiding the entertainment houses, beating the residents and breaking their musical instruments (Foggo, 2007: 41).

⁵³ Somersan (2007: 723, 725) uses the term ‘structural violence’ as used by Galtung to define the result of social structures which indirectly impede people from self-realization. Structural violence is most of the time directly related with the state policies, and affects the most disadvantageous segments of the society. The importance of structural violence is that it emphasizes the ‘structural’ aspect over ‘individual’ ones; therefore avoid ‘blaming the victim’ instead.

⁵⁴ Emphases are mine.

Sardonically, closing down of the entertainment houses increased illegal activities like prostitution and drug-dealing because people were cut off from their traditional livelihoods. At best they would become street-vendors since their ethnic and spatial identity blocked their chance of getting employed in steady jobs with regular income and social security. Impoverishment of the Sulukule people affected their physical environments as well. Lacking necessary economic resources, they were unable to restore and maintain their houses. All these factors led Sulukule to turn into a “no-go zone” despite of its central location and proximity to the city center (Karaman and İslam, 2012: 236).

Accordingly, Fatih Municipality built its discourse on the transformation of the area upon putting an end to the isolation of a “space of misery and immorality” (Karaman and İslam, 2012: 235). Prime Minister Erdoğan used the expression “cleaning away the monstrosity” in defining the transformation project. The municipality frequently emphasized the need for the Sulukule Roma to be integrated to the rest of the society because the residents are described as a heterogeneous, “low cultural group”, lacking “a sense of belonging to the city”.⁵⁵ The coordinator of the Sulukule Renewal Project puts this aim in a rather radical way:

It is not easy to integrate these people to society, but we have to accomplish it, in the end these are our people; we have to save them. If it was up to me, as a state policy, I would take all the kids under the age of ten from their parents, put them in boarding schools, educate them and make them members of the society. This is the only way (Karaman and İslam, 2012: 241).

The official discourse on the transformation of Sulukule relies on two different yet complementing claims. First one is the criminalization of the Roma community depending on the stereotypical characteristics of Roma such as laziness, immorality, unreliability, corruptness and dishonesty. And second one is the urgent need of integration of the Roma to the ‘society’ to strip them away from their ‘deviant behaviors’ (Karaman and İslam, 2012: 242). This claim is also linked with the need for renewing the physical environment because they are displayed as the reason of physical decay.⁵⁶ In praising the transformation project, A JDP deputy

⁵⁵ Quoted from the Fatih Municipality’s website by Uysal, 2012: 15.

⁵⁶ The municipality claims that the ambiguous property-owner relationships is the reason of physical decay since tenants and occupants do not pay attention to the repair of the buildings (quoted from the website of Fatih Municipality by Uysal, 2012: 15).

constitutes a perfect example of the discriminatory and even racist attitude of the official authorities towards the Roma:

Entertainment sector [...], that place has nothing to do with entertainment. 13, 14 and 15-year-old girls are forced into prostitution there. There is no normal entertainment there. These people have such an inclination from birth. I know that they start playing music in their primary school years, because I grew up amongst them. However, the place we call Sulukule is different, it is a hotbed of prostitution. It is the bad face of the entertainment sector. We have to change that place. Of course, we need to support the maintenance of these peoples' and let them to develop it. But, we need to save these people from the environment and I want to thank those conceptualizing the project specifically for that (quoted in Foggo, 2007: 43).

Even though the project was criticized and protested widely,⁵⁷ an “urgent expropriation” decision was issued in 2006 and all the residential buildings were demolished by the end of November 2009 to be replaced by high-quality housing. Nearly 500 families were displaced under police control; and the ones who refused to leave faced with power, water and heating cuts, and eventually expelled by the police (Uysal, 2012: 17).⁵⁸ Eviction from Sulukule had devastating effects on the Roma in terms of economic, cultural and social survival.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ A group of professionals and residents established the Sulukule Platform, which succeeded in raising awareness about the poverty and hard living conditions in the area and the need to protect the Romani culture (Dinçer, 2011: 49). The oppositional acts ranged from filing lawsuits against the local authorities to designing their own development plans and resistance against immediate demolitions (Karaman, 2008: 523).

⁵⁸ Even though the existing owners were offered new houses on the condition of paying the difference in between, most of them sold their properties to real estate speculators. The owners and tenants both were also offered MHA houses in Taşoluk and Kayabaş, km.s away from Sulukule and city center as well as basic public services (Karaman and İslam, 2012: 236). However, since the people of Sulukule do not have regular jobs and live in extreme poverty, most them could not afford to take the offers. The ones who did not move to other parts of the city built sheds in the neighborhood among the ruins and stayed there until they are evacuated (Karaman, 2008: 523-24). The ones that went to Taşoluk, on the other hand, faced fear, frustration and anger from the existing residents on the grounds that Sulukuleans were dealing with illegal activities (which is partly true since the Roma of Sulukule have been ripped off from their traditional livelihoods) (Somersan, 2007: 726). By 2011, it is reported that only one family continues to stay in Taşoluk and the rest turned to find houses in the vicinity of Sulukule, most of which had hard time to find houses because of their neighborhood identity (Ekümenopolis, 2011; Karaman and İslam, 2012: 238-39).

⁵⁹ Nearly all of the residents “live on a daily basis”, spending the money they earn during the same day because regular jobs are out of question. The local shops has been a part of this routine by selling goods in small portions and in credit. Furthermore, the physical environment and the sense of community provided them with the necessary accommodations in earning their livelihoods, such as tying up the horses of phaetons in front of the houses. The neighborhood also gave them the comfort of a community in which they could perform their cultural practices freely. The Roma people effectively used the streets by sitting and chatting in front of the houses, or loitering around. The weddings and other ceremonies were also mostly celebrated in the streets. However, outside Sulukule, in the apartment buildings in Taşoluk or somewhere else, it is nearly impossible to keep their old way of life. The neighborhood also provided them with a sense of security and protection from discrimination, hostility and repulsion outside (Karaman and İslam, 2012: 239-40). In that

The renewal project in Tarlabası, a district of Beyoğlu Municipality, which has started in 2008 and continues since then is another prominent example of urban transformation and gentrification in Istanbul.⁶⁰ The area has been in a process of decay since the early 1960s and has been one of the most popular destinations of the Kurdish migrants, illegal immigrants⁶¹ and various marginalized groups, with a very low profile in terms of social and economic capital. They rarely have steady incomes and generally no job security. Most of the people work in various informal jobs from selling stuffed mussels to scavenging. Furniture and petty ware workshops are common, and most of the property owners rent out a room or basement of their houses to these workshops or single male immigrants (Aksoy, 2008: 12). Even though the area has been in a process of decay and dilapidation for decades, its condition became more visible after the gentrification of neighboring areas like Cihangir and Galata (Kuyucu and Ünsal, 2010: 1487). The neighborhood has been criminalized and stigmatized in the official discourse and the media.⁶² Şen (2002: 188) argues that the neighborhood is perceived by the average İstanbulite as “a place of disorder, chaos, prostitution, and every type of monkey business”. This discourse contributes to the justification of the transformation project because it was presented as a project of cleansing, rehabilitation. The presence of criminal activities in the area are true to a certain extent; under conditions of extreme poverty, most of the migrants involve in crime or set their children to work to take care of their extended families. Karatay (2000a: 434) argues that most of the migrant families living in Tarlabası do not go other neighborhoods, as if they are still living in a village.⁶³ This makes them hard to find jobs or accept jobs far from

sense, even though the closed-community practices might seem isolating, they also provide a safe domain for the people to survive.

⁶⁰ Urban transformation attempts in Tarlabası date back to Istanbul Metropolitan Mayor Bedrettin Dalan, served between 1984 and 1989. During his term of office, Tarlabası Boulevard was expanded by clearing away some of the buildings (Merey Enlil, 2011: 17). Ünlü et al (2000: 31) argue that the demolition that started in 1986 aimed to get rid of the “slum” image of the neighborhood.

⁶¹ Özdil (2007: 108) claims that one of the reasons behind the immigrants’ preference of Tarlabası is the network of illegal relations because most of the immigrants are illegal or have expired visas. The informal relations help them to find houses for rent and jobs without necessary legal documents.

⁶² Pérouse (2011: 281) claims that even the death of Festus Okey, a Nigerian illegal immigrant in the Tarlabası Police Station while he was under custody contributed to the incriminating discourse; it was claimed that Okey was dealing with drug trade.

⁶³ A similar tendency is also observable for the children; most of the children working on the streets live in nearby decaying central neighborhoods and mention their discomfort when they go to the

their neighborhood. Besides, as Wacquant (2008: 176-177) states, “living in a stigmatized district of the city penalizes them on the labour market”; they have difficulties in finding jobs due to the negative image of the neighborhood in the eyes of the employers. Children working on the streets are partly a result of this predicament. In other cases, children do drug-dealing or purse-snatching.⁶⁴ In the preliminary project, the undertaker company - GAP Construction – prepared a brochure displaying the former and the projected situations of the neighborhood. In the projected version, Tarlabası is presented as cleansed, gentrified and totally stripped of the current human environment. In fact, the most notable feature of the Tarlabası urban renewal project is that the municipality does not mention the current residents of the neighborhood (Aksoy, 2008: 10). The project aims to evacuate the current residents and open space for rent because Tarlabası is in Beyoğlu and near Taksim Square, which are the major touristic centers of Istanbul. There have been some attempts to cancel the project, yet none of them have been conclusive.⁶⁵

As stated before, urban transformation projects are not peculiar to old historical districts. There have been several other projects in Istanbul in gecekondu districts such as Küçükçekmece, Güngören, Zeytinburnu, Şişli and Tuzla.⁶⁶ In the process, there have been violent confrontations between the squatters and the police. For example, starting from November 2007 during the demolitions and constructions in Başibüyük – Maltepe, a gecekondu neighborhood under transformation in Istanbul, the residents put up barricades around the construction site and blocked the work machines from entering. However, after the deployment of more than 1000 fully armed riot police, demolitions and construction began. The tension in area

‘rich parts’ of the city: “We can’t go there, our material conditions do not suffice. And even if I go, I can’t feel comfortable; I immediately want to come back. I feel like I went to some other country and I want to come back.” (Acar and Baykara Acar, 2009: 445).

⁶⁴ Old residents of Tarlabası tell that since the 1950s, the official authorities lead dangerous criminals to settle in the neighborhood after leaving prison. There are even stories about corrupt policemen and Roma people doing drug deals, etc. (Mutluer, 2007: 65-66).

⁶⁵ Property owners established an association (Tarlabası Mülk Sahipleri ve Kiracıları Kalkındırma ve Sosyal Yardımlaşma Derneği) and filed a lawsuit against the Beyoğlu Municipality in the ECHR in 2010, claiming that the project threatens to destroy historical buildings and treats the property owners unjustly (Tarlabası’ndaki kamulaştırma çalışmaları AIHM’ne taşındı, Sabah, 30.04.2010).

⁶⁶ Similarly, many urban transformation projects are on the agenda for gecekondu neighborhoods of Ankara and İzmir. For an extensive list of the urban transformation projects in Ankara, see Ulusoy, 2008, and for İzmir, see Bal et al., 2005.

continued for some time and the area has been protected by the police 24-hours-a-day, controlling all the entries. During the confrontations with the police, several residents were injured, including children. Even though the incidents stopped after the official negotiations started in May 2008, a permanent police force is placed in the area (Kuyucu and Ünsal, 2010: 1492).

A similar process took place in Ayazma-Tepeüstü, a gecekondu settlement built in the mid-1980s in Istanbul. Urban transformation project came to the agenda in 2004 and demolitions started in 2007. In the process, residents of the area faced many difficulties from paying loans for the MHA houses to having their sheds built around the construction site destroyed.⁶⁷ The predominantly Kurdish population of the area have already been living under extreme conditions of poverty. Due to the fact that most of the residents did not have marriage or birth certificate, the municipality defined them as “having no trace of existence not only in Istanbul but also on earth” (Turgut and Çaçaş, 2010: 103).⁶⁸ Even though Ayazma was not an overtly politicized neighborhood as Gazi or Armutlu, the existence of Kurdish migrants brought about a perception of threat in the outsiders (Pérouse, 2011: 103, 111-112). The municipality defined Ayazma-Tepeüstü as an “area of social and physical decay”, which stigmatizes the residents of the area and legitimizes their displacement as well (Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu, 2008: 21).

In short, urban transformation is presented as “a solution to almost all of the city’s ills: earthquakes, crime, segregation, stigmatization, poor living conditions and terrorism” (İslam, 2010: 60). However, ironically, the projects in question most of the time trigger at least some of the problems mentioned above by opening these spaces to higher-income groups, i.e. gentrifying them. Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu

⁶⁷ The property owners were offered MHA houses in Bezirganbahçe, 4 km. south of the area with a payment scheme extended over 15 years. However, after just five months, nearly half of the families who accepted the loan received evacuation notices for failing to pay the monthly installments in time. Furthermore, the people that have moved to Bezirganbahçe faced isolation, a deepening poverty and ethnic tension. Tenants were in a far worse situation. Having nowhere else to go, they build shelters among the ruins of the houses, which were destroyed by the municipality after a short time (Karaman, 2008: 522).

⁶⁸ In fact, this definition depicts the general ‘indifferent’ attitude towards the residents of the area, for example, in the case of Ali Ağaoğlu, the contractor of the luxurious building complexes built in Ayazma in the place of gecekondu. After a long speech on the just and profitable choices offered to the ex-residents which supposedly made them happy in their new places, he is asked about the difficulties faced by them in Bezirganbahçe. His answer is expressive: “Where is Bezirganbahçe?” (quoted from an interview with Ali Ağaoğlu, Ekümenopolis, 2011).

(2008: 17) argue that alongside with the threat of earthquake, other problems considering the areas subject to urban transformation are ‘naturalized’ and presented as in need of urgent action as much as the earthquake risk:

Measures that need to be taken in relation to the pending earthquake, such as strengthening the housing stock and examining the infrastructure, are discussed in relation to many other “disasters” that are “awaiting” Istanbulites, such as crime, migration, chaos in the transportation system, and overpopulation. In other words, the earthquake is discussed in relation to other “naturalized disasters”, creating a sense of urgency. The only way to handle these imminent “disasters” supposedly is through the massive urban transformation projects in the city. The hype about “crime”, what Caldeira calls “talk of crime”⁶⁹ is translated into a naturalized category in terms of the urban spaces and groups to which it refers and, in return, justifies the urban transformation projects.

Fear of crime and terror acts emanating from the increasing population of Kurdish migrants underpinned strict security measures and policing of these neighborhoods. And accompanied by a “vicious” new middle class discourse excluding and marginalizing the lower classes, this new urban policy based on a “politics of security” led to a “tense class encounter” between the two resulting in the eventual evacuation of the latter from the decaying inner city and gecekondu neighborhoods (Şen, 2011). As Featherstone (1998: 107) put it concisely, urban transformation and construction of gated communities are parts of the same process, both of which aim to exclude lower classes and avoid any potential threat posed by them. Changing attitude towards urban poor is parallel with the changing attitude towards gecekondu in line with the changing urban policies. Losing their ‘moral legitimacy’, their residents began to be defined in negative terms on an escalating scale from cunning opportunists to dangerous criminals. The introduction of a new term, *varoş*, in the early 1990s during the time of the mass Kurdish migrations to the big cities came to represent danger and threat in relation to ethnic identity more than material deprivation.

⁶⁹ Caldeira (1996: 63) defines ‘talk of crime’ as “all types of everyday commentaries, discussions, narratives, jokes, and the like which have crime and fear as their subject”. Continuous repetition of crime talk contributes to the amplification of fear of crime through “establishing polarities, emphasizing prejudices, creating a distance, and excluding what is different”. It also creates an image of the legal order and institutions as unreliable, which in turn produces a need for private security and vigilantism. Caldeira (1996: 64) claims that the symbolic separations created by the talk of crime are materialized through gated communities.

2.2.3 From ‘Gecekondu’ to ‘Varoş’: The Discursive Criminalization of the Urban Poor

The changing land policy as a result of the neoliberal restructuring altered the position of the gecekondu and their inhabitants by the 1980s. As a result of consecutive building amnesties and the increasing value of land, squatters began to be seen as invaders who gain undeserved profits over their houses and through informal economy they created (Erder, 1997: 106).⁷⁰ Thus, the gecekondu began to be defined as “illegal constructions” (Akbulut and Başlık, 2011: 27), which differs from the former in terms of purpose. Contrary to the gecekondu before 1980s which were built for immediate need of the migrants, the “illegal constructions” were identified with economic interest. As Demirtaş and Şen (2007: 91) state there is an undeniable relation between the changing dynamics of the land market and the incriminatory and exclusionary language on the gecekondu.⁷¹ In that sense, it can be claimed that the criminalization of gecekondu have seeped into the official discourse before the change in the law in 2004 that made gecekondu construction a criminal offence to be punished by prison sentence:

[T]here was a transformation of initially lenient, or at least unhostile, public opinion toward the expansion of irregular settlements. (...) In the media the traditionally sympathetic coverage of the problems of ‘poor’ squatters has given way to the (sometimes well-founded) presentation of the same people as quite well-off individuals who enjoy middle-class standards of living at the expense of regular citizens who pay their taxes and live in regular buildings (Buğra, 1998: 314).

There is truth about some of the squatters striking it rich to some extent. Changing role of the gecekondu in the 1980s and 1990s, and its transformation into a commodity created a chance for upward mobility in the lower classes (Pınarcıoğlu and Işık, 2008: 1354). Through what Pınarcıoğlu and Işık (2009: 471) calls

⁷⁰ On her work on Ümraniye, Erder (2001: 187) gives an example on the perception of “gecekondu” (squatter). One interviewee defined “gecekondu” as follows: “[gecekondu] women are wearing golden bracelets. I cannot easily define them as poor, yet their appearance and homes seem so. On the other hand, they have TVs and automatic washing machines in their homes”.

⁷¹ In the same manner, disasters affecting the gecekondu were represented in the media in terms of pillage, plunder and favoritism. After the explosion in the city dump in Ümraniye in 1993, Güngör Mengi wrote the following: “... migration has turned into an impudent incursion... Those people are not afraid of starving. For the land he invaded might gain a legal status in the first election. And this peasant may become rich in an instant. At the end, while the law-abiding citizen dies in the bank queue trying to pay his rent after working his guts out for years to earn a pension, the squatter could become a billionaire thanks to apartments that replaced his gecekondu...” (quoted in Erder, 1997: 88).

“poverty-in-turn”, the former migrants were able to survive in the harsh conditions of the 1980s and transfer their conditions of poverty to the newcomers, after exploiting the opportunities offered by the informal housing and job markets with the help of various solidarity networks. There emerged a differentiation among the squatters in economic terms and put the owners of *gecekondu*s turned into apartments in a position of “undeserving rich Other” as Erman (2001: 987) defines. On the other hand, socio-economic conditions of the 2000s left no place for the lower classes to ‘make it through’; for example, in their case study in Sultanbeyli, Pınarcıoğlu and Işık (2008: 1367) concluded that poverty-in-turn was replaced by poverty traps in the 2000s, producing vicious circles without any chance of escape for the first time in Turkey.⁷²

In line with the ‘undeserved profits over illegality’ argument, another component of the negative perception of the *gecekondu*s and squatters are the occasional tensions with the legal authorities. Erder (1997: 51) argues that the tension in the urban metropolises originate from the informal nature of the *gecekondu* settlements. The very fact that anything gained was based on ‘force’ and ‘struggle’ made tension and mass movements a part of the everyday life.⁷³ This ‘urban tension’ contributed to the incriminating and exclusionary official discourse presenting *gecekondu* areas as the source of urban crime and political extremism (Türkün, 2011: 65).⁷⁴ After the identification of *gecekondu*s with leftist movements in the 1970s, they became associated with illegal Islamist organizations and religious communities in the early 1990s with the electoral victory of the Welfare Party (RP) in the *gecekondu*

⁷² Sultanbeyli is one of the low-income neighborhoods harboring the new urban poor. In what can be defined as ‘new poverty’, nearly half of the residents do not have access even to informal jobs, no education and most of the time do not speak Turkish. Thus, their isolation and exclusion deepens pushing them into new levels of poverty (Özgen, 1999: 17).

⁷³ Alongside with *gecekondu*s, migrants brought their cultural formations and networks of relationships to the cities. In the course of occupying land and building the *gecekondu*s, migrants re-established and strengthened these networks. Place of origin was an important constituent since most migration was chain migration (Keyder, 2005: 125-126). In addition to be functioning as a problem-solving mechanism, networks of solidarity have taken a form of struggle or conflict in expressing demands.

⁷⁴ The sources of this discourse goes back to the 1970s, when the *gecekondu* population, who had supported the right-wing political parties during the 1950s and 1960s, have changed their inclination towards the left-wing political parties and allied with leftist political groups. Criminalization of the political protests of the lower classes also date back to these times when, for example, the demolitions in 1 Mayıs Mahallesi (1st May Neighborhood is a *gecekondu* area near Ümraniye dumpster which was named after the bloody May Day of 1977 and became famous for strong leftist inclinations and drew reaction from legal authorities) were described in the press as “ordinary police operations for law and order, neglecting political aspects” (Akbulut and Başlık, 2011: 22-23).

neighborhoods. This time, the anxiety about gecekondu stemmed from the modernist and secularist reaction (Demirtaş and Şen, 2007: 97).⁷⁵ The existence of illegal leftist organizations in some gecekondu neighborhoods and their political protests such as death fasts in the early 2000s contributed to the threatening image of the gecekondu.

In the 1990s, a new term became popular to identify the gecekondu and decaying inner city neighborhoods – “varoş”. Demirtaş and Gözaydın (1997: 83) argue that “varoş” complemented everything that other definitions (periphery, gecekondu neighborhood, informal, illegal, etc.) lacked by including “violence” and “threat”. The term comes from the Hungarian word “város”, meaning the “neighborhoods beyond the walls of the city” (Bozkulak, 2005: 245). In the Turkish case, the physical distance is translated into a metaphorical one and used to denote a group of people who are “outside the ‘should-be’ urban life and urbanity” – the ‘anti-urban other’ of the city as a deviant product of urbanization.⁷⁶ As Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu (2008: 7) argue, varoş indicates a state or a way of life which “has fallen off or been pushed out of the present and future of the modern and urban”. Unlike gecekondu, varoş does not only refer to spatiality; it also “denotes the underground or kitsch aspects of contemporary urban life” (Demirtaş and Şen, 2007: 88, 100). Baydar’s (1997: 77) description of Istanbul in the post-1980 period constitutes a good example of this position:

The fearful and terrifying reality of the 1990s which started [as a process] in the 1980s is that the socio-cultural identity of Istanbul ceases to be “urban” and starts to become “rural”. Megacity Istanbul turns into megavillage Istanbul, and rural culture of newcomers overwhelm the partially resisting urban culture.

⁷⁵ A continuation of this reaction can be observed in the aftermath of the JDP’s electoral victory in 2002. The party and its leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan adopted an anti-elitist populist discourse based on social justice before the elections, and he displayed himself as a “varoş child from Kasımpaşa”. The fact that he was able to win the votes of the lower classes and urban poor contributed to the identification of varoş with political Islam and conservatism.

⁷⁶ Erman (2001: 997) defines the term varoş in relation to the opposition between ‘us’ and ‘them’: “‘We’ are not inside the city, surrounded by the ‘city walls’ any more, leaving the ‘Others’ outside. The ‘We’ and the ‘Others’ are inside each other, the upper classes living in ‘islands’ surrounded by gecekondu settlements, and the rural migrants ending up living ‘inside the city’ as the result of the city’s expansion towards its periphery and the resulting transformation of gecekondu settlements into lower-quality apartment housing”.

Correspondingly, Aksoy (2001: 40) states that, contrary to the term *gecekondu* which implies integration to the city, *varoş* is exclusionary and closed.⁷⁷ *Varoş* differs from the working-class neighborhoods of the 1960s and 1970s in the sense that the most deprived groups created as a result of the increasing income polarization in the post-1980s inhabit the area, which are the new poor: the bottom of the bottom in the cities.

With the introduction of the term ‘*varoş*’, illegality of *gecekondus* gained a whole new dimension “beyond the illegal construction of physical space” and resistance against demolitions (Demirtaş and Şen, 2007: 92). The informality associated with *gecekondu* in terms of space and economy turned into illegality when it came to *varoş* – illegal housing, jobs, activities, organizations, etc. It is also claimed that such “illegality” led to poor record-keeping of the population by legal authorities (*mukhtars*) which “provides an environment conducive to the spread of illegal communities” (Demirtaş and Şen, 2007: 95). Starting from the mid-1990s, the term was used to imply violence, lawlessness and illegality in addition to economic deprivation; therefore a threat against not only to the urban life but the whole system. Poverty is equalized to criminality and the neighborhoods of the urban poor, the “enemies within”, are defined as “urban hellholes”, “no go areas” and “lawless zones” (Yonucu, 2008: 53). It is as if the *varoş* neighborhoods could be “cleansed”, everything would be in order again (Demirtaş and Gözaydın, 1997: 83). High crime rates were frequently emphasized and even sometimes loss of communal bonds such as religious values were brought forward to explain the tendency of the *varoş* people to deviance (Demirtaş and Şen, 2007: 100). This “new stigmatizing topographic lexicon” legitimizes any intervention to these areas including police raids, destructions and finally urban transformation projects (Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu, 2008: 7). Bozkulak (2005: 247) defines this as “the replacement of working-class movements of the *gecekondu* neighborhoods in the 1970s by an uprising of the underclass living in the *varoş* in the 1990s”.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Aksoy (2001: 40) makes a comparison between *gecekondu* and *varoş* in terms of a “will to integrate”. *Gecekondu* symbolizes a will to be a part of the city. On the other hand, *varoş* implies a resistance to the urban and its culture. Similarly, Baydar (1997: 78) argues that the migrants of the 1980s and 1990s built ghettos defined by political, ideological and cultural differences instead of trying to articulate to the city.

⁷⁸ An interesting point to note is that the radical leftist groups’ attitude towards *gecekondu* neighborhoods has also changed. Soykan (2007: 96) mentions that the previous slogans written on

It can be argued that varoş represents “a more significant other” than gecekondü, since it is defined as a threat to the whole system contrary to the gecekondü which was considered as part of the evolution of modernism and will be eliminated in the process (Akbulut and Başlık, 2011: 38; Erman, 2001: 996; Aksoy, 2001: 43). As Yonucu (2008: 64) states, the squatters have been continuously criminalized within a discourse of varoş since the early 1990s, contrary to the paternalistic civilizing attitude to the squatters in the previous era which aimed to turn them into disciplined labor.⁷⁹ Especially after the Alevi uprising in Gazi Neighborhood started on 12 March 1995⁸⁰ and the May 1st, 1996, during which radical leftist groups damaged cars and shop windows (photos and footages of demonstrators smashing ATMs found great place in the media),⁸¹ varoş people began to be identified as “enemies” sometimes by referring their relations with illegal leftist or Islamist organizations, and sometimes referring to their religious orientations, such as Alevism (Bozkulak, 2005: 245, Etöz, 2000: 49; Demirtaş and Şen, 2007). Furthermore, the clashes between the street gangs and the assaults of the thinner-addict children on the streets reiterated the negative image of the varoş. Expressions like ‘besieging the city’ or ‘entering the city’ imply a ‘state of war’ with a potential threat, which rules out the socio-economic dynamics of this polarization:

the walls starting with “Down with...” (as in ‘down with the fascism’ or ‘down with the bourgeoisie’) were replaced by ‘Gambling is a crime’, ‘Prostitution is a crime’, ‘Robbery, hijacking is a crime’.

⁷⁹ Aksoy (2001: 44) gives examples from different newspaper articles to the stigmatizing and exclusionary discourse: “These tumor cities surrounding big cities are characterized by edgy, angry, dupable people who live in small houses as crowded families”; “(...) they somehow settle somewhere and become varoş with their own primitive architecture, subculture and social structure which isolates themselves from the city yet at the same time, creates difficulties in maintaining their peasant ways” (Yalçın Doğan, ‘Farklı kimliğin farklı kültürün sonuçları’, Milliyet, 15.03.1995).

⁸⁰ The incidents started with the attack on four coffee houses mainly attended by Alevis and a cemevi by a group of unidentified persons with machine guns, which resulted in the death of several people. During the protests in the aftermath of the event, the demonstrators clashed with the police (Demirtaş and Şen, 2007: 94). Pérouse (2011: 91-92) claims that contrary to the popular representations of Gazi as an “Alevi, Kurdish, leftist” neighborhood, it cannot be categorized as such. However, continuous police presence and abuse (identity checks, setting an “official time” to leave the streets and noisy ‘shows’ of panzers on the streets in the middle of the night) did certainly create a collective consciousness against the official authority. Besides, there is an undeniably considerable number of Alevi and Kurdish inhabitants in the neighborhood (Demirtaş and Şen, 2007: 94).

⁸¹ The photo of a girl smashing the tulips on the square became the symbol of vandalism and groundless violence associated with varoş. 1st May 1996 is more crucial than Gazi events because unlike the locality of the events in Gazi, on 1st May 1996, the varoş went down the city center, right beside the urbanites (Demirtaş and Gözaydın, 1997: 83).

When ‘varos’ is put on the agenda as a threat with expressions like invasion, taking over; it becomes inevitable to cling to the idea of increasing security measures instead of examining economic, social, cultural and political reasons of this social disintegration and polarization, and thinking over the ways to create common social spaces where social demands could be expressed freely (Etöz, 2000: 52).

In some cases, the violence and hatred associated with *varoş* people is related to limited means of consumption or under-consumption. Here consumption refers not only to goods and services, but also a certain life style with ‘proper values’, i.e. “a language, an ethnic origin, a culture, an entire set of values” (Etöz, 2000: 50).⁸² In some studies it is claimed that the very desire and attempts of the ‘varoş youth’ to be ‘a part of the system’, the average way of life result in their further exclusion and marginalization which leads to reactive behaviors, even violent and terrorist acts (Yonucu, 2008: 53; Demirtaş and Şen, 2007: 94).⁸³ Depending on the circumstances, this reaction takes the form of assault either to the state, to the urbanites, or to the city itself (Bozkulak, 2005: 246).⁸⁴ The possibility of a “social explosion” has been frequently uttered defining the *varoş* as a “rural reaction turned into a landmine by social problems, poverty, identity crisis, and being severed from their roots” (Baydar, 1997: 79). Keyder (2005: 125) claims that the argument of “social explosion” is displayed as an objective truth, leaving no room for debating its possible causes:

In middle class perceptions and in the sensationalist accounts of the popular press, Istanbul is believed to be on a dangerously ‘explosive’ course – a conjecture about the breakdown of social order taken as so self-evident that the sources for the perceived tension are no longer debated; rather, commentators attempt to account for the relative safety of the city and try to explain the surprising absence of active strife.

⁸² The term ‘varoş people’ also refers to a newly emerging social group enriched by the transition to free market economy, yet devoid of necessary symbolic and cultural capital. Certain labels such as ‘kırık’, ‘maganda’ and ‘zonta’ were frequently used to identify them (Etöz, 2000: 50-51, Öncü, 1999; Bali, 2004: 50).

⁸³ From the ethnographic study she conducted in lower class Zeytinburnu youth, Yonucu (2008: 63) claims that they enjoy ‘being a threat’ to the middle and upper classes – “very proud of their power to enter middle class homes, inflict damage and steal their stuff”.

⁸⁴ Yonucu (2008: 63) claims that there is an essential difference between the attitudes of the older generations of squatters and the younger generation in terms of the perception of the social system and middle classes. The older generations had a more ‘political’ attitude criticizing the whole system, aiming for a more ‘equal and just’ one, and defining themselves with their class identity. The younger generation, on the other hand, wants to be a part of the existing system instead of aiming to change it. Their anger is directed towards the middle classes, not the class society as a whole.

The identification of the urban poor with violence and threat in the case of varoş is closely related with the compulsory Kurdish migration to the big cities.⁸⁵ As Saraçoğlu (2010: 241) states, with the mass Kurdish migration to big cities, Kurdish question outgrew the armed conflict in eastern and southeastern Anatolia. The fact that compulsory migrants are familiar with violence and repression from where they come from makes them potentially violent, criminal and dangerous in the eyes of the public. Even some lynching attempts to seasonal Kurdish workers, tradesmen or political party members took place in some of the western cities (Gambetti, 2007; Bora, 2011). Thus, Kurdish migration contributed to the crystallization of new criminal stereotypes. While urban poverty gained an ethnic character, so did crime and led to new forms of discrimination. Therefore, another negative stereotype identified with Kurdish migrants is criminal behavior. Being associated with terror acts, Kurdish migrants became a major constituent and subject of urban fear.⁸⁶

As a result, the –mostly Kurdish- urban poor in the big cities turned out to be the source of danger against the public life. Their threat has a wide spectrum, since they are nothing but ‘intractable’ and ‘hostile’ masses. Besides the neighborhoods defined as varoş by the media are usually the settlements of the Kurdish migrants (Bozkulak, 2005: 248). Pérouse (2011: 112) defines the threat related to the Kurdish migrants as “the myth of a demographic Kurdish invasion”, which blames the migrants for all the problems of the city. For example, in his study on the perception of the Kurdish migrants living in İzmir by the urban middle classes who

⁸⁵ The armed conflict in the Southeast and East started with PKK’s raid to Eruh-Siirt in 1984 and intensified with the State of Emergency declared in 1987. People started to leave the region in 1984 either voluntarily or in accordance with the “Decree on Censor and Exile” (Kılıç, 1992: 13). According to a research published in 2002 by Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies (HÜNEE), the number of people forced to migrate from the Eastern and Southeastern regions since the early 1980s is estimated to be between 953,680 and 1,201,200 (Saraçoğlu, 2010: 240). Yet, mass migrations that have changed the demographic composition of urban metropolises took place in the early 1990s. 1990 census indicates that the largest part of the migrants in Istanbul were still from Black Sea region and Anatolian interior (Özgen, 1999: 9). However, starting from the 1990s, the Kurdish population made up the greatest part of the gecekondu dwellers. For example, in Ümraniye, a socially and economically heterogeneous neighborhood, a resident defined “gecekondu” as “Kurdish neighborhood per se” (Erder, 2001: 187).

⁸⁶ Words of a businessman from the 1990s exemplify the equivalence chain, Kurds=varoş=terrorism: “(...) If we remain silent, the terror flowing away from the Southeast to big cities will swallow us all. I am telling my fellow businessmen, ‘If we cannot establish peace, the people living in varoş will pound at our doors and slit our throats one day.’ It is such gloom and doom” (Murat Sabuncu, “Patronlardan Kürt Konferansı”, Milliyet, 24.01.1996, cited in Bali, 2004: 90).

come into contact with them in markets, public spaces, buses, etc. contrary to the upper classes retreated to high-security gated communities, Saraçoğlu (2010: 242) found out that the Kurdish migrants are identified with pejorative terms and negative stereotypes such as “benefit scrounging”,⁸⁷ ignorance, invasion, separatism” and criminal behavior. The criminal activities of Kurdish migrants are interpreted by the middle classes in terms of “disrupting urban life”. In fact, most of these labels belong to the “traditional anti-migrant stereotypes” in the Turkish society; however, in the case of the Kurdish migrants, these labels are identified with an ethnic group, which is called by Saraçoğlu (2010: 243) as “ethnicization of anti-migrant sentiments”. Even though the negative stereotypes and value-judgments that construct the middle class perception of Kurdishness are based on the Kurds’ conditions of existence and their interaction with the middle classes in the city, they are still identified with a specific ethnic group and defined as ‘inherent parts of Kurdish ethnicity’ (Saraçoğlu, 2011: 39-40).

The last migration wave differed from the former examples due to many reasons. First of all, the migrants were unable to get material or psychological support from their village. Because, most of the time, they migrated with all the members of the household contrary to the chain migration in the previous decades (Erder, 1997: 151; Erder, 2001: 296; Şen, 2002: 181) and all they left behind was nothing but scorched earth. Erder (2007: 98) defines them as “villageless villagers”; they are deprived of any chance to return. Poverty of the migrants in their hometowns was another factor; in other words, they were too poor to migrate but had to do it anyway. Keyder (2005: 131) defines this as the precedence of “push factors” over “pull factors” in migration; “the decision to migrate is based more on necessity than the prospect of a better life”.⁸⁸ Besides, the migrants were all dealing with agriculture and animal husbandry before compulsory migration; so they were

⁸⁷ This sentiment has different aspects. First of all, it is related with the illicit gains from *gecekondus* that is, benefiting from state-owned property even though the Kurdish migrants of the last twenty-five years have not built their own *gecekondus*, but rented them (Saraçoğlu, 2010: 249). Secondly, the fact that Kurdish migrants mostly work in informal jobs is interpreted as a “way of getting rich quickly” because they pay no taxes (Saraçoğlu, 2010: 251).

⁸⁸ Keyder (2005: 132) argues that the migration till the 1980s has followed a predictable course in Turkey: the regions which yielded the most migration since the 1950s were the ones most linked to the capital through seasonal labor (Black Sea region) and the ones with agrarian economy and affected by market integration (the Anatolian interior). In this picture, Eastern and Southeastern regions did not have a part until the compulsory migration in the 1980s.

unqualified for the jobs in the city, and therefore they could only find jobs like construction working, street peddling and lowest level service jobs (Yılmaz, 2007: 79).

Second characteristic of Kurdish migration is that they are excluded from many informal squatter networks because of fear and ethnic prejudice.⁸⁹ For example, in Aydos, a gecekondu neighborhood mostly inhabited by the Kurdish migrants in Pendik, İstanbul, it is reported that the Kurds are exposed to various discriminatory and exclusionary practices: the neighbors do not visit them and other children call their children as ‘gypsies’ and would not play with them (Erder, 1997: 70). They have separate coffeehouses, mosques (mescit) and associations, which are necessarily more political than the solidarity and integration based associations of the older migrants (Keyder, 2005: 132); because they speak a different language, have a different culture and a different identity “that is not protected by the state” (Firat, 1992: 105). In Güvercintepe, a mostly-Kurdish-populated gecekondu neighborhood in Başakşehir - İstanbul, even the Alevi population, who have been discriminated by the official authorities for ages, ally with the Sunnites against the Kurds, because they argue that “their perception of country, nation and flag does not overlap with that of the Kurdish people” . Thus, marriages between the Turks and the Kurds are not welcomed (Yılmaz and Bulut, 2009: 30). Criminalization and exclusion of Kurdish urban poor is also observable in other well-known destinations of migration. For example, even though Mersin and Adana have been among the cities with the greatest Kurdish population for a long time, the segregation between the locals and the Kurdish migrants has not been faded. The Kurds continue to be ‘strangers’.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ The Kurdish migrants of the last compulsory migration wave also have difficulties in integrating to the solidarity networks among the Kurdish migrants who have migrated to the big cities before. Şen (2002: 181) argues that the political aspect of the last migration wave led the former migrants to isolate themselves from the newcomers.

⁹⁰ Different studies on the ethnic discrimination in Mersin since the early 1990s reveal that not much has changed in the past decades. Kılıç’s (1992: 55) study presents Mersin as fragmented into neighborhoods for the migrants according to their hometowns. There are many police check-points, especially in the entrances and exits of the city. A recent study by Doğan and Yılmaz (2011) draws a similar picture in which Mersin is still a segregated city according to ethnicity. Interviews conducted with the Kurdish residents of a heterogeneous neighborhood, namely Demirtaş, displayed that drug-dealing in the neighborhood increased considerably in the last decade. It is commonly linked to the opening of a police station in the neighborhood in the sense that “the police are involved in the theft and drug business in order to keep the Kurdish youth away from political action and to get personal benefits” (Doğan and Yılmaz, 2011: 487). Similar to other cities, all the

It is argued that the Kurdish migrants and the Roma form the urban underclass in Turkey because their exclusion is on the verge of calcifying into a permanent condition (Erman and Eken, 2004: 66; Keyder, 2005: 132). It should also be mentioned that problems did not end for them after finding a job, because, most probably, “they are often the last to be hired and first to be fired”, as Berelson and Salter (1973: 107) claim for the blacks in the USA. Due to deteriorating living conditions and exclusion, a great part of these groups make their living of scavenging or as street vendors in the cities. Disadvantaged by a combination of factors such as class, ethnicity, religious beliefs, and illegal activities or ‘unpleasant’ jobs, such as scavenging, they are excluded and marginalized, which leads them to develop closed communities and suspicious attitudes to the outsiders, at the same time increasingly involving in illegal activities as a strategy of survival. This forms a ‘vicious circle’; “the more they are excluded, the more they are engaged in illegality, and the more they live illegally, the more they are excluded” (Erman and Eken, 2004: 67).

Thus, economic and social deprivation inevitably increases crime rates in the neighborhoods of the urban poor and lead to stigmatization and exclusion.⁹¹ As

drug addict “street children” and most of the street peddlers are the product of compulsory migration (Yılmaz, 2007: 78). However in 2002, after the problematic Newroz celebrations, the governor banned street vending in the city center “in order to make Mersin a modern city”, which is an implicit message for the Kurdish people: “Be invisible or leave” (Yılmaz, 2007: 79). Recently, three well-known Kurdish neighborhoods in Mersin (namely Çay, Çilek and Özgürlük) are declared as urban transformation areas. Doğan and Yılmaz (2011: 492) claim that they are deliberate choices since they target socially and politically important spaces of the Kurdish population in the city. In spite of the resistance of the inhabitants and a suspension of the project for a couple of years, it is put back on the agenda for the year 2013. In the case of Adana, plainclothes police regularly patrol neighborhoods with high Kurdish population and stop people for random identity checks (Darıcı, 2009: 14).

⁹¹ For example, people of Gülsuyu, a gecekondu neighborhood in Maltepe, Istanbul, state that crime rates and prostitution have increased since the 1990s. It is also mentioned that most of the young people are drug addicts. The stigmatization of the people of Gülsuyu accompanies these processes. For example, taxis refuse to enter the neighborhood after dark and people have to hide that they are from Gülsuyu during job applications (Bozkulak, 2005: 255-257). Similarly, an ethnographic study on the youth of Zeytinburnu, an old gecekondu neighborhood, shows that there is an increase in petty crime and drug-dealing among the young people (Yonucu, 2008). Or in Sultanbeyli, a known address of Kurdish migration and urban poverty, number of street children and sex workers is very high. Children in the streets and in high schools are generally drug-users, either pills or glue; and drug-related and violent crimes are widespread (Özgen, 1999: 15). Karadolap is another example of criminal and ‘criminalized’ gecekondu neighborhoods. Located at the outskirts of Alibeyköy, the area is defined by the middle class living around as a ‘crime nest’. However, Soykan (2007: 95) asserts that crime is also a major problem for the residents of Karadolap; they are subject to robbery and theft as well as the threat of glue-smelling children on the streets. Extensiveness of drug-related crimes and theft is also the case in Güvercintepe, a gecekondu neighborhood mainly inhabited by Kurdish migrants in Başakşehir, İstanbul (Yılmaz and Bulut, 2009: 28).

argued above, crime problem is presented as one of the major motives behind the urban transformation projects on the agenda for most of the neighborhoods in question. In the mid-2000s, when increasing crime rates were frequently mentioned by the official authorities and the media mainly in reference to the increasing purse-snatching incidents, gecekondu neighborhoods and decaying inner city areas were presented as the ‘nests’ of criminal activities. The necessity of urgent action that should be taken to deal with urban crime came out in the form of harsher policing measures. In that period, there have been significant legal regulations including the adoption of the new Turkish Penal Code (TCK) in 2004, and amendments in Anti-Terror Law (TMK) in 2006 and Law on Police Duties and Entitlements (PVSK) in 2007. All of the legal regulations in question contributed to the stigmatization of certain social groups including Kurdish migrants, the Roma and other marginalized groups as ‘potential criminals’ and legitimized the ‘over-policing’ of their neighborhoods through vague definitions and increased sentences for street crimes and an unprecedented discretionary power given to the police force. In that sense, legal regulations that have been made in the 2000s regarding the punitive measures constitute an important part of the relation between stigmatized social groups, neighborhoods and urban transformation projects.

2.2.4 The Punitive and Policing Measures in the 2000s: Legal Regulations on the Definition of Street Crimes, Sentences and Discretionary Power of the Police

The debates on the definition and punishment of street crimes concentrated on the purse-snatching crime starting from the early 2000s parallel to the increasing crime rates. Until the new Turkish Criminal Code was passed in 2004, purse-snatching was not specifically defined by the law. Purse-snatchers were tried by the crime of “stealing by distraction”, which is the simplest form of larceny.⁹² Even though in some cases, courts treated purse-snatching as mugging⁹³ and sentenced it

⁹² Kapkaççılık yasada gasp suçu sayılmıyor, Hürriyet, 09.04.2001.

⁹³ The term ‘mugging’ is used for ‘gasp’ in Turkish, even though it does not fully give the idea. Mugging is originally an ‘American’ crime which was later imported to Britain (see, Hall et al, 1978) and has a contextual significance. However, alternate translations such as robbery or armed robbery are also not the exact counterpart of the term.

accordingly,⁹⁴ purse-snatching was generally sentenced with a couple of months⁹⁵ or their sentences were converted into fines. If purse-snatchers were children under the age of 12, then no legal procedure was involved and they were released immediately.⁹⁶ If they were between 12 and 15, they would not be punished unless they have the ability to perceive and control. And if they do, their sentence is abated by half.

It is a fact that some of the purse-snatching incidents ended with serious injuries or death. However, since the crime was not defined specifically by the law, resulting deaths were treated as 'involuntary manslaughter', and therefore the sentence was reduced to ¼ of a murder sentence.⁹⁷ In 2001, the Supreme Court decided that the purse-snatchers using cars and motorcycles during the offence should be tried and punished within the frame of activities of an organized group.⁹⁸ From that time onwards, there have been some examples in which the courts treated purse-snatching as organized crime or mugging and gave high sentences.⁹⁹ From 2002 onwards, several legislative proposals were brought to the Turkish Grand National Assembly to change the definition of purse-snatching to be included within heavy sentencing which would increase the prison sentence drastically, on the grounds that the crime has been on the rise recently and the present punishments were not deterrent. In 2002, a Nationalist Action Party (NAP) deputy brought such a proposal.¹⁰⁰ Then it was followed by similar proposals from a Republican People's Party (RPP) deputy¹⁰¹ and a Justice and Development Party (JDP) deputy¹⁰²

⁹⁴ Kapkaç suçuna gasp cezası, Sabah, 01.07.2003.

⁹⁵ A news report on a Peruvian tourist attempting purse-snatching in Atatürk Airport, İstanbul, it is claimed that he decided to do purse-snatching after learning that purse-snatching was very common and lightly punished in Turkey (İthal kapkaççıya meydan dayağı, Hürriyet, 11.06.2003)

⁹⁶ 8'inde 17'nci kez yakalandı, Hürriyet, 23.02.2006; Eskişehir'de yankesici çetesine 'balyoz' darbesi, Hürriyet, 11.03.2006; Küçük kapkaççının dediği oldu serbest, Hürriyet Ege, 03.03.2008.

⁹⁷ Kapkaççılık yasada gasp suçu sayılmıyor, Hürriyet, 09.04.2001.

⁹⁸ Kapkaççılar 'çete'den yargılanacak, Hürriyet, 28.04.2001.

⁹⁹ In 2002, a purse-snatching gang was sued in the State Security Court (DGM) with up to 90 years of prison sentence (Kapkaç ilk kez DGM'de, Sabah, 12.02.2002). In 2003, Supreme Court affirmed a total of 136 years of prison sentence to two purse-snatchers (Kapkaççılara rekor ceza, Hürriyet, 21.08.2003; İki kapkaççı için 68'er yıl hapis cezası, Hürriyet, 22.08.2003).

¹⁰⁰ Kapkaççıya ağır ceza önerisi, Hürriyet, 09.01.2002.

¹⁰¹ Kapkaç 5 yıl hapis için yasa teklifi, Hürriyet, 22.01.2003.

¹⁰² 'Kapkaççılara 10 yıl' yasa tasarısı Meclis'te, Hürriyet, 28.02.2003.

respectively in 2003. A need for the redefinition of the offense and harsher punishments have been mentioned by many state officials, lawyers, prosecutors and academicians several times.

In 2004, the new Turkish Criminal Code designed mainly in accordance with adjustment to EU was passed and went into effect on 1st April, 2005.¹⁰³ The law ignited many discussions in the judiciary, police force and the media for limiting the authority of the police and expanding the rights of the suspects and defendants.¹⁰⁴ In addition to various democratic reforms,¹⁰⁵ the law also changed the penalties for various offences and redefined offences (Müftüler Bac, 2005: 22). For example, purse-snatching entered the law for the first time as a particular type of crime, to be counted as “qualified larceny” and defined as “taking away the property carried on by special skill”. According to the law, the offense became punishable by 3 to 7 years of prison sentence, to be increased up to one thirds in the case of children, old or disabled victims. As stated above, the new Criminal Code was to go into effect on 1st April, 2005, however, RPP claimed that the article of the law on purse-snatching should be backdated due to increasing purse-snatching incidents and public unrest.¹⁰⁶ On the other hand, regulations on mugging in the new Criminal Code concerning abatement for muggers “who did not kill or injure”, and therefore giving way to early release,¹⁰⁷ as well as regulations limiting the

¹⁰³ The legal regulations that went into effect in 2005 could be defined as “Turkish Criminal Code Reform” and include Law on Criminal Procedure (Ceza Muhakemesi Kanunu-CMK), Law on the Execution of Sentences and Security Measures (Ceza ve Güvenlik Tedbirlerinin İnfazı Hakkında Kanun), Law on Misdemeanors (Kabahatler Kanunu) and Law on the Protection of Children as well as the new Penal Code (Sözüer, 2013).

¹⁰⁴ The CMK was based on fair trial principle and the rights of suspects and defendants were issued with reference to ECHR decisions. For example, the authority of the police for taking into custody, capturing, searching and confiscating were abolished except for the red-handed cases. Detention time was limited by the law and judicial control mechanisms were established to avoid unnecessary arrests (Sözüer, 2013). The law also made it clear that illegally gathered evidence will be excluded, also known as the “Exclusionary Rule” (Sözüer and Sevdiren, 2013: 292). There are also certain regulations on the reduction of punishments if the offender returns voluntarily or compensates the loss of the victim in crimes of larceny (Sokullu-Akıncı, 2013: 11).

¹⁰⁵ The major democratic reforms brought about by the new Penal Code include regulations on stopping systematical torture, abolishment of death penalty, limiting the authority of the police to use firearms, regulations on crimes against personal immunity and privacy, regulations on crime of thought and freedom of expression (Sözüer, 2013).

¹⁰⁶ CHP: Yeni TCK'da kapkaç maddesi öne çekilsin, Hürriyet, 10.11.2004.

¹⁰⁷ Öldürüp yaralamayan gaspçıya TCK affı, Hürriyet, 10.11.2004.

authority of the police were widely criticized in the media referring to the views of politicians, state officials, police, judiciary and academics.

The discussion on children involved in crimes like purse-snatching and pick-pocketing continued after the new Criminal Code. The increasing crime rates are mostly associated with child purse-snatchers and the law's inadequacy in punishing them right. Later on, at the end of May, 2005, the new criminal code's regulations on child offenders were amended and the prison sentences to 12-15 years old children were increased.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, with the new Law on the Execution of Sentences and Security Measures, prison time is prolonged; in terms of non-political crimes, the convicted persons would serve 2/3 of their prison sentence.¹⁰⁹ In December 2005, Penal Department no.6 of the Supreme Court, which is the court of appeal in mugging and purse-snatching cases, specified abatement criteria making release more difficult.¹¹⁰ In 2006, with the amendments in Anti-Terror Law, purse-snatching crime is decided to be counted as "terror offence" if it was committed within the frame of activities of an organized group.¹¹¹ TBMM Commission on Justice made re-arrangements on Law of Criminal Procedure (CMK) and purse-snatching was included in offenses that require arrest.¹¹² The police authorities argued that this decision would decrease purse-snatching incidents since many accused keep doing purse-snatching during the prosecution process.¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ Tartışmalı yeni TCK'ya rötüş Meclis'ten geçti, Hürriyet, 28.05.2005. Starting from 2008, a pilot project was put into practice in Ankara on probation of the child offenders coordinated by a non-governmental organization for children involved in crime, "Association for Solidarity with the Freedom-Deprived Juvenile" (Öz-Ge-Der). The project was financed by the EU and joint partner was Ankara Bar Association, supported by the Ministry of Justice. The aim is to strengthen the probation mechanism which calls for the rehabilitation and execution of the sentences of children in the society rather than the prison. The association members argued that through probation mechanism, the chances of the children re-committing crime would be decreased to a large extent. The prison, on the other hand, is presented as rendering the children more hostile towards the society and increase their involvement in crime afterwards since they get into contact with other criminals during their time. (Üç kere soyuldu yılmadı, Oya Armutçu, Hürriyet, 02.01.2008)

¹⁰⁹ Emniyet'te kapkaç yasası sevinci, Sabah, 21.10.2006.

¹¹⁰ Tahliye etmek yanlış, Hürriyet, 03.12.2005.

¹¹¹ DGM'den daha ağır, Hürriyet, 19.04.2006.

¹¹² Kapkaççılar artık tutuklu yargılanacak, Hürriyet, 18.10.2006.

¹¹³ Emniyet: Başbakan'ın araçta kilitlenmesinde hatamız yok, Hürriyet, 20.10.2006.

In short, it can be argued that legal regulations on the crimes like purse-snatching, pick-pocketing and mugging, which are attempted by the lower-class offenders most of the time, gradually toughened the sentences and included them under the category of heavy crimes depending on the circumstances. In the same line, the authorities and discretionary powers of the police were extended step by step through various legal arrangements.¹¹⁴ In this process, the Law on Misdemeanors adopted in 2004, despite some democratic changes, significantly increased the power, scope of authority and discretionary power of the police (Berksoy, 2013: 7-8). However, with the new CMK, which replaced CMUK in 2004, some certain improvements were recorded in custody conditions (especially torture under custody).

Despite improvements in CMK, 2006 changes in TMK further strengthened state authority and limited individual rights and freedoms:

According to these amendments, alienating the public from military service and resistance to public officials were also included under the category of crimes of terrorism including the cases in which a person is “not a member of a terrorist organization but committed a crime ‘in the name of’ a terrorist organization.” The police’s right to use firearms was also extended this same year. Additional Article 2, which was nullified by the Constitutional Court in 1999 on grounds of violating the “right to life”, was reintroduced with slight changes in TMK. As a result, the police became authorized to shoot to kill “if a person refused to surrender” (Berksoy, 2013, 8-9).

The authority of the police to use firearms has also been increased through amendments and additional articles to PVSK on 2 June 2007. These articles asserted that police were entitled to use firearms “b) vis-a-vis resistance which cannot be rendered ineffective by way of using bodily physical and material force, with the objective of and proportional to breaking such resistance, c) in order to capture individuals for whom there is an arrest warrant, a decision to detain, be captured or apprehended; or in order to capture the suspect in cases where he/she is apprehended while the crime is in progress, and the extent proportional for that purpose” (Berksoy, 2013: 31). Berksoy notes that, the amendments increases the

¹¹⁴ The laws and regulations which directly or indirectly concern the authority, duties, power and responsibilities of police in Turkey are as follows: Law on Police Duties and Entitlements (PVSK-Polis Vazife ve Salahiyeti Kanunu); Law on Criminal Procedure of 1929 (CMUK-Ceza Muhakemesi Usulü Kanunu) and Law on Criminal Procedure of 2004 (CMK-Ceza Muhakemesi Kanunu). In addition to these laws, following legislation have also effect in analyzing the transformation of police force in Turkey: Anti-Terror Law (TMK-Terörle Mücadele Kanunu, 12.04.1991, Law No: 3713) and Regulation on Riot Police (Çevik Kuvvet Yönetmeliği, 30.12.1982, Law No: 17914).

discretionary power of the police forces in use of firearms, while the international norms limit this authority with imminent threat to police's or others' lives. She also notes that other articles of PVSK contain problematic provisions which increase police's intervention into everyday life of citizens. Amendment to article 4 in 2007 gave the police officer authority "to stop an individual provided that there is a reasonable ground", without giving a clear definition of what that reasonable ground is. The first paragraph of article 11 of PVSK authorizes the police to intervene any actions (gatherings, music or dance performances etc.) that are against general morals and manners.¹¹⁵ Ambiguous statements such as "general morals and manners" is mostly used in stigmatization and punishment of disadvantaged and minority groups, and in reinforcement of authoritarian and conservative cultural codes. Article 5 of PVSK, by stating that police can collect the fingerprints of who "a) are volunteers, b) apply to receive a firearms license, driver's license, passport or document substituting passport, c) are employed first of all as a police officer, general or specialized policing agency or private security officer, d) apply for acquiring Turkish citizenship, d) apply for asylum or as a foreigner entering the country if found necessary, d) are detained." For Berksoy (2013: 36), this article reduces the whole society to the states of "potential criminals".

The 2000s are characterized by "pre-crime" and proactive policing strategies. According to Gönen (2010: 57) proactive policing relies on the criminalization of certain social groups and their increased surveillance and control. These included further increasing the technological capacities of police forces; foundation of a central intelligence network for the police forces (Pol-Net) and developing a public relations strategy which put emphasis on citizens' responsibility in prevention of crime (Berksoy, 2008: 58-9). Installment of electronic surveillance system (MOBESE-Mobile Electronic System Integration) in Diyarbakır and İstanbul in 2005, and other cities afterwards was at the heart of these developments. Through these technological innovations, preparing crime maps for the hot spots in the city and their surveillance was presented as another effective technique in fighting crime. Thus, mapping criminal areas including the types of crime, frequency, perception of crime, reactions it evokes, and profiles of offender-victim-crime

¹¹⁵ PVSK, Article 11A, Amended 16.6.1985-3233/3.

scene is counted amongst other measures taken against purse-snatching as well as other forms of criminal activities.

The debates on the need for an electronical surveillance system for monitoring certain hot spots in the city has been on the agenda since the mid-1990s. First steps of a city-wide monitoring system were taken in 2003 in Beyoğlu, financially supported by the Association of Turkish Travel Agencies (TÜRSAB) to protect tourists from purse-snatching and robbery.¹¹⁶ In 2005, police report of a solution pack on purse-snatching suggested that certain hot spots in which many purse-snatching incidents take place should be monitored with CCTV.¹¹⁷ In the same period, camera systems in different cities like İzmir and Ankara also became a hot topic in fighting crime. In June 2005, a security camera system was established in certain parts of İstanbul, called MOBESE (Mobil Elektronik Sistem Entegrasyonu), after a pilot project was launched in Diyarbakır. Minister of Interior Abdülkadir Aksu defined the aims of MOBESE as, “to make police service keep up with the technology, fight crime and criminals more effectively and efficiently, and provide the citizens the best service while protecting their rights and freedoms”.¹¹⁸ It was frequently underlined by the authorities that MOBESE would have a “deterrence effect” on the criminals. As İstanbul Governor Muammer Güler put forward, “a criminal aware of the fact that he is being watched 24-hours will think twice before committing a crime”.¹¹⁹

In time, the scope of MOBESE is expanded to cover various parts of İstanbul like Maltepe¹²⁰ and in local trains and buses, where “substance addicts dwell and bother the passengers”¹²¹ and many purse-snatching and robbery incidents happened.¹²² In addition to security cameras and MOBESE, the police cars were linked to GPS (Global Positioning System). It is argued that by means of this system, the police

¹¹⁶ Şehri turist için değil kendimiz için korumalıyız, Hürriyet Pazar, 14.09.2003.

¹¹⁷ Emniyetten kapkaça çözüm önerileri, Hürriyet, 26.02.2005.

¹¹⁸ 3 yılda 31 bin kapkaç, Hürriyet, 05.06.2005.

¹¹⁹ İşte MOBESE'nin şifresi, Hürriyet Pazar, 19.06.2005.

¹²⁰ Maltepe 60 kamerayla izlenecek, Hürriyet, 02.03.2006.

¹²¹ Ankara'da her istasyona bir polis, Hürriyet, 17.03.2006.

¹²² Yerli-yabancı demiryolu fabrikası için ortak girişim anlaşması, Hürriyet, 08.03.2006; Özel Halk Otobüsleri kameralı sisteme geçiyor, Hürriyet, 27.06.2007.

cars would be directed from the headquarters towards escaping purse-snatchers as well as providing a monitoring of the police officers.¹²³ In the following years, MOBESE expanded to other cities, as well.

Increasing police patrol on the streets was another strategy for fighting purse-snatching. It is argued that “the real place of the police is the streets” including the plainclothes and undercover ones. The involvement of specially trained forces in the “fight against purse-snatching” is expressed in terms “zero tolerance policy”. After becoming İstanbul Chief of Police in 2003, Celalettin Cerrah established “special street teams”¹²⁴ as well as deploying police officers on trains in which many purse-snatching incidents happened.¹²⁵ In 2005, Turkish National Police announced that Department for Preventing Street Crimes would be established in the context of increasing offences against property like purse-snatching, fraud, theft, pick-pocketing and shoplifting.¹²⁶ In the same year, the police’s solution pack on purse-snatching stated that Riot Police¹²⁷ and Special Forces Units¹²⁸ will be assigned to streets to maintain security.¹²⁹ Later, they attended the police operations to ‘troubled’ neighborhoods after 2006, in addition to the police officers from district branches. Keeping in mind that Riot Police and Special Forces units were

¹²³ Polis, kapkaççıyı GPS ile izleyecek, *Hürriyet*, 25.11.2003.

¹²⁴ Çetin ceviz polis, *Hürriyet*, 06.03.2003; Büyük Sivas'a geldim, *Hürriyet*, 07.03.2003.

¹²⁵ Trene kapkaç polisi geliyor, *Sabah*, 13.11.2004.

¹²⁶ Kapkaç karşı sokak polisi geliyor, *Hürriyet*, 22.01.2005.

¹²⁷ The Riot Police was established in 1982 to replace the Society Police, which was criticized for being an unnecessarily huge and cumbersome organization by the 1980 military coup. Riot Police was structured like a military organization with units equipped with high-tech weapons, and basic structure and functions of which can be defined as “to intervene in meetings and demonstrations, in other words, in social incidents (the quality of the intervention, and the events that will be intervened are to be determined by the “psychological” and “ideological” classifications made by the units)” (Berksoy, 2013: 6).

¹²⁸ Alongside with the Riot Police, formation of Special Forces Units in 1983 to fight against “terrorist organizations” contributed to further securitization and militarization of social and political issues in Turkey. Also, discretionary powers of the police forces has been expanded by the amendments made to PYSK in 1985. Though some articles were cancelled by the Constitutional Court, the amendments gave extraordinary discretionary power to the police in cases of emergency, and police’s right to use fire arms was extended (İnanıcı, 1996: 622). Equipped with special powers, tools and authority, the Special Forces were active especially in Southeastern Turkey in the 1990s, approaching the Kurdish question within a militaristic framework. 1990s were characterized by extensive, legal and illegal use and abuse of police authority especially in Southeastern Turkey, and police forces, Riot Police and Special Forces fulfilled different functions within this process (Berksoy, 2008: 56).

¹²⁹ Emniyetten kapkaç çözümü önerileri, *Hürriyet*, 26.02.2005.

first found to intervene in political meetings, demonstrations and terrorist organizations, it can be claimed that street crimes or neighborhood operations are treated as terror issues in the same line with the amendments in Anti-Terror Law in 2006 which included purse-snatching crime in the ‘terror offences’ if it was committed by an organized group.

In 2007, “Trust Teams” (Güven Timleri) and “Lightning Squads” (Yıldırım Ekipleri) were established in İstanbul within the police force in the context of Proactive Policing specifically to prevent and deal with crimes like robbery, theft, fraud, purse-snatching and pick-pocketing.¹³⁰ The police officers in Trust Teams would be undercover and Lightning Squads would be in uniform. The aim of the undercover teams is put forward by a police chief as “creating a ‘Big Brother’ effect”.¹³¹ In that sense, the main objective of the Trust Teams is to have a deterrent effect on criminals.¹³² Trust teams will work undercover as shoe shiners, bagel sellers, or even drunks¹³³ in the most crowded places, and would intervene immediately in the case of a crime to catch the criminal red-handed. General Director of National Police argued that Trust Teams would change “the image of undercover cop, antenna of whose walkie-talkie pops out of his back pocket”. Trust teams would be specially trained in close combat techniques and would use physical force when necessary. On the other hand, Lightning Squads would work as a backup force for the Trust Teams and facilitate their quick access to the crime scene.¹³⁴

In 2009, Hüseyin Çapkın became İstanbul Chief of Police and he improved the Trust Teams and Lightning Squads further, locating them especially in places “where ex-convicts live” and parks and public places where “drug-addicts” can be found. In 2011, Trust Teams and Proactive Services were turned into separate branch offices which were working under Public Order Branch Office before, in

¹³⁰ Similar units were also established in other cities like Diyarbakır and Şanlıurfa (‘Güven timi’ göreve başladı, kapkaç azaldı, Hürriyet, 12.07.2007; İşte kılık değiştiren polisler, Hürriyet, 28.01.2012).

¹³¹ Bu da canlı mobese, Hürriyet, 01.06.2007.

¹³² Çetelere karşı tebdil-i kıyafet, Hürriyet Ankara, 04.11.2008.

¹³³ İstanbul’da kapkaçı özel timler önleyecek, Sabah, 31.05.2007

¹³⁴ ‘Güven Timleri’ ve ‘Yıldırım Ekipleri’ kuruluyor, Hürriyet, 16.05.2007.

order to “effectively fight with street crimes”.¹³⁵ Çapkın introduced other novelties to the police force in İstanbul, defined as ‘İzmir model’, referring to his practices during his Police Chiefdom in İzmir.¹³⁶ Çapkın’s system included a ‘carrot-and-stick’ model for the policemen, in which the “successful” policemen will be awarded while the “inefficient” ones will be relocated to guard duties.¹³⁷ According to the “performance scoring system”, crimes like theft, mugging and purse-snatching will have points for each, and the police officers will score points per suspects they catch and will get extra points if they are arrested.¹³⁸ What is striking in Çapkın’s scoring system is that the police officers would work in the ‘hot spots’ on their own will, without being dependent on the information given by the center on criminal incidents. In other words, to increase their score, the policemen would

¹³⁵ Sokak suçlarına karşı iki yeni şube müdürlüğü, Sabah, 06.08.2011.

¹³⁶ Çapkın established news police units like Peace Teams (Huzur Timleri), Public Order Teams (Asayis, Ekipleri), School Police (Okul Polisi) and Community Police (Toplum Destekli Polis). Gönen (2013: 90) defines these teams as “organized for expanding police power over different aspects of everyday life and urban space.” Peace Teams are particularly important since they were designed specifically to deal with purse-snatching, by working in crowded public places and especially on foot. Gönen (2013: 95) argues that Çapkın’s policing strategy is an adaptation of Giuliani’s ‘zero-tolerance policing’ in New York, and it is defined by the police force with the term “digging”. It basically means “combination of profiling suspects and proactive policing that tried to bring criminals to light before crime take place, though aggressive policing of suspects, or ‘target population’”. It refers to the serious consideration of ‘petty crimes’ which were was ignored by the police, to prevent them turning into bigger, more serious crimes. A part of the ‘digging’ strategy is to specify certain areas harboring suspect populations prone to crime, in other words, a spatialization of crime. Gönen (2010: 77) claims that the target or the suspect populations had a class and ethnic aspect for the İzmir Police based on her interviews with the police officers and analyses of human rights complaint files to İzmir Bar Association – they forced Kurdish migrants, Roma, thinner and bally addicts, transvestites, in other words, the groups at the bottom of the class hierarchy.

¹³⁷ In fact, rewarding the policemen catching thieves, purse-snatchers and pick-pockets is a common practice and dates far back then Çapkın’s term in İstanbul; what Çapkın did is to systematize and standardize the rewarding mechanism and use it as a part of the appointment criteria for the police officers as he did in İzmir (Gönen, 2013: 93). For example, a news report from 2001 with the title “Prize purse-snatcher hunt”, mentions that the policemen are “rewarded with 50 million liras per purse-snatcher”, and thanks to that practice, purse-snatching decreased to a great extent (Ödüllü kapkaççı avı, Hürriyet, 05.03.2001). The news report invokes the image of bounty hunters instead of policemen doing their duties under the law. Many other examples can be followed from the news reports: Gaspcıları yakalayan polisler 200 milyon, Hürriyet, 31.08.2003; Kapkaççıları yakalayan polisler ödüllendirildi, Hürriyet, 27.07.2004; Hırsız yakalayan polise ödül verdi, Hürriyet, 16.03.2006; Oto hırsızını yakalayan polise 3 tam altın, Hürriyet, 05.01.2007.

¹³⁸ According to that system, the police gets 100 points for catching Molotov cocktails, 20 points for looting, purse-snatching, homicide, theft from house, car theft and theft from car, 15 points for attempted looting, purse-snatching, theft from house and car theft, pick-pocketing and theft from workplace, 10 points for drug-dealing, pick-pocketing from shops, fraud and fraud in money exchange, 7 points for stealing motorcycles and bicycles, all kinds of attempted theft and buying drugs, and 6 points for possession and usage of drugs, cybercrimes and unauthorized guns (970 polise bonus tayin, Hürriyet, 14.06.2010).

go to 'hunt' purse-snatchers and thieves in 'suspicious neighborhoods' known for their 'suspicious residents':

Çapkın also mentioned that “The policemen who would like to increase their scores within the scoring system would go to certain areas without being dependent on the information given by the center on incidents, because they know where to catch thieves, muggers and purse-snatchers” (İstanbul Emniyeti'nde Çapkın devrimleri, Hürriyet, 29.07.2009).

Çapkın's projects including the scoring system and further development of Trust Teams were depicted as the real reasons of decreasing crime rates in the city and almost disappearance of purse-snatching.¹³⁹

The policing strategy which put emphasis on citizens' responsibility in prevention of crime as a part of pro-active and pre-crime policing included setting up reporting/informing mechanism among the ordinary citizens.¹⁴⁰ In 2005, Turkish National Police declared that they aimed to establish a “neighborhood monitoring system”, in which the neighborhood residents would gather on a regular basis and discuss the security issues in their area. The system would also include the neighborhoods monitoring each other's “suspicious acts” and inform the police. It is claimed that this mechanism would improve the informal social control mechanisms.¹⁴¹ İstanbul Governor Muammer Güler underlines the importance of informing mechanism by saying, “Everyone should be everyone's police”, and indicates that informing is a part of the “urban awareness”.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Güven Timleri 26 bin 639 olaya müdahale etti, Hürriyet, 14.08.2010; 'Simitçi polisler' sokakta suç oranını gerilettiler, Sabah, 15.08.2010; 450 bin gözaltı, Hürriyet, 11.09.2010; 'Simitçi polis' gasp ve kapkaçı bitirdi, Sabah, 27.02.2011; 'Çalışkan polise puan' suç azalttı, Sabah, 11.02.2010; En 'emniyetli' muhabbet, Savaş Ay, Sabah, 03.10.2011.

¹⁴⁰ Gambetti (2007: 10) argues that emergence of new subjectivities like “officer citizen” or “police citizen” in the last two decades is related to the changing form and actor of violence in the post-coup era. She claims that social violence is replaced by state violence, and the distance between the state and the civil society is eroded.

¹⁴¹ Artık 175 bin polisin cebinde sanığa okuması zorunlu olan Haklar Bildirgesi var, Hürriyet Pazar, 20.03.2005

¹⁴² 300 okulun önüne kamera takılacak, Hürriyet, 13.01.2006. In 2007, Social Ethics Association (TED) prepared an “Active Citizenship Project”, in order to improve the informing mechanism within the society. It is argued that informing plays an important role in punishing the criminals and especially crimes like purse-snatching and mugging crime will decrease if it is improved, including monetary rewards to the informer (İhbarcıya para ödülü verelim, Hürriyet, 21.03.2007).

To sum up, especially after the amendments to PVSK law in 2007, the authorities of the police to use firearms, to use force; to stop and search individuals; to prevent “immoral” behaviors; and monitor telecommunications arbitrarily results in violation of fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. Surveillance systems like MOBESE, undercover police on the streets of especially “suspicious areas”, and informing mechanism could be considered as part of the excessive police authority and use of police power in suppression of certain cultural and political groups and neighborhoods as well as individual citizens. The spirit of police law in Turkey has been predominated by the ideas of prevention of social order and continuity of the state. Berksoy (2013: 30) summarizes the outcomes of this phenomenon as such:

Preventive and intelligence-based policing strategies put into practice around a new “security” logic centered on the concept of “risk”, both violate the right of privacy and, in many cases, allow the police to establish absolute control over society. Moreover, these strategies stigmatize some neighborhoods and groups as “potential criminals” and occasionally extend this stigmatization to the whole society, inevitably bringing about aggressive policing techniques.

As stated before, transformation and re-organization of urban space in relation to the changes in the penal policies and policing strategies can be analyzed by referring to the news reports through the representations of street crimes in the case of purse-snatching and certain neighborhoods defined as ‘troubled’ by the official discourse. A critical analysis of the crime news reports requires a methodological perspective that would both provide insights about news analysis and particular characteristics of crime news. In that sense, the next chapter discusses the major theoretical references utilized in the analysis the two cases, news reports on purse-snatching incidents and “troubled” neighborhoods.

CHAPTER 3

CRIME, NEWS AND CRIME NEWS

This chapter aims to introduce the reader with some of the critical theoretical debates and explorations within three fields of study – theories of crime and deviance, discourse theory and crime news. Introduction of some major divides and discussions within these fields is vital for maintaining the theoretical and methodological perspective of the dissertation. So, embracing a perspective which considers crime in non-essentialist terms as a socially constructed and historical concept, major approaches to crime and deviance with a specific focus on Marxist contributions of the 1970s to the field, deconstructive stream of critical criminology and constitutive criminology is discussed. Then, the major arguments of Critical Discourse Analysis is elaborated to understand the ways in which social relations of dominance and power are constructed within discourse in defining the social borders which separate the criminal/deviant from normal. The news in general and the crime news in particular are central in “social construction of crime”. In that sense, the structure of the news text and its major elements used in the construction of discriminatory discourses are discussed. Finally, the concept of ‘moral panics’ is examined as a particular form of crime news, or the media approach to crime to be more precise, which serves as a useful tool to understand the demonization of certain social groups related with particular types of crime and its role in the creation of consensus over certain policies.

3.1. Theories of Crime and Deviance

Despite a common framework and terminology, concepts of crime and deviance point slightly but still different things. Starting with crime, the first thing to be mentioned is that there is no unitary and universal definition of it. Crime is a socially constructed, historical concept with many contested definitions over time. Theoretical positions, dominant ideological and moral paradigms and different social and economic conditions define what crime is. There are various lexical

definitions. In *Black's Law Dictionary*, crime is defined as, "An act that the law makes punishable; the breach of a legal duty treated as the subject-matter of a criminal proceeding." In *Webster's New World Law Dictionary* it is expressed in terms of an "An act or omission that violates the law and is punishable by a sentence of incarceration." There are certain subcategories of crime which correspond to different penal processes and punishments. In the legal terminology, crime is divided into felony, offense, violation and misdemeanor. Felony and misdemeanor could be positioned on the opposite ends of crime spectrum. Felony is "a grave or serious form of crime, typically punishable by imprisonment for more than a year", while misdemeanor refers to less serious crimes receiving lesser punishments like a year or less. Deviance, on the other hand is defined in *Oran's Dictionary of the Law* as "Noticeable differing from average or normal behavior". In that sense, deviance is a broader concept than crime, generally referring to the acts and behaviors that are censured for being outside the norms of the dominant culture. Sumner (2001: 89) argues that deviance is "intertwined with the dominant culture" in the sense that it is a defining feature in the constitution of the cultural, political and economic norms of society; "society's norms and virtues are defined, partly, by their opposition to its enemies' sins and vices". In that sense, deviance is also historically constructed concept just like crime and depends on the moral principles of the time.

In the post-war period until the 1970s, the criminological theory was dominated by "social interactionist approach" which has taken the consensus in society for granted and defined deviance as a symptom of social disorganization (Taylor et al, 2003: 37). However, with the Marxist contributions to the theory, "critical criminology" emerged as a more historical, structural perspective on crime and deviance. New topics such as domestic violence, corporate crime, crimes of the state, rape, social and political crime were introduced by critical criminologists. Even positive aspects of deviant consciousness were explored under 'subculture studies'. These topics were handled in terms of power relations and social inequality in a historical perspective, especially under the influence of Gramsci and Althusser. Wykes (2001: 11) argues that in this 'new criminology',

Knowledge about deviance . . . depended on the representations of the dominant institutions wherein a mutuality of powerful interests ensured that the preferred and legitimated behaviours and views were likely to be conducive with their own.

In these terms, breaking the law or flouting social codes and rules could alternatively be seen as an act of political resistance, an assertion of self and difference.

Historical background of such a change in the understanding of criminology was a post-war atmosphere of political uncertainty, with rising radical and liberal opposition to legal and political order. Taylor et al. (2003: 237) define this as a shift from the consensual view to the conflict paradigm. Contrary to the social interactionist approach, conflict theory comprehends society as organized around dissensus emanating from the relations of power and authority. In their key study, Taylor et al. (2003: 268) emphasize the importance of the state's role in drawing the line between approved and sanctioned behavior in different historical contexts. They argue that "a fully social theory of deviance" should focus on the wider structural origins of the deviant act within the social context of power and authority relations, and inequalities of wealth, leaving biological and psychological assumptions aside.

In the same way, they argue that specific conditions and characteristics of social reaction to deviant action needs to be explained because it is necessary for understanding the occasional "crusades" against the amount and level of certain crimes. "The impact of social reaction on deviant's further action" has been explored by many sociologists and criminologists like Edwin M. Lemert (1951: 75-6), who makes a distinction between primary and secondary deviation. While primary deviation refers to the kind of behaviour that may be troublesome to the individual but does not produce a symbolic self-conception or identity, secondary deviation occurs in the case of girding oneself with it as a defense, attack or adjustment mechanism. So, deviance becomes significant in this secondary level when it assigns a certain social status (Cohen, 2006: 5). Main premise of the social reaction perspective is that not only deviance leads to social control but also social control leads to deviance.

To sum up, new criminology examines crime and deviancy in terms of power relations and social inequality in a historical perspective which avoids the depoliticization of criminological issues. From 1970s onwards, a deconstructive stream emerged within critical criminology based on a rather materialistic deconstruction of the social state. By fragmenting the world into divisions such as class, ethnicity, race, gender, nationality, etc. the deconstructive stream, which is

called “constitutive criminology”, claimed that there is no such thing as universal morality, but rather a moralistic attitude of the powerful towards the crimes and deviations of the subordinate classes (Sumner, 2004: 20). Under the influence of postmodernism and Foucault’s work, deviation from the social was even celebrated as a subversion of the dominant. Indeed, excluded, banished, ignored knowledges were welcomed as means to deconstruct the existing social power structure. The postmodernist idea of rationalism as “a form of elite power through which those who claim to have special knowledge earn the right to decide the fate of those who do not share this knowledge” (Henry and Milovanovic, 1999: 5) underpinned constitutive criminology. The notion of ‘discursive distinctions’ refers to the ‘socially constructed’ nature of all truth claims and definitions of deviance accordingly.

As distinct from ‘skeptical postmodernism’ which denies any possibility for objectivity and truth, constitutive criminology adopts an ‘affirmative postmodernist’ approach to crime and deviance. Basic idea is deconstructing edifices to reveal the possibilities of alternative reconstructions. And doing this, constitutive criminology analyses crime as part of the social totality and deny traditional modernist criminological method of separating, analyzing and then correcting the criminal action. Arguing that all crime is rooted in the unequal relations of power, Henry and Milovanovic (1999: 7) claim that crimes in contemporary societies take place due to ‘differences’ – economic, gender, racial, ethnic, political, moral, social, cultural, psychological, etc.

Identity politics, cultural studies and postmodernist debates of the early 1970s also gave rise to another approach called ‘cultural criminology’, which basically treats crime as a cultural issue. Even though Sumner (2004: 25) argues that this approach devalued the effects of the economic and political in addition to redesignating the social issues under the name of ‘cultural’, cultural criminology had an important contribution in overruling biologist, psychological explanations of crime and deviance. Polysemic and ambiguous character of the social challenged the moral norms and their enforcement and made them contestable. Through the advent of new media, legal process is usually preceded by media trials, victims and witnesses are treated and interrogated as criminals, and crime dramas feed vigilantism and sometimes celebrate certain forms of crime as rebels to society. Therefore, Sumner

(2004: 26) states that, “In today’s world, realistically, crime and justice have to be constructed or interpreted using cultural devices or knowledge – because they have acquired an immateriality and lack of obviousness, or they are just plain absent.” In that sense, media plays an important role in the social construction of crime. Keeping in mind that crime defines the moral contours of a society, representations of crime in the media are significant in understanding the social conventions and discursive practices which are “within” and “beyond” these borders. However, before discussing the particular characteristics and structure of crime news, discourse in general and news discourse in particular needs to be elaborated to understand how the news texts construct a certain “social reality” by analyzing the dynamics of selection of certain topics as news and the role of various social actors in the production process. Critical Discourse Analysis perspective provides a suitable framework to examine the ways in which news texts contribute to the reproduction of social power and dominance relations through “naturalizing” the moral borders which separate the “normal” from the “deviant”.

3.2 Critical Discourse Analysis as a Method for Interpreting Social Reality

The idea that power relations in the society can be read through the struggle over meanings in the linguistic/semiological domain constitutes the basic premise of discourse analysis. Through this ongoing struggle, meanings are continuously negotiated, change, fixated, and change again. Social classes, ethnic/racial minority groups, different genders, interest groups, governments, etc. are the main parties of this process. The definition of social reality keeps changing due to the balance of power in micro and macro levels in the society.

There are different approaches to discourse, yet all start out from the same idea that human behavior is always mediated by language, therefore meaningful. The aim is to explore and analyze this meaning and its conditions of emergence. Within this framework, every social action or activity can be read as a ‘text’ pertaining to certain historical conditions within a certain web of relations. Originated in the early 1990s by a group of scholars such as Teun van Dijk, Norman Fairclough,¹⁴³

¹⁴³ Norman Fairclough mostly focuses on the mass media discourse and challenges the idea of neutrality. In his particular case studies he shows the biased nature of the news reports. There is a

Gunther Kress, Theo van Leeuwen and Ruth Wodak,¹⁴⁴ Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)¹⁴⁵ seeks to understand the relation between language and power in the society. The works of Frankfurt School, Bakhtin, Volosinov, Althusser and Foucault¹⁴⁶ had an important influence on CDA.

strong Foucauldian influence in Fairclough's works as well as Bakhtin and Volosinov in the sense that intertextuality and multi-actuality underpin his arguments on the conflictual nature of the texts including opposing ideas at once. And in terms of the subject, Fairclough argues that the individual can be in various possible subject positions in a web of intersecting and intermingling power relations, which can be articulated to hegemonic struggle in many ways.

Fairclough (1989: 20) states that discourse is his subject of study instead of language because discourse is the language as a form of social practice. Therefore, he defines CDA as "a perspective on semiosis" because "semiosis in the representation and self-representation of social practices constitutes discourses" (2001: 121, 123). That is why he includes spoken and written language, visual images and sound effects, and representations, relations and identities under the category of the text, which is the key unit of discourse analysis (1995: 17). Fairclough argues that orders of discourse, a term taken from Foucault, are formed around "dominance"; that is, some meanings are dominant while others are marginal or oppositional. In other words, there is always a hegemonic struggle over meanings in an order of discourse.

¹⁴⁴ Ruth Wodak's discourse-historical approach is influenced by Bernstein and Frankfurt School, especially Habermas. Her studies range from the analysis of discourses in courts, schools and hospitals to sexism, anti-Semitism, racism, and decision-making processes in the EU (Wodak, 2011). In line with the political and 'emancipatory' objectives of CDA, part of Wodak's research aims to lay out guidelines for non-discriminatory and egalitarian communication. Major aim of Wodak's discourse-historical approach is to integrate systematically all available background information in the analysis of the text; in other words, to show "the effect of the context of the discourse on the structure, function, and content of the utterances" (Wodak, 2011: 61). In spite of the similarities between different racist and discriminating discourses, for example, Wodak points to distinctive features of particular historical traditions and socio-political contexts.

¹⁴⁵ As Wodak (2001: 1) mentions, the term Critical Linguistics (CL) is used interchangeably with Critical Discourse Analysis, the latter of which can be considered as the more recent name of the former. CL dates back to the late 1970s, to a group of scholars in the University of East Anglia, namely, Roger Fowler, Tony Trew and Gunther Kress and their book, *Language and Control*, published in 1979. Fowler et al. showed the ways in which grammatical tools are used to establish, naturalize and manipulate social hierarchies (Wodak, 2001: 6). Some key texts which herald this new approach are: Teun van Dijk, *Prejudice in Discourse: an Analysis of Ethnic Prejudice in Cognition and Conversation*, Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1984; Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power*, London: Longman, 1989; Ruth Wodak (ed.), *Language, Power and Ideology*, Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1989; Teun van Dijk, "Discourse & Society: A New Journal for a New Research Focus", *Discourse & Society*, 1(1), 1990 (Wodak, 2001: 4).

¹⁴⁶ Among others, Foucault has a particular importance for CDA because it has a great influence on the works of Fairclough and Wodak. Discourse is one of the three concepts that make up Foucault's broader theory of the social, besides power and knowledge. For Foucault, discourse is related to "discipline" rather than a linguistic system (McHoul and Grace, 2002: 26). Here discipline refers to both scholarly disciplines like science, medicine, sociology, etc. and disciplinary institutions like prison, school, asylum, etc. The relation between bodies of knowledge and forms of social control gave way to particular discourses, i. e. discursive formations. In *Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault (2004: 41) defines discursive formation as a system of "dispersion and regularity". Discourses are "relatively well-bounded areas of social knowledge", which "constrains and enables writing, speaking and thinking within a certain context" (McHoul and Grace, 2002: 31). To understand and analyze discourses, Foucault argues that one has to look at the "statements", not books or other works because while books and other works display "what has been/is said", an archaeological approach focusing on statements would ask the question, "Why this statement appears and not the other?" In that sense, discontinuities and ruptures define the history of

CDA has certain differences from the traditional socio-linguistics¹⁴⁷ in terms of denying any deterministic relation between texts and the social, and also denying any autonomous system of language (Wodak, 2001: 3). Rather than a uniform methodology of linguistic analysis, CDA is “at most a shared perspective” of studying semiological and discursive practices in the institutional, political, gender and media domains (van Dijk, 1993b: 131). Social inequalities and power struggles are regarded as a constitutive part and result of discourse. Wodak (2001: 2) defines CDA as follows:

Thus, CL and CDA may be defined as fundamentally concerned with analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language. In other words, CDA aims to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, signaled, constituted, legitimized and so on language use (or in discourse).

CDA does not only focus on texts; the social processes and structures giving rise to the production of texts and their reception, or the subjects’ interaction with them in the process of creating meanings are also within the field of CDA. In that sense, as well as the ideological dominance structures and social conventions created by the powerful groups in the society, CDA explores the possibilities of resistance to such relations of inequality. Van Dijk (1993a: 249) defines this as “focusing on *the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance*”. Accordingly, Wodak (2001: 3) defines three crucial concepts for CDA: power, history and ideology. Discourses are structured by dominance/power relations; every discourse

discourses rather than progress and accumulation. The importance of discourses for Foucault is that they “generate subject positions into which people are ‘inserted’” (Purvis and Hunt, 1993: 489). Analysis of the relation between power and knowledge reveals the ways of “subjection”, because being a subject is only possible through being the object of knowledge. Foucault (2001: 326) defines his work as the study of the “modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects”. The “law of truth” Foucault mentions is the basic principle that makes the governance of people possible through certain micro techniques dispersed in the society. Thanks to these demographic administration and management techniques, which Foucault (1978: 140) defines as “bio-power”; populations became “subjugated” to power. The role of discourse here is that when a discourse becomes scientific (truth), it establishes a power relation. Foucauldian approach had important impacts on critical discourse analysis. First of all, power came to be understood as something more than oppression; that is, it is a productive process in which meanings/truths emerge within certain historical contexts. And in terms of discourse, his claim to understand it as an ‘economy’ with “its own intrinsic technology, tactics, effects of power, which in turn it transmits” (Purvis and Hunt, 1993: 488) breaks its relation with the notion of ‘representation’. Rather, discourse is power itself.

¹⁴⁷ Fairclough (1989: 1) states that traditional socio-linguistic theories describe how social conventions distribute power unequally but they do not explain them as the product of power relations and struggles. They are usually limited to the study of grammar and meanings of isolated sentences, which van Dijk (1991: 46) defines as ‘surface structures’, neglecting the underlying macro-structures.

is situated in time and space; and, structures of dominance are legitimated by the ideologies of the powerful. The role of ideology especially becomes significant in understanding the given, ‘natural’ image of the social conventions and stable discursive practices, which produce social inequalities. However, ideological representations are not limited to class-based inequalities in CDA; they also include political, cultural, gender, ethnic and racial discriminations (van Dijk, 1993a: 250).

A common point made by the scholars of CDA is to take an explicit political stance against the unequal power relations in the society. Fairclough (2001: 125) defines this as “emancipatory objectives”, which means focusing on the discriminations towards the “losers” in the society. It is even argued that CDA is more interested in “pressing issues” rather than contributing to a particular paradigm or theory. Van Dijk (1993a: 252) elaborately defines the task and aim of the Critical Discourse Analysts:

Although not in each stage of theory formation and analysis, their work is admittedly and ultimately political. Their hope, if occasionally illusory, is change through critical understanding. Their perspective, if possible, that of those who suffer most from dominance and inequality. Their critical targets are the power elites that enact, sustain, legitimate, condone or ignore social inequality and injustice. That is, one of the criteria of their work is solidarity with those who need it most. Their problems are ‘real’ problems, that is the serious problems that threaten the lives or well-being of many, and not primarily the sometimes petty disciplinary problems of describing discourse structures, let alone the problems of the powerful (including the ‘problems’ the powerful have with those who are less powerful, or with those who resist it).

The notion of “critical” stands for this political stance as well as the self-reflexivity of the researcher. The social position, status, habitus, gender, etc. of the researcher is acknowledged and these are accepted as a part of the research process. In other words, there is no room for a “value-free” science in CDA. Despite of the various methods, research areas, and figures under CDA, it is possible to define some major principles:

- *CDA deals with social conflicts created by power relations,*
- *Power relations are discursive as well as the social and cultural relations,*
- *Discourses operate ideologically,*
- *Discourses are historical,*
- *Discourses are a form of social action,*
- *Text, which is a discursive construct, is the basic unit of communication,*
- *The relation between text and society is a mediated one,*
- *Texts are the sites of power struggle*

Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis focuses on the representations of ethnic minorities in Europe in the reproduction of ethnic prejudice and racism, which is critical for the scope of the thesis work. For this aim, he analyses news reports, parliamentary discussions, political speeches, etc. In each subject, van Dijk argues for a 3-level-analysis: the process of production, text, and process of interpretation. In terms of the process of production, the 'style' of the discourse should be analyzed. It depends on the social position of the speaker, the social situation and the discourse genre. For example, style of a tabloid newspaper differs from the style of a quality newspaper (van Dijk, 1991: 46). In terms of the text, rhetorical structures should be analyzed, such as sounds (e.g. alliteration and rhyme), sentence structures and meaning (e.g. metaphors, understatements or irony). These two levels are part of the 'structural analysis' of discourse.¹⁴⁸

Lastly, van Dijk's third level of analysis is defined as 'contextual analysis'. It covers the "processes of decoding, interpretation, storage, and representation in memory, and in the role of previous knowledge and beliefs of the readers in this process of understanding" (van Dijk, 1991: 47). Remembering is crucial for van Dijk because the reader tends to remember the stereotypes and conventions within the text rather than the whole. That's why van Dijk defines the whole process as 'cognitive'.

¹⁴⁸ Van Dijk offers two stages for the structural analysis of discourse: micro/local structures and macro/global structures. Micro structures consist of vocabulary, syntax, style and rhetoric of sentences. These are the 'surface' structure levels of texts and expressions of underlying levels of meaning (van Dijk, 1991: 45). Analysis of macro structures, on the other hand, involves thematic and schematic analysis. Thematic structure of a news item is basically about its 'content', 'what it is about'; and it is called 'macrostructure'. The schemata or the schematic structure, then again, is about the 'form'. This organizing global form is called 'superstructure' (van Dijk, 1985: 69). He defines the relation between thematic and schematic structures in the same way as the relation between syntax and meaning: the former organizes the latter. Thematic structure is 'semantic' for a couple of reasons. First of all, it deals with meaning. It includes notions such as 'topic', 'theme' or 'gist'. And it is neither about syntactic form nor the 'local' meaning of isolated words and sentences. Thematic macrostructure refers to larger fragments of texts, propositions or the whole text (van Dijk, 1985: 74). Van Dijk defines three principles, which are called 'macrorules', for thematic macrostructures: deletion, generalization and (re)construction. Macrorules simplify the complex meaning of a text into a more general and 'elemental' level. And macrorules are 'recursive' in the sense that they may produce even shorter abstracts at each level (van Dijk, 1985: 76). Headlines and leads usually give the overall subject of a topic or theme. If thematic structure is 'macrosemantic', then schematic structure is 'macrosyntax' (van Dijk, 1985: 84). News reports have such a schematic structure including conventional categories such as headline and lead, together forming the 'summary' category (van Dijk, 1991: 46). The other categories of the news schema include 'background', 'verbal reactions' (quotations), 'main event', 'previous events', 'consequences', 'comment' and 'history'.

Van Dijk developed a socio-cognitive model of discourse starting from the early 1980s. For Van Dijk (1993a: 251) social cognition is “the role of social representations in the minds of social actors” and the “interface” between discourse and dominance, providing a link in between. He gives a definition of social cognition as follows:

Socially shared representations of societal arrangements, groups and relations, as well as mental operations such as interpretation, thinking and arguing, inferencing and learning, among others, together define what we understand by social cognition (van Dijk, 1993a: 257).

Social cognition includes various schematic forms shaped by ‘evaluative beliefs’ – socially shared opinions. Van Dijk (1989: 24; 1993a: 258) argues that ideologies are the fundamental social cognitions which control the formation, permeation and interpretation of other types of social cognition such as knowledges, beliefs, opinions, etc. The role of critical discourse analysis here is to reveal, explain and criticize the ways in which dominant discourses influence social cognition in the manufacture of social order.

Unlike a Foucauldian conceptualization of power which is disciplinary yet productive, van Dijk’s (1993a: 254) formulation rests on the notions of coercion and manipulation. Claiming that modern power is cognitive, he defines it as a way of “*changing the minds of others in one’s own interest*”. He even uses the terms “mind management” or “mental control” (van Dijk, 1989: 20).¹⁴⁹ And again contrary to Foucault, van Dijk (1993a: 255) makes a distinction between legitimate and abusive forms of power, and defines the latter as “dominance”. Power and dominance are usually institutionalized and there is a “hierarchy of power”, in which some members of the dominant group have a special access to decision-making of and control over power. This control may range from setting the agenda and topics to deciding on who will be portrayed in what ways. Van Dijk (1993a: 255) calls this group who has a special access to discourse “power elites”.¹⁵⁰ Power elites dominate the actions and cognitions of others through their control over public texts and discourses, because ordinary people have a very limited access to these channels. So there is a positive correlation between social power and

¹⁴⁹ Even though van Dijk’s formulation of social power seems to be a ‘closed-circuit’, he mentions that there is still room for ‘variable degrees of freedom and resistance’, and that ‘dominated groups are seldom completely powerless’ (van Dijk, 1989: 20, 21).

¹⁵⁰ Van Dijk (1989: 22) mentions them as ‘symbolic elites’ referring to Bourdieu elsewhere.

discourse: the more discourse controls or influences, the more powerful social elites become (van Dijk, 1993a: 256). And in the same way, some ‘voices are censored’, that is they are blocked (van Dijk, 1993a: 260).

In the Turkish case, there are various studies from the perspective of critical discourse analysis or on critical discourse analysis (İnal, 1994; İnal, 1995; Dursun, 2004; Yanıkkaya, 2009; Sünbuloğlu, 2009; İnceoğlu and Çoban, 2014; Alğan, 2014). These works scrutinize the methods of critical discourse analysis and apply them to different cases to trace the discriminatory discourses, reproduction of unequal power relations and relations of exploitation in the media. There are also other works dealing with the issue of crime and the crime discourse not solely in the media but in various aspects of social practice, which marginalizes certain social groups such as the urban lower classes and Kurdish migrants (Aydın, 2009; Durna and Kubilay, 2010; Gölbaşı, 2008; Gönen, 2010, 2013; Özkazanç, 2011; Saraçoğlu, 2010, 2011; Yonucu, 2008). In all these studies, stigmatization and criminalization of urban lower classes, especially in the case of the Kurdish migrants are handled from different angles within a particular historical context, and their role in the reproduction of dominance relations and hegemonic nationalistic discourse.

In the light of the insights provided by CDA, the news text can be considered as a domain in which there is a power struggle over meanings. The news text constructs a certain “social reality” as a result of the ongoing power struggles through a process of selecting certain topics, displaying certain actors in certain ways from within a discourse which can be discriminatory as well as inclusive. News texts play a crucial role in building a consensus in the society over the adoption of certain policies, so, rather than transparent mediums of information, news texts are discursive edifices active in the ideological moulding of the society.

3.3. Discourse and Discrimination in the News

The term ‘reality’ is of crucial importance in understanding the news because the basic idea behind the news is the claim to ‘reflect the reality out there’. However, news is the product of an active and dynamic process. It does not simply reflect reality, but ‘works on it’ (Hartley, 1989: 7). The whole process of news production

from selection of the topics to the way they are presented depends on many factors. Power relations, conflicts and reconciliations in the society, ideological position of the newsmakers, and the relations of the media organs with the interest groups and capital all play a role in this process. And in all cases, media has a crucial role in the building of hegemony and establishment of consensus in the society. In other words, mainstream media contributes to the social reproduction of unequal power relations and exploitation. Still, one should keep in mind that an analysis of such media practices necessitates a multi-dimensional structural approach rather than crude condemnation of some ‘evil plotters’:

[...] the relationship between the material interests controlling the media and the cultural products they provide is a complex one, not explicable in terms of conspiracy or conscious intent. The part played by the media in cementing the consensus in capitalist society is only occasionally characterized by overt suppression or deliberate distortion. If we are to explain why, in an inegalitarian society, many of those receiving least of the rewards available are willing to accept and even actually support the system which maintains their subordination, the role of the media in legitimating that system must be explored. To do that requires investigating not isolated instances of malignity but the routines of practice in the media industries (Murdock and Golding, 1973: 228).

To understand the ‘routines of practice’, selection of news topics would provide a suitable starting point. Nothing is essentially ‘newsworthy’; they only become news after they are ‘selected’ as news. Therefore, news is neither found nor gathered but it is ‘created’, even ‘invented’. In fact, news is a certain ‘report’ or ‘account’ of an event.¹⁵¹ Van Dijk (1989: 42) argues that newsworthiness is based on “ideological and professional criteria” that recognize and legitimate the position of the socially powerful. In “Policing the Crisis”, Hall et al. (1978: 53) argue that in the selection of news, there are three basic components: organization of the newspapers (meaning the bureaucratic organization of the media including the profile of the personnel, business relations with other sectors, etc.), professional ideology (meaning the newsman’s sense of news values including extraordinariness, reference to elites, dramatic value, personalization, negativity, etc.) and the moment of the construction of the news story. The last one, Hall et al. (1978: 54) argue that is crucial in the newsmaking process which provides “cultural maps of the social world” through identification and contextualization.

¹⁵¹ Murdock and Golding (1973: 228) claim that news are ‘event-oriented’; based on a “need not to report reality but “an aspect that has obtruded itself”, and thus to concentrate on superficial eruptions and the dramatic, on form rather than content.”

“Consensual nature of the society” is one of the basic assumptions of these cultural maps. It assumes that “what unites us far outweighs what divides and distinguishes us” in the sense that the members of a society more or less have the same interests and same share of power in achieving their goals (Hall et al, 1978: 55). In the ideology of consensus, the aim is for the population to accept the rightness of the status quo by holding certain beliefs, and therefore the population is assumed to be undivided. Its basis is the political and economic needs of the government and business (Fowler, 1991: 49).

It is possible to make a generalization of major news topics. Hartley (1989: 38-39) defines six major categories for the British media, which could be applied to other national contexts: politics, economy, foreign affairs, domestic news, occasional stories and sport. Through restricted topic selection for the news, the media ensures a strategic control over the production of knowledge (van Dijk, 1989: 26). There are several criteria of the news selection process, which are called ‘news values’ and an extensive list of them is provided by Galtung and Ruge (1973: 69-70):

- (F₁) Frequency
- (F₂) Threshold
 - (F_{2.1}) Absolute intensity
 - (F_{2.2}) Intensity increase
- (F₃) Unambiguity
- (F₄) Meaningfulness
 - (F_{4.1}) Cultural proximity
 - (F_{4.2}) Relevance
- (F₅) Consonance
 - (F_{5.1}) Predictability
 - (F_{5.2}) Demand
- (F₆) Unexpectedness
 - (F_{6.1}) Unpredictability
 - (F_{6.2}) Scarcity
- (F₇) Continuity
- (F₈) Composition
- (F₉) Reference to élite nations
- (F₁₀) Reference to élite people
- (F₁₁) Reference to persons
- (F₁₂) Reference to something negative

Frequency means that single events are more likely to be reported than long-term processes. While threshold refers to the ‘size’ or ‘volume’ of the news, unambiguity is about the clarity of the event. Cultural proximity and relevance under the category of meaningfulness embody an ideology of ethnocentrism.

Consonance and unexpectedness seem to be contradictory, yet they are both important news values effective in the selection process. Continuity means that once something is defined as 'news', it will continue to be defined as such for some time. Composition refers to the balance or make-up of the news bulletin, which means that an item will be more or less newsworthy depending on what else is available for inclusion. The last four are culture-bound factors. Reference to persons or 'personalization' is an important news-value in the sense that it enables identification, empathy or disapproval, and it simplifies complex historical and institutional processes (Fowler, 1991: 14-16). For Galtung and Ruge (1973: 66-67) "the idea of personification" is very problematic in many senses. Presenting events as the consequence of personal or some collective action of a group of persons prevents one from evaluating them as the outcome of "social forces". This strategy can be related to many factors from facilitating the identification process to the modern techniques of news making. However, the most critical explanation of personification appears to be the one related with "cultural idealism". According to this ideological position, "man is the master of his own destiny and events can be seen as the outcome of an act of free will". Structural and materialistic explanations are omitted for the sake of deliberate individual action.

News values are operative in the creation of stereotypes; in fact, there is a reciprocal process between them. Stereotypes are socially-constructed mental categories that make events and individuals comprehensible.¹⁵² Fowler (1991: 17) defines stereotypes as "the currency of negotiation" in the process of formation of news values and production of news events. In fact, this is a process of manufacture, in which the product is not the news, but the 'readers'.

The cultural maps constructed by and through the media tend to re-produce existing relations of power. However, this does not simply mean that the media is an instrument of the dominant groups in the society. Rather, some structural obligations as well as complex relations with the news sources play roles in the process. Hall et al. (1978: 57) argue that media is most of the time dependent on the data and topics provided by some "regular and reliable" institutions as news

¹⁵² Halloran, Elliot and Murdock (1970: 26, 215-216) mention the 'inferential structure' of news; it is not bias or intentional selection, but "a process of simplification and interpretation", in which the events are selected "in terms of their fit or consonance with pre-existing images." (quoted in Cohen and Young, 1973: 101).

sources. They have some common characteristics; for example, they are usually established by official authority. They are also organized, have financial power and resources for publicity. The media relies on the knowledge provided by these “accredited” sources such as the statements of deputies, trade unionists, or various experts to separate ‘fact’ from ‘opinion’ for being impartial and objective in news reporting. Reliance on such resources result in the “over-accessing to the media of those in powerful and privileged institutional positions”. These authoritative, powerful and privileged sources are defined by Hall et al. (1978: 58-59) as “primary definers”, by Hartley (1989: 42) as “accessed voices” and by van Dijk (1993a: 255) as “power elites”. They frame and constitute “primary interpretation” of the topics and problems; in fact, there is a reciprocal relation in the sense that while the media have and prefer access to these resources, they in turn have access to media channels whenever they want. In that sense, the media are not primary definers; they rather have a secondary role in reproducing the interpretations provided by the primary definers, that is, the powerful groups and institutions. Thus, one can speak of a certain “imbalance of access” concerning these resources (Fowler, 1991: 22). This preferential access and coverage of news actors can also work negatively, in the sense that certain classes or groups are only covered as news in pejorative terms or when they are involved in deviant acts (van Dijk, 1989: 26).

Certain mediums have certain conventional methods of representation. Yet, as stated above, this is never a totally deliberate process; in other words, it is never under absolute control of the newspaper. Most of the time, they are habitual as well as deliberate. This can be understood as part of a greater theory of discourse. If ideology is already imprinted in language, and therefore discourse, then the form and content of news become relatively independent from the journalist and the reader. What happens in the discursive interaction between the writer and the reader is a reproduction of already-existing values. These values are the result of a general acceptance by society. In other words, they are the end product of a struggle over meanings – to make the multi-accentual sign uni-accentual. As Hartley (1989: 24) argues, news has a crucial role in the struggle for uni-accentuality of meaning:

News discourse is hostile to ambiguities and seeks to validate its suppression of the alternative possibilities intersecting its signs by reference either to ‘the facts of the story’ or to ‘normal usage’. Many of the explicit ‘values’ of journalistic codes are concerned with unambiguity, clarity, etc. And . . . one of news discourse’s most consistent (self-imposed) tasks is to *prefer* particular meanings for events over against other possible meanings.

Photographs and televisual images are, Hartley (1989: 30-31) argues, more prone to connotative meanings because they are motivated signs. In the case of these visual signs, called *iconic signs*, there is a strong resemblance between the sign and the referent; and this resemblance obscures the practice of signification. We can also define this as ‘realism’ – a practice of representation, which re-produces the text as if it is natural. As Coward and Ellis (1986: 45) state, “it is a practice of signification which relies upon the limits that society gives itself.” Realist texts are based on semantic closures, which make discourse possible. Yet, at the point of closure plurality of language is suppressed and limited. It has certain characteristics, such as repressing the production process and stressing the product itself (Coward and Ellis, 1977: 46). The story and content are put forward, concealing the fact that realism is a particular use of language, a particular form of representation. By this way, the signifier becomes identical with the signified.

One of the fundamental ideological linguistic devices in the reproduction of “reality” is the “personal voice” (Fowler, 1991: 47). Despite the various bureaucratic, professional and commercial constraints, every newspaper still has a distinct “social personality”, referring to the different criteria of news selection, appropriation, etc. of different media, through which the news media makes a choice among many statements provided by the primary definers on certain topics. There is a certain discursive gap between bureaucratic and personal discourses, which is narrowed by the illusion of personal voice. This illusion is basically created by employing some oral models giving the sense of conversation. It constructs a sense of informality, familiarity on the basis of an assumed common, taken-for-granted subjective reality by naturalizing the terms used for its representation (Fowler, 1991: 57).

There are many linguistic devices used in the creation of an illusion of conversation such as deliberate misspellings, incomplete sentences, slang words, idioms, diminutives, nicknames, elisions, personal pronouns, indicators of time and place, expressions which signify judgments, and speech acts.¹⁵³

Personal voice is a particular ‘mode of address’;¹⁵⁴ Hall et al. (1978: 61) argue that, considering different ‘social personalities’ of newspapers, every newspaper develops a certain “mode of address”, which means that “the same topic, sources and inferential structures will appear differently even in papers with a similar outlook, since the different rhetorics of address will have an important effect in inflecting the original item”. In other words, it is the particular language the newspaper uses in communicating with its readers. Hall et al. call this the “public idiom”. However, it should be noted that the differences between different newspapers are within the limits of the ideology of consensus, which is deeply embedded in the language itself.

Public idiom also translates the definitions of primary definers into public language. In that sense, it “objectifies” an issue by providing an “external public reference”. Publishing a topic in the newspaper provides it a kind of “public validity” which would otherwise be an issue that requires expert knowledge. Hall et al. (1978: 62) define this process as a part of the media’s “agenda-setting” function. By translating formal definitions into public language, the newspapers both reinforce and disguise the relation between dominant/official discourses and everyday language. In other words, the newspapers deciphers the dominant discourse back into consensus.

Murdock and Golding (1973: 228) argue that occupational ideology of the media support the consensus because they serve the demands of the industry. There are some basic components of consensus which define the relationship between the occupational ideology and the communication industry. Firstly, any threatening

¹⁵³ An utterance becomes a speech act when the speaker does something by saying something; for example, making promises and requests, issuing commands and warnings, etc. (Fowler, 1991: 62-65).

¹⁵⁴ ‘Mode of address’ is defined by Hartley (1989: 88) as, “the ‘tone’ of a newspaper or broadcast, that distinguishes it from its competitors and provides much of its ‘appeal’ to us as viewers and readers”. He gives BBC as an example, with its paternalist, élite, highly moralistic and formal public orientation.

opposition to consensus is presented as illegitimate or ephemeral, therefore either punishable or ignorable. In this way, “the fragmentation of the consensus is not portrayed”. In line with this argument, the priority of national interest over particular interests is reiterated based on a hypothetical “we-ness” – “a uniform moral community”. And any possible dissent or conflict is supposed to be resolvable within the solution mechanisms of the consensus.

Thus, “us” against “them” is the basic opposition in the building of an ideology of consensus. Van Leeuwen and Kress (2006: 155) argue that modalities serve the purpose of creating “an imaginary “we””, by “aligning readers or listeners with some statements and distancing them from others”. Some sub-oppositional categories are constituted on this basis, which are listed by Chibnall (2001: 21-22) as follows:

Table 1. Sub-oppositional categories

Positive legitimating values	Negative illegitimate values
Legality	Illegality
Moderation	extremism
Compromise	dogmatism
Co-operation	confrontation
Order	Chaos
Peacefulness	Violence
Tolerance	intolerance
Constructiveness	destructiveness
Openness	Secrecy
Honesty	corruption
Realism	Ideology
Rationality	irrationality
Impartiality	Bias
Responsibility	irresponsibility
Fairness	unfairness
Firmness	Weakness
Industriousness	Idleness
Freedom of choice	monopoly/uniformity
Equality	Inequality
Self-reliance	dependence ¹⁵⁵

There are some ways to cope with the negative values. If departures from the norm are not too extreme, a tolerant pluralist attitude could be taken. Yet, in extreme cases, the dichotomy between “us” and “them” becomes sharper. In fact, this

¹⁵⁵ The last opposition was added by Fowler (1991: 52).

dichotomy is contradictory considering the ideology of consensus, because “we” and “them” distinction brings forth the idea that there are some people outside the consensus. Furthermore, the press experiences another difficulty promoting the idea of consensus. Since the positive side of consensus is hardly a fertile source for enthralling news, the newspapers load themselves with the stories of “them”, the “others”: murder, rape, burglary, riots, natural disasters (Fowler, 1991: 52-53).

As stated earlier, the basic function of the public idiom is to naturalize its terms of representation. Besides the devices mentioned above, there is a broad range of linguistic structures which play crucial roles in the representation of this reality.¹⁵⁶ Lexical structure or vocabulary is one of the linguistic devices used in the representation of the world from a certain ideological perspective. Within that context, *re-lexicalization*, which means the promotion of a new term, and *over-lexicalization*, which is the overpopulation of synonymous or semi-synonymous terms for culturally significant discursive elements are frequently used (Fowler, 1991: 81-85).

Categorization is another substantial lexical structure which constitutes the basis of discriminatory practices in the newspapers through constituting ‘groups’ such as women, young people, ethnic minorities, etc. A category is justified not through the individual, but through a ‘supposed’ group to which the person belongs. It is a prejudicially constituted ideological stereotype by which the individual is identified. Representation of women is a good example of discrimination in the media discourse. Characteristics such as irrationality, familial dependence, powerlessness and sexual prominence are predicated on women (Fowler, 1991: 93-95). Van Dijk (1993a: 263) mentions “justification and denial of inequality” as socio-cognitive strategies used in biased and discriminatory news reports. The justification of inequality takes place in two forms: *the positive representation of the self*, and *the negative representation of the Others*. This may be by emphasizing “‘our’ tolerance, help or sympathy” for ‘them’, or by pointing to the negative differences, deviances or threats attributed to Others. In terms of the negative representations, the critical point is about ‘generalization’:

¹⁵⁶ Among the major semantic and syntactic structures transitivity, active and passive form, nominalization and modalities can be counted (Fowler, 1991: 73-80). However, they are not discussed in detail here because they are not utilized in the discourse analysis of the news reports within the scope of the thesis.

One of the strategic ways to make sure that such generalizations are made is to emphasize that the current model is 'typical' and not incidental or exceptional, and that the negative actions of the Others cannot be explained or excused. Speakers and writers will therefore tend to emphasize that this 'is always like that', that 'we are not used to that', and that the circumstances do not allow alternative interpretations of the 'deviant' actions of the Others (van Dijk, 1993a: 263-264).

The negative representations may include an association of the discriminated groups with problematic cultural differences, illegal immigration and residence, illegal jobs, crime and being a burden on the state in terms of such as education, housing and employment. In line with this, the discourse of victimizations turns to 'us' as in, "We are the real victims", supported by positive representations of the self as tolerant, egalitarian and understanding (van Dijk, 1989: 34). Van Dijk (1993a: 264) provides a list of some semantic methods used in such discriminatory discourses:

- a) *Argumentation: the negative evaluation follows from the 'facts'.*
- b) *Rhetorical figures: hyperbolic enhancement of 'their' negative actions and 'our' positive actions; euphemisms, denials, understatements of 'our' negative actions.*
- c) *Lexical style: choice of words that imply negative (or positive) evaluations.*
- d) *Storytelling: telling about negative events as personally experienced; giving plausible details about negative features of the events.*
- e) *Structural emphasis of 'their' negative actions, e.g. in headlines, leads, summaries, or other properties of text schemata (e.g. those of news reports), transactivity structures of sentence syntax (e.g. mentioning negative agents in prominent, topical position).*
- f) *Quoting credible witnesses, sources or experts, e.g. in news reports.*

Choice of personal pronouns and demonstratives such as, 'them, those people, etc.' imply social distance. Examples from personal stories are frequently given because they provide 'real evidence' for negative representations. Statements like, "about which you read in the paper everyday" are used while referring to crime and deviance news, or other negative incidents.

The completeness of information given depends on whether it is about 'us' or 'them'. If the information is preferred, then it is described in over-complete, detailed ways. In terms of the negative representations, sometimes irrelevant negative qualifications attributed to 'them' are given to delegitimize or marginalize their position (van Dijk, 1993a: 275). Van Dijk claims that there are some common criteria in the representation of subordinate social groups, which tend to have less access to the dominant mass media, including minorities, refugees, squatters, and Third World countries' citizens in the news reports. In these reports, they:

[...] are used less as credible and routine sources; described stereotypically if not negatively, primarily as a “problem”, if not as a burden or even as a threat to our valued resources; assumed to be “deficient” or “backward” in many ways, as compared to our norms, goals, expertise, or culture, and, therefore; need our (altruistic) help, understanding, or support, assuming they adapt to our social and political norms and ideology (van Dijk, 1989: 43).

However, it should be noted that overt racial abuse is exceptional in news reports. Rather, ethnic properties are described in a way that can be articulated to ethnically-prejudiced discourses (van Dijk, 1989: 46). Keeping in mind the role of the primary definers in the newsmaking process, it is a relevant question to ask that if complete ideological closure is possible. Hall et al. (1978: 64) answer this question negatively by referring to the “counter-definitions”. The power of counter-definitions provided by counter-definers depend on the power relations and struggles between different social groups in the society. For example, in a period when the working class is strong in the country and have the power to push their demands to the ruling classes, the trade unions would probably have a say on the definition of a controversial issue, such as collective bargaining. However, they still must be within the limits of the consensus; otherwise they may be defined as “extremist”, “irrational” or “illegal”. In the final analysis, Hall et al. (1978: 65) argue that,

The media thus help to reproduce and sustain the definitions of the situation which favour the powerful, not only by actively recruiting the powerful in the initial stages where topics are structured, but by favouring certain ways of setting up topics, and maintaining certain strategic areas of silence.

Crime news are one of the main news categories in which the most extreme forms of the opposition of “us” vs. “them” can be observed. Besides, role of the media is particularly important in the process of demonization of certain individuals and social groups because, as Garland (2001: 164) states, in this new culture of control, most of the public perceptions, sentiments, fears and anxieties about crime is shaped by “cultural scripts and not by criminological research or official data”. Especially in times of crisis or increasing crime rates, the demonization or scapegoating of certain social groups may take the form of a “moral panic” in the creation of a more conservative and authoritarian consensus in the society. In that sense, crime news are crucial in understanding and analyzing the dynamics behind social exclusion and stigmatization.

3.4 Representation of Crime in the Media and the Role of “Moral Panics” in Social Exclusion and Stigmatization

Cohen (2006: 8) states that “crime news is the basic source of information about the “normative contours of a society”. Through stigmatizing the ‘law-breakers’, the social consensus built on the widely accepted values are re-asserted. Hall et al. (1978: 67) argue that ‘illegitimate violence’ is especially important as a ‘news value’ because it is the border which separates those who are ‘of society’ from those ‘who are not’. By indicating that violence is unacceptable when it is illegitimate, the use violence by the state against those who break the law is justified as legitimate. Thus, criminalization and labelling are two crucial aspects of exercising and legitimating social control.

To use Hall et al.’s terminology, the ‘primary definers’ of crime news are the police, state officials and courts, which seem to have an extra prominence in the newsmaking process compared to any other primary definers of other types of news. Hall et al. (1978: 68) argue that the police have a special place among other primary definers since they are the only ones to “claim a professional expertise in the ‘war against crime’”. Accordingly, there is a “notion of trust between the journalists and the police” based on the ‘expertise’ of the police, a “betrayal” of which would result in losing the source of information for the journalists. Their constant referral by the journalists in crime news also reinforce the police’s “symbolic role” in the process: “their status as representatives and ‘ventriloquists’ for the good and the upright against the forces of evil and darkness”. Hall et al. (1978: 68-69) state that there two major reasons of the prominence of primary definers in crime news. First, since crime news very rarely depend on first-hand witnessed data of the reporter, they are almost totally produced from the perspective of the primary definers. And secondly, “crime is *less open* than most public issues to competing and alternative definitions”. In fact, there is a consensus about the issue of crime which leaves almost no place for competing definitions – that something should be done about it. Therefore, media is successful on mobilizing public opinion on the issue of crime than any other subject.

Moral panics is a clear sign of the collapse of hegemony in a society. Stanley Cohen, in his influential study “Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of Mods and Rockers” first published in 1972, analyzed the media portrayals of social deviance in the case of the activities of some youth groups, which he defines as ‘folk devils’ that caused a ‘disturbance’ in the public in the mid-1960s. In his study, Cohen (2006: 1) found out that there some actual ‘events’, but they have been exaggerated and distorted by the media, which he defines as “moral panic” as follows:

A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions; ways of coping are evolved or (more often) resorted to; the condition then disappears, submerges or deteriorates and becomes more visible. Sometimes the subject of the panic is quite novel and at other times it is something which has been in existence long enough, but suddenly appears in the limelight. Sometimes the panic passes over and is forgotten, except in folklore and collective memory; at other times it has more serious and long-lasting repercussions and might produce such changes as those in legal and social policy or even in the way society conceives itself.

Maybe the first and foremost notion that should be kept in mind about moral panic is that it is neither a delusion nor a fantasy; rather, what defines moral panic is “exaggeration” – “an exaggeration of the thing in itself and compared to other problems” (Cohen, 2006: viii). The basic idea of moral panic is defining a group – folk devils – or an idea as a threat to the values and well-being of the society, who are marginalized and stigmatized by the official and media discourse and handled in a “state of emergency” rather than a structural, realistic approach. Hall et.al. (1978: 16) provide a similar definition in their study on the moral panic on mugging cases in Britain in the early 1970s:

When the official reaction to a person, groups of persons or series of events is out of all proportion to the actual threat offered, when 'experts', in the form of police chiefs, the judiciary, politicians and editors perceive the threat in all but identical terms, and appear to talk 'with one voice' of rates, diagnoses, prognoses and solutions, when the media representations universally stress ‘sudden and dramatic’ increases (in numbers involved or events) and 'novelty', above and beyond that which a sober, realistic appraisal could sustain, then we believe it is appropriate to speak of the beginnings of a *moral panic*.

Cohen (2006: lxxv-lxxvi) argues that the difference of the utilization of the term moral panic has changed in the 1970s. While in his original analyses the emphasis

was on the role of the social control agencies, the analyses made in the 1970s shifted the focus to the role of the state in the creation of moral panics in relation to the crisis of the welfare state. Cohen states that with the corrosion of consent in the 1970s, consensual state policies were replaced by coercive ones, leading to a law-and-order society with strengthened mechanisms of social control. In that sense, Hall et.al.'s (1978) work on the mugging panic in Britain in the early 1970s focuses on the official discourse covered in the media which links the increasing street crime with "soft" sentencing policies and calls for a return to punitive, retributive measures in crime control. However, to understand the origins of the term through the first broad-scope theoretical analysis and case study, Cohen's arguments will be elaborated first.

In reference to Lemert's "primary and secondary deviation" theory, the major question of Cohen's (2006: 6) work is "What were the mythologies, stigma, stereotypes, patterns of exploitation, accommodation, segregation and methods of control spring up and crystallize in the interaction between the deviants and the rest of the society?" In answering this question, Cohen (2006: xxiii-xxiv) analyses the media texts arguing that the role of the media is of particular importance in spreading the moral panic because they "set the agenda, transmit images, and make the claim". In fact, the very act of reporting deviance through certain 'facts' about the subject could generate feelings of concern and anxiety that would lead to panic in the public through a process of what Cohen (2006: 8) calls 'deviance amplification'. Through sensational stories and over-reporting, non-criminal aspects of a deviant act is criminalized, which in turn creates a public sensitivity and panic about the law enforcement mechanisms and authorities not taking the necessary precautions or not deterrent enough to prevent such behavior.

The media's methods or toolbox in reporting deviance and crime, which is called 'the media inventory' by Cohen includes exaggeration and distortion, prediction and symbolization. Cohen (2006: 20) argues that "the seriousness of events" are often exaggerated in terms of "the number taking part, the number involved in violence and the amount and effects of any damage or violence". The over-reporting of events also include reporting the same incident twice as if there were two distinct incidents, and even repetition of false stories in some cases. Cohen (2006: 21) states that abuses of language including "sensational headlines,

melodramatic vocabulary and the deliberate heightening of those elements in the story considered as news” are other ways of distortion in over-reporting. In his case of Mods and Rockers, Cohen gives examples of phrases such as “riot”, “orgy of destruction”, “battle”, “attack”, “siege” and “beat up town” to conjure up an image of a besieged space of innocent citizens by a “marauding mob”.

Secondly, the news reports either overtly express or imply that “what happened will inevitably happen again”. Through reported statements of local figures such as the shopkeepers, neighborhood folk or the policemen, the precautions that need to be taken for ‘the next time’ or the possible course of events that will follow for ‘the next time’ are expressed. Cohen (2006: 26) argues that predictions in the news reports on deviant acts are very dangerous in the sense that they may become self-fulfilling prophecies. And when the predictions do not come true, the media easily reports other ‘non-stories’ to make it look like as if they did (come true) without paying much attention to the contradictions with the actual cases.

Symbolization is the third and final component of the media inventory of reporting deviance and crime. Cohen (2006: 27) defines three processes of symbolization: “a word (Mod) becomes symbolic of a certain status (delinquent or deviant); objects (hairstyle, clothing) symbolize the word; the objects themselves become symbolic of the status (and the emotions attached to the status)”. Referring to Turner and Surace (cited in Cohen, 2006: 28), Cohen defines this process as “the creation of ‘unambiguously unfavorable symbols’”. One of the practical techniques used in the creation of such symbols is “the use of dramatized and ritualistic interviews with ‘representative members’ of the either group, meaning ‘the normal and most of the time victimized citizens’ and ‘the deviants/criminals’”. Cohen (2006: 30) rightly indicates that the authenticity of such interviews are questionable; even if they were not “willfully faked”, they are certainly influenced by the newsmaker’s dispositions of how a deviant should behave, or in some cases “gullible fantasies of self-styled gang leaders”.

Media inventories are not a group of factual knowledge through which “some errors might accidentally creep from time to time”, but composed of “fantasies, selective misperception and deliberate creation of news” (Cohen, 2006: 31). In that sense, the news-making process on deviance is one of manufacture in which the

news-makers are actively involved in the creation of certain representations of 'what is real'.

In terms of the reactions to the issues, Cohen (2006: 35, 36) argues that, in the process of sense-making the main aim is to "reduce ambiguity (...) through more organized opinions and attitudes". The reactions are grouped into three thematic categories: orientation, images, and causation. 'Orientation' refers to the "emotional and intellectual standpoint from which the deviance is evaluated". In the case of Mods and Rockers, Cohen argues that there are four major types of orientation. First, the issue is treated as a "disaster" through, for example, comparing its economic damages to the society with that of a possible earthquake or flood. In what Cohen (2006: 38) terms "prophecy of doom", the "moral entrepreneurs", who may be politicians, judiciary or other opinion leaders preaching on the immediacy of social threat, make statements on the possible recurrence of the incidents in the future. Cohen claims that here comes the "dilemma of the moral entrepreneur": "he has to defend the success of his methods and at the same time contend that the problem is getting worse". The last two reactions, namely "it is not so much what happened" and "it is not only this", are derived from the first two categories and they refer to the background and general context of the incidents to underline the seriousness of the problem (Cohen, 2006: 39).

'Images' are the second thematic category of reactions, including the opinions about the nature of the deviants and their behavior. To defend a theory or support a particular action, the media attributes certain characteristics to the deviants through particular adjectives or labels such as "thugs" or "wild ones". Cohen (2006: 40) calls them "spurious attributions" and claims that they constitute a "composite stigma" which may include certain behavioral characteristics such as irresponsibility, immaturity, lack of respect for authority, etc. to be attributed to people acting and clothing in certain ways or belonging to certain social groups. Spurious attributions are not randomly selected and most of them rely on the already-existing negative stereotypes. In some cases, the clashes or disagreements within the deviant group(s) are underlined to divert attention from the social dynamics behind the deviancy by creating an image of "a senseless and ambiguous crowd situation", which is called by Cohen (2006: 42) as "divide and rule"

strategy. Cohen (2006: 43-45) claims that there are two contradictory positions on the extent to which the deviant groups are representative of the whole youth population in Britain. The first position, which he calls “hot-blooded youth” ascribes the whole category of adolescents some common traits including delinquency and aggressive sexuality. However, Cohen states that this position is not as strong as the other one called the “lunatic fringe”, which claims that the deviant group is a minority which could not be taken as entirely representative of all the people in the same social group. As a matter of fact, the rest of the group are portrayed as “conforming, decent, even positively saintly”. The “lunatic fringe” theme also serves to justify the legal punishments given to the deviants by emphasizing that they fully deserved it.

The third category used to make sense of deviancy is ‘causation’ composed of the opinions about the causes of the behavior. The deviant behavior is either seen as “a symptom of something much deeper”, which is called “a sign of the times” by Cohen (2006: 46-48), or “a disease” which spreads in the society through the usage of words such as ‘infected’, ‘spread’, ‘cure’. Another way of causation which Cohen calls “cabalism”, is to see the deviancy as part of some “conspirational plot”, disregarding both the spontaneous and the contextual aspects. Cohen argues that cabalism is an easy way to understand the situation by providing the simplest explanation. The last cause expressed in the media in the case of Mods and Rockers’ deviant behavior is “boredom”. The argument of “boredom” implies two partly contradictory claims – first, the society is blamed for not providing young people with interest, opportunities, etc., and second, by referring to the various opportunities available, it is claimed that there must be a psychological defect in the youth groups to resort to deviant behavior.

To sum up until here, Cohen (2006: 57) argues that in the effort of identifying deviance, the media tries to define the nature of deviance through some labels which probably feed from previous negative stereotypes. The label(s) attributed at the beginning evoke others to create a chain of signification – a process defined by Cohen as “primary labels evoking secondary images”, such as a drug addict invoking the image of a junkie, implying dirt, degeneracy, laziness and unworthiness. In that sense, models of understanding and interpreting deviance are an important part of social control as well as official institutions.

Cohen also provides an analysis of the ways the agents of social control such as the police and the courts have reacted to the images constructed in the media by giving examples of some reactions and possible precautions taken against the deviant groups and their role in the amplification of deviance. For example, in some cases the police tries to ‘make an example’ of some incidents by dramatizing the effects of the act or the precautions taken. Cohen (2006: 75) defines this technique as “the dramatization of evil” and argues that it is essential for the deviant to achieve folk devil status by being involved in “some sort of ceremony of public degradation”. In terms of the police’s effects of behavior, Cohen (2006: 140) mentions two influences – immediate and sustained. The immediate effect of policing on deviance is creating it through “making the rules whose infraction constituted deviance”. In fact, Cohen’s analysis on the role of the law enforcement body in the escalation of deviance suggests that first traces of ‘broken windows theory’ and ‘zero tolerance policing’ can be seen in the mid-1960s. Cohen argues that the police and the courts based their actions on some “situationally improper actions” such as lolling or loitering, which requires legal measures to be taken. Cohen (2006: 140-142) claims that legally charging such behavior requires “highly subjective definitions of what constituted ‘obstruction’, ‘abusive’, ‘threatening’, ‘insulting’, ‘disorderly’ or ‘unruly behavior’”. For example, being disrespectful to the police would be enough to be labelled as deviant. In that sense, such an official social control policy or police behavior might lead to the polarization and alignment of otherwise dispersed crowds into solidified groups as the sustained effect of police on deviance.

About a decade after Cohen’s work on Mods and Rockers, Hall et al. (1978) made a study on the moral panic about mugging in Britain in 1972-1973. In their study they argue that their focus is on mugging as a social phenomenon, not a street crime. In particular, they tried to understand why the British society reacted mugging in the way they reacted and “how the issues of race, crime and youth were articulated to the discourse of crime in the building of an authoritarian consensus and a law-and-order society”. Hall et al. (1978: viii, 29) claim that moral panic about mugging is in fact part of a larger panic about rising crime rates in general and “is a new construction of the social reality of crime”. During the period of the mugging panic in Britain, the authorities frequently stressed that there was a rapid

increase in crimes and the sentences for such crimes are too 'soft', so there was a strong need to return to a 'tough', 'deterrent' crime policy (Hall et al, 1978: 9). Such a statement basically depended on the crime statistics provided by the police or other legal authorities, or on opinion polls in other cases. Apart from the numerous problems with crime statistics,¹⁵⁷ Hall et al. (1978: 10) argue that what is crucial about them is their interpretation by the police and the media.

The term mugging is of American origin and means robbing a victim ('mug' is the word used to denote 'easy victims') by using force, with or without weapons. Hall et al. (1978: 6) argue that in fact nothing is new about mugging except the term itself. The British media borrowed it from the USA and applied it their own country. The term was already loaded with numerous connotations in the USA before it was imported to Britain. Among these connotative themes are, "the involvement of blacks and drug addicts in crime; the expansion of the black ghettos, coupled with the growth of black social and political militancy; the threatened crisis and collapse of the cities; the crime panic and the appeal to 'law and order'; the sharpening political tensions and protest movements of the 1960s leading into and out from the Nixon-Agnew mobilisation of 'the silent majority' and their presidential victory in 1968" (Hall et al, 1978: 19-20). Until the late 1960s, muggings usually took place in the black ghetto and crime was easily localized and spatialized by the middle class whites. However, the "black spill-over" into formerly white residential areas was perceived by the working-class whites as a "black invasion" – "a major intrusion from an even more disadvantaged group into their limited economic, social and geographical space". As a result, white middle classes have left the central urban neighborhoods and "fled to the suburbs" by seeing themselves as "potential victims". Hall et al. (1978: 21) argue that this "defensive mentality" of the middle class whites were in fact the symptoms of greater problems and concerns about the race issue in general.

'Moral panic' emerges at the moment of a social anxiety about a possible impairment of the traditionalist consensus, which is connected to crime and

¹⁵⁷ Among the major problems with crime statistics the 'dark figure' which refers to the unreported incidents, different ways of gathering statistics by different institutions, police sensitivity on particular crimes which leads to increased turn-ups and reports, public anxiety about particular crimes which leads to over-reporting and changes in the laws such as the definitions or scopes of certain crimes can be counted (Hall et al, 1978: 9-10).

mobilized by the media on these grounds. The ‘normal’ is defined according to the traditionalist consensus and crime is located at the opposite side. Hall et al. (1978: 140) argue that, even though it embodies “contradictory life and class experiences”, the traditionalist consensus in the British case includes some basic elements. First element is ‘respectability’, meaning both self-respect and other values like ‘thrift’, ‘self-discipline’, ‘living the descent life’, ‘self-help’, ‘self-reliance’, and ‘conformity to established social standards’. Hall et al. (1978: 141) suggest that while ‘respectability’ is mainly related to ‘keeping up the appearances’ in terms of securing a life standard in the case of the middle classes, it is connected to ‘work’, ‘poverty’ and ‘crime’ for the working classes. Work or labor is the ‘guarantee of respectability’ and poverty marks the passage out of respectability. And crime represents an ‘immoral passage’.

‘Work’ is the second element of the traditionalist consensus. According to Hall et al. (1978: 142) through what can be called “the moral calculus of work” and can be summarized by the saying “a fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work”, work is located on the opposite of crime. Third element is ‘discipline’, in both social and emotional terms. For the middle-classes, it is based on “deference to authority” and includes “self-reliance, self-making, self-control, the self-sacrifice for long-term goals and competitive struggle”. On the other hand, discipline is more related to the “practice of thrift” – making do and self-sacrifice when necessary – in the working-class context. Therefore, Hall et al. (1978: 143) argue that transgression of discipline means different things in different class contexts. The notion of discipline is also closely linked with hierarchy and authority, where indiscipline points to a threat to both of them. Hall et al. (1978: 144) defines the fourth element as ‘family’. Family is where the self-discipline and obedience to authority in terms of moral and social constraints are generated. Hall et al. maintain that fear and panic about crime is centered upon the family in terms of the lack of discipline. The final two elements of the traditionalist consensus are the ‘city’ and the ‘law’. Hall et al. (1978: 145, 148) state that while the city represents the “level of civility”, the law serves to reproduce the class relations in the society under the guise of ‘impartiality’.

Hall et al. (1978: 157) define ‘social anxiety’ as “a product of the dissolution of the material supports and the weakening of the social commitment to that ideology”. During times of social anxiety, ‘scapegoats’ emerge “into which all the disturbing

experiences are condensed and then symbolically rejected or ‘cast out’”. These scapegoats would be the ‘folk devils’ in the sense Cohen uses the word. Hall et al. (1978: 161) argue that the ‘mugger’ was such a folk devil in their case:

The 'mugger' was such a Folk Devil; his form and shape accurately reflected the content of the fears and anxieties of those who first imagined, and then actually discovered him: young, black, bred in, or arising from the 'breakdown of social order' in the city; threatening the traditional peace of the streets, the security of movement of the ordinary respectable citizen; motivated by naked gain, a reward he would come by, if possible, without a day's honest toil; his "crime, the outcome of a thousand occasions when adults and parents had failed to correct, civilise and tutor his wilder impulses; impelled by an even more frightening need for 'gratuitous violence', an inevitable result of the weakening of moral fibre in family and society, and the general collapse of respect for discipline and authority.

Mugging was by no means ‘a new type of crime’; it surely resembled older forms of crime such as pick-pocketing. However, there was an unprecedented official and public attention on the issue accompanied by a more general concern on increasing crime rates. There was actually an increase in the crime rates, however, as Hall et al. (1978: 183) pinpoint, they could not be considered as the sole reason behind the sudden public reaction to this ‘new type of crime’. The reasons may be a change in the ‘social composition of the offenders’ or a clear political connotation. The mugging panic marked a shift from a “consensual” to a “coercive, non-hegemonic” form of state in dealing with the class struggle, which defined by Hall et al. (1978: 218) as “the exhaustion of ‘consent’”.

In analyzing the moral panic on mugging, Hall et al. (1978: 223) mentions a ‘signification spiral’ to denote the chain of signification which escalates the threat posed by the events. In some cases, it may increase deviance. The signification spiral includes the following elements:

- (1) the identification of a specific issue of concern;
- (2) the identification of a subversive minority;
- (3) 'convergence', or the linking, by labelling, of this specific issue to other problems;
- (4) the notion of 'thresholds' which, once crossed, can lead to an escalating threat;
- (5) the prophesy of more troubling times to come if no action is taken;
- (6) the call for 'firm steps'.

‘Convergence’ and ‘thresholds’ are the escalating mechanisms of the spiral. In convergence, two or more events are linked to each other in the signification spiral; or, new problems are explained with reference to the older ones. In another form of

convergence, a group of social problems are displayed as part of a deeper and bigger problem. In both cases, there is amplification – not of the real events but “their threat potential for the society”. Convergence may also take the form of the “transposition of frameworks” – a political issue may be transformed into a criminal one, which depoliticizes it by criminalization. Furthermore, by over-emphasizing the violent aspects of a political issue, the signification spiral helps the production of a ‘social control’ response (Hall et al, 1978: 224).

Thresholds are the symbolical limits of societal tolerance. Hall et al. (1978: 226) mention three thresholds: permissiveness threshold, legality threshold, and extreme violence threshold. Extreme violence threshold marks the highest threat to the social order, and therefore the reactions given to acts that passed this threshold will be the toughest. Robbery with violence is counted beyond the extreme violence threshold. Hall et al. argue that convergence and thresholds used together in the signification spiral leads to the escalation of threat.

It is argued by some scholars that the notion of moral panic in explaining increased social sensitivity and media attention to certain crimes in certain socio-economic, political and historical contexts should be ‘modified’ to be applied to contemporary societies. Referring to the vast expansion and diversification of the mass media, McRobbie and Thornton (1995) argue that “the original notion of spasmodic panic” is out of date; moral panic in contemporary societies should rather be understood as a mode of representation in which daily events are regularly brought to the public’s attention. Because of many reasons such as the frequency of the ‘moral panics’, their contestation by various experts and pressure groups, difficulties in setting off one due to the blurring boundaries between the ‘normal’ and the ‘deviant’, the increased chances of ‘rebound’ on the ones who ignited a moral panic (such as revealing the mistresses of conservative politicians who make a campaign against pre-marital sex), McRobbie and Thornton (1995: 572-573) state that the notion of moral panic should be re-considered and updated.

Even though moral panic is an old concept and needs to be re-defined regarding the major technological developments in communication technologies as well as the changes in social structures, it still provides a useful framework in analyzing the media representations of certain crimes in the contemporary societies. Purse-snatching incidents in İstanbul in the 2000s and their portrayal in the press can be

defined as a type of moral panic, which led to the stigmatization of Kurdish migrants first and then their living spaces which they mostly share with another disadvantageous social group, namely the Roma as “hotbeds of crime” second. Keeping in mind that these “hotbeds of crime” are all included within the scope of urban transformation projects, it can be argued that the moral panic in the media about purse-snatching incidents led to the exclusion and stigmatization of certain social groups and their living spaces which in turn justified the need for intervention to these areas.

CHAPTER 4

AN ANALYSIS OF THE NEWS REPORTS ON PURSE-SNATCHING INCIDENTS AND ‘TROUBLED’ NEIGHBORHOODS OF THE URBAN POOR: CRIMINALIZATION, STIGMATIZATION AND RE-ORGANIZATION OF URBAN SPACE

This chapter discusses the media portrayal of purse-snatching incidents and certain lower class neighborhoods in İstanbul that are frequently subjected to harsh policing measures in the last decade. Starting from the early 2000s, street crimes symbolized by the purse-snatching incidents are displayed in the media as mainly attempted by lower-class young Kurdish migrants and children and presented as a major subject of social anxiety, an imminent threat to the whole society. In relation to purse-snatching incidents, certain neighborhoods in İstanbul, which are within the scope of urban transformation are displayed in the media as ‘crime nests’ harboring Kurdish purse-snatching gangs and Romany drug-dealers. In this framework, this chapter analyses the news reports on purse-snatching incidents and ‘troubled’ lower class neighborhoods for understanding their role in justifying and imposing new urban and penal policies to the society.

The chapter is composed of two major parts. The first part analyzes the news reports on purse-snatching incidents, and the second part is on the news reports on ‘troubled’ neighborhoods of the urban poor. The news reports on purse-snatching are analyzed with reference to the concept of “moral panic” as proposed by Cohen and developed by Hall et al. It is argued that lower class young Kurdish migrants and children are presented in the media as “folk devils”, that is, the major actors of purse-snatching incidents and a threat to the well-being of the society. In other words, they are stigmatized and criminalized as a particular social group with a more or less common class position and ethnic identity. In the first part, first, the social, political, economic and legal background of the purse-snatching ‘panic’ is discussed. Then, the news reports are analyzed by grouping them according to the most outstanding themes and elements. In that sense, firstly, the issue of Kurdish

migration problematized in the news reports as a major cause of purse-snatching incidents is elaborated. In relation to that, the history of the criminalization of young Kurdish migrants and children are examined in terms of the transition from thinner-addicts to purse-snatchers as the ‘folk devils’. In order to understand the process of lower class young Kurdish migrants and children achieving folk devil status, the descriptions of purse-snatching gangs are discussed in terms of methods of recruitment, training, organization and ways of ensuring loyalty. Elaborate details of the training process and ensuring loyalty to the gang give clues about the construction of a “cold-blooded, vicious criminal” stereotype. Accordingly, the profile of the purse-snatchers are analyzed in terms of their personalities, character traits, moral values and political views. News reports on purse-snatching placed particular emphasis on the personal characteristics of the purse-snatchers in essentialist terms by attributing them a dark, uncanny, violent, immoral self. Their socio-economic conditions or education levels are displayed as possible causes of their propensity to deviant behavior. Their political views are also frequently mentioned in the news reports and shown as markers of the intertwining of separatist tendencies with criminality. In that sense, profile of the purse snatchers as displayed in the news reports gives clues to understand which segments of the society are criminalized as potential suspects on what grounds.

In the second part, news reports on ‘troubled’ lower class neighborhoods are examined with a special emphasis on the descriptions of police operations, the intra-neighborhood conflicts among different groups of residents, and the profile of the residents from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis. Similar to the news reports on purse-snatching, news reports on ‘troubled’ lower class neighborhoods are analyzed under the most frequently handled themes and subjects. In that sense, news reports on police operations are evaluated separately to understand the portrayal of the state authority embodied in the police force vis-à-vis the ‘outlaw’ residents of these neighborhoods. Another crucial theme is the intra-neighborhood conflicts. They are portrayed in the news reports in terms of ethnic, cultural and economic tensions among the residents. In the news narratives, the residents are portrayed as divided into ‘good, decent, law-abiding people’ and ‘bad, dishonest law-breakers dealing with every type of illegal business’. In that sense, it can be argued that a kind of “us vs. them” opposition is at work. The

conflicting groups are usually the Roma and Southeastern, mainly Kurdish groups. The news reports tend to take side of each group depending on the circumstances, such as the characteristic of the conflict. That is to say, news discourse tends to criminalize the Roma community in general, except for the conflicts that include elements of a political Kurdish identity. But in general, the discourse of the news reports on 'troubled' lower-class neighborhoods in question are constructed upon an "us vs. them" opposition, which displays the residents of these neighborhoods as different from "us" and relate "their" deviant behavior to some character defects, immoral and illegal way of life, material living conditions, daily activities, jobs and their identity in terms of migration, ethnicity, class and locality. Under the major opposition of "us vs. them", the news reports tend to categorize residents of these neighborhoods on the negative side of various sub-oppositional categories such as "legality vs. illegality", "order vs. chaos", "peacefulness vs. violence", "rationality vs. irrationality", "responsibility vs. irresponsibility" and "self-reliance vs. dependence". Thus, their way of life, daily habits, cultural differences and practices, and informal jobs are fused with their criminal activities to justify the harsh policing measures they are subjected to and even their dislocation from living spaces.

To sum up, this discussion attempts to display the major discursive tools used in the news reports in the form of identifications, symbolizations, significations, causations, and other forms of linguistic strategies to reveal the social power relations, discriminatory and exclusionary media and official discourse. To do that, a total of 1736 news reports on purse snatching incidents and 738 news reports on 'troubled' lower class neighborhoods in the web versions of Hürriyet and Sabah newspapers between the late 1990s (1998 to be precise) and 2012 are analyzed. As mentioned before, the reason of choosing Hürriyet and Sabah is that they are two national newspapers with highest circulation rates and may be defined as "appealing to the general interest" during the time of the purse-snatching panic and concomitant police operations to 'troubled' lower class neighborhoods. The reason of covering a long period is to trace the transformation of a regular street crime into "the number one security problem of the country" and then to see how it gradually disappeared from the newspapers.

4.1. “Invasion of the Purse-snatchers”: Background of a Moral Panic

In the period between the late 1990s and late 2000s there has been a steady increase in crime rates in Turkey, especially in crimes against property (see Appendix A).¹⁵⁸ It is argued in the media that two major events in the beginning of 2000s affected the rise in the crime rates in general, and purse-snatching in particular – the general amnesty declared on 22nd December, 2000¹⁵⁹ and the economic crisis in 2001. The General Amnesty was criticized widely in the media referring its possible negative social implications.¹⁶⁰ On the other hand, the hardening economic conditions and deteriorating life standards have already resulted in an increase in the offences against property. When this was combined with the release of many from the prisons with the general amnesty, many people joined the army of unemployed urban poor. In that period, National Security Council’s (NSC) report on the deteriorating economic conditions of the lower-income segments of the society emphasized that there was a danger of “social explosion”. It is claimed in the report that crimes like theft and purse-snatching increased due to the worsening economic conditions, and greater social consequences and street protest could take place in

¹⁵⁸ The crime records given in the Appendix are generally gathered from official police data. However, there are certain problems about crime statistics in addition to various difficulties in accessing data, their availability and reliability. As Gölbaşı (2008: 178) argues, police statistics do not involve “dark numbers”, which refer to the criminal incidents that are not reflected on the statistics due to many reasons. In that sense, some previous studies on the subject, reports of non-governmental organizations and in some cases, news reports based on police records are also referred to as sources. As Hall et al. (1978: 10) argue, what is really crucial about crime statistics is their interpretation by the police and the media. The data given in the thesis, therefore, aims to create a general picture about the rates and tendencies rather than being precise numbers.

¹⁵⁹ The General Amnesty, or “Law on Probation and Suspension of Crimes and Trials”, declared in 2000 is also known as “Amnesty Rahşan” because it was proposed by Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit’s wife, Rahşan Ecevit. The amnesty comprised the discharge or suspension of crimes which were committed before 23rd, April 1999, except the crimes against the state. According to the Ministry of Justice, General Directorate of Judicial Records and Statistics, 4715 cases were suspended within ‘Amnesty Rahşan’ (Sarlak and Bali, 2008: 10).

¹⁶⁰ In terms of the debates in the newspapers, Bekir Coşkun steps forward in handling the issue numerous times in his column. Coşkun generally argues that by releasing an “army of ferocious criminals”, “crime machines”, “thousands of furious, bloodthirsty potential criminals looking for people to slay” to the streets, Amnesty Rahşan is behind the increasing purse-snatching incidents in the big cities (Müjde Rahşan..., Bekir Coşkun, Hürriyet, 04.04.2001; Rahşan Ecevit özür dilesin, Bekir Coşkun, Hürriyet, 21.11.2001; Kapkaçın tabana yayılması..., Bekir Coşkun, Hürriyet, 28.12.2001; Kanlı sokaklar..., Bekir Coşkun, Hürriyet, 26.12.2002).

the following days unless measures to improve the status of lower income groups are taken.¹⁶¹

Thus, starting with the early 2000s, purse-snatching crime stepped forward among others and even began to be defined by the official authorities as the number one public order problem of the country. Reporting incidents from all over Turkey¹⁶² and giving wide coverage to the comments of the police, judicial members, state officials and academics, the media played an important role in the creation of a moral panic on the subject.¹⁶³ The newspapers began to publish readers' letters on victim experiences¹⁶⁴ and articles on the profile of the purse-snatchers describing their methods, leisure time activities, dressing preferences and political views.¹⁶⁵ Popular newscast programs and reality shows made special episodes on the issue.¹⁶⁶ In the meantime, purse-snatching created an economy of its own on such as courses of self-defense techniques,¹⁶⁷ alarm systems by private security firms,¹⁶⁸

¹⁶¹ Raporda ilginç cümle, *Hürriyet*, 30.06.2001.

¹⁶² News reports on purse-snatching are not limited with cases in İstanbul, though they comprise the largest amount. Ankara, İzmir, Bursa and Diyarbakır are the other most frequently mentioned cities for purse-snatching incidents.

¹⁶³ The moral panic about purse-snatching is also traceable in the news reports on public's lynching attempts towards suspects or offenders caught red-handed. The news reports mention that the public has a great rage towards the offenders: Halk linç ediyordu, *Hürriyet*, 27.08.2003; Kapkaççı gence meydan dayağı, *Hürriyet*, 26.01.2005; Kapkaç zanlısı linç ediliyordu, *Hürriyet*, 27.12.2005; Yine kapkaç yine linç, *Sabah*, 05.01.2006. The lynching attempts in purse-snatching incidents have also created a fear in the media. Many columnists have expressed their worries about vigilantism that might emerge any time in the society since the government and security forces have failed to deal with the problem: Hadi biz abartıyoruz, ya onlar, Ertuğrul Özkök, *Hürriyet*, 18.03.2005; Uyarın kişi bir kadınsa, Ertuğrul Özkök, *Hürriyet*, 10.02.2005; Başbakan'ın uçağına binmek, Fatih Altaylı, *Hürriyet*, 30.03.2005; Kendi cezanı kendin ver Emin Çölaşan, *Hürriyet*, 30.08.2005; Türkiye, bir şiddet toplumu, Yalçın Doğan, *Hürriyet*, 15.11.2005; İşte AB'nin sonuçları, Emin Çölaşan, *Hürriyet*, 02.04.2006.

¹⁶⁴ In 2000, Ayşen Gür began to report the experiences of purse-snatching victims in her column in *Hürriyet*. The title of her column was changed into "Purse-snatching Terror". Similarly, Nilgün Gedikoğlu started to give wide coverage to the letters of readers on purse-snatching in her column, "İstanbul'u Dinliyorum" in *Hürriyet*.

¹⁶⁵ Many examples of such articles could be given such as "Kapkaç Ağaları" (*Sabah*, 23.09.2003), "Devşirme Kapkaççılar" (*Sabah*, 25.09.2003), "Psikopat lidere ölümüne itaat" (*Sabah*, 26.09.2003), and "Üç noktalı dövme Puma spor pabuç Altın zincir" (*Gülden Aydın, Hürriyet Pazar*, 28.11.2004).

¹⁶⁶ For example, Uğur Dündar made a special episode on purse-snatchers in his newscast program 'Arena' in February 2005. In the program, the average ages, family structures and economic conditions of the purse-snatchers in İstanbul are described. And in 2006, Fatih Altaylı made a special episode of his program, 'Teke Tek', on purse-snatcher children and hosted a 12-year-old purse-snatcher boy.

¹⁶⁷ Onlar kapkaçtan artık korkmuyor, *Sabah*, 06.08.2001; İşte kapkaççının en korkulu rüyası: Aikido, *Hürriyet*, 04.02.2007; Kadınlar tekvando öğreniyor, *Hürriyet*, 19.07.2007.

anti-purse snatching products such as pens, gloves and vests with electro-shock devices,¹⁶⁹ bags with alarms,¹⁷⁰ safety and security window films for cars,¹⁷¹ blank cartridge pistols specially designed for women,¹⁷² pepper spray,¹⁷³ and so on. Furthermore, insurance sector provided various policies designed specifically for purse-snatching.¹⁷⁴ Even police authorities emphasized that private insurance would be effective in decreasing purse-snatching incidents.¹⁷⁵ In that period, it is indicated that there have been an increase in the applications for gun carrying license.¹⁷⁶

Purse-snatching first began to be described as a particular crime in the late 1990s. It basically means stealing away the bags, purses, cell phones and other valuables people carry by wrenching them away while running past them, riding a motorcycle or from within a car. The fact that the act takes place at once and involves brute force differentiates it from pick-pocketing, which is a more subtle, ‘skillful’ form of theft. There are various ways of purse-snatching elaborately described in the news reports.¹⁷⁷ In all the cases, there may be casualties if the

¹⁶⁸ ‘Günde 1 dolara güvenlik’ dedi 25 milyon dolar ciroya uzandı, Sabah, 31.10.2006.

¹⁶⁹ 'Anti-Kapkaç çanta' kadınların gözdesi, Hürriyet, 10.05.2002; Gaspçı terörü: 1 ölü, 1 yaralı, Hürriyet, 22.09.2003.

¹⁷⁰ Kapkaççıya alarm kâbusu, Hürriyet, 19.02.2004.

¹⁷¹ Filmleri otomobilin camını kırmak için 14 kere vurmak gerek, Hürriyet, 23.03.2005.

¹⁷² Kadınlara özel tabanca, Hürriyet, 27.07.2005.

¹⁷³ Kadın çantasına yeni aksesuar: Biber gazı, Oya Armutçu, Hürriyet, 14.12.2006.

¹⁷⁴ Kapkaç sigorta geldi, Sabah, 15.07.2003; Kapkaç ve gaspa karşı ferdi sigorta, Hürriyet, 10.03.2005; Kapkaç arttı, kredi kartının sigorta kalkını genişledi, Erkan Çelebi, Hürriyet, 03.03.2008.

¹⁷⁵ Üç noktalı dövme Puma spor pabuç Altın zincir, Gülten Aydın, Hürriyet Pazar, 28.11.2004.

¹⁷⁶ Kapkaç arttı, silah ‘taşımaya’ döndü, Hürriyet, 21.04.2005.

¹⁷⁷ Firstly, purse-snatchers either use cars or motorcycles during the act or do it on foot. In the first case, they usually use stolen cars and motorcycles or stolen license plates. In fact, parallel with the increasing purse-snatching rates, stealing cars, motorcycles and license plates also increased. If they use cars, one of the purse-snatchers lean out of the window and grab the bag. After using the car or the motorcycle in the act, or in multiple acts during the day, the purse-snatchers usually leave them somewhere. In the second case, purse-snatcher just grabs the bag, cell phone, jewelry, etc. and runs away on foot. For both cases, there are various methods such as purse-snatching by staging a fight (tantanacılık), following-up (takipli kapkaç), by making it look like an accident (kaza süsü vererek kapkaç), by breaking the windshields of the car with spark plugs (bujili kapkaç). In ‘staging a fight’, two people act as if they are fighting while a third one takes advantage of the people coming to break up the fight. The fighting parties are called “tricksters” (dümenci) and “screeners” (perdelemeci), and the one who steals the money is called “the fixer” (iş koyucu). In ‘follow-up’ method, purse-snatchers lie in ambush in front of places of money traffic such as banks, foreign

victims refuses to let go of his/her belonging. As a matter of fact, such incidents play an important role in the moral panic about purse-snatching since there have been some cases which ended up with deaths.

Especially after a specific incident, public sensitivity about the subject intensified in line with the increasing number of news reports and space allocated to the subject in the newspapers. In November 2004, a young university student named Ahmet Hakan Canıdemir was robbed, beaten and thrown off a local train by a group of purse-snatchers. He died soon after he was taken to the hospital. The brutality of the incident was described in detail in the news reports, and the media followed the case closely for days, including the search and arrestment of the suspects. *Hürriyet* gave the news with the headline, “Who will stop the terror?”¹⁷⁸ In *Sabah*, a special news report on local trains was given with the headline, “Wagons of fear!”¹⁷⁹ underlining the increasing purse-snatching incidents in local trains and stations. Statements of Canıdemir’s father was given wide coverage in the media. He claimed that such incidents were not simple, individual cases but the works of organized crime and a part of the general public order problem of Turkey.¹⁸⁰ In the same week of the incident, a commission of four ministers¹⁸¹ was established to investigate increasing purse-snatching incidents alongside with street children, in addition to another TBMM commission. In the same period, a

exchange and land registry offices, or airports and shops. Both staging-a-fight and follow-up methods are usually used by gangs because they require organization of more than one people. In the method of ‘making it look like an accident’, purse-snatchers crash slightly into the female victim’s car with their own. When the victims gets off the car to look at the damage, the purse-snatcher grabs the valuables in the car and escapes. Recently, another method emerged that is throwing eggs to the windshield. The driver reflexively sprays water to the windshield, which becomes a milky liquid when mixed with egg and blocks view. And when the driver stops and gets off the car, the offender steals the valuables. Another common method used by the purse-snatchers is breaking the car window and grabbing the valuables on the front passenger seat. In this method, the offenders usually use spark plugs which they hide in their mouths. The reason why they use spark plugs is that it breaks window quickly and without making much noise after it is moistened (‘Tantanacılar’a dikkat, *Hürriyet*, 09.08.1999; Dikkat! 7 çeşit kapkaç var, *Sabah*, 24.09.2003; Bujili kapkaççı, Sülün Osman’ın yeğeni çıktı, *Hürriyet*, 10.04.2005; Tantanalı kapkaç, *Hürriyet*, 06.05.2006; Yolculara tuzak kuran hırsızlık şebekesi çökertildi, *Hürriyet*, 20.04.2007; Polisten vatandaşlara uyarı, *Sabah*, 07.07.2009; Hırsızların yeni yöntemi, *Hürriyet*, 18.10.2010).

¹⁷⁸ Bu terörü kim durduracak, *Hürriyet*, 05.11.2004.

¹⁷⁹ Korku vagonları! *Sabah*, 08.11.2004.

¹⁸⁰ Kapkaç kurbanı aileden basına teşekkür, *Hürriyet*, 11.11.2004.

¹⁸¹ The commission included the Minister of State for Children and Family Güldal Akşit, Minister of Health Recep Akdağ, Minister of National Education Hüseyin Çelik and Minister of Interior Abdülkadir Aksu.

“Security Summit” was made on purse-snatching.¹⁸² The police force published a solution pack of 46 articles on purse-snatching about its possible causes and some measures that should be taken against it.¹⁸³ About a week later, a meeting was held by İstanbul Governorship called ‘Security in İstanbul’.¹⁸⁴ In the Politics of National Security Document (Milli Güvenlik Siyaseti Belgesi) prepared by the Presidency of General Staff (Genelkurmay Başkanlığı) in April 2005, increasing crime rates and specifically purse-snatching was defined as an “internal threat”, and it was argued that if the necessary measures were not taken, “social problems and aggressive behavior in the society might increase”.¹⁸⁵ The notion of social explosion was later taken over by the RPP by arguing that purse-snatching incidents should be seen as an indicator of an imminent social explosion.¹⁸⁶ In the meantime, the IMF’s demand for pay cuts in pensions and minimum wage in the context of austerity measures was criticized by the opposing political parties for neglecting the social aspect. It was said, “In an atmosphere of crime outburst where theft, purse-snatching, robbery and the like have increased, the IMF demands would instigate social explosion”.¹⁸⁷ So, coming to the mid-2000s, many state officials from police chiefs to mayors and ministers have specified maintaining public order as their primary target in reference to the increasing purse-snatching incidents.

Apart from the obvious tragedy, there have been other tragic purse-snatching incidents on the local trains several years before that. For example, in 1998 a young woman named Aysel Tabak was robbed and fell from the train chasing the purse-snatchers. She was stuck between the train and railway platform and died.¹⁸⁸ Many

¹⁸² The Summit was led by Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan and included National Intelligence Organization (MİT), police force and gendarme. It was argued that Erdoğan asked the Minister of Interior Aksu to take urgent measures about the issue mobilizing all the security forces of the country (Kapkaç terörüne neşter zirvesi, Hürriyet, 26.02.2005). After the summit, Minister of Justice Cemil Çiçek declared that 8 bylaws will be issued to meet the demands concerning security (Güvenlikle ilgili 8 yönetmelik çıkıyor, Hürriyet, 09.03.2005).

¹⁸³ Emniyetten kapkaç çözümleri önerileri, Hürriyet, 26.02.2005.

¹⁸⁴ In the meeting, İstanbul Governor Muammer Güler gave a briefing to some of the İstanbul deputies, İstanbul Chief of Police Celalettin Cerrah and the Provincial Gendarmerie Commander (‘Kapkaç azaldı, hırsızlık arttı’, Sabah, 06.03.2005).

¹⁸⁵ İşte askerin güvenlik önerisi, Hürriyet, 27.04.2005.

¹⁸⁶ CHP'den sosyal patlama uyarısı, Hürriyet, 15.05.2005.

¹⁸⁷ CHP: IMF sosyal patlamayı körüklüyor, Hürriyet, 09.05.2005.

¹⁸⁸ Aysel'in katili de tinerçi çete çıktı 13.10.1998.

similar incidents happened in the following years, ending up with serious injuries or death of the victims. So, what was peculiar about Candemir case and why did it get so much media attention and create a public opinion about the subject? In fact, many steps for fighting purse-snatching have been taken at the state level long before Candemir case. However, the year 2005 has a particular importance in terms of the changes in the penal and policing measures which were mentioned previously, such as the new Criminal Code and the introduction of MOBESE. In that sense, it can be claimed that Candemir case became a symbol of the campaign against purse-snatchers based on the strict security measures taken by the state.

In this period, the newspapers gave wide coverage to the purse-snatching incidents within the context of increasing crime rates and the problem of insecurity in İstanbul. It can be argued that the first months of 2005 have witnessed an increased sensitivity about public order in general, and purse-snatching in particular in the media.¹⁸⁹ Many columnists problematized the issue of crime and continuously called the government to take harsher measures. Among these columnists, Ertuğrul Özkök steps forward because he paid special attention to the subject and handled the issue several times in his column. In the first months of 2005, Özkök repeatedly expressed his concerns about the increasing crime rates in İstanbul. He claimed that İstanbul “has turned into the 1960s’ New York with many Harlems”, “falling prey to” purse-snatching gangs, which “turned into urban guerilla”.¹⁹⁰ He continuously compares the purse-snatching and theft incidents with the ideological street conflicts of pre-12 September period, arguing that the level of distress in the society is only comparable to that.¹⁹¹ Similarly, he claims that fighting with purse-snatching is as important as fighting with PKK.¹⁹² By referring to the official crime records, Özkök points to the seriousness of the problem and calls the authorities into action. He even advises Prime Minister Erdoğan to take the problem seriously

¹⁸⁹ About the same period, in the regular poll of Ankara Chamber of Commerce (ATO), called “Çarşının Nabzı” (Sound of the Market) carried out with over two thousand tradesmen in the last week of April 2005, nearly one third of the respondents indicated personal security and increasing crime rates as the most important social problem. Every four respondent out of ten stated that they or someone from their family were subjected to theft, mugging or purse-snatching (ATO araştırması: En büyük sorun rüşvet ve işsizlik, Hürriyet, 15.05.2005).

¹⁹⁰ Silahınız varsa yatak odasına çekilin, Ertuğrul Özkök, Hürriyet, 05.02.2005; Ey hırsızlık mağdurları, Ertuğrul Özkök, Hürriyet, 06.02.2005.

¹⁹¹ Uyaran kişi bir kadınsa, Ertuğrul Özkök, Hürriyet, 10.02.2005

¹⁹² İlginç bir yaş günü partisi, Ertuğrul Özkök, Hürriyet, 23.02.2005.

and take example of Nicolas Sarkozy during his Ministry of Interior in France and former Mayor of New York Rudolph Giuliani both of whom are known for handling public order issues successfully.¹⁹³

In the same period, other columnists wrote similar articles focusing on the subject of purse-snatching and insecurity in İstanbul. For example, stating that big cities have become unlivable, Fatih Altaylı complains about the insufficient measures taken by the state authorities and police. After that, he refers to Giuliani and how he “cleansed” New York with his “zero-tolerance policy” to crime.¹⁹⁴ Ahmet Hakan defined İstanbul as the “capital of thieves”, in which purse-snatching became routine and security the biggest problem of the city. Similar to other columnists, Hakan complains about the incompetence of the police in dealing with the crime problem.¹⁹⁵ Yavuz Donat from Sabah links the purse-snatching problem with difficult working conditions of the police and expresses his worries about the subject since it is claimed that “purse-snatchers have subdivided some parts of İstanbul among each other and the police could not enter those areas”.¹⁹⁶ Serdar Devrim published the results of a poll he conducted on the public order issue with his readers, revealing that half of the correspondents declared that “they feel distressed”, and nearly all of the remaining half stated that “they did not feel safe in their homes or in the streets” in the face of the increasing purse-snatching, robbery, etc. incidents.¹⁹⁷

The period was also the time of hot discussions on the new Turkish Criminal Code designed mainly in accordance with adjustment to EU. In various interviews and news reports, the police authorities emphasize that the democratization efforts did nothing but to tie the hands of the police by protecting the rights of the offenders. Severe punishments to the police in the case of violation of the rights of the offender are displayed as a major reason behind the increasing crime rates claiming

¹⁹³ Hadi biz abartıyoruz, ya onlar, Ertuğrul Özkök, Hürriyet, 18.03.2005.

¹⁹⁴ Blair'den şaka ile karışık mesaj, Fatih Altaylı, Hürriyet, 24.02.2005.

¹⁹⁵ Orantısız müdür kullanımı, Ahmet Hakan, Hürriyet, 10.03.2005.

¹⁹⁶ Kanayan yara... Kapkaç... Hırsızlık, Yavuz Donat, Sabah, 14.03.2005.

¹⁹⁷ Birikmiş anketler, Serdar Devrim, Hürriyet, 13.04.2005.

that the new regulations “intimidated the police”.¹⁹⁸ Offenders being aware of their rights is presented as an ‘absurdity’, claiming that these rights are given to people “who do not deserve them”.¹⁹⁹ On the other hand, abatement of mugging sentences in line with the new criminal code was criticized by many columnists and defined as “covert amnesty” or “indirect amnesty”.²⁰⁰ The basic argument is that because of the new regulations, many “killers, thieves and vandals” will be released among “us”.²⁰¹

In that sense, it is clear that an escalating public distress and media attention about purse-snatching incidents made its peak in the mid-2000s. This study claims that the public sensitivity on the subject and the accompanying media discourse which marginalizes and stigmatizes a certain social group as a “threat to the well-being of the society” can be defined as ‘moral panic’, as used by Hall et al. (1978) in their analysis of the mugging cases in Britain in the early 1970s. In the case of the purse-snatchers, young Kurdish migrants and Kurdish children are displayed as the main actors of the incidents, which “suddenly and dramatically” increased and relatively “novel” to the society. The analysis also benefits from Cohen’s (2006) set of tools

¹⁹⁸ Some of the examples of such statements are: Devletin polisi homoseksüelden dayak yiyor mu dedirtecektim, Gülden Aydın, Hürriyet Pazar, 30.01.2005; Gasp suçları %35 arttı, Hürriyet Pazar, 13.02.2005; Polislin çilesi, Yalçın Bayer, Hürriyet, 13.02.2005. Similar arguments were put forward by the columnists as well. For example, Tufan Türeç goes as far as to claim that even though he did not approve them back in the day, the ‘old school ways’ of the police surely had a ‘deterrent’ effect on the criminals. Similar to the arguments above, he claims that the democratization reforms limited the authority of the police intimidating them from ‘fighting fire with fire’ (Polis de dertli, Tufan Türeç, Hürriyet, 16.02.2005). Similarly Özkök defines new legal regulations on human rights as “restrictive practices in fighting with the criminal” and continues with arguing that the new law protects the rights of the offender but neglects the rights of the victim, which would have serious consequences (İlginç bir yaş günü partisi, Ertuğrul Özkök, Hürriyet, 23.02.2005). Yalçın Doğan, Emin Çölaşan, and Rahmi Turan put forward similar arguments emphasizing the advantageous position of the offenders vis-à-vis a weakened, disqualified, intimidated police (Yasanın polis cephesi, Yalçın Doğan, Hürriyet, 23.03.2005; Ailenin feryadı... AB uyum yasaları! Emin Çölaşan, Hürriyet, 14.07.2005; Öfke patlaması! Rahmi Turan, Hürriyet, 10.06.2007). A different point of view is offered by Fatih Altaylı in which he claims that there might be a “deliberate negligence” of the police in fighting crime to create a public opinion against the new Criminal Code (Tayyip Bey, hiç anneniz kapkaç mağduru oldu mu? Fatih Altaylı, Hürriyet, 18.03.2005).

¹⁹⁹ For example, İstanbul Mayor Kadir Topbaş claims that the rights given by the new legal regulations to the offenders are “exploited by people who really do not deserve them”. He also states that the offenders now know their rights better than the lawyers (Topbaş: İstanbul’da hırsızlık ve kapkaç endişe verici, Hürriyet, 17.02.2005).

²⁰⁰ Af, Emin Çölaşan, Hürriyet, 11.02.2005.

²⁰¹ For example, Bekir Coşkun argues that in a country where the crime rates are already high, releasing criminals from prison will do nothing but make things worse; he advises his readers to shut their windows and doors tight and wait for “them” to come, since the criminals will soon visit everyone’s houses (Evde bekleyin gelecekler... Bekir Coşkun, Hürriyet, 01.02.2005).

since his study is the first extended and thorough utilization of the concept of ‘moral panic’.

In the news reports, purse-snatching is linked to some specific reasons including socio-economic conditions, legal regulations and migration. However, migration steps forward among other reasons and, as the moral panic theory suggests, the particular crime of purse-snatching is denoted in the media as the symptom of a larger problem, which is the Kurdish migration. Many news reports referring to the views of state officials, police, judicial members and academicians as the ‘primary definers’ directly linked increasing purse-snatching incidents with the Kurdish migrants who make up a major segment of the urban poor in the big cities.

4.1.1. Kurdish Migration as a Major Cause of Purse-Snatching as Displayed in the News Reports

In addition to general amnesty and economic crisis, migration is counted as one of the most important reasons behind increasing purse-snatching incidents in the 2000s in both the state and the media discourse.²⁰² It is argued that mass migration resulted in irregular settlements, or varoş, which became home to criminal activities and shelters of gangs. In that sense, crime is directly linked with lower class neighborhoods of the urban poor. For example, after becoming İstanbul Chief of Police, Celalettin Cerrah defined varoş neighborhoods which were “the results of mass migration and irregular urbanization” as “constituting serious security problems”.²⁰³ In the NSC meeting on 18th April 2005, it was stated that “limit of migration has been exceeded” in 14 big cities, which leads to an increase in purse-snatching incidents. In the meeting, Tayyip Erdoğan’s proposal on “issuing visa to İstanbul” was discussed alongside with ways to prevent migration.²⁰⁴ In a similar

²⁰² As one of the most influential pressure groups in Turkey, The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) also stated that only by stopping migration can crimes like purse-snatching be prevented. In a research made in 2008 by İstanbul Chamber of Commerce (İTO), called “İstanbul’da Şiddet ve Şiddetin Sosyolojik Arka Planı Araştırması” in 32 districts with 2,150 people, 105 convicts and 50 street children revealed that ¾ of people living in İstanbul do not feel safe and one out of every five persons has been subjected to violence. The Chairman of İTO Murat Yalçıntaş defined the reasons of security problem as migration, irregular urbanization, uneven income distribution and inadequate number of police force (İstanbul’da şiddet raporu, Hürriyet, 24.07.2008)

²⁰³ ‘İstanbul’da ciddi güvenlik sorunu var’, Hürriyet, 24.09.2003.

²⁰⁴ Göç eşiği aşıldı, Hürriyet, 19.04.2005.

sense, referring to the MOBESE system that would control all the muhtarlıks and monitor their record-keeping, İstanbul Governor Muammer Güler stated that they would be able prevent İstanbul from “turning into a halfway house”.²⁰⁵ He also claimed that migration to İstanbul should be made difficult in order to prevent crime, by saying, “not everybody and his brother should be allowed to come to İstanbul” since, according to Güler, “irregular urbanization, migration, not being able to fit in the city, and ideological reasons” are the major causes of increasing purse-snatching incidents in İstanbul.²⁰⁶

Similarly, Tayyip Erdoğan has indicated migration as the leading cause of crime several times, implying that the migrants coming from the Southeast and East make up the largest part of the criminals in the big cities:

F.A: There is a perturbation, a problem of security in the country. Theft, mugging and purse-snatching are on the rise. What is going on? Do the police authorities not take matters seriously? Does the government have serious projects on the issue?

T.E: The incidents originate from poverty. In fact, there has been an important intimidation and suppression due to the recent police operations. (...) But there is a reality – migration. İstanbul has the lead in the process. (Polis siyasallaştı, Fatih Altaylı, Hürriyet, 04.04.2005)

PURSE-SNATCHING PROBLEM

[Prime Minister Erdoğan] answered the question, “Why did purse-snatching problem increase? Some people say that it is organized and an extension of the terrorist organization in the big cities. What is your opinion?” as follows:

“There has been a decrease in the last 1-1,5 years. The incidents really increased for some time in the past. We think that migration underlies this problem. And gangs, mob, et cetera. Unfortunately, they draw children under the age of 18 to big cities from Southeastern Anatolia, especially Diyarbakır. They are the main perpetrators. Yet, bringing down the gangs and fight against the mob led to a significant decrease. More importantly, we have to change the terror areas through socio-economic investments. (Başbakan 'gemicik'i tarif etti, Hürriyet, 20.07.2007)

The media discourse is mainly parallel with the official discourse in terms of indicating migration as a major cause of increasing crime rates in the big cities. For example, after the Security Summit held at the Prime Minister’s Office on 4th April, 2006, in which migration was discussed as the ‘cause of serious security problems

²⁰⁵ İşte MOBESE’nin şifresi, Hürriyet Pazar, 19.06.2005.

²⁰⁶ 300 okulun önüne kamera takılacak, Hürriyet, 13.01.2006.

in terms of purse-snatching and theft incidents',²⁰⁷ Ertuğrul Özkök wrote that migration in Turkey should be “recorded” to monitor “nondescript people”:

I know that it is not possible to ban people from moving from one place to other in the country.

But, at least, this migration has to be recorded, people’s movement has to be determined, and migration has to be reduced as much as possible.

It is good to reserve a security summit to the sole subject of purse-snatching and theft, and invite the mayors of big cities such as Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir, Antalya, Bursa, and Adana, which are the destinations of migration.

Because purse-snatching and theft became reckless.

These nondescript people directly challenge the state.

No serious state allows these reckless gangs. (Gece saat 24.03 faksı, Ertuğrul Özkök, Hürriyet, 07.01.2006)

The “nondescript people” mentioned in Özkök’s article turns into “overcrowded, uncivilized, dirty, coarse, untrained, hungry, miserable” masses who will “attack and kill more people” in Bekir Coşkun’s article. According to Coşkun, increasing population of urban lower classes will eventually increase crime and violence in the big cities. Coşkun’s discourse clearly condemns and stigmatizes all of the urban poor as potential criminals:

People outgrow cities.

(...) Overcrowded, uncivilized, dirty, coarse, untrained, hungry, miserable people will start to fight with each other hammer and tongs.

They will attack and kill more people in the streets.

(...) They will organize into gangs and the gangs will slaughter the innocents.

*

(...) The unemployed will do more purse-snatching, theft, and kill more people.

The gangs will proliferate.

(...) That beautiful country will turn into a junkyard. (Nerde çocukluk... Bekir Coşkun, Hürriyet, 16.03.2006)

To sum up, in the official and media discourse the last migration wave, which is mainly Kurdish migration, is displayed as a major reason of the increasing purse-snatching incidents. It is argued that the increasing migrant population make up a considerable amount of the unemployed in the cities, who also resort to illegal activities because of financial troubles. However, in all the examples above, there is a tendency to identify the lower classes and migrants with crime regardless of their economic conditions. These groups are somewhat defined as potentially dangerous,

²⁰⁷ Kapkaç ve iç göç masaya yatırıldı, Hürriyet, 05.01.2006.

unpredictable masses who would not hesitate to resort to violence. In that sense, in both the official and the media discourse, urban lower classes are defined as threats to the very existence of the “real residents of the city”.

In the case of purse-snatching, a particular group of urban poor steps forward – young Kurdish migrants and children. In fact, they have already been an object of fear since the late 1990s as thinner-addict street children in the big cities. Coming to the mid-2000s, they became identified with purse-snatching incidents in the media. In the news reports, they are displayed as the main perpetrators even sometimes as coming to the big cities for the sole purpose of joining purse-snatching gangs. Even though the news discourse avoids to use the term “Kurd” explicitly, it implies the ethnic identity through emphasizing hometowns and sympathy of the perpetrators to PKK. In that sense, the news reports provide a fertile area to analyze the criminalization and stigmatization of young Kurdish migrants and children through the detailed descriptions of their character traits, moral values, political views, leisure activities as well as the organization of purse-snatching gangs, their recruitment methods and training process.

4.1.2. From Thinner-Addicts to Purse-Snatchers: Young Kurdish Migrants and Children as Folk Devils

The issue of “criminal children” has been a hot topic in Turkey that comes to the forefront from time to time in the last two decades or so. Especially with the late 1990s, some criminal issues led to fierce discussions on the substance-user, or in the popular language, thinner-addict street children in the legal authorities and the media. In that period the notion of “criminal children” is identified with thinner-addicts. Yet, through the mid-2000s, thinner-addicts mostly left their place in this equation to “purse-snatcher children” as the new child criminal stereotype.

The portrayal of the thinner-addicts in the media could be defined as the beginnings of the criminalization of street children.²⁰⁸ The phenomenon of street children is not

²⁰⁸ In 1986, UNICEF offered a definition which categorizes street children in three groups: children on the streets, candidates for the streets, and children of the streets. In the Turkish case, there has been an ongoing debate on the definition of street children, yet it is possible to identify two main groups of street children: children working on the streets living with their families and supposed to be under their supervision, and children living on the streets who have left their families, or have no families to live with. In the second group, some of the children also work on the streets.

the issue of a couple of decades in Turkey like the rest of the world; however, it is a fact that their number and visibility have risen significantly in the last two decades with the mass Kurdish migration to big cities.²⁰⁹ In addition, increasing income polarization, weakening social aspect of the state and further impoverishment of the lower classes due to the neoliberal policies have played an important role in the process. Thus, it can be argued that sending children streets to work is a direct response of the migrant families to the difficulties they face in adjusting to the city, in other words, a manifestation of urban poverty (Atauz, 1998: 71; Yüksek, 2008: 233).

In the last two decades, many researches and studies were made on the phenomenon that has become more and more significant in time. The findings of the works are generally parallel with each other: most of the families have migrated from the eastern and southeastern regions in the last two decades; most of the mothers are housewives and most of the fathers are unemployed apart from a few who work in the informal sector with very low wages; most of the families are nuclear families with many children; the parents have a low educational profile; most of the mothers are illiterate and do not know Turkish; children have a very low level of success in schools and most of them are school drop-outs,²¹⁰ children have either used adhesive-volatile substances or came into contact with others using them; and most of the children had a contact with the police due to substance-usage, suspicion, complaint or street-vending (Atauz, 1998; Küntay, Erginsoy and Yılmaz, 1998 (cited in Akşit et al); Küntay, 1999; Karatay, 2000a; Karatay, 2000b; Akşit et al, 2001; Altıntaş, 2003; Özen et. al, 2005; Güngör, 2008; Bilgin, 2009; Yılmaz, 2009; SHÇEK, 2010). According to UNICEF Turkey's

²⁰⁹ In spite of the fact that most of the street children come from migrant Kurdish families, the Romany children constitute a significant part of the children working on the streets. In the Romany society, the period of childhood is traditionally short which results in early marriages and starting to work in early ages (UNICEF, 2011). However, may be more important than that, the Roma people in Turkey have a very low socio-economic profile and live under extreme conditions of poverty, which possibly is the actual reason behind working Romany children.

²¹⁰ Most of the children on the streets has either left school or never started it; and the ones that continue their education have very low levels of success. In addition to economic difficulties, another possible factor in the failure at school is the attitude of the teachers and peers; they encounter aggressive behavior from their teachers and other students (Akşit et al, 2001: xi). Language barrier is another important factor; migrant children may experience difficulties in adjusting to education in Turkish (UNICEF, 2011). The ratios of education in the urban metropolises are very much parallel with the ratios in their hometowns in the Eastern and Southeastern regions, which leads Karatay (2000b: 481) to claim that the migrant families have created "their own Diyarbakır, Mardin, Ağrı, or Van in Istanbul".

numbers, there were officially 42.000 children working or living on the streets by 2006, and the number unofficially reached up to 80.000. The primary cities with highest number of street children are Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Antalya, Diyarbakır, Adana, Mersin, Bursa, Erzurum and Gaziantep. The most common jobs done by the children in the streets are shoe-shining, weighing, cleaning windshields, portorage, begging, selling bagels (*simit*), tissues, flowers, bottled water, chewing gums, lighters, stuffed mussels and scavenging.

It can be argued that the social perception of street children oscillates between “ignoring” and “criminalizing”. Paradoxically, street children are the most “overlooked” group of children despite of all their visibility (Bilgin, 2009: 234).²¹¹ For example, the former State Minister of Women and Family Güldal Akşit stated that people asked her to “lock them up on an island somewhere”.²¹² In 2004, Bakırköy Mayor Ateş Ünal Erzen proposed the “Yassıada Project” as a solution to the street children problem, which aimed to collect substance-addict street children and isolate them “for treatment” in Yassıada for two years (Özkazanç, 2011: 188-189).²¹³ Similarly, Sevil Atasoy, one of the leading forensic experts of Turkey, mentions some “dreadful” solution proposals to increasing juvenile delinquency: “sending children having committed a crime or that have a high risk of committing a crime to boarding schools surrounded with high walls, or even picking up and impounding bally or thinner using, school drop-out children and putting them away in somewhere out of sight”.²¹⁴ Nurdan Gürbilek argues that increasing number and visibility of mostly Kurdish street children since the early 1990s have shattered the image of the “crying child” signifying destitute, innocent and honest orphans. Instead, street children came to signify threat, danger and destruction. The term street children became equivalent to “criminal children”; their bad fate leading them to crime. According to Gürbilek (2004: 45-47), changing image of street

²¹¹As well as their unpredictable behavior, the danger and threat ascribed to street children is related to their inexorable visibility. Street children do not belong to a particular place or location; despite all the efforts for their exclusion, street children are everywhere (Kavur and Koşkun, 2009: 83). In some cases, urban middle classes have displayed an intense hatred and disgust towards the street children. For example, owners of luxurious shops do not want street children nearby, because they believe that the children will ruin their business (Akşit et al, 2001: 56).

²¹² The Economist, 25.09.2003.

²¹³ Özkazanç (2011) gives various other examples of suggesting the isolation of substance-addict children for “rehabilitation and treatment”.

²¹⁴ Çocuklar öldürünce, Sevil Atasoy, Hürriyet, 09.04.2006.

children is related to class fear. Deepening urban poverty with Kurdish migration has created a sense of threat about the urban poor. Accordingly, the reflex of protecting street children turned into a reflex of “protecting oneself from them” (Atauz, 1998). Özkazanç (2011: 171) argues that the most important characteristic of the contemporary discourse on youth crime is its clear relation with the problem of lower-classes, in other words, the class positions of the ‘child criminals’.

Even though only a small part of the children on the streets are involved in petty crimes, the media labels all the children as criminals or potential criminals in an overstating manner. Various studies on the children living and/or working on the streets revealed that while a considerable number of children have been taken into custody by the police, a few of them have a criminal record (Bilgin, 2009; Güngör, 2008).²¹⁵ Karatay (2000b: 509-510) states that nearly 1/3 of the children working on the streets of Istanbul had been taken into police custody, and about 60% had their goods confiscated. Likewise, nearly all of the children living on the streets of Istanbul had an encounter with the police, either because of living on the streets, suspicion, theft, thinner using, or other complaints (Altıntaş, 2003: 91). In her study on the street children in Istanbul and Şanlıurfa published in 1990, Atauz mentions that whenever there was a burglary, the police collected all the street children in the area (cited in Altıntaş, 2003: 91). Same can be claimed for the children working on the streets of Ankara; they have been frequently taken by the police (Altıntaş, 2003: 205). Interviews made with children in different cities point that they have been subject to ill-treatment and sometimes beaten by the police, in addition to losing their “capital”, having them confiscated. While the police considers such acts as deterrent and educational, the children mostly think of them as common and routine treatments when “fallen into the hands of the police” (Altıntaş, 2003: 210).

Generally, children start to smoke or use volatile-adhesive substances shortly after starting to work and/or live on the streets (Bilgin, 2009: 241; Güngör, 2008: 41).²¹⁶

²¹⁵ In fact, as Yılmaz (2009: 188) points out, if the children had chosen to involve in burglary, pickpocketing, or purse-snatching instead of working on the streets selling tissues or scavenging, they would have made more than a month’s earning in a day; yet they have chosen to work under very hard conditions and make little money in order to avoid getting involved in crime.

²¹⁶ The possible causes of thinner addiction could be defined as, “living on the street, substance addiction of other children around, boredom and a need for excitement, suppressing hunger, suppressing fear, mustering up courage, suppressing desperation and depression, reducing the feel of shame, dealing with sleep disorders, protecting from cold, fighting, staying awake to protect from abuse and dangers, being a part of a group, dealing with various physical pains, being insensitive,

The chances of drug using increase in jobs like scavenging, since the children tend to “get high” in order to stand the terrible smell, scornful attitudes of people and many dangers of the job like getting infected or being hit by a car.²¹⁷ Especially the ones working at night near bars and clubs “face abuse from gangs of older children or from adults” (Akşit et al, 2001: xi, 43). Harboring such dangers and risks, the street, therefore, is an important factor on the child’s tendency to commit crime. As Akşit et al. (2001: xii) underline, the children working and/or living on the streets are under a high risk of becoming drug users, bullies or criminals since “they are subjected to abuse at home, at school, in the streets, at police stations and child detention centers and in society in general”. Half of the children living on the streets and contacted by SHÇEK between 2004 and 2006 are substance-addicts, and defined as “dangerous or anti-social” (UNICEF, 2011).²¹⁸ The number of legally accused children increased by 26 percent between 1995 and 2000 (Özen et al, 2005: 432). According to the official records, lawsuits against children increased substantially from the mid-1990s to mid-2000s, the most common offence being larceny. By 2009, the number of children in correction facilities and prisons is 2.721 (UNICEF, 2011).²¹⁹ It is commonly known that many poor families have

doing stealing more easily, suppressing traumatic events and the feelings they evoke.” (Filiz Yavuz, “Sokak Çocukları Gerçeği”, Psikolog Emin Dönmez ile röportaj, <http://www.evrensel.net/05/03/01/gundem.html#4>, cited in, Aydın (2009: 44))

²¹⁷ According to a report on informal economy in Turkey published by İstanbul Chamber of Commerce in 2000, substance-addiction and alcoholism is widespread among children working in places like leather processing or textile workshops where workload is dense and working conditions are severe and poor (Öğretmenler ek iş mahkûmu, Hürriyet, 29.10.2000).

²¹⁸ Drug or substance addiction is a common label hastily attached to street children in the media discourse. However, according to a recent research made by the İstanbul Police Headquarters Narcotics Department, the rate of substance addiction among street children is 6 percent. The remaining 94 percent of the children addicted to drugs are the ones living with their families (Doğru bildiğimiz bir yanlış daha, Hürriyet, 04.08.2011).

²¹⁹ In the mid-2000s, specifically after 2006, a new phenomenon emerged – “children throwing stones”. Especially in the eastern and southeastern cities with high rates of Kurdish population, children of various ages began participating in the political demonstrations and throwing stones to the police and public and private buildings in the vicinity. These children are accused with respect to the Anti-Terror Law, Law on Demonstrations and Public Meetings and Turkish Penal Code. It is claimed that they were subjected to violence and insulting behavior during their arrest and detention; they were not interrogated by a children’s prosecutor; their families were not informed; and they were not allowed to contact a lawyer in the required time. In some cases, the prosecutors demanded prison sentences up to 25 years. In 2010, Anti-Terror Law was amended and according to it, the children would no longer be treated as adults in the judicial process and would be sentenced to lighter penalties (UNICEF, 2011). In a news report, it is claimed that the amendment politicized the children further since the children who were involved in ‘petty crimes’ like theft, pick-pocketing, street-vending and purse-snatching began to commit ‘heavy crimes’ like participating in political demonstrations and attacking the police (“Taş atan çocuk” yasası suça itti, Hürriyet, 10.11.2011). The same argument is posed by Kanat Atkaya in his article on children throwing

been renting their children to be employed in agricultural fields or in big cities. In some cases, the children are used in various forms of theft including purse-snatching. The working conditions of these children are counted amongst the worst forms of child labor and sometimes defined as “slavish” (Değirmencioğlu et al., 2008: 192).²²⁰

Starting with the late 1990s, substance-addict street children in Turkey came to the agenda as a criminal issue after three prominent and sensational cases that took great coverage in the media. In 1997, a young teacher, named Serpil Yeşilyurt was kidnapped, raped, tortured and killed by a group of substance addict street children. Four years later, in 2001, Üzeyir Garih, one of the most well-known and wealthiest businessmen of Turkey was found dead in a cemetery; and the first suspect of the murder was a street child. And in 2003, a SAT Lieutenant Zeki Şen was stabbed to death by some thinner-addict children.²²¹ These three cases crystallized the fear and

stones; he defines them as “the children of a generation who faced the risks of the street, some of which sold tissues, dealt drugs or did purse-snatching” (Devlet ‘düşman’ aileler ‘hain’ BDP ‘light’, Kanat Atkaya, Hürriyet, 03.03.2012). Many news reports on purse-snatching provide other examples of relating street children with PKK, for example, it is argued that “even tissue-selling children support terror financially” (Terörün ekonomik maliyeti, Sabah, 20.10.2011). The narrative and reasoning in the news report implies that Kurdish children are related to criminal activities in any case be it political or non-political. In their study on the media portrayal of “children throwing stones”, Durna and Kubilay (2010) argue that they are discriminated by the media twice, in terms of delinquency and ethnic identity. In a similar sense, Darıcı (2009: 4) argues that “children throwing stones” represents a change in the perception of Kurdish children from a “judicial matter” to a “political threat”. However, according to a survey conducted by the Batman Governorship on children throwing stones and their families, 41,4 percent of the children smoked and addicted to alcohol, volatile-adhesive substances and other drugs (Devletten ‘taş atan çocuklar’ için anket, Sabah, 20.07.2010), which is a depiction of the intertwining of ordinary crimes and political threat. In the case of children throwing stones, violent memories of compulsory migration are entwined with urban poverty and exclusion.

²²⁰ According to the Convention 182 of International Labor Organization (ILO), “all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances; the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties; work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children” are counted as the worst forms of child labor.

(<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/reim/ilc/ilc87/com-chic.htm>)

²²¹ Aydın (2009: 46) argues that the portrayal of the incident of Zeki Şen in news reports displays the thinner-addicts as “strangers” rather than “enemies”, which puts them into a far more threatening position against the rest of the society. For they may be physically close to us, but they are still spiritually remote. That is why even a well-trained soldier was caught unawares by the sudden attack of the thinner-addicts. In that sense, Kurdishness embodied in the thinner-addict street children becomes an excess that needs to be gotten rid of, an “other” in terms of both class and ethnicity by contrasting the filthy, dirty, uncanny thinner-addict with a physically strong, well-educated soldier in the news narrative.

hate discourse in the media towards substance-addict street children. The news reports on these children seems to attribute them an uncanny, dark, threatening self. Accordingly, the children are constituted in the news reports as ‘uncommunicable, unknowable, impenetrable subjects’. This premise is sometimes supported by references to some ‘experts of the field’, such as psychiatrists. By referring to the ‘expert opinions’, it is advised in the news reports to approach such children cautiously and be prepared for an attack that can happen anytime. By this way, an anticipation is created towards a possible attack, even though the children have not committed any “yet”. Expressions used in the news reports like “avoid any communication”, “keep a distance” signify them as dangerous as well as threatening.²²² In the crime news reports considering thinner-addict children, the irrationality in their acts are frequently emphasized giving the acts a tone of groundless violence and evil. While the discourse implies that any act of sympathy or help is in vain, it supports the idea of isolation as the only solution possible.²²³

In that sense, the discourse that stands for rehabilitation substance-addict street children also signifies them as a dangerous group, “a bomb ready to explode”, which has to be isolated from the rest of the society. It is claimed that failure to isolate and treat these children would have catastrophic effects on the society since they are “potential mob leaders, hitmans, thieves and looters”.²²⁴ For example, İstanbul Police Chief Cerrah stated that thinner-addict children should be rehabilitated since “you cannot get rid of them or kill them”(!), but this should be somewhere away from the society.²²⁵

The news reports on substance-addict children included detailed descriptions of their appearances, physical and medical conditions. The lack of bodily hygiene is

²²² Para isterlerse vermem yerine, kalmadı deyin, Hürriyet, 13.05.2003.

²²³ Some of the headlines of news reports as an example of this attitude are as follows: “He gave money, but they still stabbed him” (Para verdi, yine bıçakladılar, Hürriyet, 29.05.2003), “Thinner-addicts created trouble at the party” (Tinerçiler partide olay çıkardı, Hürriyet, 02.06.2003), “They have been spreading terror on the streets for years” (Sokaklarda yıllardır dehşet saçıyorlar, Hürriyet, 14.11.2003), “They poured thinner and burned up the driver who did them good” (İyilik yapan şoförü tiner döküp yaktılar, Hürriyet, 26.03.2004). In an interview, Celalettin Cerrah defined thinner-addict children in Beyoğlu as “ferocious vandals carrying blades” in defending the aggressive treatment of the police (“Ateş etmek rahatlatır”, Savaş Ay, Sabah, 27.11.2005).

²²⁴ Sevgiyi tinerde arıyorlar, Hürriyet, 23.10.1998.

²²⁵ Kapkaç zor biter, Balçıçek Pamir, Hürriyet, 28.03.2005.

emphasized and a link between physical and moral depravity is constituted.²²⁶ In that sense, giving the children a bath, cutting their hair and fingernails in the shelters and rehabilitation centers are depicted as ordinary, even “vital” practices. Interventions to the bodily integrity of the street children somewhat denies their rights over their own bodies and renders them “state property”. During these procedures, the state records children while “putting them into order”. Such a perspective trivializes the existence of street children as well as their bodies and somewhat legitimizes the maltreatment of the police, other children and their families.²²⁷

In that sense, it can be argued that thinner-addict children became ‘folk devils’, through a symbolization process in Cohen’s (2006: 27) sense involving a word (thinner-addict) symbolizing a deviant status. Objects in the case of physical appearance come to symbolize the deviant status and the fears it evokes such as dirtiness, shabby looks, blank stares and slow movements. The ‘composite stigma’ (Cohen, 2006: 40) attributed to the thinner-addict children presuppose that children using drugs, having a certain outlook and acting in certain ways are extremely dangerous. Through that chain of signification, non-criminal aspects of a deviance, using drugs in this case, is criminalized. This position is reinforced by referring to ‘expert’ opinions such as social service workers, police, academicians and judiciary. News reports on attacks of the thinner-addict children with sensational headlines underlining the irrational and groundless violence such as “He gave money but they still stabbed him”, “They have been terrorizing the streets for years”, “They burned the bus driver with thinner who did nothing but kindness”, imply that the children are beyond the ‘extreme violence threshold’ as used by Hall et al (1978: 226) imply that things will get worse if no action is taken.

In the following period, the incriminating discourse towards street children became sharper, identifying them with purse-snatching incidents as well as substance

²²⁶ In a news report, after describing the physical weakness and illnesses of the children, it is stated that the “children have no aims, no concerns and even no dreams. They just want to sponge up.” (Sokakta çalıştırmak için çocuk yapıyorlar, Hürriyet, 27.03.2000)

²²⁷ This trivialization came so far that Antalya Provincial Director of Social Services Ramazan Özen proposed castration (oophorectomy) of the women living on the streets as a rational solution. Approaching the subject on a “profit and loss basis”, Özen objectifies the body of the subject living on the streets by saying, “Something has to be done about them, they get pregnant all the time, rather than paying for abortion on and on, they should better be castrated” (“Evsiz kadınları kısırlandırılm”, Hürriyet, 08.03.2006)

addiction. The fact that the governmental commission established in 2004 on purse-snatching which was mentioned above would also handle the street children problem clearly shows this attitude.²²⁸ In the official discourse, it is frequently mentioned that crime gangs use substance-addict street children in purse-snatching.²²⁹ The news reports tend to portray all street children as ‘potential suspects’ who needs to be monitored or even taken into custody by the police whenever it seems necessary. In an example from İstanbul, the news reports mentions that the police held responsible all the street children on a spot where many purse-snatching incidents took place. After many incidents happened, the police took every windshield cleaning children in the vicinity into custody:

Blame of consecutive purse-snatching incidents on Dolmabahçe Crossroads the other day was layed on the substance addict windshield cleaning children.

Two different police teams from Beşiktaş Police Directorate and Public Security Branch Office took windshield cleaning children at the crossroads into custody. (...) police is trying to identify the attacker who posed as a ‘beggar thinner-addict’ to approach his victims. (Dolmabahçe’de kapkaça önlem, Hürriyet, 13.03.2005)

²²⁸ ‘Kapkaç komisyonu’, Sabah, 09.11.2004.

²²⁹ There are other examples of the criminalizing official discourse on street children; for example, Özdek (2000: 8, fn. 3) states that in a resolution issued by the Governorship of İstanbul in 2000, street children are portrayed as “potential criminals threatening public security” even though it is claimed to be aiming at the “protection” of street children: “These children threaten our present and future as a significant social danger. There is a possibility that everyone would suffer from this serious social danger and in the end, it threatens the security of life and property as well as public order.” (“Sokakta Yaşayan ve Sokakta Çalıştırılan Çocukların Korunması suretiyle Kamu Esenliğinin Sağlanması İle İlgili Güvenlik Kararı”, Resmi Gazete, 19.08.2000, Issue 24145, p.55-56). In the same vein, Prime Minister Erdoğan stated that many street children are involved in purse-snatching and robbery (Sokak çocukları için özel proje, Hürriyet, 25.03.2005). Similarly, President of the Parliamentary Commission on Street Children Öner Ergenç declared that street children either fall into the hands of purse-snatching gangs or become substance-addicts, leaving no third option for them (Türkiye’de 6 bin çocuk sokaklarda yaşıyor, Hürriyet, 17.10.2006). In the same manner, Minister of National Education Hüseyin Çelik describes the threat posed by street children by defining them as “stray lions or tigers wandering on the streets” (Bakan Çelik: Sloganımız herkese eğitimidir, Hürriyet, 09.02.2006). The threat posed by thinner-addict street children also seems to bother businessmen of the country considering a campaign launched by the Ankara Branch of Young Businessmen Association of Turkey (TÜGIAD) with the slogan, ‘Invite to Life’ (‘Yaşama Davet Et’), which aims to attract public attention to the problem. The Branch Chairman Sefa Çol stated that the incidents caused by thinner-addicts has gradually been becoming a serious threat. In his words: "Once wandering around alone, these children begin to form groups and gangs in the face of the dangers they faced. When they get hungry or want to buy thinner, they involve in crimes like theft and mugging. These children of ours are used by the gangs of the adults in purse-snatching, theft, racketeering and mugging. Thus, we think that it is useful to specify the economic and social problems that pushed our children to streets and draw public attention to the issue." (Genç işadamları yaşama davet etti, Hürriyet Ankara, 16.09.2008).

Referring to some ‘scientific’ data or researches is a common method used in the news reports or in columnists’ articles to provide a tone of factuality and reliability. For example, in the extract below, the columnist Ferai Tınç begins her discussion by referring to ‘some’ research that defines street children as the major cause of purse-snatching and theft:

According to the researches, street children are the major cause of purse-snatching and theft problem.

When I went to Diyarbakır just after the war on terror has ended, I came across an army of children who surround people to sell tissues. There was no such a thing before. Later on, I came across similar occasions in different cities I visited. They were the children without a future of the families who came from evacuated villages and settled in varoş.

The families, who did not even know the exact number of their children, released them to the streets when they were all done in feeding them let alone educating. Three months ago when I listened to people in Diyarbakır telling that ‘**they were not even looking for their children any more**’, I thought that **Osman Baydemir**’s claim that ‘**the region has been exporting potential criminals to İstanbul and other big cities**’ should be taken seriously.

The researches revealed that the number of children migrated from the East and Southeast to İstanbul and started to live on the streets keep snowballing and theft and mugging incidents became widespread among them. (İstanbul, bir güneydoğu sorunu, Ferai Tınç, Hürriyet, 13.02.2005)

A news report in Hürriyet on a field research conducted by Association for Protection of Destitute Children (Kimsesiz Çocukları Koruma Derneği), it is stated that “children living on the streets are seen in the public as drug-addicts and muggers, and that the crimes like purse-snatching and mugging are mostly committed by substance-addict children”. It is also mentioned that women are generally afraid of street children rather than feeling sorry for them.²³⁰ The importance of the news report is that by referring to a ‘serious’ research conducted in 10 cities by a known civil society organization, the findings are displayed as the general public opinion. In other words, the stigmatization, prejudice, fear and suspicion that seem to be the results of a research in turn creates an intimidating effect on the reader who cannot help but feel the same way as the correspondents of the research. As Cohen (2006: 8) argues, the very act of reporting deviance through certain ‘facts’ about the subject could generate feelings of concern and anxiety that would lead to panic in the public through a process called ‘deviance amplification’.

²³⁰ Sokak çocuklarına erkekler acıyor, kadınlar korkuyor, Hürriyet, 16.02.2005.

To sum up, it can be argued that at some point, thinner-addict children left their place as folk devils to purse-snatcher children. Especially through the mid-2000s, when purse-snatching rates increased alongside with other forms of larceny, the newspapers made many news reports on Kurdish purse-snatching gangs, members of which were mainly children. In the news reports, it is particularly emphasized that the gangs train the children coming or taken from the Eastern and Southeastern regions to become ruthless, cold-blooded criminals. Similar to news reports on thinner-addict children, the media discourse on purse-snatcher children are mainly based on their groundless violence, aggression and brutality. The fact that the crime committed is larceny, which is an offence against property is overshadowed by constituting children as “cruel subjects full of hatred towards the state and the society” with some dark, plotting motives behind. At that point, the ethnic identity of the children becomes involved in the symbolization process and intertwined with criminal behavior which leads to criminalization of ethnicity. As Aydın (2009: 48) argues, it can be claimed that criminalization of street children is part of a governing strategy that criminalizes the Kurds in an atmosphere of high rates of unemployment, increasing poverty, political crisis and dissolution of social bonds to create an “archfelon” vis-à-vis a strong, order-keeping state.

4.1.2.1. Purse-Snatching Gangs: Methods of Recruitment, Training, Organization and Ways of Ensuring Loyalty

Since the early 2000, purse-snatching began to come to the agenda in terms of gangs. It is frequently claimed in the news reports that purse-snatching should not be treated as a simple, individual offence by some poor, desperate persons, but an organized crime controlled by gangs.²³¹ The newspapers made many reports on various purse-snatching gangs including the Şaşmaz gang, Esenyurt Susurluk gang, Sorguç gang, etc. However, may be the most notorious of them which certainly had the widest media coverage was the Delibaş Gang, led by Fırat Delibaş, a.k.a. ‘Mad Fırat’ (Deli Fırat). From being an ordinary thief in Aksaray, Delibaş became the leader of a purse-snatching gang of 300 members, most of which came from the

²³¹ In a news report on a purse-snatching incident in a local train, it is claimed that some letters were found on the offender saying, “These acts are no more enough, we have to do bigger jobs. Work more”. Specifically mentioning these sentences reinforce the image of the purse-snatchers as part of a greater criminal organization (Kapkaççı bu kez kaçamadı, Hürriyet, 15.11.2004).

Eastern and Southeastern regions. The gang was brought down by a police operation on 28th October 2003, named ‘Harlem Operation’ because it was claimed that Delibaş has turned Beyoğlu into Harlem.

In many news reports, it is argued that Delibaş aspired to be a “native Robin Hood” by taking money from the rich bar, night club and other kinds of store owners in Beyoğlu.²³² In that respect, he was “a hero who takes the ill-gotten gains of the rich in İstanbul” in the eyes of the children in his gang or in the Southeast and East.²³³ It is claimed that he started to act as a negotiator in the disputes between the tradesmen and the locals, and help people having financial troubles. The news reports argued that children have been bandying about him in the Southeast and ran away from their homes and come to İstanbul to join his gang. Claiming that children have idolized Delibaş in some way implies that they are full of anger towards the rich, local İstanbulites and yearning for taking revenge and what they deserve by attacking them and taking away their property by brute force:

Desire to be Robin Hood

It came out that children ran away from their homes and came to İstanbul to join Delibaş’s gang whose name has been bandied around in the Southeast. It is reported that Delibaş, who has an obsession to be a native Robin Hood, told the gang members, “The people who own bars, stores here are rich men. Every night they suck people in. We will take their ill-gotten money.” (Harlem Çetesi çökertildi, Hürriyet, 30.10.2003)

The children working for Delibaş gang were either coming voluntarily to join the gang, taken, kidnapped or rented from their families in the Eastern and the Southeastern regions by Delibaş’s men for 250 million TL per month, or sometimes in return for paying their rents, electric and water bills.²³⁴ In some cases, the gang chooses children of the poor migrant families living in the urban slums:

The police monitored Delibaş closely and saw that he included hundreds of poor children who have migrated from the Southeast to Beyoğlu’s slum neighborhood Tarlabası into purse-snatching and theft gang. Everyone knows that Delibaş pays rents, electrical and water bills of many houses in Tarlabası in return for making children work for him. (Silahlar konuşuyor, insan dövülüyor İmam Adnan Sokak’ta neler oluyor? Şermin Sarıbaş, Hürriyet, 28.09.2003)

²³² Harlem Çetesi çökertildi, Hürriyet, 30.10.2003; Üç noktalı dövme Puma spor pabuç Altın zincir, Gülden Aydın, Hürriyet Pazar, 28.11.2004.

²³³ Delibaş’ın çocuklarından 30 ayrı çete doğdu, Hürriyet Pazar, 13.03.2005.

²³⁴ Delibaş’ın çocuklarından 30 ayrı çete doğdu, Hürriyet Pazar, 13.03.2005.

Purse-snatcher Hasan tells that purse-snatching gang leader Fırat Delibaş even paid ‘firewood and coal expenses’ of the thieves’ families who work for him: "Most of them voluntarily came from Diyarbakır to join. We looked up to him because he protected us." (...) Underlining that Delibaş especially worked with pick-pockets, Hasan says, "There were people in charge of transferring thieves from the Southeast. They chose the ones who were registered 4-5 years younger than their actual age. They were both experienced and stole much more." (Kapkaççı adaylarına çıkış yok, Sabah, 09.12.2004).

After Delibaş Gang was brought down, it did not take long before new purse-snatching gangs emerged in İstanbul. In a news report on the post-Delibaş period, it is claimed that expecting a decrease in crime with Delibaş gang wiped out was nothing but wishful thinking because even though the leaders were in prison, minor purse-snatchers did not get any prison sentence and returned to the streets. Furthermore, the people who provide boys to Delibaş gang from the Southeast and East have started to work for the new gangs. According to the news reports, there were nearly 30 purse-snatching gangs including about 300 boys in İstanbul by 2005. Some of the names that replaced Fırat Delibaş are counted as “Siirtli Naci, Bingöllü Gani, Siirtli Murat Bayraktar, Batmanlı İbrahim Adıyaman, Diyarbakırlı Mehmet Salih Bozan ve Diyarbakırlı Mahmut Doğru”, all of which are apparently Kurdish gang leaders.²³⁵

Children coming from Eastern and Southeastern regions are claimed to constitute the backbone of purse-snatching gangs. The gangs usually use children in purse-snatching because they are protected against the law. Most of the children have been registered at an old age, therefore old enough to commit crimes but officially too young to have criminal liability. In many cases, the courts ask for medical opinion to determine the actual age of the children. A good example would be the statistics published by Bursa Police Department in 2004, proclaiming that the age of committing crime have dropped as far as 4 in the city.²³⁶ According to the police records, ¼ of the purse-snatchers were under 18 by 2004, which reaches up to 40 percent in some cities.²³⁷ Being under 18 is preferred by the gangs because they are released by the courts even if they get caught. It is frequently emphasized that even

²³⁵ Kapkaççı adaylarına çıkış yok, Sabah, 09.12.2004; Delibaş’ın çocuklarından 30 ayrı çete doğdu, Hürriyet Pazar, 13.03.2005.

²³⁶ Suç işleme yaşı 4'e düştü, Hürriyet, 06.04.2004.

²³⁷ Her 4 kapkaççıdan biri çocuk, Hürriyet, 17.09.2004.

though the police catches them, they return to streets soon after because the courts decide on returning them to their families:

THE AGE FACTOR

Our second finding is even more striking: 50 percent of the thieves in İstanbul are not sentenced to any punishment no matter how many times they get caught! Because they are under 18. As a matter of fact, most of them are older. However, they are either registered at an old age or took over their deceased younger siblings' identities. Thus, they officially appear younger. Police do not have the authority to interrogate underage thieves. Testimony of thieves under that category could only be taken by the prosecutors accompanied by a lawyer. (Çalıntı malın adresi hep o, Hürriyet, 14.02.2005)

Some of them have a criminal record of more than 150 cases

The major problem we come across in our fight against purse-snatching and pick-pocketing gangs is that the gang members are underage children. Even some of them have a criminal record of more than 150 cases. But they are released due to being underage. We turn them over to their families, they come back in a week. We returned some children to their families 10 times but they came back again. We took action on some families but there is no punishment. Most of the families and children could not file a complaint against these man due to fear and pressure. Even if we catch their leaders, children continue their activities outside. (Delibaş'ın çocuklarından 30 ayrı çete doğdu, Hürriyet Pazar, 13.03.2005)

The columnists also bring out the issue by arguing that the police's hands are tied in the face of the legal regulations on juvenile delinquents. For example, Tufan Türeñç states that in addition to the inadequate number of the officers, financial sources and technical means, the police also has to deal with the legal protection on children; even if they catch the children red-handed, they are released by the courts.²³⁸ In a similar vein, Yalçın Doğan argues that imprisoning gang leaders is not a solution to the purse-snatching problem since the children are still "loose" on the streets:

CRIMINAL CHILDREN

The major disturbance in the big cities, especially İstanbul is the rapidly increasing purse-snatching incidents.

13,974 children were caught for purse-snatching and **14,874** in 2004 in İstanbul. Each one of them has at least twenty criminal records. Then what? **Only 2,000** of a total of 28,000 criminal children are **arrested**. Besides, the moment they get caught, criminal children say, '**I am younger than 18, you cannot do anything to me**', they are released and continue purse-snatching!

Legal loopholes, non-operative children's courts, non-existent reformatories, more than you can shake a stick at.

²³⁸ Polis de dertli, Tufan Türeñç, Hürriyet, 16.02.2005.

There are **300 organized crime networks in İstanbul** which push children into crime. Their leaders are locked up. But criminal children are among us! On the loose! (Yasanın polis cephesi, Yalçın Doğan, Hürriyet, 23.03.2005)

In an interview, İstanbul Police Chief Celalettin Cerrah argued that child purse-snatchers and thieves are the main reasons behind the public security problem in İstanbul. Cerrah emphasizes that the police have no right to interrogate children and many of the children caught by the police return the streets with the order of the prosecutor and continue committing crimes. Thus, according to Cerrah, a solution to the problem of thinner-addict and purse-snatcher children would solve the security problem of İstanbul on a great deal:

Police Chief of İstanbul, which suffer the most from public order problems in Turkey, Celalettin Cerrah bared his heart to SABAH: "Well aware of the legal loopholes, crime gangs use children under 18 in theft and purse-snatching."

WE HAVE NO RIGHT TO INTERROGATE

So, are the children under 18 the main perturbs?

-Definitely, because organized crime gangs know the legal loophole very well. Thus, they always use children under 18 in purse-snatching and theft.

What happens when a minor commits a crime and gets caught?

- According to the law, we have no right to interrogate them. Whatever crime they have committed, we deliver them to the prosecutor. And the prosecutor acts according to the law. He evaluates their crime and brings them to the court if necessary. (...) We know that İstanbul is a destination of migration. If a minor is involved in crime in some way, he cannot easily give it up because once he is get used to it he does not stop. How could he? There are no deterrent measures, no punishment but good money to make. (...)

Can the order and security in İstanbul be maintained if the problem of criminal children under 18 and thinner-addict problems are solved?

-If you eliminate these two, believe me, there will be a significant decrease in crime. Especially in crimes of purse-snatching and theft. As an officer working in the police force for 34 years, I claim that purse-snatching in İstanbul would never end. But if we solve these problems, it will decrease significantly. (Kapkaç zor biter, Balçiçek Pamir, Hürriyet, 28.03.2005)

As mentioned above, the news reports particularly emphasize that purse-snatching gangs mostly work with children of poor migrant families or from eastern and southeastern regions. Gürbilek's argument of "the poor Kurdish children as the new object of fear" is reflected on the news reports talking about some dubious children full of trains coming to big cities to become ferocious thieves. This discourse of fear and threat is constituted in the news reports through the statements of state officials on "groups in the Eastern cities renting buses only to come and do purse-

snatching in the big cities”,²³⁹ such as Celalettin Cerrah saying that “the gangs have brought 1200 children from the southeastern cities to İstanbul to train as purse snatchers”,²⁴⁰ or depending on some official records.²⁴¹ The common point in all these news reports is the construction of a relationship between ethnic identity and crime.²⁴² In most of the examples, the hometowns of the perpetrators are specifically mentioned, which are mostly Eastern and Southeastern cities,²⁴³ Diyarbakır being the leading one alongside with an indication of the sole purpose of their migration as purse-snatching.²⁴⁴ In the examples below, it is argued that the

²³⁹ Doğu illerinden minibüsle kapkaç için geliyorlar, *Hürriyet*, 18.01.2000.

²⁴⁰ 6.5 trilyonluk rüşveti almadık, *Hürriyet*, 04.06.2004.

²⁴¹ The parliamentary commission on purse-snatching declared in 2007 that the nearly 10 thousand of 15.273 children legally accused children in İstanbul were coming from other cities. It is also stated that most of these children were used in robbery, purse-snatching and theft (Asayış(sızlık) dair... Mehmet Nuri Yılmaz, *Hürriyet*, 23.03.2007).

²⁴² During his election campaign promising to ‘end purse-snatching in one week’, Mehmet Ağar criticized the JDP government by “bringing the bandits which they have defeated in the mountains to cities”. Considering that Ağar is mainly known for his role in the operations against the PKK in the east and southeast, the analogy he makes reveals an identification of the purse-snatcher with ‘Kurdish terrorist’ (Ağar: Dağda devirdiğim eşkıya şehirde, *Hürriyet*, 20.03.2005).

²⁴³ Some of the examples include “Purse-snatching gang composed of people from Urfa and Diyarbakır” (Yeğen Tatlıses tek kurşunla vurdu, *Hürriyet*, 04.11.2002), “The Bitlisli Gang caught for purse-snatching” (Gasp değil kapkaç yapın, *Hürriyet*, 18.11.2004), “Çetin Başalak, known as Çeto from Batman and for purse-snatching incidents around Aksaray-Laleli” (Aksaray ve Laleli kurtuldu, *Sabah*, 05.12.2004), “gang composed of children and young people coming from Diyarbakır” (Kapkaç çetesinin hücre evleri basıldı, *Hürriyet*, 23.05.2005), “Purse-snatching gang of Diyarbakır” (‘Roman kapkaç çetesi’ üyesi iki kişi yakalandı, *Sabah*, 29.06.2005), “over 70 Diyarbakır-originated theft gangs in İstanbul” (Kapkaççıyla evlenmek için kızlar can atıyor... Serdar Devrim, *Hürriyet*, 14.07.2005), “Ağrılılar Gang” (Küçük çete yuvası Dilovası, *Hürriyet Pazar*, 28.08.2005), “Mardinliler Gang in Kartal Station, “Kabo (Erzurumlular) Gang in Pendik Station and “Urfalılar Gang” in Gebze Station are dominant” (Kapkaç çeteleri, *Sabah*, 19.11.2004), “Diyarbakır group” (Kapkaç sabıkalılarını polisleri yaraladı, *Hürriyet*, 06.01.2006).

²⁴⁴ In 2005, Latif Demirci published a caricature in *Hürriyet* on purse-snatching which drew heavy criticism from the readers (see, Appendix B). In the caricature, a group of men is portrayed as standing around a table putting their hands on it and swearing to become purse-snatchers. The scene makes an analogy with the oath of enlistment. A man who seems to be the leader says the others that they have come from Diyarbakır and resigned to the gang to become purse-snatchers. He ends up saying “May your holy war be blessed!” There are some posters on the wall, saying, “Hit, run, be proud” making a reference to Atatürk’s maxim, “Every Turk is born a purse-snatcher” making a reference to a famous military saying mostly shouted during the trainings by the soldiers, and “9/10 of manhood is purse-snatching” making a reference to the saying, “9/10 of manhood is running away”. While it is clear that Demirci associates purse-snatching with eastern and southeastern immigrants through mentioning Diyarbakır as their hometowns, most of the criticisms that were published the next day were mainly focusing on the generalization of every Turkish citizen with purse-snatching in one of the posters, rather than the obvious ethnic stigmatization of the Kurdish people as potential criminals. In his reply, Demirci argued that the main reason behind the caricature drawing so much criticism is that it was published in an atmosphere of nationalistic sensitivity due to the flag burning incidents in Newroz celebrations in Mersin. He claimed that what he meant to underline was the fact that young people have been joining gangs “as if it was national service”, which is a statement that has to be analyzed because of the implication that purse-snatching is like a

purse-snatching gangs ‘transfer’ children who are athletic, fast and respond quickly, in other words, who “have facial and bodily structures fit for purse-snatching”²⁴⁵ from Eastern and Southeastern regions through various methods such as kidnapping, renting from the families, deceiving or sometimes on a voluntary basis.²⁴⁶

Purse-snatching aghas who dwell in İstanbul recruit their members from various regions of Anatolia to the city. Children that have facial and bodily structures fit for purse-snatching are either kidnapped, rented from their families or deceived.

Since everyone in the big cities make their own way, purse-snatching gangs have trouble in finding members and therefore, they resort to the way of recruitment. Adapting the Ottoman soldier recruitment –devshirmah- system, the gangs bring the children they have “chosen” from all around Anatolia to İstanbul and integrate them into the “World of Crime”. Mostly choosing children after observing them in their own environments, purse-snatching aghas either take children by persuading their families or kidnap them. And thus, purse-snatching gangs turn into groups composed of people coming from certain cities or regions. FIRST STOP ARE THE “HOUSES”

According to the İstanbul Headquarters Public Security Branch Office reports, most of the purse-snatching incidents on foot are committed by groups from Diyarbakır. Children, most of whom are below 18 come to İstanbul in one way or another. Some of them are “rented” to the gangs by their poor families, and some others are kidnapped. And most of the adolescents are deceived by promises of “intercourse with women” and brought to the city. (Devşirme kapkaççılar, Sabah, 25.09.2003)

Two thirds of the purse-snatchers in İstanbul come from Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia. They are between 15 and 17 years old. They are either primary school graduates or high school drop-outs.

Their families in the village are unemployed, poor and uneducated. They think that their children are working in a normal job in İstanbul. Few of them leave their hometowns by stating, ‘I am going to the big city to join a purse-snatching gang’. Yet when they come to the city, they contact their purse-snatcher fellow

military duty for the Kurdish youth. Consciously or not, by that statement Demirci relates purse-snatching with Kurdish political struggle providing another example of the discourse that intertwines ordinary street crime with political crime.

²⁴⁵ In some cases, they get into conflict over ‘talented’ or ‘high quality’ boys which may go as far as armed fight (13'lük kapkaççıyı transfer kavgası, Hürriyet, 01.04.2002; Devşirme kapkaççılar, Sabah, 25.09.2003).

²⁴⁶ There are many examples of such news reports. All of them are not quoted but some of their headlines provide examples: Diyarbakır'dan kaçırıldığı çocuklarla kapkaç çetesi kurmuş, Hürriyet, 26.03.2003; Çocuk çetesi yakalandı, Hürriyet, 06.08.2003; Çocukları kapkaççı yapan çete basıldı, Hürriyet, 29.09.2003; Boncuklu çete evinde basıldı, Hürriyet, 13.10.2003; Çocuk çetesi basıldı, Hürriyet, 30.03.2004; Kapkaç çetesine 150 gözaltı, Hürriyet, 01.05.2006; Oğlunu kapkaç çetesinden kurtardı, Hürriyet, 02.07.2006; Kaçırıldıkları çocuklara hırsızlık yaptıran çete, Hürriyet, 06.05.2007; Çocuklara hırsızlık yaptıran çeteye 306 yıl hapis istemi, Hürriyet, 13.07.2007.

townsmen or relatives and by this way, they fall into the hands of the gang. (Üç noktalı dövme Puma spor pabuç Altın zincir, Gülden Aydın, Hürriyet Pazar, 28.11.2004)

Similarly, in an interview made by Savaş Ay with someone whose identity is kept secret, it is claimed that the children are kidnapped from Eastern cities, for example, Diyarbakır, and sent away to metropolises like İstanbul to join purse-snatching, robbery gangs. The unknown interviewee openly states that the children involved in crime in İstanbul mostly come from Diyarbakır. The children are either kidnapped, deceived or rented from their families. For the last point, the interviewee argues that many families are content with the money they take from the gangs, and therefore they do not question the whereabouts of their children or what kind of activities they are involved in:

What really matters is what I talked about, not whom I talked to. Please read:

- If I write down what you told me, I would alarm everyone, wouldn't I?

- Yes, you would. And you'd better do that. Everyone would pull himself together.

- !!!!!!!!

- Better be concerned and worried about our children than losing them forever.

- Fine, I will write them down. Parents will get the creeps but it is our duty to warn and propose solutions.

- That is the right thing to do.

- Who kidnap children? How and why do they kidnap?

- Even if I only give examples from Diyarbakır, the severity of the situation will be revealed.

- What is the significance of Diyarbakır?

- There are reports on the parliamentary records. Since the late 1980s, nearly four thousand settlements were evacuated. Three million people have migrated from there. According to the records, Diyarbakır is the leading destination of migration in the region. And mostly the children are traumatized by migration.

İstanbul is swarmed

- There are many of them in İstanbul.

- Yes, look at the purse-snatchers, muggers, thieves in İstanbul. Most of them are children. They are trained and make practice in Diyarbakır, and the 'successful' ones are transferred to big cities, especially İstanbul.

- Would there be any exaggeration?

- Look at the records. Look at the civil registry records of the children involved in crime in İstanbul.

- And what would I see?

- You'll see that more than 70 percent of them are registered to Diyarbakır. (Çocuk kaçırıyorlar haberiniz olsun!.. Savaş Ay, Sabah, 28.01.2006)

In the latter parts of the interview, the interviewee mentions that the gangs use girls as lookouts in purse-snatching, shoplifting and pick-pocketing until they grow up

and transferred to prostitution. In the face of such a horrid picture, Savaş Ay argues that the families must be suffering a hellish torture. However, the interviewee claims that most of the families are aware of the situation and even content with it as long as they got money. The expression that “they have no money but plenty of kids” signifies a stereotypical poor Kurdish family with many children, each of whom are a potential menace to the well-being of the metropolis:

As long as money comes

- The families must be suffering a hellish torture.
- Some of them are and some of them are not.
- !!!
- Don't be surprised. We have statistics. 50 percent of the children's parents do not know Turkish let alone being literate. They nearly have no income at all. The only thing they have is plenty of children. They let them loose on the streets. As long as money comes, its method is not a problem.
- How can they get any money from a kidnapped child?
- They send money to families periodically to stop them from making a scene or track down their children. That is why there a few complaints or cooperation. (Çocuk kaçırıyorlar haberiniz olsun!.. Savaş Ay, Sabah, 28.01.2006)

During this period, synchronous operations coordinated by the police quarters of İstanbul and Diyarbakır were conducted to collect the children used by purse-snatching gangs and return them to their families:

Two purse-snatching gang members tried to recruit 4 children rented from their families for 250 million liras and 2 other children kidnapped at knifepoint. However, the police have acted on the information of the uncle of one of the 6 children and rescued the children coming from Diyarbakır to İstanbul with an operation to the Haydarpaşa Train Station.

(...) I RENTED THEM FROM THEIR FAMILIES

Özkan Yılmaz, the gang member who brought the children from Diyarbakır was also caught in the train station. (...) Yılmaz stated to the police that they did not kidnap children, but on the contrary, they rented them from their families for 250-300 million liras per month. ('Kiralık kapkaççı'ları kurtarma operasyonu, Sabah, 08.12.2004)

The important thing about these operations is the police control in train and bus stations in Diyarbakır. With the subtitle “Quarantine over the purse-snatching gangs in Diyarbakır”, the news report implies that the police tries to confine some disease in its root and prevent it from spreading to other, ‘healthy’ parts. In that analogy, southeastern cities like Diyarbakır are displayed as the ‘source of evil’, which threatens to spoil and corrupt big cities like İstanbul. It is told that the police checked the identities of every child under 18 and the ones that “looked suspicious”

in train and bus stations. In that respect, it can be argued that every Kurdish child who wants to go to İstanbul is treated as a ‘potential purse-snatcher’:

Quarantine over the purse-snatching gangs in Diyarbakır

When it was revealed that many children brought from Diyarbakır to big cities every day, İstanbul being the most prominent one, by force or persuasion, National Police Force took train and bus stations under control. Moving upon SABAH's report, identities of every children under the age of 18, who wanted to leave the city were checked and the suspicious ones were returned to their families. Alarming rates of child purse-snatchers who have been coming to western cities recently once again came to the agenda with the operation in İstanbul in which 6 children were rescued from a purse-snatching gang. After specifying that children between the ages of 13 and 16, some of whom are going to primary school, were being taken to İstanbul by purse-snatching gang leaders or couriers assigned by them, measures were increased in Diyarbakır to prevent such incidents.

MEASURES WERE INCREASED

Officers from Public Order Branch Office and Children Police checked the identities of the child passengers who wanted to get on the İstanbul train all day. While the children with no parents were interrogated, some of the suspicious-looking adults were asked to prove their relationship with the children they accompanied. In the meantime, students who came to the train station to walk around left the area when they were warned by the police as, "Do not wander here, purse-snatchers would kidnap you". Diyarbakır Deputy Police Chief İlknur Şahin stated that they took those measures to deter purse-snatching gangs from kidnapping children or the ones who would go voluntarily, and said, "We will continue to take measures" (Kapkaççı adaylarına çıkış yok, Sabah, 09.12.2004)

It can be argued that the police operations conducted in train and bus stations can be read as what Cohen (2006: 75) calls, ‘dramatization of evil’. Sometimes the police acts to guarantee that the deviants are also labelled in the eyes of the public through a ‘ceremony of public degradation’, which is treating every Kurdish child as a potential purse-snatcher by checking their identities in this case. Through dramatization of evil, the process of achieving folk devil status for the deviant group is completed.

Similarly, in a news report on the Southeastern purse-snatcher children, it is argued that the children start to ‘migrate’ to İstanbul in summer, implying that after the school term is over the children start purse-snatching as a ‘summer job’. In the news report extract below, the first subtitle is “Seasonal purse-snatchers”, making reference to seasonal workers. The important thing here is that the narrative define purse-snatching as a ‘job’ for the Southeastern children, no more different than any summer job a child can do during the holiday. By this way, purse-snatching is

banalized and normalized ‘for’ these children. In the greater picture, what is really normalized and banalized for the Southeastern people is criminal activities, that is, crime itself. It is displayed as a way of life for them. In the signification spiral as used by Hall et al. (1978: 223) Kurdish children are identified with crime, implying a link between a particular ethnic identity and crime in general. In that sense, crime problem and Kurdishness ‘converge’ at the intersection of Kurdish purse-snatching children. The second subtitle, “They are coming to ‘hunt’” defines the children as ‘hunters’, making the locals of İstanbul or other big cities, ‘their prey’. Such a terminology constitutes the children as violent, scary villains in the face of helpless, weak victims of big cities:

According to the police records, Eastern and Southeastern children who are used in purse-snatching by gangs will start coming to big cities after May.

(...) Seasonal purse-snatchers

Purse-snatcher children, who have become the nightmare of especially the women in the big cities will set off by May. According to the police records, children between the ages of 12 and 16 who are used by crime gangs in purse-snatching terror come to İstanbul, İzmir and Antalya after leaving their homes in the region, especially Diyarbakır every year by May. Cities like Adana and Mersin which are close to the Southeast also get their share from these “seasonal purse-snatcher” children. As long as they send money, their families do not show a concern for these children, who return to their homes when the summer is over. The parents only go to the police and file a missing or kidnapping report when the child does not send money. As a matter of fact, last year 8 families filed missing reports for their children to the Police Headquarters of Diyarbakır where purse-snatching gangs are the most active. Later on, it was revealed that 7 of these children have come to İstanbul to commit crime and the families were aware of that. (...)

THEY ARE COMING TO ‘HUNT’

Purse-snatcher children tell that they ‘do their internship’ in the Southeast and become experts in İstanbul, where the ‘preys’ are plenty.

C.K.: No one here has money or job. We have to go there. (Kapkaç göçü başlıyor, Sabah, 09.04.2005)

After choosing the children in one way or other, the news reports state that the gangs train them in the ways of purse-snatching. It is claimed that more experienced boys or gang members on higher ranks teach the techniques of purse-snatching and robbery such as how to use knives, or how to run and escape from the scene quickly.²⁴⁷ It is frequently emphasized that the gangs have children do

²⁴⁷ Some of the examples from the news reports include: “Mentioning that they did not know how to do purse-snatching before, two suspects said, “Those people we met taught us how to draw knives, do purse-snatching and mugging. Then we started doing them”” (Bıçakla kapkaç dersi, Sabah,

sports such as running or playing football on a regular basis to keep their bodily condition high.²⁴⁸ It is claimed that they stay in bed-sitters and small, desolate houses, sometimes called “purse-snatching schools” where they are trained:

Purse-snatching has its own school

16-years-old Ö.T.’s statements, who got caught on the train doing purse-snatching is terrifying. (...) Ö.T. said, "More experienced big brothers train us in purse-snatching schools in Altınşehir." (Kapkaça 5 yıl hapis, Sabah, 06.07.2001)

According to the police records, many bed-sitters are used as “Purse-snatching Schools”. (Devşirme kapkaççılar, Sabah, 25.09.2003)

Accordingly, the news reports spare a considerable part on the description of the gang organization. Apart from systematically training new members and recruiting them as fierce thieves, it is often stated that the gangs have an organized structure in which every member’s duty and responsibility is clearly defined. It is often underlined that gangs have a “strict hierarchy and discipline”, in which the lower-rank members are loyal to their superiors if they provide protection.²⁴⁹ A news report with the title, “Loyalty to the death to the psychopath leader” implies that the members do not question the orders of their leaders and would not hesitate to go to prison, kill or even die for them.²⁵⁰ However, members do not know the ones at the top of the hierarchy, they only know their superior. Getting higher in the gang hierarchy is inversely proportional with actual street activity.²⁵¹

29.10.2001), “Taking long-fingered, athletic and fast children of the poor families in Southeast into his gang, Delibaş released them to the streets to do purse-snatching and theft after a tough training and testing process.” (Hizbullah gibi kapkaç çetesi, Hürriyet, 04.11.2003), “The seniors teach the tricks of the job. Through a one-week-training period, the methods of purse-snatching, ways of acting fast, neutralizing the victim, escaping and streets fit for purse-snatching are taught.” (Üç noktalı dövme Puma spor pabuç Altın zincir, Gülden Aydın, Hürriyet Pazar, 28.11.2004).

²⁴⁸ Some examples of such statements from the news reports are as follows: “Children brought to Ankara learn both the “job” and to escape by running in sportswear on a regular basis.” (‘El Kapkaç’ örgütü, Sabah, 19.12.2005), “It is revealed that the purse-snatching gang brought down by the police have been working out on the astroturf to stay in form and develop a team spirit.” (Kapkaça hazırlık için halı sahada çift kale, Sabah, 04.05.2006), “From time to time the teams gather in empty lands and work for purse-snatching. Gang members work in utmost discipline and hierarchy.” (Tantanalı kapkaç, Hürriyet, 06.05.2006)

²⁴⁹ Tantanalı kapkaç, Hürriyet, 06.05.2006; Üç noktalı dövme Puma spor pabuç Altın zincir, Gülden Aydın, Hürriyet Pazar, 28.11.2004.

²⁵⁰ Psikopat lidere ölümüne itaat, Sabah, 26.09.2003. It is also argued in the news reports that purse-snatchers have a tattoo of three dots meaning, “see no evil, hear no evil”. (Üç noktalı dövme Puma spor pabuç Altın zincir, Gülden Aydın, Hürriyet Pazar, 28.11.2004)

²⁵¹ In an article on the experiences of an anonymous purse-snatcher who have been operating in and around Beyoğlu, he elaborately tells the organization of the gang, the ‘ranks’ and duties of every man within the organization and the relations between them. He states that “tricksters” (dümenciler) are at the bottom of the hierarchy and lookout for the ones stealing the money. They work under the

In some of the news reports, the gangs are claimed to be organized in sleeper cells or councils similar to terrorist organizations, or have ‘military branches’ in the case of Delibaş Gang. Expressions like “organized like terrorist organizations”, “similar to Hizbullah” or “Al-purse snatching gang” make reference to terrorist organizations, such as Al-Qaida, which have made violent attacks and responsible from the death of many:

It is revealed that ‘Esenyurt Susurluk’ purse-snatching gang, which engaged in armed fight with the police and gendarme, is organized in sleeper cells like the terrorist organizations and punish its members who do not want to commit crimes. (Hizbullah gibi kapkaç çetesi, Hürriyet, 04.11.2003)

THEY ARE ORGANIZED LIKE TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS

Police states that gang organizations have changed after the operation made to Fırat Delibaş. Purse-snatching gangs started to work in small groups which do not know each other, similar to the terrorist organizations. (Delibaş’ın çocuklarından 30 ayrı çete doğdu, Hürriyet Pazar, 13.03.2005)

It is revealed that the purse-snatching, pick-pocketing and mugging gang which was brought down just before organizing country-wide, was organized in sleeper cells like terrorist organizations. ... It is indicated that the leader was preparing to spread Turkey-wide through establishing houses similar to terrorist organizations. (Kapkaç çetesinin hücre evleri basıldı, Hürriyet, 23.05.2005)

Purse-snatching gang like a “terrorist organization”... Children are bought from families for 100 YTL. They work in sleeper cells. The “militants” do not know each other. (‘El Kapkaç’ örgütü, Sabah, 19.12.2005)

The news reports state that the gangs exercise power over the members to ensure loyalty and to intimidate the members from hiding money from the gang, rejecting to steal or do purse-snatching, through various methods which can be grouped into three as threats, punishments and rewards. It is claimed that there is a kind of solidarity in the gangs based on mutual dependence. Setting forth their rap sheets, the gang imposes them the idea that they would not be able to find any jobs elsewhere. The gangs also threat their members to kill, harm relatives or loved

“dodger” (kurnaz), who are experienced thieves. It is claimed that there are 6 “dodgers” responsible from Beyoğlu. And above them are the “brothers”. They are usually older than 18 so they do not directly involve in purse-snatching and pick-pocketing to avoid going into prison. “Brothers” are directed by “uncles”, who are claimed to represent the “bureaucracy of stealing”. At the top of the hierarchy, there is a “big brother”. Fırat Delibaş is claimed to the “big brother” of Tarlabası area (Kapkaçıyla evlenmek için kızlar can atıyor... Serdar Devrim, Hürriyet, 14.07.2005). Some other examples of news reports mentioning the organized structure of the gangs are: En organize kapkaç çetesi yakalandı, Hürriyet, 06.05.2006; Cezaevinden yönetilen çete, Hürriyet, 26.07.2006.

ones,²⁵² inflict physical harm like crippling, mutilating or beating,²⁵³ and blackmail them with inappropriate photos.²⁵⁴ In the following news report extracts, it is stated that the punishments include beating, torture, breaking bones, wringing feet with pincers and pliers, cutting ears and thumbs.²⁵⁵

PUNISHMENT IS BREAKING FINGERS

It is stated that Delibaş broke fingers to be defined as “merciless” and be obeyed in the gang. That is to say, Delibaş broke fingers of the men who did not obey him or kept money from the gang. (Çukur Mahalle'de güvenlik kamerası, Sabah, 01.11.2003)

This time, purse-snatching violence became the nightmare of a 14-years-old child. It is claimed that a purse-snatching gang tortured 14-years-old G.A. for days who refused to do purse-snatching by wringing his feet with pincers and pliers. Indicating that he managed to escape from the gang, the boy took refuge at the police and led them to catch three men. 'They also cracked my head'

Stating that he did not want to steal and he was tortured when he did not do purse-snatching, 14-years-old G.A. said, "In İzmir, they wringed my feet with pincers and pliers when I could not do purse-snatching. They tortured different parts of my body with pliers. Lastly, they cracked my head." ('Dayak ve işkenceyle kapkaç yaptırıldılar', Sabah, 16.05.2005)

It is confirmed that the gang leader and associates who punished children by cutting their ears and thumbs when they did not want to commit crime, are PKK sympathizers and transfer the money coming from purse-snatching and theft to the terrorist organization. (Kapkaç çetesine 'Katmerli' darbe, Sabah, 03.12.2005)

²⁵² “Telling Altaylı every detail of the operating systems, organization charts, tortures and dark relations of the purse-snatching gangs, little M. said that he was forced to steal and threatened with killing his family if he refuses to do so by the gang members in İstanbul.” (Kurt olup tavşanı tutacaksın' dediler, Sabah, 11.03.2006).

²⁵³ “The boy, who was tortured for a week to do purse-snatching, was rescued from the house he was imprisoned with an operation.” (Hızlı koşan çocuğu kaçırıp işkenceyle kapkaç zorladılar, Hürriyet, 18.06.2005), “It is stated that after being placed in flats in large housing complexes, kidnapped children are forced to commit crimes in big districts of İstanbul such as Şişli, Beyoğlu and Beşiktaş through various tortures as well as death and crippling threats.” (Kapkaç hazırlık için halı sahada çift kale, Sabah, 04.05.2006).

²⁵⁴ “The new members’ attempts of leaving the gang, escaping or taking away the gang money were severely punished. Furthermore, it is revealed that children who insist on returning their homes were threatened by sending their obscene photos to their families.” (Hizbullah gibi kapkaç çetesi, 04.11.2003). “It is confirmed that these children were trained and their obscene photos were taken to prevent them from escaping.” (Kapkaççı yaptıkları çocuklar yakalattı, Hürriyet, 03.12.2005)

²⁵⁵ Some other examples are “It is indicated that the gang punish “unsuccessful” children with torture.” (Boncuklu çete evinde basıldı, Hürriyet, 13.10.2003), “Mentioning that he was brought from Diyarbakır a year ago, 16-years-old Ş.G. testified to the police as follows: ‘(...) They beat and threatened to stab us if we refused to steal.’” (Delibaş’ın çocuklarından 30 ayrı çete doğdu, Hürriyet Pazar, 13.03.2005), “It is indicated that gang leader Nedim Sorguç is very strict about money and punished members who kept or stole money from him by torturing.” (Tantanalı kapkaç, Hürriyet, 06.05.2006).

According to the news reports, the members are rewarded with prostitutes,²⁵⁶ driving cars if they were too young to be interested in women²⁵⁷ or in the case of getting caught and going to prison, the gang promises to look after them and their families.²⁵⁸ In return for protection, the gang demands absolute obedience:

SOLIDARITY Within the gang, the members are inseminated by arguing that ‘You are a thief, you have a criminal record. This is your future. If you stayed in your hometown, you would be on the mountain.’ The gang member is afraid of being excluded because it is not possible for him to do ‘business’ outside of his group. All the purse-snatchers have shared interests and a gain-and-loss psychology. First article of the Gang Constitution is absolute obedience. And the reward is being fed in the days when he could not bring any money and being looked after if he goes to prison. There is a strong sense of solidarity among them. Everyone holds the motto, ‘Today it’s me, tomorrow it will be you.’ Every expense of the member that went to prison is definitely met. (Üç noktalı dövme Puma spor pabuç Altın zincir, Gülden Aydın, Hürriyet Pazar, 28.11.2004)

Beside threats, punishments and rewards, drugs are also used as stimulants on the children to muster up courage before going to ‘work’.²⁵⁹ Fatih Altaylı argues that after “being bought” from their parents, the children are trained, addicted to drugs and turned into “crime machines” by the gangs, which later “unleash” them to the

²⁵⁶ Kapkaçın ödülü hayat kadını, Sabah, 31.10.2003

²⁵⁷ “They also paid for treats in restaurants and let us drive cars. We were trained in vacant lands in the evenings for a few months to learn driving.” (Kurt olup tavşanı tutacaksın’ dediler, Sabah, 11.03.2006)

²⁵⁸ “It is confirmed that ‘Esenyurt Susurluk’ gang, which has caused suffering to many people, kept 2 trillion liras in multiple bank accounts belonging to different people. (...) It is indicated that the money was used to help gang members who went to prison and their families.” (Kapkaçtan 2 trilyon servet yapmışlar, Hürriyet, 05.01.2002)

²⁵⁹ Some examples of such expressions are: “It is indicated that Özek took drugs and stimulants before doing purse-snatching.” (İstanbul’da 6 kapkaççı yakalandı, Hürriyet, 01.04.2003), “According to the statements, drugs like pills and marijuana makes it easy for the young people to adapt to the “occasion.” (Devşirme kapkaççılar, Sabah, 25.09.2003), “It is confirmed that suspects with usually similar criminal records take pills before purse-snatching and other forms of theft.” (99 kapkaççıdan 40’ı yakalandı, Hürriyet, 13.11.2004), “During interrogation, gang members told that they took pills they believe to be encouraging before going to work.” (Gasp değil kapkaç yapın, Hürriyet, 18.11.2004), “Contrary to popular belief, they do not sniff thinner but take green prescription pills sold illegally in Dolapdere and Tarla başı before going to ‘work’.” (“Üç noktalı dövme Puma spor pabuç Altın zincir”, Gülden Aydın, Hürriyet Pazar, 28.11.2004), “Some of the children smoking weed and taking pills, which they call ‘kubar’ and ‘mühür’, before going to work are only 11 years old.” (Kapkaç göçü başlıyor, Sabah, 09.04.2005), “We smoke weed before going to work in order to avoid any pain from beating in case the police catches us.” (Kapkaççıyla evlenmek için kızlar can atıyor... Serdar Devrim, Hürriyet, 14.07.2005), “Telling that they go purse-snatching after smoking weed and taking pills, Ergün Aslan said that he always carries a knife because he has enemies and also draw his knife to a woman during purse-snatching.” (Uyuşturucu almak için kapkaç, Hürriyet, 18.01.2006).

streets to do purse-snatching.²⁶⁰ In Altaylı's article, purse-snatcher children are portrayed as some 'robots' without any will power, just following orders. The news reports state that the gangs "addict its members to drugs and make them do purse-snatching in return for providing drugs".

Stating that young people had to resort to "purse-snatching" to find drug money, [Ankara Police Headquarters Narcotics Branch Office commissioner] Durmuş told that young people first stuff like sell cell phones and watches, then try to get money from their families through various lies or do theft and purse-snatching. Durmuş said, "There are young people who needs to find money to buy drugs behind the purse-snatching terror." (Ankara'da öğrencilere uyuşturucu uyarısı, Hürriyet, 06.03.2006)

The news reports on purse-snatching also include descriptions of the personal characteristics, moral values, political views and leisure activities of the purse-snatchers. An analysis of such descriptions provides the necessary tools to understand which segments of the society are criminalized as potential suspects on what grounds.

4.1.2.2. Profile of the Purse-Snatchers: Character Traits, Moral Values and Political Views

The news reports on purse-snatching tend to portray purse-snatchers as a uniform, homogeneous group with certain characteristics in terms of their personalities, moral values, ideological positions and sometimes even leisure time activities and physical appearance. A major common characteristic of the purse-snatchers as displayed in the news reports is the groundless violent impulses and aggression, as in the case of thinner-addict children.²⁶¹ Purse-snatchers are sometimes portrayed as delirious, blood-thirsty villains, who steal for the joy they get from the action and the violence they inflict rather than any material needs.²⁶² In the news report

²⁶⁰ Sabıkalarını Kardak'a yerleştirelim, Fatih Altaylı, Hürriyet, 09.11.2004.

²⁶¹ It is also argued in the news reports that purse-snatchers try to create an intimidating image, "to give the message that he is a 'psycopath'", by cutting themselves with razor blades. (Üç noktalı dövme Puma spor pabuç Altın zincir, Gülden Aydın, Hürriyet Pazar, 28.11.2004).

²⁶² Even playing 'Counter-Strike' in internet cafes in their leisure time is displayed as an indicator of the violent impulses the children are supposed to have, disregarding the fact that the computer game mentioned is very popular among children and teenagers regardless of their socio-economic or cultural profile: "They spend their leisure time in internet cafes, playing "Counter Strike", a video game including violence." (Kapkaç göçü başlıyor, Sabah, 09.04.2005).

extracts below from three different cases, the statements of the offenders are referred to reinforce this image:

Caught for stabbing Münevver Yeşiltepe 8 times in front of her 6-years-old son, 17-years-old E.A. said, “My name is Azrael.”

I cannot bear not seeing blood

It is reported that E.A. is a drug addict and during his statement he shouted, “I cannot bear not seeing blood. I have to stab myself or others to relax.” (İşte 17 yaşındaki eli bıçaklı ‘Azrail’, Hürriyet, 31.01.2002)

Statements of the ‘purse-snatching agha’ give shivers. Here is what Şaşmaz, who stated that he sees women as potential enemies, chooses beautiful women as ‘victims’ and takes joy from dragging the ones who resisted, told in his statement:

I PREFER BEAUTIFUL WOMEN

(...) First of all, we chose beautiful women as purse-snatching victims. Because presentable and beautiful women usually have money. Purse-snatching became a pleasure to me. I wanted to hurt women. That is why always looked in their eyes and grinned. I take pleasure from dragging women who did not let go of her bags." (Kapkaç ağaları, Sabah, 23.09.2003)

Bitirim thinks that purse-snatching and pick-pocketing cannot be stopped with the new Turkish Penal Code. “Man does anything for money. We can also kill people. We can take away their kids. We can enter their homes. Man is a wolf to man. Therefore, instead of making new laws, they should try to understand the problem.” (Kapkaççıyla evlenmek için kızlar can atıyor... Serdar Devrim, Hürriyet, 14.07.2005)

The extracts above brings to mind the technique of using dramatic interviews or statements to reinforce the ‘composite stigma’ attributed to the purse-snatchers including groundless violence, aggression, and even sadistic tendencies, in an effort to define the nature of criminal behavior by attributing a ‘deviant essence’. As Young (1999: 117) has stated, essentialism is crucial for social exclusion by appointing targets, providing stereotypes, and re-affirming the identity of the ‘normals’ vis-à-vis the deviants. Furthermore, through what Young calls ‘bogus of essentialism’, essentialism may become self-fulfilling since the actors labelled as deviant embodying certain characteristics would adopt this position “to compensate for the lack of identity”. Expressions on, for example, the offender claiming that he could not bear not seeing blood and that he has to stab someone, even himself to “relax”, or, defining purse-snatching as a “pleasure” and claiming to do it to “hurt women”, taking a “joy” from dragging women, even “looking her in the eye and grinning” also makes someone to question the authenticity of these remarks. As Cohen (2006: 30) remarks, even if such statements are not ‘real’, they are the

indicators of the newsmaker's dispositions of "how a purse-snatcher thinks and feels", in this case.

In addition to violent impulses, character defects, personality disorders and lack of morality are defined as characteristics of purse-snatchers in the news reports, most of the time based on the opinions of some experts in the area such as academics. By personalizing the act, the purse-snatcher becomes a pathological case with a 'dark' nature. As argued before, the changing penal paradigm based on punitiveness and retribution assumed that individuals would be prone to anti-social, criminal behavior unless they are controlled by powerful and effective formal or informal mechanisms. Accordingly, the purse-snatchers are portrayed in the news reports as anti-social pleasure-seekers devoid of any moral values, and possibly addicted to drugs or alcohol. Failing at school and in life general, possibly unemployed, they develop an inferiority complex which leads them to bully the ones weaker than them. In the following examples, the narrative is based on 'scientific' positions of academicians giving them a 'reliability' and 'factuality', leaving no room for any doubt. As Hall et al. (1978: 62) argue, by translating formal definitions or the definitions of the primary definers into public language, the newspapers both provide them with a "public validity" rather than being only some complex expert knowledge, and also reproduce the relation between dominant discourse and everyday language.

SOCIAL DEGENERATION LED TO PURSE-SNATCHING

Prof. Dr. Ahmet Çelikkol from Ege University (EÜ) Psychiatry Department stated that poverty, rapid urbanization, social degeneration, purse-snatching and theft led to swindling.

"Seeing the high life in visual media, children and young people who migrated from their villages in the hopes of finding a job but cannot find one or fired due to economic crisis, begin to ask themselves "I am hungry and unemployed, yet how can those people live like that?" Since the philosophy of "if you earn, it is not important how you do it" prevails over honesty, purse-snatching, theft, swindling became prominent. Inadequacy of punishments and control also increase such crimes." ('Kapakç'taki artışın nedeni af ve kriz, Hürriyet, 19.05.2001)

WHO DOES PURSE-SNATCHING?

Psychiatrist Prof. Birsöz told what kind of people do purse-snatching as follows: "This kind of people have nothing to lose, already lost value-judgments and are probably alcoholics or drug addicts. They can do anything to get the substance they need. Because such people have lost all the value-judgments in their lives. A purse-snatcher's aim is to make easy money and buy pleasure-giving substances

with it. We generally call such people as anti-social.” (Kapkaç fobi oldu, Hürriyet, 11.04.2002)

Emphasizing that people involved in purse-snatching have behavioral disorders and believe that they could not be successful in life through working, Psychiatrist Assoc. Prof. Bengi Semerci says: "They do not do purse-snatching to feed themselves or out of desperation. They behave in such ways due to changes in the rising social values and lack of education in varoş neighborhoods. If children who failed at school and be seen as unsuccessful in their community at early ages are not supported enough, if no intervention is made at this early stage, they become anti-social and display personality disorders. As they grow up, they would want to take advantage of the people around through hurting and bullying them. And after a while, they start to blame others. If they grow up under such circumstances until a certain age, it becomes hard to interfere with them. Such cases have to be intervened in during the period of childhood."

THEY BULLY THE WEAK

Remarking that purse-snatchers choose women because they like the weak, Semerci said, "Bullying everyone that is weak makes them feel good. They display acquiescence behavior in the face of authority. They attack women because they consider them as physically weak. High numbers of divorced people among these criminals are also related to personality characteristics. The relationship did not last long or the women left not being able to stand them." Semerci continued: "Purse-snatchers find each other quickly due to social pressure. Thus gang formation emerges. What really matters for them is to feel success. If a person is successful at school or in life, you cannot include him into any gang. They can never recruit successful people." Semerci also remarked that the suggestion, "bad friend leads one astray" does not apply to such cases. (Devşirme kapkaççılar, Sabah, 25.09.2003)

As an example to the ‘scientific’ opinions about the characteristics of the purse-snatchers mentioned above, the following extract from the experiences of a purse-snatcher could be given. In the news report, the experiences are narrated in the form of a story, reinforcing the realism effect. It works simply as a case of all the arguments above on the failure at school and in working life, developing an inferiority complex due to the symbolic violence he faced in school and in work life and an unconcerned family as possible causes of criminal behavior:

Among the reasons which led Bitirim to pick-pocketing and purse-snatching, ‘poverty and influence of friends’ have an important role, who remarked, “Each and every one of the 500 children in Tarlabası today is ready to steal”. Coming to İstanbul from Adana at the age of 9, Bitirim gets beaten a lot during the years when he left school and sold stuffed mussels in Beyazıt. He is also bullied in the textile workshop he was sent to in the hopes of learning a job. Then, he starts to hang out with a friend from Diyarbakır who wears 300-YTL-shoes, 500-YTL-coat and 90-YTL-pants in Tarlabası where poverty is all around. (Kapkaççıyla evlenmek için kızlar can atıyor... Serdar Devrim, Hürriyet, 14.07.2005)

Overruling the socio-economic reasons or ethnic discrimination in increasing offences against property is a common position displayed by many academics or state officials in the news reports as the examples above. It is even claimed that socio-economic depravity is depicted as an “excuse” for such people who are just after easy money, aiming to hit the jackpot. Two examples below are from a statement of İstanbul Mayor Kadir Topbaş and a columnist in Hürriyet, Zeynep Göğüş. In both of them, the traces of the critical position towards the image of the “needy”, “deprived” criminal can be observed:

“THE OFFENDERS SEE IT AS A JOB”

İstanbul Mayor Topbaş said, “Mentioning ‘people are desperate, they are compelled to do such things’ as an excuse for the perpetrators of the crimes in question is out of question.” Topbaş, continued:

“People involved in such activities are the ones who see it as their job and their number increases every day. It is a much easier way to make money for them. People’s lives are made miserable, they are harmed physically and psychologically which makes their lives harder for goods that have a little value. It cannot be explained in anyway.” (Topbaş: İstanbul’da hırsızlık ve kapkaç endişe verici, Hürriyet, 17.02.2005)

While economic growth is 9.9 and per capita income is over 4 thousand dollars, how come theft incidents increase in cities in Turkey?

It is not possible to explain this increase by **Amnesty Rahşan** nor poverty.

The increase in theft incidents is a part of social degeneration. A manifestation of an atmosphere in which money became the supreme value. (Tasarım yoksa ölüm var, Zeynep Göğüş, Hürriyet, 02.04.2005)

In line with the above argument, purse-snatching is displayed as a matter of ‘education and morality’. It is claimed that purse-snatchers suffer from lack of education, which explains why they are ‘uncivilized’. In the news reports, the education levels of purse-snatchers are occasionally given, emphasizing that most of them are school drop-outs.²⁶³ Their low education levels are implied to be the reason of deviant behavior. Accordingly, weakness of ‘moral values’ are underlined and even counted as the key reason behind deviant behavior compared to socio-economic problems. The following examples are from the statements of İstanbul Governor, İstanbul Mayor and Minister of National Education. They all argued that weakening social cohesion and dissolution of social integrity results in crimes like purse-snatching:

²⁶³ Kapkaç göçü başlıyor, Sabah, 09.04.2005.

EDUCATION, DISCIPLINE, SOLIDARITY

Reminding that especially purse-snatching incidents have been an important part of the agenda, İstanbul Governor Güler underlined that such incidents could not be stopped solely through policing measures, but education, discipline, economic conditions and social solidarity play an important role in preventing crime. (İstanbul'a kent vergisi önerisi, Hürriyet, 01.12.2004)

Topbaş remarked: “You can see this problem as ‘a reflection of social problems’, yet, a decent person would not resort to such acts no matter what. Whatever difficulties he faces, his righteousness, honesty and character should not allow him.” (Topbaş: İstanbul'da hırsızlık ve kapkaç endişe verici, Hürriyet, 17.02.2005)

Underlining that the most dangerous person is the one who has nothing to lose, [Minister of National Education] Çelik said: “Deprived of education and social security, isolated from family and society, these boys or girls are more dangerous than a stray tiger or lion.” (Bakan Çelik: Sloganımız herkese eğitimidir, Hürriyet, 09.02.2006)

Family is an important element in the conservative new right discourse, as the body of morality which should provide its members the necessary education about the rules and values in being a part of the society. Thus, increasing crime rates are occasionally related with deteriorating familial values and morals in general. It is underlined in many news reports that purse-snatchers come from dysfunctional families with poor economic conditions. Separated or divorced parents are displayed as an important reason behind the child’s propensity to criminal behavior. The four examples below are from a news report, a quotation from the Spokesman of Turkish National Police, a police academy teacher and an evaluation of a psychiatrist. The extracts represent the news discourse, the official discourse and the medical discourse, all parallel with each other and underline that ‘deviant’ or dysfunctional families play a great role in the propensity to criminal behavior because they fail to operate as efficient control mechanisms:

One of the children kidnapped by purse-snatching gang and involved in crime is C.O. He is only 14 years old. He is from a middle class family. Yet, his father’s “corrupt” way of life also affected them. His father was having an affair with another women. And he also had children with her. Thus, he was noticed by the “hunters” of purse-snatching gang while trying to make sense of such a life ridden with contradictions. (Değişirne kapkaççılar, Sabah, 25.09.2003)

THE REASON IS FAMILY TROUBLE

Emphasizing that recently increasing purse-snatching incidents became a social disturbance, [Spokesman of Turkish National Police] Er mentioned that they have been taking many preventive measures about the issue. Er stated that major reasons are hard economic conditions of especially migrant families with many

children, separated parents and family troubles based on the profiles of the people involved in purse-snatching. (Kapkaç olaylarında artış, Sabah, 13.11.2004)

DR. İBRAHİM CERRAH (Police Academy Institute Director)

The reasons of increase are technology, migration, erosion of moral values

It is unhealthy to evaluate the issue of crime only in terms of success or failure of political authority's crime-fighting policies. There may be various reasons such as technology, rapid migration, irregular urbanization, inadequate and unqualified education, erosion of moral values, weakening social control of family and society... (Gasp suçları %35 arttı, Hürriyet Pazar, 13.02.2005)

Commenting on the recently increasing criminal incidents among children between 15 and 18, Prof. Dr. Sunar Birsöz [Akdeniz University Medical School Psychiatry Department] declared that family plays an important role in the behavioral disorders of children involved in crimes like mugging and purse-snatching.

Birsöz emphasized that behavioral disorders are more common in children of broken families having an authority gap with violence and alcohol usage. He also said, "Behaviors like establishing authority over others through violence may emerge in these children if they faced violence." (Gençlerin karıştığı suç olaylarındaki artış, Hürriyet, 24.02.2007)

Another characteristic of the purse-snatchers displayed in the news reports is 'pleasure-seeking'. The purse-snatchers are portrayed as people who like to spend the money they stole on women, in night-life, in gambling, on expensive cars and other luxuries. This portrayal has two levels: first, at the level of gang leaders, and second, at the level of ordinary gang members. Doubtlessly, at the first level, the amounts of money spent is far more than the second. There is certainly truth about the big money the leaders make, lavish spending practices and their conspicuously luxurious way of life.²⁶⁴ Large sums of money, gambling, owning luxurious cars,²⁶⁵ auto showrooms, hotels, cafes, night clubs,²⁶⁶ and even preference for Russian girlfriends²⁶⁷ are mentioned to display the primrose path they are in, similar to the case of Fırat Delibaş, who had a passion for horse races that he spent 1 billion liras on betting every day, and he even owned horses.²⁶⁸ His interest in night life and

²⁶⁴ Kapkaç ağaları, Sabah, 23.09.2003;

²⁶⁵ BMW'li kapkaççı villada yakalandı, Hürriyet, 25.12.2001; BMW'li kapkaç çetesi yakalandı, Sabah, 11.07.2006.

²⁶⁶ Kapkaçtan 2 trilyon servet yapmışlar, Hürriyet, 05.01.2002; Kapkaç parası ile oto galerisi sahibi oldu, Sabah, 26.01.2002; Çukur Mahalle'de güvenlik kamerası, Sabah, 01.11.2003; Gasp çetesi liderinin lüks hayatı, Hürriyet, 31.03.2005.

²⁶⁷ Akın Şimşek, a gang leader, is claimed to spend 900 billion for his Russian girlfriend (Üç noktalı dövme Puma spor pabuç Altın zincir, Gülden Aydın, Hürriyet Pazar, 28.11.2004).

²⁶⁸ Harlem Çetesi çökertildi, Hürriyet, 30.10.2003.

relations with famous singers were brought forward. The wealth of the gang leaders are related to the average daily returns brought by the members, which are most of the time jaw-dropping amounts.²⁶⁹ In terms of the minor or ordinary members of the gangs, it is frequently underlined that they spend their money on women, night-life, drugs, gambling, expensive dresses, etc.²⁷⁰ In some of the examples, the usage of the word “party” (alem) to define their relaxation or enjoyment activities implies that purse-snatchers are licentious, voluptuous carousers.²⁷¹ Their supposed debauchery is sometimes explained with losing hope about their future, that they would be in-and-out of prison all the time.²⁷² In some of the news reports, the expression “having money to burn” (para yemek) is used pointing to the useless ways the money was spent in.²⁷³ Furthermore, emphasizing that the purse-snatchers spend money on enjoying themselves is depicted as if something was wrong in the act itself – that in addition to purse-snatching, they are committing crime by enjoying themselves. Normally, there is certainly nothing wrong with spending money on enjoying oneself, however, in the case of the purse-snatchers, enjoyment, taking pleasure is criminalized. The extracts below are chosen as examples of such a discourse:

In his testimony at the court, incorrigible thief Yıldıray Çokçalışkan said, “I got out of prison on December 31st. There was a bag on the front seat of the car waiting at the traffic lights in Tarlaözü. I opened the door and took the bag. I

²⁶⁹ It is claimed in a news report that Delibaş gang made 40 billion a day through robbery, pick-pocketing and purse-snatching (Emniyet’te Harlem operasyonu, Hürriyet, 31.10.2003).

²⁷⁰ “We usually steal by pick-pocketing. And live in luxury with the money we took. We wear highest quality clothes, eat, drink and party at the most luxurious places.” (Kapkaç göçü başlıyor, Sabah, 09.04.2005), “It is revealed that Gencay Yolcu and his two friends taken into custody partied with two prostitutes in their house the night they were caught.” (İşte o acımasız kapkaççı katil, Hürriyet, 20.11.2005).

²⁷¹ “Purse-snatching gang busted in party” (Kapkaç çetesi âlemde basıldı, Hürriyet, 30.07.2002); “Purse-snatching gang caught in party” (Kapkaççı çetesi, âlemde yakalandı, Hürriyet, 22.01.2008); “First loot, then party” (Önce vurgun sonra âlem, Hürriyet, 16.03.2009).

²⁷² This argument is parallel with a news article on the purse-snatchers, in which it is argued that they have no political views, and therefore they are totally hopeless about the future: “They live in bed-sitters. 15-20 of them stay in a desolate house with 2 rooms. Yılmaz Güney’s, Ahmet Kaya’s, Doğuş’s and sometimes Che Guavera’s posters are hung on the walls. Yet they are not interested in politics. They have no notion of saving and investing the money they stole. They are totally hopeless about the future.” (“Üç noktalı dövme Puma spor pabuç Altın zincir”, Gülden Aydın, Hürriyet Pazar, 28.11.2004)

²⁷³ “Suspects taken into custody confessed their crimes and said, “We burned the money we got in bars and night clubs.”” (Kapkaç çetesi, Hürriyet, 24.01.2000)

spent all the money in the bag in gambling and night life. I am already one foot in the prison.” (Yıldıray yılmadı, Hürriyet, 06.01.1999)

Erhan Çetin, the ferocious thief who involved in numerous purse-snatching, auto-theft and mugging incidents in İstanbul, caught in a bar partying with foreign prostitutes with the money he stole.

The ferocious leader, sought by the police for 43 different criminal cases, of the gang three members of which were caught 6 months ago partying in a bar, said, “I like having fun very much. I can never live such a life by working. That is why I continuously steal. And I spend the money in night clubs. This is my life.” (Kapkaç parasıyla işte böyle âlem yapmışlar, Hürriyet, 06.01.2003)

Purse-snatching gang member goes to folk bars to enjoy himself. They gamble with each other. Puma²⁷⁴ sneakers are enough to look stylish. If he is of Southeastern origin, he definitely buys a gold chain. He likes to open up his shirt buttons. (Üç noktalı dövme Puma spor pabuç Altın zincir, Gülden Aydın, Hürriyet Pazar, 28.11.2004)

As stated above, it is a common practice to portray purse-snatchers as cold-blooded criminals with a propensity to violence besides being pleasure-seekers. It is argued that if the children are sentenced to imprisonment, the time they serve does nothing but to make them develop “a grudge against the state and become even crueler”. The assumption is that prison sentence is even no use for these children because after some time they become irremediably damaged and spoiled. In the news report extract below, it is specifically mentioned that the children themselves declared their state of mind. By this way, the narrative that constructs purse-snatcher children as cruel, incorrigible criminals verifies itself by relying on first-hand knowledge:

Master purse-snatcher goes to İstanbul

Children of migration start their first jobs in Diyarbakır. After they gain some experience, they get to their fellow countryman gang leader Fırat Delibaş’s side in no time flat.

Their common ground is being children of poor families with many children. Purse-snatcher children state that when they got out of prison or reformatories, they “develop a grudge against the state and become much crueler”. They do not even remember how many times they were taken into custody. (Kapkaççı adaylarına çıkış yok, Sabah, 09.12.2004)

²⁷⁴ Later on, it is reported in the newspaper that people wearing Puma brand shoes and the owners of the brand were annoyed by the news article claiming that purse-snatchers prefer Puma shoes. In a letter published by Ali Atıf Bir in his column, it is claimed that the “chicks of Bağdat Avenue would not be pleased with wearing the same shoes with uneducated, coarse, eastern purse-snatchers” (Farklı görüşler, Ali Atıf Bir, Hürriyet, 24.12.2004). It is rather weird that Ali Atıf Bir suggests Puma brand managers to use this information as part of their advertising strategy by underlining the fact that the purse-snatchers probably prefer their brand because of the speed and swiftness it provides (İzmirli bir bayandan... Ali Atıf Bir, Hürriyet, 17.12.2004).

The grudge they have against the state is sometimes directly linked with their ethnicity and socio-economic position. Claiming their Kurdish identity, the children develop a grudge against the state and blame it on the discrimination and subordination they face. Emphasizing that the only place they do not steal is the public meetings of DEHAP implies that the children have a political identity and support the Kurdish political struggle. Here, similar to the case of children throwing stones, ordinary crime is intertwined with political crime, but this time the articulation takes place in a different manner. In the case of the purse-snatcher children, there is an inclusion of political identity, possibly some separationist underlying motives to ordinary urban street crime to double the criminalization effect on the children. Referring to the ‘transposition of frameworks’ as mentioned by Hall et al. (1978: 224), in the case of the news reports on purse-snatcher children, a criminal issue is transformed into a political one. In that, it politicizes crime and links to a wider social problem, which is the separationist Kurdish movement. Furthermore, as constituting an important part of the urban poor in the big cities, the children are also claimed to be furious with the upper classes and possibly blame them on their own depravity. Thus, in both ethnical and socio-economical senses, the purse-snatcher children are portrayed as potential ‘public enemies’:

Their another characteristic is protecting their Kurdish identity. Angry at the state, these children hold “the rich and the state” responsible for what they have been through. As they never miss DEHAP meetings, they only try not to make theft or pick-pocketing in these meetings. (Kapkaç göçü başlıyor, Sabah, 09.04.2005)

For example, in the flag-burning case in Mersin during the Newroz celebrations in 2005, the Kurdish children involved in the act are defined by Provincial Police Chief Süleyman Ekizer as “substance addicts, convicts of theft, purse-snatching and pick-pocketing”. Here is again a ‘transposition of frameworks’, but on the opposite way this time. By identifying the political protesters with ordinary street crime, or “depoliticizing it by criminalizing” (Hall et al, 1978: 224) the political action is trivialized. On the other hand, in the same news report, the purse-snatchers, thieves and substance addicts are labelled as terrorists:

THEY ARE USED

Mersin Chief of Police **Süleyman Ekizer** stated that most of the ones taken into custody for aiding PKK are under the age of 18. **Ekizer** said, **‘Half of them are primary school and high school students, and the other half are substance addicts, convicts of theft, purse-snatching, and pick-pocketing. Among the decisions taken by the organization is using these people in acts in the city. He sniffs bally or takes pill, then he sees nothing else.’** (Polis onu arıyor, Hürriyet, 26.03.2005)

In line with this argument, state officials’ statements on possible links between purse snatching and terrorist organizations started to come to the agenda in the mid-2000s. As mentioned before, there has always been a subtle link in the media discourse between purse-snatching and terrorist activities or separatist inclinations based on the ethnic identity of most of the purse-snatchers. However, this time the link between purse-snatching gangs and PKK is explicitly uttered, which provides the clearest example of the intertwinement of ordinary crime with political crime:²⁷⁵

İstanbul Chief of Police Celalettin Cerrah declared that the terrorist organization is behind the purse-snatching, pick-pocketing and theft gang that has been brought down by synchronous operations in İstanbul and Diyarbakır that took 10 months of preparation.

(...) Cerrah said, “This operation has revealed that some terrorist organizations are behind incidents of drug dealing, purse-snatching, theft through staging a fight, and mugging.” Telling that children used in various crimes were kidnapped from Diyarbakır, Cerrah said that some of the people that got caught even made an armed fight with another group over an experienced boy. (Kapkaçta PKK parmağı, Hürriyet, 02.12.2005)

[Celalettin Cerrah] “In the ‘Swamp Operation’ it is once again revealed that using children brought from Elazığ and Diyarbakır in purse-snatching, mugging and pick-pocketing, and the fact that journals of separatist organization were captured in the house searches shows that money gathered from these activities went to the separatist organization and crime organizations provide money and every kind of support by using children. (İstanbul’da "Batakılık" operasyonu: 228 kişi yakalandı, Hürriyet, 04.05.2006)

PKK documents were captured

Documents of separatist terrorist organization PKK were captured in the searches made in gang members’ houses. It is investigated if the trillions of crime money was used to financially aid PKK. (En organize kapkaç çetesi yakalandı, Hürriyet, 06.05.2006)

²⁷⁵ Other examples of such news reports are: (Kapkaç paraları PKK’ya, Sabah, 30.11.2005); “Children forced to commit crime brought down the PKK-related mugging, purse-snatching and drug-dealing gang.” (Kapkaççı yaptıkları çocuklar yakalattı, Hürriyet, 03.12.2005); (Kapkaç çetesinde PKK bağlantısı, Sabah, 02.12.2005).

To sum up, it can be argued that the profile of the purse-snatchers given in the news reports tend to portray them as violent, dangerous predators taking joy from the act of violence itself. Material reasons such as financial troubles or ethnic discrimination are discarded as the major reasons behind purse-snatching. Such claims are sometimes reinforced by the statements of the perpetrators, authenticity of which are questionable. On the other hand, Referring to ‘expert’ opinions of professionals, the news reports define them as anti-social pathological cases turned into criminals in the lack of necessary informal control mechanisms such as the family. In that sense, they lack moral values and pursue a life of seeking-pleasure, by giving examples of their leisure time activities including gambling, night life and prostitutes. Finally, their ethnic identity as well as class position are brought forward as a marker of hostility and hatred against the rest of the society in some of the news reports which link purse-snatching activities with PKK. In all the cases, it can be claimed that the news reports tend to define a homogeneous group with common characteristics with a natural propensity to deviant behavior.

4.1.3. Assessment

It can be argued that the rising crime rates in the case of purse-snatching incidents in big cities of Turkey, İstanbul being the most prominent one, in the mid-2000s in Turkey have created a moral panic in Cohen’s (2006) terms, folk devils of which can be defined as young Kurdish migrants and children. The crime news are chosen to trace this panic discourse because, as Hall et al. (1978) argue, the state and police are ‘primary definers’ of crime news, which makes them a proper area to trace the official discourse on crime. Hall et al. (1978) link the rise of moral panic with the rise of a ‘law-and-order’ society and an ‘authoritarian consensus’ based on ‘tough-on-crime’ policies. In the case of purse-snatching, several legal regulations were made and strict security measures were taken, which were briefly mentioned above, during the hot debates on increasing crime rates in the specific example of purse-snatching, accompanied by a media anxiety on the new Turkish Criminal Code which strengthens the rights of the suspect and convict vis-à-vis the police by limiting the latter’s authority. They further argue that the mugging panic articulated issues of race and youth to crime, which, in this case, proves to be a handy

framework to deal with the particular role of Kurdishness in the representation of purse-snatching incidents.

In terms of the ‘signification spiral’ mentioned by Hall et al. (1978: 223), it can be argued that purse-snatching is identified as the ‘specific issue of concern’, which in turn identified with a ‘subversive minority’, which is the Kurdish migrants in this case. Through ‘convergence’, purse-snatching is linked with the issue of migration, in which a street crime is linked with the problem of over-migration which has been threatening metropolitan cities for a long time by filling them with an army of dangerous, unemployed, aimless masses. In Hall et al.’s diagram of violence thresholds, “robbery with violence” is beyond the “extreme violence threshold” the crossing of which may lead to “an escalating threat”. In this case, purse-snatching is definitely located over the extreme violence threshold, and may lead to ‘vigilantism’ if the government does not handle the issue effectively enough. In terms of the ‘prophecy’, it is claimed that purse-snatching may even be the ‘harbinger of doom’ in terms of a possible ‘social explosion’ to come. The final step is a ‘call for ‘firm steps’’, which in this case is related with an anxiety over the authority of the police limited by the new Criminal Code. In that sense, the ‘primary definers’, or the ‘moral entrepreneurs’ in Cohen’s (2006: 38) sense including state officials, politicians, police, judiciary and academicians specialized on the issue underline the need to increase authority and power of the police against the dangerous criminals who have been threatening the ‘well-being’ of the society.

It is also important to note that neither official nor media discourse displays a solid, holistic perspective. Occasionally, some critical views on both levels are observed, such as the comments of the Vice President of Police Academy Assoc. Prof. Halil İbrahim Bahar referred in a news report. He argued that by putting forward such offences (like purse-snatching and theft), more serious ones like white-collar corporation crimes are overshadowed. He stated that “while the cost of a white-collar criminal’s larceny is more than hundreds of petty thieves, street children are displayed as more harmful”.²⁷⁶

In a similar vein, the data from two researches conducted by the police force and the Ministry of Justice provides a profile for the purse-snatchers that is very much

²⁷⁶ Gasp suçları %35 arttı, Hürriyet Pazar, 13.02.2005.

different from the one displayed in the news reports. Both of the researches were made in the mid-2000s and based on the legal cases from the police directorates, surveys and interviews made with purse-snatching convicts in the prisons. According to the research made in 2005 by the police force based on the analysis of 1026 randomly-selected purse-snatching cases from the provincial security directorates, nearly 70 percent of the purse-snatchers were above 18, primary-school graduates, unemployed, ex-convicts and repeaters. Nearly half of the purse-snatchers stated that they committed crime because of poverty.²⁷⁷ Some of the results are parallel with the research made by the Ministry of Justice on the purse-snatcher convicts in prisons. According to the analysis of 1232 cases of convicted purse-snatchers in prisons, nearly half of them are primary-school graduates. However, contrary to the first research, and many presumptions of the news reports, nearly all of them have a profession and half of them were employed when they did purse-snatching. As described above, the news reports tend to display purse-snatchers as unskilled layabouts. Another striking result of the research is about the family structure of the purse-snatchers; it is declared that most of them did not have dysfunctional families and therefore, had good relations with their families. Accordingly, nearly 90 percent of them were living with their families before going to prison.²⁷⁸ This last finding invalidates the claims that most the purse-snatchers were street children. The research also showed that the first three cities which were lived in the most until the age of 12 are Amasya, Ankara and Tokat, followed by Ardahan, Aydın, Çanakkale, Iğdır, Kırklareli, Nevşehir and Şanlıurfa.²⁷⁹ Thus, another common knowledge about the purse-snatchers coming from the Southeast, and especially Diyarbakır is refuted.

4.2. Portrayals of 'Troubled' Neighborhoods in the News Reports

Preparing crime maps for the 'hot spots' in the city to fight street crimes like purse-snatching has been an important part of pro-active policing and pre-crime strategies in İstanbul. These hot spots are defined by the police as neighborhoods where

²⁷⁷ Kapkaççıların hedefi kadınlar, Hürriyet, 26.02.2005; Kapkaçın hedefi kadın, Sabah, 26.02.2005.

²⁷⁸ 'Kapkaç' araştırması, Sabah, 01.09.2006.

²⁷⁹ Kapkaççılık ikinci meslek, Hürriyet, 25.10.2006.

“potential purse-snatchers live”.²⁸⁰ These suspicious neighborhoods are sometimes defined as “factories producing thieves, pick-pockets and purse-snatchers” because of the “dominant culture in the area”.²⁸¹ Thus, in the same period of the peak of purse-snatching panic, there have been concomitant police operations to certain lower class neighborhoods which are claimed to shelter Eastern and Southeastern (that is, Kurdish) purse-snatching gangs as well as Romany drug dealers. The news reports on these neighborhoods displayed them as ‘hotbeds of crime’, areas of moral and physical decay in need of urgent action. On the other hand, the neighborhoods in question were included within the scope of urban transformation by the state authorities. In that sense, in addition to earthquake risk, a need to decriminalize these areas were presented as another motive of urban transformation. Thus, it can be argued that the news reports on purse-snatching incidents and certain ‘troubled’ lower class neighborhoods tend to criminalize and stigmatize certain social groups, namely the Kurdish migrants and the Roma, which serves as a justification for their dislocation and transformation of their living spaces to open these areas to the market.

There have always been occasional police operations to certain lower class neighborhoods including historical inner city slums and gecekondu areas in Istanbul but the process gained a momentum since 2006, especially in the first months when there were many concomitant operations to different lower class Kurdish and Roma neighborhoods.²⁸² Starting with the operation to Karabayır on 18th January 2006,²⁸³ the police entered Sarıgöl on 23rd February,²⁸⁴ and Hacıhüsrev

²⁸⁰ “İstanbul Chief of Police Hasan Özdemir asked the police officers to increase measures against purse-snatching incidents. Through the police radio he stated that police patrols will be increased in areas where people inclined to involve in purse-snatching incidents probably live.” (Özdemir’den polise kapkaç talimatı, Hürriyet, 23.11.2001)

²⁸¹ “Besides, there are such neighborhoods in İstanbul which works like a factory producing thieves, pick-pockets and purse-snatchers due to the dominant culture in the area.” (Çalıntı malın adresi hep o, Hürriyet, 14.02.2005).

²⁸² In 2006, the police also conducted operations to certain lower class neighborhoods in other parts of Turkey, e.g. Menzilahir in Edirne – a lower class neighborhood known for its Roma population – on 10th February (Gölbaşı, 2008: 199), Barbaros neighborhood in Tarsus Mersin, where Cono Tribe live (Aşiret üyelerine kapkaç operasyonu, Hürriyet, 17.11.2006), and simultaneous operations to Kulu – known for majority of Kurdish population – and Kadınhanı in Konya, Kütahya and Adana on 20th December (Şafakta 500 polisle fuhuş operasyonu, Sabah, 20.12.2006).

²⁸³ Zehir evlerine şok operasyon, Sabah, 19.01.2006. Just before the operation to Karabayır, in “Haber Özel”, a popular reality show broadcast on Show TV, made a special episode on “criminal neighborhoods” in İstanbul. Some reporters went to the neighborhoods acting as customers and wiretapped the transactions and the ‘marketplace’.

on 17th March.²⁸⁵ They continued later in Esentepe-Gaziosmanpaşa on 13th June, Küçükbakkalköy-Kadıköy on 15th June,²⁸⁶ Karabayır on 23rd June,²⁸⁷ and Hacıhüsrev on 5th August.²⁸⁸ After the operations in Sarıgöl and Hacıhüsrev, the Deputy Police Chief Tayfur Erdal Ceren stated that such operations would continue in different parts of the city, which became “hotbeds of crime”.²⁸⁹ During the operations, police authorities declared that there are nearly ten similar neighborhoods in İstanbul which the police cannot enter. Also referring to the increasing purse-snatching and pick-pocketing incidents, they stated that, as long as they get the permission from the courts, they would continue the operations to “drain the swamp”.²⁹⁰

In the official and media discourse, these neighborhoods are characterized as “rebel zones” and “nests” of criminal activities. It is argued that catching the criminals one by one outside will not do any good to decrease crime because these nests would continue to breed more criminals every day. Therefore, these places have to be “cleansed”, the “swamp has to be drained”. After concomitant police operations, there were many news reports referring to the decreasing crime rates in the city, in which the role played by the operations are specifically underlined.

Thus, among the most notorious neighborhoods known for criminal activities in İstanbul in the official and media discourse, five neighborhoods are chosen within the scope of this work, namely Sarıgöl and Bursa in Gaziosmanpaşa, Karabayır in Esenler, and Tarlabası and Hacıhüsrev in Beyoğlu. There are certain reasons for this preference. First of all, their residents are predominantly lower class Kurdish migrants or Roma, which provides suitable examples to trace the relationship between the discourse of crime, ethnicity and class. And secondly, even though

²⁸⁴ İstanbul'da 1500 polis ile operasyon, Sabah, 23. 02. 2006.

²⁸⁵ Beyoğlu'nda Şafak operasyonu, Sabah, 17 Mart 2006.

²⁸⁶ “İstanbul Police raided Gaziosmanpaşa Esentepe Neighborhood on June, 13th with 700 policemen and took 18 people into custody. On June, 15th, 26 people were taken into custody in Kadıköy Küçükbakkalköy raided by nearly one thousand policemen.” (600 polisli baskında altı gözaltı, Sabah, 24.06.2006)

²⁸⁷ 600 polisli baskında altı gözaltı, Sabah, 24.06.2006.

²⁸⁸ Beyoğlu'nda “Hacıhüsrev” operasyonu, Sabah, 05.08.2006.

²⁸⁹ Gaziosmanpaşa'da 1500 polisle baskın, Hürriyet, 23.02.2006; Hacıhüsrev'de şafak operasyonu, Sabah, 06.08.2006; İstanbul Beyoğlu'nda 'şafak' operasyonu, Hürriyet, 05.08.2006.

²⁹⁰ Mahalle boyu operasyon, Radikal, 24.02.2006.

police raids are not peculiar to these neighborhoods, they are the most outstanding ones to be frequently covered in the news reports. The expressions used to denote them in the news reports reinforce the image of “crime nests”. Some of these expressions are:

For Sarıgöl: “a “crime ghetto” in which every kind of convict dwells and hides”,²⁹¹ “place where perpetrators of purse-snatching and pick-pocketing incidents taking place in the city are nested”,²⁹² “Cambodia Neighborhood”,²⁹³ “the new ‘Narcho Neighborhood’ of the city”,²⁹⁴ “destination of over-migration and hub of drug trade”,²⁹⁵ “Harlem of İstanbul”, “key center of purse-snatching gangs and drug trade”, “one of the key centers of drug production and trade in İstanbul”,²⁹⁶ “swarmed by crime gangs”, “where even garbage trucks cannot enter at night due to security concerns and the municipality cannot set street lamps because of drug trade”,²⁹⁷ “where crimes are frequently committed”,²⁹⁸ “which became an area of drug trade and gang fights”,²⁹⁹ “which is called as the center of purse-snatching gangs and drug trade”,³⁰⁰

For Bursa: “new ‘center’ of drug trade”,³⁰¹

For Karabayır: “drug haven of İstanbul”, “famous with its fights”,³⁰² “where drugs became toys of children, drug dealers sell death”,³⁰³ “drugs are sold like hotcakes”,³⁰⁴ “selling synthetic drugs hit the van”,³⁰⁵

For Hacıhüsrev: “the most ‘senior’ neighborhood in drug-trade in İstanbul”, “having a bad reputation of drug-trade, murders, conflicts and thievery”,³⁰⁶ “famous with its crime record”,³⁰⁷ “known as a ‘hotbed of crime’”, “known with

²⁹¹ Bir annenin dramı, Sabah, 23.01.2003.

²⁹² Vatandaşı canından bezdiren artış, Sabah, 10.11.2005.

²⁹³ Uyuşturucu alışverişi yeni 'merkezine' taşındı, Sabah, 20.09.2006.

²⁹⁴ Reina'nın polisi Sarıgöl'e uymaz, Hürriyet, 08.08.2007.

²⁹⁵ Kurtarılmış bölge için özel taktikler, Sabah, 15.05.2007.

²⁹⁶ Helikopter ve köpekli operasyon, Hürriyet, 22.01.2009.

²⁹⁷ "İstanbul'un Harlem'i" Sarıgöl dağıtılıyor, Sabah, 13.02.2006.

²⁹⁸ İstanbul'da 1500 polis ile operasyon, Sabah, 23.02.2006; Gaziosmanpaşa'da 1500 polisle baskın, Hürriyet, 23.02.2006.

²⁹⁹ “Şafak operasyonu”, Sabah, 24.02.2006.

³⁰⁰ Sarıgöl mahallesi ıslah ediliyor, Sabah, 27.10.2007.

³⁰¹ Uyuşturucu alışverişi yeni 'merkezine' taşındı, Sabah, 20.09.2006.

³⁰² 600 polis mahalle bastı, bir tabanca bir de tüfek buldu, Hürriyet, 24.06.2006.

³⁰³ Anne sarıyor kızı satıyor, Hürriyet, 18.01.2006.

³⁰⁴ Zehire bulaşan minicik eller!, Sabah, 18.01.2006.

³⁰⁵ “Karokolun karşısı uyuşturucu pazarı”, Sabah, 06.08.2006.

³⁰⁶ ‘Rüşvetle torbacılara göz yuman polis var’, Sabah, 07.08.2006.

³⁰⁷ Hırsızlar kralı öldürüldü, Sabah, 21.05.2001.

purse-snatchers, thieves, drug dealers”, “where people are afraid to enter”,³⁰⁸ “where it is known that many illegal people have infiltrated”, “where many lawless people who became crime machines dwell”,³⁰⁹ “which is claimed to be the distribution center of drugs”,³¹⁰ “which turned into a drug center in İstanbul”³¹¹

For Tarlabası: “rebel zone”,³¹² “where it is presumed that many purse-snatchers live”,³¹³ “where purse-snatchers have based in the last two or three years”,³¹⁴ “where one cannot dare to walk its streets and most of the time the police says, “We cannot protect you””,³¹⁵ “notorious with illegal incidents and native-foreign residents”³¹⁶

The significance of the news reports on these neighborhoods is that, known for their peculiar ethnic and class profile, they are presented as “lawless zones” of certain segments of the urban poor, namely the Kurds and the Roma.³¹⁷ In that sense, these areas are subject to continuous broad-scale police operations in the last decade.

4.2.1. Depictions of Police Operations to ‘Troubled’ Neighborhoods

As mentioned above, the neighborhoods in question have probably been raided by the police regularly before 2006³¹⁸, but it is evident that after 2006 the operations became systematical and more newsworthy. The police even brought reporters and cameras to shoot and document the operations. From that time on, the newspapers

³⁰⁸ Hacıhüsrev’de değişim rüzgârı, Sabah, 02.05.2004.

³⁰⁹ Sabaha karşı katliam, Sabah, Savaş Ay, 28.11.2004.

³¹⁰ Hacıhüsrev’e 450 polisle baskın, Hürriyet, 15.01.2009.

³¹¹ Narkotik’ten tarihi operasyon, Hürriyet, 12.05.2009.

³¹² Soyulmayan tek yer 220 numara, Hürriyet, 05.02.2005.

³¹³ Deneyimli kapkaççı aranıyor, Hürriyet, 11.11.2004.

³¹⁴ İstanbul’un arka sokakları, Hürriyet, 03.12.2004.

³¹⁵ ‘40’ı keşfetmeye ne dersiniz? Hürriyet, 13.02.2010.

³¹⁶ Yer: Tarlabası Toplum Merkezi Adres: Medeniyetin 150 metre aşağısı, Zeynep Bilgehan, Hürriyet, 01.08.2010.

³¹⁷ For example, there have also been frequent police raids to Cibali and Balat, where there is a more ‘conservative’ profile of residents (They are mostly Siirtans and Batmanians, close to the illegal Islamist organization Hizbullah) (Çavdar, 2007: 62). However, they do not attract as much attention as Tarlabası or Hacıhüsrev, in which ethnicity and class are criminalized. In that sense, it can be argued that religious orientation or conservatism cross-cuts ethnic identity.

³¹⁸ For example, in a news report about an operation to Hacıhüsrev it is mentioned there have been 25 operations to the neighborhood in the past 11 months, but there were neither any specific news reports about these operations nor any detail of the operation subjected by the news report itself (Hacıhüsrev’e 11 ayda 25 operasyon, Sabah, 03.11.2004).

began to report the operations in detail, in terms of their stages, the number of police involved, the suspects taken into custody or arrested, etc., accompanied by the photographs of the police in action and the suspects taken into custody. Between 2006 and 2012 May, there have been regular news reports on neighborhood operations, Hacıhüsrev being the most prominent one. The list of the neighborhood-scale operations reported by Sabah and Hürriyet within that time period, including the names of the operations if they are indicated, is as follows:

Table 2. Neighborhood-scale operations reported by Sabah and Hürriyet

Date	Neighborhood	Name	Additional Definition
18.01.2006	Karabayır		
23.02.2006	Sarıgöl	“Sarıgöl” ³¹⁹	dawn operation
17.03.2006	Hacıhüsrev	“Balyoz”, “Bahar Temizliği” ³²⁰	dawn operation
13.06.2006	Esentepe		
15.06.2006	Küçükbakkalköy		
23.06.2006	Karabayır		
05.08.2006	Hacıhüsrev		dawn operation ³²¹
05.07.2007	Hacıhüsrev	“Demir Yumruk” ³²²	dawn operation
04.09.2007	Sarıgöl		
03.08.2008	Hacıhüsrev		
26.09.2008	Hacıhüsrev	“Bayram Temizliği” ³²³	
08.11.2008	Bursa	“Gün Batımı” ³²⁴	(Saturday evening)

³¹⁹ Şafak operasyonu, Sabah, 24.02.2006.

³²⁰ The name of the operation is given differently in in different news reports: 1250 polislik operasyon, Hürriyet, 18.03.2006; Hacıhüsrev’de Felluce manzaraları, Mehmet Y. Yılmaz, Hürriyet, 20.03.2006; 1500 polis bastı 7 çocuk yakalandı, Sabah, 18.03.2006.

³²¹ İstanbul Beyoğlu’nda ‘şafak’ operasyonu, Hürriyet, 05.08.2006; Hacıhüsrev’de şafak operasyonu, Sabah, 06.08.2006.

³²² 40 aile holding gibi çalışmış, Sabah, 08.07.2007; Suç makinesi Mihriban cezaevinde, Hürriyet, 17.07.2007; Villada yakalandı, Sabah, 10.07.2007; Büyük operasyondan sonra suç oranı düştü, Sabah, 10.07.2007.

³²³ İstanbul’da “Bayram Temizliği” operasyonu, Sabah, 26 Eylül 2008.

³²⁴ Helikopter destekli operasyon, Hürriyet, 12.11.2008; Helikopterli baskın: 130 kişi gözaltında, Hürriyet, 13.11.2008.

22.11.2008	Sarıgöl		
14.01.2009	Hacıhüsrev		
12.05.2009	Hacıhüsrev		
10.06.2009	Tarlabaşı		
28.06.2009	Hacıhüsrev		dawn operation ³²⁵
06.01.2010	Bursa		dawn operation ³²⁶
14.01.2010	Karabayır		
06.03.2010	Hacıhüsrev		
06.01.2011	Hacıhüsrev		
10.05.2012	Hacıhüsrev		dawn operation ³²⁷

It can be seen that the operations made to Hacıhüsrev on 17th March, 2006 and on 5th July, 2007 are named “Balyoz” (meaning, “sledgehammer”) and “Demir Yumruk” (meaning, “iron fist”) respectively. The names clearly imply a sudden blow to criminals and crime, physical strength and superiority. Again, the names “Bahar Temizliği” (meaning, “spring cleaning”) and “Bayram Temizliği” (meaning, bayram/holiday cleaning) given to the operations made to the same neighborhood point to an identification of the criminals with “dirt”, “pollution”, or “contamination” which has to be cleared away. In addition, nearly all of the operations are defined as “dawn operation”, mostly pointing to the time of the day when they took place.

It should be noted that these neighborhoods have been the subjects of police activity numerous times even though it may not be whole neighborhood-scale all the time. In other words, there were many other small-scale police operations to specific addresses or to find specific suspects. In that sense there are two major types of police operations as displayed in the news reports: neighborhood-scale operations and small-scale, specific-purpose operations. The analysis of the media portrayal of police operations here includes both of them though the priority is given to the former.

³²⁵ Hacıhüsrev'e şafak operasyonu, Sabah, 28.06.2009.

³²⁶ 500 Polisle Şafak Operasyonu, Hürriyet, 06.01.2010.

³²⁷ Hacıhüsrev'e şafak operasyonu, Hürriyet, 10.05.2012.

In analyzing the news reports on police operations to troubled neighborhoods, it should be kept in mind that police is the major ‘primary definer’. As Hall et al. (1978: 68) argue, crime news are very rarely dependent on ‘first-hand’ accounts. They are almost wholly produced from the perspective of primary definers, which is the police. Among the three basic formats of crime news mentioned by Hall et al. (1978: 69), news reports on police operations are mainly based on police statements. In many cases, it is possible to come across the same text in Sabah and Hürriyet on the same operation, which means that the news report is the exact copy of the police bulletin.³²⁸ However, as mentioned above, the police has brought reporters to some of the operations. In that sense, it can be claimed that some of the news reports are written from first-hand witnessing even though it is not possible to see any criticism towards the methods of the police in the texts. So the viewpoint of the newsmaker is overlapped with that of the police in the news reports on police operations. The news reports in question have certain common elements including;

- purpose of the operation (e.g. searching for suspects of purse-snatching, pick-pocketing, drug dealing, etc.)
- bureaucratic and legal procedure prior to the operations
- branches of the police force carried out the operations such as Narcotics, Special Forces Units, Riot Police, motorized teams and district police forces
- involvement of specially-trained dogs and helicopter escorts
- vivid descriptions of the operations
- expressions that reinforce the suddenness and unexpectedness of the operations on the side of the residents/suspects
- number of the police, the houses raided and searched, and the people taken into custody or arrested; amount of seized stolen goods, drugs and weapons
- in some cases, resistance against the police

The purpose of the operation is frequently mentioned in the news reports. It ranges from finding the persons wanted for purse-snatching, theft, pick-pocketing or drug-dealing to catching criminals red-handed. The statement of the purpose justifies the operations by emphasizing “why”, while trivializing “how”. In other words, when the purpose is declared at the beginning of the narrative, which is fighting crime in

³²⁸ For example, the news report titled, “İstanbul'da 1500 polis ile operasyon” (Sabah, 23.02.2006) is same with the news report titled “Gaziosmanpaşa'da 1500 polisle baskın” (Hürriyet, 23.02.2006). In another case, “Beyoğlu'nda “Hacıhüsrev” operasyonu” (Sabah, 05.08.2006) is the same with “İstanbul Beyoğlu'nda 'şafak' operasyonu” (Hürriyet, 05.08.2006).

general terms, the methods used during the operation or eventual outcome – how many people were caught or how much drugs or weapons were seized – becomes less important. In the first example below, the news reports starts with indicating that Sarıgöl neighborhood is known for high crime rates. The fact that only 5 guns, a shotgun and some drugs, the exact quantity of which was not indicated probably because it was very little, were found becomes less important in the face of the neighborhood’s bad reputation. Similarly, the title of the second news report, “600 policemen raided the neighborhood and found only a gun and a shotgun” refers to the disproportion between the number of the police and the amount of illegal items found. The third and fourth examples establish a direct link between the increasing purse-snatching and pick-pocketing incidents and a particular neighborhood. No specific arrest warrants or solid evidence were mentioned; the news reports imply that it only seems logical to make operation to Hacıhüsrev in the face of increasing larceny crimes:

Telling that 30 different houses were searched in this neighborhood known for high crime rates on court decision, Ceren stated that 5 guns, a shotgun and some drugs and synthetic substance were captured. (Gaziosmanpaşa’da 1500 polisle baskın, Hürriyet, 23.02.2006)

Public Security Branch Office and Esenler Police Directorate conducted a raid to Karabayır Neighborhood famous for its fights, against crimes of theft, mugging and purse-snatching. (600 polis mahalle bastı, bir tabanca bir de tüfek buldu, Hürriyet, 24.06.2006)

District Public Security and Proactive Services Branch Offices conducted an operation to Hacıhüsrev Neighborhood because of the recently increasing theft, purse-snatching and pick-pocketing incidents. (Hacıhüsrev’e kamyonla operasyon, Hürriyet, 03.08.2008)

During the Ramadan Feast, the police took extra precautions against pick-pocketing by mingling with the crowd. A raid was conducted by Pick-pocketing and Fraud Branch Office to specific addresses in Beyoğlu Hacıhüsrev yesterday in the early morning hours. (Hacıhüsrev’de bayram öncesi yankesici operasyonu, Sabah, 27.09.2008)

The numbers have always been a crucial part of the crime news – number of the police, the houses raided and searched, the people taken into custody or arrested, and the amount of seized stolen goods, drugs and weapons.³²⁹ Sometimes, similar

³²⁹ Beyoğlu’nda büyük asayiş operasyonu, Hürriyet, 28.10.2003; Delibaş Operasyonu için 3 ay hazırlandı, Sabah, 04.11.2003; ‘Harlem’ operasyonu, Hürriyet, 30.10.2004; Hacıhüsrev’e 11 ayda 25 operasyon, Sabah, 03.11.2004; Esenler’de 1 kg uyuşturucu ele geçirildi, Hürriyet, 18.01.2006; 100’ün üzerinde polisle 7 gözaltı, Hürriyet, 18.01.2006; Zehir evlerine şok operasyon, Sabah, 19.01.2006; Esrarı yaktılar, Hürriyet, 19.01.2006; Gaziosmanpaşa’da 1500 polisle baskın, Hürriyet,

to the argument above, irrespective of the disproportion of the amount of security forces employed to the number of people captured or illegal goods seized, the news reports are swarmed with numbers. For example, in the news reports below, it is stated that hundreds of policemen attended the operation and only a few individuals were taken into custody. The titles of second and third examples express the idea briefly – “1500 policemen raided and 7 children were captured” and “Six custodies in the raid of 600 policemen”:³³⁰

Coming to Sarıgöl Neighborhood in the early morning hours on the court order, 1500 policemen from public order, narcotics, special forces units and riot police branch offices started the operation by holding the entries of the neighborhood. (...) Many people resisting the police and seemed suspicious as well as 15 people wanted by the police from various crimes one of which is murder were taken into custody.

A shotgun, 5 guns, cutting tools, drugs, stolen auto tapes and a camera attached to TV was captured during the searches. (İstanbul'da 1500 polis ile operasyon, Sabah, 23.02.2006)

In the operation attended by 1500 policemen from special forces units, riot police, narcotics and public order teams, 49 houses specified before were raided. During the raids, 8 people wanted by the police were taken into custody and 7 children who are under state protection and have to be delivered to children's homes were found. (1500 polis bastı 7 çocuk yakalandı, Sabah, 18.03.2006)

600 policemen from Public Order, Special Forces Units, Riot Police and motorized teams from İstanbul Police Headquarters and Esenler Police Directorate Teams conducted a raid to houses specified before at 4 a.m. yesterday. (...) In the operation, 6 persons with a warrant were taken into custody and 2 unlicensed guns, one pump rifle and their bullets and shells were captured. (600 polisli baskında altı gözaltı, Sabah, 24.06.2006)

Sometimes, the same operation is reported more than once which creates the effect that there have been more than one operations. This strategy is defined by Cohen

23.02.2006; 1500 polis sabaha karşı mahalle bastı, Hürriyet, 24.02.2006; Şafak operasyonu, Sabah, 24.02.2006; 1250 polislik operasyon, Hürriyet, 18.03.2006; Esenler'de romanlara baskın: 6 gözaltı, Hürriyet, 23.06.2006; Beyoğlu'nda “Hacıhüsrev” operasyonu, Sabah, 05.08.2006; İstanbul Beyoğlu'nda 'şafak' operasyonu, Hürriyet, 05.08.2006; Hacıhüsrev'de şafak operasyonu, Sabah, 06.08.2006; Beyoğlu'nda asayiş operasyonu: 10 gözaltı, Hürriyet, 25.08.2006; İstanbul'da uyuşturucu operasyonu 16 kişi gözaltında, Hürriyet, 01.10.2006; Beyoğlu'nda asayiş operasyonu: 10 kişi gözaltında, Hürriyet, 13.10.2006; İstanbul'da asayiş operasyonu, Hürriyet, 07.07.2007; İstanbul'da “Bayram Temizliği” operasyonu, Sabah, 26.09.2008; Helikopter destekli operasyon, Hürriyet, 12.11.2008; Helikopterli baskın: 130 kişi gözaltında, Hürriyet, 13.11.2008; Emniyet son 6 aylık bilançoğu açıkladı, Hürriyet, 22.11.2008; Hacıhüsrev'e dev narkotik operasyonu, Sabah, 15.01.2009; Helikopter ve köpekli operasyon, Hürriyet, 22.01.2009; İstanbul'da uyuşturucu operasyonu: 30 gözaltı, Hürriyet, 10.06.2009; Hacıhüsrev'e şafak operasyonu, Sabah, 28.06.2009; Esrara fişek kokaine şeker, Hürriyet, 14.01.2010; Hacıhüsrev'e şok operasyon, Hürriyet, 06.03.2010.

³³⁰ The same operation is reported by Hürriyet with the title, “600 policemen raided the neighborhood and found a gun and a shotgun” (600 polisli baskında altı gözaltı, Sabah, 24.06.2006).

(2006: 21) as a way of ‘over-reporting’. Some of the examples in which the newspapers make news on the same operation more than once are as follows:

“Helikopter destekli operasyon” (Hürriyet, 12.11.2008), and “Helikopterli baskın: 130 kişi gözaltında” (Hürriyet, 13.11.2008)

“İstanbul'da 1500 polis ile operasyon” (Sabah, 23.02.2006), and “Şafak operasyonu” (Sabah, 24.02.2006)

“Esenler'de 1 kg uyuşturucu ele geçirildi” (Hürriyet, 18.01.2006), “100'ün üzerinde polisle 7 gözaltı” (Hürriyet, 18.01.2006), and “Esrarı yaktılar” (Hürriyet, 19.01.2006)

“Gaziosmanpaşa'da 1500 polisle baskın” (Hürriyet, 23.02.2006), and “1500 polis sabaha karşı mahalle bastı” (Hürriyet, 24.02.2006)

“Esenler'de romanlara baskın: 6 gözaltı” (Hürriyet, 23.06.2006), and “600 polis mahalle bastı, bir tabanca bir de tüfek buldu” (Hürriyet, 24.06.2006)

“Beyoğlu'nda “Hacıhüsrev” operasyonu” (Sabah, 05.08.2006), and “Hacıhüsrev’de şafak operasyonu” (Sabah, 06.08.2006)

“İstanbul'da asayiş operasyonları” (Hürriyet, 04.09.2007), and “Kur'an içinde uyuşturucu” (Hürriyet, 05.09.2007)

“İstanbul'da “Bayram Temizliği” operasyonu” (Sabah, 26.09.2008), and “Hacıhüsrev’de bayram öncesi yankesici operasyonu” (Sabah, 27.09.2008)

“İstanbul'da dev uyuşturucu operasyonu” (Hürriyet, 14.01.2009), and “Hacıhüsrev’e 450 polisle baskın” (Hürriyet, 15.01.2009)

“Hacıhüsrev’e uyuşturucu operasyonu”, (Hürriyet, 28.06.2009), and “60 eve 200 polisle koçbaşı operasyon” (Hürriyet, 29.06.2009)

“Hacıhüsrev’e şafak operasyonu” (Hürriyet, 10.05.2012), and “Evler basıldı böyle gözaltına alındılar” (Hürriyet, 10.05.2012)

Three major themes step out in the news reports on police operations: vivid descriptions of the operations, depictions of the police taking part in the operations and working in ‘troubled’ neighborhoods, and organization of the living space (on both the neighborhood and the building level) conducive to illegal activities. The verbs, verb tenses, form of narration, and particular expressions that reinforce the effect of story-telling are particularly analyzed in terms of the descriptions of police operations. As van Dijk (1993a: 264) argues, storytelling is a common semantic methods used in discriminatory discourses by “telling negative events as personally experienced and giving plausible details about negative features of the events.” In the same vein, expressions that denote the success of the operations, superiority of the police force vis-à-vis the criminals reinforce the positive image of the law enforcement. In terms of the descriptions of the living space, it can be argued that

news reports tend to describe the living environment of the residents with regard to their utilization of space that gives way to conduct illegal business. In that sense, all the three themes elaborated below tends to reinforce the “us vs. them” opposition in terms of “rightful and just law enforcement mechanism” vis-à-vis “illegal, unjust and violent criminals”, that are the neighborhood residents.

4.2.1.1. Vivid descriptions of police operations

In most of the news reports, the operations are narrated similar to an action movie, emphasizing the advanced techniques of the police forces against cunning, evil criminals – and on a broader level, state’s power and determination vis-à-vis the organized crime.³³¹ Police operations are narrated in the news reports in elaborate details, including the preparations made beforehand by the police forces and the required legal procedure. In most of the cases, the text is in the form of story-telling, narrating the events as personally experienced and giving plausible details about the features of the events. As mentioned above, story-telling is one of the semantic methods used in discriminatory discourses which provides a ‘reliability’ to the narrative. Usage of simple past tense (-di’li geçmiş zaman) reinforces the effect of ‘first-hand witnessing’ accompanied by a ‘time-line’ in some of the examples, such as reporting the course of events by, for example, indicating the exact period of the operation or what time of the day it was made. There are numerous examples of such news reports, some of which are chosen randomly to give the idea:

Specifying every house one by one, police came to the neighborhood in the morning with court permission. Over 100 police officers including women gathered in the neighborhood entry and took control of the houses’ vicinity by running on the streets for some time. (...) Completing the operation which took approximately 15 minutes, the police left the neighborhood with the people taken into custody. (100’ün üzerinde polisle 7 gözaltı, Hürriyet, 18.01.2006)

IT TOOK 15 MINUTES

Shocked by the operation that started at 07.45 in the morning, drug dealers were caught up in the sudden. (...) Firstly, İstanbul Police Headquarters Narcotics

³³¹ There are almost no critical evaluations of the police operations in the newspapers. Only one example steps forward, which is an article of Mehmet Y. Yılmaz in Hürriyet that criticizes a certain operation made to Hacıhüsrev. Yılmaz argues that breaking in every house and pushing people around criminalize every resident of the neighborhood, which are definitely not compatible with the rule of law (Hacıhüsrev’de Felluce manzaraları, Mehmet Y. Yılmaz, Hürriyet, 20.03.2006).

Branch Office teams specified the houses to be raided one by one. While a Riot Police team of 50 policemen were sent to Karabayır Neighborhood 58.Street and its vicinity for security reasons, 60 narcotics policemen rummaged the houses and suspects. In the meantime, there was a chase between police and suspects. (Zehir evlerine şok operasyon, Sabah, 19.01.2006)

1500 police from public order, narcotics, special forces unit and riot police branch offices that have come to Sarıgöl Neighborhood in the morning with a court order, started the operation by holding the entries of the neighborhood. (İstanbul'da 1500 polis ile operasyon, Sabah, 23.02.2006)

İstanbul police rummaged Gaziosmanpaşa Sarıgöl Neighborhood in the operation that started approximately at 04.00 a.m. yesterday and took nearly 3 hours. (Şafak operasyonu, Sabah, 24.02.2006)

Nearly 200 police from Public Order Branch Office of Pick-pocketing and Fraud Department, Riot Police Branch Office and motorized teams known as “Dolphins” came to the neighborhood late at night. (...) Entering and searching some houses in the neighborhood for nearly 4 hours, the teams took 11 people 7 of which was wanted by the police for various crimes and 5 of which are women into custody for pick-pocketing and other similar crimes. (İstanbul'da “Bayram Temizliği” operasyonu, Sabah, 26.09.2008)

As it can be seen from the examples above, the method of story-telling also gives the news texts the sense of an ‘action movie’. In the example below, the operation is even defined as “breath-taking” and “like a movie”, emphasizing that every second of it was recorded, with detailed descriptions of how the police secured the entries and entered the neighborhood and smashed the doors of the houses when they were not opened voluntarily:

At approximately 05.00 a.m. nearly 500 police entered the neighborhood. There was also a police escort in case the suspects attempted to escape. Police from Narcotics, Riot Police, Special Forces Units and district police forces almost blockaded the neighborhood. When some of the suspects insisted on not opening the doors, special forces units stepped in. Doors were smashed with battering rams and suspects were captured without any chance of escape. It was seen that some suspects protected themselves with Pit bulls. In the operation recorded in every second, 15 people 5 of which are women were taken into custody. A large amount of drugs was captured. (500 Polisle Şafak Operasyonu, Hürriyet, 06.01.2010)

Expressions like “blockading” (ablukaya almak),³³² “holding the entries” (giriş çıkışları tutmak/kapatmak),³³³ “encircling the neighborhood” (mahalleyi çembere

³³² “Upon Princess Basma Bin Talal's complaint, police blockaded Hacıhüsrev where shoplifters mainly live.” (Ürdün Prensesi Türk usulü çarpıldı, Sabah, 14.04.2004); “In the dawn operation conducted by 2 thousand police from public order, narcotics, special forces units and riot police, the neighborhood was blockaded.” (Şafak operasyonu, Sabah, 24.02.2006); “Blockading Karabayır Neighborhood, police teams kept a sharp lookout during the 3-hours-operation. (...) After the 3-

almak),³³⁴ and taking control of the area (çevresini kontrol altına almak)³³⁵ reinforces the effect of isolation by portraying the areas as if they were a kind of ‘enemy territory’ and the residents as ‘enemy’. And keeping in mind that most of the time crime news are the exact copy of the police bulletin delivered to the reporters, such expressions reflect the official discourse on the troubled neighborhoods. Emphasizing that the police smashed the unopened doors with sledgehammers or battering rams (sometimes it is specifically emphasized that they were ‘steel doors’)³³⁶ and scared the suspects by firing guns into the air (havaya ateş edip korkutma)³³⁷ implies how intimidating and fearful the police is vis-à-vis the criminals. Other frequently used verbs such as rummaging (didik didik

hours-operation, police removed the blockade.” (600 polis mahalle bastı, bir tabanca bir de tüfek buldu, Hürriyet, 24.06.2006); “300 police blockaded Sarıgöl Neighborhood in Gaziosmanpaşa İstanbul yesterday morning on the court order.” (Kur’an içinde uyuşturucu, Hürriyet, 05.09.2007); “The neighborhood was blockaded in the operation ‘Sunset’” (Helikopterli baskın: 130 kişi gözaltında, Hürriyet, 13.11.2008); “Police from Narcotics, Riot Police, Special Forces Units and district police forces blockaded the neighborhood.” (500 Polisle Şafak Operasyonu, Hürriyet, 06.01.2010).

³³³ “1500 police from public order, narcotics, special forces units and riot police came to Sarıgöl neighborhood in the morning on court order and started the operation by holding the entries of the neighborhood.” (Gaziosmanpaşa’da 1500 polisle baskın, Hürriyet, 23.02.2006; İstanbul’da 1500 polis ile operasyon, Sabah, 23.02.2006). Other examples are: Şafak operasyonu, Sabah, 24.02.2006; Beyoğlu’nda Şafak operasyonu, Sabah, 17.03.2006; ‘Hacıhüsrev’e polis baskını, Hürriyet, 17.03.2006; Beyoğlu’nda “Hacıhüsrev” operasyonu, Sabah, 05.08.2006; İstanbul Beyoğlu’nda ‘şafak’ operasyonu, Hürriyet, 05.08.2006; Helikopter destekli operasyon, Hürriyet, 12.11.2008; İstanbul’da dev uyuşturucu operasyonu, Hürriyet, 14.01.2009; Hacıhüsrev’e 450 polisle baskın, Hürriyet, 15.01.2009; İstanbul’da uyuşturucu operasyonu: 30 gözaltı, Hürriyet, 10.06.2009.

³³⁴ “While Riot Police teams encircled the neighborhood, police from Public Order Branch Office entered and searched the houses that were specified before.” (600 polisli baskında altı gözaltı, Sabah, 24.06.2006)

³³⁵ “Over 100 police officers including women gathered in the neighborhood entry and took control of the houses’ vicinity by running on the streets for some time.” (100’ün üzerinde polisle 7 gözaltı, Hürriyet, 18.01.2006)

³³⁶ “Some iron doors that were not opened despite the warnings of the police were smashed by sledgehammers.” (İstanbul’da 1500 polis ile operasyon, Sabah, 23.02.2006); “During the operation it was observed that some of the neighborhood residents resisted the police and did not open the doors of their houses. The police opened these doors by force.” (Hacıhüsrev’e polis baskını, Hürriyet, 17.03.2006); “When doors of the houses in which some criminals were staying were not opened, special forces units entered by smashing steel doors.” (1500 polis bastı 7 çocuk yakalandı, Sabah, 18.03.2006); “The houses of some criminals who resisted the police were entered by smashing their doors.” (Hacıhüsrev’de şafak operasyonu, Sabah, 06.08.2006); “In the operation, the police entered the houses by smashing locked doors with battering ram.” (İstanbul Hacıhüsrev’e uyuşturucu baskını, Sabah, 12.05.2009). Other examples include: İstanbul’da 367 kg. uyuşturucu yakalandı, Hürriyet, 01.03.2008; Hacıhüsrev’e kamyonla operasyon, Hürriyet, 03.08.2008; İstanbul’da dev uyuşturucu operasyonu, Hürriyet, 14.01.2009; Hacıhüsrev’e şafak operasyonu, Sabah, 28.06.2009; 60 eve 200 polisle koçbaşı operasyon, Hürriyet, 29.06.2009; 500 Polisle Şafak Operasyonu, Hürriyet, 06.01.2010; Maaile uyuşturucu ticareti, Sabah, 15.03.2012.

³³⁷ “Suspects who were trying to escape were taken into custody after being scared off by firing guns into the air.” (Nöbetçi esrarıcı, Hürriyet, 06.02.2008).

aramak),³³⁸ (specifying, searching, catching, taking into custody, arresting, etc.) one by one,³³⁹ carrying a strict follow-up (sıkı bir takip gerçekleştirmek), follow step by step (adım adım takip etmek), capturing without any chance of escape (kısıkvrak yakalamak), cornering (kısırmak), chase/ing (kovalamaca), keeping a sharp lookout (çevrede kuş uçurtmamak), “being alarmed” (alarma geçmek),³⁴⁰ “taking extra precautions” (tedbiri elden bırakmamak),³⁴¹ “tracing” (iz sürmek), “pursuing” (peşini bırakmamak),³⁴² mobilizing (seferber olmak), “finding (drugs, guns, stolen goods, etc.) in stashes” (zulalardakileri bile bulmak)³⁴³ and “clarifying the case” (olayı aydınlatmak) reinforce the story-telling effect and underline the superiority of the police vis-à-vis the ‘crime’ by implying that the police carried out a successful operation by making a meticulous search and capturing the criminals:

Blockading Karabayır Neighborhood, police teams kept a sharp lookout during the operation that took 3 hours. (...) 600 police officers from Public Order, Special Forces Units, Riot Police, motorized teams and Esenler Police Directorate raided the houses that were specified before in Esenler Karabayır Neighborhood at 04.00 a.m. yesterday. While Riot Police teams encircled the neighborhood, Public Order Branch Office policemen searched the houses specified before. (600 polisli baskında altı gözaltı, Sabah, 24.06.2006)

³³⁸ “The houses were rummaged in the operation attended by 90 police from Organized Crime Branch Office and Public Order Special Forces Unit, and 200 police from Riot Police.” (Delibaş Operasyonu için 3 ay hazırlanıldı, Sabah, 04.11.2003); “İstanbul police rummaged Gaziosmanpaşa Sarıgöl Neighborhood in the operation which started at 04.00 a.m. yesterday and took nearly 3 hours.” (Şafak operasyonu, Sabah, 24.02.2006); “Police rummaged everywhere in the houses including stove stacks.” (Polis, Hacıhüsrev’i kamyonla bastı, Hürriyet, 04.08.2008); “While the houses are rummaged, 11 people 6 of which are women are caught and taken into custody.” (Hacıhüsrev’de bayram öncesi yankesici operasyonu, Sabah, 27.09.2008); “The houses were rummaged.” (İstanbul’da uyuşturucu operasyonu: 30 gözaltı”, Hürriyet, 10.06.2009).

³³⁹ “Specifying the houses to be raided one by one, police came to the neighborhood in the morning on court order.” (100’ün üzerinde polisle 7 gözaltı, Hürriyet, 18.01.2006); “Before the operation that started in the small hours, teams from İstanbul Police Headquarters specified the houses of people wanted for theft, fraud and drug-dealing one by one.” (1500 polis bastı 7 çocuk yakalandı, Sabah, 18.03.2006); “Recording the drug trade they conducted in the guise of customers with hidden camera, police caught the drug dealers one by one.” (‘Garantili’ esrara gizli kameralı polis baskını, Sabah, 07.02.2008).

³⁴⁰ “Police teams are alarmed by the information on a woman robbed by purse-snatchers in İstanbul Bakırköy last Wednesday.” (Sosyetik kapkaççılar, Sabah, 26.04.2003); “Polis alarma geçti” (Prenseler olunca fail bulunverdi, Sabah, 15.04.2004).

³⁴¹ “During the Ramadan Feast, the police took extra precautions against pick-pocketing by mingling with the crowd.” (Hacıhüsrev’de bayram öncesi yankesici operasyonu, Sabah, 27.09.2008).

³⁴² “Specifying that the suspect left 2 days before the operation, the police continued to pursue.” (Bedava iftar pahalıya geldi, Sabah, 22.08.2011).

³⁴³ “Narcotic dogs found all the drug stashes one by one ready to be sold including school bags, stoves, bathroom closets, shoes and under the floors.” (Hacıhüsrev’e 450 polisle baskın, Hürriyet, 15.01.2009).

It came out that police carried a strict follow-up before the operation to the drug dealers in Hacıhüsrev and recorded the operation by video camera. It is indicated that Beyoğlu Police Directorate Teams rented a house and recorded the activities of the dealers one by one before the operation on January, 6th, to identify the drug dealers dwelling in HacıHüsrev. (Kameralı takipten sonra baskın, Sabah, 11.01.2011)

The suddenness and unexpectedness of the operations are always emphasized by expressing how the residents were taken unawares through different expressions, such as “raiding” (baskın yapmak),³⁴⁴ shocking raid (şok/ani baskın),³⁴⁵ caught in sleep (uykuda yakalanmak), caught red-handed (suçüstü yakalanmak),³⁴⁶ be baffled (şaşkına dönmek), be panicked (paniğe kapılmak), be shocked/rocked (neye uğradığını şaşırarak), captured without any chance of escape (kısıkrak yakalanmak):³⁴⁷

Narcotics police made synchronous raids to 9 different houses early in the morning on with the permission of the prosecutor’s office. Shocked by the operation that started on 07.45 a.m., the dealers were captured without any chance of escape with illegal material in their houses. (Zehir evlerine şok operasyon, Sabah, 19.01.2006)

CAUGHT IN SLEEP

It is indicated that Elif Tanrıseven, 19, who has been wanted by the police for purse-snatching and theft crimes for a long time was also caught in the dawn operation in Hacıhüsrev. It is also stated that two family members of Tanrıseven, who was caught in sleep in the shocking raid yesterday, involved in theft and purse-snatching were taken into custody. (Hacıhüsrev’de şafak operasyonu, Sabah, 06.08.2006)

³⁴⁴ Boncuklu çete evinde basıldı, Hürriyet, 13.10.2003; Delibaş Operasyonu için 3 ay hazırlandı, Sabah, 04.11.2003; ‘Harlem’ operasyonu, Hürriyet, 30.10.2004; 1500 polis bastı 7 çocuk yakalandı, Sabah, 18.03.2006; 600 polisli baskında altı gözaltı, Sabah, 24.06.2006; 600 polis mahalle bastı, bir tabanca bir de tüfek buldu, Hürriyet, 24.06.2006; Hacıhüsrev’de bayram öncesi yankesici operasyonu, Sabah, 27.09.2008; Hacıhüsrev’e 450 polisle baskın, Hürriyet, 15.01.2009; İstanbul Hacıhüsrev’e uyuşturucu baskını, Sabah, 12.05.2009; Hacıhüsrev’e şafak operasyonu, Sabah, 28.06.2009; Kameralı takipten sonra baskın, Sabah, 11.01.2011; Evler basıldı böyle gözaltına alındılar, Hürriyet, 10.05.2012.

³⁴⁵ The term ‘shocking raid’ can be defined as ‘over-lexicalization’ as used by Fowler (1991: 81-85) in the sense that a raid is shocking by its very nature. Using the adjective ‘shocking’ aims to reinforce effect of being caught unawares of the neighborhood residents faced with the powerful, efficient operation of the police. Some examples in which the term is used include “Zehir evlerine şok operasyon” (Sabah, 19.01.2006); “Hacıhüsrev’e kamyonla operasyon”, Hürriyet, 03.08.2008; “Helikopter destekli operasyon”, Hürriyet, 12.11.2008.

³⁴⁶ Hacıhüsrev’e 11 ayda 25 operasyon, Sabah, 03.11.2004.

³⁴⁷ “Captured with his gang without any chance of escape” (Çetesiyle kısıkrak, Sabah, 29.10.2003); “Doors were smashed with battering rams and suspects were taken into custody without any chance of escape.” (500 Polisli Şafak Operasyonu, Hürriyet, 06.01.2010).

THEY ENTERED BY CIVILIAN CARS AND TRANSPORTATION TRUCKS

Official and plainclothes police teams gathered in the Public Order Branch Office and moved to the area in civilian cars and transportation trucks. The police used such a method in order to avoid being noticed by the neighborhood residents and went to the addresses specified before after they got off the vehicles. Seeing many policemen, the neighborhood residents were baffled. Some of the people get panicked and closed their doors. In this breathtaking operation, police entered the houses by smashing doors. (Hacıhüsrev'e kamyonla operasyon, Hürriyet, 03.08.2008)

The other day at 15.30, police raided Hacıhüsrev Neighborhood, which is one of the most important centers of mugging, theft, pick-pocketing and drug dealing in İstanbul, in transportation trucks to shock the residents.

Always prepared to police raids by informing each other, Hacıhüsrev residents were shocked the other day. (...) A police official said, "Even the police officers did not know where was going to be raided until the last minute. In order to avoid being noticed, we entered the neighborhood in trucks. Every team had its own house. Teams came close to houses in cars and trucks. The operation started with the radio announcement." (Polis, Hacıhüsrev'i kamyonla bastı, Hürriyet, 04.08.2008)

In some of the news reports on police raids, the residents' reactions were included in the form of resistance or protests including throwing stones,³⁴⁸ slippers from windows³⁴⁹ to the police, or protecting themselves with pit bulls.³⁵⁰ Various tactics of the residents to avoid getting arrested or being taken into custody such as hiding, burning drugs,³⁵¹ flushing them away, declaring that they are users not dealers,³⁵² or trying to escape³⁵³ also reinforce the shocking effect. Some of the examples are as follows:

³⁴⁸ "A police official said, "We have to leave the neighborhood in half an hour at the latest. Or the neighborhood residents attack with stones and sticks." (Karabayır benzeri en az 10 semt var, Hürriyet, 21.01.2006); "The authorities stated that some people attacked the police with stones during the operation and a police officer was slightly injured in the arm." (İstanbul'da uyuşturucu operasyonu 16 kişi gözaltında, Hürriyet, 01.10.2006)

³⁴⁹ "The neighborhood residents with top model cars in front of their houses protested the operation by throwing slippers to the police from their windows." (1250 polislik operasyon, Hürriyet, 18.03.2006).

³⁵⁰ "It was observed that some suspects protected themselves with Pit bulls." (500 Polisle Şafak Operasyonu, Hürriyet, 06.01.2010)

³⁵¹ "They burned the weed" (Esrarı yaktilar, Hürriyet, 19.01.2006).

³⁵² "Police showed the video records to drug dealers who declared that they were users after getting caught." (Helikopterli baskın: 130 kişi gözaltında, Hürriyet, 13.11.2008)

³⁵³ "Suspects who were trying to escape were scared by firing guns into the air and taken into custody." (Nöbetçi esrarıcı, Hürriyet, 06.02.2008)

Narcotics Detectives initiated the Harlem operation which has been prepared for 4 months and raided 24 houses in the back streets of Tarlabası. (...) Drug dealers shouted, 'Narco is here, Narco is coming' and escaped when they saw the police. ('Harlem' operasyonu, Hürriyet, 30.10.2004)

It is recorded that 4 people, including one who was trying to escape from the roof while Special Forces Units smashed his door because he had a large amount of drugs at his home, were taken into custody. (İstanbul'da 367 kg. uyuşturucu yakalandı, Hürriyet, 01.03.2008)

DRUGS WERE BURNED IN THE STOVE

It was observed that smoke rose from the chimneys of some houses during the operation. It was stated that a large amount of drugs was tried to be burned in the stoves. (Hacıhüsrev'e dev narkotik operasyonu, Sabah, 15.01.2009)

Thus, vivid descriptions of police operations to 'troubled' neighborhoods builds a narrative which constructs the areas in question as 'enemy' territories. These territories are claimed to be taken under control and de-criminalized only through broad-ranged police operations. Various expressions and semantic methods used to describe the operations reinforce the image of the residents as 'criminals' vis-à-vis the crime-fighting police force. Thus, another component of the news reports on police operations is the 'positive' representations of the police and elaborate details of their successful methods in fighting crime.

4.2.1.2. Representations of the Police Taking Part in the Operations and Working in 'Troubled Neighborhoods'

News reports on police operations put as much emphasis on the methods and successes of the police force as the targeted suspects and their suspected crimes. News reports on 'criminal neighborhoods' including police activity tend to create a certain 'security forces profile' which can be categorized into two groups. First, the police force is represented as organized, efficient and capable in their methods of dealing with crime by underscoring the physical and technical superiority vis-à-vis the criminals, or suspects. And secondly, the police is always portrayed as respecting the law and abiding with the legal procedure no matter how long it takes, how much it ties their hands and whatever difficulties they face.

An organized, efficient and capable police force is implied in various parts of the news reports such as the meticulous work and preparations made before the operations, ability to use advanced technology (computers, wiretapping, hidden

cameras, etc.), working undercover, cooperation between different branches of the force, and usage of certain expressions and verbs reinforcing the positive image of the police.

The preparation period before the operations are most of the time included in the news reports. It is often emphasized that the police spent days, even months arranging the operation.³⁵⁴ The suspects have been meticulously monitored, scrutinized and investigated by advanced use of computerized systems,³⁵⁵ taking pictures, recording the activities of the suspects with hidden cameras and wire-tapping,³⁵⁶ mapping the neighborhood and the houses to be raided,³⁵⁷ identifying

³⁵⁴ “Fırat Delibaş, who is the leader of the gang committed purse-snatching, mugging and theft crimes in the Beyoğlu area, was caught with an operation prepared for 3 months and Delibaş gang was brought down.” (Delibaş Operasyonu için 3 ay hazırlandı, Sabah, 04.11.2003); “Narcotics Detectives initiated the Harlem operation which has been prepared for 4 months and raided 24 houses in the back streets of Tarlabası.” (‘Harlem’ operasyonu, Hürriyet, 30.10.2004); “İstanbul Narcotics Branch Office teams started an operation in İstiklal Neighborhood known as “Hacıhüsrev”, to catch drug dealers and prevent crimes, after 3 months of technical surveillance.” (İstanbul’da dev uyuşturucu operasyonu, Hürriyet, 14.01.2009); “50 houses in Hacıhüsrev were raided at noon yesterday, which were specified by the Narcotics Branch Office teams after 3 months of technical surveillance.” (Hacıhüsrev’e dev narkotik operasyonu, Sabah, 15.01.2009); “When the police found out that the “top secret” information they gathered by wiretapping the drug dealers in Hacıhüsrev for months and sent to the court house has been leaked, they started the operation today.” (Narkotik’ten tarihi operasyon, Hürriyet, 12.05.2009).

³⁵⁵ “Since everything was made through computers, the whole operation took only seven-eight hours.” (Küçük oyuncu soyguncu kızlar, Ersin Kalkan, Hürriyet, 15.03.2003)

³⁵⁶ “Through three months of preparation, Fırat Delibaş and his men’s houses and workplaces were recorded and photographed to compose the file.” (Delibaş Operasyonu için 3 ay hazırlandı, Sabah, 04.11.2003); “Teams recorded a drug-dealing in one of the houses in the neighborhood with hidden camera and caught them red-handed.” (Hacıhüsrev’e 11 ayda 25 operasyon, Sabah, 03.11.2004); “Narcotic teams carrying hidden cameras contacted the drug-dealers.” (Nöbetçi esrarıcı, Hürriyet, 06.02.2008); “Some drug dealers were recorded by police camera for ten days during technical surveillance.” (Gaziosmanpaşa’da uyuşturucu operasyonu: 17 gözaltı, Hürriyet, 17.09.2008); “Police specified the suspects by audio and visual recording of the drug dealers in the area.” (Helikopter destekli operasyon, Hürriyet, 12.11.2008); “During the operation, houses in which drugs are sold and people who buy drugs were specified by taking photos.” (İstanbul’da dev uyuşturucu operasyonu, Hürriyet, 14.01.2009); “After documenting the drug-trafficking in the neighborhood through photos and videos, the operation started yesterday.” (Hacıhüsrev’e 450 polisle baskın, Hürriyet, 15.01.2009); “Narcotic teams backed up by Beyoğlu Police Directorate acted after specifying the houses in which the drugs are sold with cameras.” (Hacıhüsrev’e dev narkotik operasyonu, Sabah, 15.01.2009); “60 houses in Beyoğlu and Şişli that sells drugs were specified by camera.” (60 eve 200 polisle koçbaşı operasyonu, Hürriyet, 29.06.2009); “Drug-dealing of the suspects were recorded with hidden camera through technical and physical follow-up.” (500 Polisle Şafak Operasyonu, Hürriyet, 06.01.2010); “It came out that police carried a strict follow-up before the operation to the drug dealers in Hacıhüsrev and recorded the operation by video camera. It is indicated that Beyoğlu Police Directorate Teams rented a house and recorded the activities of the dealers one by one before the operation on January, 6th, to identify the drug dealers dwelling in HacıHüsrev.” (Kameralı takipten sonra baskın, Sabah, 11.01.2011).

³⁵⁷ “Before the operation that started in the small hours, teams from İstanbul Police Headquarters specified the houses of people wanted for theft, fraud and drug-dealing one by one. Specifying the

the license plates of the cars used in purse-snatching and other criminal activities,³⁵⁸ working undercover to gather evidence, contact the criminals or catch them red-handed.³⁵⁹ The ability to use advanced technology in fighting crime point to the physical and technical superiority of the police force, such as the example below, in which the preparation period is described in detail:

It came out that police carried a strict follow-up before the operation to the drug dealers in Hacıhüsrev and recorded the operation by video camera. It is indicated that Beyoğlu Police Directorate Teams rented a house and recorded the activities of the dealers one by one before the operation on January, 6th, to identify the drug dealers dwelling in HacıHüsrev. It is also learned that drug-dealers placed lookouts on the streets to be informed about the coming of police teams. Yet, they got caught when they washed car in the rainy weather. Police started the operation with civilian teams on January, 6th. To by-pass lookouts, the neighborhood was raided first by civilian cars, then by armored vehicles. (Kameralı takipten sonra baskın, Sabah, 11.01.2011)

The image of an organized and efficient police force carrying out the operations is reinforced by mentioning which branches took part such as Narcotics, Special Forces Units, Riot Police, motorized teams and district police forces, and emphasizing the involvement of specially-trained dogs and helicopter escorts.³⁶⁰ The number of the police who took part in the operations are frequently given to underline how broad and efficient the operations are.³⁶¹ Indicating the frequency of

addresses of 49 houses, police mapped the houses.” (1500 polis bastı 7 çocuk yakalandı, Sabah, 18.03.2006).

³⁵⁸ “License plates of the cars which monitored and followed the passengers arriving in Esenboğa were investigated. Later on, one car was specified.” (Yolculara tuzak kuran hırsızlık şebekesi çöktürüldü, Hürriyet, 20.04.2007).

³⁵⁹ “Police made an investigation in Beyoğlu Çukur Neighborhood in the guise of street peddlers and specified the addresses.” (Delibaş Operasyonu için 3 ay hazırlandı, Sabah, 04.11.2003); “In the operations made in Hacıhüsrev and Dolapdere, police teams acted as panhandlers and street peddlers.” (Hacıhüsrev’e 11 ayda 25 operasyon, Sabah, 03.11.2004); “Police entered the neighborhood in transportation trucks and civilian cars.” (İstanbul’da asayiş operasyonu, Hürriyet, 07.07.2007); “Acting as customers and recording the deal with hidden camera, police caught the drug dealers one by one.” (‘Garantili’ esrara gizli kameralı polis baskını, Sabah, 07.02.2008); “Police contacted drug dealers in the guise of customers during the investigation.” (Hacıhüsrev’e 450 polisle baskın, Hürriyet, 15.01.2009).

³⁶⁰ “Operation was conducted with helicopter escorts in case the suspects try to escape.” (Helikopterli baskın: 130 kişi gözaltında, Hürriyet, 13.11.2008); “The operation was backed up by helicopters and detector dogs aided police.” (Helikopter ve köpekli operasyon, Hürriyet, 22.01.2009); “Teams from Beyoğlu Police Directorate Public Order Branch Office and Riot Police raided Hacıhüsrev Neighborhood early in the morning.” (Hacıhüsrev’e şafak operasyonu, Sabah, 28.06.2009);

³⁶¹ “The houses were rummaged in the operation attended by 90 police from Organized Crime Branch Office and Public Order Special Forces Unit, and 200 police from Riot Police.” (Delibaş Operasyonu için 3 ay hazırlandı, Sabah, 04.11.2003); “While a Riot Police team of 50 policemen

operations³⁶² as well as their impact on the crime rates suggest that active police work is the most effective way to decrease crime through expressions such as “the operation that ‘swept away’ purse-snatching and mugging in İstanbul”³⁶³ about the operation made in Tarlabası to Delibaş gang in 2003, or “the operation that ended up purse-snatching and pick-pocketing in shopping malls in İstanbul” about an operation made to Hacıhüsrev in 2007.³⁶⁴ As mentioned before, crime rates began to decrease with 2007 and the news reports relate this decrease to the wide-scale operations made to ‘troubled’ neighborhoods as well as the coordinated work with Southeastern police directorates which stopped the transfer of children to big cities to become purse-snatchers and thieves. In that sense, these groups are denoted as the major causes of high crime rates and the only way to decrease crime is “policing them”:

Crime rates have been decreasing at a great extent in the last year. İstanbul Police Headquarters officials argue that operations designed four-five months before played an important role. (...)

It is stated that “Iron Fist” operation made to the theft gang in Hacıhüsrev led to a huge decrease in purse-snatching and pick-pocketing crimes. Officials recorded that no follow-up purse-snatching from airport took place after 29 suspects were sent to rpison.

It is indicated that operations made by İstanbul Police to gangs who force children brought from Southeastern cities to steal, was influential on decreasing crime rates. A police official said, “Thanks to the coordinated work with Police Quarters of those cities, no children from there are brought any more.” (Telefon merakı çeteleri bitirdi, Ali Aksoyer, Hürriyet, 29.08.2007)

The positive representations are sometimes related to the transformation of the police force in general. As well as being well-educated and skilled in many areas

were sent to Karabayır Neighborhood 58.Street and its vicinity for security reasons, 60 narcotics policemen rummaged the houses and suspects.” (Zehir evlerine şok operasyon, Sabah, 19.01.2006); “In the operation attended by almost 2 thousand police from public order, narcotics, special forces units, and Riot Police, the neighborhood was totally blockaded.” (Şafak operasyonu, Sabah, 24.02.2006); “500 police from Public Order Branch Office, Riot Police, Special Forces Units and district forces raided 30 addresses.” (Hacıhüsrev’de şafak operasyonu, Sabah, 06.08.2006); “Nearly 200 police from Public Order Branch Office Pick-pocketing and Fraud Department, Riot Police Branch Office and motorized teams known as “Dolphins” came to the neighborhood late at night.” (İstanbul’da “Bayram Temizliği” operasyonu, Sabah, 26.09.2008); “150 police from Public Order Branch Office, Beyoğlu Police Directorate and Riot Police entered Hacıhüsrev Neighborhood and made operation.” (Hacıhüsrev’e şok operasyon, Hürriyet, 06.03.2010).

³⁶² “25 operations in 11 months to Hacıhüsrev” (Hacıhüsrev’e 11 ayda 25 operasyon, Sabah, 03.11.2004).

³⁶³ Çukur Mahalle’de güvenlik kamerası, Sabah, 01.11.2003.

³⁶⁴ Büyük operasyondan sonra suç oranı düştü, Sabah, 10.07.2007.

including academic knowledge and computer usage, the police are depicted as adaptive to the ‘requirements of the day’, adjusting to different urban environments, and keeping up with the fashion in terms of working undercover. As mentioned before, especially for the police officers working in ‘troubled’ neighborhoods, there is a tendency to plain-clothes or undercover policing. Rendering security forces invisible to the ordinary man’s eye is proposed as an effective solution to the crime problem. It is frequently underlined that the police no longer ‘look like police’; that they are able to mingle with the crowd on the streets by changing their physical appearance and imitating street styles. It is argued that the “most successful” undercover police are that of Narcotics because different types of drug addicts have different outlooks and they are to be found in different neighborhoods.

Undercover police working in troubled neighborhoods are physically described in the news reports in detail; for example it is stated that undercover police working in ‘varoş’ neighborhoods grow stubbly beards, carry rosaries, and wear “Leke Jeans”.³⁶⁵ News reports give clues about which drug is identified with which neighborhood and what users of certain drugs look like. For example, ecstasy users usually hang around Tarlabaşı, Bursa and Sarıgöl, and dress casually. Heroin addicts can be found around Hacıhüsrev, Sulukule and other parts of Beyoğlu; they are usually sallow and shabby-looking. On the other hand, cocaine users go Etiler and Nişantaşı to buy drugs. It is argued that cocaine users look self-confident, smoke expensive cigarettes and wear expensive suits and watches. It is clear that drugs have a class dimension and neighborhoods like Tarlabaşı, Sarıgöl, Bursa and Hacıhüsrev are known with cheaper, ‘lower class drugs’, as it is mentioned in the title of a news report, “Reina’s police does not fit in Sarıgöl”.³⁶⁶ The police even states that an undercover cop in the guise of a usual cocaine buyer would “get robbed and beaten up if he is sent to Hacıhüsrev”:

³⁶⁵ Leke Jeans is a Turkish clothing brand, which produces mainly for the low-income group. The cheapness of the products have made it popular among the working class youth. Yet, the brand is also identified with lower class, “lumpen” culture and became symbol for the “apache” youth in Turkey. In Uludağ Sözlük, the brand is characterized by “imitating famous brands”, “producing apache-style jeans”, and defined as “a real apache brand”. (<http://www.uludagsozluk.com/k/leke-jeans/>)

³⁶⁶ Reina’nın polisi Sarıgöl’e uymaz, Hürriyet, 08.08.2007.

İstanbul Deputy Police Chief Şammaz Demirtaş says, “We have to be very subtle. If you send the men to Ecstasy follow-up in Hacıhüsrev, who was before sent to Bebek to cocaine follow-up, he does not only be unfitting but also gets robbed and beaten.” (Telsizli simitçi devri bitti işte yeni sivil polisler, Hürriyet, 27.03.2005)

A respect for the law and adherence to legal procedures constitute the second pillar of the positive portrayals of the police. The determination and loyalty of the police is underlined in the face of restrictive legal regulations and bureaucratic processes which take a long time. The bureaucratic and legal procedure prior to the operations are usually elaborated in the news reports on police operations,³⁶⁷ which implies two significant points: first, a very organized and systematic law enforcement mechanism is positioned vis-à-vis the law-breakers; and secondly, the legitimacy of the operations is emphasized disregarding the fact that such procedures are a routine part of the legal process. In some cases, the legal regulations are depicted as ‘tying the hands of the police’ in fighting crime in ‘troubled’ neighborhoods. After the changes in the Criminal Code for adjustment to EU, it is argued that soon they will not be able to identify suspects via photographs or fingerprints because there are now legal barriers on taking the photographs or fingerprints of the suspects, which will, most probably, lead to serious problems in the future:

³⁶⁷ “Organized Crime Branch Office delivered the case file to SSC prosecution office.” (Delibaş Operasyonu için 3 ay hazırlandı, Sabah, 04.11.2003); “It is stated that a search warrant was taken from the court for the houses after it was specified that there was drug trade in Karabayır Neighborhood.” (Esenler’de 1 kg uyuşturucu ele geçirildi, Hürriyet, 18.01.2006); “Specifying the houses to be raided one by one, police came to the neighborhood in the morning on court order.” (100’ün üzerinde polisle 7 gözaltı, Hürriyet, 18.01.2006); “Police conducted synchronous raids 9 houses in Esenler Karabayır Neighborhood on the prosecutor’s permit.” (Zehir evlerine çok operasyon, Sabah, 19.01.2006); “Sketches of the houses were brought to the prosecutor’s Office and search warrant was taken upon these sketches.” (Karabayır benzeri en az 10 semt var 21.01.2006); “Coming to Sarıgöl Neighborhood in the early morning hours on the court order, 1500 policemen from public order, narcotics, special forces units and riot police branch offices started the operation by holding the entries of the neighborhood.” (İstanbul’da 1500 polis ile operasyon, Sabah, 23.02.2006); “In the operation “Sarıgöl” made on the permit from Gaziosmanpaşa 2nd Criminal Court of Peace, 30 addresses specified before were searched for criminals, illegal materials and drugs.” (Şafak operasyonu, Sabah, 24.02.2006); “Police raided and searched a house in Tarlabası at night on court order.” (Kuran cildi arasında uyuşturucu, Hürriyet, 05.02.2007); “300 police blockaded Sarıgöl Neighborhood in Gaziosmanpaşa İstanbul yesterday morning on the court order.” (Kur’an içinde uyuşturucu, Hürriyet, 05.09.2007); “police team from district public order department took a permit for physical and technical follow-up for one month from the prosecutor’s office to determine and catch the people involved in drug trade in the area.” (Helikopter destekli operasyon, Hürriyet, 12.11.2008); “On the proof of drug trade in Bursa Neighborhood, Gaziosmanpaşa police took court permission to record with hidden cameras.” (Helikopterli baskın: 130 kişi gözaltında, Hürriyet, 13.11.2008).

NEW CRIMINALS OF DOLAPDERE

Police officers working in theft department complain that they are no more allowed to take pictures or fingerprints of the suspect after the new law. They say, "We try to make do with the old photos for identification". When the old criminals retire and withdraw in five to ten years, identification of new generation of thieves, purse-snatchers and muggers from photos and fingerprints will end. Because criminals' files can only be seen with a court decision now. After the work is done, the copies of the files are either destroyed or returned. (Burası Türkiye'nin en çok asayiş suçlusuyla boğuşan Taksim Karakolu, Hürriyet, 10.06.2006)

The other side of the coin for the police officers respecting the law is the difficulties faced, especially for the ones performing their duties in such dangerous, unsafe environments. There is a constant emphasis on the need for more policemen to work in 'troubled areas'. In a news report titled "'Gentleman' became a nostalgia, 'His son' is scared" ('Bey' nostalji oldu 'Oğlu' korku içinde), it is stated that the number of the policemen working in Beyoğlu is not enough compared to the amount of crimes committed in the area. In other news reports on Taksim Police Station, the inadequacy of the number of police is underlined in the face of high crime rates and various types of crimes in the area:

İstanbul's tourism and entertainment center Beyoğlu is also the center of crime now. (...) Tradesmen are distressed, police cannot come to help of everyone. (...) Mentioned every day with another criminal incident, Beyoğlu looks like a giant horror tunnel with its streets between Siraselviler, İstiklal and Tarlabası on every corner of which a danger awaits. (...) Police is trying to maintain public order in Beyoğlu with a staff of 170 officers. Yet, they fail to do so. ('Bey' nostalji oldu 'Oğlu' korku içinde, Sabah, 05.08.2003)

14 PEOPLE WORK IN THE MARMARA HOTEL, 19 WORK HERE

The number of criminals and types of crime that pass through its corridors is incomparably rich. Yet, only 19 police officers work in the station's 24-hour shift. The whole staff is 40 people. While even The Marmara Hotel is protected by 14 security guards, the limited staff of the station goes on patrol, makes operations, keeps hundreds of records, sends tens of criminals to hospital, forensic medicine institution, prosecutor's Office and court, and transfers them to other police stations every day. (Burası Türkiye'nin en çok asayiş suçlusuyla boğuşan Taksim Karakolu, Hürriyet, 10.06.2006)

Thus, the police paying attention to self-protection is more than sensible. In the case of Festus Okey, who was suspiciously killed by a police officer in Beyoğlu Police Directorate, the accused officer defends himself and explains why there were bullets in his mag by referring to the dangerous nature of the neighborhood.

In such an environment, unfortunate events could happen in the form of “collateral damage”:

Cengiz Yıldız, police officer from Beyoğlu Police Directorate Public Order Branch Office who is standing trial for death of Nigerian Festus Okey in custody, said that he was very sorry, that they did not intend to kill anyone but try to serve within the law. (...) Yıldız stated that every night there is an incident in Tarlabası and there were bullets in his mag to protect the citizens and themselves. (Nijeryalı Okey'in dosyası Ağır Ceza Mahkemesine gönderildi, Hürriyet, 26.11.2007)

In many other examples the police state that they are facing many dangers in dealing with these neighborhoods. For example, it is stated in a news report that the police “could only stay for 15 minutes in Karabayır” because after that the residents start throwing stones and attacking the police; and there are ten more neighborhoods in İstanbul similar to Karabayır.³⁶⁸ Or, in an interview Celalettin Cerrah claims that the police is under a serious threat by the thinner-addict children in Beyoğlu by stating that these children have “gauged the eyes of many policemen and crippled them”.³⁶⁹ A similar position is displayed by Süleyman Ulusoy (a.k.a. Hortum Süleyman), the notorious chief of Beyoğlu Police Directorate in the 1990s, in an interview. When asked about beating the transvestites in Beyoğlu during his time, he defends himself by arguing that “the transvestites carry snap blade knives and they are extremely strong because they take drugs”.³⁷⁰ In that sense, paradoxically, while the news reports display the police as a successful, organized force which keeps the neighborhoods under total control, they also underline the threats faced by them and how they are “hung by a thread” against the notorious, violent, dangerous residents of troubled neighborhoods. In what can be defined as “the dilemma of the moral entrepreneur” referring to Cohen (2006: 39), the authorities have to claim that “the problem is getting worse” while defending the success of their methods.

Even though the news reports on police operations to troubled neighborhoods tend to portray an organized, efficient and capable police force in general, there are occasional negative representations of the police in terms of corruption, incapacity

³⁶⁸ Karabayır benzeri en az 10 semt var, Hürriyet, 21.01.2006

³⁶⁹ Ateş etmek rahatlatır, Savaş Ay, Sabah, 27.11.2005.

³⁷⁰ Devletin polisi homoseksüelden dayak yiyor mu dedirtecektim, Gülden Aydın, Hürriyet, 30.01.2005.

to deal with crime, and abusive behavior. In terms of the increasing unrest considering the crime in ‘troubled’ neighborhoods such as purse-snatching, possible corrupt relations between police officers and crime gangs came to the fore from time to time. For example, in 2003, when Delibaş gang was active in Beyoğlu and its vicinity, tradesmen in the area have complained about how the police has overlooked the events possibly due to a corrupt relationship based on mutual interest:

GANGS ARE KNOWN

The owner of Demir Cafe in Mis Street for over 30 years, Necdet Demir says that it is the first time for him to see the police so desperate. Demir thinks that increase in purse-snatching is related to police’s not working efficient enough, and says, “Police would end it if they really wanted to.” Pointing to the gang formation in Beyoğlu, Demir continues, "I think that police knows and allows all of them. The police used to patrol more, they were more efficient. Even though I’m a tradesman, I know who the thief is. I’m sure police knows better. I can know what a man does for living; you can guess it from his face, his shoes. Police knows it better." (...)

89-years-old shoe shiner Vezir Bozkurt says, “It’s just a useless crowd. They are coarse. The laws have no control, neither the municipality, police nor courts has. There is no authority of law or justice anywhere. Money talks everywhere." ('Bey' nostalji oldu 'Oğlu' korku içinde, Sabah, 05.08.2003)

After all, when the gang was brought down after a series of police operations, news reports mentioned that there were contacts of the gang within the police, indicating the amount of bribes given to certain officers.³⁷¹ Likewise, corrupt relations between the police, the judiciary, the crime gangs and families are mentioned in news reports on Hacıhüsrev.³⁷² Presented as a hotbed of crime with people dealing with illegal activities as family business, it is occasionally admitted that the area harbors only the lowest-rank drug-dealers or pick-pockets within an organized crime network. Savaş Ay’s comments in his column in Sabah provide a fine example:

³⁷¹ Kapkaçın ödülü hayat kadını, Sabah, 31.10.2003; Çukur Mahalle'de güvenlik kamerası, Sabah, 01.11.2003; Delibaş Operasyonu için 3 ay hazırlandı, Sabah, 04.11.2003.

³⁷² 'Rüşvetle torbacılara göz yuman polis var', Sabah 07. 08. 2006. In 2009, it was revealed that some lawyers and judicial staff members have been leaking information to the drug-dealers in Hacıhüsrev about police operations. Also, Beyoğlu Prosecutor’s Office started an investigation on İstanbul Police Headquarters. The whole process provide a suitable example of ‘corrupt police’, even though the process ended with accusation of some lawyers and other judicial personnel. (Narkotik'ten tarihi operasyon, Hürriyet, 12.05.2009; Adliye'ye ‘köstebek’ baskını, Hürriyet, 13.05.2009; Beyoğlu Adliyesi'nde 9 köstebek yakalandı, Sabah, 13 Mayıs 2009).

Who is at the top?

Is it even a mystery that thief Gypsy wives involve not only their children by their side but also the ones growing in their bellies to crime and they go work in the marketplace as **pregnant pick-pocket ladies**? Well then, who makes them to do so? The answer is simple: First their husbands, big brothers, fathers. And who makes them to do so? The answer is simple: Theft, purse-snatching, mugging gangs. And who are those gangs? The answer is simple: the respiratory organs (!) of a larger mechanism. And what are they? The answer is simple: The crowd of aghas, masters, big brothers, uncles, “fathers” who have a so-called illegal dominance in the area. And who are their superior?

Who pushes them?

Well! Let’s just hold for a minute. The answer is not simple, even a little hard. Not hard because it is unknown, but hard because it is intricate and complicated. Because there is a huge rent. **Because no one can benefit from it without any price.** There are big shots behind including politicians, artists (!), police, judiciary and even, as claimed, businessmen, teachers and journalists.

Let me ask once more cutting to the chase. There are children pushed into crime, but who pushes them? If Hacıhüsrev is such a mystery, then who creates it? (Hacıhüsrev çocuklarına kıymayın efendiler!..., Savaş Ay, Sabah, 29 Kasım 2004)

‘Incapacity to deal with crime’ appears to be another form of negative representation of the police. Indifference of the police officers to immediate criminal acts make up a part of this portrayal.³⁷³ It is sometimes implied that the police is not indifferent to crime only when a VIP is involved. When the police caught pick-pockets who stole a foreign royal member’s bag in a couple of hours after the incident, Sabah gave the news with the heading, “The perpetrator was caught instantly when it is a princess” (Prenses olunca fail bulunverdi, Sabah, 15 Nisan 2004). In some cases, indifference is accompanied by inability and powerlessness in the face of crime. Especially when it comes to the ‘troubled’ neighborhoods, it is frequently mentioned that the police is “scared” or “intimidated” to go there and deal with those people.³⁷⁴ In some of the news reports, spatial proximity of the ‘troubled’ areas to police districts are mentioned to emphasize the extent criminal activities have reached:

30 METRES TO POLICE STATION

Things came so far that even police station does not scare the dealers. In a shack on a street blocked by a truck in Esenler's Upper Karabayır Neighborhood with

³⁷³ 'Bey' nostalji oldu 'Oğlu' korku içinde, Sabah, 05. 08. 2003.

³⁷⁴ In terms of the purse-snatching incidents in Tarlabası, Savaş Ay argues that “the police cannot enter some parts of their jurisdiction area” (Vali Bey yakında Tarlabası'na da inecekmiş!.. Savaş Ay, Sabah, 10. 05. 2004).

50 thousand of population, every type of drug is freely sold 25-30 meters away from "Police Department for Proactive Services."

AND THE SHOCKING SCENE...

This time I head towards the other entry of the street. Turning right after 10 meters, that shocking view appears: "Upper Karabayır Police Department for Proactive Services" There are at most 30 meters between the dealers' shack and police station... Furthermore, there is a porter's lodge in front of the station. (Karakolun karşısı uyuşturucu pazarı, Sabah, 06.08.2006)

In Merkez (Bursa) Neighborhood in İstanbul-Gaziosmanpaşa, drug trade takes place at every hour of the day. Dealers swarm the 4 streets 100 meters to the District Police Directorate and municipality.

Drugs are sold publicly in the neighborhood especially in Bahtiyar Street, Bahtiyar's End Street, Safa Street and Akarlar Street which are only 100 meters to Gaziosmanpaşa Police Directorate, District Governorship, Municipality and district square. (Uyuşturucu alışverişi yeni 'merkezine' taşındı, Sabah, 20.09.2006)

The police directorates in charge of these areas come into question every now and then with abusive behavior such as beating and harassing, not to mention suspicious deaths like that of Festus Okey, which constitutes another aspect of the negative representations of police. In 2009, some policemen from the Beyoğlu Police Directorate looking for a suspect raided a house in Tarlabası, in which mostly Kurdish male migrants live. During the raid, the police beat one of the residents nearly to death before realizing that he was not the man they were looking for. Later on, the injured man stated that just after they learned that he was the wrong one, one of the policemen offered his colleagues to throw him out of window and tell that he himself jumped. Later, Hakim Adlığ, the victim of police violence filed a complaint against the officers.³⁷⁵ There are many news reports on other victims of police violence of the Beyoğlu Police Directorate, for which The Committee of Human Rights Inquiry in the Turkish Grand National Assembly opened an investigation.³⁷⁶ Such events provide clear examples of the

³⁷⁵ 'Polis beni dövdi, ağzıma silah dayadı', Hürriyet, 01.04.2009; Yanlış adam dövmüşüz üzgünüz, Hürriyet, 02.04.2009; 'Yanlış dayağa' soruşturma, Hürriyet, 03.04.2009

³⁷⁶ About a month later, Beyoğlu Police Directorate once again came into question with the beating of a young woman named Berfu Beysanoğlu by a police officer working in the French Consulate, for sitting on the stairs in front of the building. Other police violence incidents associated with Beyoğlu Police Directorate are the beating of Cumhuriyet reporter Servet Alçınkaya in the police car and the police directorate and beating of Mehmet Cirik from Tarlabası who had to go to surgery afterwards for asking for identification of the police officers, beating of K.K. when he went to the police directorate to file a complaint, beating of Ali Bakça for protesting the police beating a taxi driver, beating of a transvestite for "passing by the police directorate", beating of NTV reporter Hilmi Hacaloğlu (Beyoğlu'nda yine dayak iddiası, Hürriyet, 22.04.2009).

criminalization of certain social groups and residents of particular neighborhoods through their subjection to unquestioned violence by the authorities.

Another theme stepping forward considering the news reports on police operations to ‘troubled’ neighborhoods is the residents’ organization of their living spaces. In relation to the police’s success in finding stashes or catching criminals, the narrative also refers to the difficulties the police face such as hidden corners, various tactics and structure of the neighborhood and the buildings which makes it easier for the neighborhood residents to avoid the police. In that sense, descriptions of the organization of living space are both displayed as an obstacle before the law enforcement and a proof to the illegal activities of the residents.

4.2.1.3. Descriptions of the organization of space conducive to illegal activities

The relation between the organization of space and crime is elaborated in various ways in the news reports on ‘troubled’ neighborhoods subjected to police operations. The news reports tend to describe the space as a ‘facilitator of crime’. In a broader level, the general configuration of the neighborhoods – which cannot be directly linked to the current residents – including the narrowness and intricate structure of the streets are problematized to provide a suitable environment for the illegal activities to take place and to shelter criminals. It is argued that by means of this structure, criminals are able to place hidden security cameras and lookouts in the street corners and entries of the area to monitor police activity and be prepared for any operations. In terms of the utilization of the buildings, secret passages between attached buildings and back doors to escape easily, steel doors to provide extra-protection, hide-outs and stashes to keep drugs, stolen goods, etc., and burning stoves to throw away drugs in the case of a police bust are counted as the major spatial tactics of the residents against law enforcement.

In 2003, when purse-snatching incidents increased around the streets of Tarlabaşı-İstanbul, it was explained in terms of the availability of the structure of the streets for such crimes to be committed. It is argued that the intricacy and the way the

streets cross-cut each other makes it easier for the purse-snatchers to escape.³⁷⁷ It is sometimes directly indicated that the neighborhoods are “conducive to hiding of the suspects” and provide them an advantage against the police. In a news report on a police chase in Hacıhüsrev, the neighborhood is claimed to have “a structure conducive to the hiding of the suspects”.³⁷⁸ The narrowness and intricacy of the streets let the residents to barricade them easily in the case of a police operation or to block the entries of the neighborhood to hide it from the ‘eyes of the police’ as in the case of Karabayır.³⁷⁹ The same structure also allow them to crowd the area and make an uproar to create a suitable atmosphere to mingle in and escape for the criminals during police operations:

Telling that they have developed different tactics regarding the time of the police operation, day or night, gang members indicated that they crowd the streets during the day to prevent the police from catching the purse-snatchers. (Çukur Mahalle'de güvenlik kamerası, Sabah, 01.11.2003)

Neighborhood residents enables the suspect to escape by making an uproar. (Karabayır benzeri en az 10 semt var, Hürriyet, 21.01.2006)

In the case of Bursa and Hacıhüsrev, it is mentioned that the residents locate lookouts on the street corners to be informed of the police activity.³⁸⁰ Hidden security cameras are mentioned for Tarlabası and Sarıgöl as a major warning mechanism for possible police operations. It is stated that Fırat Delibaş has located cameras on the entries of Çukur Mahalle to Tarlabası and Dolapdere to be informed about possible police operations and be sure that the gang members were not followed by the police while returning from purse-snatching. A similar hidden camera system was found by the police in Sarıgöl:

³⁷⁷ Silahlar konuşuyor, insanlar dövülüyor İmam Adnan Sokak'ta neler oluyor? Şermin Sarıbaş, Sabah, 28.09.2003.

³⁷⁸ “Because of the neighborhood’s structure conducive to the hiding of the suspects, police blocked the suspects’ car by risking an accident.” (İstanbul'da dev operasyon, Sabah, 11.04.2011)

³⁷⁹ “When the entry of the street, in which drugs were sold, was barricaded with carriages, the police entered the street on foot.” (Esrarı yaktılar, Hürriyet, 19.01.2006); “One cannot see the rest of the street from its entry because a truck blocks the already narrow street.” (Karakolun karşısı uyuşturucu pazarı, Sabah, 06.08.2006).

³⁸⁰ "Drug dealers have a free hand now. When police enters the neighborhood, lookouts on street corners inform." (Uyuşturucu alışverişi yeni 'merkezine' taşındı, Sabah, 20.09.2006), “It is also learned that drug-dealers placed lookouts on the streets to be informed about the coming of police teams.” (Kamerahlı takipten sonra baskın, Sabah, 11.01.2011)

MEASURE AGAINST POLICE

During the interrogations, it was learned that the gang located mobile security cameras on the intersections of the streets they occupied with Tarlabası and Dolapdere. It is stated that gang's lookouts see if the members returning from purse-snatching are followed with the help of security cameras and they can know beforehand the police operations to the neighborhood. (Çukur Mahalle'de güvenlik kamerası, Sabah, 01.11.2003)

It was revealed that there was a camera system in one of the houses to spy upon the neighborhood. (1500 polis sabaha karşı mahalle bastı, Hürriyet, 24.02.2006)

In terms of the interior structure of the houses, secret passages between attached buildings, or buildings that are very close to each other, surrounded and protected by high walls and steel doors in addition to back doors or exits are indicated as factors which make it difficult for the police to catch the criminals during operation. This particular structure of the houses was even defined as “cave-like” in a news report on Sarıgöl:

There are secret passages between attached houses of these families. (Hacıhüsrev'e 11 ayda 25 operasyon, Sabah, 03.11.2004)

THERE ARE SECRET PASSAGES

It becomes very hard to catch the suspects because of the closeness of the houses and secret passages between them. The fact that houses are surrounded by high walls reaching up to 4 meters obstructs physical follow-up. (Karabayır benzeri en az 10 semt var, Hürriyet, 21.01.2006)

In Sarıgöl, which is swarmed by crime gangs and where even garbage trucks cannot enter at night due to security concerns and the municipality cannot set street lamps because of drug trade, gecekondus are demolished by Gaziosmanpaşa Municipality one by one. And the biggest problem demolition teams face is the cave-like structure of the houses, i.e. secret passages for the criminals to escape easily. ("İstanbul'un Harlem'i" Sarıgöl dağıtılıyor, Sabah, 13.02.2006)

Within the houses, there are various hide-outs and stashes to keep drugs, stolen goods, etc. including bird cages,³⁸¹ stove stacks,³⁸² bathroom closets, school bags, shoes and under the floors.³⁸³ And burning stoves to throw away drugs in the case

³⁸¹ “Police authorities declared that drugs were found in a dove cage in an operation to Gaziosmanpaşa Sarıgöl Neighborhood.” (İstanbul'da “Beyaz Kartal” operasyonu, Hürriyet, 24.11.2007)

³⁸² “Police rummaged everywhere in the houses, including stove stacks.” (Polis, Hacıhüsrev'i kamyonla bastı, Hürriyet, 04.08.2008).

³⁸³ “In the operation backed up by helicopter escorts, drugs like marijuana and weed were captured hidden in school bags, stoves, bathroom closets, shoes and under the floors in the houses.” (İstanbul'da dev uyuşturucu operasyonu, Hürriyet, 14.01.2009)

of a bust³⁸⁴ are counted as the major spatial tactics of the residents against the law enforcement:

After the operation started, smoke started to rise from the chimneys of the houses on the street. But this time, it was not a smoke of wood or coal, but of marijuana thrown into the stoves by drug dealers. (Esrarı yaktılar, Hürriyet, 19.01.2006)

DRUGS WERE BURNED IN STOVES

During the operation, it was observed that smoke rose from some of the houses. It is indicated that a large amount of drugs were burned in the stoves. (Hacıhüsrev'e dev narkotik operasyonu, Sabah, 15.01.2009)

In 2006, a TV newscast program (Haber Özel) made a special episode on Karabayır displaying the utilization of houses as 'drug workshops'. News reports based on the TV program define the houses as "poison lairs", basements of which are usually used in producing drugs. It is stated that buyers queue up in front of these houses. In one of the news reports, it is argued that there is even a 'waiting room' called the "party room" (alem odası) for the customers to rest while their 'order' is being prepared.³⁸⁵ The living spaces of the families are displayed as also serving as their 'workplace' in which all the family members including the children take part in the production of drugs:

The drug market shown by Show TV Haber Özel team is almost same as the drug market in South America. Most of the houses are used as workshops. Children roll joints in the rooms, sell cigarette papers and play the key role in retail sale. (Anne sarıyor kızı satıyor, Hürriyet, 18.01.2006)

BASEMENTS ARE WORKSHOPS

Haber Özel teams went to Esenler Karabayır on the eve of Festival of Sacrifice and secretly videotaped the houses producing drugs, customers lined up in front of the houses and children used in selling. (...) While drug addicts line up in front of the houses, many drug dealing families poisoning young people by selling ecstasy and marijuana produce drugs in the basements of apartments. (...) You do not return empty-handed from any house in the drug neighborhood. (...) Drugs are mainly produced in the basements. Drugs are packed recklessly involving children in the houses of very poor condition and then sold by children. (Zehire bulaşan minicik eller! Sabah, 18.01.2006)

Apart from various tactics and ways to evade law enforcement and carry out illegal activities, the relations the residents of troubled neighborhoods have with their

³⁸⁴ "Emphasizing that all of the houses have steel doors and exits at the back, a police says, "Stoves are always burned up here. Dealers throw away and burn drugs in stove in the case of a bust." (Helikopterli baskın: 130 kişi gözaltında, Hürriyet, 13.11.2008).

³⁸⁵ "Waiting for my orders, I was taken to a small shack at the end of the street. They call this place with plastic pipes on the ceiling, red lights on the walls and furnished with an armchair and wooden sofa bed, "Party Room". A deep chat begins while waiting for the 'hash'." (Karakolun karşısı uyuşturucu pazarı, Sabah, 06.08.2006)

living spaces is problematized. It is a common practice to define the residents as “invaders” based on the fact that most of the residents take refuge in the dilapidated, desolate buildings. In that sense, dilapidation is indicated as a major cause of criminal activities in the areas in question. Thus, in many news reports it is indicated that dilapidated, desolate building became shelter of crime gangs, purse-snatchers and drug-dealers:

It is argued that Delibaş and his men have completely invaded Çukur Neighborhood in Tarlabası which they chose to settle and became a permanent power in the area by occupying houses that mostly belonged to the minorities and abandoned. (Çukur Mahalle'de güvenlik kamerası, Sabah, 01.11.2003)

Gangs are based in Tarlabası and make sale in Beyoğlu. They use occupied houses or buildings of General Directorate of Foundations. (...) They keep and store the drugs in those buildings. (...) as a result of the increase in drug-related deaths, police teams frequently make spot operations to occupied buildings, but get no results. (Beyoğlu'nda cemaat çetesi, Sabah, 07.08.2006)

To sum up, the utilization of space in ‘troubled’ neighborhoods by the residents are portrayed in the news reports basically in terms of its role in the criminal activities. It is argued that the from the general configuration of the streets to the very usage of the houses in criminal activities such as producing and selling drugs, the neighborhoods in question are portrayed as ‘criminogenic areas’. Besides, the living conditions and strategies of the residents such as taking refuge in the desolate houses or using illegal electricity are displayed as a proof for a propensity to break the laws with their very existence.

Another crucial theme to understand the discriminatory discourse of the news reports in the stigmatization and exclusion urban lower class in the case of Kurdish migrants and Roma is the intra-neighborhood conflicts. The news reports on ‘troubled’ lower class neighborhoods have given coverage to the occasional conflicts between the residents in the last decade or so. The portrayal of each social group differs from case to case, depending on particular circumstances such as the role of ethnic and political identity, criminal activity and way of life. In that sense, portrayal of intra-neighborhood conflicts provides clues about the criteria of marginalization of each group compared to each other in the news discourse.

4.2.2. Intra-neighborhood conflicts

Intra-neighborhood conflicts in troubled neighborhoods that are covered by the news reports can be grouped under three categories: ethnic tensions, cultural tensions and economic tensions. In all these cases, the residents are divided by the news discourse into ‘good, decent people who are not involved in crime or do anything against the law’ and ‘bad, malevolent people involved in criminal activities and break laws’. In other words, crime is the basic element that divides the groups or makes them define each other. In the period covered by this study, there have been occasional conflicts between different groups of residents in the neighborhoods most which included armed fight, injuries, even deaths. In most of the cases, the conflicting parties are the Romany and Kurdish groups.

In Hacıhüsrev, there have always been a tension with the older the residents of the area, which are the Roma, and the Kurdish migrants. The Roma have been inhabiting the area for over 300 years. Kurdish migrants, mainly from Mardin and Diyarbakır began to come and settle in the area in the early 1990s with the compulsory migration from the Southeast. Hacıahmet neighborhood near Hacıhüsrev was their main destination, which resulted in the ‘retreat’ of the Roma to Hacıhüsrev, selling or renting their properties to the newcomers. Since then, there have been occasional frictions between the two groups who are mainly spatially segregated but still live at each other’s elbow. When the tensions increased, fire guns included in addition to stones and sticks, and Riot Police involved to control the armed fight.

In 4th June, 2000, there was a conflict between the Romany people in Hacıhüsrev and the Kurdish residents of Hacıahmet, which resulted in the shooting of a young boy and the involvement of Riot Police. The news reports on the conflict define its reason as “the rage which piled up in years in people having different cultures”.³⁸⁶ The contrast between the Roma and the Kurdish ways of life is narrated in detail to show the discrepancies in between, and also shown as the major reason behind the Roma’s retreat from Hacıahmet in the first place. The Roma are defined as “fond of

³⁸⁶ Şimdi barış zamanı, Hürriyet, 07.06.2000.

night life”, “drinking rakı in the company of music in front of the houses in the streets”, “sprawl on the streets men and women together”. On the other hand, the Mardinians, the Kurdish group involved in the conflict, are characterized as “leading a self-enclosed, traditional way of life”, “crowded families with many children”, “unemployed and poor”. It is stated that the Mardinians work under harder conditions compared to the Roma and disturbed by their noise in the middle of the night.

Nevertheless, cultural differences or discrepancies between different ways of life are not the only reasons of the conflict. It is argued in the news reports that ethnic identities play an important role in the sense that the Roma act upon some nationalistic sentiments and display a hostility towards the Kurdish residents of Hacıahmet. In return, the Kurds tend to develop protective reflexes to preserve their identity:

Residents of Hacı Ahmet say that, while driving on the streets in convoys during seeing men off to military service, young men of the other neighborhood shout slogans like “long live Turkey”, “down with PKK” and “like it or leave it”.

After Diyarbakırspor won the football match with Konyaspor the week before, people celebrated on the pitch. When stones were thrown to Hacıhüsrev resident’s car passing by, everything gets out of hand. (Şimdi barış zamanı, Hürriyet, 07.06.2000)

Complaining about “being seen as potential criminals and terrorists”, a Kurdish resident claims that the conflict arises from the drug dealers and purse-snatchers whose interests in the area were imperiled by the interventions of the Kurdish people. In short, the news reports on the conflict between the Roma and the Kurds in Hacıhüsrev includes ethnic and cultural elements as well as economic interests. The testimonies of the residents and the discourse of the news report display that the two groups’ hostility towards each other are in compliance with their stereotypical characteristics and helps to reproduce them.

In 2004, there was another armed fight in Hacıhüsrev providing an example for the polarization of different social groups. On 31st October, two purse-snatchers threw an empty bag to yard of The Environment Protection Association for Hacıhüsrev and Hacıahmet Neighborhoods.³⁸⁷ It is stated in the news reports that when one of the association’s board members warned them, the purse-snatchers left and came

³⁸⁷ Hacıhüsrev (İstiklal) ve Hacıahmet Mahalleleri Çevre Koruma Derneği.

back with a crowded group. In the end one man was shot to death and other two were injured. During the incidents, the residents attacked the police who came to the area to take conflict under control. They threw stones to the police and the panzers, damaging some police cars and fire trucks. In the end, the police fended off the crowd with pepper spray.

Five months before the incident, there were news about the association in Sabah, under titles such as, “Wind of change in Hacıhüsrev”,³⁸⁸ “They are raising conscious youngsters”,³⁸⁹ and “Union makes strength”.³⁹⁰ In these news reports, the association is displayed as an effort of the “people turning an honest penny” to get rid of the notorious image of the neighborhood. The neighborhood is divided in the news reports into two groups: “people pursuing an honorable, honest life” and “purse-snatchers, thieves, drug dealers”. In the news reports, some members told that they have been telling the young people that “they could get what they want through working”. After the incident, a similar discourse was produced which can be observed in the words of the vice-chairperson of the association, given in a news report with the title “The neighborhood should get cleansed”:

Deputy President of the Environment Protection Association for Hacıhüsrev and Hacıahmet Neighborhoods Salih Deniz made a statement in the name of the group gathered in front of the building and said that a friend who has lived by the sweat of his brow was brutally murdered. Çağlar also added: "Our friends were attacked by people who are nested here, deal with illegal business, use drugs and steal. Here, there is a group of people who turn an honest penny and others who do not want to do that. We are stricken with grief. We want the police to be more sensitive about this kind of incidents." (Mahalle temizlensin, Sabah, 01.11.2004)

In Hürriyet, a news report on the following day gave wide coverage to the comments of some of the residents who are acquaintances of the murder victim. The comments clearly display the sharp divide within the neighborhood and define the other group as “scum”. They also give the message that the “decent people” would be compelled to get involved and “clear the scum” themselves if they are not punished by the law:

The neighborhood folk stated that nothing will ever be the same again in the neighborhood which has been mentioned with drug dealing, pick-pocketing and

³⁸⁸ Hacıhüsrev'de değişim rüzgârı, Sabah, 02.05.2004.

³⁸⁹ Duyarlı gençler yetiştiriyorlar, Sabah, 02.05.2004.

³⁹⁰ Birlikten kuvvet doğar, Sabah, 02.05.2004.

purse-snatching for years and they would not allow the thieves, swindlers and drug dealers into the neighborhood any more. Here are the reactions:

THEY PLAUGED İSTANBUL

Salih Deniz Çağlar (Member of Board of Environment Protection Association for Hacıhüsrev and Hacıahmet Neighborhoods) In this neighborhood, a group of people involved in illegal activities, using and selling drugs, and stealing brutally murdered our friend who warned them. We want the state, the police to solve this. They did not only plague the neighborhood folk but also İstanbul.

WE WILL CALL THEM TO ACCOUNT

Ali Bakça (Brother of murder victim Hikmet Bakça) The perpetrators are a drug dealing, stealing gang. Their identities are known. Those people have to get caught and punished. My brother is shot under my eyes. If they are not punished, we will call them to account.

WE WILL CLEAR THE SCUM

Oktay Kalyon (Neighborhood resident) Our only wish is that there should not be stealing or drug dealing in the neighborhood. Even when we have a patient, taxis would not enter when they learn that it is ‘Hacıhüsrev’. If our police fellows do not respond, bring them to their knees, we, as the neighborhood residents, will clear this scum.

THEY DON’T EVEN HIRE

Ethem Çalışkan (Born and raised in Hacıhüsrev) We cannot even find jobs because of the neighborhood’s bad reputation. 5 people doing these kind of things soil an entire neighborhood’s name. From now on, you cannot stop anything here. In one way or other, they will leave here.

THEY ARE DRIVING MERCEDESSES

Hüseyin Kastaş (tradesman of 14 years) There are two kinds of neighborhood residents here. On the one side are the ones pursuing an honorable, honest life, and the ones doing illegal activities on the other. We live by the sweat of our brow. I am 38 years old and I don’t have a car; even the ones as young as 15 years old in them drive BMWs, Mercedeses. (Uyuşturucu satanları istemiyoruz, Hürriyet, 02.11.2004)

In one of the news reports in Hürriyet, it is explicitly indicated that the incidents broke out after two purse-snatching “Roma” were warned. The specific mention of the ethnic identity of the purse-snatchers constructs a subtle relationship between the Roma residents and one of the two groups the neighborhood was divided into – the purse-snatchers, thieves and drug dealers. In other words, the fact that the perpetrators are Roma, the whole Roma community is linked to various criminal activities defined as the characteristics of the group positioned vis-à-vis the “honorable, honest people”. Dividing the neighborhood between the Roma and the non-Roma and criminalizing the whole Roma community in the neighborhood

could also be seen in the expressions defining the two parties of the fight – the “Roma” and the “neighborhood residents”:³⁹¹

Blood was shed in the street fight between 300 people in Hacıhüsrev Neighborhood. One man died and two were injured in the incidents which started after two ‘Roma’ doing purse-snatching were warned. It is claimed that the two purse-snatching Roma threw the bag they took to Hikmet Bakça’s yard after emptying it. When Bakça warned purse-snatchers, they began to quarrel with swearwords. The Roma left and came back with 10 people and tried to set Bakça’s house on fire. When neighborhood residents protested this act, two groups decided to meet somewhere else. At 17.00, the parties confronted in front of Environment Protection Association for Hacıhüsrev and Hacıahmet Neighborhoods and a donnybrook began. During the fight, one of the Roma citizens drew a gun and shot Hikmet Bakça, Şahin Özdemir and Hüsamettin Çoban. After the gunfire, the Roma ran away to the back streets. Hikmet Bakça died on the way to hospital. Learning that, this time the neighborhood residents attacked the Roma with stones, sticks and knives. Riot Police and Special Forces Units with armored scorpions and panzers intervened. When the fighting parties attacked the police, riot police fended off the groups with pepper gas. After the events were suppressed, many knives, guns and shotguns were captured during the search in the Roma’s houses. (Hacıhüsrev’de kapkaç meydan savaşı, Hürriyet, 01.11.2004)

After the incidents in October 2004, the neighborhood was defined as “terrorized by a small group”³⁹² and news reports carried clear signs of ethnic stigmatization towards the Roma by dividing the neighborhood into good and bad people and relating the Roma with the latter. But in general, mainly considering the two cases mentioned above, it can be argued that the main divide in such a neighborhood like Hacıhüsrev where two major underdog social groups are settled are related to crime and criminal activities.³⁹³

A similar ethnic segregation is observable in Tarlabası. The Roma and the Kurds constitute the two major communities living in the area. There have been occasional conflicts between the two groups, sometimes revealing the ethnic prejudices and hostilities towards each other. In 2006, there have been violent

³⁹¹ The news report in Hürriyet on the following day defined the two parties as “the Roma” and “the Sivasians” (Uyuşturucu satanları istemiyoruz, Hürriyet, 02.11.2004).

³⁹² Hacıhüsrev değil sanki 'Acı Hüsrev', Sabah, 02.11.2004.

³⁹³ Later on, after an armed assault in Hacıhüsrev the same year, Savaş Ay wrote on the illegal activities carried out in the area which threatens and condemns other people who have nothing to do with crime. In his article he defined two groups as, people “having an illegitimate life” and “knowing no law”, “crime machines” on the one side and “poor, lonely, helpless, innocent people who have never involved in any illegal act” on the other. (Sabaha karşı katliam, Savaş Ay, Sabah, 28.11.2004)

conflicts between the Roma and the Kurdish political protesters. Pérouse (2011: 286) argues that the conflicts started at the same time with the re-start of armed conflicts in the East. The Roma are claimed to be directed by ultra-nationalists against the Kurdish people who are associated with the PKK. A news report on Hürriyet clearly takes the side of the Roma against the Kurdish protesters. By defining the Romany attack on the protesters with swords, axes, cleavers, sticks and shovels as “citizens’ reactions to the protesters”, Hürriyet described the beating of a protester by the Romany group as, “The citizens beat up a protester they caught and handed him over the police”:

When the incidents in Dolapdere continued in the area where mostly Roma citizens live, some of the citizens reacted to the protesters.

Citizens grabbing swords, axes, sticks and shovels, the citizens reacted to the group. And the police stopped one individual among the Roma, who had a gun. When some of the protesters trying to escape to the side streets were tried to be lynched by the citizens, police rescued them. Another group unfurling Turkish flags in Tarlabası Bostan Neighborhood, attacked PKK sympathizers with sticks and cleavers, shouting “Here is Bostan; there is no exit from here.” The citizens handed over a protestor to the police after beating him up. In the chase on the side streets of Tarlabası and Dolapdere, 27 protesters were taken into custody. (Romanlar PKK’lıları baltayla kovaladı, Hürriyet, 03.04.2006)

At the end of 2009, there was another significant conflict between the Roma and the Kurds in Dolapdere near Tarlabası. During a Kurdish political protest, some young Romany men drew guns to the protestors and fired in the air. The news reports in the aftermath of the incident spoke of the men as “(they) fired guns to protect themselves and the neighborhood”, and emphasized that the guns were blank cartridges:

It turned out that S.Ü., T.G. and S.Z., who reacted to the sympathizers of the separatist organization throwing stones and Molotov cocktails to houses, stores and cars in Tarlabası by drawing guns, fired guns to protect themselves and the neighborhood. (Gözaltına alınıp bırakıldılar, Hürriyet, 15.12.2009)

Savaş Ay’s interview with the Romany elders in the neighborhood underlined that the conflict between the two groups date back to the tension between Hacıhüsrev and Hacıahmet. They argued that in addition to the nationalistic conflicts, the real tension arises over the sharing of rent over illegal activities in the area:

FIGHT OVER RENT

To tell the truth, some of the newcomers belong to purse-snatching and mugging gangs. Those times, there were also pick-pockets, drug dealers in our area. They sometimes confront each other in the same domain. Or, when one side did

something, and the police unknowingly raided the other side's house or place, everything broke loose. (Dolapdere'de bir dolap mı dönüyor? Savaş Ay, Sabah, 15.12.2009)

However, may be the most widespread and violent conflicts took place in Karabayır. Similar to Tarlabası and Hacıhüsrev, the neighborhood accommodates migrants from various parts of Anatolia, therefore ethnic and religious tensions are common. Yılgür (2012) argues that the segregation of the Roma and non-Roma in Karabayır dates back to 1970s. In 3rd March 2002, there has been a harsh conflict between the - mostly Alevi – Roma and conservative Sunnite Siirtans which started with some debt issues. Shotguns, Molotov cocktails, stones and sticks were included. After the local police failed to suppress the conflict, Riot Police and Special Forces Units intervened with panzers and tear gas. At the end, one man was killed and twenty-one were injured.³⁹⁴ The conflict could only be soothed by curfew that lasted for two days. After the police operation and the pacification of the events, the office of the mukhtar was turned into an 'emergency' police station. It is reported that the mukhtar was not complainant at all; he even said, "As long as there is a police station in our neighborhood, I'll find some place for myself".³⁹⁵ During the police operation, 138 people were taken into custody and 22 guns were captured including 1 Kalashnikov and 16 shotguns.³⁹⁶

The official authorities (represented by the district governor Ali Gün) denied that there are two different groups with an ethno-cultural tension in between, and described the event as a "result of group psychology". It is persistently emphasized in the news reports that the conflicts originated from a business dispute, therefore they are "not political, but ordinary".³⁹⁷ However, it is possible to trace the contradictions within the official discourse; while it tries to hide and deny the social and political dimensions of the event, it affirms the existence of a cohabitation problem by underlining the need to accept each other's existence:

³⁹⁴ 43 'Esenler Sanığı' için tutuklama istemi, Hürriyet, 07.03.2002.

³⁹⁵ Karabayır'a acil durum karakolu, Hürriyet, 07.03.2002.

³⁹⁶ 43 'Esenler sanığı' için tutuklama istemi, Hürriyet, 07.03.2002.

³⁹⁷ Esenler'de sokağa çıkma yasağına devam, Hürriyet, 04.03.2002. A similar attitude is observable in the opposition parties; they refused to acknowledge any ideological motives behind and explained the events in terms of the migrants' inability to integrate to the society (Erman and Eken, 2004: 61).

It is not possible to sack anyone from their homes. Then, citizens themselves have to find ways to live as brothers, friends. They have to acknowledge that they will live as friends and brothers. Thus, they will live in peace together.³⁹⁸

To support this claim, the description of the fighting parties in the news reports can be given as an example. In *Hürriyet*, the parties were described first as “two groups”, then “a tradesman and a Roma citizen”,³⁹⁹ and then as ““the Roma”⁴⁰⁰ and the Siirtans”⁴⁰¹ and “Tokatians and Siirtans”⁴⁰². In *Sabah*, the expressions are “tradesmen and Roma”,⁴⁰³ “Siirtans, Mardinians and Roma”,⁴⁰⁴ “Romany citizens and Siirtans”,⁴⁰⁵ “the Roma and the Siirtans”.⁴⁰⁶ Furthermore, the fighting parties were described as “two groups having tension and conflict for years”.⁴⁰⁷ It is obvious that language of the news reports oscillates between avoiding any ethno-cultural implication and blaming a certain ‘stigmatized’ group – the Roma.

In a similar vein, Esenler Mayor Mehmet Öcalan described the events as started by “some wrongdoings of Roma children”,⁴⁰⁸ and Istanbul Police Headquarters’ statement of the events included certain derogatory and stigmatizing expressions about the Roma such as “nomads” and “nomad hordes”⁴⁰⁹ “attacking the residents of the neighborhood”:

The incident started with a tradesman of the neighborhood beating up the son of one nomad family living in Karabayır Neighborhood, 693rd Street, and continued with the members of the nomad hordes living on the entire 693rd Street attacking neighborhood residents with stones and sticks and reacted in the same way by the

³⁹⁸ Taken from the comments of the district governor Ali Gün (Esenler’de sokağa çıkma yasağına devam, *Hürriyet*, 04.03.2002).

³⁹⁹ Esenler’de sokağa çıkma yasağı, *Hürriyet*, 03.03.2002.

⁴⁰⁰ Here, usage of quotation marks ascribes an intrinsic character to the Roma people, which the others do not possess.

⁴⁰¹ Esenler’de sokağa çıkma yasağına devam, *Hürriyet*, 04.03.2002.

⁴⁰² Esenler’de gergin saatler, *Hürriyet*, 04.03.2002.

⁴⁰³ Esenler savaşı, *Sabah*, 03.03.2002.

⁴⁰⁴ Esenler savaşı, *Sabah*, 03.03.2002.

⁴⁰⁵ Meydan savaşı, *Sabah*, 04.03.2002.

⁴⁰⁶ Sakarya Caddesi’nde ‘OHAL’ sürüyor, *Sabah*, 05.03.2002.

⁴⁰⁷ Meydan savaşı, *Sabah*, 04.03.2002.

⁴⁰⁸ Sakarya Caddesi’nde ‘OHAL’ sürüyor, *Sabah*, 05.03.2002.

⁴⁰⁹ Here, the Turkish expression “sülale” is translated as “horde” because both of the words imply a crowd with hostile behavior.

residents. Both groups also used guns against each other. (43 'Esenler sanığı' için tutuklama istemi, Hürriyet, 07.03.2002)

News reports reflect different explanations of both parties, even though the language of the news reports tend to put the blame more on the Roma. For example, it is argued that the conflict should not be evaluated as the fight of two different groups but rather should be seen as the residents' outburst of anger towards the Roma which has been piled up in years:

Many people claim that this should not be evaluated as the fight of two different groups. According to them, this is more of an outburst of anger of the neighborhood residents towards the Roma which has been piled up in years... (Sakarya Caddesi'nde 'OHAL' sürüyor, Sabah, 05.03.2002)

There are some points worth considering about the quotation above. First of all, the counter position of the Roma is expressed as the view of "many people", rendering it a "commonsensical" position. Accordingly, the fact that "many people" have agreed on the disturbing behavior of the Roma for years justifies that the Roma have indeed disturbing behavior. On the other hand, the Roma deny that they are involved in illegal activities and they are being discriminated by the state.

Interviews with the residents of the neighborhood revealed that the two parties have different explanations about the events. Roma claimed that they are excluded and humiliated because of their religious beliefs. They argue that the Siirtans have been supported by the police, which has been continuously raiding their houses, and the Nationalist Action Party (NAP), which provided them with guns. The Siirtans, on the other hand, complain about the Roma for their deviant and illegal behavior and accuse them of being thieves. The mukhtar claims that robbery and assault were common crimes in the neighborhood, most of which are not reflected in the statistics (Erman and Eken, 2004: 62).

One of the leaders of the Siirtan youth:

Both Roma and we have been living in Karabayır for over 30 years. Yet we cannot get along with them. There is a clash of culture. They should leave Karabayır.

A Siirtan woman:

We are scared to go to the section where the Roma live. In this last Event, my neighborhood people united against the gypsies and wanted to give them their lesson.

A tradesman from Malatya:

The gypsy young men show up in the streets with beer bottles in their hands as soon as the sun goes down. It is dangerous even for men to walk in the street. They harass passers-by. Neither the police nor the officials from the electric company can enter this part of the neighborhood (Erman and Eken, 2004: 62).

Other views opposing the Roma referenced in the news reports emphasize that the Romany families are too crowded and cause disturbance all the time. Emphasizing that the conflict has no ethnic, political or religious background, they argue that the whole incident resulted from the illegal activities of the Roma:

"What happened here is the result of an accumulation of 15-20 years. Stealing, lawlessness piled and finally exploded. Aluminum doors are dismantled and sold in this neighborhood. Auto tapes are stolen. Some days, our children's pocket money is taken away. We even witnessed our children's coats taken off them in school. The reason of that conflict is neither religious nor racial. It is entirely because of the Roma's lawlessness and theft." (Yukarı Mahalle: Bu kavga 20 yılın birikimidir, Sabah, 03.04.2002)

The Roma, on the other hand, argue that all they care is to earn their bread and make a living. Furthermore, they maintain that the claim on them dealing with illegal activities and harass the other residents have no solid ground since no one has ever been robbed or attacked in the neighborhood. According to the Roma, there are racist sentiments beneath the accusations against them.⁴¹⁰

There are a number of explanations for such intra-neighborhood conflicts in the lower class areas. Competition over urban land and rent increases the importance of belonging to a particular group, be it ethnic, religious or regional, and sharpens the 'us vs. them' conflict. Erman and Eken (2004: 63) claim that the hostility of the Siirtans against the Roma can be understood in terms of setting eyes on the land inhabited by the Roma. In relation to that, worsening economic conditions after the economic crisis of 2001 deeply affected the Siirtans, who were mostly small-scale merchants, and their economic conditions deteriorated significantly. As it is mentioned elsewhere, the unemployed youth socializing mostly on the streets among peer groups display an inclination towards violent behavior (Erder, 1997). In such an atmosphere, they may have directed their anger and frustration towards the Roma, who are the most powerless and disadvantageous group in the neighborhood, or "the Other of the Other" as Erman and Eken (2004: 63) define.

⁴¹⁰ Sakarya Caddesi'nde 'OHAL' sürüyor, Sabah, 05.03.2002.

On the other hand, spatial concentration may have a role in the stigmatization of communities which renders cultural differences more explicit while enabling the members of the community practice their particular way of life. Such concentration and increased sense of community may result in collective reactions to individual conflicts (Erman and Eken, 2004: 64). When spatial isolation is combined with the state's discontent attitude towards Alevism and Romani, Karabayır Roma's violent and self-preservationist behaviors become more comprehensible.

Erman and Eken (2004: 66) claim that Karabayır is an "unregulated territory with its own domain of power":

When they see that the doors of upward mobility are closing down on them in the present system, they tend to create their own "domain of power", their own "state-free" territories in the urban space, challenging the State's legitimacy and its rule of law. The urban periphery, as in the case of Karabayır, with its unregistered residents, unrecorded criminal acts, unlicensed guns, unattended schools, unemployed or informally employed workforce, illegal electric use, and more importantly with its unregulated housing and job markets, becomes the territory outside of State regulations and control. (...) It was only possible for state officials to enter the neighborhood when Karabayır was under curfew; the electric company only then was able to disconnect hundreds of wires that were illegally connected to street lamps to electrify houses without paying bills. Also, the state's functions are inadequate, if not absent in the neighborhood, particularly in the Romans' section. For example, the garbage is not collected, and (...) state security forces fail to provide residents' safety in everyday life. The state intervenes when there is a problem, an "emergency", to which paying attention cannot be avoided, such as the event.

However, such a perspective overlooks many other dimensions of stigmatizing and criminalizing certain social groups and also problematical about the relation between the state and the society. It ascribes a fallacious autonomy to a stigmatized, excluded neighborhood by labeling it as "unregulated territory"; and also rules out any critical analysis of the particular role of the state in the current condition of the place by rendering it all powerless. This position is not far from the mainstream media's depiction of the events, ascribing the neighborhood and its residents a totalistic, independent existence – an uncanny island of danger and crime. Headlines of the news reports provide a good example: "Esenler war" (Esenler Savaşı), "The battle" (Meydan Savaşı).

Another point to be criticized about Erman and Eken's (2004: 66) claim is that the ethnic/religious/regional fragmentation of the lower class is peculiar to the non-

Western/peripheral countries, while, in the West, the majority of the urban poor are composed of “alienated, uprooted, lonely individuals”. However, such ghettoization is also common in the Western capitalist societies, in which ethnic, religious or racial lower class minorities tend to reside in their closed communities. Therefore, rather than a matter of “development”, ghettoization is about class relations and exploitation in the societies.

In terms of the news discourse, it can be argued that the conflict in the neighborhood is linked to migration and poverty. Increasing population with the recent migrations from Anatolia, and mainly Southeast, and the resulting “irregular urbanization” are displayed as motives behind the sharpening tension between two “different cultures”:

Since the ‘different’ cultures living side by side in the unplastered gecekondus turned into apartments lapped onto each other in this rapidly growing varoş for 10 or 15 years have attacked each other with fury, there is a ‘state of emergency’ in Sakarya Avenue. (Sakarya Caddesi'nde 'OHAL' sürüyor, Sabah, 05.03.2002)

In the following years, occasional tensions continued from time to time in Karabayır.⁴¹¹ Three years later, in 2005, there has been another conflict in the neighborhood and one man was killed by the police. It is particularly emphasized that the fighting parties stopped and attacked the police when they came to the neighborhood to take the situation under control.⁴¹²

The intra-neighborhood conflicts in the troubled neighborhoods are reported in the newspapers in terms of ethnic identities, struggle over rent and criminal activities. In the most outstanding examples of intra-neighborhood conflicts within the past decade covered in the newspapers, the fighting parties are the Roma and Southeastern, mainly Kurdish groups. The language of the news reports tend to criminalize the Roma community and emphasize their illegal way of life as the main reason behind the conflicts. However, when it comes to a political protest of the Kurdish groups, the news reports take side with the Roma. But in general, ethnic prejudices and discrimination, even religious differences play an important part in the conflicts and contribute to the ethnic stigmatization of the Roma community.

⁴¹¹ Karabayır’da gergin gün, Hürriyet, 18.06.2003; Esenler Karabayır yine karıştı: 1 ölü, Hürriyet, 18.02.2005.

⁴¹² Esenler Karabayır yine karıştı: 1 ölü, Hürriyet, 18.02.2005.

4.2.3. Profile of the residents

News reports on troubled neighborhoods provide a resident profile with various components. The major social groups living in these neighborhoods are the Roma, Kurdish migrants, transvestites and African and Middle Eastern immigrants, but the crime news reports considering these areas are mostly about the Roma and the Kurdish migrants. Mostly defined as marginal and excluded groups, the major characteristic of the residents is defined as illegality. The profile of the residents portrayed by the news reports is categorized under three titles: living conditions, crime as a major activity conducted every member of families, and a ‘criminal’ or ‘deviant’ identity constructed in terms of ethnicity, class and character traits.

In terms of the living conditions, the residents are portrayed as pursuing an “informal life” in every sense, from having no identity cards, residence records to using illegal electricity, water, etc. However, the depictions of the living conditions tend to draw a paradoxical picture in which the residents are both depicted as on the verge of extreme poverty and enjoying a hidden luxury thanks to the illegal activities they are involved in. Secondly, news reports give elaborate details of the everyday activities of the residents, which are mainly illegal, such as drug-dealing or various forms of theft, including purse-snatching. There is a particular emphasis on family-size crime. In many news reports, criminal activities are displayed as family business. In relation to that, the children are portrayed as the “new generation of criminals”, who have been taught since they were infants. The identity of the residents displayed in the news reports has various dimensions including migrant identity, ethnic identity, class identity and local identity, all of which sharing a common ground - ‘criminality’. Ethnic identity is linked to criminality through certain different negative stereotypes for the Roma and the Kurdish migrants. While the Roma are displayed as “innately prone to criminal activity” due to their particular way of life, customs and habits, the Kurdish migrants’ propensity to crime is usually linked with their political inclinations. Stereotypes are not limited with ethnicity; reports also provide some characteristics of class identity, in other words, habitus. Socio-economic positions of the residents are given as proofs to explain their resentment against the “rich”, the state and the

rest of the society in general. The portrayal of children and their role in the criminal activities is particularly important. As “the next generation of criminals”, the children’s hard-boiled attitude in criminal transactions are emphasized to imply the innate deviant essence and indicate that the line between “the abused object” and “criminal subject” is blurred in the news reports. Thus, it can be argued that the news reports put forward a unified, solid, stereotypical identity for all the residents, ascribed to every resident living in the areas in question.

4.2.3.1. Living Conditions

The living conditions described in the news reports on troubled neighborhoods imply that even when the residents does not actually ‘commit’ a crime, their very way of life, routine everyday activities are the indicators of illegality and criminal activities. In other words, description of the living conditions contributes to the demonizing, incriminating discourse on the residents. These descriptions may include contradictory elements such as both underlining that the residents use illegal electricity and indicating that they own luxurious cars and TVs.

Under the major defining principle, illegality, unregistered living is counted as an indicator. Having no birth certificates, identity cards and residence records, registering the children at old ages or using illegal electricity, water, etc. are displayed as parts of criminal profile, or a tendency to criminal behavior even if not all of them are purse-snatchers, drug-dealers, etc. Accordingly, ‘unregistered living’ is given as a proof to the temporariness of their existence in those areas. In fact, their very conditions of existence is defined as ‘illegal’. It is common for the news reports to mention unregistered living alongside with a police bust:

Indicating that there have been 1274 operations last year, a police official said, “They have no record. Everything is unregistered. We have to leave the neighborhood in half an hour at the latest. Otherwise, the people in the neighborhood attack with stones and sticks.”

Similar to the previous operations, police prepared a sketch of the neighborhood for the last Karabayır operation because the houses have no numbers. Sketches of the houses were brought to the prosecutor’s Office and search warrant was taken upon these sketches. The houses are not registered in any sense. They neither pay taxes nor electric bills. Most of them use illegal electricity. It is argued that it

would take a long time to solve this problem through policing measures. (Karabayır benzeri en az 10 semt var, Hürriyet, 21.01.2006)

In the operation [to Sarıgöl] houses using illegal electricity were also specified. (Şafak operasyonu, Sabah, 24.02.2006)

In contrast, it is also implied that the residents pursue a ‘hidden’ prosperous life thanks to illegal activities. Despite it seems paradoxical, the same residents who appeal to using illegal electricity to avoid paying bills, are also the ones to own plasma TVs or top model cars:

The neighborhood residents with top model cars in front of their houses protested the operation [made to Hacıhüsrev] by throwing slippers to the police from their windows (1250 polislik operasyon, Hürriyet, 18.03.2006)

(Testimony of an author who wrote a book on the street children of İstanbul) Young author says that she was shocked by the luxury in the houses of some children she befriended. She says, "There was even a plasma TV in one house where the family lived on pick-pocketing and made their children do the same job. I was quite shocked." (Mendilci kızın evinde plazma televizyon vardı, Sabah, 14.01.2010)

The news reports claim that the children who were caught by the police and put into children’s homes were taken away by people in “Mercedeses”. Even though the news report implies that there might be some greater criminal organization behind, it also emphasizes that the families might be the ones to take children with expensive cars:

Provincial Director of Social Services Eroğlu stated that children sent to children’s homes by court order have been taken away by crime gangs. He said, “We do not have the necessary infrastructure in our institutions to rehabilitate criminal children. Still, courts send children to us. But children escape. We cannot force them to stay. Next thing you know, a *Mercedes* comes and takes away the children half an hour after he/she came. These children are organizedly made to commit crimes by their families or other people.” (Kasımpaşalı uyuma! Sabah, 19.01.2003)

There are occasional news about owning luxurious hotels or having flamboyant wedding ceremonies. Even though these news reports are mainly mentioning gang leaders or some individual cases of hitting the jackpot like stealing a big amount of money at once from a bank, they still imply that there is a possibility for these people to have a luxurious, wealthy life with what they have stolen:

When their families did not consent to their marriage, the couple who grew up in Hacıhüsrev, ran away to Adana with three other children from the neighborhood a month ago. They started a luxurious life there with the money they stole. The bride-to-be, who got caught 45 times and the groom-to-be, who got caught 15

times in a year by the police, flipped their wedding money in their last job. When they were identified by the security cameras stealing 40 thousand YTL from a bank in Adana, they come to naught about setting up their new home in this city. (...) They settled on 40 thousand YTL for a wedding of 300 guests. The deal included the bride and groom's two-day honeymoon suite. The bride and groom got caught after coming to the hotel with a 45-thousand-Euro BMW. (Balayı süiti yerine şubede sabahladılar, Hürriyet, 02.05.2006)

It was revealed that the families that got caught in the "Iron Fist" operation made to Hacıhüsrev (...) and structured like crime organizations had million dollars of fortune. Mükerrerem and Müjdat Çapalar, the leaders of the Çapalar family which is one of the organizing families of crimes like theft, purse-snatching and murder, got caught in their luxurious, million-dollar villa with pool in Silivri. It also came out that Akıncılar family had a hotel in Kuşadası. (Büyük operasyondan sonra suç oranı düştü, Sabah, 10.07.2007)

The living conditions of the residents of 'troubled' neighborhoods as displayed in the news reports tend to give a contradictory picture which includes both traces of extreme material destitution such as using illegal electricity or taking refuge in desolate houses, and also imply that they have been pursuing a luxurious way of life by means of the criminal activities. But in both cases, as van Dijk (1989: 34) states, they are represented negatively by implying that they are a burden on the state and 'us', which makes 'us the real victims'.

4.2.3.2. Activities: Crime as Family Business

Major activities of the residents handled within the scope of this work are related to crime. The major crimes handled by the news reports and constitute the basis for this work are drug dealing, drug usage, purse-snatching, pick-pocketing, shoplifting and various other forms of theft. Gang formation is depicted as an important indicator of the corruption of the neighborhoods. An emphasis on organized crime calls for extreme measures in the fight against them. In other words, it is implied that regular policing methods would not be sufficient to eradicate the illegal activities in the area, a militarized struggle is necessary. There are occasional references to gangs settled or operating in the area. Gangs are either drug-dealing or purse-snatching ones. They are depicted as organized groups, dividing up the area among each other and controlling certain territories, having many people working for them from children to older women. It is claimed that the gangs have

also created an economy of stolen goods through various spot stores in the area.⁴¹³ In Beyoğlu, it is claimed that there are “dealer communities”, divided into “the solitary” (münferitler), “the dealers” (torbacılar), and “the wholesalers” (toptancılar). The wholesalers are argued to be located in Tarlabası and employ the other groups:

The police officer attending operations against drug dealers and thieves ‘operating’ in Beyoğlu, where every kind of drug is sold publicly, says that there are “dealer communities” in the district. According to the police and police records, the characteristics and modus operandi of dealers communities are as follows: the operations show that there are more than 100 dealers in Beyoğlu. Apart from them, there is another group of 30 people called “the solitary” (münferit). They usually ‘have their way’ and sell drugs on the streets. The majority of the dealers are the employees of another group of 20-30 persons called the “wholesalers” (toptancılar). This group works under the wholesalers and get paid by them. (Beyoğlu'nda cemaat çetesi, Sabah, 07.08.2006)

The gangs are claimed to own heavy weapons⁴¹⁴ and do not hesitate to resort to violence when they feel threatened. In some of the news reports, the whole neighborhood is depicted as a part of the gang. Or, even if they do not belong to a gang, the residents are portrayed as looking out for and support each other, and protecting the gang members. Making false statements to the police is a common practice for the residents to mislead or avoid them.⁴¹⁵ They addict young “innocent non-residents” to drugs, beat, torture and even rape them if one denies to commit crime, control the lower-rank dealers by protection and threat, such as hit men to lookout for them in the streets. They even keep people captive. For example, in a series of news reports in Sabah about a young girl held against her own will in Sarıgöl and forced to deal drugs after becoming addicted herself, the girl’s story and testimonies took wide coverage.⁴¹⁶

"It is a whole different place. I went there because of some friends. Some of my friends lived in Sarıgöl so we went there out of curiosity. We got into trouble because of curiosity. I will not give their names but some people in Sarıgöl used me. Everyone knows each other, everyone watches each other’s back. Mugger,

⁴¹³ Evi, iş yeri soyulanlar bu haberi dikkatle okusun, Hürriyet, 03.03.2010.

⁴¹⁴ “Another striking claim is that drug gangs own heavy weapons...” (Beyoğlu'nda cemaat çetesi, Sabah, 07.08.2006)

⁴¹⁵ “Police passes by from time to time. When they ask something, no one gives a straight answer.” (İşkence ve dayak günleri!..., Savaş Ay, Sabah, 23.01.2003)

⁴¹⁶ 15 yaşındaki kızı işkenceyle esrar satıcısı yaptılar, Sabah, 23.01.2003.

purse-snatcher, drug dealer, robber, you name it. Most of the children, girls, and boys do illegal things. There are other boys or girls like me who somehow ended up in there or kidnapped. (...) At first, I resisted a lot. I wanted to leave. They said that once you came, you cannot leave. They started beating. Then everything became worse. They began to torture. They were beating and burning with cigarettes.

I became addicted to marijuana there. They gave it in cigarettes, or they made water pipes. I was both using and selling. (...) I wanted to take the money of the people I was staying with and run away. (...) Then they caught me. (She cries) They caught me in Küçükköy. They caught me with the money, took off my clothes and kicked out. They beat me, flogged me. They beat and raped me for hours by the stream. (...) If I ran away again, they would kill me and fed to the dogs.” (İşkence ve dayak günleri!.. Savaş Ay, Sabah, 23.01.2003)

Tracing their daughter for 8 months like detectives, the parents finally discovered where she was kept against her will. However, the area in question was Sarıgöl, a “crime ghetto” where every kind of convict dwelled and hid. Gang members attacked and brutally beat the parents with sticks, knives and blades, who wanted to save their daughter from a place where even the police teams could hardly enter. (Bir annenin dramı, Sabah, 23.01.2003)

Among the gangs located in troubled neighborhoods, Delibaş gang (see, chapter on ‘purse-snatching’) is the most frequently mentioned one. Delibaş gang was settled in Tarlabası Çukur Mahalle and in that sense, Tarlabası is depicted as the “lair of criminals”, “shelter of the gang”⁴¹⁷ and center of purse-snatching activity. For example, it is stated that Delibaş has turned Tarlabası into a “big crime empire”,⁴¹⁸ and “everyone knows that purse-snatchers live in Tarlabası”.⁴¹⁹ Even after the gang was brought down, the neighborhood continued to be mentioned with gang settlement in the area:

The neighborhood became the base of purse-snatchers in the last two-three years. Therefore, one has to be careful and walk around in groups in the area. (İstanbul’un arka sokakları, Hürriyet, 03.12.2004)

There are 30 people in the gang in Tarlabası

The number of the members of the gang in Tarlabası is 30, which is composed of trickster, dodger, brother, uncle and big brother. This gang includes nearly everyone ‘who seems promising’. Bitirim is one of them. Among the reasons which led Bitirim to pick-pocketing and purse-snatching, ‘poverty and influence of friends’ have an important role, who remarked, “Each and every one of the 500 children in Tarlabası today is ready to steal”. (Kapkaçıyla evlenmek için kızlar can atıyor... Serdar Devrim, Hürriyet, 14.07.2005)

⁴¹⁷ Çukur Mahalle’de güvenlik kamerası, Sabah, 01.11.2003.

⁴¹⁸ Çocuk çetelerinin acımasız patronu, Sabah, 13.11.2002.

⁴¹⁹ ‘Bey’ nostalji oldu ‘Oğlu’ korku içinde, Sabah, 05.08.2003.

Other than Delibaş gang, there were no other specifically defined or named gangs in the crime news reports. But there are always reference to gang formation in these neighborhoods. For example, in many news reports, there is an emphasis on the practice of renting cars as a service to go to work for the drug-dealers and purse-snatchers or pick-pockets, which reinforces the idea of organized crime.⁴²⁰ It is even particularly underlined that the drug gangs in these areas are not ordinary gangs but large-scale crime organizations:

They are not an ordinary gang but an organized crime group. Police has trouble in infiltrating them and gathering information. Because drug money is distributed in big amounts considering the security of the gang. That is why the gangs are very secretive. (Beyoğlu'nda cemaat çetesi, Sabah, 07.08.2006)

In addition to dealing drugs, the residents are also portrayed as “using” drugs. The tone of the first news report extract below mentioning bottled water pipes for smoking pot located in the houses creates an image as if every resident of the neighborhood is a drug addict. To make matters even worse, the residents are portrayed as deceivers, seducing outsider/innocent people, tricking them into illegitimate life:

“It is a whole different place. I went there because of some friends. Some of my friends lived in Sarıgöl so we went there out of curiosity. We got into trouble because of curiosity. (...) I became addicted to marijuana there. They gave it in cigarettes, or they made water pipes. I was both using and selling. I became a dealer.” (İşkence ve dayak günleri!.., Savaş Ay, Sabah, 23.01.2003)

Water pipes used for smoking pot was discovered in the houses. (1500 polis sabaha karşı mahalle bastı, Hürriyet, 24.02.2006)

In ‘troubled’ neighborhoods, criminal activities are sometimes displayed as “family business”. The emphasis on “family-size” crime points to the fact that criminal behavior is inherited from generation to generation and since the people see illegal business as their “job”, they “see no harm in using their children”.⁴²¹ Some of the “criminal families” mentioned in the news reports are the major ones that conduct the business in the area.⁴²² Division of labor among different families or within

⁴²⁰ İstanbul'da korsan taksitle hırsız servisi, Hürriyet, 05.12.2006.

⁴²¹ “Since the families see drug dealing as their “job”, they see no harm in making their children do the same thing. The major reason of using children is that they do not have criminal liability.” (Karabayır benzeri en az 10 semt var, Hürriyet, 21.01.2006)

⁴²² “It is specified that 6 families conduct drug dealing business in the area. The most famous of them is “Aynur the heel breaker”” (Hacıhüsrev'e 11 ayda 25 operasyon, Sabah, 03.11.2004), (Uyuşturucu şebekesi aileye gözaltı”, Sabah, 18.08.2006), “It was revealed that the families that got

family members are emphasized in a news report with the title, “40 families have worked like a holding”. The title implies that the criminal families are so well-organized that they are comparable to extensive and broad-range associations like holdings:

There is an ongoing investigation on gang charges about 139 people out of 250 that have been taken into custody are. It is indicated that the gang is composed of 40 families and divided into groups like the ones stealing, hiding the money and the ones that turn the stolen goods into cash. (40 aile holding gibi çalışmış, Sabah, 08.07.2007)

There also more “small-scale” criminal families who usually involve in shoplifting, pick-pocketing or purse-snatching as well as small-scale drug-dealing. For the families dealing with different forms of robbery, it is argued that there is a division of labor between the family members: using little children for picking up purses from cars or from counters in shops, etc. This division of labor implies that families are in fact organized crime groups:

“Here, the eldest woman of the family takes care of the business. All the grandchildren, even the children of neighbors are used. They rather work around Taksim, Elmadağ and Beyoğlu. They do purse-snatching to tourists and old women that seem rich. If they ever reach the slope from Elmadağ to Dolapdere after purse-snatching, it is not possible to catch them.” (Polisten bin ah işittik, Hürriyet, 01.06.2000)

Theft gangs of the residents of Beyoğlu Hacıhüsrev and Hacıahmet Neighborhoods are composed of extended families and they go stealing together as a family. Women and especially children do the stealing. A driver, two women (mother or sister) and two children below 18 work as a team. While the child does the stealing, the women distract the victim. Theft gangs choose crowded places and prefer shopping malls on rainy days. They go stealing with their own cars or with rentals. (...) Police specified that a driver named Sedat Dalgıç has been picking up the children from their homes in Hacıhüsrev Neighborhood, taking them to big shopping malls and returning them to their homes in the evening. After getting caught, Dalgıç said, "Their families wanted them to steal. I only picked them up from their homes and dropped them off to places where they will do the stealing. I was paid 50 million daily." (Ailece 'işe' çıkıyorlar, Sabah, 19.01.2003)

The involvement of women and children are specifically mentioned in many news reports. It is often stated that 5-6 years old children, teenagers, pregnant women, mothers with children, old women take part in drug-dealing, pick-pocketing or purse-snatching, which implies that each and every one living in ‘troubled’ neighborhoods is somewhat involved in crime. In some of the news reports it is

caught in the “Iron Fist” operation made to Hacıhüsrev (...) and structured like crime organizations had million dollars of fortune.” (Büyük operasyondan sonra suç oranı düştü, Sabah, 10.07.2007)

particularly emphasized that the families train their children to become drug-dealers or thieves. Some of the examples of news reports which particularly emphasize the involvement of women and children are as follows:⁴²³

A reporter easily goes in and out of many houses in the neighborhood to buy drugs and never leaves one empty-handed. It is possible to see different kinds of dealers from 5-6 years old children to elderly women on the streets. (Zehire bulaşan minicik eller! Sabah, 18.01.2006)

Nearly 100 people were taken into custody in the operation, including pregnant women and children. (Hacıhüsrev'e 450 polisle baskın, Hürriyet, 15.01.2009)

It is worth noting that there were elderly women among the suspects. (Hacıhüsrev'e şafak operasyonu, Sabah, 28.06.2009)

It is worth noting that two of the women taken into custody were brought to the police station with their children. (Hacıhüsrev'e şok operasyon, Hürriyet, 06.03.2010)

It is worth noting that there were women with babies taken into custody. (Hacıhüsrev'de gündüz operasyonu, Sabah, 06.03.2010)

In some of the cases, it is claimed that the mothers train their daughters in the ways of pick-pocketing, shoplifting, etc. In that sense, in many news reports it is underlined that the mothers of children involving in crime are usually also ex-convicts and their rap sheet is particularly mentioned.⁴²⁴ Accordingly, the children are sometimes depicted as committing crimes to earn money because mother is in prison.⁴²⁵ It is underlined that the girls' criminal record are similar to their mothers' because they take after their mothers. The girls are defined as "absolute crime machines just like their mothers". In fact, they have been involved in crime since they were babies because their mothers exploit the advantage of being with little babies in stealing, etc.:

⁴²³ In some of the news reports, it is specifically emphasized that there are women and young people among the ones taken into custody: İstanbul'da asayiş operasyonu, Hürriyet, 07.07.2007; Helikopterli baskın: 130 kişi gözaltında, Hürriyet, 13.11.2008; İstanbul'da "Bayram Temizliği" operasyonu, Sabah, 26.09.2008; Hacıhüsrev'de bayram öncesi yankesici operasyonu, Sabah, 27.09.2008; 60 eve 200 polisle koçbaşlı operasyon, Hürriyet, 29.06.2009;

⁴²⁴ "8 years old P.B. and his 7 years old brother P.B. did tens of purse-snatching and stealing in a very short time. (...) It was learned that their mother Nazan B. also gone to prison two years ago because of stealing." (Oyunu değil, hırsızlığı seçti, Hürriyet, 22.11.2005), "It came out that Ayşenur Özmut, mother of the little child living in Hacıhüsrev, also has 15 criminal records from stealing." ('Hırsızlığa değil, türbe ziyaretine geldik', Hürriyet, 06.07.2007)

⁴²⁵ "M.S.T., one of the thieves handed over to the Juvenile Branch Office, said in his first statement, 'My mother is in prison. That is why I stole.'" (Alex'in eşini çarptılar, Hürriyet, 22.11.2004)

15 years old Mihriban T. and 14 years old Yaprak K. are caught, who have stolen 32 billion from Ziraat Bank Eyüp Branch. (...) And the mothers who have raised their daughters as ferocious thieves since they were very young are searched by the police. The police has been looking for Sevilay K. and Nuray T. who made their children steal by hiring them a chauffeur. (Çocuklarını yaktılar, Sabah, 26.02.2003)

WHAT THE MOTHERS DID

These children have nowhere to go other than Hacıhüsrev and no one to go to except for their families. (...) Mothers are absolute crime machines just like their daughters. Mihriban T.'s mother Nuray T. has 62, and Yaprak K.'s mother Sevilay K. has 59 criminal records. Under these circumstances, it seems that the children have no other choice. Even when they were only infants, they play their part in the act of crime in their mothers' arms. Mothers work more efficiently by using the advantage of having babies. (Küçük oyuncu soyguncu kızlar, Ersin Kalkan, Hürriyet, 15.03.2003)

Division of labor comes into play as soon as the girls are old enough to walk. The news report tells that the girls “shoplift” purses and bags “with pacifiers in their mouths” while their mothers are distracting attention:

Little girls are set to work as soon as they are old enough to walk. While their mothers distract the shop owner, the girls shoplift the bags with pacifiers in their mouths and bring them to the other woman waiting outside the shop. There are records of hundreds of similar cases in the Public Order Branch Office. (Küçük oyuncu soyguncu kızlar, Ersin Kalkan, Hürriyet, 15.03.2003)

It is argued in the news reports that because the children are underage and had to be returned to their families, they continue committing crimes. It is even said that “the girls get back to the internship with their mothers”. Yet, since the police and the courts treat these girls, their mothers and the drivers as “a criminal organization”, they were able to “inactivate” 20 criminal families. However, still, putting the children in detentions centers or children homes is not a solution since families break out, smuggle their children out of those places:⁴²⁶

⁴²⁶ In addition to the lack of physical measures, the orphanages are claimed to be not proper for children involved in crimes because they were mainly designed for “innocent” children. Placing “innocent children” opposite of children involved in crime implies that the latter is “guilty”. Accordingly, children involved in crime are claimed to seduce other children in the orphanages to do illegal activities by bragging about how much they earn. In various news reports on little pick-pockets or purse-snatchers, the statements of Social Services experts are referred to. It is commonly argued that putting these girls in orphanages after they get caught is not a solution because this time they corrupt the other children in the centers (Küçük oyuncu soyguncu kızlar, Ersin Kalkan, Hürriyet, 15.03.2003; Oyunu değil, hırsızlığı seçti, Hürriyet, 22.11.2005; Çocuk Sitesi'nde bir konsomatris, Hürriyet, 05.06.2006).

IT IS COUNTED AS FORMING GANG

About a year ago, İstanbul Public Order Branch Office started a new practice. Having specified that shoplifting has three pillars, police began to haul the mother, the child and the driver up before the judge with the crime of forming a gang. At first, the judges did not sustain such claims and held only the child responsible for the crime. The children were taken away from their mothers and sent to children's homes. And the girls escape the first chance they got and continued their internship with their mothers. A Public Order Branch officer wearily mentions the well-known vicious circle: "We catch them but they leave the court cocking a snook at us. In a couple of weeks, everything repeats itself." In the last few months, prosecutors and judges started to acknowledge that the public order branch office was right about gang claim and 20 shoplifting families were made ineffective.

CHILDREN ON THE RUN

Yaprak was sent to Küçükyalı Children's Home because she was younger, and Mihriban was sent to another center for girls in Bahçelievler. Children are already registered in those centers. Provincial Directorate of Social Services declared that Yaprak and Mihriban have come almost 20 times before and disappeared in a couple of days. Because, these places are not detention centers but children's homes.

When we told that we wanted to visit Yaprak and Mihriban, the officials said that this was not possible because the girls ran away from the center on February, 27th, two days after they stole an ATM safe with 32 billion inside. They also told a story. Yaprak used to stay in a children's home in Yakacık a year ago. As the story goes, she could not find a way to escape because this center was more secure than the others. Next evening, when there was a bomb call, the children were evacuated from the building to the yard. It turned out that it was a hoax bomb call and Yaprak disappeared taking advantage of the mess. While escaping, Yaprak told other children, "My folk have cooked it up". (Küçük oyuncu soyguncu kızlar, Ersin Kalkan, Hürriyet, 15.03.2003)

To sum up, the major activities covered in the news reports on 'troubled' neighborhoods are either illegal or related to crime in some way. In that sense, it is implied that the majority of the residents are either purse-snatchers or drug dealers by particularly emphasizing people are involved in crime on "family-size", sometimes dragging 'innocent' non-residents into the life of crime. Even if they are not directly involved in criminal activities they are either drug addicts or help the criminals to escape or evade the police.

4.2.3.3. Identity

Identity construction for the residents of ‘troubled’ neighborhoods in the news reports is a multi-faceted process. It includes portrayals of migrant identity, ethnic identity, class identity and local identity as in the case of neighborhood belongingness. But above all, the common ground of all these identities appears as ‘criminality’. Thus, being mentioned with crime and criminal activities is the most common stereotype for the residents of the troubled neighborhoods and the most crucial one within the scope of this study. As mentioned before, the neighborhoods are often defined as “lairs” of purse-snatchers and drug dealers is a common trait for many news reports, which contributes to the construction of a solid, holistic neighborhood image by labelling every resident as a kind of criminal. For example, the cosmopolitan, multi-cultural fabric of Tarlabası is mentioned in the news reports alongside with the high crime rates in the area. In that sense, it can be argued that different social groups living in the area such as African and Iraqi migrants, the Kurds and the Roma are all criminalized. Tarlabası, which harbors all these social groups is defined as a place “where you should be careful about your safety”:⁴²⁷

Tarlabası is among the most complicated neighborhoods of İstanbul with high crime rates. Even though Kurds, Roma, Africans or Iraqi immigrants live side by side, they are also distant from each other. (Tarlabası'nın öteki yüzü, Sabah, 08.12.2006)

Similarly, in a news report on the gecekondu demolitions in Sarıgöl, it is mentioned that the squatters are sent away gradually in small groups to avoid gang formation in the new neighborhood. Such a reasoning implies that all the residents are potential criminals, gang members:

Sarıgöl, with a population of nearly 2,500 people will be totally evacuated in 3 years. It is declared that evacuated families have moved to Karagümruk and Küçükçekmece. Having been evacuated gradually to avoid gang formation in the new neighborhood, the families are said to be easily adapted to the new neighborhoods and established an orderly life. (“İstanbul'un Harlem'i" Sarıgöl dağıtılıyor, Sabah, 13.02.2006)

⁴²⁷“It is good to remind, you should be careful about your safety on especially the streets of Tarlabası.” (İstanbul’un arka sokakları, Hürriyet, 03.12.2004)

After the JDP victory in 2002, Kasımpaşa and Hacıhüsrev, where Tayyip Erdoğan was born and grew up, came to the agenda.⁴²⁸ In a news report, it is argued that 70 percent of the juvenile delinquents come from Kasımpaşa and Hacıhüsrev, which are “complete substitutes of Harlem with high crime rates”. It is claimed that in order to prevent the children from getting involved in crime, the whole neighborhood should be rehabilitated. If not, the report claims that crimes like purse-snatching and robbery would increase. By localizing crime, the news report stigmatizes a certain neighborhood and its people and label them as the sole origin of criminal activities:

70 percent of the children committing crimes are from Kasımpaşa and Hacıhüsrev. The officials argue that children are pushed into crime by their families or strangers in Kasımpaşa, and therefore this neighborhood should be rehabilitated. (Kasımpaşalı uyuma! Sabah, 19.01.2003)

In 2004, the young people of Hacıhüsrev decided to form an association to get rid of the “negative image” of Hacıhüsrev. The news report claims that these young people are different from the “criminal” ones and therefore trying to separate themselves from them by showing that they do social activities instead involving in “illegal business”. The news report also gives many young people who are “turning an honest penny” as examples in contrast to the criminals:

Young people of Hacıhüsrev, known as a ‘hotbed of crime’, try to raise a responsible generation through the association they found to get rid of this image. Young people aim to prevent wrongdoings through social activities.

They did not suffer from anything more than their neighborhood’s name. They were locked out in job interviews. Cab drivers dropped them off the moment they learned the address. Above all, the girls they loved; they dumped them... Because they were the children of Hacıhüsrev... The people lived by the sweat of their brow rose against the ‘notoriety’ of Hacıhüsrev, which is mentioned alongside with purse-snatchers, thieves, drug dealers, and where people are afraid to go. The residents argue that they have been facing difficulties and insults in their private and work life just because they live in this neighborhood and they want to get rid of this image. A group of young people who are fed up with the

⁴²⁸ The fact that Tayyip Erdoğan came from a “notorious” neighborhood and made to the prime minister is displayed in a news report by the victory of the excluded, marginalized segments of the society over the ‘white Turks’. Yet, a critical tone in the mainstream media towards the incriminating discourse on the people of troubled neighborhoods is very rare: “So, nice gentlemen and pretty ladies... Now tell me, what happened to your arguments that “Kasımpaşa, Dolapdere and Hacıhüsrev neighborhoods were the Harlem of this city”, or “their residents were second class, ignorant, uneducated and potential criminals”? Now people of Kasımpaşa are once more proud of their neighborhood. They shout with one voice for their Leader who made the ‘Anatolian Revolution’ in politics: “Kasımpaşa finally beat down Nişantaşı.” (“İMAM Beckenbauer!”, Sabah, 06.11.2002)

neighborhood being called a ‘hotbed of crime’ found The Environment Protection Association for Hacıhüsrev and Hacıahmet Neighborhoods, led by a 58-year-old retired worker Ali Kalyon. Some of which are high school and the others are university graduates, these young people try to open up new horizons to the young people through social activities like theatre plays, movies, picnics or short cruises and meeting on every Saturday.

WE ALWAYS FELT AS LOSERS

Deputy Director of the Association’s Youth Branches Zafer Çağlar is a graduate of Kocaeli University Computer Hardware Department. He has been working as a hardware technician in Bilgi University’s Computer Department. Çağlar says, "We always felt like losers. One of the aims in founding this association was to get rid of such feelings. There are also people in our neighborhood who turn an honest penny." Çağlar states that they want to open up new social spaces for themselves and avoid getting involved in any negative events. He also argues that young people of the neighborhood can be inclined to do certain things when they cannot express themselves freely, and their life will affect their children’s life in the future. (Hacıhüsrev’de değişim rüzgârı, Sabah, 02.05.2004)

As mentioned in the case of purse-snatching incidents before, the official and media discourse constructs a relationship between migration and crime. In terms of the news reports on ‘troubled’ neighborhoods, there is a particular emphasis on population increase of the areas in the recent years which led to an increase in criminal activities, through expressions such as “too much crowd brought crime”,⁴²⁹ or “it is normal for criminals to lay ambush in such crowded areas”.⁴³⁰ The migrants are even contrasted with the “beautiful people” of old times, which logically suggest that they are “dirty”, “bad” or even “ugly”.⁴³¹ The ‘low’ cultural and socio-economic profile of the current residents is directly linked with a tendency to criminal behavior. For example, Sarıgöl is defined as “destination of migration and center of drug trade”⁴³² and it is explicitly stated that “drug-dealing crime has increased alongside with uncontrolled migration”:

Drug-dealing crime has increased alongside with uncontrolled migration in Gaziosmanpaşa to where 20 thousand people migrate every year. Drug dealers took hold of Sarıgöl Neighborhood in the area. (...)

45 thousand more is added to the district population every year

⁴²⁹ 'Bey' nostalji oldu 'Oğlu' korku içinde, Sabah, 05.08.2003.

⁴³⁰ Burası Türkiye'nin en çok asayiş suçlusuyla boğuşan Taksim Karakolu, Hürriyet, 10.06.2006.

⁴³¹ “Back then, everywhere was well-kept, of high-quality. People were classier for once. Now, coarse people come. Public order was also not like that back then. There were not so much thieves, pick-pockets or purse-snatchers. They were all neat and clean people.” ('Bey' nostalji oldu 'Oğlu' korku içinde, Sabah, 05.08.2003)

⁴³² Kurtarılmış bölge için özel taktikler, Sabah, 15.05.2007.

While 760 thousand people lived in the district according to the 2000 census, population increases by 45 thousand every year according to Turkish Statistics Institute records. Accordingly, 20 thousand babies are born and 25 thousand people migrate to Gaziosmanpaşa every year. (Uyuşturucu alışverişi yeni 'merkezine' taşındı, Sabah, 20.09.2006)

In terms of the ethnic identity, it is sometimes specifically underlined in the news reports that the gangs or criminals residing in the 'troubled' neighborhoods are from Eastern and Southeastern cities (Diyarbakır, Siirt, etc), or they are Roma. It is rarely mentioned that they are "Kurdish", rather they are described by their hometowns. This particular emphasis constitutes a subtle relationship between ethnicity and crime. For example, in terms of the Delibaş gang, the news reports express that "the gang members are the children of poor Southeastern families that have migrated to Tarlabası."⁴³³ Or in the case of drug dealers in Hacıhüsrev and Karabayır it is specifically indicated that the Roma and migrants from Diyarbakır conduct the trade which sometimes get into conflict due to "commercial" issues.⁴³⁴

Drug usage and trade is most concentrated in İstanbul. Dealers are Roma or of Eastern origin. (...) Ergüder states that drugs are mostly captured in Üsküdar Selamsız, Gaziosmanpaşa Sarıgöl, Esenler Karabayır and Şişli Dolapdere in İstanbul, and he underlined that drugs are sold by the Roma most of the time and dealers of Eastern origin stepped forward recently in dealing on streets especially ecstasy. (Uyuşturucu baronları gözünü çocuklara dikti, Sabah, 02.10.2003)

Opening a İstanbul map, we decide make to 'spot operations' to areas known with synthetic drug trade. First stop is Upper Karabayır Neighborhood with a population of 50 thousand in Esenler, whose population jumped to 350 thousand in the last 15 years... I get off the vehicle after approaching the gecekondu area of the neighborhood. There are two groups in the neighborhood; the Roma and the Kurds... In this street, two groups live side by side and there is an unnamed border between the two. (...) No one enters the other's "selling" territory. (...) There was a curfew in the neighborhood because of the conflicts in 2-3 March 2002. The reason of the conflict is commercial, and the ethnic differences between the parties instigate the "money conflict". (Karakolun karşısı uyuşturucu pazarı, Sabah, 06.08.2006)

It is even stated that the "gang communities" organize around "Kurdish identity" and other regional identities. The analogy between "community" and "gang" points to some organic bonds among the gang members. In that sense, it is plausible to

⁴³³ Silahlar konuşuyor, insanlar dövülüyor İmam Adnan Sokak'ta neler oluyor? Şermin Sarıbaşı, Hürriyet, 28.09.2003.

⁴³⁴ Hacıhüsrev'e 11 ayda 25 operasyon, Sabah, 03.11.2004; Karakolun karşısı uyuşturucu pazarı, Sabah, 06.08.2006; Esenler'de operasyon, Sabah, 23.06.2006; Esenler'de romanlara baskın: 6 gözaltı, Hürriyet, 23.06.2006.

argue that the news reports suggest a gang or criminal network based on ethnic identity:

Drug gangs defined as “communal” organizations organize upon acquaintanceship, hometown and region. Most of them gather around "Kurdish identity and regional identity". (Beyoğlu'nda cemaat çetesi, Sabah, 07.08.2006)

Apart from the subtle expressions of ethnicity through regional, city belongingness and explicit mentions mostly for the Roma and rarely for the Kurdish, the news reports also provide certain negative ethnic stereotypes. These stereotypes mostly concern the Roma people. Referring to Baykal's (2009: 122) list of the negative stereotypes of the Roma depicted in the media, it can be argued that they include “simple-mindedness, frivolity, pleasure-seeking, avariciousness, licentiousness, cunningness, violence and dangerousness, thieves and petty criminals, serious criminals and drug dealers, enmeshed in poverty through choice” in terms of the news reports on ‘troubled’ neighborhoods.

Naivety and simple-mindedness are the most common stereotypical traits identified with the Roma. For example, in terms of the urban transformation project in Sarıgöl, the Mayor defines the positive reaction and happiness of the Roma who were given money in exchange of their houses as “leaving the houses by playing darbukas”, which imply that the Roma are naïve and simple-minded people who do not take matters seriously.⁴³⁵ Similarly, their frivolous nature is implied by referring to another stereotype, which is belly-dancing as a reaction in times of extreme or extraordinary situations, such as a police bust. It is stated in a news report that the Roma of Hacıhüsrev “protested the police operation by belly-dancing”.⁴³⁶ Being pleasure-seekers is displayed as part of their frivolous nature. In a news report which depicts the Roma of Hacıhüsrev as enjoying drugs and music and caring nothing else links pleasure-seeking with immorality and degeneracy. The subtitle, “The reality of Hacıhüsrev”, implies that the only reality for the Roma of Hacıhüsrev enjoying themselves and using drugs.⁴³⁷

⁴³⁵ "İstanbul'un Harlem'i" Sarıgöl dağıtılıyor, Sabah, 13.02.2006.

⁴³⁶ Hacıhüsrev'e kamyonla operasyon, Hürriyet, 03.08.2008.

⁴³⁷ “In the narrow alley, small groups sitting in front of the houses publicly use drugs by listening to music.” (Rüşvetle torbacılara göz yuman polis var', Sabah, 07.08.2006)

Petty or serious, the Roma have always been stigmatized as criminals or potential criminals in the official and media discourse. In a news report on Tayyip Erdoğan and his neighborhood – Kasımpaşa, an anecdote is told about the people of Hacıhüsrev, which depicts every resident as a thief.⁴³⁸

Before moving to Üsküdar Emniyet Neighborhood, they lived in an 80 square meters flat in Kasımpaşa for 16 years and their neighbors were mostly Alevis and Gypsies. Years later, as a famous politician, he visits his neighbors in Hacıhüsrev. But in one of those visits, Mrs Erdoğan goes to check the place where her husband will give a speech and finds that there is no one. When she asks about where the people are, she gets this answer: “They waited for you but when you did not come, they went to stealing!” (Engelli koşunun en hızlısı, Emel Armutçu, Hürriyet, 15.03.2003)

In terms of the negative ethnic stereotypes for the Kurdish residents of the ‘troubled’ neighborhoods in the crime news, the major examples are the ones that associate criminal activities with political identity. For example, in terms of the purse-snatching gangs, it is argued that the Kurdish identity is used by the members to exploit the feelings of others, by shouting, “is it a crime to be from Diyarbakır?” while taken into custody during police busts:

Gang members tell that they develop different strategies according to the time of the day of the police bust. They say that during the day, they crowd the streets and prevented the police from catching the purse-snatcher, and during the night busts, gang members agitate the people by shouting, "Is it a crime to be from Diyarbakır?" and impede any custodies. (Çukur Mahalle'de güvenlik kamerası, Sabah, 01.11.2003)

Apart from ethnic stereotypes, there are also certain characteristics generally associated with the residents of the ‘troubled’ neighborhoods irrespective of their

⁴³⁸ In 2010, Prime Minister Erdoğan started a Romany Initiative, in which he addressed the Roma coming from all around Turkey and argued that the JDP government would remove any discrimination against the Roma in the state and society level. Savaş Ay claims that Erdoğan “made a hit with the Roma” by stating that he grew up in Hacıhüsrev. He argues that such a statement is “bold” since the Roma of Hacıhüsrev have been an object of prejudice for a long time: “Whoever asks “What’s the big deal?” probably knows nothing about the area. For god’s sake! Is it easy to be from Hacıhüsrev? You are on the ‘usual suspects’ list from cradle to the grave. Whenever an illegal act takes place in any part of the city, there is always a prejudiced position which points to the direction of that Romany Ghetto. For example, whenever there is a theft or purse-snatching, they say, “It must be the people of Hacıhüsrev!” Whenever there is drug bust, they say that it is definitely Hacıhüsrev people’s doing. Of course not all of them is blameless, but is committing crime peculiar to the people of this area?” (Hacıhüsrev'den Başbakan'a 'Kelamınız pek şugarmış' Savaş Ay, Sabah, 16.03.2010). And in return of the “Romany Initiative” some of the Roma declared their support for the constitutional amendment. (Romanlardan Anayasa değişikliğine şarkılı türkülü “Evet”, Hürriyet, 07.09.2010).

ethnic identity in the news reports. For example, describing them “in search of easy money” contributes to the image of immorality and lack of ethical values:

Girls in Tarlabası are simply dying for marrying a pick-pocket or a purse-snatcher. But once they get married and see that no money comes, girls leave the boys. (Kapkaççıyla evlenmek için kızlar can atıyor... Serdar Devrim, Hürriyet, 14.07.2005)

Immorality and lack of ethical values is epitomized by certain characteristics such as fearlessness, brazenness, flagrancy and maliciousness. For example, selling drugs in public, sometimes very close to police headquarters are frequently handled by the news reports which points to a fearless, brazen attitude and flagrancy of criminal activity. These examples also reinforce the image of “lawless zones”. Expressions like, “not even scared by the police quarters nearby”, drugs are sold “publicly”, “headlong”,⁴³⁹ “in the middle of the street”,⁴⁴⁰ “before police’s eyes”, or statements like “I’m here for 24 hours”, “Let alone the police, even the riot police cannot enter here” underline the inadmissibility of the situation:

BEFORE THE POLICE’S EYES We enter the street on the opposite side of the police station in Upper Karabayır. It is possible to find every type of ‘hash’ here. (...)

30 METERS TO POLICE STATION Things came so far that even the police station does not scare the dealers. (...) The words of dealer who ‘procures goods’ to us is alarming: "Even Riot Police cannot enter here". (Karakola 30 metrede esrar alışverişi, Sabah, 06.08.2006)

A deep conversation begins while waiting for the 'hash'. A young men who said he was from Diyarbakır and his name is “Big Boy” (Koca Oğlan) says: "This is our place. Look, there is a police station over there, but you can come here any time you want, we’ll find anything to you in any case. Not only the police, but even the Riot Police cannot enter here. Anyway, they come every year and find what? Only the army can enter here." (Karakolun karşısı uyuşturucu pazarı, Sabah, 06.08.2006)

There was an interesting dialog between the undercover police who recorded the drug dealing with hidden camera and the drug dealer. Claiming that he sells high-quality marijuana, Erkan Tutkun says that he is there for 24 hours in case they are not satisfied with the product. (Nöbetçi esrarıcı, Hürriyet, 06.02.2008; 'Garantili' esrara gizli kameralı polis baskını, Sabah, 07.02.2008)

⁴³⁹ “Deputy Çömez says he decided to bring up the drug issue to the public agenda and claims that drugs are sold “headlong” in some neighborhoods of İstanbul.” (Milletvekilinden esrar operasyonu! Sabah, 24.03.2007)

⁴⁴⁰ “Narcotics police made an operation to the dealers in Gaziosmanpaşa, selling drugs in the middle of the street.” ('Garantili' esrara gizli kameralı polis baskını, Sabah, 07.02.2008)

Similarly, there are frequent references to the self-confident attitude of the children involved in criminal activities. In some cases, the children involved in crime are portrayed as aware of what they do, that they will not be punished because they are underage and therefore feel free to do anything. In the news report on little purse-snatcher girls from Hacıhüsrev, two subtitles of different sections of the text is revealing – “they weren’t even scared” (korkmadılar bile) and “they looked older than their ages” (yaşlarından büyük gösteriyorlardı). The news report ends with telling that the youngest purse-snatchers waited for their parents to come “easely”. The particular emphasis on the comfortable, easy attitude of the girls ascribes a cold-bloodedness and awareness of their status via the law, just like the awareness level of an adult, even though the girls were not even 10-years-old:

THEY WEREN’T EVEN SCARED

(...) THEY LOOKED OLDER THAN THEIR AGES

It is worth noting that the girls taken into custody on the claim of purse-snatching looked much older than their ages. The two girls, who are 11 and 15 years old, were very quiet during their interrogation in the police station. The ones below 10 waited for their families to come “easely” while their big sisters were testifying. (Sosyetik kapkaççılar, Sabah, 26.04.2003)

Accordingly, the children involved in criminal activities are portrayed with a “hard-boiled” attitude in regard to their actions. The fact that the children are so comfortable in conducting illegal business such as purse-snatching, pick-pocketing or drug dealing is that they have either naturalized it as a part of their way of life or internalized their actions as “business” and became professional about it. Brazen, impenitent, incorrigible behavior of children are displayed, by for example the expression, “Stealing is my job, why would I be ashamed?”, or, “why would I be afraid of the police, I’m young, they cannot do anything” The news report on an 8-years-old pick-pocket who has been caught and put into children’s home multiple times yet managed to escape and steal again provides a good example. In the caption of the news text, most striking elements of the news report are listed; the fact that he could only be held in the children’s home for 2 days, that he chooses theft over playing, and that stealing is his job:

8-year-old P.B. was caught for robbing Prof. Dr. Erol Uçer and his wife (...) in Etiler and put into a children’s home but could only be kept there for two days. He answered the psychologist’s question, ‘Playing or stealing?’ as ‘Stealing’ without any hesitation. P.B. said stealing is his job and told the social services workers, ‘My aunt’s daughter was burned with boiling water for not going to

work once. you cannot hold me here.’ (Oyunu değil, hırsızlığı seçti, Hürriyet, 22.11.2005)

It is claimed that in one of his previous captures, after kissing the hand of Police Chief of İstanbul Celalettin Cerrah and going to a children’s home, he told the journalists that he will escape and steal again. The contrast between the repentant and compliant attitude and the aggressive and incorrigible tone underlines the dishonest and unreliable nature of the child:

After kissing the hand of Police Chief of İstanbul Celalettin Cerrah and going to a children’s home after he was captured, P.B. said the reporters, ‘I will escape and steal again’. He could only be kept for two days in the children’s home he was sent to and escaped (...) last Friday at noon. (Oyunu değil, hırsızlığı seçti, Hürriyet, 22.11.2005)

The subtitle, “why would I be ashamed” tells a lot since it explains the attitude of the child towards crime. From that expression, it can be understood that the child does not show any sign of remorse and have no idea about the implications of his actions. And may be the most importantly, choosing stealing over playing crashes the last bit of innocence related with childhood. Social worker’s explanation of the child’s choice with the thrill of stealing attributes a dark, uncanny side to the child’s persona:

WHY WOULD I BE ASHAMED

P.B’s statements during the two days he stayed in the children’s home shocked the psychologists and social service workers who tried to help him. P.B. said he was actually 11, but deliberately registered at old age. He also said he had six siblings but only he does stealing. When the psychologist asked, ‘Why do you steal? Aren’t you ashamed?’, he answers, ‘That is my job. Why would I be ashamed?’ Later, psychologist asked a tricky question to P.B. At first, he asked, ‘Do you like playing?’ P.B. answered as ‘Yes’. Then he answered the psychologist’s question, ‘Playing or stealing?’ as ‘Stealing, of course’ without any hesitation. Social service worker said the child gets excited during stealing and this feeling could have tempted him. (Oyunu değil, hırsızlığı seçti, Hürriyet, 22.11.2005)

Self-confidence and enough knowledge to pull through from dire circumstances, for example when they are caught up, portrays an 8-years-old little child as if he is a totally self-conscious adult, and therefore implies that he should be treated as one:

When asked, ‘There are many bad things outside, there are thinner-addicts, aren’t you afraid?’, he answered, ‘Why would I be? I just take a cab and leave.’ And it turned out that P.B knew the law well enough to answer the question, ‘Aren’t you afraid of the police?’ as, ‘Why would I be afraid of the police? I’m young, they cannot do anything to me.’ (Oyunu değil, hırsızlığı seçti, Hürriyet, 22.11.2005)

The attitude of the children in criminal transactions are narrated in many news reports in detail to underline these traits. For example, in the news report extract below, selling drugs are demonstrated as a natural part of their life so much so that they would immediately quit playing in the street and go to deal with a ‘potential customer’ that came to the neighborhood:

"DO YOU NEED HELP?" When we enter Upper Karabayır Neighborhood in Esenler, the children playing nearby come and ask, "Do you need any help?" Then, they say, "We have every kind of stuff, we'll find whatever you want." (Karakola 30 metrede esrar alışverişi, Sabah, 06.08.2006)

In a similar manner, a news report on the undercover operation of a JDP Deputy, Turhan Çömez, in Sarıgöl by introducing himself as a customer to buy drugs to point to the drug trade in some neighborhoods of Istanbul, describes the conversation between the deputy and the drug-dealer boy in detail. What is striking in the news report is that the boy is portrayed as a cunning, hard-boiled salesman, an expert of drug trade and master of the jargon associated with it, who is not ashamed of to promote his merchandise like it is no different from any other commercial good:

Wearing a hat, scarf and glasses, and driving a private car, Çömez went to the Sarıgöl Neighborhood in Gaziosmanpaşa, mostly a gecekondu neighborhood. After driving around for a while, he stopped by a 15-16 year-old boy waiting on the corner of the street.

When the boy said, **"Yes, sir?"** Çömez opened the car window and started a conversation with the dealer boy:

"-Do you have good stuff?"

- Yes.

- How much is 12,5 (grams)?"

- 60 but it is 50 for you.

- Don't give me seedy ones. I've got guests, I don't want to lose face.

- We don't sell lousy stuff. Everyone comes and leaves satisfied."

After that dialogue, the boy went into one of the gecekondu and returned with a bunch of marijuana wrapped in newspaper. He came near the car and gave it to Çömez.

Çömez gave the boy 50 YTL and asked, **"Do you have rolling paper?"**

The boy said ‘yes’, went back into the same gecekondu and brought some rolling papers.

Turhan Çömez asked, **"Is it clear down there?"** (meaning, are there any cops down the street?). And the boy said, **"It's clear, don't worry"**. Then he walked away from the car.

Down the street, there were some luxurious cars waiting to buy drugs. And there were also some boys on the exits of the street asking **"Yes sir, what do you want?"** (Milletvekilinden esrar operasyonu! Sabah, 24.03.2007)

However, the condemning and judging attitude towards the children involved in crime goes hand in hand with a discourse based on compassion and pity. As mentioned before, after a newscast program made a special episode on drug trade in Istanbul in 2006 and the shootings of little children rolling joints, selling drugs on the streets were broadcast, concomitant police operations to ‘troubled’ neighborhoods began. News reports made during the process portrayed children as “abused objects” rather than “criminal subjects”. However, this time the parents and families are demonized. Expressions like “3-4 years-old children play with drug packages instead of toys” construct a contrast between the atrocity of the crime and the innocence of childhood. In these narratives, verbs like “used”, “abused”, “made to sell”, “made to roll joints”, “making money on children” imply that the children are mere instruments in the hands of their parents, families or other persons and left with no choice but to produce or sell drugs. A little girl telling “shyly” that she is told to sell drugs to earn bread and butter, or a little boy saying that he had to sell drugs to earn pocket money because his parents are unemployed insert an extra dramatic tone to the narrative and helps to build an evil, cruel parent image:

Poisoned children

Karabayır Neighborhood in Esenler is simply a drug center. Little children are made to roll joints, pack drugs in the houses and sell them on the streets. (...) Little members of the family used in production are also the major actors in selling. Drug dealers including little kids sell drugs on the street shouting, "We have daisies (papatya), cherries (kiraz)" (...) In Esenler-Karabayır neighborhood where drugs are sold like hot cakes, families that produce and sell drugs make the sale through using their 4-5 year-old children.

THEY ABUSE CHILDREN... Drugs are packed recklessly involving children in the houses of very poor condition and then sold by children. (Zehire bulaşan minicik eller! Sabah, 18.01.2006)

Children roll joints in the rooms where drugs are produced, sell rolling papers and play the key role in retail sale. Unfortunately, four-five year old children play with drug packages instead of toys. Children of school age sell marijuana and pills.

I EARN MY POCKET MONEY

Show TV Haber Özel team went from door to door and recorded the neighborhood. The words of a five year-old girl in an embarrassed tone reveals who the drug dealers use: "My parents say, 'go, sell and make money,' so I sell to earn money." On another door, a boy says: "My mother is a housewife, my father is unemployed; so I earn my pocket money by selling these." (Anne sarıyor kızı satıyor, Hürriyet, 18.01.2006)

The fact that children were made to roll joints in the rooms where drugs were produced in one of the houses and they were used in selling drugs on the streets is shocking. 3-4 year-old children play with drug packages instead of toys. Children of school age sell marijuana and pills. When they are asked, they say they are contributing to the family livelihood. (Zehir evlerine şok operasyon, Sabah, 19.01.2006)

Even though the children are yet innocent and abused victims, they would probably be the vicious, cold-blooded criminals of tomorrow. One sentence from one of the news abstracts gives the clue of the incriminating tone insinuated despite the all compassionate, sympathetic discourse: "The future of children selling cigarettes and marijuana is uncertain."⁴⁴¹ In that sense, it can be argued that the two images of children involved in crime, which are "abused object" and "criminal subject" are intertwined. A similar attitude is observable in Yüksel Aytuğ's column in Sabah. Referring to the Haber Özel episode, Aytuğ expresses his shock and frustration in the face of the children involved in drug trade. Using the word "brat" (velet) describing a 10-year-old selling ecstasy, and the children's self-confident and hard-boiled attitude during the trade reinforces the image of children as "criminal subject". However, in the later part of the article he mentions a dealer woman boasting about the quality of her product by telling that she has been testing it on children, and gets closer to the image of children as "abused object". Therefore, it can be argued that Aytuğ's perspective provides a good example of the how the two images of children involved in crime are interwoven:

I watched Haber Özel on SHOW TV shuddering, in dismay... A place called Bursa Neighborhood in the middle of İstanbul... Acting as a customer, Haber Özel reporter goes in and out of places where drugs are sold. First stop is a package store... There are children of 10-12 years old behind the counter. They do the selling. In a package store where selling alcohol and cigarettes to children below 18 is forbidden, children do the selling job... Wait, it's not over yet: Our guy asks, "Do you have candies?" It turned out that they use the word "candy" for ecstasy here. 10-year-old brat says, "Yes, we do, and also like hell". In the meantime, another boy comes in and takes out the "candy" bag. The 10-year-old boy has become a real salesman (!). He says, "These are very sharp, you have to eat yoghurt or drink milk with them!" I am paralyzed... This time, the guy enters a house. There is a woman and her 14-15 year-old kid in the house. She takes out the pills recklessly. Our guy is brazen; he says, "Is this stuff good?" The woman says, "Yes, very good" Our guy is acting as a conscious (!) customer. He asks, "How do you know that it's good?" I could not believe what she says. She points to the child at the back and says, "We test it. First, we make the boy take it" In

⁴⁴¹ Anne sarıyor kızı satıyor, Hürriyet, 18.01.2006.

the end, there are familiar scenes of police busts, smashed doors, women and men handcuffed at the back... One of the women had a long rap sheet. She was arrested at least for five times!.. I lose hope, my brain goes numb. I go numb... (Vah benim uyuşan çocuklarıma, Yüksel Aytuğ, Sabah, 20.10.2006)

Taking drugs before children's eyes is specifically indicated in the news reports to give a sense of the extent of immorality and maliciousness.⁴⁴² Violation and abuse of children's innocence escalates the degree of wickedness and strengthens the effect of demonization. Another indicator of immorality is displayed in a news report in terms of profanity. In the case of police busts to Sarıgöl and Tarlabası on different dates, it is stated that the police found drugs stashed inside of a Koran. The shock of the police is underlined to point to the contrast between the depraved criminal and decent, well-behaved police.⁴⁴³ In a similar example, incorrigible behavior is accompanied by brazen attitude. For example, a news report on the women of Hacıhüsrev, mentions that after the women were taken into custody, they continued committing crimes by stealing money of the canteen keeper and the cell phone of a police officer. Their actions were described as "not standing idle even in the prison". The detail that the stolen cell phone was found in one of the women's underwear adds a tone of licentiousness:

People of Hacıhüsrev, who were caught in Iron Fist operation (...), did not stand idle even in the prison. Two of the three women among the 246 who were taken into custody, stole the money of an employee from his pocket, who brought them sandwiches from the canteen. While one of the women distracted the canteen keeper, the other took his money from his pocket. And they paid the sandwich with this money. But the canteen keeper realized the situation. Then, the women gave the money back. Another women stole the cell phone of an officer on guard duty. When the police officer realized what happened, the women were frisked. The cell phone was found in the woman's underwear. (Hacıhüsrevliler gözaltında bile kapkaç yaptı, Sabah, 12.07.2007)

Apart from ethnic, local, neighborhood-based stereotypes, the news reports on 'troubled' neighborhoods provide a class profile for the residents. Physical appearance, clothing, manners and modes of speech are displayed as a part of the resident profile. As mentioned before, it is stated that an undercover police working in Sarıgöl grows a stubbly-beard, carries rosary beads and wears Leke Jeans, which

⁴⁴² "They roll and smoke joints before the children's eyes." (Uyuşturucu alışverişi yeni 'merkezine' taşındı, Sabah, 20.09.2006)

⁴⁴³ Kuran cildi arasında uyuşturucu, Hürriyet, 05.02.2007; Kur'an içinde uyuşturucu, Hürriyet, 05.09.2007.

can be defined as the components of working/lower class youth habitus in Turkey.⁴⁴⁴ Shabby looks, possibly old, battered shoes are given as keys to understand the nature of this person, which is probably not very good.⁴⁴⁵ The news reports describe the youth of the neighborhood as wandering in crowded male groups, disturbing women and other people around. It is also stated that they use swearwords while scrumming each other. Their low educational profile is particularly emphasized in the news reports:

Many kids around... Children and women sitting on the sides of the street, young men saying swearwords and scrumming each other are staring at me. After a while, the young people scrumming each other block me and ask, "Shall we help?" (Karakolun karşısı uyuşturucu pazarı, Sabah, 06.08.2006)

There are fights occasionally. There are groupings in the neighborhood. We are mostly disturbed by the people coming from Karabayır. It becomes unbelievably crowded on Sundays. Mostly men. They have a low educational profile. Girls cannot walk freely on the street. (Bizim mahallede böyle takılırız, Hakan Gence, Hürriyet, 10.05.2009)

The notion of some secret, special language among the residents is often mentioned in the news reports. Even though the terms belong to either street language, slang words or Romany, it is depicted as if they have some incomprehensible, unperceivable codes to communicate:

It was learned that the suspects call marijuana 'fişek' and cocaine 'şeker' among each other. (Esrara fişek kokaine şeker, Hürriyet, 14.01.2010)

It is stated that the gang that caught after 6 months of physical and technical follow-up used a coded language among each other. It is argued that the lookouts exploring the area before stealing warned the gang members of police existence by saying, "Uncles are here, don't come". (Evi, iş yeri soyulanlar bu haberi dikkatle okusun, Hürriyet, 03.03.2010)

It was confirmed that people taken into custody in Beyoğlu Hacıhüsrev Neighborhood have created a special language among each other. (...) It is stated that suspects used the word "droba" instead of car, and "çönük branch" instead of juvenile branch. Police is trying to determine and decipher the codes the suspects use. (Telefonda 'özel dil' oluşturmuşlar, Sabah, 07.07.2007)

The identity of the residents of 'troubled' neighborhoods constructed by the news reports have ethnic, class, parochial aspects all intersect at one common ground –

⁴⁴⁴ Reina'nın polisi Sarıgöl'e uymaz, Hürriyet, 08.08.2007.

⁴⁴⁵ 'Bey' nostalji oldu 'Oğlu' korku içinde, Sabah, 05.08.2003.

illegality. The criminal image of the residents is reinforced through various negative stereotypes as well as ascribed character traits.

4.2.4. Assessment: Urban Transformation Projects as a Remedy to the Urban Crime

The ‘troubled’ neighborhoods analyzed within the scope of the thesis are portrayed in the news reports as centers of criminal activities, in which every resident is somewhat involved in some kind of illegal business. As mentioned before, these neighborhoods are defined as “factories of criminals”, “home to potential purse-snatchers” and “hotbeds of crime”. It is argued that the depictions of ‘troubled’ neighborhoods are built on the “us” vs. “them” opposition in the news discourse. In that sense, the neighborhoods and their residents are portrayed as the opposite of “good, decent, law-abiding citizen”, that is, “us”.

Starting from 2006, the neighborhoods in question became the target of wide-scale police operations, which are described in the news reports in terms of “cleansing”. News reports on police operations are usually narrated in the form of story-telling, which reinforces the effect of realism and the negative perception as van Dijk (1993: 264) argues. Indeed, in some of the operations, the police brought reporters with them; yet, most of the time news reports rely on the police bulletins, which means that, they reflect the official discourse on ‘troubled’ lower class neighborhoods. Descriptions of police operations also provide a particular portrayal of the police force and their efficient methods in fighting crime. Details of their meticulous work and many difficulties they face working in these areas contributes to the “us” vs. “them” opposition through displaying residents as “criminals” and police as “crime-fighters”. A similar picture emerges in terms of the depictions of the residents’ organization of their living spaces. It is claimed in the news reports that the residents of ‘troubled’ neighborhoods organize their environments according to the illegal activities they are involved in; for example, they have stashes to hide drugs, burn stoves all the time to burn drugs when necessary, built secret passages between the houses to escape in the case of a police bust. Since every tactic is designed to avoid or escape from the police, the very organization of living space is displayed as an obstacle before the law enforcement and a proof to the illegal activities of the residents.

One of the ways to trace the “us” vs. “them” opposition is the depiction of intra-neighborhood conflicts in the news reports. Occasional conflicts between different groups in the neighborhoods, the major parties being the Kurdish migrants and the Roma most of the time, are displayed in terms of ethnic tensions, disparities between different ways of life and struggle over rent from criminal activities. Most of the time, neighborhoods are displayed as divided between “good, decent, law-abiding people” and “bad, malevolent criminals”. It can be claimed that news reports tend to criminalize the Romany community in most of the cases, except for the activities of the Kurdish groups that have a political connotation. Thus, “Kurdishness” as a political ethnic identity is the most marginalized identity and a fixed element of “them” category in the news discourse.

As mentioned before, since the Kurdish migrants and the Roma are the most represented groups of residents in terms of criminal activities, the resident profile in the news reports analyzed in this study are on these two groups. Both the Kurdish migrants and the Roma residents of these neighborhoods are majorly defined on one ground, which is illegality, as in the sub-opposition of “legality vs. illegality”. In terms of their living conditions, it can be argued that the news discourse criminalizes their very conditions of existence such as using illegal electricity or taking refuge in desolate houses or unregistered living in general. They are displayed as “a burden on the state and us”, which implies the sub-opposition of “self-reliance vs. dependence”. In the same manner, and also paradoxically, the neighborhood residents are sometimes portrayed as pursuing a hidden prosperous life thanks to illegal activities. The illegal activities mentioned in the news reports include drug-related crimes and various forms of theft. These activities are most of the time displayed as “family business”, giving particular emphasis on the kinship between criminals and involvement of elderly women, pregnant women, and women with children. Portrayal of children is particularly important in the news reports in the sense that children are portrayed as both “abused objects” and “criminal subjects”. In the first case, the descriptions of the involvement of children in producing and dealing drugs demonizes the parents or the elders of the family in terms of the violation of the innocence of childhood. In that sense, it can be argued that the residents are positioned on the negative side of the “responsibility vs. irresponsibility” sub-opposition. On the other hand, the same

children are depicted as “the new generation of criminals” by emphasizing their “training” process that started in the earliest ages and their “hard-boiled” attitude in the criminal transactions.

As mentioned before, migration is counted by the official authorities and other primary definers quoted in the news reports as a major cause of urban crime. In that sense, migrant identity of the residents of the ‘troubled’ neighborhoods play a crucial role in their identification with crime. Ethnic identity of the residents is also referred in the news reports in relation to criminal activities. It should be underlined that news reports avoid using the term “Kurdish” in most of the cases. However, over-emphasizing the migrants’ hometowns or regions as well as their sympathy to PKK clearly imply Kurdishness. Accordingly, political views or inclinations of the residents are intertwined with their criminal activities, and in that sense, their political identity is criminalized. In terms of the Roma, news reports include various negative stereotypes ascribed to the Romany community for centuries, based on the construction of a “deviant self” originating from their very way of life, customs and habits. For both of the social groups, news reports underline a tendency to violent behavior, which can be considered under the sub-opposition, “peacefulness vs. violence”. Apart from these, class positions of the residents are implied to be another cause of propensity to illegality with regards to their resentment about their image in the eyes of the rest of the society. In all cases, it can be claimed that the news reports on ‘troubled’ lower class neighborhoods tend to put forward a homogeneous stereotypical identity for all of their residents.

Thus, keeping in mind that all of these neighborhoods are included within the scope of urban transformation projects, the discourse of security that underpins urban transformation becomes clearer. In most of the cases, urban transformation projects result in the total exclusion and further marginalization of their residents. Referring to Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu (2008: 20), these areas can be defined as “captive urban geographies”, in which their exclusion becomes negligible in the face of ‘security issues’.⁴⁴⁶ In that sense, news reports on ‘troubled’ neighborhoods tend to

⁴⁴⁶ For example, Aziz Yeniay, the Küçükçekmece mayor, emphasizes that “The state should immediately take the urban transformation project in Istanbul within the scope of “national security”. (...) A war must be declared immediately” (Funda Özkan, “Vatandaş Omuz Vermezse Kentsel Dönüşüme 500 Yıl da Yetmez”, *Radikal*, 10.01.2008, quoted in Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu, 2008: 28).

portray their residents as ‘dangerous masses’ and the areas as centers of criminal activities. For example, the mention of the neighborhood’s criminal record in the news reports on urban transformation and gecekondu demolitions, imply that gecekondu neighborhoods are home to illegal activities and organizations:

The gecekondu in Sarıgöl, which is depicted as the key center of purse-snatching gangs and drug trade, are demolished by the municipality one by one.

In Sarıgöl, which is swarmed by crime gangs and where even garbage trucks cannot enter at night due to security concerns and the municipality cannot set street lamps because of drug trade, gecekondu are demolished by Gaziosmanpaşa Municipality one by one. ("İstanbul'un Harlem'i" Sarıgöl dağıtılıyor, Sabah, 13.02.2006)

The gecekondu in Sarıgöl Gaziosmanpaşa, which is referred as the center of purse-snatching gangs and drug trade, are demolished within the scope of the urban transformation efforts. Gaziosmanpaşa Mayor Erhan Erol stated that criminals spread, the neighborhood degenerated and became a cause of distress in time. (Sarıgöl mahallesi ıslah ediliyor, Sabah, 27.10.2007)

In an article on a group of gecekondu youth in Derbent who protested the demolitions made in terms of urban transformation in the area, Ertuğrul Özkök argues that the protests are the symptom of a bigger threat the gecekondu people became – “an imminent threat against ‘us’”, the real owners of the city.⁴⁴⁷ In the same vein, news reports on urban transformation projects tend to portray the city as sheltering all types of evil from “thinner addicts”⁴⁴⁸ to illegal political organizations, which is in a process of rehabilitation thanks to the projects in question:

In big cities, while the public housing projects that are constructed through urban transformation projects end irregular urbanization, they also destroy the spaces that provide shelter for criminal terrorist organizations [...] TOKİ (MHA) and the municipalities realize numerous projects of mass housing in order to bring about a regular city look. [...] The illegal organizations composed by the members of the terrorist organizations, such as PKK and DHKP-C, provoke people against the urban transformation projects by means of posters and booklets (Zaman, 18.05.2008, quoted in Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu, 2008: 18).

Since urban transformations are presented as a remedy to the illegal organizations that have been nested in the areas in question, any resistance to them are considered as “terrorist acts”. A statement of Erdoğan Bayraktar, head of TOKİ of the time,

⁴⁴⁷ O sahneyi gördünüz mü, Ertuğrul Özkök, Hürriyet, 25.03.2006.

⁴⁴⁸ In a speech on urban transformation project in Tarlabası, Tayyip Erdoğan stated that they would “cleanse the area off thinner-addicts and their like”. ("Ben onun kadar edepsiz, alçak, ahlaksız değilim", Hürriyet, 01.06.2011)

provides a good example of the official discourse linking crime with urban transformation:

Terrorist groups and people who are involved in drug and women trafficking try to obstruct urban transformation projects, by manipulating innocent people who live in gecekondu settlements. Irregular urbanization breeds terrorism (quoted in Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu, 2008: 19).

In that sense, zoning for housing is presented as a solution to the crime problem in the troubled neighborhoods. The official authorities even argue that “building luxurious houses in the area would end criminal activities”.⁴⁴⁹

Çömez said, “It was declared that expropriation has begun in Bursa and Sarıgöl neighborhoods in Gaziosmanpaşa. Yet, efforts have been inconclusive. The municipality has to complete the expropriation process and rehabilitate these areas. Also, there should be social projects aimed at citizens living in those areas.” (Milletvekilinden esrar operasyonu! Sabah, 24.03.2007)

In central Gaziosmanpaşa, we have Sarıgöl Neighborhood. Another version of Sulukule. Even the police could hardly enter this area. We proclaimed there a gecekondu transformation area. (Dönüşüme 4 bin dönüm 12 mahalleye başladı, Hürriyet, 12.11.2012)

In spite of the dominant discourse on urban transformation projects which claim that they will be a solution to the urban crime in the case of urban poor, many field researches as well as actual experienced showed that urban transformation projects resulted in the social exclusion of the residents of these neighborhoods and made them more prone to illegal activities, as in the case of Sulukule. Detached from their traditional livelihoods and usual workplaces, the ex-residents of the areas subjected to urban transformation would have no choice but to resort to drug-dealing, purse-snatching, pick-pocketing, prostitution, etc.

⁴⁴⁹ Uyuşturucu alışverişi yeni 'merkezine' taşındı, Sabah, 20.09.2006

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The urban space in Turkey has undergone a major transformation and restructuring process in the last decade. Major cities, most prominent among which being İstanbul began to display sharper patterns of urban segregation embodied in the increasing number of spatially isolated gated communities on the one side and neighborhoods of urban poor stigmatized as “no-go zones” on the other. Urban transformation projects that came to the agenda in the early 2000s as a systematical state policy claim to rehabilitate the latter to bring them to the use of every urbanite and make them “livable” spaces for everyone. In that process, one of the main justifications of the urban transformation projects is displayed as an urgent need for the “de-criminalization” of these areas.

The period in which urban transformation projects came to the agenda also witnessed an increasing sensitivity about street crimes in İstanbul symbolized by the purse-snatching incidents. It was argued that purse-snatching incidents posed a serious threat to the public order unless they were taken under control by the state authorities. In the meantime, through changes in the legal regulations, the police authority and discretionary powers extended broadly within a discourse of “tough-on-crime”. The media gave great coverage to the incidents and displayed them as mainly attempted by young Eastern and Southeastern (Kurdish) migrants who have been dwelling in either decaying inner city areas or *gecekondu* neighborhoods considered in the scope of urban transformation. Starting from the mid-2000s, there have been concomitant broad range police operations to these areas on the claim that they have become hotbeds of crime, sheltering Eastern and Southeastern (Kurdish) purse-snatching gangs as well as Romany drug dealers. Similar to the purse-snatching incidents, the media also reported the police operations in detail.

This thesis claims that the media coverage of purse-snatching incidents and police operations to certain lower-class areas stigmatized as “lawless zones” articulated to the neoliberal urban policies in the form of urban transformation projects based on a discourse of security. Even though the news reports tend to portray these areas as

extremely dangerous places where the police even cannot enter, there is no evidence of an armed conflict or serious resistance to the police during the operations, which suggests that the portrayal of threat presumed to be posed by these areas is an exaggerated one. In that sense, contrary to the claim that news reports are objective representations of reality, this thesis argues that they have contributed to the building of a consensus on an urgent need for intervention to these areas in the form of urban transformation projects, by representing them as areas of moral and physical dilapidation and decay. To do this, the news reports portray and stigmatize their residents as dangerous criminals that have turned their living spaces into crime nests.

The fact that the neighborhoods in question are mainly inhabited by Kurdish migrants and the Romany people who constituted a part of the poorest societal segments of urban lower classes in the big cities, indicates that the stigmatization process has an ethnic as well as a class aspect. Especially in the case of purse-snatching incidents, young Kurdish migrants and children are portrayed as the major perpetrators. Their case provides an example of moral panic on the grounds that they are stigmatized and criminalized as a social group and purse-snatching incidents are depicted as an eventual outcome of the Kurdish migration to big cities. In the case of the Roma, they are portrayed as drug dealers pursuing an “immoral” way of life. In both cases, the news reports act on particular negative ethnic and class stereotypes pertaining to the groups in question.

The analysis on the news reports on purse-snatching shows that lower-class young Kurdish migrants and children are depicted as the “folk devils” of a “moral panic” on purse-snatching crime in media, which escalated in the mid-2000s. It can be argued that the news reports tend to marginalize and stigmatize a certain social group as a “threat to the well-being of the society”, actors of a “suddenly and dramatically increasing crime” within the framework put forward by Cohen (2006) and Hall et al. (1978) in their works on moral panic. The crime of purse-snatching, which is the subject of moral panic, is depicted in the news reports as a symptom a larger problem in the background that is the mass migrations from the East and the Southeast in the last decades. Apart from the fact that law enforcement mechanism is the primary definer in the crime news, news reports also refer to the comments

and views of academicians, social service experts and even sometimes psychiatrists to reinforce their claim.

In fact, criminalization of young Kurdish migrants and children date back to the issue of thinner-addicts in the big cities. The problem and increasing visibility of street children in 1990s is related with the mass Kurdish migration to big cities, and therefore urban poverty gained an ethnic character in the 1990s. The news discourse tends to construct thinner-addicts as “uncanny, uncommunicable, unpredictable subjects” that are, therefore, extremely dangerous and prone to groundless violence. The composite stigma attributed to thinner-addict children in Cohen’s (2006: 40) sense, fused their looks, behavioral patterns with threat and danger. In that sense, non-criminal aspects of thinner-addicts, such as using adhesive-volatile substances, are criminalized through a chain of signification. Coming to the early 2000s, thinner-addicts began to be identified with various street crimes, purse-snatching being the most prominent one. Accordingly, expert opinions in the field from law enforcement officials to psychiatrists and social service workers are used in the identification of thinner-addicts with purse-snatching incidents and profiling the purse-snatchers in the news reports. As Cohen (2006: 8) suggests, “factualizing” the information given in the news reports by referring to “expert opinion” is a crucial element of moral panic by increasing feelings of anxiety and fear in the public, through a process called “deviance amplification”.

According to the news reports, children coming from the Eastern and Southeastern regions through various ways constitute the backbone of the purse-snatching gangs. Similar to the thinner-addicts, purse-snatchers are constituted as “violent, cruel, cold-blooded” offenders, “full of grudge and hatred towards the state and society” through detailed descriptions of the gang organizations, methods of recruitment, training process and ways of ensuring loyalty to the gang in the news reports. It can be argued that news reports attribute a “deviant” essence and composite stigma to the purse-snatchers similar to that of thinner-addicts, by emphasizing their aggression, violent and even sadistic tendencies. In some of the cases, news reports refer to dramatic interviews with or statements of purse-snatchers, authenticity of which are questionable, to reinforce that composite stigma. Even if they are authentic, it can be argued that they serve to “compensate for the lack of identity”

by creating a “bogus of essentialism” on the side of the perpetrators from the gaze of the official and media discourse, as Young (1999: 117) argues.

News reports also emphasize the role of social control on the deviant behavior of the purse-snatchers. In line with the new penal paradigm that emphasizes the role of the family and other social control mechanisms, news reports frequently refer to the expert opinions on the dysfunctional families, weakness of moral values and failure at school as possible causes of propensity to crime. In the absence of such mechanisms, purse-snatchers are claimed to pursue a life of “pleasure-seeking”, enjoying themselves in night clubs, taking alcohol and drugs and being with prostitutes. In that sense, it is implied that the “dark” nature of such criminals could only be kept under control by strong authoritative and disciplinary mechanisms. In the same manner, material depravity and lower socio-economic status are displayed as “excuses” of the purse-snatchers, who exploit their condition of poverty for justifying their unlawful behavior. Accordingly, by emphasizing the inadequacy of the punishments on juvenile delinquents, the news reports also call for harsher policing and punitive measures for the perpetrators of such crimes. Many columnists handle the issue of purse-snatching as the “harbinger of a social explosion”, and therefore call for “firm steps”. As an example to such firm steps, the police made operations in train and bus stations in Diyarbakır to control the “potential purse-snatcher flow” to the big cities. Through these operations, young Kurdish migrants and children are subjected to what Cohen (2006: 75) calls a “ceremony of public degradation”, to guarantee the labelling of them in the eyes of the public. Thus, Kurdishness and crime “converge” in purse-snatcher children in the signification spiral offered by Hall et al. (1978: 223).

Emphasis on “grudge and hatred towards the state and the society” is linked with their class position as well as ethnic identity in the news reports. It is implied that purse-snatchers hold the wealthier segments of the society in addition to the state and its policies in the East and Southeast responsible for their current condition. For example, it is claimed that children do not do purse-snatching only in the DEHAP meetings. In that sense, ordinary street crime is linked to their political identity and their sympathy to the PKK. Through what Hall et al. (1978: 224) call “transposition of frameworks”, a criminal issue is politicized in the sense that

purse-snatching crime is linked to a wider social problem that is the separationist Kurdish movement.

Preparing crime maps for the “hot spots” in the city is proposed as an effective method for fighting with purse-snatching crime among other street crimes by the police force. In that sense, starting from 2006, there have been systematical, broad-scale police operations to certain lower-class ‘troubled’ neighborhoods which are defined as “hotbeds of crime” and “shelters of criminals and potential criminals”. Referring to van Dijk’s (1993) argument that discrimination in discourse usually works through a basic opposition – “us vs. them” – it can be argued that residents of the troubled neighborhoods are portrayed as “criminal, lawless, violent, irresponsible them” against “decent, law-abiding, peaceful, responsible us”. The neighborhoods subjected to police operations that took wide coverage in the media and chosen within the scope of this work are Sarıgöl and Bursa in Gaziosmanpaşa, Karabayır in Esenler, and Tarlabası and Hacıhüsrev in Beyoğlu. These neighborhoods are mainly inhabited by lower-class Kurdish migrants and Roma. The media portrayal of the police operations include vivid descriptions of the operations, mainly positive depictions of the police taking part in the operations and working in ‘troubled’ neighborhoods in general, and descriptions of the organization of the residents’ living space conducive to illegal activities.

In general, depictions of the police operations include specific details about the number and the branches of the attending police force, and the number of the captured illegal or stolen goods and the suspects taken into custody. The purpose of the operations is frequently indicated to underline their legitimate basis. Apart from that, operations are narrated in the form of story-telling, by using simple past tense to reinforce the effect of realism through first-hand witnessing. Certain expressions used to describe the police’s control over the area and meticulous work construct the neighborhoods in question as isolated “enemy” territories subjected to the militarized intervention of the police force, and the police as efficient and organized vis-à-vis the “criminal” residents of the neighborhoods. The bureaucratic procedure before the operations are also described in detail to emphasize that the police respects and abides the law under any circumstances, even though such procedures are a routine part of the legal process. Another element described in the depiction of the police operations in the news reports is the organization of the

living space of residents. It is basically argued that residents of ‘troubled’ neighborhoods organize their environment in a way that facilitates illegal activities, such as having stashes to hide drugs or stolen goods, burning stoves all the time to throw away drugs when necessary, or building secret passages between the houses to escape in the case of a police bust. Furthermore, the configuration of the neighborhoods having a narrow and intricate structure of streets is also counted as a facilitator of crime and criminal activities even though it has no direct relation to the current residents of the neighborhoods.

News reports on troubled neighborhoods also mention occasional intra-neighborhood conflicts, which sometimes lead to serious injuries or deaths among different groups of residents. The conflicts mostly arise out of ethnic, cultural and economic tensions. In most of the cases, the fighting parties are the Kurdish migrants and Romany groups. The news reports tend to divide the residents of the neighborhoods into “good, decent people who does break the law” and “bad, malevolent criminals involving in illegal activities”. Thus, it can be argued that crime or illegal activities are the basic element that draws the line between the conflicting groups. In general, news reports have a tendency to criminalize the Roma community when it comes to the issue of criminal activities or cultural differences. However, whenever the conflict has political connotations in terms of the Kurdish identity, the news reports side with the Roma and take a position against the Kurdish community. Thus, it can be argued that “Kurdishness” as a political identity is the most stigmatized and marginalized one among the residents of the ‘troubled’ neighborhoods in the news reports.

The news reports provide a profile for the residents of the ‘troubled’ neighborhoods in terms of their living conditions, crime as their primary activity and a “criminal” identity with ethnic, class and personal characteristics. In terms of the living conditions, it can be argued that their very way of life is criminalized in the news reports in terms of “informality”. In other words, even if the residents are not actually committing a crime, the very conditions of their existence is illegal. Having no birth certificates, registering children at old age, using illegal electricity or taking refuge in the desolate houses are counted as elements of their informal life and implied to be a part of their “criminal” identity. On the other hand, news reports also paradoxically imply that residents pursue a hidden luxurious life thanks

to illegal activities. In both of the cases, they are presented as a “burden on the state and us”, which makes “us the real victims”.

In terms of the activities of the residents, it is frequently emphasized that neighborhoods are home to gangs, most of which are composed of families. The gangs are portrayed as dividing up the neighborhoods among each other, owning heavy weapons, and working in extremely organized ways. In that sense, crime is depicted as “family business” in these neighborhoods. There is a particular emphasis on the involvement of pregnant women, elderly women and children in illegal activities by referring to pick-pocket pregnant women or drug producing and dealing little children. News reports frequently underline that “mothers train their children” in various types of criminal activity. In a similar manner, it can be argued that “criminality” is the common ground on which many identities of the residents intersect. As in the case of purse-snatching, migration and migrant identity is linked with criminal behavior in the news reports by arguing that increase in crime rates is parallel with the increase in migration. In terms of the ethnic identity of the residents, news reports generally do not directly use the term “Kurdish”, but instead emphasize the hometowns and regions of the residents. But in the case of the Roma, news reports directly indicate the Romany identity of the residents. There are different negative ethnic stereotypes for each group. In the case of the Kurdish migrants, news reports tend to link involvement in criminal activities with Kurdishness as a political identity by claiming that gangs organize around Kurdish identity or support PKK financially. In terms of the Roma, negative ethnic stereotypes in the news reports are generally parallel to the general negative stereotypes ascribed to the Romany community for centuries; thieves and criminals stepping aside among others. Character flows of the residents depicted in the news reports are similar to the ones of purse-snatchers, such as immorality, brazenness and maliciousness. The hard-boiled attitude of children in criminal transactions such as drug-dealing or under custody is frequently mentioned within this context. However, children involved in illegal activities are also sometimes portrayed as manipulated by their parents into the world of crime. In that sense, portrayal of children oscillates between “criminal subject” and “abused object”. In terms of the socio-economic conditions and class profile, news reports refer to the residents’ physical appearance, clothing, manners and modes of speech. Having a shabby

look, old clothing, usage of swearwords and disturbing people around are underlined in descriptions.

In general, police operations are depicted in the news reports as crucial in decreasing crime rates. In that sense, it is implied that urban crime problem centered in ‘troubled’ lower class neighborhoods could only be solved through militarized interventions of the police. In line with that argument, the seriousness and chronicity of crime problem in these areas are implied to be dealt with only through a powerful police force with broad discretionary powers. For example, the new regulations brought by the new Criminal Code are criticized on the grounds that they limit the authority of the police and broaden the rights of the criminals.

There is a real increase in the crime rates in İstanbul since the late 1990s and a certain relation of the urban poor with criminal activities especially in the case of crimes against property due to material depravity and exclusion. In that sense, some Kurdish immigrants and Romany people are involved in various forms of theft and drug-dealing from time to time. However, the thesis claims that these groups are over-represented in the news reports and the media transforms the data on increasing street crimes to an exclusionary, stigmatizing discourse for the social groups in question to justify harsher penal and policing measures, which is articulated to the discourse of urban transformation projects. Besides, many researches based on the police records or made in prisons by the state institutions revealed that the Kurdish migrants do not in fact constitute the majority of the purse-snatchers in the big cities.

Thus, the thesis argues that “policing the urban poor” is one of the major aspects of the new urban policy. The harsh policing and retributive penal measures taken in the last decade can be read as an attempt to counterpoise the possible protests and upsurges of the urban poor due to the dislocating and impoverishing policies of the state. During the time of the purse-snatching panic in the media and debates on the rehabilitation of ‘troubled’ neighborhoods that shelter illegal activities, the legal regulations have expanded the discretionary powers of the police than ever before and blurred the definition of crimes, which plays a key role in the stigmatization and punishment of urban poor including minorities and marginalized groups as potential criminals.

The discourse of security that underpins urban transformation projects comprises both protection from earthquake and protection from crime. In that sense, when these two aspects are interfused in the same discourse, the measures taken against crime “benefit” from the scientific claims of earthquake security and gain the status of an objective truth. On the other hand, security is considered and displayed in the media as a matter “above and beyond politics”. Public order and fight against crime are displayed as issues beyond ideologies, political parties about which every segment of the society regardless of their differences should be equally sensitive. In other words, fight against crime is “naturalized” in the dominant discourse.

The claim that urban transformation projects would result in a decrease in the street crimes is problematical in many senses. First of all, the urban poor dislocated due to urban transformation projects have been driven away to the peripheries of the city. They are deprived of many jobs they commonly do like peddling, house cleaning, childcare and scavenging because they are mostly located in the central areas of the city. Besides, many of them do not have the financial means to make a down payment or pay the monthly installments of the MHA houses offered to them. Therefore, urban transformation projects in fact make the urban poor more inclined to illegal activities by impoverishing and excluding them further.

To sum up, the rising crime rates in the last decade symbolized by the purse-snatching incidents and some “lawless” neighborhoods in the middle of İstanbul were represented in the media as a justification of the harsh penal and policing measures and of urban transformation projects through stigmatizing and criminalizing certain social groups, namely the Southeastern and Eastern (Kurdish) migrants and the Roma, and blaming them for their expulsion by referring to some presumed innate deviant behaviors, characteristics and ethnic identifications.

Thus, it can be claimed that the poorest and most disadvantageous segments of the urban lower classes will continue to be expelled from their living spaces unless there is a radical change in the urban policies. And the police will continue to intervene in the process with an escalating use of force within their extended discretionary powers. Arbitrary detentions, maltreatment, right to stop individuals or intervene any events or actions which are considered as against the “general morals and manners” as well as preparing crime maps for particular areas of the city considered as “criminogenic” will probably lead to the further harassment of

many stigmatized social groups, and especially the Kurdish migrants by the police. The representations in the media will again have a crucial role in the process by justifying the policing measures and urban transformation projects. In the final analysis, the logic of security which seems to be a vital component of the recent political and economic system will probably be as important in the following period in understanding the state-society relations.

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Documentary:

Ekümenopolis, 2011

APPENDIX A
CRIME RECORDS

Crime records in Turkey

Number of crimes		Number of crimes against property	Number of purse-snatching and pick-pocketing crimes
1995	229.513		
1996	291.662		
1997	304.147		
1998	304.114		
1999	280.554	48.273	7.000
2000	259.895	137.852	12.012
2001	299.589	160.623	16.309
2002	295.824	155.735	12.595
2003	321.805	178.003	12.793
2004	353.578	195.337	16.790
2005	487.761	289.765	25.724
2006	785.510	463.834	39.766
2007			22.649
2008			16.598

Source: Hürriyet (06.01.2000, 25.05.2000), Turkish National Police records (quoted in Gölbaşı, 2008), Suç Terörünün Bilançosu Raporu (ATO, 2007).

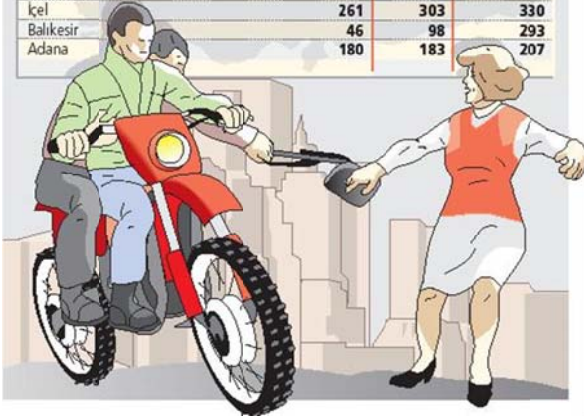
Rank	City	2000	2004	Rate of increase (%)
1	BALIKESİR	2406	9332	287.9
2	ERZİNCAN	276	877	217.8
3	DENİZLİ	2151	6307	193.2
4	KASTAMONU	661	1934	192.6
5	ELAZIĞ	1214	3477	186.4
6	KIRKLARELİ	809	2241	177.0
7	EDİRNE	833	2041	145.0
8	DİYARBAKIR	4014	8796	119.1
9	KARAMAN	315	690	119.0
10	KİLİS	258	558	116.3
31	İSTANBUL	67.299	94.509	40.4
40	İZMİR	16.710	21.358	27.8
44	ANKARA	23.059	28.647	24.2

Source: Suç Terörünün Bilançosu Raporu (ATO, 2007).

İllere göre suç oranı

Kapkaç ve yankesicilik olaylarının en çok yaşandığı 10 ilde son üç yıl içinde yaşanan olayların tablosu şöyle:

İl	2002	2003	2004
İstanbul	4809	5175	8320
İzmir	1814	2430	2411
Diyarbakır	305	525	1214
Antalya	539	734	733
Ankara	688	598	633
Bursa	1930	972	521
Gaziantep	411	290	294
Çel	261	303	330
Balıkesir	46	98	293
Adana	180	183	207



Source: Sabah, 14.02.2005.

Kapkaç suçunda %41 azalma

Suç türü	2007	2008	Oranı
Kapkaç	4.530	2.660	-41
Oto hırsızlığı	22.852	16.867	-26
Otodan hırsızlık	52.320	40.806	-22
Kasten öldürme	1.542	1.379	-11
İşyerinde hırsızlık	42.698	35.671	-16
Eviden hırsızlık	69.536	65.553	-6
Yankesicilik	22.649	16.598	-27
Gasp	7.311	5.452	-25
Aile fertlerine kötü muamele	22.330	20.409	-9
Toplam	245.768	205.395	-16



Source: Sabah, 06.06.2009.

Crime records in İstanbul

Year	Number of purse-snatching and pick-pocketing crimes
1993	301
1994	987
1995	1493
1996	3468
1997	5158
1998	5449
1999	3022
2000	4102
2001	5533
2002	2794
2003	5175
2004	8320
2005	
2006 (1 st 6 months)	1295
2007 (1 st 6 months)	628

Source: Hürriyet (25.05.2000, 19.06.2001, 29.06.2001, 21.11.2001, 18.01.2003, 25.07.2003, 14.10.2003, 22.05.2004, 06.11.2004, 12.11.2004), Sabah (30.06.2001, 13.11.2004, 14.02.2005).

APPENDIX B

CARICATURE



(Okur Temsilcisi'ne mektuplar, Hürriyet, 28.03.2005)

APPENDIX C

TURKISH SUMMARY

Tezin çıkış noktası 2000'lerin ortaları itibariyle gündemde olan üç konu arasındaki ilişkileri incelemektir: artan kapkaç olayları ve üzerine kurulan korku söylemi; özellikle İstanbul'da 'suç yuvası' haline geldiği iddia edilen ve çoğunlukla yoksul Kürt göçmenlerin ve Romanların yaşadığı bazı gecekondu mahallelerine ve çöküntü alanlarına düzenlenen geniş çaplı, ağır silahlı, medyada geniş yer bulan polis operasyonları; ve çoğunlukla söz konusu alanları hedefleyen, buraları neredeyse baştan tanzim eden kentsel dönüşüm projeleri. Tezin iddiası, ilk bakışta birbirinden farklı görünen bu üç olgunun ilişkili olduğu ve belirli bir toplumsal özgüllükte aynı söylemde eklemlendiğidir. Bu bağlamda, tezin amacı Türkiye'de son on yılda ön plana çıkan iki neoliberal mantık arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir: değişen kent politikaları ve kentsel dönüşüm özelinde sermayenin mantığı ile artan sokak suçları söylemine dayanan ceza politikaları ve polislik stratejilerindeki dönüşümler özelinde güvenlik mantığı.

2000'lerin başından itibaren büyük şehirlerde artan kapkaç olayları medyada bir korku nesnesi, toplumun bütününe yönelik bir tehdit olarak sunulmuştur. Medyada kapkaç olaylarının faileri çoğunlukla Doğulu ve Güneydoğulu genç göçmenler ya da çocuklar olarak gösterilmiştir. Tez, 2000'li yılların ortalarında kapkaç olaylarından kaynaklanan bir 'ahlaki panik' yaşandığını ve buna paralel olarak ceza ve polislik rejiminde 'suç karşı sertlik' temelli bazı dönüşümler gerçekleştiğini öne sürmektedir. Kapkaç olaylarıyla bağlantılı olarak İstanbul'daki bazı mahalleler medyada "Doğulu ve Güneydoğulu (Kürt) kapkaç çeteleriyle Roman uyuşturucu satıcılarını barındıran 'suç yuvaları'" olarak gösterilmiştir. Özellikle 2000'lerin ortalarında söz konusu mahallelere çok sayıda ve ağır silahlı, koçbaşı, kar maskeli Özel Tim ve Çevik Kuvvet polislerinin katıldığı ve özel eğitilmiş köpeklerle helikopterlerin eşlik ettiği sistematik, geniş çaplı operasyonlar düzenlenmiştir. Bu

‘abartılı’ operasyonlar basında ve resmi söylemde adeta “terörist hücre evlerine” düzenleniyormuş gibi ve “ulusal güvenlik” için bir gereklilik olarak sunulmuştur. Aynı dönemde, kentsel mekânın kentsel dönüşüm projeleriyle yeniden tanzimi gündeme gelmiştir. Söz konusu projeler, çoğunlukla Kürt göçmenlerin ve Romanların yaşadığı kent merkezindeki çöküntü alanı haline gelmiş mahalleleri ve bazı gecekondulu mahallelerini kapsamaktadır. Bu projeler olası bir deprem riski ve suçla mücadele üzerine kurulan söylemlerle haklılaştırılmıştır.

Tezin başlıca hedefi, yukarıda bahsi geçen üç konu arasındaki ilişkiyi yazılı basındaki temsilleri yoluyla incelemektir. Bu hedef şu cümleyle özetlenebilir: “‘Kapkaççı Kürt göçmenlerin ve uyuşturucu taciri Romanların yuvalandığı ‘suçlu’ mahalleler ve buraların kentsel dönüşümle rehabilitasyonu.’” Diğer bir deyişle, kent/sokak suçlarının neoliberal kent politikalarının ana dürtülerinden biri olarak sunulduğu ve söz konusu suçların kentsel dönüşüm projeleri ve ilişkili yasal düzenlemeleri haklılaştırıcı söyleme eklenildiği iddia edilmektedir.

Tezde, söz konusu üç olgu üzerine olan haber metinleri gerekli yasal düzenlemelerin ve politikaların oluşturulması ve yürürlüğe konması için ideolojik bir çerçeve sundukları iddiasıyla incelenmiştir. Haber metinleri Eleştirel Söylem Analizi çerçevesinde incelenmiştir. Bu çerçeveye göre, medya metinleri yeni politikaların topluma empoze edilmesi, toplum nezdinde haklılaştırılması ve amaçlanan politikalara dair bir konsensüs oluşturulmasında anahtar rol oynar. Nitekim bu çalışma medya metinlerinin liberal medya teorisinin iddia ettiği gibi gerçekliğin nesnel temsilleri olmadığını fakat tam aksine, toplumsal gerçekliğin oluşturulmasında aktif rol oynadığını savunmaktadır.

Tezin başlangıç noktasını oluşturan ve kentsel dönüşüm projeleriyle sokak suçlarını kent yoksullarının belirli kesimleriyle ilişkilendiren temel sav birtakım önermeler içermektedir. İlk, kapkaç ve uyuşturucuyla ilişkili suçlar belirli toplumsal gruplarla, yani Doğulu ve Güneydoğulu göçmenler (Kürtler) ve Romanlarla ilişkilendirilmektedir. Bu grupların ortak özellikleri etnik azınlıklar olmaları ve kent yoksullarının en büyük kısmını oluşturmalarıdır. Sonuç olarak, İstanbul’un kent yoksullarını oluşturan iki büyük toplumsal grup medyada kent suçlarının baş aktörleri olarak damgalanmaktadır. Bununla beraber, damgalanmanın unsurları her iki grup için farklılaşmaktadır.

Esasen, Kürt göçmenler 1990'lardaki zorunlu göç dalgalarıyla birlikte büyük şehirlere gelmeye başladıklarından beri kentli orta ve üst sınıflar için başlıca huzursuzluk ve korku unsurlarından biri olmuştur. Bu hissiyatın iki veçhesi vardır. İlkin, Kürt göçmenler Doğu ve Güneydoğu bölgelerindeki terör eylemleri ve silahlı çatışmalarla özdeşleştirilerek “ulusal birliğe karşı tehdit” olarak algılanmaktadır. İkinci olarak da büyük şehirlerdeki kentli alt sınıfların en yoksul kesimlerinden birini oluşturduklarından “sınıfsal tehdit” olarak görülmektedirler.

Öte yandan, Romanların damgalanmalarının kendine özgü birtakım dinamikleri ve yüzlerce yıllık geçmişi vardır. Romanlar, farklı yaşam tarzları ve kültürel pratikleri nedeniyle resmi otoritenin gözünde her zaman “kontrol atında tutulması ve disipline edilmesi gereken bir topluluk” olmuştur. Bu anlamda, Romanların yasa dışı aktivitelerle özdeşleşmelerinin uzun bir tarihi vardır. Bu çalışmaya dâhil edilmelerinin temel nedeni Kürt göçmenlerle beraber suçla özdeşleştirilen ikinci büyük toplumsal grup olmaları ve haber metinlerinde “doğuştan suç işlemeye meyilli” olarak tanımlanmalarıdır.

Önceden belirtildiği üzere, ağırlıklı olarak Kürt göçmenlerin ve Romanların yaşadığı bazı mahalleler medyada “suç yuvaları” olarak resmedilmekte ve tanımlanmaktadır. İstanbul'daki söz konusu mahalleler ya Hacıhüsrev ve Sarıgöl gibi neredeyse yüzyıllık geçmişi olan Roman mahalleleri ya da Tarlabası gibi son Kürt göçü dalgasının başlıca destinasyonlarıdır. Aslında, çoğu zaman aynı mahalleler Roman ve Kürt nüfusu birlikte barındırmaktadır. Söz konusu mahallelerde birtakım yasadışı faaliyetlerin yürütüldüğü olgusal bir gerçekliktir. Ancak, güvenlik güçlerinin abartılı müdahaleleri medyada bu mahallelerinin tüm sakinlerini suçlayıcı ve damgalayıcı bir tonda aktarılmakta ve böylelikle de bu bölgeleri suç mekânları olarak kurmaktadır.

“Suç yuvası” olarak damgalanan tüm mahallelerin kentsel dönüşüm kapsamına alınmış olması dikkat çekicidir. Tüm bu gözlemler ışığında medyanın kapkaç olayları söyleminin ve belli bölgeleri “suçlu mahalleler” olarak tanımlamasının kentsel mekânın neoliberal mantık çerçevesinde yeniden tanımlanması ve örgütlenmesinde anahtar rol oynadığı ve kamu otoritelerinin daha sert cezai yaptırımlar ve polisiye önlemler kullanmasını haklılaştırdığı iddia edilebilir.

Bu çalışmada, söz konusu olguyu analiz etmek için yazılı basındaki suç haberlerinin seçilmesinin ana nedeni medyanın gerçekliğin kuruluşunda oynadığı roldür. Bir diğer neden ise suç haberlerinin özgün yapısıyla ilgilidir. Hall vd.'nin (1978) belirttiği üzere, medya, çeşitli resmi haber kaynaklarına yapısal bağımlılığı nedeniyle hâlihazırda haber yapım sürecinde “ikincil tanımlayıcılarıdır”. Ancak, suç haberleri özelinde, suç meselesinin doğasından kaynaklanan özgün bir durum söz konusudur. Suç haberlerinde ilk elden tanıklık oldukça nadir rastlanan bir durumdur. Ayrıca, toplumda “suça karşı olmak” üzerine çok güçlü bir konsensüs vardır. Bu nedenlerden dolayı devlet görevlileri, polis ve yargı mensupları suç haberlerinin yalnızca “başat tanımlayıcıları” olmakla kalmaz, çoğu zaman perspektifleri haberlerde olduğu gibi yansıtılır. Çoğu durumda, gazeteler polis bültenlerini haber metni olarak olduğu gibi yayınlamaktadırlar. Bu anlamda, medyanın toplumsal uyuşmaların, hegemonik tanımlamaların ve özdeşliklerin yeniden üretilmesi yoluyla toplumsal gerçekliğin kurulumunda oynadığı özgün rol bir yana, suç haberleri resmi söylemin izinin sürülebileceği en verimli alanlardan biri olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır.

Tüm bu önermelerin ışığında, bu çalışmada incelenmek üzere iki ulusal günlük gazete olarak Sabah ve Hürriyet seçilmiştir. Bu tercihin temel sebepleri, söz konusu iki gazetenin çalışmanın kapsadığı dönem boyunca genel toplumsal algıya hitap ediyor olmaları ve ülkedeki en yüksek tirajlara sahip olmalarıdır. Tezin kapsamı içinde Sabah ve Hürriyet gazetelerinin internet versiyonlarında, 1990’ların sonundan 2012 Mayısına değin çıkan kapkaç haberleri ve İstanbul’daki ‘sorunlu’ olarak tanımlanan, sistematik polis operasyonlarına hedef olan ve kentsel dönüşüm kapsamına alınan Gaziosmanpaşa’da Bursa ve Sarıgöl, Beyoğlu’nda Tarlabası ve Hacıhüsrev ve Esenler’de Karabayır mahalleleri üzerine çıkan haberler incelenmiştir. Örneklerin İstanbul’dan seçilmesinin nedeni medyanın en fazla yeri İstanbul’daki kentsel dönüşüm projelerine ayırması ve artan suç oranları üzerine en hararetli tartışmaların İstanbul bağlamında yapılmış olmasıdır.

Dolayısıyla, kapkaç ve ‘sorunlu’ mahalleler üzerine yapılmış olan haber metinlerini incelerken iki temel teorik çerçeveden faydalanılmıştır. Kapkaç haberlerinin medyadaki temsilinin özgün dinamiklerini anlayabilmek için Stanley Cohen’in normdan sapma davranışı gösteren bazı gençlik grupları için 1970’lerin başlarında ortaya attığı ve 1970’lerin sonunda Hall vd. tarafından İngiltere’deki gasp

(*mugging*) olaylarının analizini yaparken kullanılan “ahlaki panik” kavramından faydalanılmıştır. Ahlaki panik temel olarak kriz dönemlerinde belli bir toplumsal grubun ya da grupların medyada toplumun tümüne bir tehdit olarak damgalanması ve suçlulaştırılmasını ifade eder. Ahlaki panik birtakım somut gerçekliklere dayanır; suç oranları gerçekten de artmaktadır. Ancak, olguları öyle bir biçimde abartır ki sorun olduğundan çok daha ciddiymiş ve arka planda yatan daha büyük bir sorunun semptomuymuş gibi görünür. Kapkaççılar özelinde, kentlerde artan sokak suçları genç Kürt göçmenler ve çocuklarla özdeşleştirilmiştir ve kapkaç da daha büyük bir sorunun, yani Kürt göçünün bir semptomu olarak sunulmuştur.

‘Sorunlu’ mahalleler üzerine yapılan haberlerde van Dijk ve diğer Eleştirel Söylem Analizcilerinin söylemde ayrımcılık üzerine çalışmalarından faydalanılmıştır. Söylemde belli toplumsal gruplar “biz”den farklı olarak kurulur ve “onlar”ın normdan sapma davranışları birtakım içkin eksikliklere, hatalara ve hatta suç işleme eğilimlerine bağlanır. Temel “biz vs. onlar” karşıtlığında “yasallık vs. yasadışı”, “düzen vs. karmaşa”, “barışçılık vs. şiddet”, “akılcılık vs. akıldışılık”, “sorumluluk vs. sorumsuzluk” ve “kendi kendine yetme vs. başkalarına bağımlılık” gibi alt karşıtlık kategorileri kullanılır. Bu anlamda, söz konusu grupların gündelik pratikleri, kültürel farklılıkları, çoğunlukla kayıt dışı olan işleri ve kaçak elektrik kullanımı gibi pratikler yoluyla oluşturulan “devletin ve toplumun üzerinde yük” imajları haber metinlerinde, maruz kaldıkları sert polisiye müdahaleleri ve hatta yaşam alanlarından sürülmelerini haklılaştırmak için kullanılmaktadır.

Bu bağlamda, tezin ilk bölümünde Türkiye’de 1980 sonrasında uygulanmaya başlayan neoliberal politikaların kent veçhesi batı dünyasındaki kentsel ayrışma biçimleriyle ilişkili olarak incelenmektedir. Türkiye’de neoliberal yeniden yapılanma doğrultusunda dönüşen kentsel rejim, kent mekânını metalaştırmayı amaçlayan yasal düzenlemelere referansla tartışılmıştır. Daha sonra, büyük kentlerdeki kentsel ayrışma biçimleri güvenli siteler ve uydu kentlerin ortaya çıkışı ve sayılarının hızla artması ile kentsel dönüşüm projeleri bağlamında incelenmiştir. Bu sürece eşlik eden damgalama ve suçlulaştırma pratiklerini anlayabilmek için ‘gecekondu mahallesi’ tabirinin yerini ‘varoş’un alması, ilgili literatüre referansla tartışılmıştır. Varoş tabiriyle birlikte gecekondu kavramının “enformelliği” “yasadışıllığa”, hatta “suça” evrilmiştir. Varoş kavramı kentin ve kentliliğin anti-tezi olarak sunulmuştur. Ayrıca varoş, gecekondu olarak,

ya da onun imlediklerine ek olarak, “tehlike” ve “tehdit” kavramlarını çağrıştırmaktadır. Özellikle 1995’teki Gazi olayları ve 1996’daki olaylı 1 Mayıs’tan sonra varoşlarda yaşayanlar yasa dışı sol örgütlerle ilişkilendirilerek ya da Alevilik kimlikleri ön plana çıkarılarak resmi söylemde ve medya söyleminde “düşmanlaştırılmıştır”. Aslında çoğu zaman varoşun temsil ettiği tehdit sınıfsal bir tehdittir; kent yoksullarının “devlete ve topluma duydukları öfke” medyada ve resmi söylemde sık sık “sosyal patlama” kavramına referansla gündeme getirilmiştir.

Varoş bağlamında kent yoksullarının şiddet ve tehditle özdeşleştirilmesi 1990’lardaki zorunlu Kürt göçüyle de ilişkilidir. Bu göçle birlikte Kürt sorunu kentli orta ve üst sınıfların gözünde Doğu ve Güneydoğudaki silahlı çatışmalardan ibaret olmaktan çıkmıştır. Kürt göçmenlerin memleketlerinde baskı ve şiddete aşına olmaları, onları kentli orta ve üst sınıfların gözünde potansiyel olarak şiddet eğilimli, tehlikeli ve suçlu kılmıştır. Bu nedenle, zorunlu Kürt göçünün büyük şehirlerdeki yeni suçlu stereotiplerinin oluşmasında etkili olduğu iddia edilebilir. Aynı biçimde Kürt göçmenler korku ve etnik önyargılar yüzünden kent yoksulları arasında hâlihazırda var olan dayanışma ağlarından da dışlanmışlardır. Hatta ayrımcı ve damgalayıcı pratiklere maruz kalmışlardır. Sonuç olarak, pek çok dezavantaj nedeniyle Kürt göçmenler büyük şehirlerdeki yoksulların en alt kesimlerinden birini oluşturmuşlardır.

Bu bölümün bir diğer başlığı da ceza rejiminin temel paradigmasının ‘iyileştirme/düzeltilme’den ‘hak edildiği biçimde cezalandırma’ya dönüşümüdür. ‘Hak edildiği biçimde cezalandırma’ paradigmasının temel bileşenleri suç ve ceza söylemi, ‘suç’, ‘suçlu’ ve ‘mağdur’un değişen tanımları ve ‘polislin sıfır tolerans politikası’ üzerinden tartışılmıştır. Neoliberal paradigmanın dünya genelinde hâkim olmasıyla birlikte, refah devletinin “içerici” ve “asimile edici” ceza politikası terk edilmiştir. Yeni neoliberal ceza paradigması kendini refah devleti temelli ceza politikalarının tam tersi olarak kurmuş ve bu çerçevede temel prensiplerini ahlaki değerlerin yeniden tesisi, ailenin, geleneklerin, toplumsal hiyerarşilerin ve disiplinin toplumda pekiştirilmesi ve bunların gerçekleştirilebilmesi için de devletin baskı aygıtının daha güçlü ve otoriter bir hale getirilmesi şeklinde ortaya koymuştur. Toplum düzenini bozan başlıca aktörü ise alt sınıflar olarak tanımlamıştır. Neoliberal ekonomik sistem, alt sınıflar arasındaki işsizlik oranını

arttıracak biçimde emek piyasalarını yapısal bir dönüşüme tabi tutmuş ve bu esnada orta ve üst sınıflara pek çok ekonomik avantaj sağlamıştır. Sınıf farklılıklarının keskinleşmesi ve dolayısıyla suç oranlarının artması nedeniyle de alt sınıflara yönelik savunmacı, kontrolcü, disipline edici ve hatta cezalandırıcı bir söylem yeni rejimin vazgeçilmezlerinden biri olmuştur.

Bu bağlamda, suçu mahrumiyetle açıklayan refah devleti paradigmasının tersine, neoliberal paradigma suçu bir disiplin ve kontrol meselesi olarak ele almıştır. Bu nedenle, bu tür özelliklere sahip olmayan ya da toplumsal kontrol mekanizmaları tarafından denetlenemeyen bireylerin topluma “ders olacak biçimde” ağır şekilde cezalandırılması gerektiği savunulmuştur. Bu nedenle, yeni suçlu figürü toplumdaki “risk kategorilerinden” oluşmaktadır; söz konusu toplumsal gruplar sürekli gözlenmeli ve kontrol altında tutulmalıdır. Kentsel ayrışma da bu kontrol mekanizmalarından biri olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır.

Yeni suç söyleminde “mağdur” kategorisi de ön plana çıkmıştır. Mağdur hikâyeleri ve deneyimleri medyada sıklıkla yer bulmakta, sert ceza politikalarının ve polisiye tedbirlerin haklılaştırılmasında kullanılmaktadır. “Mağdura” yapılan bu vurgu aynı zamanda suçun artık yalnızca suça karşı korunmasız olanların karşı karşıya bulunduğu bir tehlike değil, tüm toplumu tehdit eden bir risk olduğunu ima eder. Artık her mağdur hikâyesi, “bu sizin hikâyeniz de olabilirdi” mesajıyla sunulmaktadır. Aynı doğrultuda, suça karşı mücadele politikası popülist söylemin ana bileşenlerinden biri olur ve “herkesin anladığı ve hakkında konuşabileceği bir konu” olarak sunulmaya başlar.

Bu çerçevede, “risk yönetimi” zihniyeti hukuki yaptırım ve uygulama mekanizmaları tarafından benimsenerek polislik pratikleri performans kriterlerine bağlanmıştır. Risk yönetiminin bir diğer vechesi de belirli “sıcak bölgelerin” suç haritalarının çıkarılmasıdır. Böylelikle “toplumda huzursuzluk ve düzensizlik yaratma potansiyeli olan” bölge ve unsurlar önceden tespit edilir. Risk yönetimi anlayışı en belirgin ifadesini, 1980’lerin başında ortaya atılan suça karşı “sıfır tolerans” stratejisinde bulur. Söz konusu stratejinin temel argümanı, serserilik, ayyaşlık, dilencilik gibi “düşük öneme sahip” suçların büyüyüp daha ciddi suçlara yol açmadan önce baskıcı polisiye tedbirlerle kontrol altına alınmasıdır. Sıfır tolerans stratejisine göre çöküntü alanı haline gelmiş bölgeler “kriminojeniktir”; yani, suça ve suçluların barınmasına elverişli hale gelmiştir. Bu nedenle, söz

konusu bölgeler güvenlik kamerası ya da sürekli polis devriyesi gibi tedbirlerle kontrol altında tutulmalıdır. Sıfır tolerans stratejisi suçun asıl sebeplerini önemsizleştirerek ya da gizleyerek ve sebeplerden ziyade sonuçlar üzerine vurgu yaparak, siyasetçilerin ve yasa uygulayıcıların suç oranlarında dönemsel ve bağlamsal olarak gerçekleşen düşüşleri suçla mücadele tekniklerinin başarısı olarak sunmalarını sağlar.

Sıfır tolerans stratejisinin de dâhil olduğu yeni cezalandırma paradigması suçlu figürünü “şiddete eğilimli, iflah olmaz bir öteki” olarak kurarak “insanlıktan çıkarır/şeytanlaştırır”. Böylelikle, toplumun “şeytanlaştırılmış” kesimleri “zaten eşikte” olarak tanımlanarak tüm sorunların kaynağı olarak gösterilirler. Böylesi bir bakış açısı suçu suçludan kaynaklanan bir olgu olarak göstererek altta yatan toplumsal ve ekonomik faktörleri göz ardı eder. Benzer bir yaklaşımı 1980 sonrasında Türkiye’deki ceza politikalarındaki dönüşümler ve polisin yetkilerinin kademeli olarak artırılmasını içeren süreçte de görmek mümkündür. 2004’te kabul edilen 2005’te yürürlüğe giren yeni Türk Ceza Kanunu, temel olarak Avrupa Birliği’ne uyum çerçevesinde sanık ve mahkûm hakları üzerine yaptığı iyileştirmeler nedeniyle, yeni cezalandırma paradigması çerçevesinde pek çok açıdan eleştirilmiştir. Bu doğrultuda, sonradan yapılan yasa değişiklikleri ve eklemelerle özellikle mala karşı işlenen suçların tanımları muğlaklaştırılmış ve kapsamaları genişletilmiştir.

Aynı doğrultuda, 2007’den itibaren Polis Vazife ve Salahiyetleri Kanunu’nda yapılan değişikliklerle polisin yetkileri arttırılmıştır. 2000’ler aynı zamanda “suç önleyici” polislik stratejilerinin de yürürlüğe girdiği yıllar olmuştur. Bu çerçevede polisin teknolojik imkânları arttırılmış, Pol-Net adlı merkezi istihbarat ağı ve MOBESE adlı elektronik gözetleme sistemi kurulmuş ve suçu önlemede vatandaşların sorumluluğuna da vurgu yapan yeni bir halkla ilişkiler stratejisi benimsenmiştir. Aynı çerçevede kriminojenik bölgelerin suç türleri, sıklığı, suç algısı, suçun doğurduğu tepkiler ve suçun failinin, mağdurun ve suç mahallinin profillerine dayanan suç haritaları çıkarılmıştır. Kapkaç gibi sokak suçlarının önlenmesine yönelik özel polis timleri kurulmuş, sokak devriyesine ağırlık verilmiştir. Söz konusu timlerin özellikle kriminojenik mahallelerde sivil olarak çalışacağı vurgulanmıştır. Ayrıca, 2009’da Hüseyin Çapkın’ın İstanbul Emniyet Müdürü olmasından sonra polislere verilen ödül ve cezaları sistematikleştirerek bir

“performans puanlama sistemi” oluşturmuş, böylece terfilerini polislerin yakaladıkları şüpheli başına aldıkları puanlara bağlamıştır. Türkiye’de ceza yasalarında ve polisin yetkileri üzerinde yapılan değişiklikler aynı zamanda kentsel mekânın dönüşümü ve kent yoksullarının ötekileştirilmesiyle yakından ilişkilidir.

İkinci bölümde suç ve norm-dışı davranış teorileri, söylem analizi teorisi ve suç haberleri üzerine tartışmalar ele alınmıştır. Suç ve norm-dışı davranışa temel yaklaşımlar tartışıldıktan sonra suç ve norm-dışı davranışın toplumsal olarak nasıl kurulduğunu anlayabilmek için Eleştirel Söylem Analizi ele alınmıştır. Daha sonra, haber metninin yapısı ve söylemde ayrımcılığın mekanizmaları tartışılmış ve ahlaki panik kavramı ele alınmıştır. Stanley Cohen ve Stuart Hall vd.’nin çalışmaları bağlamında tartışılan ahlaki panik kavramı kapkaç haberlerinin ve onlara referansla oluşturulan korku söyleminin analizinde anahtar öneme sahiptir.

Üçüncü bölüm Sabah ve Hürriyet gazetelerinin internet versiyonlarında 1990’larından sonundan günümüze değin kapkaç olayları ve ‘sorunlu’ mahalleler üzerine yayınlanmış haberleri incelemektedir. Çalışma kapsamında kapkaç üzerine 1736 ve ‘sorunlu’ mahalleler üzerine de 738 haber incelenmiştir. Haber incelemeleri haberlerde en sık işlenen temalar ve unsurlar üzerinden gruplandırılmıştır. Bu kadar uzun bir dönemin incelenme sebebi ise sıradan bir sokak suçunun nasıl “ülkenin bir numaralı güvenlik sorunu” haline dönüştüğünü ve zaman içinde kademeli olarak nasıl haber değerinin azalıp gazetelerden yok olduğunu görebilmektir.

Kapkaç haberleri üzerine yapılan analiz göstermiştir ki alt sınıf genç Kürt göçmenler ve çocuklar medya söyleminde 2000’lerin ortalarında doruğa ulaşan “ahlaki paniğin” özneleri olarak gösterilmiştir. Haber metinleri, Cohen (2006) ve Hall vd.nin (1978) ahlaki panik üzerine çalışmalarında gösterdiği üzere, belirli bir toplumsal grubu “toplum huzuruna tehdit” olarak damgalamakta, “ani ve dramatik bir biçimde artan bir suçun” aktörleri olarak gösterme eğilimindedir. Bu bağlamda, ilk olarak kapkaç “paniğinin” toplumsal, siyasal, ekonomik ve yasal arka planı tartışılmıştır. Ahlaki paniğe konu olan kapkaç suçu, haber metinlerinde arka plandaki daha büyük bir sorunun, yani son 20 yıl içinde Doğu ve Güneydoğudan gerçekleşen kitlesel göçün bir semptomu olarak sunulmaktadır. Yasal ve hukuki otoritelerin suç haberlerinin başat tanımlayıcıları olmalarının yanı sıra, haber

metinleri iddialarını sağlamlaştırmak için aynı zamanda akademisyenler, sosyal hizmet uzmanları ve hatta kimi zaman psikiyatristlerin görüşlerine başvurmuştur.

Aslında büyük şehirlerdeki genç Kürt göçmenlerin ve çocukların suçlulaştırılması tinerci çocuklarla başlamıştır. 1990'larda sokak çocuklarının sayısının ve görünürlüğünün artması büyük şehirlere gerçekleşen kitlesel Kürt göçüyle ilişkilidir. Bu dönemde kentsel yoksulluk etnik bir karakter kazanmaya başlamıştır. Haber söylemi tinerci çocukları “tekinsiz, iletişim kurulması mümkün olmayan, öngörülemeyen” özneler olarak kurmakta ve bu nedenlerle de aşırı derecede tehlikeli ve şiddet eğilimli olduklarını savunmaktadır. Cohen'e (2006: 40) referansla, tinerci çocuklara yapıştırılan “karma damga” (composite stigma) dış görünüşleri ve davranış biçimlerini tehdit ve tehlikeyle özdeşleştirmiştir. Diğer bir deyişle, tinerci çocukların tiner kullanmak gibi aslında yasa dışı olmayan özellikleri ve nitelikleri bir “imleme zinciri” (chain of signification) aracılığıyla suçlulaştırılmıştır. 2000'lerin başlarına gelindiğinde, tinerci çocuklar aralarında kapkaçın öne çıktığı pek çok sokak suçuyla özdeşleştirilmeye başlamıştır. Bu doğrultuda, haber metinlerinde, yasa uygulayıcılardan psikiyatristlere ve sosyal hizmet uzmanlarına dek pek çok uzman görüşüne dayanılarak tinerci çocuklar kapkaç olaylarıyla özdeşleştirilmeye başlamış ve kapkaççı profilinin unsurlarından biri haline gelmiştir. Cohen'in (2006: 8) belirttiği üzere, haber metinlerinde verilen bilginin “uzman görüşüne” başvuru olarak “olgusallaştırılması” ahlaki paniğin önemli bileşenlerinden biridir ve böylelikle, “norm dışı davranışın abartılması” (deviance amplification) adı verilen bir süreç dâhilinde toplumda kaygı ve korku hisleri beslenir.

Haber metinlerine göre çeşitli yollarla Doğu ve Güneydoğu bölgelerinden gelen çocuklar büyük şehirlerdeki kapkaç çetelerinin omurgasını oluşturmaktadır. Kapkaççılar da haber metinlerinde tinerci çocuklara benzer biçimde “şiddete eğilimli, zalim, soğukkanlı, devlet ve topluma karşı kin ve nefret dolu” saldırganlar olarak kurulurlar. Bu söylemsel kurulumun başlıca alanları kapkaç çetelerinin detaylı anlatımlarıdır. Bu anlatımlar çetelerin örgütlenme biçimleri, eleman devşirme yöntemleri, eğitim süreci ve çeteye bağlılık ve sadakati sağlama yollarının tasvirlerini içerir. Haber metinleri kapkaççılara, saldırganlıklarına, şiddet ve hatta sadist eğilimlerine vurgu yaparak tinercilerinkine benzer “normdan sapmaya meyilli” bir öz ve karma damga atfetmektedir. Bazı durumlarda haber

metinleri kapkaççılarla yapılan ve gerçekliği su götürür olan, dramatik röportajlara ya da beyanatlara başvurarak oluşturdukları karma damgayı pekiştirir. Söz konusu röportaj ya da beyanatlara gerçek olsa bile, Young'ın (1999: 17) belirttiği üzere, suç faillerinin tarafında resmi söylem ve medya söyleminin gözünden “sahte bir özcülük” yaratarak bir “kimlik eksikliğini telafisi” olarak görülebilir.

Haber metinleri aynı zamanda kapkaççıların yasa dışı eylemlerinde toplumsal kontrolün, daha doğrusu, eksikliğini rolünü vurgularlar. Haber metinleri, aile ve diğer toplumsal kontrol mekanizmalarının norm-dışı davranış üzerindeki etkilerine vurgu yapan ceza paradigmasına paralel olarak sıklıkla uzmanların parçalanmış ailelerin, ahlaki değerlerin zayıflığının ve okulda başarısız olmanın suça eğilim üzerindeki etkilerine dair görüşlerine başvururlar. Söz konusu mekanizmaların yokluğu ya da zayıflığında kapkaççıların “zevk ve sefa peşinde” bir hayat sürdükleri, gece kulüpleri ve barlarda eğlendikleri, alkol ve uyuşturucu kullandıkları ve hayat kadınlarıyla birlikte oldukları belirtilir. Bu bağlamda, bu tarz suçluların “karanlık” doğalarının ancak ve ancak güçlü otoriter ve cezalandırıcı mekanizmalarla kontrol altına alınabileceği ima edilir. Benzer biçimde, maddi imkânsızlıklar, yoksulluk ya da düşük gelir düzeyi kapkaççıların yasa dışı eylemlerini haklılaştırmak için öne sürdükleri bahaneler olarak imlenir.

Haber metinleri çocuk suçlulara verilen cezaların yetersizliğine de sık sık vurgu yaparak söz konusu suçlara yönelik daha sert polisiye tedbirler alınması ve bu suçların faillerinin daha ağır biçimde cezalandırılması için çağrı yaparlar. Pek çok köşe yazarı kapkaç meselesini eli kulağında bir “sosyal patlamanın kıyamet habercisi” olarak görmüş ve “sert tedbirler” alınması için çağrı yapmıştır. Böylesi sert tedbirlere örnek olarak polisin büyük şehirlere “potansiyel kapkaççı akının” kontrol altına almak için Diyarbakır’daki tren ve otobüs istasyonlarına yaptığı operasyonlar gösterilebilir. Bu operasyonlar yoluyla genç Kürt göçmenler ve çocuklar Cohen’in (2006: 75) “kamusal aşağılama merasimi” (ceremony of public degradation) olarak adlandırdığı eyleme maruz tutulmuşlar ve bu da onların toplumun gözünde damgalanmalarını garantilemiştir. Yani, Kürtlük ve suç, Hall vd.nin (1978: 223) ortaya koyduğu imleme sarmalında (signification spiral) “birleşmektedir” (converge).

Haberlerde yapılan “devlet ve topluma karşı kin ve nefret” vurgusu etnik kimliğin yanı sıra sınıfsal konumla da ilişkilendirilir. Kapkaççıların kendi durumlarından

devleti ve devletin Doğu ve Güneydoğudaki politikalarının yanı sıra toplumun daha varlıklı kesimlerini sorumlu tuttıkları ima edilir. Örneğin, kapkaççı çocukların yalnızca DEHAP mitinglerinde kapkaç yapmadıkları iddia edilir. Bu anlamda, adi sokak suçları kapkaççıların siyasi kimliklerine ve PKK'ya duydukları sempatiye eklenir. Hall vd.nin (1978: 224) “çerçevelerin yer değiştirmesi” (transposition of frameworks) olarak tanımladığı söylemsel mekanizma doğrultusunda suça ilişkin bir konu politize edilir; yani, kapkaç suçu daha büyük bir toplumsal sorunla, yani ayrılıkçı Kürt hareketiyle ilişkilendirilir.

Kentteki “sıcak bölgelerin” suç haritalarının çıkarılması polis tarafından kapkaç ve diğer sokak suçlarıyla mücadele etmenin etkin bir yöntemi olarak sunulmuştur. Bu çerçevede, 2006'dan itibaren, medyada ve resmi söylemde “suç yuvaları” ve “suçluların ve potansiyel suçluların sığınağı” olarak tanımlanan belirli ‘sorunlu’ alt sınıf mahallelere sistematik, geniş çaplı polis operasyonları düzenlenmiştir. Tezde, van Dijk'ın (1993) söylemde ayrımcılığın çoğunlukla temel bir karşıtlık, yani “biz vs. onlar” üzerinden kurulduğu argümanından yola çıkarak, ‘sorunlu’ mahallelerin sakinlerinin haber metinlerinde “dürüst, yasalara saygılı, barışçıl, sorumluluk sahibi biz”e karşı “suçlu, yasa dışı, şiddet eğilimli, sorumsuz onlar” olarak kurulduğu savunulmaktadır. Bu çalışma kapsamında seçilen ve medyada geniş yer bulan polis operasyonlarının hedefi olan mahalleler Gaziosmanpaşa'da Sarıgöl ve Bursa, Esenler'de Karabayır ve Beyoğlu'nda Tarlabası ve Hacıhüsrev'dir. Bu mahallelerde çoğunlukla alt sınıf Kürt göçmenler ve Romanlar yaşamaktadır. Polis operasyonlarının medyada aktarımı operasyonların canlı tasvirleri, operasyonlarda görev alan ve genel olarak ‘sorunlu’ mahallelerde görev yapan polisin olumlu betimlemeleri ve mahalle sakinlerinin yaşam alanlarını yasa dışı aktivitelere uygun bir şekilde tanzim etme biçimlerinin anlatımlarını içerir.

Genel olarak, polis operasyonlarının haber aktarımları operasyona hangi polis birimlerinin ve kaç polisin katıldığını ve de ele geçirilen yasa dışı ya da çalıntı malzemenin miktarı ile gözaltına alınan şüphelilerin sayısını içerir. Operasyonların amacı, meşru zeminlerinin altını çizmek için sık sık belirtilir. Bunların dışında, operasyonlar, ilk elden tanıklık yoluyla realizm etkisini güçlendirmek için di'li geçmiş zaman kullanılarak hikâye biçiminde aktarılır. Polisin bölge üzerindeki kontrolünü ve titiz çalışmasını anlatan belirli ifadeler, mahalleleri polisin militarize müdahalesini gerektiren yalıtılmış “düşman” bölgeler olarak kurar. Polis ise, bu

ifadeler yoluyla, mahallelerin “suçlu” sakinleri karşısında etkin ve organize bir yapı olarak resmedilir. Operasyonların öncesindeki bürokratik prosedür de haberlerde detaylı bir biçimde aktarılmaktadır. Her ne kadar söz konusu prosedürler yasal sürecin rutin bir parçası olsa da, polis her ne koşulda olursa olsun yasalara saygılı ve bağlı olduğunun altı çizilir. Polis operasyonlarının haber metinlerindeki tasvirlerinin bir başka unsuru ise mahalle sakinlerinin yaşam alanlarını düzenleme ve kullanma biçimleridir. Temel olarak, ‘sorunlu’ mahallelerin sakinlerinin mekânlarını yasa dışı aktivitelere uygun, onları kolaylaştıracak biçimde düzenledikleri vurgulanır. Örneğin, uyuşturucuları ya da çalıntı eşyaları saklamak için evlerin çeşitli yerlerindeki zulalardan, olası bir polis baskınında uyuşturucuları yakmak için sürekli yanık tutulan sobalardan, ya da yine olası bir polis baskınında kolayca kaçabilmek için evlerden birbirine açılan gizli geçitlerden söz edilir. Dahası, her ne kadar mahallelerin var olan sakinleriyle doğrudan ilişkili olmasa da, mahallelerin dar ve birbirinin içine geçmiş sokaklardan oluşan girift yapısı da suça ve yasa dışı aktivitelere olanak veren bir unsur olarak sunulur.

‘Sorunlu’ mahalleler üzerine yapılan gazete haberleri aynı zamanda, kimi zaman ciddi yaralanmalar ve hatta ölümlerle sonuçlanan mahalle içi çatışmalara yer verir. Çatışmalar çoğunlukla etnik, kültürel ve ekonomik gerilimlerden kaynaklanmaktadır. Çatışan başlıca gruplar ise Kürt göçmenler ve Romanlardır. Haber metinleri mahalle sakinlerini “yasayı çiğnemeyen, iyi, dürüst insanlar” ile “yasa dışı faaliyetlerde bulunan kötü niyetli suçlular” olarak ikiye ayırır. Bu nedenle, suçun ya da yasa dışı faaliyetlerin çatışan gruplar arasındaki temel sınır çizgisi olarak temsil edildiğini söyleyebiliriz. Genel olarak, konu sokak suçları ya da kültürel farklar olduğunda haber metinlerinin Roman grupları suçlulaştırma eğiliminde olduğu söylenebilir. Ancak ne zaman ki çatışma Kürtlük kimliği üzerinden siyasi bir boyut kazanır, haber metinleri Romanların tarafını tutar ve Kürt gruplara karşı tavır alır. Bu nedenle, ‘sorunlu’ mahalleler üzerine yapılan haber metinlerinde siyasi bir kimlik olarak “Kürtlüğün” en çok damgalanan ve ötekileştirilen kimlik olduğu söylenebilir.

Haber metinlerinde ortaya çıkan ‘sorunlu’ mahalle sakinlerinin profili yaşam koşullarına, başlıca aktivite olarak suça ve etnik, sınıfsal ve kişisel özellikler barındıran bir “suçlu” kimliğine dayanır. Yaşam koşulları açısından, haber metinlerinin söz konusu mahalle sakinlerinin yaşam biçimlerinin kendisini “kayıt

dışılık” üzerinden suçlulaştırdığı söylenebilir. Diğer bir deyişle, mahalle sakinleri doğrudan bir suç işlemiyor olsalar bile varoluş koşullarının kendisi yasa dışıdır. Nüfus kayıtlarının olmaması, çocukların nüfusa geç yazdırılması, kaçak elektrik kullanımı ya da metruk evlere yerleşip buralarda yaşama pratikleri kayıt dışı yaşamlarının kanıtları ve “suçlu” kimliklerinin bir parçası olarak sunulur. Öte yandan, haber metinleri aynı zamanda paradoksal olarak mahalle sakinlerinin yasa dışı aktivitelerden elde ettikleri kazanç sayesinde gizlice lüks içinde yaşadıklarını da ima eder. Her iki durumda da mahalle sakinleri “devletin ve bizim üzerimizde yük” olarak sunulur ve “asıl mağdurun biz olduğumuz” ima edilir.

Mahalle sakinlerinin aktiviteleri konusunda, haber metinlerinde sıklıkla mahallelerin ailelerden oluşan çetelere ev sahipliği yaptığı vurgulanır. Çetelerin mahalleleri kendi aralarında bölüştükleri, ağır silahlara sahip oldukları ve son derece organize bir biçimde çalıştıkları vurgulanır. Bu anlamda, söz konusu mahallelerde suçun bir “aile mesleği” olduğunun altı çizilir. Hamile yankesiciler ya da uyuşturucu üreten ve satan çocuklardan bahsedilerek hamile, çocuklu ve yaşlı kadınların ve de küçük çocukların bile yasa dışı aktivitelere dâhil oldukları belirtilir. Haber metinleri sık sık “çocuklarını çeşitli yasa dışı aktiviteler ve suç türleri konusunda eğiten annelerden” söz eder. Bu nedenle, haber metinlerinde “suçluluğun” mahalle sakinlerinin pek çok farklı kimliğinin kesiştiği ortak bir zemin olarak sunulduğu söylenebilir. Kapkaç haberlerinde olduğu gibi mahalle haberlerinde de göçmen kimliği doğrudan suç davranışıyla ilişkilendirilmektedir; örneğin artan suç oranlarının artan göçle paralel olduğunun altı çizilir. Mahalle sakinlerinin etnik kimlikleri söz konusu olduğunda haber metinlerinin “Kürt” terimini doğrudan kullanmaktan kaçındığı görülmektedir; bunun yerine, mahalle sakinlerinin memleketleri ya da geldikleri bölgeler vurgulanır. Ancak Romanlar söz konusu olduğunda, haber metinleri mahalle sakinlerinin Roman kimliklerini doğrudan belirtmektedir. Her iki grup için farklı etnik stereotipler söz konusudur. Kürt göçmenler açısından, haber metinleri yasa dışı faaliyetlerde bulunmayı siyasi bir kimlik olarak Kürtlükle ilişkilendirir ve çetelerin Kürt kimliği etrafında örgütlendiğinden ya da PKK’ya maddi destek sağladıklarından söz eder. Haber metinlerinde Romanlara dair kullanılan olumsuz etnik stereotipler ise genel olarak yüzyıllardır Roman toplumuna atfedilen olumsuz stereotiplerle uyumludur. Bunlar arasında suçluluk ve hırsızlık ön plana çıkar.

Haber metinlerinde mahalle sakinlerine atfedilen karakter bozuklukları ise kapkaççılara atfedilenlere benzerlik taşır. Bunlar arasında ahlaksızlık, arsızlık ve utanmazlık ve de kötücüllük sayılabilir. Çocukların uyuşturucu ticareti gibi yasa dışı faaliyetler ya da gözaltı esnasındaki pişkin tavırları bu bağlamda sıklıkla haberlere konu olmaktadır. Ancak, yasa dışı aktivitelere bulaşan çocukların kimi zaman da aileleri tarafından zorla suç dünyasına sokuldukları vurgulanır. Bu nedenle, ‘sorunlu’ mahalleler üzerine yapılan haber metinlerinde çocukların temsilinin “suçlu özne” ve “suiistimal edilen nesne” arasında gidip geldiği söylenebilir. Haber metinleri sosyo-ekonomik koşullar ve sınıfsal profil açısından mahalle sakinlerinin fiziksel görünüşlerine, giyim kuşamlarına, tavır ve davranışlarına ve de konuşma biçimlerine değinmektedir. “Kılıksızlıkları”, eski püskü kıyafetleri, konuşurken küfür etmeleri, birbirlerini itip kakmaları ve çevredeki insanları rahatsız etmeleri bu tasvirlerde öne çıkan unsurlardır.

Genel olarak, haber metinlerinde polis operasyonları suçun azaltılmasında hayati öneme sahip şekilde sunulmaktadır. Bu paralelde, ‘sorunlu’ mahallelerde odaklanan kent suçları probleminin ancak polisin militarize yöntemleriyle çözülebileceği ima edilmektedir. Yani, bu bölgelerdeki suç probleminin ciddiyeti ve kronikliği ancak ve ancak güçlü ve yetkileri genişletilmiş bir polis gücüyle çözülebileceği savunulmaktadır. Örneğin, yeni Ceza Yasasıyla getirilen düzenlemeler polisin yetkilerini kısıtladığı ve suçluların haklarını genişlettiği için haber metinlerinde sıklıkla eleştirilmektedir.

İstanbul’da 1990’ların sonundan beri gerçekten de suç oranlarında bir artış gözlemlenmektedir ve kent yoksullarının maddi imkânsızlıklar ve dışlanma yüzünden özellikle mala karşı işlenen suçlarla yakın bir ilişkisi vardır. Bu anlamda, bazı Kürt göçmenler ve Romanların zaman zaman çeşitli hırsızlık faaliyetlerine ve uyuşturucu ticaretine karıştıkları söylenebilir. Ancak, tezin iddiası, söz konusu grupların haber metinlerinde “aşırı temsil edildikleri” (over-representation) ve medyanın artan suç oranları verilerini, söz konusu gruplara yönelik sert ceza politikalarını ve polisiye tedbirlerini meşrulaştırıcı ve sonrasında da kentsel dönüşüm projeleri söylemine eklenen dışlayıcı ve damgalayıcı bir söyleme dönüştürdüğüdür. Nitekim resmi otoritelerce yapılan ve polis kayıtları ya da cezaevi istatistiklerine dayanan ve cezaevlerinde yürütülen pek çok çalışma Kürt

göçmenlerin aslında büyük şehirlerdeki kapkaççıların çoğunluğunu oluşturmadığını ortaya koymuştur.

Bu nedenle, tezin iddiası, “kent yoksullarının zaptiyesinin” yeni kent siyasetinin önemli bileşenlerinden biri olduğudur. Geçtiğimiz on yıl içinde yürürlüğe giren sert polisiye tedbirler ve bedel ödetme temelli ceza politikaları, devletin yerinden eden ve yoksullaştıran politikalarına karşı kent yoksullarının olası protesto ve itirazlarını karşılamak için atılmış adımlar olarak da okunabilir. Medyadaki kapkaç paniği ve yasa dışı aktivitelere ev sahipliği yapan ‘sorunlu’ mahallelerin rehabilitasyonu üzerine yapılan tartışmalar sırasında gerçekleşen yasal düzenlemelerle polis yetkileri hiç olmadığı kadar genişletilmiş ve özellikle mala karşı suçların tanımları muğlaklaştırılmıştır. Böylelikle, azınlıklar ve potansiyel suçlular olarak ötekileştirilen grupları içeren kent yoksulları damgalayıcı ve cezalandırıcı bir söylem üretilmiştir.

Kentsel dönüşüm projelerinin temelini oluşturan güvenlik söylemi hem depremden hem de suçtan korunmayı vurgular. Bu iki vurgu aynı söylemde kaynaştırıldığında suça karşı alınan tedbirler deprem güvenliği söyleminin bilimselliğinden “faydalanarak” nesnel bir gerçeklik payesi kazanmaktadır. Öte yandan, güvenlik konusu medyada “siyaset üstü ve ötesi” bir konu olarak ele alınmaktadır. Asayiş ve suçla mücadele haber metinlerinde ideolojilerin ve siyasi partilerin ötesinde, toplumun her kesiminin aralarındaki farkları gözetmeksizin eşit derecede hassas olması gereken konular olarak sunulmaktadır. Diğer bir deyişle, suçla mücadele hâkim söylemde “doğallaştırılmaktadır”.

Kentsel dönüşüm projelerinin sokak suçlarını azaltacağı iddiası pek çok açıdan problemlidir. Öncelikle, kentsel dönüşüm projeleri nedeniyle yaşam alanlarından sürülen kent yoksulları şehrin çeperlerine itilmektedir. Böylelikle de seyyar satıcılık, gündelikçilik, çocuk bakıcılığı ya da çöp toplayıcılığı gibi çoğunlukla kent merkezlerinde bulunan iş imkânlarından mahrum kalmaktadırlar. Ayrıca, çoğunun kendilerine sunulan TOKİ konutlarının peşinatını ya da aylık taksitlerini ödeyecek maddi gücü yoktur. Bu nedenle, kentsel dönüşüm projeleri aslında kent yoksullarını daha yoksullaştırıp dışlayarak suça daha meyyal hale getirmektedir.

Sonuç olarak, kapkaç olayları ve İstanbul’un göbeğindeki bazı “yasa tanımaz” mahallelerle sembolize edilen ve son on – on beş yıl içinde artan suç oranları

medyada sert ceza politikaları ve polisiye tedbirlerin ve de kentsel dönüşüm projelerinin gerekçelerinden biri olarak sunulmuştur. Bu esnada, yoksul Doğulu ve Güneydoğulu (Kürt) göçmenler ve Romanlar gibi belirli toplumsal gruplar damgalanıp suçlulaştırılmış ve birtakım içkin normdan sapma eğilimleri, kişilik özellikleri, sınıfsal ve etnik stereotiplere dayanılarak yaşam alanlarından sürülmelerinin sorumluları olarak gösterilmişlerdir.

Bu nedenle, siyasal iktidarın kent siyasetinde radikal bir değişiklik olmadıkça kentli alt sınıfların en yoksul ve dezavantajlı kesimlerinin yaşam alanlarından sürülmeye devam edeceğini söylemek mümkündür. Ve polis de artan bir güç ve genişleyen yetkileriyle sürece müdahil olmaya devam edecektir. Rasgele gözaltılar, kötü muamele, “genel ahlak ve değerlere” aykırı olduğu tespit edilen durum ve eylemler söz konusu olduğunda müdahale etme ve kişileri durdurma hakkının yanı sıra kentin “kriminojenik” olarak görülen belirli bölgeleri için suç haritaları hazırlama gibi pratikler büyük olasılıkla, damgalanmış pek çok toplumsal grubun, özellikle de yoksul Kürt göçmenlerin polisçe daha fazla taciz edilmesine yol açacaktır. Medyadaki temsiller ise polisiye tedbirleri ve kentsel dönüşüm projelerini haklılaştıran söyleme eklemlenecektir. Son tahlilde, yakın dönemin siyasi ve ekonomik sistemi için kritik önemde olduğu görülen güvenlik mantığı büyük olasılıkla yakın gelecekte de devlet-toplum ilişkilerini anlama açısından anahtar bir kavram olmaya devam edecektir.

APPENDIX D

CURRICULUM VITAE

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BS	METU Political Science and Public Administration	2002
High School	Yıldırım Bayezid Anatolian High School, Ankara	1997

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2004-Present	METU Media and Cultural Studies	Research Assistant
2003-2004	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Administrative Officer

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- May 15-17, 2013 ““Thinner Addicts” and “Purse-Snatchers: Criminalization of Children in the Turkish Daily Press”, paper presented in, 4th International Conference on Critical Education, Ankara University.
- Apr. 26-27, 2013 “Yeni Kent Siyaseti ve Suçlu Sınıflar”, paper presented in, Urban Policy Planning and Local Governments Student Conference, METU.
- Sep. 5-9, 2012 ““Heal it or Leave It”: Urban Segregation and the Discourse of Crime in Turkey”, paper presented in, ‘Beyond the Wire’:

- Regulating division, conflict and resistance, 40th Annual Conference of the European Group for the Study of Deviance and Social Control, University of Nicosia, Cyprus.
- Dec. 9-11, 2009 “1980’ler 1990’larda Türkiye’deki Yeni Sağ Hegemonik Projesi Çerçevesinde Yazılı Basında Şiddete Dayalı Suçun Temsili”, paper presented in, 11. Ulusal Sosyal Bilimler Kongresi, METU.
- Nov. 28-30, 2007 “Yeşilçam Dedikleri Türkiye: Türkiye’de Toplumsal Dönüşüm ve 1980’ler Komedi Sineması”, paper presented in, 10. Ulusal Sosyal Bilimler Kongresi, METU.

APPENDIX D

TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enformatik Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>

YAZARIN

Soyadı : Özçetin
Adı : Deniz
Bölümü : Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) : Stigmatization and Criminalization Of Urban Poor Through News Discourse in Turkey: Portrayal of Purse-Snatching and ‘Troubled’ Lower Class Neighborhoods

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans Doktora

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