

BECOMING A MAN ON THE STREETS:  
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF JOYRIDER COMMUNITIES OF ANKARA

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **BECOMING A MAN ON THE STREETS: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF JOYRIDER COMMUNITIES OF ANKARA**

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Based on ethnographic research of eleven months in Ankara, this study examines the car customization and use of customized cars by poor urban young men which play a central role in the construction of their masculine identities. Given that the relationships between things and masculine identities have not received much attention, the dialogical construction of masculine identities and masculine automobiles were the subject of inquiry. The mobility of the automobile is discussed as the primary force that shapes the form of the built environment in modern urban spaces. In this sense, the use of the automobile is considered as a way to experience and transform the city and thus the reflection of gender on the space. From this perspective, this study analyzes the conditions in which car enthusiast, poor urban young men construct their masculine identities, and how they perform masculinities through their cars and reflect their identities back on the streets.

Keywords: Anthropology of Masculinity, Masculinity, Material Culture, Automobile

## ÖZ

### SOKAKLARDA ERKEK OLMAK: ANKARA'DAKİ ARABA MERAKLISI TOPLULUKLARININ ETNOGRAFİK BİR ÇALIŞMASI

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Ankara'da on bir aylık bir etnografik araştırmaya dayanan bu çalışma, kent yoksulu genç erkeklerin eril kimliklerini kurmada merkezî bir rolü olan araba kişiselleştirme ve kişiselleştirilmiş araba kullanımını incelemiştir. Eşya ve eril kimlikler arasındaki ilişkilerin yeterli ilgi görmemiş olmasından hareketle, eril kimliklerin ve eril otomobillerin karşılıklı inşası bu araştırmanın konusu olmuştur. Otomobilin hareketliliği, modern kentsel mekânın formunun oluşumunda temel bir güç olarak tartışılmakta ve bu anlamda otomobil kullanımı şehri deneyimlemenin ve dönüştürmenin, dolayısıyla da cinsiyet düzenini mekâna tekrar yansıtmanın bir yolu olarak görülmektedir. Bu perspektifle, çalışma araba meraklısı, kent yoksulu erkeklerin eril kimliklerini kurdukları koşulları ve de erkekliklerini arabayla nasıl icra edip caddelere yansıttığını analiz eder.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Erkeğin Antropolojisi, Erkeklik, Maddi Kültür, Otomobil

To the men courageous enough to renounce  
sovereignty...

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION: A NIGHT WITH SONER AND KADRI

On a late November night with a tough wind, Soner<sup>1</sup> and I were cruising in his burgundy Tofaş Şahin (a model of the domestic Tofaş automobile manufacturer, whose production was halted more than a decade ago), which had gone through some mechanical modifications for to improve performance. Having finished his shift at his workplace, Soner picked me up saying “I’m gonna introduce you to friends. They are more into this job [modification, drifting, and drag racing].” He had been working to set up this meeting for a month or so since he had promised to help me with making connections on the joyriding scene. As he was driving, he was also talking to Kadri, an ex-colleague of his, on the phone to settle the meeting place and time. We arrived at a remote and windy hill top at Dikmen, a neighborhood in the south of Ankara, which used to be a slum yet whose physical and social landscape was transformed after the building of a recreational area in the 90s. At the top of the hill were tall TV antennas, and around fifty cars were lined up in front of them, facing Lake Mogan; the men in cars were looking at the scenery and drinking. As we parked in line and started to wait for Kadri, Soner informed me about the environment. “The police don’t come here very much but if they come, just keep ‘sober’<sup>2</sup>. They come slowly from below, look at the plate numbers to check if there is a wanted car. They come from below, go all the way up the hill, then come back.

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<sup>1</sup> All the names are pseudonyms.

<sup>2</sup> He uses the word “*ayık*” which figuratively means to be cautious, literally means sober.

There, they check the plate numbers via their walkie-talkies. If they come for the second time, then there is a problem.” Towards the end of his monologue, he got up on his seat to better see a car, a white Tofaş which got ridiculously close to the back of his car, in the rear view mirror. With the paranoia induced by these instructions, I slid down in my seat to be less visible to the driver of the car at the back, as well as to check it in the passenger side wing mirror. While I was peeking at the car, one of its darkened window was lowered and there appeared the face of a young man, sporting a moustache and a soul patch beard. There was a huge smile on his face, as he knew that he had startled us. “Here’s Kadri” said Soner while gesturing in anger to Kadri in the rear view mirror. Kadri headed forwards, and Soner followed him. We thought he was looking for a parking space roomy enough for two cars, since ours was surrounded by cars on each side. However, we understood that he was not looking for a space as he left the main road and entered the poor and narrow streets of the slum right behind the TV antennas, the slums where, Soner said, waste paper collectors who came from Erzurum and Diyarbakır live, implying that the residents are Kurdish -since these two cities are located in East and Southeastern Turkey respectively.

Kadri’s aggressive, and speedy driving in those dark, inclined, declined, rough, and narrow streets was an invitation to Soner for a game of chase, and Soner was not at all hesitant to take part. “Now, you are here, so he wants to put on a show for you,” said Soner, frowning but at the same time enjoying himself. “Then we will put on a show for him, won’t we?” However, he was having a hard time to follow him, let alone take the lead. After a chase that shook the streets with roaring engines, bursting mufflers, and screeching tires, we passed through the poor neighborhood, and came to a steeply inclined street that is connected to the Konya Road, an intercity freeway as well as a thoroughfare in the city - the very same road which Soner and I had gazed at while waiting for Kadri. While we were expecting Kadri to turn right, in the direction of Ankara, he turned left with a drift, heading out of

the city. Drifting is a trick exercised by skidding the rear tires of a car while turning. By this time Soner could not suppress his anger: as soon as he took the turn after Kadri, he called his friend. He was cursing at him while listening to his friend's explanations. From the conversation, I understood that we were heading towards what street racers call "Enka", a fragment of the southern part of Ankara's orbital motorway which provides the track for improvised and illegal street races. At Enka, there are four lanes in each direction and a complex web of sideroads connected to Gölbaşı and İncek, which is a district that used to be rural land but was transformed into an upper-middle class suburb. At the same time, Enka is away from the city and thus relatively free from the surveillance of police, so it provides automobile enthusiast youth with joyful nights.

In the dark of the night, we proceeded towards the town of Gölbaşı where Lake Mogan, which we had looked at half an hour before from the top of the hill at Dikmen, is located. Soner was cheering, flashing his headlights, honking, and making noises by revving up his engine as Kadri was swerving his car on the way. Not so long after, we passed by the interchange at the junction of the orbital motorway and the Konya Road, following Kadri. AAt one point, Kadri took a narrow unlit road and lowered his speed; all we could see was his tail lights. After a few minutes of driving on that rough road, he pulled over. Neither Soner nor I expected this, but Soner also pulled over. From the window of the car, Kadri told Soner that a friend of his had called him and said there were police patrols at Enka. Kadri's new plan was to go to Patara Hill – an established joyriding space named after the Patara Mall on the skirts of that hill. He said we could spend some time over there until the police left Enka. As Soner and I agreed to his suggestion, we went all the way back to Dikmen. This news obviously upset Soner, all the joy went out of him. Kadri's driving was not as cheerful as it had been on the way to Gölbaşı, he was not swerving his car this time, only revving up and roaring the engine.

On the way to Patara Hill, I asked Soner if we would be able to go to Enka or would have to spend the whole night at Patara. He was quite self-confident, and daring when he said the bears – a nickname for policemen – cannot do anything to them about the cars, the only problem was the drivers, Soner and Kadri, drank alcohol above the legal limit to drive. Nevertheless, in time, the police would leave Enka, and we would be able to go there. Following Kadri, we ended up in quite a calm and posh neighborhood. Having never seen this district of the city, I asked Soner where we were. I learned that all the villas were not houses but embassy office buildings. This made me quite perplexed because at the gate of each and every embassy office building was a police booth with two or three armed policemen. Did we run away from the policemen at Enka, and take refuge among other policemen in another place? Again I asked Soner if these policemen did not deal with anything but attacks on embassies. “No,” he said, and pointed out of window to the left, “This is where I was packed up [arrested].” He is referring to when he was arrested for dealing weed. Then we turn left, onto an uphill street full of cars either parked in lots or on the move. The sound of a pop song coming from a BMW blended with a folk dance song from a Tofaş. The darkness of the night was lit with the yellow, white, and blue headlights of the cars. Some men were standing by their cars with friends, others were in their parked cars facing the scenery or the street. Their common point was everyone drinking and enjoying chitchat with their friends. We moved towards the top of the hill centimeter by centimeter to find an empty parking space. The traffic was crazy because of the cars coming in and going out of that narrow street. A BMW, a couple of cars ahead of us, was also a cause of the traffic jam: the driver was driving slowly in order to make his car better seen; it had white lights at the bottom and a loud techno song coming out of windows.

Eventually, we made our way to an empty lot and parked the cars. We get out, and after Soner and Kadri greeted one another, Soner introduced me. After some small talk between us, Kadri turned to Soner and informed him about their other friends

who were supposed to be with Kadri. They were at *dere*, reported Kadri, and they would go to Enka directly from there. Soner had already mentioned to me the place they call *dere*: it was a remote, and desolate place with a small stream of water on the outskirts of Dikmen which he and his friends generally used for doing drugs. It turned out in conversation that Kadri had not drunk anything since he finished his shift at the printing factory. No one seemed eager to get back in the cars and go to buy drinks, but Soner came up with good news – he had a bottle of whisky in the trunk, a present from a relative living in Germany. He was saving it for the end of the night but we could start to “kill” it now. Having sorted out the drink problem, Kadri turned to his phone again – texting and calling to collect information about who was where, where the police were, if this venue was clear, if that venue was overcrowded, while Soner and I were watching four guys packed in a Tofaş spinning the tires on their way to the top of the hill. It was so cold and windy that I started to shiver. Seeing that, Soner started to chuckle “Are you cold already? Look at me, touch me, I’m not cold at all. You see?” he stretched his arm towards me, pulling up the sleeve of his coat. Kadri finished his calls and came to report when Enka would “be clear”, who would be there, and so on. I could not stand the freezing wind and wanted to get into the car. Soner brought the whiskey from the trunk, and we got into his car. Kadri took the passenger seat and I was in the back. The drink was a Greek brand and it was doubtful if it was whiskey or something else. The old, foxed label had Greek writing on it, we could learn neither its year of production nor its type. The only thing for sure was that it was an old and bitter spirit – a bitter-and-hard-enough drink for Soner and Kadri to show me what good drinkers they are. After a couple of sips while watching the cars roaring their engines and exhausts, skidding, swerving and (when there was enough space) drifting, Kadri took out a spliff from the inside pocket of his coat and they started to smoke. This was my first night out with modifiers – in a car with two stoners, running from police to join a company of drifters and racers and spending time drinking until we could join them, literally on the top of a hill.



It was already around 1 AM when a phone call came for Kadri informing him that the police patrols were leaving Enka. Hearing this, we left the peak and headed towards to the neighborhood of Keklikpınarı - a middle class neighborhood in the Dikmen district - to buy some more beers from a liquor shop whose owner is somebody that Soner knows and who sells him liquor after 10 PM, when legal sales have to stop. On our way to the shop, each time we saw a police car, I became frightened. I could not help myself saying, “There are police everywhere.” This made Soner cheerful again; “Hold on, hold on. I’m gonna get you drag racing against the police tonight”, he said with a loud laugh. After buying the beers, we headed towards Enka once again on the Konya Road. On the road, he wanted me to give him a can of beer. I felt like I had to accompany him drinking and opened a can for myself as well. Now we were two buddies in the Tofaş Şahin, beer cans in our hands, driving aggressively and paying no attention to traffic rules and etiquette. In other words, I was a *çakal*, a pejorative label used to stigmatize the young men from the lower stratum of society who violate the traffic rules, display “uncivilized” behavior contrary to driving etiquette in particular and urban life in general – racing on the streets with their souped-up cars, playing music loud from their cars’ factory radios, revving their engines, roaring their exhausts, honking at pedestrian women and even sometimes putting their heads out of the window and shouting at the people on the streets.

### **1.1. *Modifiye* Cars, Modifiyecis and Joyriding Activities**

I clearly recall when the driving instructor of the course that I took told me to stay away from two types of car in the traffic to avoid accidents: One is commercial vehicles (busses, lorries, cabs, and so on) and the other is souped-up cars, especially Tofaş models. What he suggested was slowing down whenever I see them and letting them go, a suggestion which reminds me of the instructions that tell you what to do when confronted with an aggressive animal in the wilderness. This was not the only time I heard discriminatory, belittling and ridiculing statements about the

drivers of souped-up and tuned cars. Especially after I started my research, the ones who learnt of my topic reported their experiences with the *modifiyeci* youth and every single one of them was either mocking or accusatory. So who are the *modifiyeci* youth that we see on the streets and laugh at? What is *modifiye* and what does it entail? Before delving into the theoretical and empirical concerns, there is a need to answer these questions. Here it must be noted that these questions will be answered via the data from my research. In other words, *modifiyeci* youth in another location, at another point in time may vary from the portrait I draw here.

*Modifiye* literally translates to the mechanical and visual customization of a car. In that sense, it is a Turkish translation of tuning or “modding”. It is also used as an adjective to imply the car has been through a process of tuning. The cars go through the process of *modifiye* to be used for joyriding which can be simply defined as the use of cars for purposes other than transportation, e.g. for fun and enjoyment. Cruising, racing and drifting are the primary forms of joyriding. The term *modifiye* is used for the customization of relatively affordable cars. In this context, the domestic Tofaş models whose production was halted more than a decade ago now, and twenty-to-thirty-year-old models of European and Japanese manufacturers become *modifiye* cars when they are customized. Supposedly, the owners of these old and affordable cars are the men with limited access to resources. In a drifting event, “Tofaş drivers are the ones who have only three liras in their pockets,” said a junior mechanic boy who owns a *modifiye* Tofaş Doğan, “When they make some money and have five liras in their pockets, they go buy a [BMW] E30<sup>3</sup>”. In the visual – and to some extent aural – customization of these models, the class taste is unavoidably reflected in and reproduced through the cars’ bodies, generating a seemingly coherent group in the eyes of the general public. In this sense, the mocking, derision and anger directed towards this seemingly coherent group might be regarded as strategies to maintain class inequalities. However, when considering

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<sup>3</sup> The chassis code of BMW 3 series produced between early 80s and early 90s.

both my position as the researcher and the subjectivity of the scientific inquiry, *my* study of the taste of these men from the lower stratum would suggest the reproduction of existing inequalities. Thus, the focus will be on the practices which the *modifiye* process and *modifiye* cars entail, and on the young men who get together around the cars and the joyriding, rather than the look of the cars and the tastes of their owners.

As mentioned earlier, *modifiye* is the customization of a car. The processes of customizing the automobiles are carried out through a mix of professional mechanic services and do-it-yourself. The *modifiyecis* I had contact with generally report they first start with changing the factory radios and speakers. Then comes the darkening of the windows. The addition of small accessories such as extra mirrors, fancier



*Figure 1 Look of a modifiye Tofaş Kartal*

speedometer dials, ashtrays, replacement of tire valve caps, hanging misbahas or stuffed toys here and there are practices which are not even considered as customization. Cutting the suspension coils to lower the car – named as *bastırma* or *pıstırma* – is a practice which gives the cars a distinct look known as *basık*. In order to make the car look closer to the ground, extra parts known as body kits are installed

below the bumpers and running boards. The wheels are considered to be the shoes of a car and it does not matter how well dressed one is if his shoes do not match his clothes. The wheels with diameters larger than standard are much preferred. Moreover, wheels with positive offset, i.e. those which extend beyond the width of the car, and broad tires with thin sidewalls are used in combination with the *basık* look to imitate the look of a racing car. In many cases, spoilers are installed on the tails to accentuate the sports car look. In terms of the interiors of the cars, I cannot put forward any commonalities as although some *modifiyecis* care for and customize the upholstery, internal lighting, carpets, gear sticks and steering wheels, the majority make efforts just to maintain them in good conditions while another quite marginal group does not care about the interior of the car.



Figure 2 Modified engine of a BMW E30 3.25

The exhaust system is a point in between the mechanics and the look of the car because of its sound. The sports exhausts are the ones designed for the needs of a sports car as they compress the outflowing air less. However, the exhausts of passenger cars are designed with concern for air pollution and noise in the cities and are legally regulated with the same concerns. *Modifiyeci* youth prefer the sports exhaust systems not only because of the noise they make, which complements the sports car look, but also the performance gain they yield. Nevertheless, a good exhaust system may cost up to the price of used Tofaş and does not mean anything without a high performance engine. The desire to make more noise with the exhaust despite limited budgets is fulfilled through the installation of a remotely controlled valve on the muffler of the exhaust system. A hole is punched in this type of muffler which practically disables the function of muting the noise; however, when the valve

is turned on, it clogs the hole and makes a proper muffler. In this way, the desired sound of power which makes the people around turn and look at the car is imitated, at the same time the traffic police are by-passed.

In terms of mechanics, the engines go through laborious and detailed alterations to increase performance. Up to now, I have never met a *modifiyeci* who knows exactly what he is doing with the engine. The mechanical alterations are carried out through rather a trial-and-error method. This is partly due to these alterations are made with used or aftermarket parts, i.e. with the parts in the hand. Also, they require a great extent of technical knowledge given the fact that the automobile is a technical totality, for example a change in the throttle affects the power engine generates, thus a series of changes are needed from crank shaft to brake system. In this context, neither themselves nor the mechanics have adequate technical knowledge and technical problems always happen. Then, the mechanical alterations are carried out on the overlap of maintenance and improvement. As a result, *modifiyeci* youth favor mechanically untouched used cars when buying a new one. Nevertheless, the purpose of the never-ending mechanical alterations is the higher power of the engine and the louder noise this entails.

On the question of who *modifiyecis* are, it can be argued that they are sons of rural to urban migrants, being the first generation born and raised in the city. They are mostly from below average districts, dispersed to the fringes of central Ankara. My informants are from the Akdere and Doğukent neighborhoods of the district of Mamak, at the east end of the urban area, and the neighborhoods of Yenikent, Törekent and Gazi Osman Paşa, which are part of the district of Sincan at the west end. The slums of Dikmen at the south end of te urban Ankara, the workers' neighborhoods around the Siteler industrial zone in the north east, which might be the poorest neighborhoods of Ankara, and the neighborhood of Keçiören in the north settled around the expressway to the airport also form the homes of *modifiyeci* youth. When I asked mechanics about the age of their customers, the common

answer was that they could not specify since their ages vary between 7 and 70 – a figurative statement to imply there are *modifiyecis* from every walk of life. Indeed, I have seen many children about ten years old as spectators at drifting events. However, car ownership, and thus customization and joyriding practices start around the age of sixteen. Involvement in customization and joyriding practices decreases towards the age of thirty. Of course, this case is related with the involvement in the labor market at early ages, familial relationships and marginal propensity to consume. Two *modifiyecis*, the best schooled ones among my informants had high school diplomas while the worst schooled one was an elementary school dropout. The majority were middle school graduates. Leaving school and entering the homosocial, manual labor market at early ages while continuing to live with their families yields a relatively large marginal propensity to consume. Until marriage, they are supposed to and do live with their families and after marriage, the increased financial responsibilities and the expectations they are faced with from being a husband result in a decrease in involvement in the car related activities.

In terms of occupation, *modifiyeci* youth are primarily manual laborers working in homosocial work settings. The proportionally small number of service workers also work in homosocial work settings, such as barber shops<sup>4</sup> and *pavyons*<sup>5</sup>. Besides, the majority of the *modifiyecis* have jobs with less security, stripped of insurance and benefits while the other portion of my informants have totally informal jobs such as working as drivers of unregistered cabs, making a living through the purchase and

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<sup>4</sup> For further information on the homosocial space of barber shops in Turkey, see Erenler, S. (2015) Kadınlara Kapalı Mekânlar: Mahallenin Demirbaşları Erkek Berberleri. In Erkoçak, A. and Bora, T. (Eds.), *Bir Berber Bir Berbere* (pp. 274-84). İstanbul: İletişim.

<sup>5</sup> *Pavyon* is a night club for men which also sells *time* to spend with the women working there. For more information on *pavyons*, see Özarlan, O. (2016) *Hovarda Âlemi: Taşrada Eğlence ve Erkeklik*. İstanbul: İletişim. Although he uses the term *gazino*, field of Özarlan's work is coined as *pavyon* in Ankara vernacular while *gazino* implies the night clubs where families and woman can attend.

sale of cars, working in the business of relatives as piece workers without any legal registration. Only two of them had two jobs. Towards the middle of my field research, one of them started a second day job after finishing his primary job as an electrical technician, while the other one was dealing weed and other drugs after working hours. A considerable portion of the *modifiyecis* I had connection with have criminal records mostly related to the financial insecurity they experience. One of them served his time for dealing drugs, another was on parole for stealing telephone cables to sell to recycling companies, yet another one had been jailed for extortion on behalf of a “businessman” while another *modifiyeci* had been on parole for manipulating official documents in order to sell a car. I met only one ex-convict *modifiyeci* who was not charged for money related crime. He served time for helping a friend and his girlfriend to run away; however, since the girl was underage, her family sued the men for kidnap.

*Modifiyecis* I had contact with were all of Turkish ethnicity. Except two of my informants, all of them were Sunni Muslims. Two of them were Alevis, despite the fact that neither of them embrace Alevi identity particularly except avoiding performing Salah or fasting. Since there was not a sufficient number of Alevi men among my informants, I put no emphasis on ethnicity throughout the thesis; however, when we consider that my only Alevi informants were the most regular senders of text messages to celebrate my “holy Friday”, since Friday has recently become known as a holy day to be celebrated, further research on “Alevi Consciousness” in a Fanonian sense and the hegemonic ideals of masculinity related with religious identity among Alevi men who do not live in relatively closed Alevi communities stands there for a further and fruitful inquiry.

On the question of what the practices around which *modifiyecis* gather are, it can be put forward that drifting and racing are the most distinctive practices, while joyriding is a gloss on term that covers the use of cars for purposes other than transportation, for fun. Drifting is the act of skidding, through oversteering, a car

whose engine is relatively powerful. However, in the Turkish context, drifting refers to doing what the Americans call doughnuts, i.e. skidding to the extent that the car drifts continuously in a circular pattern, and to “drawing eight”, i.e. drifting continuously in a figure of eight pattern. “*Polka*” is another drifting figure that refers to the dance of two cars doing synchronised doughnuts on the same circle. “Tire burning” is the practice known as burnout in English speaking countries: While the car remains stationary, the rear wheels are spun and the friction causes an increase of heat until the tires get worn out and emit smoke and dust. Drag racing is a form of race between two cars over a short distance. The acceleration and risk are the key components. Regular races between two cars over a predetermined track also happen on the joyriding nights. In the past, my informants report, the racers would place bets on their own cars and the winner would take the money. Now, this has been replaced with bets on “a tankful of gas”, i.e. someone drives his car into the middle of the audience, and declares to the crows that he is going to fill the tank of



*Figure 3 The fume emitted from burnt out tires covering Enka*



the car that can overtake his. Otherwise, the loser is supposed to buy gas for him. Betting does not take place in drifting events. The other difference is that drifting events generally take place during the day and may evolve into racing events after sunset, while racing events always take place at nights. The practice of drifting in the sense of motorsports jargon, i.e. oversteering and skidding while taking a corner, is referred to as *yanlama*, a word derived from “side” since the car proceeds sideways while performing a drift. *Yanlama* is performed in regular traffic while taking corners as well as during joyriding, but *yanlama* is not limited to it since joyriding is not limited to the established venues but takes place on any asphalt paved street, which means the whole urban area.

These events are generally organized via social media pages. However, some locations which have been established joyriding venues such as a point in İvedik Organized Industrial Zone, a North West part of Ankara’s orbital motorway around a village called Yuva, another part of the orbital motorway on the South named as Enka, a street at Siteler industrial zone on the North East, the roads of a development project called as *Kuzey Yıldızı* (North Star) on the North, and the corner behind a football stadium in Yenikent on the West always provide the tracks for drifting and racing. At nights, *modifiyeci* youth hang around these places while at Friday and Saturday nights and on Sundays throughout the day, the number of the participants’ increases. Along with the *modifiyecis*, especially on Sundays, there are also audience which consist of younger boys at their early teens. Joyriding nights are also the night outs for the *modifiyeci* youth. There happen improvised collective parties as individual groups of friends who consume alcohol and other sorts of intoxicants start to play folk dance songs from their cars and to dance them. In this sense, joyriding is also a form of homosocial entertainment for young men.

## 1.2. Research Problems

Nevertheless, aim of this study is not further stigmatization nor criminalization with a scientific disguise. Rather, it is an attempt to make sense of why young men of the urban fringes instrumentalize a commodity, the automobile, at their strategies to construct their masculinities. This is an intriguing inquiry because, first and foremost, improving mechanical and visual appearance of a car, let alone maintenance of it, forces their budgets, most of the time lead them – who are short of all forms of capital, but primarily short of economic capital – to be in debt. In other words, engagement of young men, who can be identified as urban poor, with a commodity is puzzling because consumption studies either neglect the consumption practices of urban poor, resorting consumption to middle classes. If urban poor people ever become the subject of a consumption study, they are considered as rather victims of or revolting against the consumerism. This research explores the automobile consumption practices of urban poor men – modification, tuning, racing, drifting and joyriding – as embedded in the distribution of power in today's Ankara. The road violence is considered as a political violence; however, this should not suggest that this research decipher these consumption practices from a yet another victim/resistance perspective. Meant by the road violence is not only the most apparent form – violating the traffic law and endangering one's own and others' lives – but also violence inflicted on the residents of Ankara through marketization of land, spatial segregation, land use, production of built environment and automobile system, exclusion from the urban life characterized by consumption and the insecure position of the young *modifiyeci* men as unskilled labor in the job market as well as the relatively weak position of them in the gender order partly due to their economic insecurities and transitory state from boyhood to manhood.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

This study problematizes the masculinity as a construction and traces its roots in the *modifiyeci* car culture. Being a commodity and a vehicle of displacement, the automobile cannot be elaborated apart from the economic logic which makes it exist and the built environment in which automobile operates. Eventually, this research mainly attempts to answer the question how masculine identities are constructed by men in their relationships with the cars. For this end, the study aims to provide an account of how *modifiyeci* men differentiate themselves from the others in terms of masculine identity. Then, the anchors of the masculine identity they craft through this relationship need exploration. And the relationship between these anchors and the dominant understanding of masculinity should be located. Furthermore, the question of how urban poor *modifiyeci* young men experience being a man and being segregated needs to be elaborated.

### **1.4. Theoretical Perspective: Becoming a Man**

In this study, adopted is a perspective informed by the critical studies on men and masculinities. Masculinity is “a heuristic category, a placeholder” in Bederman’s terms (2011: 5). The perspective informed with critical studies on men and masculinity is useful since it bears the differences and varieties among men as well as other gendered subjectivities, it recognizes the power relationship between gendered subjectivities in mind, and the productive capacity of these relationships and it stresses the discursive, performative and practical processes in the construction of masculine identities.

Many authors find the roots of interest in studies on men and masculinities at the intersection of socio-economic and political changes that include the institutionalization of feminism (McDowell 2003; Massey 1994; Little 2002, etc.). The second wave feminism at its heydays in the social sciences in 1970’s, put forward that it was more than a critique against the subordination of women or a

demand for women's right. The aim was not solely a call for women's right but the transformation of the society in favor of the long neglected other half of the society. In the efforts for that end, feminism put a critical social sciences approach at its core against the women's subordination. In other words, in the social sciences before feminism, women and their experiences were neglected due to a masculine perspective and the units of analysis were the social relations that were treated as made of and by only the men. Then, feminism in the social sciences aimed, on the one hand, to criticize the former methods of social sciences as being malestream – neglecting the engendered characteristic of social relations and scholar field – and to reshape the practice of knowledge production by putting women, and their experiences, at the focus of inquiry on the other hand (Bozok, 2009: 270).

Having criticized the claims of former ways of inquiry for being objective and impartial, feminism headed towards to develop policies, theory, methodology and research. Feminism's success in contemporary social thought stems from its ability to transcend beyond a political movement or a theory to bring new perspectives in all of the above mentioned fields. Highlighting the subordination of women as well as emphasizing subjectivities and experiences extended the theoretical means and opened a way to settle a solid place among social sciences and humanities. Contrary to the positivistic approaches which claim to be objective and impartial, feminism put forward that women subjectivities should be the subject of scientific inquiry for the political aim of subverting the cast-in-stone subordination of women.

The most important significance of the critical studies on men and masculinities informed with second wave feminism and evolved in coordination with the third wave is the fact that it brings the same political mission to the academia: Making an understanding of how gendered power relations and inequalities are sustained. For this end, such a perspective takes men as the subject matter since they are the primary beneficiaries and sustainers of the gender order at the same time they also suffer under the heavy weight of gender order. This does not simply mean that

profeminist, critical studies on men and masculinities are simply reflections of feminist struggle and theory on the men. Rather, they are two complementary parts that make a whole against the inequalities stem from the gender order in many societies.

#### **1.4.1. A Critical Approach to Masculinity**

As mentioned above, critical studies on men and masculinities stemmed from larger feminist project to deconstruct patriarchy, to produce knowledge, and policies for a change in advantage of women. However, just as “one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” (Beauvoir, 1956[1953]: 273), one is not born, but rather becomes, a man in complex set of social, historical, economic forces. That is, each and every change in the interaction between social, historical and economic forces yields a different masculine identity. And it would be more than overgeneralization to state all men enjoy patriarchal bargain and each men equally enjoy patriarchal bargain. In other words, gender order is a power hierarchy that cuts across the other social forces and relative position of groups of gender identities determines their share of patriarchal bargain. Some men are more men than the others, some women are more men than many men: That is to say masculine identities are plural and their loci are ambiguous.

The conceptualization of masculinity as plural masculinities was brought in to the agenda of gender studies by R. W. Connell’s book *Masculinities* (1995) and further developed by her (Connell, 2005). However, this should not suggest men are the victims of economic structures, or historical developments that constructed patriarchy as it is, giving a superior position to men vis-à-vis women. What is suggested by the plural conceptualization of masculinity is that masculine identities are constructed in the interplay of practices of men in the social structures, as Kimmel clearly puts forwards:

Masculinity refers to the social roles, behaviors, and meanings prescribed for men in any given society at any one time. As such, it emphasizes gender, not biological sex, and the diversity of identities among different groups of men. Although we experience gender to be an internal facet of identity, the concept of masculinity is produced within the institutions of society and through our daily interactions.

(Kimmel, 2004: 503)

Such a formulation of masculinity provides the possibilities to problematize it as a practical, lived experience shaped in cultural constructs, i.e. a particular masculine identity is constructed in the everyday practices, language, interactions, attitudes of people – not only men but also women, living in a particular moment in a particular locality, regardless of sexual orientation. By this way, the stereotypical sex role theory that ties masculinity to the sexual traits of the body is transgressed. This perspective is closer to Butler's conception of gender as an array of acts:

Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, *a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame* that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being. A political genealogy of gender ontologies, if it is successful, will deconstruct the substantive appearance of gender into its constitutive acts and locate and account for those acts within the compulsory frames set by the various forces that police the social appearance of gender.

(1999[1990]: 43-44, emphasis added)

As the term “rigid regulatory frame” suggest, gendered bodies do not freely choose the acts to perform from a variety of options. Indeed, gender is a *doing* independent from the *doer*, e.g. a body is attained with a gender as it performs the acts provided by the scripts in a rigid frame. In this sense, they are the performances of masculinity that makes a body into a man and these performances are scripted into stone through the repetitions of the acts over time. These scripts regulates the definition of what being a man is.

When he said the cited quotation below, Goffman were overgeneralizing due to the bias of singular masculinity;

In an important sense there is only one complete unblushing male in America: a young, married, white, urban, northern, heterosexual Protestant father of college education, fully employed, of good complexion, weight, and height, and a recent record in sports. [...] Any male who fails to qualify in any of these ways is likely to view himself-during moments at least-as unworthy, incomplete, and inferior.

(Goffman, 1963: 128)

However, it is a clear illustration that there are ideals in each strata of every society that work as scripts for performing masculinity. Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity is a clear formulation of this ideological idealization - "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (2005: 77). Here must be underlined is that Connell's plural view of masculinities does not regard different forms of masculinity as equal. Rather, her account recognizes them for being hierarchically ordered as Cornwall and Lindisfarne draws attention "[h]egemonic masculinities define successful ways of 'being a man'; in doing so, they define other masculine styles as inadequate or inferior" (1994: 3). In other words, hegemonic forms of masculinity are legitimized by contesting, suppressing and dominating other forms of gendered subjectivities as well as the masculinities embodied by the men from different classes, ethnicities, races, ages, sexualities and so forth.

In this context, Bourdieu's conceptualization of gender as habitus in *Masculine Domination* (2002) is a fruitful perspective to locate the relation of young men from the slums of Ankara to the automobile in the interrelatedness of masculinity, class and car culture. He defines habitus as "not only a structuring structure, which organizes practices and the perception of practices, but also a structured structure: the principle of division into logical classes which organizes the perception of the social world is itself the product of the division into social classes" (Bourdieu, 1984: 170). Building on the field research he conducted in Kabyle society, Bourdieu puts

forwards that the differences between female and male body are inscribed in the cosmos – a process which results in a sexualized cosmos. This sexualized cosmos comes to be perceived as the natural thus the gender order is assumed to be the order of the nature. Gender order becomes the natural, taken for granted state to live in, and subjects submit to this doxa that they created at a non-conscious level as if it is the natural, cast-into-stone order of the world (2002: 7-11). In other words, the things, the object, the bodies are inscribed with sexuality through practices of individuals and these sexualized entities inscribe the practices of individual; however, as the term habitus suggests, in the inscription of things with sexualities and practicing with them, the position of the individuals to access to sources, i.e. class positions, is a key element. As such, later studies following conceptualization of gender as habitus delved into the inseparability of class and gender traits from one another, such as in the study of McCall (1992) that argues the different forms of capital which correspond to different occupational capitals hide their gendered characteristic, seem to be gender neutral. However, as all other forms of capitals, they can be, and they are, transformed into gender capital. In other words, gender is also an index of class structure (p. 842). And similarly, McNay (1999) highlights that gender as habitus does not operate on a single, isolated field and sexualized objects not only serve as gender capital, but also the gender capital can be transformed to different forms in different fields (p. 112).

In this study, a profeminist, critical perspective is adopted to provide an account of doing gender and the construction of masculine identities through a relation to an object – the automobile – for the following reasons. First and foremost, a critical perspective on men and masculinities focuses on the relationship between the collective and individual practices of gendered subjectivities, and the discourses and ideals operating on gender identities. Therefore, inquiring the relationship between gender identities and discourses and ideals about them enables the researcher not to reproduce a dualistic understanding of gender. In other words, such an approach



allows for a conceptualization of male and female bodies in terms of gender and more importantly does not reduce gender identities to men and women; rather, provides a lens to map out the internal diversities in and transitivity between gendered subjectivities. Secondly, such a performative and discursive conceptualization of gender identities allows the researcher to analyze the power relationships between and among the gendered subjectivities. With a relational approach to gender identities, the essentialist understanding of men as the only winner of patriarchal bargain is eliminated. By this way, the hierarchical structure of gender order can be unearthed. And finally, a critical inquiry of the relationship between the gender identities and metanarratives about them enables the researcher to locate gender identities in a historical moment, in a particular political economic structure and in a particular locality. By this way, the researcher can not only map out differences and diversities over time in a society, but also produce a knowledge against gendered social injustices and domination.

#### **1.4.2. An Analytical Frame for the Study of a Car Culture**

The debate of “Writing against Culture” makes it hard to talk about the concept of culture. Defined in a traditional way, culture is a set of shared meanings, values, and common practices of individuals, generally thought to exist on a particular locality. However, thanks to the critics, we know that it is not spatially bounded in an increasingly global economy accompanied with the flow of goods, money, people and symbols through the borders and it is hard to tie culture to a specific locality as much as to claim cultural singularity in a singular space (Gupta and Ferguson, 1992). As the anthropologist of flows of finance, economics, ideologies and cultural images, Appadurai (1996) provides an account of the above mentioned “disjunctions” in his own words against the asymmetrical center-periphery approach and puts forward that local cultures are formed as the locales appropriate the free floating flows. Against his arguments, Kalb and Tak (2005) reminds us the power of class inequalities in the process of appropriation both in local and global scale –

such a conception of culture is myopic to the politics of globalization. In another article, Kalb (2005) stresses that the space have become more of an importance as the globalization operates on the level of expanding of market logic on new localities and this expansion further separate the global and local material inequalities.

At the core of a car culture is, as I conceptualize it, first and foremost, an object engineered for mobility and displacement. In this context, when I use the term culture, I refer to a complex amalgamation of economic and political forces with the objects, texts, symbols and memories through which social meanings, values and the existing power hierarchies are reproduced and expressed. In this sense, social inequalities are reproduced within the culture because of the varying access to and control over the above mentioned constitutive elements of a culture. Thus, culture is a terrain of loosely organized practices and materials on which power works. Miller (2001) points out the automobile cannot be elaborated apart from its “point of origin”, the economic, historic, social, and cultural context in which it is engineered (p. 17). Such an extended, and open conceptualization of culture, then, rules out tying culture to a specific locality on the one hand and opens possibilities to inquire negotiations of individuals in the meaning making process guided by institutions, but never fully determined by them (Hall and Jefferson, 1976; Fiske, 1989). And by institutions, I primarily refer to market economy, and gender order.

An inquiry of a car culture is, then, an inquiry of material life and the set of meanings on which the material life depends on. As Baudrillard states:

The empirical ‘object’ given its contingency of form, color, material, function and discourse ... is a myth. How often it has been wished away! But the object is nothing. It is nothing but the different types of relations and significations that converge, contradict themselves, and twist around it, as such – the hidden that not only arranges this bundle of relations, but directs the manifest discourse that overlays and occludes it.

(1981: 63)

Automobile, as “an object of consumption” in Baudrillard’s words, is merely a phoneme that makes sense only in its relation to other phonemes. Furthermore, since the time of Mauss’ conceptualization of *hau*, we know that objects are not merely commodities that have a value in commodity exchange but they are the objectifications of social relations. And culture is not founded through merely exchange of goods as Malinowski who found the elementary forms of homo economicus would put, culture is rather founded through extension of social relations on the objects. Turning back to automobiles, the term *Fordism* is quite symbolic. Automobile has come to be the automobile in this economic logic so much so that a manufacturer gave its name. The car is a commodity which contains the whole exploitative and unequal production process in itself, in a Marxian sense. On the other hand, the subjectivities shaped in this economic logic and a gender order inflicted by it make the automobiles in a car culture. In this aspect, although the hold of the capitalist market logic is still vivid, men not only inflict the economic logic in which their subjectivities are created, but also inflict their gender identities on their cars.

Having said that, my account of car culture is, then, twofold. In the first fold, at the core of the car culture is the mass production, and mass consumption ideology that operates at the level of not only commodities, but also built environment, and subjectivities. Being author of the one of the very few works on automobiles in Turkey, Vassaf (2000) reports a personal anecdote about the first traffic lights of Turkey. Installed on Atatürk Boulevard – the main axis around which modern Ankara was constructed – in 1960s, he states that stopping at the red light even though there were barely automobiles was an indicator of being modern in that era as wearing a necktie in home, or attending the concerts of Presidential Symphony Orchestra on each and every Sunday was (p. 108). The second fold of the car culture refers to groups loosely organized around the automobile related activities, i.e. groups of men with shared appreciation of specific styles and participation in

activities which are centered on the automobiles. These particular activities such as car tuning - or *modifiye* as they call this practice, customization, drag racing, drifting and touring are carried out by young automobile enthusiast men living in the fringes of urban area of Ankara whose activities are always in dialogue with the first fold of the car culture.

### **1.5. Anthropological Studies on Men and Masculinities**

Being the study of “mankind”, the discipline of anthropology has been an influence for the development of the critical studies on men and masculinities as ethnographic studies of various cultures provided the insights about the plurality of the masculinities. However, until very recently, anthropological studies documenting the diverse meanings of manhood in different context did not pay enough attention to men as men, i.e. manhood was not been subject of discussion in itself but in men’s relations primarily with women. Because of the gender myopia of classical anthropology, men’s practices, materials, symbols, texts and memories were theorized as of the whole - supposedly uniform - society. In such a context, the discipline of anthropology could not craft an account of “men-as-men”, in Gutmann’s terms (1997: 386), up until the critical studies on men and masculinities provided the theoretical base. As mentioned earlier, anthropological studies on men rather informed the critical studies on men and masculinities and the body of knowledge provided these studies dialogically carried anthropological studies on men further.

In such a context, in his article about the anthropological studies on men and masculinities, Gutmann provides the reviews of the studies which are in dialogue with the critical studies on men and masculinities. The new approach to the study of men in anthropology primarily employs four concepts as he puts forwards:

The first concept of masculinity holds that it is, by definition, anything that men think and do. The second is that masculinity is anything men think and do to be men. The third is that some men are inherently or by ascription

considered 'more manly' than other men. The final manner of approaching masculinity emphasizes the general and central importance of male-female relations, so that masculinity is considered anything that women are not.

(Gutmann, 1997: 386)

In the broadest sense, the ethnomethodological studies on men and masculinities have investigated the masculine subjectivities, experiences and the construction and reproduction of masculine hegemony in private and public sphere. In these studies, masculinities have been elaborated in their relationships with the other constituents of the social order. For example, Mac an Ghail brings up the race to the forefront in British schooling and investigates the exclusionary aspects of institutionalized education and Afro-Caribbean boys' construction of masculine identities in a reaction to the exclusion (1994, 183-199). On ethnicity, Herzfeld's monography on a Cretan mountain village underlines the negotiation of the legitimate masculinity between Cretan villager men and Greek urbanite men. In this process, villager men resort to construction of an imagined heroic past in order to assert their masculinities which are much despised by the urbanites (1988). The essays in Ouzgane's edited volume on Muslim masculinities lay out the various ways in which Muslim masculine identities are constructed in relation with religious value system as well as religious politics (2006). The collection of essays in Ghoussoub and Sinclair-Webb (2000) shift the lens to the locality when they investigate Middle Eastern masculinities and their relations to religious and national politics as well as when they lay out the cultural underpinnings that tell a man from a woman and a child, such as exclusion from women's public bath or having facial hair.

Commodity culture has been a neglected constituent in the studies that highlight the social construction of masculinities by underlining the men's practices, experiences, discourses and ideas contrary to above mentioned themes. This should not suggest that consumption is totally ignored. Especially in the discussion of masculinity crisis, the studies that take consumption into consideration with its relation to masculine identities have primarily delineated by essentialist sex role theory. The

importance of productive capacity in the market has been long discussed in the studies on men. Stressing the decrease in the importance of productive capacity yet the increase in the importance of consumption capacity in the construction of identities, such studies argued that masculinity in a crisis as it loses its economic grounds (Coad, 2008; Hall, 2015). The construction of masculine identities in commodity culture has been brought to the forefront especially in the studies on gay masculinities. To illustrate, Blachford (1981) demonstrates how gay subculture appropriate clothing items from heterosexual and heteronormative working class culture and extend their gender identities on these item through their particular way of clothing (pp. 200-202). On the issue of gay men's strategies to gain visibility through consumption, Hennessy notes that such strategies unintentionally legitimize and reproduce the patriarchy when she states that the "assimilation of gays into mainstream middle-class culture does not disrupt postmodern patriarchy and its intersection with capitalism; indeed, it is in some ways quite integral to it" (1994: 63).

### **1.5.1. Significance of the Research**

Gutmann mines out the concepts delineating the critical approach to masculinities in the discipline from the inquiries of cultural variety, family, body, power and the relationship between women and masculinities. However, in this expansive review there was not one single research that inquires the position of material culture in men's practices for doing gender. This is not because he simply skipped the studies on the relationship between men and objects, but rather there was not a matured field consisted of such studies. In his cross cultural study on the homosocial male groups of Swedish car engineers and Malaysian motorbike mechanics, Mellström also points at the underdevelopment of such a field:

This is surprising since massive numbers of men around the globe spend their daily lives working and interacting with machines and technology. It is even more surprising when one considers the fact that through

industrialization and modernization in the West and other parts of the world, men have always been in control of key technologies.

(Mellström, 2004: 369)

From Mauss on, we know that objects entail social relations and furthermore they do not only entail social relations but also they are parts of set of social relations in which masculine identities are constructed. Levi-Strauss' conception of men as "givers" and "takers" in *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (1969) might be considered as the starting point for unearthing the relationship between things (whether be women or automobiles) and men to understand making of masculinity in terms of men's practices. As further studies of material culture have shown, things are not only objects of exchange but also reification of social relations as the relations are embedded in them (Miller, 1987; Tilley, 2006; Graeber, 2001). However, the studies on thing-person relationships focusing on masculine identities have been informed with the essentialist sex role theory. In other words, masculinity is considered as an array of roles men are expected to carry out and things have been scrutinized as complementary "props" the actors use in their acts.

In this contexts, this study is significant for filling a gap in the anthropological studies on men as well as materials through providing an understanding of construction of masculine identities informed by the theoretical framework shaped by the critical studies on men and masculinities. That is to say, the things (automobiles in this case) are considered to be the reification of the social order which also encompasses the gender identities, and masculine identities are taken as constructed through the appropriation and the transformation of these objects which embodies social order in themselves.

### **1.5.2. Related Studies**

The construction of masculine identities with relationship the automobiles has not been a much explored area partly due to the relatively egalitarian access to the automobiles in Global North, the academia of which dominates the scholar world.

If there are major works in the academia of the other parts of the world, they are not to my knowledge. However, on the gender of the automobile in the context of the USA and of the UK, works of Scharff (1991), and O'Connell (1998) explore the gender ideology of separate spheres that delineated the early phase of use and production of the automobiles. Having almost the same perspective, they define the automobile as masculine in general, since it provided mobility in the public sphere which is considered to be realm of masculinity and it is a mechanical and technical object which enabled men to put a claim on the use of it. Both scholars highlight that women were supposed not to participate in the complex mechanics of the cars, and rather enjoy the aesthetic of the commodities given the fact that operation of the early automobiles were quite dirty because of the underdeveloped technology. Eventually, women were left with electric cars which offered shorter distance of mobility due to insufficient batteries. Scharff also highlights that as the technology improved over time, the luxurious models were considered to be feminine due to the aesthetics and comfort (1991: 49-58). And again, both scholars point at the putting emphasis on the aesthetics on the luxurious models by the marketing of them as a class distinction indicators which eventually resulted in consideration of family property on which men remained their control (Scharff, 1991: 58-66; O'Connell, 1998: 63-70).

On the car culture, works of Menoret (2014), and Best (2006) brings up the politics of driving in particular communities that get together around cars in Riyadh, and California respectively. Both of them explore the practices rebellious youth that has been excluded from the political spheres to assert their presence in the public life. While Best focuses on the ethnic claims on territory in an ethnically diverse context, Menoret's account is centered on the space and petroleum industry in a context where land, wealth of land and state are under the absolute hegemony of Emres. In this context, Best's and Menoret's works is directly related to this research as they



provide an account of car related practices in relation with the transgression of power hierarchies and challenges against inequalities.

### **1.5.3. Related Studies in Turkey**

Yavuz's article *Ekekliğin Tutkulu Hâli* (A Passionate Mood of Masculinity) directly explores the relationship between the automobile and the construction of masculine identity in a particular car community that get together around domestic Tofaş models. Assuming that masculinity has been in a crisis due to the enlargement of service sector, the demolition of the breadwinner myth with the entrance of the women into job market, and increased role of consumption in the making of identities, she explores how men engage in subcultural formations to set the new norms to sustain their privileges vis-à-vis the women given the fact that they are unprivileged men which cannot comply with the norms of hegemonic masculinity.

Elifhan Köse's work (2014) on the gender of automobile and the automobile spaces which occupy the urban, explores the mutual transformation of space and automobile at the junction of semiotics and Foucauldian perspectives. In her account, the spaces of driving are the masculine spaces with their manners, materials such as signs and lights as well as publicity which is considered to be masculine again. The enlargement of the public spaces as the masculine spaces of driving is made possible by the automobile and everywhere becomes the spaces of control men exert on women while everywhere becomes the spaces of driving.

My research builds upon the above mentioned studies by bringing in a different perspective and a different case. First of all, acknowledging the automobile is a masculine object in Turkish context, this research inquires how urban poor young men reproduce their masculine identities through their relations to the automobiles. The automobile is seen as an active participant of the crafting the masculinity as the men dialogically use and transform the automobiles. Furthermore, the ideals of being good at being a man are considered to be a part of the mutual transformation

of men and their cars. In addition, the car related practices of men are considered to be strategies to challenge the existing political economy and attempts to consolidate and to assert their masculine identities.

## **1.6. The Methodology**

The primary aim of this thesis is to provide an account of construction of masculine identities of young men living in the fringes of Ankara in their relationship to the automobiles. Hearn (1996) warns against the blunting effect of the concept of masculinity as it is “a gloss on”, and “the result of the social processes”, and calls for a return to study of men – what men think, feel, do, say – to reveal the discursive and material processes that inscribe men with a particular masculine identity and that men reproduce through their practices (p. 213-15). In other words, he reminds that masculinities are constructs and a study of masculinities should explore the social, economic and historical forces that direct men to construct their masculine identities in particular and diverse ways. Then, an ethnographic research is the most convenient endeavor to touch the men in *modifiyeci* car culture, to grasp their internal dynamics as well as experiences and emotions about being a young, unprivileged men on the fringes of the city. Thus, I have conducted an ethnographic field research with loosely organized *modifiyeci* groups in lower class neighborhoods on the urban fringes of Ankara. I had connection with eight peer groups geographically dispersed and moreover I involved in drifting, racing and joyriding activities sometimes as the peer of my *modifiyeci* informants, sometimes as merely audience and sometimes as the event photographer in the joyriding spaces which also helped me to make new contacts with the other *modifiyecis* from the peer groups I already had connections. The research lasted approximately for eleven months between September 2015 and August 2016 with unavoidable interruptions, apart from the pilot research I had conducted beforehand. On the other hand, since *the field* is not a physical space the researcher simply enters into and exit from, my

field work still continues in a sense since I had new friendships during this time period.

Apart from *modifiyeci* youth, I conducted semi-structured interviews with four urban planners working at the municipality and a land speculator in order to grasp how marketization of land takes place in technical terms.

### **1.6.1. Making Contact with the *Modifiyeci* Youth**

Before conducting the extended field research for this thesis, I was supposed to conduct a pilot research in May 2015. My aim, then, was to conduct an inquiry about the consumption practices of *Tofaşk* car culture, to provide an account of class taste informed by Bourdieu. As a young man who does not drive an automobile, who is not related to the automobiles at all, I resorted to help of my friends and family. Eventually, I conducted two focus group, and one-to-one interviews with semi-structured, open-ended questions. I could not establish strong connections with the initial informants and except two peer groups, my connection with them came to a rupture. The initial informants were mainly conservative young men, some of them were even involved in local politics within the ruling party and as a graduate student from a university known for its leftist tradition, I was received with hostility in a period when a general election was going to take place in a few weeks and the country were going through an agitated time. The elections resulted in the loss of ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), and pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) passed the election threshold. The results agitated the masses as well as my informants who were already politically tense. On the top of it, assassination of two policemen and a sergeant in Kurdish towns stormed a wave of nationalist demonstrations. In such an agitated circumstances, I ended up trying to establish a trust relationship with the radicalized nationalist *modifiyeci* men who were already hostile towards me and started to thinking of starting a new research from scratch.

However, I stuck to an inquiry of *modifiye* car culture, yet, this time my focus was shifted on the doing gender through the use of automobiles for which I am thankful to the informants in my pilot research as I realized during my pilot research that, firstly, even though their cars were expressive about their class positions, at the core were their masculine identities. And secondly, an investigation of automobiles as the expressions of class taste would not be more than slumming, class tourism and judgement of tastes of unprivileged men if my position as researcher is considered. After the rupture; however, again with the help of my friends and acquaintances, I met and conducted the research with the men who are willing to participate having thought that their cars will be the subject of a scientific inquiry and more importantly who are less rigid in their encounters with people from different groups, thus more hospitable towards me and involved in secular entertainment activities. Obviously, this fact had tremendous effect in the consequences of the research.

The research was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, I gave more weight on the car enthusiasm. During this phase, friendly conversations took place either in one to one settings or with peer groups at a time. I frequently met my key informants after their working hours, on weekends in their cars, cafes and if possible, in their workplaces during the working hours. In the second phase, emphasis was put on their experiences of and ideals about being a man. During that phase, I was attentive to conduct the conversations in relatively private spaces, isolated from the fellow *modifiyecis*. However, the boundary between the phases was already blurred when I decided to put emphasis on gender in general, masculinity in particular since conducting friendly conversations rather than strictly structured interviews enabled my informants to bring up the subjects as in a conversation of friends after trust relationships have been built. In other words, as we got to know one another, my informants already started to talk about the subjects in which I find the constructive elements of their masculine identities. Throughout the both phases, I also conducted participant observation through visiting established joyriding spaces alone or with

my *modifiyeci* friends. Also, we carried out joyriding activities as we chatted, drank, listened to music and cruised on the streets every now and then as friends do.

Moreover, having an interchangeable lens digital camera helped me a lot to know new informants in the joyriding activities and foster the relationship among us with the ones I already knew since there are photographers who professionally take pictures of the *modifiye* automobiles for posting on social media and I was doing it for free. A camera, though, has its drawbacks as well: After a while, I have come to realize that I was spoken for the sake of free pictures and it was hard to sustain a relationship after they got the pictures.

### **1.6.2. Researcher's Position and Research Limitations**

Even though I took graduate courses, read articles and heard professors that emphasized the fact that the traditional medium of ethnography, the monograph, is a form of representation, and as in all sorts of representations, it is very much subject to position of the representor; furthermore, the ethnographer is an authority that produces knowledge about *the Other* and I thought I knew these issues quite well, conducting an ethnographic research about a culture (in which I am an alien) of unprivileged men (with whom I share only a marginal commonalities in terms of masculine identity, as a well-educated young men with easier access to resources), resulted in hard times both for sustaining the research and for my mental health.

First of all, having not completed my mandatory military service, not owning a car, still being at the school and not having a proper job put me in a *boy* position rather than a man in the view of my informants at the beginning. Such a perception lead them to thinking themselves as helping to a college boy to do his homework. However, as the time passed on, and they realized this was not a homework, they became more curious about me, and started to question me, my background. In this sense, I became *the Other* they investigated.

Then emerged the second problem I faced: As they learnt about me more, they started to perceive me as a boy who gone through all the best schools, from a respectable, and better of family. In one case, Mert, a key informant, was introducing me to his *modifiyeci* fellow Burakay. Right at the beginning of the introduction, right after Mert said I was doing master in Middle East Technical University, Burakay's response was "Definitely, he already looks like a wise *ağabey*<sup>6</sup>." His selection of words were so uncommon that we started to chuckle and Mert made fun of him. And when I asked him why he defined me as wise, his answer straightly pointed out the embodiment of the class as he said "Your glasses and all..." In another case, Özkan, another key informant from another peer group, was asking me questions about me, my family, and so on, such as what my father's job is, what my mother's job is, where they are living and from. After a few seconds of silence, he asked me if my mother plays conquian. Neither I nor my friends whom I told this anecdote later, helped ourselves laughing since conquian is a cards game associated with the women from upper classes, probably not working, wives of wealthy men, keen on self adornment and home décor, playing conquian with fellow friends in my and my friends' imaginary as well as apparently in Özkan's imaginary – even though I could not ask about it after laughing so hard in his face as a response to his quite serious question while there were other friends at that time; however, after reviewing my audio transcriptions, I realized that Özkan defined Mercedes models as the cars for "upper strata people", being "a manager at a bank, or at a private enterprise" and having a wife "who goes to conquian parties." Besides, his buddy Çağrı's frequent use of the idiom "son of the one whose mother is a conquian player" as a milder and supposedly funnier substitute for "son of a bitch" shows that a

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<sup>6</sup> He exactly said "*bilge bir ağabey*". While *ağabey* means big brother, and often signals a respect, *bilge* literally translates as wise; however, it is not a frequently used word and when used, it is generally describes senior citizens, especially the senior men.

woman playing conquinian is an indicator of idle and decadent life of imagined upper classes.

Having been perceived as well educated, upper class boy caused yet another challenge for me. They started to represent themselves as *cultured* as they perceived me. My questions were answered as if I am a teacher and they are the students taking an oral exam and trying to recall the correct answer. Or they have brought up that they know *some people*, they have relatives who have university degree, or the owner of a fancy club in a fancy district is their buddy. However, as the time passed, trust relationships have been built and they saw I am not an aloft guy, these challenges were erased one by one. My very own position as a man, despite the different form of masculinity I perform, has been an obstacle for me as much as it provided opportunities. Many questions I sincerely asked since I could not make sense of some practices, statements or symbols due to the differences between our masculine identities have been corresponded with reservation since I was supposed to know them for being a part of the larger society, and a man. On the other hand, I could not reach the more pious *modifiyeci* youth because of my secular lifestyle. This gap has a tremendous effect on the results of the research. In this sense, another researcher performing another masculinity and another personal history might have come up with different results. Thus, the generalizations I draw on the data is bounded only with the *modifiyeci* youth with whom I conducted this research. Furthermore, as I mentioned at the very beginning, I could not include more conservative *modifiyeci* youth into this research due to the polarization of the society. I assume, a research that included conservative ones would yield different results in the end.

Even though the challenges related with the authority in the field has been overcome through trust and truthfulness, the representation in the writing phase caused me problems that are hard to solve. The readers of this text will know the young men as much as I tell about them and it is impossible to fully introduce them because of

very practical reasons let alone theoretical concerns. The young men who are the subject matter of this thesis are not only *modifiyecis*. They are individuals with personal histories, their lives are not solely consisted of cars. In order to know them, the reader should know them in person. Here I provide a representation of them and this representation is unavoidably subjective. Furthermore, authorship is born out of the authority to represent which means an asymmetrical power relationship between me and the ones who I see as friends. “Writing Culture” debate provided an epistemological questioning of this fact. Since this thesis is not on the production of knowledge, I consider delving into this debate unnecessary. However, to be sincere, the asymmetrical power relationship between me and my friends, my authority to tell their subjective and partial life stories to outsiders wounds me. Quite often, I found myself thinking about becoming Stephen Taylor as depicted in the frontispiece of *Writing Culture: Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, edited by Clifford and Marcus (1986): The ethnographer taking notes on a pad in front of an *indigenous* family, turned his back to them. However, in such cases, what kept me motivated was the belief and hope that the knowledge extracted through my endeavor were aimed to contribute to a more egalitarian, and a freer society. In other words, I aim to humbly contribute to a larger movement for first and foremost the emancipation of women through providing an account of how masculine domination is constructed, and sustained. Furthermore, I also believe that through an interrogation of masculine identity ideals shaped in a particular moment in history, in a particular economic structure and in a hegemonic order, this study also contributes to increase consciousness of *men* through questioning of gender norms they are imposed to and they reproduce (I know *modifiyeci* youth cannot and will not read this text. By *men*, I refer to anyone who may accidentally come across with this thesis on the online databases and might read it). In short, the belief that the knowledge I produced through this research is an incremental contribution for a change has been what kept me motivated through the writing process.



## 1.7. Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. In this chapter I provided the main objective of the study which is to understand the how urban poor young men construct their masculine identities through the relationship with cars. A framework has been offered to conceptualize masculinity and the relationship between the automobiles and the gender identity. The significance of the study has been underlined as it fills in a gap on the overlap of material culture studies and the studies on men and masculinities.

In the second chapter, a discussion is carried out to better locate the car in the power relationships that produce the urban space on which the cars and *modifiyeci* men exist and the relationship between them takes place. Ankara is scrutinized with a focus on the automobile and the social, economic, historical and cultural forces which built the city. Then, the position of the *modfiyeci* youth is located in this city, thus in the social, economic, historical and cultural forces.

The third chapter focuses on the non-physical space on which car tuning and joyriding activities are carried out. The tuning and joyriding activities are discussed as the appropriation and transformation of the automobiles and argued is that the automobiles are made into masculine capitals in this non-physical space. Furthermore discussed is the process of contesting and negotiating the appropriate ways of being a man through the cars and their uses in this non-physical space as the processes of making *modifiyeci* youth's masculine identities.

In the fourth chapter, the practices of car customization and use are examined in terms of their relatedness to experiences of being an urban poor young men. After an exploration of competitive and expressive characteristic of customized cars, an attempt is made to shed light on the constituents of the masculinity of urban poor young men. Here, the key point is the split between the lived experiences of these young men and the masculinity ideals they are expected to

conform with. Focusing on these splits, explained is how *modifiye* cars and joyriding are made into the means of negotiating the emotions *modifiyeci* youth feel against these splits.

As the conclusion chapter, the fifth chapter ties together the arguments brought up in each chapter and provides some conclusory remarks on the social order in which the cars and the *modifiyeci* men are embedded and how car enthusiast and their cars mutually make one another. Then brought to the forefront are the characteristics of the outcomes of this process of mutual making in both masculine identities and the cars.

## CHAPTER II

### AUTOMOBILE AND URBAN SPACE

Discussed up to now is the mutual transformation of men and their cars and argued is that men make use of the cars as a masculine capital through which they construct and display their masculinities. Such an account of the thing-person relationship requires the exploration of the automobile in the social, economic and cultural order firstly, and then the exploration of its interlocutors, e.g. the *modifiyeci* youth, and their masculinities which are constructed in the same social, economic and cultural order.

In this sense, before delving into exploration of how being a young, unprivileged, pushed-to-the-fringes man is experienced, there is a need to locate the automobile in the unequal order of space, gender and urban culture primarily delineated by the economic logic which made the existence of automobile in the first place. In other words, the automobile cannot be conceptualized unless enough attention is paid to the economic infrastructures. In this sense, the sign value of the automobile will be discussed first. Then, its mutual relationship with the urban space will be elaborated since it is a good designed for displacement. Here must be also noted that the space is directly related with the gender. With a perspective that takes automobile as the omnipresent carrier of an economic logic on the urban, land use in Ankara, the recent transformation of it and the segregations it entailed will be discussed further. Then I will elaborate how these segregations affect urban poor *modifiyeci* young men and how they use car related activities to negotiate with the inequalities that stem from

the economic logic that made possible the existence of automobiles and transformed the physical and social landscape.

### **2.1. Automobile as a Symbol**

As many works of cultural studies have shown in various contexts, the automobile has been a private property that is connoted with the individualism, freedom, development, and these connotations made it a symbol of American way of life (Bell, 1999[1976]; Ross, 1996; Cohan, and Hark, 1997; Giucci, 2012). In Turkish context, we see a similar symbolism of the automobile as it has been represented as the carrier of the values of modernity which has been often amalgamated with Westernization (Parla, 2003).

The automobile has been a figure of Westernization and modernization in the fictive representation and degraded because of the hostility felt for the processes it symbolized. In Rezaizade Mahmud Ekrem's 1898 novel, *Araba Sevdası* [The Love of Car], a car is the protagonist of the novel although it is a horse carriage since it was written only a couple of years after the invention of motor car. Being a heir of a bureaucratic elite in an era that witnessed the rapid change of social order thus named Reformation Era, conspicuous, insufficiently educated, pretending to be Francophone – which implied being well educated at that time-, Bihruz falls in love with a woman in a car even though he could barely see her face while he was spending the money he inherited to be a part of the new elite and their consumption activities. He cannot recall the woman's face, but never forgets the yellow paint of the car. In the end of the novel, the car turns out to be rented and the woman turns out to be a “naughty” one.

In a similar vein, Bayram of *Fikrimin İnce Gülü* [The Delicate Rose of My Thought] by Adalet Ağaoğlu which was first published in 1975. Ağaoğlu's novel provides an account of a masculinity archetype through Bayram's relation to his dear Mercedes automobile which he names as *Honey Girl*. In an era when “village novel” genre -

that provided a romantic portrait of the peasants as the participants, if not pioneers, of the soon socialist revolution - was still popular, Aĝaoĝlu provides a quite contrary portrait of a villager man. While the reflections of '68 movement in Turkish literature portrayed villagers as hardworking and exploited noble savages whose mobilization would bring the revolution, after the military coup in 1971, Aĝaoĝlu expressed a radical and pessimistic objection to hardworking and oppressed villager men image. Bayram betrayed his fiancée by leaving her behind in his pursuit for wealth and betrayed his fellow friend as he played tricks on him and stole his right to be a worker in Germany. He worked in BMW factory dreaming about the respect and obeisance he would get from the villagers when he turns back to his village. However, throughout his journey from Germany to his village, he goes through many little accidents which make his car into a wreck one by one. Right before entering the village, he learns from a shepherd that his fiancée married someone else, his friend told how Bayram cheated on him to get working permit and everyone in the village dislikes him. Throughout the text, Aĝaoĝlu portrays Bayram, the protagonist, as a villager men that beats the political prisoners, attempts to sexually harass the woman, egoistically rejects helping his worker friend to avoid a possible damage to his car and causes his fellow to have a car crash and does not bother himself to help a friend in car wreckage. The Mercedes is "the delicate rose" of Bayram's thought which has been shaped by the success and competitiveness in the market economy.

The automobile has been a symbol of mechanization of the human kind in romantic conservative thought of Nurettin Topçu. As Bora (2008) reports, Topçu draws a line between the civilization and the culture. Culture is the essential, spiritual, organic and native for him, while civilization (he uses the term almost as a synonym for Western civilization which he thought to be singular) is mechanization, which is the murderer of spiritual culture. In this sense, the automobile is the agent of the spread of the act of killing carried out by the West. As other forms of mechanization,

automobilization kills the true psyche, causes corruption as it triggers restlessness. Even though he has a conservative, if not flawed, understanding of culture based on the agricultural production, he deserves appreciation for being the earliest intellectuals of Turkey who recognized the mobility brought by the automobile further reproduces spatial inequalities as he says “instead of bringing products to Anatolia”, the automobiles “make Anatolian people flow into İstanbul and some other big cities” which results in the emptying Anatolia out (my translation from the citation in Bora, 2008: 396).

On the other hand, socialist poet Nazım Hikmet’s poems which has been partly inflicted with Soviet futurism, praise the automobile as he champions the mechanization and technological advancement for being steps of further development. In his poem *Nikbinlik* [Optimism], Hikmet depicts the automobile as in one of the “driving in the wilderness” scenes in American movies do. Addressing to the workers, Hikmet wants workers to believe that they are going to see pretty bright days and drive their cars at the fifth gear into the blue, and he guesses that kissing while speeding at 160 km/h must be amazing. When Hikmet’s political stance is considered, these pretty and bright days on which workers will kiss their lovers while speeding in a car are the days after the predicted socialist revolution for Hikmet, while the days before the revolution are portrayed as poor and gloomy in the rest of the poem. Maybe Hikmet fantasized about travelling through the collective farms by his Soviet AZLK make car yet what his depiction of reminds me is the *road trippin’* which is a key part of American dream as narrated in the works of Jack London to Jack Kerouac or in Western movies that cemented the connotations between the free, independent, adventurer men that explores the wilderness and *makes himself* through the mobility in that exploration.

The connotations of freedom and individualism cannot be conceptualized apart from the historical development of the automobile. Being originated in Europe and matured in the US, Gartman (2004: 171) states that the automobile has been

offered mobility to affluent classes initially, providing them with the privilege to go further distances at higher speed in contrast to equal capacity to movement horses offered to anyone. However, the more important is that the automobile brought the independence of movement to the people who could afford them. They did not have to use the rail-and-timetable-bounded locomotion as the lower classes did. Thus, the automobile has been associated with prestige, freedom and independence since its birth.

The automobile in itself is an inert object and becomes a tool for displacement over time when it is combined with the human body and intelligence. In *The System of Objects*, Baudrillard argues that “objects are generally isolated as to their function” and advocates the irrationality of needs that transforms the objects beyond their mere functions and connotes symbolic meanings to them (1996: 8). In his own words, “no sooner does an object lose its concrete practical aspect than it is transferred to the realm of mental practices. In short, behind every real object there is a dream object” (p. 117). In other words, objects gain a sign status in the imagery of the people and car is an exemplary fetish as it is transformed by the irrational needs:

The automobile, for instance, it is very hard now even to imagine what an extraordinary tool for the reorganization of human relations it might have been ... so quickly did it become encrusted with parasitic functions defined by the requirements of *prestige*, comfort, unconscious projection, and so forth – functions which first impeded and then blocked the automobile’s essential function, which was human integration. Today the car is a completely inert object.

(Baudrillard, 1996: 126, emphasis added)

Sign status of the automobile signifying prestige and economic success in the imagery stems from the fact that the automobile is a private property, especially in Turkish context where automobile prices are doubled by the taxes and they are expensive to operate due to oil and spare part prices. Moreover, it is designated to

an individual by the legal authorities. The ownership of a private property excludes the others to have control over that property. Graeber (2001) highlights that the problem with the understanding of gaining prestige through consumption is that prestige is not an object to buy and sell. Rather, the prestige is *reified* (or objectified in Miller's and Tilley's terms) in the imagery of people through the social relations and

[Private] property is a social relation as well ... when one buys a car one is not really purchasing the right to use it so much as the right to prevent others from using it – or, to be even more precise, one is purchasing their recognition that one has a right to do so. But since it is so diffuse a social relation – a contract, in effect, between the owner and everyone else in the entire world – it is easy to think of it as a thing.

(Graeber, 2001: 9).

Then we can argue that the ownership of the car as a private property entails the individualism of the car. As its name suggests, the automobile promises the autonomous mobility that is self-propelled and self-directed. Contrary to the prior technologies of land transportation, namely the locomotion which is transportation of the machine itself, the automobile transports the driver, the passengers and the goods from door to door, independent from a timetable. However, given the fact that driving in the downtown is not more advantageous than walking, let alone the stress it induces, it is hard to argue that automobile ownership solely means prestige and privilege of individual movement and freedom of mobility. As the automobile have gone commonplace in urban space because of Fordist mode of production and consumption, it has tremendous effects on the social, and physical geography of urban and rural spaces as it opened new ways of land use.

## **2.2. Urban Space as Driving Space**

The automobile is one of the most visible entity in social and physical landscapes of the urban spaces. For Barthes, the automobile is “almost the exact equivalent of the great Gothic cathedrals: I mean the supreme creation of an era, conceived with



passion by unknown artists, and consumed in image if not in usage by a whole population which appropriates them as a magical object” (2009[: 101). The primary reason of the going omnipresent of cars in the urban space lays in the logic of Fordist mass production and consumption. Even though there is not a need to further elaborate what Fordism means, we know that it is a social and economic system based on the standardization and industrialization, and born out of the idea of Ford (“surprisingly” an automobile manufacturer) to sell the product a worker produced himself/herself. As Aglietta (2015[1979]) highlights, the consumption is structured in this system in a way to coincide with the production and it is “governed by two commodities: the *standardized housing* that is the privileged site of individual consumption; and the *automobile* as the means of transport compatible with the separation of home and workplace” (*A Theory of Capitalist Regulation*, 3.I.1, unpaginated e-book).

Despite the autonomous mobility it premises, the automobile is dependent on the specific paved roads to make possible the consumption of its function<sup>7</sup>. In other words, it is a commodity that needs dedicated spaces of consumption which are the streets dedicated to its movement as well as servicing and storing places to maintain its movement. The modern urban spaces are formed by such spaces dedicated to the movement, service and storage of the automobiles and this is why Horvath names the modern urban spaces as “machine spaces” (1974). After the increased ownership of the automobile, the cities are engineered and re-engineered into machine spaces. While Aglietta points out the separation of home and workplace, Gorz (1980) stresses the inequality embedded in this separation. First of all, he argues that, with an analogy to villas on the shoreline, the automobile yields in the exclusion of the pedestrians, the ones who cannot afford an automobile, or the ones who cannot drive

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<sup>7</sup> SUV’s might be seen as the exception of this generalization; however, it should be noted that the SUV’s have been engineered as military vehicles, and many countries recognize them as trucks in the legal procedures, not passenger cars. For further information, see Fletcher, 1987.

such as elders and children from the urban space (1980: 70). Furthermore, the automobile takes the burden of commuting from the employers and give it to the working classes; and it yields in the increased distances between home and workplaces (p. 74); the car causes to the murder of the city as it slices the urban space into the lots of accommodation, working, shopping, education and so on through the suburbanization made possible by the automobile. All of these processes result in the land use segregated according to the class positions.

Yet another French intellectual, Lefebvre further develops the segregated land use and alienation from the space due to the automobile when he defines the automobile as the colonizer of the everyday life of the urban resident. Being a so quotidian object that urban residents generally cannot see the power relations in which the automobile exist, the power of automobile to colonize everyday life stems from this blindness. The quotidian and omnipresent characteristic of the automobile and its infrastructure in urban make the automobile most pervasive of the all commodities as he states ““in this society where things are more important than human beings, there is a king-object, a pilot-object: the automobile. Our society, so called industrial, or technical, has this symbol, a thing invested with prestige and power (...) The car is, in the neo-capitalist countries, an incomparable and perhaps irreparable instrument of deculturation, of internal destruction of the civilized world’ (Lefebvre, 1971a: 14)” (as translated in Löwy, 2002: 100). The colonization process of the urban space and everyday life by the automobile is carried through the construction of *autoroutes* that cut across and through the cities which also result in dispersed macroform (1971b: 101). This marks the victory of “geometric space” vis-à-vis “lived space” while the commercial centers are occupied with the cars, commodities and money and the communities in the cities are undermined with the “machine spaces” in Horvath’s terms, on which people roam in their metal capsules with small interaction with one another.

In this context, automobile is a part of built environment of the urban spaces. Automobile has a hold over the whole environment as it altered the settlement patterns and everyday life of the urban residents. While the urban spaces are transformed into driving spaces, this entailed another transformation that is the transformation of urban spaces into the geographies of consumption. The commercial centers has long been the hearts of the urban spaces (Slater, 1997); however, the addiction to and abundance of cars in the geographies altered by the mobility brought in by the automobile destroyed the small communities weaved through face-to-face interactions (Jacobs, 1961) and segregated residences from commercial centers where urban culture is reproduced (Jacobs, 2004). However, as mentioned before, the automobile itself is an innate creature of human mind and labor. It must be reminded that the colonizing, the destructive characteristic of the automobile does not stem from itself. Rather, it gains such characteristic in the economic infrastructure which manufactured it in the first place. Furthermore, drawing on Gorz's argument that automobile excludes the lower classes, the elders and the children, we can argue that gender also plays a role in the making of the automobile and the infrastructure into destructive, corrosive elements of built environment.

### **2.2.1. Gendered Spaces of Driving**

As the automobile is considered to be a means of individual freedom in the commonsense, in the same fashion, one may argue that the automobile also empowered the women as it enabled the women to freely participate in the public life. Despite the fact that automobile shrunk the public life as I sketched above, this might be a valid argument in the contexts where gender gap is relatively small if we assume driving kids to school, commuting and fetching groceries increase the level of participation in public life, not the level of running the errands a woman – as a domestic worker – is expected to do. However, in terms of rights, having equal access to an object might still be a gain for the woman.

In the context of the urban fringes of Ankara, where rural patriarchal relations are tried to be carried out in a big city consisted of anonymous strangers, the automobile remains a highly gendered object. There is one clear rule – women do not and cannot drive. Although *modifiyeci* youth appreciate the women who can drive for being “like a man” as manliness is much valued concept, they never let their mothers, sisters, and wives drive, or have a driving license. Furthermore, if a mother, sister, or wife needs to go to a grocery store, the houses of relatives or acquaintances, and so on, they give their *modifiyeci* sons, brothers, or husbands a call to drive them. In other words, women do not take public transport neither; a man from the family must be with them when they are in public.

The automobile is an object that operates on the diffused boundaries between public and private. On the one hand, its function requires it to be used in the public. On the other hand, despite its windows, inside the automobile is a private room in which people can be invisible to the external public. In this context, the concept of *mahrem* is crucial here. *Mahrem* is translated as private, the opposite of the public in many cases; however, *mahrem* has direct sexual connotations. Ögüt (2003: 388-9) reports that *mahrem* literally means “not halal, prohibited by the religion [Islam]”. In terms of Islamic law, *mahrem* refers to the ones whom cannot marry one another, and he goes on with explaining the ones who cannot marry: the ones from the same lineage – maternal or paternal, the spouses of the one’s relatives, and the ones who were breastfed by the same woman. In other words, the concept of *mahrem* means anyone except the close relatives, and their spouses can marry. In a context where traditional values inflicted with Islam confronts with secular sociality of the big city, *mahrem* means not only the prohibition of marriage, but also permission to have sex. It also entails belonging of women to the men in their families, that is to say they are honor of the men, and men should protect them from *haram* [strictly prohibited by Islam], from violating the prohibitions.

The concept of *mahrem* has pervasive reflections on the space from where the reason to translate it as “private” stems. Private, domestic realm is *mahrem*. However, the degree of *mahrem* changes in a house as well. The room of a flat used for having guests over, known as *salon*, is the least *mahrem* part of the house, while the bedrooms are strictly *mahrem*, i.e. one has to be really close relative to enter into them. On the other hand, the body parts are *mahrem* in a varying degree. As expected, the sexualized parts are the most *mahrem*, and should be covered all the time. Almost the whole body of women is sexualized in Sunni Islam, so they should cover the whole body except the face, and hands when they are not in *mahrem* places.

Automobile is a site of conflict between the *mahrem* and publicity for women. The conflict is not about the public visibility of women per se, rather it is a matter of interaction between the women, and not *mahrem* men in the public. The control over the access to the car by men is a way to deal with the problem of automobile dependence in the city as a machine space. In other words, a woman who do not drive is less likely to be able to in public since the spatial configuration of cities including Ankara marginalize other forms of transport. Although they do not directly address to the concept of *mahrem*, in their study of the gender of the public transport in Ankara, Kalfa et al (2009) discuss the design of public transport as being *by men for the men* in a context where the designers are “gender blind” since they neglect the needs of woman in a city public/private spaces are split according to genders. At another level, Köse (2014) highlights that the masculine characteristic of automobile, due to the cultural assumptions that relates masculinity with manual and intellectual skills, transforms the whole surface of the cities as they become the automobile territories. As an addition to these accounts, automobile’s being a social relation should be reminded as Graeber highlighted. In Ankara context, it is a masculine object and mode of transport because of the strong concept of *mahrem*. If the ones who have power to give and take women are coined as men, in Levi-

Strauss' terms, the ones who can drive and be a part of social landscape are coined as men in Ankara. Being the invader of urban landscape, the masculine automobile further sustains the masculinity of public space in a dialogic way.

### **2.3. A Cartography of Ankara**

Up to now, the automobile has been discussed as an instrument that alters the land use of the city as it is a social relation in dialogue with the gender, and economic order with a focus on urban space. The cities evolved into connection of remote and isolate places of dwelling, working, entertaining and consumption. The local communities have been scattered due to the increased distance between home and work as well as exclusion of pedestrians from the streets. And in Ankara context, the already existing split between the *mahrem* and public spaces has been fostered as women's access to automobile is controlled by men. From now on, to find an answer to why automobile is chosen by young men of fringes to craft their masculine identities, the land use in Ankara will be explored. By this means, the economic order that make possible the particular land use will be unfolded, and experiences of being an unprivileged, short of resources man will be located in the economic order.

#### **2.3.1. Ankara: Asphalt Paved Modern Capital**

Ankara has been declared of the new republic after the invention of the automobile. Even though automobile ownership were not common, in the design of the city as the capital of the young republic, it is possible to argue that the city was constructed around a spinal motor way that starts from the center of the old town on the north, and reaches to the president's mansion on the south. When looked at the map of Ankara, what is seen is a dispersed macroform; however, the motor ways which base the skeleton of the city catch attention as they conjoin on the street named Atatürk Boulevard between the above mentioned north and south poles. The capital of the republic were built around this axis, and named *Yenişehir (Newcity)* still forms

the core of the city. Inquiring the functions, and architectural style of the buildings on Atatürk Boulevard, Baydar (1992) makes the statement that this street was built as the storefront of a new, modern, connected to contemporary Western countries, and set as an exemplar for the future development of other Anatolian cities. In a similar vein, Tankut (1993) places the new Ankara of the new republic in a group of capital cities composed of Canberra, Brasilia and Islamabad, their common point being a departure from the past, a nationalist attitude that justifies the departure and a stress on the political success through production of an utopic capital as the crown of the new regime (pp. 35-7). She defines construction of Ankara as the capital city as an internal-colonization: Political, bureaucratic, and militaristic elites from Istanbul fluxed into Ankara, a small market town then, and the local peasants turned into workers with the jump start of construction sector as well as industrialization.

The compact form of the core of Ankara due to the rough morphological characteristic of the geography on which it is built, is one of the major reasons of Ankara's macroform dispersed around the motorway axes, along with the errors in the projections of the growth of the city. The dispersed macroform of Ankara also leads to the spatial segregation: Yenimahalle being the workers district was built out of the core on the North West, connected to the core with Istanbul Street passing through the industrial zone and by the green belt of the city of the time; Bahçelievler housing estate for the lower ranking government officials was built on the West, connected to the core with Bahçelievler Street and Gazi Mustafa Kemal Boulevard passing through meadows by the old airport (for detailed information on the development of Bahçelievler, Kansu, 2009); while these two were planned settlements, *gecekondu*<sup>8</sup> started to emerged starting from 1940s on the North East, East, and South fringes of the core as the growth of the city was not projected correctly (Duyar-Kienast, 2005; Şenyapılı, 1985), connected to the core with arteries such as Samsun State Highway, Dikmen Street, İrfan Baştuğ Street. Such a

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<sup>8</sup> Squatter houses

macroform of the city yields a monocentric urban land use with a single activity center and a society spatially segregated according to their proximity to activity center. Şenyapılı's (2006) seminal work that inquires the reflections of social topography on the space through an investigation of the demographics, internal mobility and dispersion of classes in the city clearly lays out that there has not been much of a change from the new capital of Turkish Republic divided by the railway into South and North while upper classes aboded in the South half and North was further from the core and location of lower classes. Today, while the urban area has been expanded towards West, the distinctions still exist as they are since the newly opened areas on the North West become the home for the lower classes, and while upper classes moved to the newly opened areas on the South West while the already existing segregation in the older settlements remained (pp. 239-43).

### **2.3.2. The Neoliberal Restructuring**

More than a decade now, the landscape of Turkey has been witnessing a new shift in the growth, spread, and transformation processes of the built environment of urban space. The construction sector is enjoying its second golden era with AKP rule after the first wave in 1980s with ANAP rule (Penpecioglu, 2016: pp. 167-69). Still, the production of built environment not only fosters the automobile dominated transportation policies but also connotes to the progress in cultural imagery – a progress towards to the level of developed Western countries, if not exceeding them. While in the daily debates of the general public, *duble yol*, which translates as divided highway, became a symbol of the development boom, the increased number of airports because of the liberalization of previously stately held air transport became an issue of which Western nations are supposedly “jealous”. These ideas and expressions are not independent from the discourse in the political campaigns of the ruling party. While the economic development has been based on the construction sector through the implementation of urban transformation process, there is a justification strategy for the construction based economic development



through a discourse stressing the creation of wealth through the increase of rent, investment attractiveness, place marketing and branding, and clearing the blighted areas (Penpecioğlu, 2016: 163)

Although many articles, and books have been published on the issue of transformation of Turkey's landscape through the urban transformation process, Çavuşoğlu's (2016) account has a significance since it maps out the connectedness of market economics and state interventionism in the recent economic development model based on the construction sector. He highlights that what the government implements is not a simple neoliberal restructuring but an amalgamation of market ideology and the corporatism.

Following Brenner and Theodore (2002), it can be possible to argue two faces of neoliberal restructuring. On the one face of the coin is the economic pressure applied on the cities. That is to say financial flows, real-estate speculations and the erased boundaries for the transnational capital means a new shift in the economic order. On the other face of the coin is the shifting of the municipalities to development companies to attract the flowing finance. While the early republican period was characterized with the strict control of economy by the state, the state had been characterized as an archetypical father who brings the bread home, and distributes among the household [my interpretation]. The authoritarian state that neglects all kind of differences among the citizens, and fosters nationalism against the differences, regulates production and consumption as it reduces the citizens to the soldiers of the development of the whole nation through the colonization of everyday life. In other words, earlier economic regime was marked with Fordist regulation. What AKP achieved, for Çavuşoğlu, borrowing from Gramsci, is making construction a national-popular project, and thanks to this national-popular project, and safeguarding their hegemony not only with the consent they make through the national-popular project of construction, but also starting up a company with the citizens through offering them small shares of the accumulated capital through flat

for land basis contracts as well as the adjustments that made access to bank loans easier.

As mentioned above, the landscape of Turkey has been through a massive change for more than a decade now. In the scale of Ankara, this change has been carried out by collaboration the private sector, local municipality, and state agencies in the name of urban transformation. First passed as a law for building an environment more rigid to the earthquake disasters, urban transformation law has been a tool for this coalition to dispossess the urban poor first, and then the general public, of the land they own. The urban transformation process in Turkey might be the full-fledged, concretized form of Harvey's concept of accumulation by dispossession (2003a): Throughout the recovery period from 2001 economic crisis in Turkey, the state changed the whole banking system increasing their security while making bank loans easier to get; opened the commons to market as well as the stately held sectors and enterprises. While stately held banks were kept in hand to supply loans for larger scale investments by the private sector; the taxes related with the production of built environment has been reduced and partly removed (Balaban, 2016). Yet, I think one example might sum up the whole process: Hasköy district which is enclaved by Samsun road on the South, İrfan Baştuğ Street that goes to the airport on the North, Sitelер industrial zone on the East, and Altınpark (a park which used to be a golf club in the country since the early days of Ankara and transformed into a public park in the late 1980s) on the West, has been going under a massive transformation. Since I was born and spent my early childhood in a social housing estate there, and I still visit the district since I have friends, relatives and informants there, I have witnessed the transformation myself. Across the apartment building where I lived were the *gecekondu*s. During the recent transformation process, they had been demolished and multi-story apartment buildings have been constructed on the land their destruction provided. When I had an interview with the urban planners working for the municipality, I learnt that actually they were not *gecekondu*s but social housing

buildings known as *Tren Evler* (Train Houses) constructed by the public property and expropriation department of the municipality in late '60s and early '70s for distributing to the lower income families in order to fight against the increasing number of *gecekondu*s and unplanned growth since the district is very close to an industrial zone. And a side note, they were built in the form of *gecekondu*s since the lower income families are accustomed to live in that form both in their villages and in the city as well as they could use their yards to grow food for themselves. Now, the very same department privatize the social housings and expropriate the *gecekondu*s to open land for the private sector.

The reflections of the neoliberal shift in the land use on *modifiyeci* youth is twofold. Firstly, the spaces where the joyriding activities are intensified are all the neighborhoods that have been going under the transformations. On the North East of the city, streets of Sıteler provide the tracks for drifting and drag racing. On the East, Doğukent Street of Mamak and the neighborhoods on the East and South form the spaces of joyriding – a district that used to be the city dumpster a few years ago and now the multi-story apartments buildings, luxury residence buildings, a couple of malls are constructed on the land municipality privatized. The joyriding node on the North was North Star - or officially named as North Ankara City Entrance Urban Transformation Project - for which a bill passed from the national assembly. It is a tremendously large development project whose construction by the state, local government and private sector collaboration has not finished yet and it will contain a massive mosque compound, an artificial lake, villas, apartment buildings, bridges, tunnels, and so on. On the South, joyriding activities are staged on the south of the *gecekondu*s that wait to be demolished as the neighboring ones had been for development project known Dikmen Valley as well as Enka being a close part of the orbital motorway around Ankara to İncek district, which has been built through the change in the status of agricultural lands to residence and commerce, is the other joyriding space on the South. On the North West, the joyriding activities are

dispersed between İvedik Organized Industrial Zone and the neighboring Yuva village whose once arable lands are now the bases for the apartment buildings of the a new neighborhood. Thanks to municipality that changed the agricultural status of the lands to the residential, and commercial, now the endemic melon species named after the village is going extinct. On the West, the *modifiyeci* youth form Sincan, Yenikent, Törekent, and Fatih use the road behind Osmanlı Stadium in Yenikent neighborhood which has been restructured from a rural town to a neighborhood in the urban area thanks to the changes in the zoning after state's social housing compound was built near to the neighborhood.

All the common denominator of these districts are that they have been transformed in the urban transformation, they are places where *modifiyecis* either dwell, or work, and they are places where the urban area of Ankara ends, i.e. beyond these districts are the rural towns of Ankara. All the districts not only have newly constructed wide, and deserted streets since - as the planners I interviewed asserted - they are supposed to be new centers in the near future, but also they are connected to the singular activity center of Ankara with long stretching expressways. The remote position of those places do not attract people but the ones who already live there and attempt to create new centers fails. These districts only become the centers where the financial resources of the construction sector flows in. Thus, the neighborhoods on the fringes are not only places where exact equivalent of accumulation by dispossession theory of Harvey takes place, but also the process of destruction of community through automobile Jacobs stressed is carried out. A cruise in these neighborhoods by car (by car because pedestrians are not considered in theirs design) would be enough to see that they are merely bedroom communities since there are hardly indications of life on the streets in the work hours.

#### 2.4. Debtor and Bored

The other fold of the reflection of neoliberal restructuring on the life of the *modifiyecis* is debt, and the emotion of *sıkıntı* [boredom] related with both the debt and the death of community in their neighborhoods. While the emotion of *sıkıntı* is rather translated as boredom, for the *modifiyeci* youth *sıkıntı* is an emotion which implies more than boredom. On the most apparent level, *sıkıntı* refers to the lack of entertainment and especially the commoditized forms of entertainment. Furthermore, feeling void and empty is also expressed as *sıkıntı* or *bunaltı*. In this sense, *sıkıntı* refers to the uncertainty about the future as well as current state of being, to feeling of failure and regret. Nevertheless, the state of feeling void is also related to being short to participate in consumption activities when we consider Ritzer's (2005[1999]) argument that consumption in the late modernity has become the means to overcome disenchantment – an emotion closely related with *sıkıntı* as feeling void.

As mentioned earlier, the urban transformation is far from creating new centers and the only ones who already live the transformed neighborhoods dwell in the new buildings. In other words, the transformation causes the increase of the rent on the fringes. In a sense, the house has become a “Giffen good” in terms of economics – the demand and the price increase in a parallel – thanks to the mortgage loans. Being the bread winner of the house requires a house in the first place. My informants who had been through the mandatory military service, which constitutes a critical moment in transition to be a man, and wait for the marriage their families will arrange report that they owe 150.000<sup>9</sup> Turkish Liras because of mortgage loans and there are 10 years to due, with only one exception. Of course, the figures are rounded, yet the young men take on a massive debt to buy houses where they have been grown up not only as an investment but also as a preparation for the marriage.

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<sup>9</sup> The net minimum wage is 1300 TL

In this sense, it can be argued that a new moment of transition is added between the military service and marriage for lower class men as they perceive a financial security in investment on houses although being in debt.

The neoliberal restructuring brought the shrinkage of social provisions, as the transformation in Hasköy clearly demonstrates. However, this is not limited with housing. As the social provisions shrink, the sectors become more and more informal. The informalization of jobs comes with the insecurity. For example Kadri, who is in debt for the house he bought on mortgage credit, were fired from his job at a printing factory paying minimum wage due to a leakage he caused and the cost of the leakage were only about two percent of the net minimum wage. Highlighting that credit existed before the coin, Graeber puts forwards that the morality of debt permeated through slavery, and states that “slavery is the ultimate form of being ripped from one's context, and thus from all the social relationships that make one a human being. Another way to put this is that the slave is, in a very real sense, dead” (2011: 168). Working 65 hours a week at a job with the fear of being fired for a leakage slightly above the price of a BigMac menu might not be the equivalent of death, yet it is clear that social relations, ethic being the most primary one, have been altered by the debt (Lazzarato, 2012: 32). Many *modifiyecis* had a criminal record, which is a part of making them outcasts by the larger public. After being fired Kadri deal weed full time to make ends meet.

Being outcast, excluded from the urban culture; living in the deserted neighborhoods covered with empty streets, which have hardly communal life; owing tremendous sums of money to the banks compared to their incomes and bearing the risk of unemployment and losing the mortgaged houses causes an emotion which they express as *sıkıntı*. Doing the same thing, facing the same people all day long, and the jailhouse were not as boring as his workplace is, states Kadri. Yenikent, where Ünal lives, being all the same level topographically, having no room to meet new people, is a boring place. Along with the repetition, Moller states that the emptiness

which causes discontinuity and loss of expectation, the rapture which is not promising are the constituents of the boring (2014: 189). The repetitive pattern of everyday life and the loss of expectations because of the unchanging works, the square places they inhabit are expressed as *sıkıcı* [boring] or *bunaltıcı* [~ muggy, depressive] by *modifiyecis*.

If the fringes are machine spaces remote from the singular activity center of Ankara, at the same time, they are the geographies of boredom in a sense that Özarlsan conceptual-izes (2016: 65-6). While defining *taşra*<sup>10</sup>, he states that a geography cannot be defined in terms of emotion; however, in the cultural imagery, *taşra* is the place where the commoditized entertainment does not originally live, but is imported from the urban spaces, following Harvey (2003b), where he defines as the loci of commoditized entertainment.

#### **2.4.1. Joyriding as Transgression and Negotiation**

As I stated above, the spaces of joyriding are spatially detached from the central activity center of Ankara. Starting late at night, the joyriding sessions end in the morning always in a nearby marked zone. A night started in the hilltops of Dikmen, ends in a nearby mall, or the street behind the president's office. Joyriding nights of Sincan region comes to an end in the district of Eryaman where there is a mall, a park with a lake, and so on. When I was in the car obsessed with the observing and recording the gestures, the statements, the context, this fact did not mean a lot for me. However, one night when I was not with *modifiyecis* had a significant effect for me to grasp the joyriding as a transgression, and negotiation over the space.

In a late October night, I was at the opening of a photographic exhibition in a small gallery in a neighborhood close to Esat district where *pavyons* are concentrated. Having short financial resources, *pavyons* constitute only desirable, but not

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<sup>10</sup> Roughly translates as country, province

attainable places of entertainment for most of the *modifiyecis*, and in this context Esat district has been brought up throughout my research as aspired place. Before the gallery was a group of young, mostly graduate students of arts, and social sciences, i.e. snob bohemians for *modifiyecis* as well as for a significant portion of Turkish society, drinking and socializing. While we were enjoying themselves there, my trained ears throughout my research heard the sound of a modified exhaust, and when I turned my head what I saw was a white Tofaş Şahin passing by the street. After a while, the sound of the exhaust came first as the guys in the car deactivated the silencer, and the very same car came before the gallery with its lights on, playing out loud a folk dance song, slowed down almost to stop, span the rear wheels, and then went away while my friends were kidding me saying “Sarper, your friends dropped by”.

The spaces of joyriding, which are also where *modifiyecis* inhabit, are the places pushed to the edges spatially and socially. Living such conditions induces an emotion coined as boredom by *modifiyeci* youth themselves. As the above mentioned instance suggest, the aggressive joyriding is not only taking imaginary revenges. The streets are apparently public spaces; however, the access to them is limited by the many factors such as health, and age. On the gender issue, streets are shown to be where men control women, other men and other gender identities as the concept of *mahrem* indicates. Yet in another level, streets are the throughways to participation in the urban life as they are the bases for the symbolic marketplace coined as *piyasa* – which will be discussed in details in the next chapter. In this sense, joyriding is an act of expanding the *piyasa* since *piyasa* is where the *modifiye* cars are. In this sense, joyriding is transgressing the limits set by economic forces, and the political economy of the urban space. It is a contestation of claims on territory through making oneself visible through the look and the sound of the mechanical extension of body.



## CHAPTER III

### LOCATING THE MEN IN THE *PIYASA*

In early October 2016, a Turkish pop-rock band, Athena, released a video clip for their song “Ses Etme” (Keep Quiet). The video sparked a massive reaction on the social media. Right after the release, it was banned from the TV channels. Many of my friends who knew I was writing a thesis on the relationship between masculine identities of urban poor, young men and their automobiles called me, and send messages about the video clip. The reason of all these reaction was that the video clip narrated the story of a transgender woman being subject to severe violence on her way to home at night. The video starts with showing a men undressing in the dark. As he starts to wear bras, and shave his beard, the ambiance light increases. Then the audience watch him transforming into a flamboyant woman wearing fancy clothes, and make up, sporting a big, curly, blonde wig. The room illuminates with colorful lights, the audience see her two transgender woman friends as flamboyant as her in the room, all are preparing for the night out – one of them is dressed like a geisha, the other is dressed like a cyber punk girl. After giving her pleasant mommy goodbye kisses, they go on to the street for taking a taxi. On the way, a group of three young men standing by their cars stare at them with *flirteuse* eyes. The one of the cars is a BMW E36, a much favored make by the *modifiyeci* young men and two of them are domestic Tofaş makes which are also associated by *modifiyeci* young men, one is a quite older make, and the other is a newer make which has been produced until the early 2000s. Indeed, the cars in the video are *modifiye* cars as their looks suggest and the men are implied to be *modifiyecis*. BMW and older Tofaş start to do *polka* while women sit on the newer Tofaş and watch them. The women

take a taxi, the men follow them in the traffic, doing frilly things such as dangling out from the windows to touch the women. Women answer back them with a similar attitude, the audience get that this is not harassment but flirting. In the end, women make it into a night club, dance and have fun in there, but the audience do not see the men with cars in the club, probably because they get bounced back at the door. After a fun night, the protagonist walks back home; however, out of the darkness, three men appears, attack on her, stripping off her wig first, than the fancy fur coat and beat the heck out of her. Their faces are barely visible in the dark; however, we see the lustful and hateful faces of the *modifiyecis* via flashbacks to their moment of meeting. Although I am not a master of visual analysis, obviously the flashbacks to their lustful and hateful faces during the beating scene imply that the ones who beat her are the *modifiyeci* men who flirted with her and her friends earlier at that night.

I mentioned this video which brought up the violence exerted on LGBTQs, women, sex workers by men and depicted the violent men as *modifiyecis* since it is the most direct, sensational example among the many other representations of *modifiyecis* as uncivilized, violent fools who drive their “funny” looking, “vulgar” souped-up cars. I do not claim that these representations are totally false. Moreover, this kind of representations seen in the movies, TV series, video games and music videos are the reflections of how middle classes perceive the car enthusiast young men racing on the streets, violating the traffic rules and so on. Throughout my research, my middle class circle sometimes remarked, sometimes directly said that I was dealing with *çakals*, rascals, vagabonds for countless time. However, if my aim is to contribute to the making an understanding of gender order through providing an account of how masculine domination is reproduced in the daily lives, on the streets, then the study should go beyond the dummy representations of *modifiyeci* men which does not problematize the context in which these men construct their masculine identities. In this sense, this chapter will focus on locating the *modifiyeci* car culture and the

*modifiyeci* youth in relation to both the automobiles and the social space they live in.

### **3.1. *Piyasa***

In the earlier days of my research, every *modifiyeci* was talking about the *piyasa*. Originating from Italian “piazza” which directly translates as the square, it primarily means “market” in Turkish. However, it has gone through a semantic shift when appropriated into Turkish language. Historically, the marketplaces are on the most crowded and lively squares of the cities and when used as a verb – *piyasa yapmak* – it means to hang around in the crowded places to see and to be seen. In this context, everyone’s mentioning the *piyasa* in a way confused me a lot. They were sometimes criticizing the cars on the *piyasa*, sometimes indicating that *piyasa* had been inflated recently or how pretentious guys in the *piyasa* were degrading being a *modifiyeci*. In addition to this, considering my informants’ always checking the advertisement website which is almost the monopoly for the used car advertisements on the Internet, I thought they were altering the mechanics and the look of their cars solely for the commercial purposes, i.e. buying a car in poor condition, improving it for the resale with a mark-up. I even thought to get in contact with the used car dealers since I was hearing them frowning about how car dealers were inflating the *piyasa* and lowering the overall quality of the *piyasa* by adding some cheap-but-fancy accessories to the cars they resell with the purpose of increasing their mark-ups.

At that time when I was just getting to know *modifiyecis*, I was asking them how they got started with these practices, i.e. when they started to drive; when they had their first car, whether it belonged to them or their families; if they recall the first alterations they made on a car and if they recall a distinctive car that made them aspiring and so on. All the responses I got was indicating that they had been fans of cars since their childhoods, and car enthusiasm was a disease which they caught in the childhood. Of course this is a valuable data when considered the facts that

Ankara is a “machine space” in Horvath’s terms (1974), the residents of Ankara are dependent on the automobile based transportation; an automobile provides a financial security for the people who are financially insecure as long as it is maintained well since it keeps its value in the resale market and having easier access to bank loans increases the propensity to consume of the unprivileged households which results in “materialism” defined by Ger, and Belk (1990) as “the consumption-based orientation to happiness-seeking” (p. 183).

When I asked Firat if he recalls the first time was astonished with a *modifiye* or regular car, his answer made me grasp the concept of *piyasa* as it is used by *modifiyecis*. With a face that expresses both shame and pride, he said “I swear – I will be honest, I saw this thing on the *piyasa*.” He felt ashamed at that time because he was confessing his pretentiousness at the beginning and he was proud because he was embracing his fault of being pretentious at the beginning *like a real man would do*. This little sentence may not mean a lot in itself; however, when we consider that *modifiyecis* know one another from their plate numbers, gossip about the cars and their drivers by referring the plate numbers such as “Have you heard that RCT 58 slammed TU 158 at Enka last Sunday?”, by *piyasa* he was referring to the cars and the drivers that are visible on the streets of their environments in particular and of Ankara in general. In this sense, checking the advertisement website frequently, posting the advertisement of their cars on that website even though they do not have an intention to sell them, posting videos and pictures of their cars on Facebook pages and checking these pages too see other *modifiyecis*’ cars are not only information collection before an intended transaction but also, and primarily, ways to keep up with the *piyasa*, i.e. to know what features a particular car has, to see if the driver of a car is a competent drifter or racer, to track the current trends in the car styles and so on.

In this sense, *piyasa* used as car enthusiasts takes on the second meaning of the word (*piyasa yapmak*). The *piyasa* is a non-physical space on which the customized cars

race, drift and cruise. Having a souped-up car, participating in races and drifting events, getting “likes” for one’s drifting video on social media which I consider to be an extension of public space means gaining visibility, respect, a name in that non-physical, unbounded, fluid and mobile space called *piyasa*. *Piyasa* is not bounded by the physical space, rather, the presence of souped-up cars and their drivers at a given place turns a street or a neighborhood into *piyasa*, thus when considered the mobile characteristic of the automobiles, the men who participate in the *piyasa* through souped-up cars and joyriding practices become not only known, regarded and visible to the other men in the *piyasa* but also visible to the larger public, they feel to be a part of the public space. The relation between visibility and masculine identity has been discussed with a focus on race and ethnicity since these classifications are both the bases for inequalities and marked on the bodies (Seidler, 2006; Newell, 2009; hooks, 2004). On the competitiveness and masculinity relation, hooks (2004) states that sports is “a site of redemption and affirmation. Given the history of black male success in the arena of sports, an arena deemed ‘manly’ by patriarchal standards, black boys learn early on in their lives that by excelling in sports they can gain both visibility and a measure of respect” (p. 89). Surely, drag races and drifting events can be considered as an amateur branch of motorsports. However, even though many of the car enthusiasts wanted me to do something to get the local government build a racing track on which they can enjoy themselves freed from the pressure of the police, motorsports do not matter for them at all given the fact that they are not interested in any kind of institutionalized motorsports, nor the audience of it. Nevertheless, the *piyasa* is the site of redemption and affirmation for the car enthusiast young men from the urban fringes of Ankara as sports is for the similarly unprivileged and stereotyped young black men of USA. However, here must be stressed is that *piyasa* is not a uniform space which is consisted of different groups of men from different positions in the social realm that draw exclusive moral boundaries to authenticate themselves while talking about themselves, and the other car enthusiasts.

### 3.2. The Other Men and the Other Cars

All has been said, my interest is to map out the connections between these two folds of car culture, identify the interrelatedness of them and inquiring how despised, mocked, unprivileged young men from the urban fringes of Ankara make meanings, construct and assert their masculine identities and negotiate their constraints because of their unfavorable position in access to financial, spatial and gendered resources. In this sense, this chapter will provide an understanding of how urban poor young men differentiate themselves from the other car enthusiasts with a stress on the class inequalities and different masculinities they perform through the car related activities. *Modifiyecis* youth primarily employ two strategies to authenticate their masculine identity and the cars are at the very core of these strategies. The car enthusiasts with easier access to resources are belittled for being feminine, sissy or immature boys. The car enthusiasts from the same strata with them but primarily focusing on the appearance of the car in the customization are again belittled but for failing to comply with the modesty ideal of manhood. The concept of modesty is used here to stress the shared implication of the concepts of *mertlik*, *ağrlık*, *delikanlılık* and *yiğitlik* which are almost synonyms of manliness in Turkish concept. All these concepts imply a balance between the two forms of exorbitance: A balance between cowardice and venturesome bravery; cheerfulness and grumpiness; aggressiveness and discreetness; judiciousness and relentlessness. More importantly, the balance is not achieved through avoiding two opposites. Rather, it is achieved through having the capacity to resort to either ends when needed. In other words, a man should be *mert*, *yiğit*, *delikanlı* or *ağır* (all these concepts almost mean the same personality traits), that is to say that he should remain modest; however, he should go aggressive or reasonable, cheerful or serious when needed.

*Modifiyecis*, let alone being a full-fledged, objectively existing coherent community, do not form contrasting group from the other men, especially from the men of the same age, in terms of their neither their passion for cars nor other values which are

considered to be primary constituents of masculine identities. Rather, as all forms of identity, masculine identity is constructed through the Other. And the groups are established through the construction of the Other as de Beauvoir stated:

Otherness is a fundamental category of human thought. Thus it is that no group ever sets itself up as the One without at once setting up the Other over against itself.

(1956[1953]: 16)

The dichotomy between the Self, and the Other is built up being so natural that they are taken to be natural and for granted quite often in everyday life, especially in the case of man and woman where social and biological mix into one another. However, identity is a social construct and represents a hierarchical social order in which definite groups are appointed to a higher status in their relations with the other groups. In this sense, if power is determined by the access to resources to reproduce social meanings and values through the control over the objects, texts, symbols and memories, then the identity is a site of power plays. In terms of gender, we live in a patriarchal world, that is to say the masculine subject makes the world, as de Beauvoir (1956[1953]) put “thus humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being. [...] She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute – she is the Other.” (pp. 15-6). However, no man is almighty when considered the gender is not the only site of identity that determines the power of its bearers. In other words, men construct the other men as the Other in their quest for constructing and asserting masculine identity as well as negotiating the power. The *demasculanization* of other races, ethnicities and men from other classes directly reveals this strategy of crafting the Subject through making of the Other.

The relationship between objects – the automobile in this case – and the subjects is as equally constitutive as the intersubjective relationships in this quest. Blurring the

boundaries between objects, and subjects, and reformulating them as things and persons, “persons make and use things and ... things make persons” stated Tilley (2006: 4). This dualistic process takes place through the humility of things, a characteristic of the things as his early collaborator Miller (1987) coined informed with Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* which he defines as “systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations” (1990: 53). For Miller, in line with Bourdieu’s notion of *habitus*, things are objectifications of the practices and representations (of the culture, as I would put), and at the very same time, being omnipresent, and invisible to the people, these objectifications generate dispositions, and practices, thus, the persons (Miller, 1987: 100-108). Furthermore, in his conceptualization of gender as *habitus* and masculine domination as symbolic domination, Bourdieu brings up the “paradox of *doxa* – the fact that ... the established order, with its the established order, with its relations of domination, its rights and prerogatives, privileges and injustices, ultimately perpetuates itself so easily apart from a few historical accidents and that the most intolerable conditions of existence can so often be perceived as acceptable and even natural” (2001: 1).

This paradoxical characteristic of *doxa* stems from a circular causality as people socially construct “things”, then ignore their ‘constructedness’ and see them as natural and inflict that naturalness to the social life back again (p. 7-11). The later works on gender informed by Bourdieu enables to conceptualize the things as the gendered symbolic capitals (Anderson, 2005; de Visser et al., 2009; de Visser and McDonnell, 2013). If the symbolic capital is an important source of power and authority as it consists of one’s knowledge, experience and social connections that help an individual to access resources; masculine capital is the source of masculine domination that individuals raise through the making and using of gendered things as well as embodiment of the discourses on ideals about masculinity. In this sense,



automobile participates in social relations as a resource for masculine capital. Starting with the assumption of a gendered characteristic of the automobile might seem contradictory the method I employ and it is a fact that the automobile might have different gender identities in different gender context. However, as studies have shown (Köse, 2014; Kalfa et al, 2009) automobile is a masculine object primarily because it is an element of public sphere, and due to the function of it, it cannot exist in *mahrem* (private) spaces.

Having put that identity construction is always carried out by the relationships between the Other, and the things, and that automobile is a resource for the creation of masculine domination and masculine domination is not only inflicted on women but also on the Other men, now I will explore the social space in which the joyriding and car tuning activities are carried out and locate the *modifiyeci* men in this space through an inquiry of their ‘identity talks’ with an emphasis on how they deface and challenge the masculine identities of other men in their relationships with their cars.

### **3.2.1. What *Modifiyecis* Are Not**

Faruk is a middle aged men owning a car paint shop. His shop can do a very distinct painting technique which is called “chrome painting”, which can be applied to any surface, with any color, and makes the painted object shine like made of chrome. It is a cheaper substitute of chrome plating as well as gold and silver plating depending on the color of the paint. I was introduced to him by a sculptor I know who collaborated with Faruk to develop this technique from scratch while he was trying to find out a cheaper solution to give one of his artworks to look like made of gold. Thanks to this collaboration, Faruk’s shop became one of the only two car paint shops that can apply this technique in Ankara. Even though he broke the monopoly of the other shop, and charged less for that technique, it is still an expensive technique. Because of that fact, rather than painting the whole body of a car, he and his workers paint relatively small pieces such as wheels, mirrors, grilles, door

handles and so on. I thought it might be a good idea to know him so that he could introduce me to his clients, who were, I supposed then, *modifiyecis*. The first surprise came when he asked if I needed *mekanikçi* or *kaportacı*. *Mekanikçi* refers to the *modifiyecis* who alter the mechanical components of the automobile, while *kaportacı* refers to the ones who alter the look of the body of the automobile. My answer was that it does not make any difference for me. Even though these two practices are quite mixed with one another, during my field research, I saw that there are certain boundaries between the practitioners of the two alterations.

After we knew one another, and Faruk agreed to introduce me to his clients, I got a call from Faruk saying that a client of his will come to the shop a few days later, so he can introduce me to him. I went to his shop a little bit earlier, and had a small chat about *modifiye* in his office. Despite having a low level of education, now he owns his own business, and earns quite well from the profession he started as a footboy. Thinking that my research is about human psychology, he says that “Let me tell you. These [*modifiyecis*] are psychopaths. They are schizophrenics. All of them are mental. Would a man who is right in the mind do these things – threatening the lives of people’s kids, the properties?” I ask him why he thinks so, and he replies “First of all, [*modifiye* is] an insult to the engineer who made that car. The man thinks about the weight of the car, the power of the engine, and makes a brake according to them. This car for example [shows his car parked in front of the office through the glass wall]. This car weighs about 1600-1700 kilograms, let’s call it one and a half ton. Its engine is two liters, it produces power according to it. What happens if you remove its hood, bumpers, and mount a hood, a bumper made of fiberglass? Its bumper is made of polyester, but, the men calculate its thickness, flexibility. Everything has a measure for it [my emphasis]. What do these [*modifiyecis*] do? They get a fiberglass hood in Şaşmaz<sup>11</sup> and what? ‘My car has become lighter, now, it goes faster’. Okay, what about the brakes? These brakes are

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<sup>11</sup> An industrial zone where automobile repair shops are concentrated on.

not made for you speeding 180 [km/h]. Then come the accidents. The problem is – let them kill themselves, they take the lives of people’s children. If I were a – if I were in charge, had an authority, I would ban them from the traffic. Let them fucking go to tracks, kill themselves there, not the innocent people.” While we talk about the absence of a race track in Ankara, through the glass wall of the shop, I see a hatchback Opel Corsa coming – It has a very distinctive matte blue color. In the car is the client we were waiting for. Faruk tells that it was coated with colored protective film instead of painting, and the owner of the car was getting chrome plated the door handles, running boards, mirrors, exhaust pipe muffler, and bumpers one at a time, because of the price. A tall, and very slim young man, wearing a suit and necktie got off the car. Faruk welcomes him first, and introduces me to him. I mention about my research, and he says even though he would be glad to participate, he might not be one of the people I was looking for, because he was not a *modifiyeci*. While his car stands before us with all its vivid-yet-matte blue coating, and darkened windows, I could not help myself to say “But you are modifying your car”. Then he corrected me: What he do was not *modifiye* but tuning a little bit. He was doing tuning for pleasure, enjoyment, not for going rampant on the streets, disturbing the others.

### **3.2.2. Not *Tuningçis***

While the other car enthusiast men differentiate themselves discursively from *modifiyecis* through defining them as mentally ill, rampant, immoderate, *modifiyecis* put the other car enthusiasts into two broad categories: *Tuningçis*, and *etiketçis*. *Tuningçis* carry out the very similar practices with *modifiyecis* – altering the mechanical parts for performance, and sound, altering the look of the car, personalization with small accessories, attending street races. The only difference is that they do them with more costly automobiles. A few months before Çağrı went to do his military service, we were drinking tea in a coffeehouse and talk about the cars with Çağrı, Özkan, and Alper, and Çağrı asked me when I am buying the car.

His choice of words was very peculiar. He did not ask if I will buy a car, or which car I would like to buy – a frequent topic in the conversations of my informants. However, he asked me when I will buy the car – the definite car. Having never thought of owning a car, my response was “Which car?” He constructed the sentence as if owning a car was the most natural thing on earth, and surely I was going to buy a car. He repeated his question, and I murmured some stuff saying that I was planning to do a PhD, also there is a military service I had to do, so I did not know when I will buy the car. Then Çağrı said “After the military service, I will buy a (Volkswagen) Polo, or maybe a Golf if I can find a clean, an affordable one. I will do tuning then. I will buy rim wheels, with all thin rims, plus thin sidewall tires.” I tell them that I still could not get the difference between the tuning and *modifiye*. Özkan intervenes “You know what tuning is – you buy a car yourself, drive it all clean. You just do add somethings for your pleasure. You darken the windows for example. What happens then? The air conditioner works more efficient. It does not have to be – I mean, only the outside. You might want to change gears quickly. Then what would you do? You take your car to a service, get your clutch cable adjusted, and make it couple [at a] higher [position of the clutch pedal]. How can I put it? It is for rather the people from the upper stratum. Take yourself for example. Would you dress from Dejure [an affordable clothing company]? You go, buy from somewhere else, from Levi’s. You would throw it away once it is worn out. We, the people from a bit lower stratum, dress from Dejure, ESV [another affordable clothing company]. Once it is worn out, we throw it away, too – but, it is cheaper. A man from a much higher strata, goes and wears, I do not know, Armani Jeans, Gucci, whatnot. A man from a much lower strata, dresses from İtfaiye Square, put patches once it is worn out, and torn” Çağrı adds “That is to say, you do little adjustments only, do not mess with the dirt and rust of the car”. There is no need for major adjustments, according to Özkan and Çağrı, since *tuningçis* drive already good performance, and new cars, they do not make major alterations on the mechanics of the car.

While the people whom *modifiyecis* call *tuningçi* accuses *modifiyecis* going rampant, *modifiyecis* denigrate them for being untalented drivers, parasites living on their families wealth, and pretentious boys driving fancy cars to impress women. One night Mert, Ömer, Emre, and I went to the drag races at Yuva village. It was already crowded enough for races to start when we arrived the improvised racing track which is contained a part of Ankara orbital motorway, a connection road which is a wide street that connects orbital motorway to residential areas, and two other asphalt paved but unmaintained, and narrow streets. On the two sides of the connection road were parked cars and *modifiyeci* youth either as audience or as participants of the races. We parked the cars, stood by them, and had conversations, and drinks, in other words spent time until the races start. Then, a Ford Focus ran through the gap between the people on the each side of the road. That is a movement to display one's car to attract opponents. As the Ford Focus passed by us, with dissatisfied expressions, Mert, and Ömer said "Softwared", which suggests the performance of the car is increased with changes on the software of the car. I asked them how they could understand. While Ömer was informing me saying that it is possible to increase the performance of the diesel engines; however, then the exhaust fume of the car becomes darker, Mert shouted "Tuning has been invented, *mertlik* has been degenerated, cousin!" While saying cousin, he was addressing me as he often calls me. The point here is that he transformed the proverb "Rifle has been invented, *mertlik* has been degenerated" to dare the other *modifiyecis* there. *Mertlik*, or being *mert*, is considered to be a virtue for men, and only for men, in Turkish society, which is hardly translatable to English. A *mert* man is honest and upfront; brave, courageous and nice; hardworking, honorable. Turkish Language Society, a state agency, defines *mertlik* with another untranslatable concept "*yiğitlik*, manliness". Encyclopedia of Islam directs to *şecaat* when looked for *yiğitlik*, describes *şecaat* as "is a state of anger that has been moderated through the submission to reason, and sometimes refers to the middle between aggressiveness, and cowardice; sometimes refers the antonym of cowardice", and according to the

same article, it is one of the four fundamental virtues along with reason, chastity, and justice, and the most *yiğit* person ever was Prophet Muhammed (Çağrıçı, 2010: 402-4). Obviously, *tuningçis* are considered to be not brave enough to be a real, *mert*, *yiğit* men to race on the tracks with real *modifiye* cars. When considered the fact that, the extra horsepower gained through the change of the software is named as “*haram horse [power]*” by *modifiyecis*, it is possible to say that in the boundary between *modifiye* and tuning operates on an understanding of being a real man which has been delineated by religion, but it is not limited by religion only.

In the imagery of *modifiyecis*, *tuningçis* and other car enthusiasts who drive newer, and more expensive automobiles are young men living off of their parents. They are described as university students sometimes – most of time private university, sometimes as working in their fathers’ company, or running a business their fathers started up for them. They go to the fancy bars, and *pavyons* by their cars, spend the money they did not deserve in the first place. When still struggling to grasp who *tuningçis* are, I ask Ramazan about them, and he says “Do you know who *tuningçis* are? Probably, there are *tuningçis* at your university, too. Their fathers buy a car for them. And these [*tuningçis*] pimp it a little. The purpose is to be different. I mean, ‘everyone has a [Seat] Leon’ says the man, ‘mine shall be different’. Then he goes, let’s say, installs a spoiler, darkens the windows, and all, then hangs around, passes before the bars, cafés playing music out loud. I mean, who we call *tuningçi* is the person who beautifies his car according to his taste.” His statement reminds me the men who slowly cruise before the bar I and my friends, and I ask “Then, does he not attend to drift [events], races? I mean, you said he only beautifies, does not mess with the mechanics and all”. “Some of them do. I mean, he owns a car whose performance is already decent, I mean, in its stock condition – these types come to the race. They do not come to the drift [events] because of the front wheel drive thing, you know. Do you know what they do? Either, they go to bars, *pavyons*, drink a few glasses, then come to Kuzey Yıldızı. They watch people in their cars, drinking

at the same time. Plus, they always hang around by two cars – not three, not one, always two. They do not race with the people there, only two of them – they race against each other, they do not regard us. They race against each other, then park their cars, take pictures, upload the pictures to Facebook, Instagram. They show off to the girls, and women ‘Do you see how I race?’ You see these types everywhere, they show off their cars everywhere.”

According to *modifiyecis*, *tuningçis*’ is not a passion for cars, cars are only instrumental for them to impress other people and girls primarily. However, *modifiye* is an illness and *modifiyecis* are ill, as *modifiyecis* put. Portrait of the people generalized as *tuningçi* as drawn by *modifiyecis* is somewhere between feminine and immature boys: They chew gums like “bitches”, they upload selfies with their cars like the whores do with their new bags, they look down on *modifiyecis* when they win the races so much so that they cannot get off their cars because of the fear of being beaten, they make up excuses and put the blame on their cars like children when they lose. On the other hand, as Çağrı’s plans to do tuning after his military service suggests, the statements which despise *tuningçis* are followed by a correction saying that there are nice men who do tuning in a well-behaved, modest way, in other words, who do not show off. Moreover, tuning can be a well-regarded practice after a certain age, when they are old enough to drift in empty squares, and race on the motorways in the outskirts of the city. The connection he makes between the military service, and going modest in terms of car tuning, and driving is also significant when considered the mandatory military service, being a drastic constituent of the masculine identities in Turkish society, demarcates the man from a boy (Selek, 2014[2008]; Sünbuloğlu, 2013; Sancar, 2013[2008]; Altınay, 2004; Sinclair-Webb, 2000), thus, real men should behave.

### 3.2.3. Not *Etiketçis*

*Etiketçis* are the other group who primarily alter the look of their cars and despised by *modifiyecis* for being obsessive with the look of the car instead of its performance. The term *etiketçi* roughly translate as “tagger”, and how the word is originated is a bit vague. “To become an *etiket* (tag)” in slang widely means to be the subject of the gossips, which is not necessarily negative, sometimes it is a source of honor. In drugs jargon, it also means to be regarded as a usual suspect by the police because of one’s criminal records. On the other hand, in the vernacular of *modifiyecis*, an *etiketçi* is a car enthusiast who ornaments his car with stickers (which also translates as *etiket*), and other eye catching ornaments. In this sense, it is a bit vague to tell if they are named this way because they use stickers to ornament their cars or because they are blamed for showing off by the look of their cars. The term *etiketçi* embraces the both reasons, and it makes sense according to the context in which it is used. The curious thing is that even though *modifiyecis* of Ankara use it in a pejorative way, when I searched *etiketçi* on the Internet, I saw that there are people in other cities who embrace the *etiketçi* identity and proudly display their cars.

When I first met Taner, some parts of his all black Tofaş Kartal, such as door handles, mirrors, a part of grilles, brake drums and suspension springs were coated with a material with fluorescent orange color to it. After a few weeks, he peeled the coating saying that “It became like a car of gypsies. It looks way better now - slicker.” With an arch smile on his face, a colleague of him tells Taner to tell me the truth. While Taner scolding him back saying there is no truth, the only truth is his car looked bad, he went too far, his colleague tells me someone called his car an *etiketçi* car.



In a drifting event next to Osmanlı Stadium<sup>12</sup> at Yenikent, Sincan, of which I was the event photographer, I was going to take pictures of Murat and the car he jointly uses with his big brother Firat. Before going posing; however, he wanted to dust the car off since the fume of burnt out tires of the drifting cars cause tremendous dust. He opened the trunk and inside the trunk lid was full of stickers. I could not hide my surprise when confronted with so many stickers hidden under the trunk lid. With a bit shy face, Murat murmured that his big brother does not allow him to put the stickers on the visible parts of the car. After a small session of photoshoot, while sharing cigarettes with Firat, watching the drifting cars, I ask Firat why he does not let his brother to put stickers on the body of the car. He says that he likes a car all slick, there is no room for any excess. However, if he allowed his brother, he would do all nasty things; he would cruise in their neighborhood turning off the exhaust silencer, playing music out loud, and put stickers everywhere on the car, stickers of his name, Playboy bunny, and such kind of other nasty stuff, and turn it into an *etiketçi* car. According to his brother, since Murat himself did not pay for the car and its maintenance, he was using it roughly as uncivilized men drive their cars.

Whether or not flamboyant are their cars, the men who drives cars which have a souped-up look but poor performance, and who drives aggressively in the residential zones are also labeled as *etiketçi*. In an ordinary day, while I, Mert, and Tanju were hanging around before Mert's barbershop, an all-black BMW E30 with a huge spoiler on its tail passed through the street with the noise of its revved up engine and exhaust, then turned right to a street skidding the tail of the car. After some remarks of discomfort by Tanju and Mert, Mert turned to me and said "Cousin, you were asking me about the groups, right? That is [the car passed just before] the *etiketçi*. The car screams and screams, but do not roll", Tanju adds "There is the sound, but not the image", then corrects it "That does not have neither the image, nor the sound

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<sup>12</sup> Named after the Osmanlıspor (Ottomansport) Football Club, a football club closely related to municipality.

though!”), implying the sound of the car did not indicate a powerful engine, it was only the noise of revved up engine and the exhaust with a by-passed silencer. “Nevertheless, the guy in it thinks he has the best car. He does not even fix the broken tail light but shows off in the middle of neighborhood like the kids who steal their fathers’ cars!” adds Mert.

### **3.3. Negotiating Masculinity through Customization and Joyriding**

What makes *modifiyecis* to seem like a coherent group for the larger public can be understood with Gürbilek’s definition of *züppe* (2012[2001]: 105). Often translated to English as snob, *züppe* has different connotations in Turkish language. Gürbilek states that being a *züppe* is always defined in terms of extremeness, “ a *züppe* is not the pretender actually, he/she is the one who extremely pretend; he/she is not the borrower, but he/she borrows extremely; he/she is not the one who desires someone else’s desires, but the one who exaggerates that desire [my translation]”. From this perspective, the denigration of the *züppe* is a strategy to authenticate oneself. In the eyes of the *tuningçis*, and general public, what makes *modifiyecis* a category is this extremism – extremely loud exhausts of their cars, extremely salient look of their cars, extremely involvement in an object of consumption. While *yiğitlik* is a personality trait and used as the synonym of manliness, it refers to capacity to moderate anger with reason, the accusation of being rampant, extreme is an attack on the *modifiyeci* youth for failing to achieve that in between point, and move away from the reason. Connell (2005[1995]) has illustrated that there are hierarchically ordered masculinities which varies between and in the classes according to their access to the resources. The hierarchical order between the classes are reflected on the different types of masculinities in the groups, states Pyke:

Class-based masculinities provide men with different mechanisms of interpersonal power that, when practiced, (re)constitute and validate dominant and subordinate masculinities.

(1996: 527-8)

Then, the *piyasa* becomes a site for the contest for hegemony, if Connell's terms are used. Conceptualizing nature as "the notion of human consciousness", Ortner (1972) argued that culture "asserts itself to be not only distinct from but superior to nature, and that sense of distinctiveness and superiority rests precisely on the ability to transform – to 'socialize' and 'culturalize' – nature" (p. 11), and from the broad equation between the male and the culture, and between the female and culture stems the gendered domination. In other words, as the concept of *mertlik* suggests, the man is the one who has mental capabilities and the ones who fail to have them are considered to fail being a man thus pushed to the realm of nature, next to the women. The accusation for being on the anger side rather than the reason side can be considered as a strategy for asserting the domination by *tuningçis*, i.e. car enthusiast middle class young men. Here must be stressed is the class differences between the *tuningçis* and *modifiyecis*. The portrayal of an imagined *tuningçi* always refers to the social practices associated with middle classes and their easier access to consumption goods so much so that Özkan directly uses the word *strata* and hierarchically order the *stratum* according to their consumption power. In this context, middle class car enthusiasts who correspond to *tuningçi* in the imagery of financially disadvantaged and stereotyped young men who embrace *modifiyeci* identity, discursively push *modifiyecis* into the realm of nature by claiming that their reason is weak to moderate their emotional responses.

On the other hand, *modifiyecis* draw a boundary between themselves and the middle class men through attaching effeminate traits to them, as well as accusing them to fail the expectations to be economically independent. In their study on the working class men in Ontario with a focus on the relationship between industrial insecurity during the deindustrialization, and masculine identities, Dunk and Bartol (2005) states that the blue collar men whose masculinity is constructed on being the breadwinner tends to value manual labor over the mental labor as a strategy to defend their position in job market and in family (p. 37). The young men who

embrace *modifiyeci* identity are primarily manual laborers with poor educational backgrounds. In this context, putting stress on their capability to carry out complex mechanical alterations in contrast to an imagined community they call *tuningçi* to refer other car enthusiast young men from relatively privileged groups in terms of access to financial resources, as well as recognition by the larger public, in *modifiyecis* “identity talk” displays a similar strategy to defend, and as-assert their masculine identities. Besides, Kimmel (2005) states that self-made manhood, and marketplace manhood are the most pervasive, and often amalgamated, archetypes of manliness in capitalist societies. A man has to assert, and prove his masculinity, and on-ce it is proven, it becomes subject to questioning, and challenges, this is why Sancar (2013[2008]) described it as an “impossible power”. With a historical perspective, Kimmel states that with the development of capitalism, the foundations of aristocratic patriarchy slipped away, and the bourgeois men who do not come from the noble descent set the new norm for being a man on the basis of success, and competitiveness in the marketplace, and moreover, reaching high levels of economic success despite starting from lower levels with little inheritance (2005: 28-9). In this sense, it is not a coinciden-ce to name the non-physical space consisted of men, cars, and built environment as *piyasa*: It is an objective marketplace where the cars are displayed, bought, and sold. Moreover, it is a symbolic marketplace in which the ones who accumulated the more capital with less inheritance, and who properly display his capital publicly in accordance with the expectation that requires a man to be modest, approximates the loci of power. In this contest for approximation to the loci of power, *modifiyecis*, adopt a strategy, at a discursive and a practical level, to defend their masculine identity against the ones who start with an initial sum of capital thanks to their class position. In that strategy, they demasculinize the car related practices of them buy arguing that they do not mechanically alter their cars since it requires manual labor; yet, they spend the money, which is not made by themselves but inherited, on the appearance of their cars like the women obses-sed with their appearance, if not sluts.

On the other hand, against the ones who start the contest for approximation to the loci of power with the similar amounts of capitals, namely the *etiketçis* are attacked by the very similar grounds, i.e. obsession with the appearance of their cars which is considered to be an effeminate trait. Furthermore, as larger public, and more privileged car enthusiast do, *modifiyecis* accuse them to fail to be modest, to lack reason to curb their aggressiveness in their endeavors to display their masculine capitals (their cars), and to comply with the self-made, hardworking man myth through cutting the corners to display their masculine capitals.

In other words, in their construction of identities, *modifiyecis*, as other car enthusiast men do, employ a very old strategy to put masculine and feminine in two binary, oppositional poles, deeming the practices, tastes, moralities, and objects that deviate from their understanding of proper, the correct way of being man as non-masculine, feminine. In the hands of car enthusiast youth, cars become the site of contestation over appropriate ways of being a man. Put another way, there is not a singular hegemonic masculinity all the car enthusiasts in the *piyasa* strive to. Rather, the multiple ideals about being a man in written in and read from the look of and use of the cars. These varying ideals are asserted and contested through the cars in the *piyasa*.

Than the question is, what is the correct way of being a man for *modifiyeci* youth? What is the relationship between manliness, automobile, and automobile related activities of joyriding, and car tuning? Up to now, the presented is the social space delineated by car tuning and joyriding activities through which the *piyasa* is created, and the Other *modifiyecis* are demasculinized to construct their own identities. The market-*piyasa* connection is important here. The criteria of success in *piyasa* directly overlaps with the masculinity ideals of working class men which are related with the success in manual labour market. From now on, the focus will be on the mutual construction of the masculine identities and the car as an object. And

furthermore, the kinship relations, sexuality and national identities will be investigated since they strongly influence this mutual construction process.

## CHAPTER IV

### PERFORMING MASCULINITY WITH CARS: *MODİFİYE* AND JOYRIDING

If the *piyasa* is the non-physical space that is consisted of car enthusiast young men, their cars and the built environment, and delineated by the men's contest to accumulate masculine capitals and climb the ladder of hegemony, the question how they make the inanimate automobiles into a symbolic capital that dualistically transform boys into men remains unaddressed. From a cultural perspective, Edley and Wetherall stress that masculinity is established through the culturally shared practices, and perception of "what it means to be a man: what one looks like, how one should behave and so forth" (1996: 106). Then, a cultural approach to masculinity necessitates the inquiry of how different masculinities are practiced in different social situations along with the inquiry of how practices are "established, perpetuated, and changed" in different communities (p. 71). For this end, I will explore the car related activities of loosely organized *modifiyeci* community from the urban fringes of Ankara, first, and connect those practices with the masculine identity they perform with their cars. Then, in order to locate the *modifiyeci* masculinity in the social settings they live in, I will explore how they experience being an urban poor man.

#### 4.1. Competitive Driving

At a racing night on the highway nearby Yuva village on the North West of Ankara, car enthusiasts were either drag racing over a short distance or track racing during which they drive around a couple of streets and turn back to the bridge which is also

the starting point. A silver BMW E36 compact and a Peugeot 106 took their places on the starting point for a *try out* – the word “race” is never used on races, they always try their cars out against the other cars, to see which car is better. Of course this is in name only, they are proper and real races. As they started for a track race, the humble Peugeot 106 took the lead, they disappeared and while passing below the bridge, Peugeot 106 was still leading while BMW E36 was following it from about two or three meters back. They disappeared in the dark of the night, turned back to the start-finish place on the bridge as Peugeot 106 was about a ten meters ahead of BMW E36 and the honking cars marked the victory of Peugeot 106. While it was an ordinary race, the driver of the BMW got off his car, fiercely slammed the door and started beating his chest, jumping and hitting the car as he shouted out loud that the car did not “go” despite his efforts. Initially, anyone there went silent, the only thing I heard was the mix of the songs from the speakers of the parked cars of audience – it was a minute of bafflement. Then the audience started to shout some remarks at him while his friends rushed to calm him down. While I was amazedly watching the all the things that were going on, Kadri and Soner were chuckling, ridiculing and shouting curses at the defeated driver. According to Kadri and Soner, he should not have try his car out if he cannot embrace losing, he had better play racing games on his phone if he wants to win every time and if he cannot overtake the other guy, it is because of his unskillful driving, he should not put the blame on the car. Kadri and Soner were not the only ones ridiculing him out loud, almost every other groups of friends were chuckling and making funny remarks about him so much so that he and his friends left the venue eventually.

The sports might be one of the most discussed topic of masculinity studies which conceptualize the organized sports as a field on which men are expected to carry out physical practices that displays the skill, strength and wit, and reproduce myths about masculinities (Connell, 2008; Bramham, 2003; Howson, 2004; Messner, 2002; McKay, Messner, and Sabo, 2000). The street racing practices of *modifyecis*



are not full-fledged sporting organizations; however, similar processes go on in this field as well. In the context of physical education, Connell (2008) stresses that competitive sports in the curriculum are practices that reproduce hegemonic masculinities through the subordination of the peers. Crucial here is the understanding of “win or lose” in physical and mental activities. Winning and losing designates who is more skillful, wittier, more willing to take risks, or vice versa. Since these traits are valued in many societies, partly due to institutionalized sports, a hierarchy between men is created according to their success to comply with these values. However, the display of having these traits and the ways to measure them changes from context to context. Street racing does not require a serious physical strength. If courage, wit and willingness to take risk are displayed here, then why cannot Risk, the board game, be the arena instead of car races?

The answer could have been the motorsports institution if only *modifiyeci* youth were into the motorsports but they are not. A more grounded answer can be the overlap of the ideology of car and the masculinities, and the becoming of a masculine capital of the car in that overlap. Following Marx’s theory of alienation, many authors (Gorz, 1980; Lefebvre, 1971a) hold an understanding of automobile as an object that bears the mode of production in itself and being a part of everyday life and urban landscape, it inflicts that mode of production on the society. It should be noted that automobile as a commodity is one of the connection points between the everyday practices and the economic infrastructure which are always embedded in one another as masculine identity and economic infrastructure are embedded in one another. In this context, ownership of a car as a private property, and mobility in the public space are the processes that make car race an arena for display of virility, daring, courage and wit which are constituents of masculine identities.

There is another point that needs to be elaborated. As I mentioned earlier, the *modifiyeci* men do not *race* against one another but *try their cars out*. Obviously, they race, yet at the verbal level, this practice is coined as trying. Coining the race

as a try out exports the responsibility to the car at a verbal level, thus making the racer less challenging and less assertive about the victory. At the first sight, this is a paradoxical statement when considered the race cars are built by the racer himself, so he should take the responsibility. However, the *modifiyeci* youth never knows what they are doing on their cars. In other words, the car is too complicated for one to fine tune in the best way on his own with the short resources and knowledge. And more importantly, using the verb try out is a way to soften the sharp edges in the display of their masculinities. Talking about the races, Kadri says:

This thing is like fighting. Do you count the punches in a fight? You don't. The important thing is to dare – you have to have the bollocks. Otherwise – these things cannot be done through eating sunflower seeds on the side [of the road]. If you say 'I have a car', then you must show it on the road, you should not wait on the side by your car. *Haa*, if you say you do not trust your car – or what I know, the man came there by a superbly made car with turbo charger, and NOS, Vorex exhaust, you would say 'I had better stay there'. But, you watch, see a car that is a peer of yours, you say 'Shall we give it a try?' You win, you lose, it is another point but... I mean, you try your car out, [you see] if it takes the gas on time, if you can change the gears properly, or – you see, you get to know your car better. 'What happens if I change the gear while the clutch pedal was pressed to the half' for example.

Kadri's words resonates the statement "You win, you lose, this is how it is" I heard from each one of the *modifiyecis* I have ever talked despite the fact that they get upset and tried to refrain expressing that feeling after each time they lost and obviously cheered up after the each victory. Using the word "try out" to name a real race, defacing it as a trial, arguing that the joy, the experience, getting to know car better are the ways to deal with temporary fail to comply with masculinity ideals of competitiveness and willingness to take risk. Kadri's analogy between racing and fighting, which was also made by other *modifiyecis* is quite solid: On the contest to climb up the ladder of hegemony, the men face with the fact that it is not always possible to reach to the top through uppercuts only and guard is a technique for staying on the ring. In this sense, the expression of trying out is a defensive strategy

at a discursive level to deface the loss which is an attack on their claims to be successful at being a man.

#### **4.2. Expressiveness of the Car**

Cars are expressive goods, and used in expressive ways to communicate specific messages. The way a car is engineered, designed, and promoted in the media makes it loaded with meanings, yet the consumers – or the appropriators (the whole society in the case of automobile since it is publicly consumed and almost omnipresent in public spaces of modern urban) – attach meanings to it through the use of it and assimilation of its image. Redshaw makes an analogy between the human body and the car body, and asserts that the bodies of different cars are perceived to convey different messages – big cars are seen as having a high acceleration power and as being masculine, while Asian makes are seen as sporty and as being a young man in American context (2008: 37-42). Scharff's seminal work on the vague gender of automobile stresses that automobile could have been an empowering object for the woman as it brought them a mobility in the public sphere in the early days of the automobile technology; however, the loss of electric car against the internal combustion engine in the forthcoming days took that public mobility from women since the running of early internal combustion engines needed a manual power and also caused all dirt of fumes and grease, thus the bourgeois men became the master of the automobile, the working class men became the chauffeur and became the automobile masculine (1999: 55-63). In this sense, it may be argued that the masculine domination made the automob-ile exclusive to the men. Yet, we already know that masculinity is not singular, invariable, and constant over time and locality. As the myths of masculinities shift, so does the masculine domination. In the context of Norway in late 1990s, Garvey (2001) clearly illustrates how rural women use automobiles to transgress the boring social environment of the country side by making use of the automobiles as a private space detached from home and domestic sphere.

Here, we need to turn back the argument that cars are expressive media. They do not solely express the meaning attached them through engineering, design and promotion processes; however, the users of automobiles make convey meanings through inflecting their identities on their metal bodies' look and "behavior". In the context of *modifiyeci* car culture, the stickers are the most vivid channels of expression. Before conducting the research, I used to found them silly and funny, yet now I see that they are meaningful in this specific car culture. A writing on the rear window of a car that reads as "If you're gonna cry, we'd better not play" or "Come on you fool" are teases stuck there for a losing opponent in a race to read. Or a sticker that reads "Don't hassle, the daddy is tired" is a statement to insult the opponent.

Beyond such cues only meaningful to the ones in the *piyasa*, some use their cars as a publicly visible billboard to directly convey their messages. Ünal's dear 'Sedat' is one of those cars that sports a huge picture of Neşet Ertaş - a folk singer - that covers the whole rear window. Actually, Ünal reports that he got it made at a poster shop. On a yet anot-her Sunday in Yenikent Asaş Stadium, while I was the event photographer. I saw a Tofaş Doğan with a Neşet Ertaş picture on the rear window and on the left of the picture written was a verse from Ertaş's mournful song he wrote after the death of his childhood love:

Is a human being nothing?  
Is it a crime to love an orphan?  
I wish we also could have fulfilled our wishes  
Is it a crime to be wretched?<sup>13</sup>

Having seen me taking the pictures of his car, he came by and asked me if I can send the pictures to me. This is how we got to know one another. After he volunteered to be an informant in the research, a further trust relationship has been developed

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<sup>13</sup> My translation. Original lyrics are "İnsanoğlu hiç mi idi? / Öksüzü sevmek güç müydü? / Biz de murat alsaydık/ Garip olmak suç mu idi?". The word *hard* in the second line of the original lyrics is mistakenly written as *crime* on Ünal's car.

among us. Then the sticker on the rear window, and the tattoo on the knuckles of his left hand that reads as “My mom”<sup>14</sup> made more sense as they were complementary elements of the sorrowful life story he reflected. He lost his mother at the age of twelve; he loved a girl but her father did not let them since Ünal’s father is a “nasty alcoholic” and got her engaged to another man; he has been working since the age of ten and had faced many cruelties in the work life as well, and so on.

Cars are analogous to prosthesis: They are bodily extensions which enhance the capabilities of human body. Driving a car is a bodily experience that enhances the capacities of human body by adding up a comparatively tremendous speed to its movement. However, this is only possible when the driver and the machine merge into a singular body as the driver start to drive, that is to say blinking the signal, checking the mirror, stepping on the clutch pedal unconsciously and reflexively. Dant (2004) names this merger “the Driver-car assemblage” that is actualized at the intersection of embodiment of the car, its parts and speed by the driver, and the gain of intentionality of the driver by the lifeless automobile (p. 65). Once the Driver-car status is actualized not only a new entity is born but also the driver perceives the car as an extension of his/her body (p. 73). “The car is the make up for men” was the sentence I most frequently heard at the beginning of the fieldwork. Despite the perception of self-adornment - including clothing and make up - as deceiving, concealing the natural, the truth, Miller’s work on Indian sari and pallu highlights (2010) that self-adornment is neither deceiving nor representing oneself yet crafting an identity with the taken for granted materials (being a married woman and a mother in *sari* and *pallu* context), enhancing the body (*pallu* being a nursing tool for the infant, the third hand of the mother holding the toddler’s hand). The car used as the body and using the sticker as a tattoo on that body in Ünal’s case can be understood by Dant’s, and Miller’s conception of enhancing the body and inscribing it with an identity. Ünal tattooed his longings for his mother and the girl he loved

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<sup>14</sup> My translation. Original text is “Anam”

on his both metal and flesh bodies that complements his tough-enough-to-be-tolerant-against-the-greatest-sorrows self-concept as the teasing remarks on the rear windows of the others' cars is a part of a self-concept delineated by being in the *piyasa*.

In the final analysis, it is true that these cases are quite singular, not all the car enthusiast men go, and put on stickers after the death of beloved ones. However, the stickers are the most vivid examples for the expressiveness of the cars. There is a common aesthetic of the *modifiye* cars which is shaped by understanding of modesty which is an important constituent of masculine identity among the *modifiyeci* youth. Here, modesty is used as a rough translation of the connotative meanings of , *yiğit*, *mert*, *delikanlı*, *ağır*. These personality traits are hardly translatable yet quite pervasive constructs of masculine identities for almost all men in Turkish context, maybe except effeminate gay men. A men should not laugh loudly, he should not be cheerful too much, must be serious, he should not whine but come up solutions,

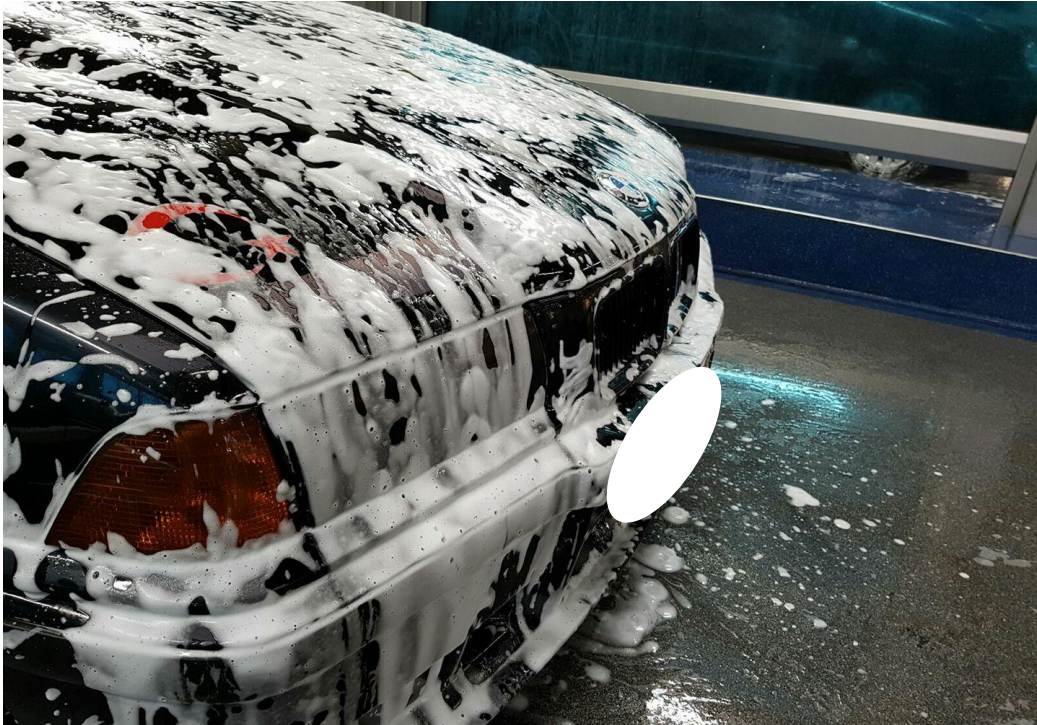


Figure 4 Car wash as a Sunday entertainment

he should not talk a lot but when he does, he should get everyone listen to his words, he should be kind but when the interlocutor does not “respond” to that kindness, he should not avoid though methods. In other words, modesty is used as the translation of the overlapping terms of *ağır*, *mert*, *yiğit*, *delikanlı* to imply traits which are not childish and effeminate. Furthermore, when the car considered as enhancement of the body which dualistically transforms the identity, such customizations of the cars point at the attempts to comply with the shared aesthetics thus being a part of the *piyasa* as well as representing oneself to the extent permitted by the shared aesthetic norms.

#### **4.2.1. A Car Like a Sword: Clean and Slick**

If the modesty which is related with the pervasive perception of being a man draws dividing boundaries in the identity talk of car enthusiast, how it is reflected on the car needs a further elaboration. In the visual alteration of a car, the most attention is paid on the clean and slick look of the car.

Cleaning the car might be the activity on which the most time spent in Mert’s barbershop. Mert cleans the car, shines the tires with a special product made for it, vacuums the upholstery, and sprays scents into it. If a client drops by, he stops cleaning and Ömer continues with where he left. If Ömer is busy with a client, Emin, the errand boy of the shop, takes the job. Sometimes Mert cleans his car more than once a day, saying that the car is parked on the street, so there are lots of dust. Once, I even witnessed that he cleaned his car in snowy weather. Firat and Murat are always cross with one another since Murat smears the dirt under his feet to the ground, smokes cigarettes in the car. Burakay is all aware of being obsessed with the cleanliness of his car, chuckling and telling that he gets his car washed at a car washer in Şaşmaz which is far away from his home, then on the way back home to Keçiören, the car gets all dirty and he slightly washes it once again. Muharrem on the other hand makes an analogy between a caring mother, and her child. “You

know, our mothers would wash us on Sundays” he says, “I wash my car on Sunday, too. First, I wash it and then I wash myself.”

On the other hand, many *modifiyecis* de-tune their cars in the winter: Installing regular wheels and tires, changing the headlight lamps, peeling off the stickers if there are any, changing the exhausts with the regular ones, reinstalling the regular suspensions to get it higher, replacing the body kit with a thinner one, and so on. This de-tuning process is carried out by two reasons. First of all, in the winter, car prices decrease and people buy the cars in this season. Thus, the majority of cars go under the biannual traffic tests in the winter season. Since most of the tuning parts are not allowed due to legal procedures, a de-tuning takes place to get around the legal procedures. The second and the more important reason is the weather conditions. Simply, in winter, cars get all dirty due to snow and rain and many *modifiyecis* cannot bother themselves with cleaning the car twice a day contrary to Mert does. In other words, it is okay to have a dirty car if it is de-tuned but the tuned car should always be clean. This attitude clearly shows that cleanliness is considered to be a *part of a modifiye car*.

The cleanliness as a condition is reflected on the design of the car. Even though they use the same word (clean) for the condition and design, in terms of design, slick might be a better interpretation than clean. The proper look of a car should be all slick – no excessive parts, no contrasting colors. Muharrem’s white BMW 3.25 E30 went through a series of alterations for this purpose. First, he painted the chrome-looking part of the grills to black to make it matching with the other parts of the grilles. Door handles, the black plastic parts on the doors and bumpers, and the body kit [the parts at the bottom of bumpers and doors] were originally black, he painted them glossy white to achieve a color uniformity. The tail lights were replaced with of a newer model, according to Muharrem which looks ‘plainer’ since the red, white and orange parts were distributed more neatly. To achieve a further slick look, he covered them with a dark gelatin that makes them look blackish when the lights are



turned off. After lowering it for a couple of centimeters, it gained a streamlined and fast look which is he proudly defined as “Now, it became – like a sword”, which interprets as thin, strong, agile and clear-cut, e.g. slick, look.

The clean and slick look is not only an attempt imitate the aerodynamic style of the sports cars but also reflection of the ideal of modest man. If a man should be reserved most of the time; however, make everyone listen to him when he talks by talking seriously, the car should be like him. It should not exert itself to the eyes of the public yet should the way driver uses the car do. The noise engine and exhaust make get people turn their heads to have a look. In this sense, the contrast between complying with the norm that requires being modest and the desire to be seen, to catch eyes on the streets is overcame by the alterations of mechanical parts.

#### **4.2.2. A Car Like an Authorized Pistol: Fast and Loud**

Önderli Oktay is a local musician, playing folk dance songs in the night clubs, and weddings. As his nickname *Önderli* suggests, he is probably living in Önder district,



*Figure 5 Tunnels are championed as they amplify the exhaust noise*

near Siteler industrial zone. And probably again, he is into the cars so he has a song named “*Vututu Yapar Ankaralı*” (The One from Ankara Does *Vututu*). *Vututu* is a mimetic word for defining the sound when an exhaust system that has a RPM-limiter makes at the higher RPMs. Many cars today come with this part, yet Tofaş models did not. However, almost all the *modifiye* Tofaş cars are installed with that part. On a drifting show, after a couple of doing doughnuts (or drawing a zero as it is called in Turkish), the driver stops to rev up the engine in order to activate the cutter that makes an intermittent noise of woo-too-too-too. In the chorus of the song he says<sup>15</sup> “Our BMW is fancy/ We drift, bro/ With a 3.25 E30/ The one from Ankara does *vututu*.”

On a Sunday before a drifting event, Özer, Ramazan and I met for going to the auto repair shop whose owner is a friend of Özer’s. Özer lives in Yıldıztepe neighborhood, Ramazan lives in nearby Doğantepe neighborhood and both of these are slums that provide the labour force for Siteler industrial zone in Northeast of the city as Önder neighborhood is. Furthermore, all these three neighborhoods are adjacent to one another. Özer got his mechanic friend to open his shop on Sunday morning, since Ramazan wanted to get his broken RPM-limiter fixed before that day’s drifting event in Siteler industrial zone, which becomes the drifting track on Sundays, and week nights for the young men working there and living in nearby neighborhoods. I took Özer’s car to the shop, while Ramazan followed us in his car. On the road, Özer mentioned about the discomfort he felt for getting the mechanic to open the shop on a Sunday morning. And I asked if the RPM-limiter is such a critical part of the car thinking that Tofaş Doğan would come with it if it were so necessary. Özer went on with saying Ramazan wanted to do *vututu*, which was already obvious. I asked about the function of the RPM-limiter besides preventing the excessive heat. He says there is no other function except doing *vututu*, and adds

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<sup>15</sup> “BMW’imiz fiyakalı/Veririz kardeş yanı/3.25 E30’la/Vututu yapar Ankaralı”

that “Plus, we bang it in the weddings and all. When we fire guns, *zarbos*<sup>16</sup> come, write a ticket, finish the wedding. So, we bang the exhausts”. Firing arms in open air weddings is a tradition which is the display of a sort of power, fearlessness and manliness.

As we dropped by the shop, after Özer had introduced me to the mechanic, having mentioned about my research, I asked the mechanic about the vivacious green Tofaş parked in front of his shop. Interrupting the mechanic, Özer said that it is not a paint job, but a colored protective gelatine, the mechanic changes the color every six months or so – whenever he got bored of the color. After that, I complemented saying that the hue of the green was very nice, and car looked good actually and Özer interrupted again, saying that “Of course. Yaşar Usta [the mechanic] is like this – He takes good care of his car, he does not disappoint his car. The car stands there just like a licensed gun, he uses it when he needs. When he is done, he cleans it, puts it back to its place.” Besides the phallic associations of the barrel of a gun and the exhaust pipe, Özer’s words reveal a much complicated situation. The noise of the revved up engine and the noise of the exhaust when RPM-limiter is activated are all attempts to be audible on the streets, to catch the attention of the fellow drivers and of the ones walking by. This attempts are more apparent in Ünal’s talk about his dear “Sedat”.

On a yet another Sunday, Mustafa was washing his car for preparing it to the *holy Sunday*, as Ünal and Mustafa jokily name Sundays since it is the their only day off on which they can enjoy themselves in Yenikent neighborhood, that is on the west end of the city, supplying the labour force for Sincan Organized Industrial Zone. While Ünal, and I were watching him wash his car, they mention a man from their workplace, telling that he spends a lot of money on cars, owns a Tofaş Murat, a cabriolet BMW E30, and recently bought a late 80s make Volkswagen Golf, and

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<sup>16</sup> Policemen in their vernacular.

makes “projects” on them, that is to say he restores them. I could not hide my surprise and said “A lot of money is spent on these things.” Ünal whiningly confirmed “Yeah, don’t ask about it. I bought ‘Sedat’ for 5,500 liras, also spent about 10,000 liras”, and he started to tell about the alterations he got done on the car:

For example, the engine was made – from scratch. I was already thinking about a change in the engine, we went to mechanic, to *Taş Otomotiv*. We said ‘*Ağabey*, we want to make such and such things. What can we do?’ [The mechanic said] ‘We can install a degreed camshaft. The pistons -, the pistons of Kartal S fit into this’. I mean, without an excessive expenditure -, regular engine -, let me put it this way. What I mean by an excessive expenditure is like this, when you gather a regular engine up, everyone in the *piyasa* says that ‘It is just a Tofaş engine, is not it? You gather it up for 750 liras, 1000 liras’. But, it is not like this. If you attempt to make a regular engine, it goes up to 1500 liras, 2000 liras. I paid 3000 liras, the flywheel has been grinded; the combustion chambers in the cylinder head have been changed, enlarged; valves has been changed, Renault Kangoo’s steel valves have been installed; Kartal S pistons have been installed, it has a ratio – I don’t know much about it but the mechanic said, he said 1/1000 or 1/10,000. I mean, it changes the combustion [fuel-air mixture] ratio, it depends on the radius of the piston and all. We installed Kartal S pistons, we installed a degreed camshaft. Now, the car has an incredible torque. Hedos [headers] exhaust has been installed – with remote control [to activate/deactivate the muffler], the open air filter has been installed. On the top of the carburetor – normally, the carburetors of Tofaş makes are wide. I have a [Fiat] Tipo carburetor, a small cap has been installed, and an open air filter has been attached to it. Now, to the car – maybe with a few adjustments, I can install a turbo [charger] now.

I did not get a half of what he said (and now I can understand merely a half of it) but obviously, the engine and the exhaust system of the car has been through a major, laborious and expensive alterations. Why would someone bother himself with such a long, and detailed process? What is the expected return on this huge investment of time, money, and mental and manual labor? Ünal’s answer was simple:

I said, it has an incredible torque, *ağabey*. It slams like crazy, runs like crazy. Think of it when I open the exhaust [deactivate the muffler] – you cannot stand by it [because of the noise].

Speed, quick acceleration, the high volume of the engine, and the exhaust system are the most valued, most desired features of a *modifiye* car. For this end, money, time, mental efforts and labour are generously spent. However, the word used to coin the making of a customized engine and the whole car as well, subtly reveals the economic rigors a *modifiyecisi* confronts during the customization process. A customized engine, or the car is always manufactured with the scrap parts of the used cars. Once Mert intended to swap his car's BMW M20 series engine with a M52 series engine, which is newer and more powerful. He could find a decent cylinder block; however, he waited about three months before he could find the matching head. A cylinder block without the matching head is like wearing only the left shoe despite having a pair of feet, that is to say even though block and the head are mechanically detachable, they make an engine only when coupled. After months without a car, since he sold his car's original engine, he could find a cylinder head. But, since it was in a poor condition, it cracked, i.e. irreparably damaged, not so long after the installation, and his adventure ended up with gathering up a M20 series engine from scratch, and selling the car afterwards.

The tires are the biggest expense item due to the burnouts, drifts, and swerving and skidding. Initially, it made me wonder how they compensate the expenditure of the tires. Then I saw that used parts of other cars play a role there as well. First of all, there is a used tire market. Tire shops sell the old tires of the cars that they install new tires to 'the tireburners', i.e. *modifiyecisi*. In fact, worn out, slick used tires are especially wanted to make the drifting possible, since they do not hold on to the asphalt. Moreover, many of the men in the *piyasa* get the used tires for free thanks to either working in the industrial zones which they have neighborhood relations with tire shops or having connections established with mechanics thanks to frequent

visits. At the same time, do-it-yourself is a quite frequently used method since the majority of the *modifiyecis* with whom I conducted the research are manual laborers and experienced about fields such as mechanics, electricity and painting. Even though they are not experts in these fields, they all have elementary to intermediate skills for carrying out minor repairs.

Finding used parts for gathering them up to make a working part, accessing to the cheaper – if not free – goods and services, using their professional skills and the materials of their workplaces for tuning the cars can be considered as *bricolage* (making do) in De Certeau's terms if the car is a masculine capital accrued, and used for climbing the ladder of domination (1984: 174-5). De Certeau builds on Levi-Strauss' conceptualization of *bricolage* as turning the raw into the cooked using the materials in hand, the materials already found in the environment for making of a myth that turns back on reality (1966: 16-36). While *bricolage* is an improvisation without an intended, solid purpose, De Certeau sees *bricolage*, the art of making do with the materials already in the hand and as a practical everyday tactic that has a political purpose – the maneuver of the weak on the grounds of the strong to find a way to subvert the strong (p. xix).

The practice of *modifiye* is far from being a resistance movement. Rather, its end products, i.e. *modifiye* cars, are the objectification of ideal of modest man. When I asked about how the “best” *modifiye* car should be, the common answer is that it is the one that catches attention by its clean and slick look, the one makes people look at it with aspiration rather than despise. It should not catch the eyes because of its vividness. However, when it proceeds on the streets, it should assert its presence, it should make people look at its power with admiration. When I asked what kind of a man women likes in order to grasp their ideals about being a man (since it is hard to get a proper answer when asked “What is the ideal man for you?”), the answers depicted a human version of the ideal modified car: A silent man in general but earns respect of the others as he does not twaddle when he speaks. Only then a woman

would fall for him. What I claim is that the visual and audial style of the car silently echoes the ideals of being a man. By this way, being the objectification of the ideals, the car is considered to add to the masculine capital of its owner. However, these ideals are shaped on the very split between the lives they actually live, and the lives they want to live. In this sense, there is a need to explore the key components of their transitory lives, which are the kinship system which has been brought from rural roots, sexuality and national identity.

#### **4.3. Imaginary Revenge on the Streets**

One of the breaking points in this study happened during my pilot research I conducted before the extended fieldwork. One of the informants attached a revanchist meaning to *modifiye* and joyriding saying that

Sometimes ... being envied also motivates you. For example, you pass by a new car. The man has spent 40,000 TL to buy it. You pass by it roaring the engine. The feeling when I see his face in the rear view mirror is what makes me enjoy modification. These (people) think that we cannot drive good looking, high performance cars. They would suffer on the buses in old days, now they expect us to suffer as they did.

Obviously, he was referring to an expression of anger, dispute or bafflement on the faces of other drivers when he recklessly overtaking with his noisy car. What made me wonder was that the creation of the Other solely based on consumption power and an imaginary past in which the Other suffered. Moreover, thinking of taking revenge from the Other on the streets, and making of the automobile as a weapon for taking the revenge directed me towards delve into the power relationships embedded in the practice of joyriding. In this sense, before delving into the power relationships in the practice of joyriding in particular, and driving in general, there is a need to explore the how being an urban poor, rural to urban migrant man is experienced in the urban fringes of Ankara.

#### 4.3.1. Fathers and Sons

After trust relationships were built between me and the key informants, what surprised me was the prevalence of the disputes between the informants and their fathers. Ünal was depicting his father as an irresponsible man who cannot take care of his family and in fact, he partly left his father's home and mostly grew up with his maternal relatives after the death of his mother. Özkan stopped talking to his father, and big brother because of a money problem and he reports they did not already get along quite well before this problem. He borrowed from his father-in-law before buying his car but he wanted to test the ones he thought closest to him. He first called his wife's sister's husband who is also a friend of Özkan's, asking for debt. He accepted. Then he called his big brother for the same reason, but he got refused. Then he called his father, he got refused once again. That was the end of the relationship. Kadri does not talk to his father, waits until midnight to go home for his father to go bed. They did not have a breaking point, but his father has never been "a father like a father" for him – he is claimed to be stone-hearted, inconsiderate, and unsympathetic. Taner depicts his father with similar lines. He did not care about home but only money. They did not have a conflicting relationship before the breaking point, because they did not have a relationship at all, Taner argues. When the electronics repair shop Taner started up went bankrupt, he reports his father did not help him in financial terms although he had a plenty of money.

Traditional father authority is based on the being the breadwinner of the household. In the families short of income, this authority is eroded. In the post-industrial societies, where manual labor loses its market value vis-à-vis service sector, Sancar states that masculinity becomes more related to consumption and leisure time activities for the under-class men and the traditional father role based on being the breadwinner cannot comply with those activities (2013[2008]: 54). In line with this argument, it is possible to argue that the disputes between the *modifiyeci* young men from the fringes and their fathers stems from the discrepancy between their different



ideals about being a man. Furthermore, since the authority of father is always related to capacity to make living for the family, the young men find their power to challenge that authority through earning their own income. In other words, economic independence is seen as a way to challenge the rule of father. This case especially become explicit when I asked in the interviews about their families' attitude towards their involvement with the cars. Especially the younger ones stressed that it is their money and their families cannot meddle in what they spend the money on. Their class position forces them to enter into job market at very young ages thus they become an equal financial source of the household. This might not be the case with middle class young men as education postpones the entrance to labor market. Thus, it can be argued that the ties with home loosens earlier for working class men. However, the morals and values about being a family and a son prevent them from total rejection against the rule of father. Thus, living in the same family and tacitly acknowledging their father's right to interfere their lives cause an ambivalence in the transitory eras between being a boy and a man in their lives. And this ambivalence is reflected as an anger towards fathers accusing them being irresponsible, unsympathetic, inconsiderate, stone-hearted, and so on.

The automobiles form a private space detached from home which is the realm of their fathers'. They provide car enthusiast young men with ability to stay away from home yet having a private space on which they can exert their control. Furthermore, the car is used as a weapon to assert car enthusiasts' manliness vis-à-vis their fathers' authorities as a car is not only a means to escape from father's realm but also a private space of car enthusiasts. In other words, the private car is not only a private space in which they can drink, spend their leisure time with friends but also a private property that car enthusiasts have a hold on. As the fatherhood is shaped by the control over the family and the sphere in which family exists, the decreasing involvement in cars after the marriage implies that car enthusiasts forgo having a

hold on cars when they have control over more valued subjects, namely family and home.

#### **4.3.2. Women and Sexuality**

It was my second visit to Mert's barbershop. Mert, Ömer and Emre were there already since it was their workplace. First Tanju dropped by, later Erhan came to the shop, then Burakay showed up. And the eleven-year-old footboy of shop at that time, Berk was there who barely spoke in that day as well as the other days until he left the job due to the eczema he got in the shop. At first, I thought Mert called all these car enthusiast men to introduce me to them. However, as the time passed, I saw that Mert's barbershop was the gathering point of the modifiyecis in the neighborhood. He parks his BMW E30 on the pavement in front of the shop, the others pull over by it. Somedays, the shop gets so crowded with the car enthusiasts that they double park on the street in front of Mert's shop.

When Tanju dropped by the shop while we were hanging in front of the shop, Mert asked him why he had not showed up for a long time. Tanju started to tell what he has been gone through: He wrecks another car while driving drunk as he also did the last month. He crashes into another car which means not only the increase in the expenses. The real problem is the guy in the other car was an officer in the army, severely injured, still in the hospital, and his family demanded a quite load of money from him not to take the case to the court, which means a higher indemnity. According to him, all these unfortunate events happened to him since he got "long-haired ones" – a term he uses to refer women – to curse at himself.

After a while, when the team gathered up and Mert and Ömer were cutting the hairs of Tanju and Erhan, Emre took a call. He got out of the shop to talk on the phone, and as we saw through the glass wall, he was very heated while talking. Then he got into Ömer's car to avoid us seeing and hearing him. Mert got into the car to calm him down. A few minutes later, first Mert and then Emre came back into the shop.

People were curious and Mert explained that he was swearing at the girl, her mother and sister. It was okay to swear at her but he should not have got the old lady into this issue. Furthermore, why was he having a quarrel with a whore in the first place? He “fucked” her, if she was causing problems, he should have gone away.

After Mert’s comments, I found myself in a subjectively very bizarre conversation. Newlywed Erhan was critical towards Emre as well, saying that “You will not make clamor. You will just beat her first, then fuck her. If you just yell and shout, she will be spoiled. You will just beat her. If you beat her first, then fuck her, she supposes you love her and beat her because of your love. You know I lived with this woman for eight months before my marriage. I would do so to her. She would come back from the work, I would beat her. Then I would fuck her. Even so, when I woke up, I would see that she put money in my pocket, and went to work”. As a response, Emre defended his face saying that he already beats the girls, even imitates the girl screaming and crying when he had beaten her before this argument and made an analogy between the cry of puppies and the girl. Tanju, who runs a *pavyon* in a nearby small town in Black Sea region, cheered up the heated environment ironically saying that “Do I not tell you not to be a whoremonger, not to live on women’s money?”, and went on with teasing Mert, arguing that Mert were upset with Emre since he swore at Mert’s mother-in-law, implying a relationship between the sister of this girl and Mert. Mert proudly says that he did not “fucked” the girl because she was all screaming and shouting words like “come on, oh yeah”. He hates such behavior in an intercourse. So he “throw her away from her top” and Ömer “fucked” her on behalf. Then teases were directed at Ömer saying that how miserable he was to “fuck” a woman Mert was fucking a few minutes ago. Despite being severely heated a few minutes ago, now Emre was all cheerful while telling how horny Ömer is, and reports an anecdote. Ömer and Emre rent a flat for a night, and Emre “brings” a girl for himself, and she brings a friend of hers for Ömer. Towards the dawn, Emre realizes that his partner is not in the bad, and some weird

noises come from the bathroom. He walks to the bathroom and sees that Ömer holds the crouching girl from her hair like holding a puppy and his partner washes the girl's womb with the shower hose stuck into her. At that point, everyone in the shop was laughing, including 11-year-old Berk. He went on saying that starving Ömer "went five times" at a night and ejaculated into her. Ömer and the other girl were trying to avoid pregnancy in this way. Having grabbed the whole attention of the friends, he started to imitate the girl walking in the shop like a stoned person would do. The second laughter came after this imitation that marks the end of his small stand-up show.

When I could not yet get over with the shock of seeing that the men who were nicely chitchatting with the woman living upstairs, and warm-heartedly joking with the kids of neighborhood passing by the shop half an hour ago yet started telling violent sexual experiences in a proud, and vivacious way, after a while from this conversation, Mert asked Tanju about Limon. Tanju said he stopped seeing him because of his stupid behaviors. He reported that Tanju, and Limon made fake cop ID cards first, then found a couple of police vests, walkie-talkies, and they would carry pistols. However, stupid Limon were showing the fake ID everywhere – while passing through the X-Rays of the malls, on the busses for free pass, and so on. Eventually, when they were joyriding, a police pulled them over, and Limon showed his fake ID. Since a couple of drunk policemen doing doughnuts in a car is a suspicious case, they were caught. He stopped seeing him ever since then. Then he started to narrate how they would get all geared up and raid the cathouses as two policemen. He reports, they would raid the house, kick the client men out playing merciful cops, then have an intercourse with the women threatening them with jail and all, and before leaving the house, they would take women's money and valuable belongings – in other words, they would rape and extort. He went on with telling the funny stories about playing the policemen to other guys but it was too much for

me for a day. I asked Mert if Tanju was telling the truth, he confirmed and said that they even got Mert and another friend out from custody by playing the policemen.

In the construction of masculine identity, the relationship with the women, and other gender identities is a field expansively elaborated. However, it was very hard for me to observe their relationships with the women they are intimate with given the fact that women are their honor and should be well preserved in home, in the *mahrem* realm – a realm that is very hard for a man to enter into. In fact, none of my key informants had a regular intimate relationship with women except the only married ones – Özkan and Mert. Besides intimate relationships, there are also the women whom they use merely as masturbation objects, objects to sooth their sexual drives. So-called “escorts” are among these women. Frequent visits to houses of “escorts” result in the development of a personal relationship. In other words, their relationship goes beyond the client-service provider relationship; however, the money is still involved. There are also the girls they see but it is hard to name the relationship between them as free relationship or open love. The purpose of the men is to satisfy their sexual drives again while the women are reported to have expectations of becoming a couple. If they had an intimate relationship with men, still I could not know it since homosexuality is a taboo among them and they could easily hide it from me.

Nevertheless, in the discursive level, women are seen as subservient and degraded; except their mothers, wives and crushes. “A man should not be merciful for the one he loves”; “he should ‘fuck’ her instead of being passionate about her because when you become passionate, you go blind, when you are blind, she can do anything, any nasty thing”; so “if [he] beat[s] her first, then fuck her, she supposes [he] love[s] her and beat[s] her because of [his] love”. All these statements are made by my key informants; however, here we should remember that these statements were made by the men who wept when drinking with me on the desolated places in the private cocoon of automobile about how much they loved; how madly they were in love

like legendary *Mecnun* but the cruel fate did not let them be happy all together. In other words, during my field research I saw that exaggeration, and telling lies to some extent, about their sexual virility as well as about the cases which imply power are quite frequently employed verbal strategies in the self-representation of men's masculine identities in order to create an image of themselves that complies with their ideals about being a man. Keeping some experiences concealed while stressing and exaggerating the others tells us about the ideals of the informant (Selek, 2014[2008]: 14). In this sense, the frequently expressed "the whore woman who needs to be degraded - the man with a passionate heart turned into a woman slaughter because of the whore woman" theme points at a discrepancy that emerges from the arranged marriage. Knowing that their families will arrange a marriage for them, young men categorize women into the ones whom they may marry, i.e. daughters of family friends and relatives, and the ones whom they will not marry. These categorizations are reflected on their relationship with women in a way that the women they may marry are mentioned with respect and kindness while the others are represented as "the sluts". However, more than often they fall in love with the girls they cannot marry and the offense of being slut is a tactic to overcome the reality of almost impossible marriage. Although my sample size of married ones is quite small, they claim to be in love with their wives after the marriage while the other women are "dirt on their hands", i.e. nothing of importance.

After this day I spent with Mert and his group of friends, I visited the shop about a week later. That time Emre was not in the shop, when I asked why he is not there Mert reported that he found a job in a barbershop at an upscale district of the city. And apologetically continued with saying that Emre was causing problems to them, now it was better to not have him here. Obviously, he was referring to the last week's conversations, and holding Emre responsible for opening up these issues. I tried to reply saying that he is still a teenager, and a handsome boy newly exploring his sexuality, so such issues of him can be tolerated, and some other stuff to imply I am

okay with the last week. Picking up “handsome” among my words, he claimed that he thinks he will have a glamorous life with girls, and money and said “He still thinks life is such, but such a world does not exist. After doing the military service, working at here and there for a couple of years, his mother going to make him marry. He has 5 years left, not many, then he will see. They will find a girl from the hometown, or here among the daughters of neighbors, and all. After a year, he will get a child in his arms. Then I will see him – now, we neglect saying that ‘he is young, he is ignorant’”. Mert were not the only one who brought up arranged marriage as “the murderer of dreams”. The girl Ünal loved engaged to a relative of hers, Özer’s girlfriend was forced to marry a wealthy Turkish Cypriot living in the UK and Muharrem is just fooling around with the any girl he could pick up since her mother started to look for a daughter-in-law, so he should get as much “experience” as possible before marriage, otherwise he cannot “satisfy” his future wife.

With only one exception, all my informants were the first generation born in the urban in their rural to urban migrant families. In such a context, arranged marriage is still widespread despite the fact that, compared to their parents’ generation, the boys are freer to have relationships with the girls, whether be on the streets, in the cafes, at the school, or on the Internet. Sharpe notes that, during her research on how girls are socialized into gender roles, she saw that Asian girls in the UK who got married primarily through arranged marriage were resentful, and rebellious about their families that arrange marriages for them (O’Donnell and Sharpe, 2000: 100). In a similar way, the young men in the urban fringes are quite frustrated against arranged marriage while sympathetic with the idea of love marriage. However, arranged marriage being their fate, the theme of “cruel whore vs. hardened heart” they use in their self-representation is a coping tactic with this discrepancy.

At another level, we know that how a man represents himself reveals larger context in which he constructs his masculine identity. Narrating the experiences of sex

which can be identified as sexual offences is a way to express their manly power. On the problem of sexual violence, drawing on the increase of sexual assaults in the war times, Cleary highlights that sexual offences occur when there is an opportunity, which means a suitable target and lack of safe environment along with the appreciation of the act by the peers (2004: 18-9). The justification language that makes “whores” from the women, who are not eligible to marry under the circumstances of arranged marriage, makes almost all the women potential subjects of oversexed acts, if not sexual offences. Living in a violently patriarchal society, the homosocial work environments as well as the *piyasa*, which urban poor boys enter into at the very young ages, the narratives are quite frequently told to other men and appreciated by them (given the fact I have witnessed many of milder sorts of the above narrated conversations during my relatively short period of time). From this fact, it is possible to argue that self-representations highlighting the oversexed manliness in homosocial settings not only reveal a contrast between the desire to assert a man’s sexual prowess through the number of women he had a relationship and the arranged marriages accompanied with the taboo of extramarital sex for women, but also it reveals how the gendered domination is discursively reproduced in homosocial work settings in which young men of working classes socialize.

#### **4.3.3. Nationalist, Conservative Young Turks**

The beginning, and the end of the research was marked by two incidents. As I reported in the introduction, when I started to make connections in the spring of 2015, it was a few weeks ago before the general election in June, 2015. The *modifiyeci* youth to whom I could have access were agitated with the nationalist and conservative emotions against pro-Kurdish Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP), which were likely to pass the electoral threshold, and against Republican People’s Party (CHP), the secular party. Being a graduate student from a university known for its socialist tradition, I was not welcomed warmly. Thinking that *sociology* has to do something with *socialism*, my informants were not replying my questions,



bringing up the politics to see my views, and so on. Then HDP passed the electoral threshold, gained more chairs than far-right Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), Justice and Development Party (AKP) lost their one-party rule after thirteen years. Nationalist, and conservative population, of which *modifiyeci* youth are a part, were agitated by the results of the elections. Then the assassination of two policemen, and a sergeant in Kurdish towns marked the start of a spiral of violence in Kurdish region including the suicide bombings in the rallies of socialist parties and organizations in Urfa and Ankara as well as in a public meeting where HDP co-chair were addressing the voters in Diyarbakır for the election of November, 2015. On the other hand, Kurdish agricultural workers were lynched and workplaces of Kurdish people in Turkish regions were set on fire. In other words, the whole country became a battle ground. In such a context, my informants were organizing rallies adorning their cars with Turkish flags, cursing at Kurds, chanting nationalist slogans. This spiral of violence charged with nationalist, and conservative politics remained as it was until the early election in November, 2015 which resulted in the one-party rule of AKP.



*Figure 6 A Flag clad Tofaş in a drifting event in Sitelер*

On July, 2016 I was having a vacation on a coast right across Lesbos Island and right next to the washed up boats, clothes, life vests of Syrians who fled from war in homeland to Turkey and to Greece. While scrolling down on Facebook, I saw a post in a page where the *modifiyeci* youth living around Siteler industrial zone organized events. In the post were two pictures of a blood-soaked young men lying on the floor, and an explanation claiming that in Önder neighborhood, Syrian immigrants stabbed him since he refused to sell cigarettes to them at a lower price. The wounded shopkeeper was hospitalized and his state was critical. And the *modifiyeci* youth were organizing in the page to lynch Syrians and to set their homes, and workplaces on fire. Seeing this movement online, I let my friends working at NGOs working on migration know. A night before the planned lynching night, a coup d'état attempt took place. Not only the less secure environment, but also the agitated nationalism after the attempted coup blended this night of horror with a parade – according to reports of my informants, car enthusiasts from East most districts of Karapürçek and Hüseyingazi organized a rally with their cars adorned with flags. *Modifiyeci* men from all the neighborhoods surrounding Siteler got together and welcomed that rally in Önder neighborhood. Then the march to burn down and loot the houses and workplaces began. After a few hours later, about the midnight, police bothered themselves to stop them.

Önder neighborhood is one of the neighborhoods that surround Siteler industrial zone and supply the low-cost labor for the workshops, if not sweatshops, in the zone. With the influx of Syrian immigrants, the neighborhood was now called as “Little Aleppo” by Turkish residents of the district. There was already a tension between Turkish and Syrian populations before. Syrian laborers were kicked out of the audience in drifting events, and I was interlocutor of complaints that Syrians were stealing their jobs, decreasing the wages, increasing the rent and thinking they are the owners of the neighborhood, with the hope that I could help them to get rid of the newcomers. Kurdish ethnicity of Syrian migrants is at play here as well. In a yet

another session of cursing at Syrians, I asked if they have not any sympathy towards Syrians as the victims of war who had to leave their homelands. Ramazan replied in rage “Why would I? Recently, I teased one of them – he works at the shop next door. I said - ‘You are doing very well, I said. ‘You are living on benefits like free riders’. I said ‘They say that your father Tayyip [Erdoğan] will give you houses. Then, you will never turn back to Syria’. What do you expect him to say? He says, the motherfucker says that when the war is over, Kurdistan will be founded, and he will turn back to Kurdistan, not Syria”. However, Kurdish ethnicity is not the only ground on which the nationalism is justified. A few years ago, Somalian migrants were settled in nearby Yıldıztepe neighborhood had been the subject of similar disputes which ended up with the torching the houses of Somalians and exiling them.

Masculinity cuts through the ethnicity and race as a realm on which the hegemonic relationships are built and sustained. This fact even led to the institutionalization of Black Males Studies which produced a vast body of knowledge on gender of racial discrimination, construction of masculine identities by the marginalized men, and strategies of marginalized men to negotiate patriarchal bargain with the unmarked, privileged men (hooks, 2004; Collins, 2005, Lemelle, Jr., 2012). However, interesting here is how the unprivileged, outcast *modifiyeci* men vis-à-vis the larger population, become so violently aggressive when they confronted with the ethnic minorities. In a similar context of Cretan mountain villagers, Herzfeld (1988) argues that the villager men, who are stereotyped and ridiculed for being primitive, uncivilized by the larger population, construct their identities as the fighters against Turkish and German occupiers, as the true heroes of the island in a context where they are short of financial resources valued by the capitalist society. In other words, Herzfeld demonstrates how the heroism myth manufactured through the dominance of other ethnic groups becomes defensive tool of unprivileged men vis-à-vis the unmarked ones. The weaker asserts his power to the stronger through oppressing the

absolute Other. The verbal representation of Syrians, Kurds and Gülenists (the religious community held responsible for the attempted coup) as occupiers and the collaborators of so-called hostile European countries, the US and Israel which want Turkey to fall into pieces, and locating themselves as fighting against the enemies can be considered as a manufacturing of heroic tale amalgamated with the severe competition over the insecure job market.

#### **4.4. Resentful Boys**

From the above mentioned experiences of the young men from the fringes of the urban Ankara, we can argue that aggressiveness towards the ones who are less privileged than them is a key practice of *modifiyeci* youth. Here must be noted that elaborated are the most vivid ones while the issues addressed here also resonate with other areas such as heavily and conspicuously drinking and doing drugs, narratives of frequent physical fights, mandatory military service and militarism. Because of the limitations of the thesis, it is not possible to delve into all these areas but aggressiveness and being proud of aggressiveness is a crucial part of *modifiyeci* youth's identities.

Even though an empirical inquiry of emotions is very hard to conduct because of immaterial characteristic of emotions, we know that emotions are culturally constructed, and expressed (Lutz and White, 1986; Leavitt, 1996), and an emotion "serves as an agent of ... reproduction" of values (Lutz, 1988: 157). And I suggest that the aggressive behaviors are the means to express the emotion of *ressentiment* urban poor men feel due to the dilemmas they face as unprivileged, stereotyped, ridiculed men who desire for asserting themselves, get higher on the ladder of hegemony and set the grounds on which this ladder is erected. In other words, the discrepancy between their desires delineated by the everyday life in a capitalist society, and their short access to resources to fulfill the desires causes the wounds

in their self-conception of manliness, and a *ressentiment* towards the ones who are assumed to be able to fulfill the desires of urban poor *modifiyeci* men.

In the *On Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche attaches a revolutionary characteristic to the emotion of *ressentiment*:

The slave revolt in morality begins when *ressentiment* itself becomes creative and gives birth to values: the *ressentiment* of natures that are denied the true reaction, that of deeds, and compensate themselves with an *imaginary revenge* [emphasis added]. While every noble morality develops from a triumphant affirmation of itself, slave morality from the outset says No to what is "outside," what is "different," what is "not itself"; and *this* No is its creative deed. This inversion of the value-positing eye – this *need* to direct one's view outward instead of back to oneself – is of the essence of *ressentiment*: in order to exist, *slave morality always first needs a hostile external world* [emphasis added]; it needs, physiologically speaking, external stimuli in order to act at all – its action is fundamentally *reaction* [emphasis added].

(1967: 36-7)

Roots of the slave morality, which is dependent on the existence of a hostile external world in order to exist, in other words, whose existence is actualized through the hostility of external world that can exist in itself, is the ambition to feel as the subject, the agent of their own existence through the subversion, through tearing down the values set by the external world. In other words, slave morality stems from the emotion of *ressentiment* that is sensed by the ones who soothe themselves by imaginary revenges; the hate felt by the weak, the powerless towards the powerful, free, and independent. *Ressentiment* triggers a reactionary revolution as it takes the form of abasement, will to lower, levelling at the lower level (p. 54). In her analysis of Dostoyevsky novels, whose influence on Nietzsche is clear as Kaufmann reports (1960[1956]: 14), Gürbilek highlights the abject heroes of Dostoyevsky, from Raskolnikov to the man of the underground, Alexei to Dolgoruky, are characterized by the *ressentiment* that stems from their dilemma of desire to self-actualize, attain power, and submission to the others due to lack of power as “Dostoyevsky narrated

the people divided by the desire to be exalted through an ideal, and the feeling of actually being a nothing” (p. 31).

In the *Prologue of Rules of Art* (1995) in which he analyzes Flaubert’s *Sentimental Education*, Bourdieu describes the protagonist, Frédéric, as a heir of provincial bourgeois family destined to be bourgeois in Paris, who has means to achieve any of the two forms of power in the universe of novel, artistic and politic; however, he does not do anything for this end, he runs after love and rejects power. On the other hand, Deslauriers from lower classes (the doppelganger of Frederic I might say), is an ambitious man; however, he is short of any means to be a part of either political or artistic circles, and sees his relationship with Frederic as a means to upward social mobility Bourdieu’s reading of this narrative adds the emotion of indifference to Nietzschean *ressentiment* that arises from the discrepancy between the will and the means. Frédéric cannot find a response for his love, outcasts himself in the end, soaked up all the way to indifference. His doppelganger, Deslauriers, while loaded with the productive feeling of *ressentiment* at first, also falls into the emotion of indifference once he becomes an ordinary clerk since he realizes the fact that since he was not born into these circles, he cannot be a full-fledged member of them (pp. 35-40).

The indifference Bourdieu brings up as the dialectical counterpart of *ressentiment* is key here. As a theoretician with a conception of society as inert, if not static, set of relationships, Bourdieu stresses that *ressentiment* goes hand in hand with the indifference that stems from the disappointment, from the frustration due to the failure of the desire to abase:

Resentment is a submissive revolt. Disappointment, by the ambition it betrays, constitutes an admission of gratitude. Conservatism was never mistaken about this: it knows enough to see there the highest tribute rendered to the social order, that of vexation and frustrated ambition; just as it knows how to detect the truth of more than one juvenile revolt in the trajectory

which leads from the rebellious bohemianism of adolescence to disillusioned conservatism or to reactionary fanaticism in maturity.

(1995: 18)

In other words, for Bourdieu, Nietzschean conception of revolutionary *ressentiment* of the weak is most likely to turn into the indifference that perpetuates the order, given his understanding of society shaped by the structuring structures, and structured structures thus changes only through “a few historical accidents” (Bourdieu, 2002: 1).

As mentioned earlier, masculine identity is not solely constructed, lived, experienced, and asserted in public realm. However, it is always up to the judgement of the others. Atay (2012) shifts the focus on the destructive, ruptured characteristic of masculinity and stresses that “masculinity oppresses the men most” due to the renunciations, ordeals and compromises men have to make to comply with the ever-changing ideals of hegemonic masculinity (p. 34-46). Given the plurality of masculinities, his over-assertive argument may need a change to “ideals about being a man oppress the men as well as other gender identities”; however, it is true that men suffer because of culturally shaped ideals about being a man especially when lacking the resources to comply with the ideals of self-made men, when a hostile external world is present and when they are facing dilemmas due the poor integration to the urban culture. They suffer because they cannot live their loves with the girls they love, they suffer because although they consider themselves to be men making their own money, they are still the children who are controlled by their fathers and to some extent mothers in the kinship relations in which they grow up. On the other hand, the absolute Others are threatening their already insecure position in the labor market, threatening them with stripping away from their already limited financial resources. In other words, the constitutive elements of the masculine identities of the young men from the urban fringes are in a state of crisis. The mobility brought by the automobile, the expanded social space thanks to the

Internet and other technologies of communication open the way for them to connect with the secular urban culture primarily delineated by consumption activities. The desire to be a part of this culture, the desire to be a man as valued in this culture contradicts with the masculinity they perform with short resources and informed by the rural values. In other words, the relatively unprivileged position of men in this culture, due to the lack of means to participate in urban culture as the makers of values, symbols, texts, and memories as well as due to the contradicting expectations about being a man set by the families that are the strongholds for sustaining the patriarchal order in which they are born, causes an ambivalence for the *modifiyeci* youth about their masculine identities at a transitory period in their lives. In other words, the values of their families, which contradict with the values of urban culture *modifiyeci* youth wants to be a part of, have a strong hold on not only the everyday life but also life trajectories of urban poor young men.

The self-made men myth is a pervasive ideal in the construction of masculine identities. However, being outcast, stereotyped men, *modifiyeci* youth is “made” by the larger population. The contradiction between the desires, and the means, being defined by the external world is reflected as the aggressiveness in both discursive, and practical level – which is a strategy to take imaginary revenges. And the imaginary revenges are taken from the ones who are already less powerful than themselves – women, migrants, or the defenseless men trying to make their way home from work. Freire highlights that an unjust order is sustained through the violence of the oppressor, and the dehumanization of the oppressed (2000: 44). This is a process of ontological violence since it entails the refusal of the oppressed as entities in themselves by the oppressed, and makes the oppressed manipulated, or neglected objects, then starts the spiral of violence as the oppressed enact violence in the struggle for recognition (Freire, 2000[1970]). The imaginary revenge is the key in the case of aggressive behavior performed by *modifiyeci* youth in the daily life towards the Other - the women, the other gender identities, the other masculine



identities, the ethnicities and all the Others created in their imagery. The revolutionary power of *ressentiment* turns into conservatism as Bourdieu highlighted once the revenge is not directed towards the powerful, but to the weaker, thus sustaining the already existing unjust order.

In this sense, we can conclude that *modifiyeci* youth is split between their desires, and the objective conditions of existence, i.e. lacking the capitals to be a part of the urban culture in which their desires are shaped. Moreover, the gender order they inherited from their families conflicts with the gender order which they want to be a part of. This split between the “dreams and lives” in their own terms, or the desires and the means, yields the emotion of *ressentiment*. The mythical self-made man is the one who could close the split. However, it is mythical because of the given unjust distribution of power which *modifiyeci* youth suffers and the disappointment because of their gainless efforts to tie the gap leads them to take revenge from the imaginary Others – an action just perpetuates the already existing injustices. In such a context, the car is transformed into a weapon of revenge shaped by the conflicting masculinity ideals of modesty, suffering, and virility (Atay, 2012; Selek, 2014[2008]). Car is used as a weapon to take imaginary revenges from the false enemies, i.e. the ones on the streets, the ones who have enough resources to reproduction of the urban culture. When used as a weapon on the streets, the car is a partial and temporary means to close the split between dreams and lives. They become visible to the otherwise neglecting society through aggressive driving behavior and roaring engines.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.1. Recap

In the introduction chapter, the subject matter of the study has been described and then the objective of the study has been stated. A sketch of the theoretical background that delineated the study and the primary characteristics of the field research have been presented, through which the collected data of the field research have been scrutinized. First, the development of the critical approaches to the men and masculinities have been presented. In this context, the masculinity is considered to be a social construct that is produced and reproduced through the practices, discourses and experiences of men as well as other gendered subjectivities. In this regard, masculine identities are informed with the larger economic infrastructure, historical and cultural forces hence there are multiple masculinities in a given society and there are continuous struggles among different strata in a society on defining what appropriate masculinity is. As well as the masculinity ideals, masculine identities are constructed in these never-ending struggles. Customization and use of the cars have been discussed as a realm on which urban poor young men construct their masculine identities and negotiate their masculine ideals.

Chapter 2 discusses the bonds between the automobile, urban space and the economic infrastructure. The automobile has been considered as a pervasive element of built environment which transforms the physical and social landscape. Going commonplace of the automobile reflects Fordist regime which invented the modern automobile on the cities in which we reside, interact with one another and reproduce

a specific culture as a realm of power hierarchies. In specific, Ankara has been discussed as a city that was developed around the motor roads and the spatial politics delineated by the economic infrastructure which also gave birth to the automobile have been analyzed. The contemporary transformation of spatial politics thus land use are shown to be in further disadvantage of the urban poor and use of cars is argued to be a way to transgress these disadvantages on symbolic realm.

In Chapter 3, the symbolic realm, *piyasa* as they call it, on which men and cars dialogically make one another. The metaphor of market/marketplace is interesting as it points the covert characteristic of the automobile as a masculine capital through which masculinity accumulated. *Piyasa* has many different actors from a variety of classes. These actors accumulate masculine capital and negotiate the appropriate form of masculinity while accusing the others for failing to conform to their masculinity standards. That is to say that masculinity needs to be asserted via performances, observed, evaluated and confirmed by the others but more importantly by the other men.

Chapter 4 focuses on the performances of masculinity through cars and the wider infrastructures which inform the masculine identities of the urban poor young men. The cars are the means to race the degree of conformity with the pervasive ideals of being successful at being a man such as bravery, willingness to take risk. Furthermore, the mechanic body of the car and the flesh body of the driver are considered to be amalgamated and the power of the engine is championed as the physical power and strength of it driver. The connection between the mechanic and flesh bodies are most apparent in the use of the cars as expressive means. The cars are adorned with the accessories that reflects personal history, personality and dreams of the driver. An analogy is made between the personalized car and the weapons. The split between the ideals about masculinity and the experienced reality which does not conform to the ideals causes the emotion of *ressentiment* in urban

poor young men. The cars are used as the weapons of imaginary revenge induced by *ressentiment*.

## **5.2. Conclusory Remarks**

Automobile is far beyond being a simple object of consumption. It is a private property that tells about the owner of it. Furthermore, it is the most mundane yet most pervasive element of the built and social environment of the modern urban spaces. So much so that it can be argued that the automobile made the city. It made the city as it changed people's perception of time with the greater capacity to speed it brought. The speed also changed the land use since the distances have become shorter. But the most importantly, as a commodity which is the eponym of a particular mode of production and controlled consumption, the automobile made the city into the space of consumption. It is possible to see that making process as the infliction of the economic logic that made the automobile existent in the first place on space, thus society. However, the reflection process is far from being straightforward.

The objects of consumption are not merely inanimate objects nor the fetishistic objects which rule the consumers. Rather, they are the objectifications of the cultures that produce them and the culture is a terrain of power on which economic structures, historical forces and gender interplay with one another. And consumption is not merely assimilation but appropriation of that culture. The term appropriation suggest that the process of owning, exchanging - or keeping out of exchange -, using, storing, and disposing is the appropriation and being a part of the culture. In this way, the subjectivities of the people are constructed by the culture that is consisted of a particular economic structure, a gender order.

Being subjects in a market society, *modifiyeci* youth are disadvantageous to be part of the culture of the city they live in. They are short of economic, social and cultural capital, they are both physically and socially pushed to the boundaries of the city.

On the other hand, the short amount of capital they have causes them to comply with the criterion about being successful at being a man in a market society. This situation leads them to fall into the emotion of *ressentiment*. Being the maker of the city, both physically and symbolically, the automobile becomes a weapon of revenge in their hands. In the making of the car into a masculine weapon, they attach masculinity related meanings to the look and use of the cars as they alter and tune up their cars. Then the cars attached with masculine connotations are contested with one another. Furthermore, attention grabbing driving behavior helps them to be recognized by the larger public. The mobility it brings enables the urban poor young men to be present at the core of the city where the market transactions take place thus the culture is reproduced. By this way, they can extend the smaller social space all over the city from which they are excluded.

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## APPENDICES

### A. GLOSSARY

**Sıkıntı/Bunaltı:** Expressions of feeling bored, void and empty, and depressed. Primarily delineated by the lack of commoditized entertainment, it also imply being short to consume entertainment. The repetitiveness without an expectation of a change also may lead to these closely related emotions. *Sıkıcı* being the adjective form, it is considered to be negative emotion in an era of pleasure is sought in fast moving commodities while *bunaltıcı* as the adjective form implies an anxiety.

**Bilge:** Coming from the same origin with the *bilgi* [knowledge], *bilge* is a wise and knowledgeable person. Because of the assumption of precious experiences he/she had throughout his/her life, generally a *bilge* person is considered to be old.

**Modifiye/Modifiyeci:** *Modifiye* refers to the alteration of the mechanics and the image of a car and also used as an adjective to define an altered car. However, that adjective is generally used for the cheaper souped-up cars. It also entails the maintenance of the car to keep it on the streets. *Modifiyeci* refers to a man who alters the car he owns and uses.

**Etiket/Etiketçi:** In slang, becoming an *etiket* means being the subject of gossips. Depending on the reason to be *etiket*, it may be a positive or negative statement. To illustrate, becoming *etiket* because of being a womanizer is a source of pride; however, becoming *etiket* with a failure in trade is a source of shame. Sometimes, becoming *etiket* is a source of both pride and shame such as in the context of getting busted by the police. The criminal record is considered as a medal of honor yet being busted implies clumsiness. In car culture of Ankara, *etiketçi* is used in a negative way to label the ones who are over-concerned with the look of the car yet do not pay enough attention to the mechanical power of it.

**Tuning/Tuningçi:** Borrowed from English, *tuning* is used as the minor improvements and alterations made on a newer and more expensive make. And the one who does such alterations on his car is named as *tuningçi*. It is generally a negative label; however, many *modifiyecis* acknowledge that they neither would not make major alterations on their cars if they had newer and more expensive cars.

**Haram:** Directly and strictly prohibited by İslam. On the question of what is haram and what is not, the sects have different traditions. However, in Turkish context, regardless of the sects one may argue, the income that is not well-deserved is *haram*. In this sense, *haram* horsepower refers to undeserved power of the engine.

**Mahrem:** Derived from the concept of *haram*, refers to privacy and private spaces that are prohibited by İslam to otherwise stated individuals. To illustrate, body and soul of a woman is *mahrem* to the men except her husband.

**Ağırhık:** A personality trait denoted to both women and men but a man must have it to be successful at being a man. *Ağır* is the adjective form. An ideal *ağır* man does not talk if it is not necessary and when he talks, he makes everyone listen to him. He is wise, to the ground, mature and respectable.

**Mertlik/Yiğitlik:** Synonymous words which have become almost synonyms of manliness and manhood. *Mert* and *yiğit* are adjective forms and used as boys' names. A *mert/yiğit* man is physically powerful but does not hurt the weak rather protects her. He does not tell lies because he is courageous enough to face with his mistakes. He has the potential to be both venturous and calm; however, he exactly knows where and when to reveal either of these characteristics.

**Şecaat:** Religious term to address *mertlik/yiğitlik*.

**Delikanlılık:** Almost identical to *mertlik/yiğitlik* but with a stress on the age. *Delikanlı* is the adjective form. It can be argued that a *delikanlı* is a junior *mert/yiğit* men. In other words, he is immature and sometimes may fail to be *mert/yiğit*.



However, his failures should be tolerated since he is still young and learning to be *mert/yiđit*.

**Yanlama:** Means drifting in motorsports.

**Drift:** Refers to the practice “doing doughnuts” in American car culture. While the front wheels are kept stationary, the rear tires are kept spinning while steering wheel is oversteered to make the car move on sideways on a circular pattern.

## B. TURKISH SUMMARY

Bu çalışma, kent yoksulu genç erkeklerin eril kimliklerini kurmada merkezî bir konumda olan araba kişiselleştirme ve kişiselleştirilmiş araba kullanımını incelemiştir. Eşya ve eril kimlikler arasındaki ilişkilerin ne antropoloji disiplinde ne de erkekler ve erkeklikler üzerine çalışmalarda yeterli ilgi görmüş olmasından hareketle, farklı erkekliklerin farklı yollarla araba kişiselleştirilmesinde ve kullanımında nasıl kurulduğunu sunan bir çerçeve çizilmiştir. Kent yoksulu bir erkek olmanın deneyimleri incelenmiş ve bu deneyimlerle araba kişiselleştirme ve kullanımı arasındaki bağlantılara ışık tutulmuştur. Ve neden özellikle arabaların eril kimliklerin kurulmasında kullanıldığı sorusuna bir cevap verilmeye çalışılmıştır.

Modifiye sözcüğü ile arabaların kişiselleştirilmesi ve değiştirilmesi kastedilmektedir. Bu bakımdan modifiye başlıca bir tüketim etkinliğidir. Modifiyeci sözcüğü ise bu tüketim etkinliğini gerçekleştiren kişileri tanımlamaktadır. Ankara şehrinde, trafikte ve de sosyal medyada son zamanlarda görünürlüğü artan modifiye araçların sahiplerinin ve sürücülerinin yalnızca erkekler olduğunu söyleyebiliriz. Bu tezi yazmak için yürütülen saha çalışması da göstermiştir ki bu tüketim etkinliğini gerçekleştirenler şehrin çeperlerinde yaşayan, ekonomik anlamda görece dezavantajlı konumda olan, düşük gelirlili ve düşük eğitimli ve de genç erkeklerdir. Bu genç erkekler, modifiye edilmiş araçlarıyla, hafta sonları ve mesai dışında kalan gece saatlerinde şehrin merkezi konumlarında veya şehrin çeperlerindeki doğaçlama bir şekilde modifiyeci mekânı olmuş yerlerde bir takım belirli etkinlikler gerçekleştirmektedir. Temel olarak tüketim aktivitesi olarak tanımlayabileceğimiz bu etkinlikler başlıca sokak yarışı, kalkış yarışı, yanlama, lastik yakma ve turlama olarak tanımlanabilir. Sokak yarışı, belli bir yerden kalkan iki aracın belli cadde ve sokaklardan oluşan rotayı takip ederek kalkış noktasına en erken varma müsabakaları olarak tanımlanabilir. Kalkış yarışları ise aynı noktadan kalkan iki aracın, caddenin veya sokağın kısa ve düz bir kesitinde önceden belirlenmiş bitiş noktasına en erken varmak için yarışmasıdır. Yanlama diye tanımlanan aktivite daha

çok görece boş ve kavşak gibi geniş alanlarda, araçların ön tekerleri sabit dururken arka tekerlerinin hareket etmesiyle arka taraflarının yana doğru hareket ederek çember biçiminde dönmesidir. Lastik yakma ise yine ön tekerler sabit dururken arka tekerlerin olduğu yerde dönmesi sonucu, asfaltla lastik arasındaki sürtünmeden dolayı tekerlerin aşırı ısıtılması ve aşındırılmasıdır. Turlama da genellikle geceleri gerçekleştirilen, şehrin çeşitli bölgeleri arasında, bir yere varma hedefi olmadan otomobille gezmeye denmektedir. Burada amaç bir yere varmak değil arabada arkadaşlarla eğlenmek, gezmek ve de yanlama ve lastik yakma gibi etkinliklerle şehirde görünürlük kazanmaktır. Artan görünürlükleriyle birlikte bu genç erkekler, araçlarının görünümüyle olsun sürüş biçimleriyle olsun popüler kültürde dikkat çekmiş ve alaycı, dışlayıcı ve kimi zaman suçlayıcı yargıların nesnesi olmuştur.

Otomobil kullanmanın vergilerin, petrol ve yedek parça fiyatlarının yüksek olmasından ötürü masraflı olduğu ve de modifyeci gençlerin ekonomik olarak dezavantajlı olduğu gerçeğinden hareketle, bu çalışma kent yoksulu genç erkeklerin neden bir meta ile kimliklerini kurmaya çalıştığını anlamaya çalışıyor. Modifyeci gençlerin kimlik temsillerinde erkeklığe yapılan vurgudan yola çıkılarak, bu sorunun cevabı ise genelde sosyal cinsiyet kimliklerinin, özelde eril kimliklerinin kurulma sürecine odaklanarak verilmeye çalışılmaktadır. Bu yüzden, öncelikle erkeklığe nasıl yaklaştığını ve de eril kimlikle nesnelere arasında nasıl bir ilişki kurduğunu yansıtan bir çerçeve çizmem gerekmektedir.

Erkeklığı ve eril kimlikleri anlamak için, bu çalışmada, erkekler ve erillikler üzerine eleştirel çalışmalar ekolünün geliştirdiği perspektif benimsenmiş ve bu ekolün ürettiği bilgiye katkı sunulmaya çalışılmıştır. Sosyal cinsiyet kimliklerini açıklamak için geliştirilmiş ve daha önceki baskınlığını yitirmiş olsa da hâlâ akademide etkinliğini sürdürebilen cinsiyet rolleri teorisi, erkek olmayı, bir toplumda erkeklerden uyması beklenen bir dizi rolleri gerçekleştirmek olarak tanımlar. Böyle bir yaklaşım toplumsal cinsiyeti biyolojik cinsiyete bağlar ve bu nedenle oldukça heteronormatiftir. İkinci dalga feminizmin etkisiyle ortaya çıkan ve feminizmle

birlikte ilerleyen erkekler ve erillikler üzerine çalışmaların yaklaşımı ise toplumların ve kültürlerin sosyal cinsiyet rolleri hakkında ideallerinin olduğunu kabul etmekle birlikte, sosyal cinsiyetin yalnızca biyolojik cinsiyet özelliklerinin üzerine inşa edilmediğini savunur. Bu açıdan, cinsiyet rolleri sabit ve değişmez değil, tarihsel, ekonomik ve kültürel bağlam içinde gelişir ve değişime açıktır. Sosyal cinsiyet kimlikleri, bireylerin yukarıda bahsedilen bağlamlar içerisinde gelişen davranışları, duygulanımları ve deneyimleri ile üretilir ve yeniden üretilir.

Cinsiyete ve cinsiyet kimliklerine böyle bir yaklaşımla, öne sürülebilir ki erkeklik de sabit bir kişilik özelliği olmaktan çok uzaktır. Erkeklik daha çok bir toplumda biyolojik erkeklerin nasıl davranması, düşünmesi, hissetmesi ve konuşması gibi konulardaki beklentilerin yerini tutan soyut bir kavramdır. Bu beklentiler tarihsel, ekonomik ve kültürel bağlamda geliştiği için diğer kimliklerle sürekli iletişim içindedir. Başka bir deyişle, bir biyolojik erkeğin nasıl davranması, düşünmesi, hissetmesi ve benzeri konulardaki toplumsal beklentiler aynı zamanda o erkeğin etnik, ırksal kimliğiyle, yaşıyla, cinsel yönelimiyle ilişkilidir. Erkek olmak ise bu beklentilerle uyum sağlayan veya bu beklentileri reddeden davranışlar sergilemekle, hissetmekle, söylemler oluşturmayla gerçekleştirilen bir oluşturma, yani bir eylemdir. Cinsiyet kimliklerinin diğer kimliklerle ayrılmaz bir bağı olduğunu tekrar hatırlarsak, ileri sürmek mümkündür ki bir toplumda çeşitli erkek olma biçimleri yani çeşitli erkeklikler vardır. Etnik azınlık olan bir erkek, etnik çoğunluğun erkeklerinden farklı bir biçimde erkek olur. Eşcinsel bir erkeğin erkekliği, eşcinsel olmayan bir erkeğin erkekliğinden farklıdır. Aynı biçimde öne sürülebilir ki farklı toplumsal sınıflardan erkekler, farklı biçimlerde erkek olur. Erkekliğin bir performans olduğunu hatırlarsak, erkek olmak en çok da eril cinsiyetin, erkek olmak için gereken özelliklerin sergilenmesini ve başkaları tarafından onaylanmasını gerektirir.

Connell'ın ortaya koyduğu gibi her toplumda, erkek olmada başarıyı temsil eden bir *hegenomik* erkeklik ideali vardır (Carrigan, Connell ve Lee, 1985; Connell, 2005).

Toplumdan topluma deęişkenlik gösterse de erkeklerin tahakkümüne dayanan ataerkillik neredeyse bütün toplumların evrensel bir özelliğidir. *Hegemonik* erkeklik ideali işte bu deęişken ataerkillikler içinde tanımlanır ve ataerkilliğın yeniden üretilmesini saęlayan bir idealdir. *Hegemonik* erkeklik bir toplumdaki “mimli” olmayan erkeklige işaret eder ve bu mimlenmiş olma durumu toplumdan topluma farklılık gösterir. Başka bir deyişle, *hegemonik* erkeklik zemininde duran ideal bir erkek hem cinsiyet kimlięi bakımından hem de dięer kimlikler bakımından bütün toplumsal normlara uyar. Baęlamdan baęlama farklılık göstermekle birlikte, modern kapitalist toplumlarda bilişsel kapasiteye dayanan saygıdeęer bir işi olan ve iyi kazanan, harcama gücü yüksek, heteroseksüel, iyi eęitilmiş, dinî veya etnik bir azınlık grubuna mensup olmayan, orta yaşı bir baba, *hegemonik* erkeklik idealine en yakın erkektir. Hegemonya teriminin belirttięi gibi, *hegemonik* erkeklik her zaman karşı-hegemonyanın taarruzlarına açıktır ve bu taarruzlar sebebiyledir ki asla bir grup bu *hegemonik* erkeklik zeminini güvenli bir şekilde elinde tutamaz. Bu sebeple, *hegemonik* erkeklik ideali, grupların bu ideal zeminle yakınlığı ve rabitasına göre grupların güç daęılımındaki durumunu belirleyen bir kerteriz noktasıdır.

Daha öncede belirtildięi gibi, modern kapitalist toplumlarda iyi kazanmak ve dolayısıyla pazar ekonomisinde başarılı olmak, bu ideale yaklaşmak için çok önemli bir kıstastır. Kimmel (2005) pazaryeri erkeklige kavramıyla bu durumu tartışmaya açar ve pazar ekonomisinin işledięi toplumlarda, *hegemonik* erkeklige en çok yaklaşan grubun pazaryeri erkeklige performansını en başarılı şekilde gerçekleştiren erkekler olduğunu savunur. Pazaryeri erkeklige öncelikle pazar ekonomisinde, yani rekabetçi piyasada, başarıyla tanımlandığı için ideal erkeklige rekabetçilik üzerinden tanımlanmasına yol açar. Rekabette başarısı ise başlangıçta sahip olunan güç ile şimdi sahip olunan güç arasındaki müspet farkla tanımlanır. Başka bir deyişle, en az sermaye ile en çok varlığı biriktiren erkekler ideale en yakın konumdadır. Fakat tüketim gücünün etkisi göz ardı edilmemelidir. Önceden

belirtildiği gibi erkeklik performansları her zaman başkalarına gösterilmeli ve onlar tarafından sınanmalı ve onaylanmalıdır. Bu açıdan tüketim aktiviteleri sadece tüketim gücünü göstermez, aynı zamanda bir erkeğin rekabetçi piyasada ne kadar başarılı olduğunu da gösterir.

Bir pazar ekonomisinde nesnelere ilişkiler temel olarak tüketimle kurulduğunu düşünürsek, buradan yola çıkarak öne sürebiliriz ki erkeklik nesnelere de doğrudan ilintilidir. Bourdieu (2001) eril tahakkümün nasıl kurulduğunu ve yeniden üretildiğini döngüsel nedenselliklerle açıklar. Kurduğu bu nedenselliğe göre içinde yaşadığımız ve deneyimlediğimiz düzen tam da biz öyle yaşadığımız ve deneyimlediğimiz için bir düzen olarak devam eder. Cinsiyet konusunda ise bu nedensellik şöyle işler: İnsanlar, verili olan bedenlerini cinsiyetlendirir ve bu cinsiyetlendirilmiş bedeni kozmosa yansıtır ve dolayısıyla kozmosu da cinsiyetlendirir. Daha sonra da bu cinsiyetlendirilmiş kozmos tekrar bedene aktarılır ve beden cinsiyetlendirilir. Kültürden kültüre değişmekle beraber, Bourdieu, etnografya çalışmasını yürüttüğü Kabile toplumundan örnekler sunar. Yukarı erildir ve dolayısıyla yukarıda olan eril olur ve erkeklerin yukarıda olması beklenir; yumuşak olan dişildir ve dolayısıyla yumuşak olan dişil olur ve kadınların yumuşak olması beklenir. Bu düzen insanlarda, toplumsal konumlarına bağlı olarak, bir habitus oluşturur ve cinsiyet de bir habitustur. Başka bir deyişle, toplumsal cinsiyet yapılandırılmış bir yapıdır ve yapılandıran bir yapıdır. Bourdieu'nün toplumsal cinsiyeti bir habitus olarak tanımlayan çalışmasını takip eden çalışmalar daha sonra göstermiştir ki ataerkil toplumlarda erkek olmanın kendisi bir sermayedir. Yani kaynakların eşitsiz dağıtıldığı güç dağılımında, kaynaklara daha kolay ulaşımı sağlar. Bu sebeple özellikle biyolojik erkek bedeni eril sermaye olarak tanımlanmıştır. Eril sermayeden kastedilen ise bir bedene eril cinsiyet niteliğini kazandıran ve dolayısıyla ataerkil düzende kaynaklara kolay erişimin kapılarını aralayan bir sahip olma durumudur.

Tilley'in (2006) sözleriyle insanlar eşyayı yaparken eşyalar da insanları yapar ve bu ortak dönüşümde iki tarafta birbirinden üstün değildir. Eşyanın bu gücü, Miller'ın da (1987) altını çizdiği gibi eşyaların içinde oluşturuldukları kültürü içlerinde taşıması ve kültürel hayattaki pozisyonlarına göre bu kültürü gündelik hayatın düzenlemesini sağlayabilmelerinden gelir. Otomobil kültürü her şeyden önce bir eşya kültürüdür. Kültür kavramı ise ekonomik ve tarihsel güçlerin karmaşık bir bileşkesine işaret etmektedir. Bu karmaşık bileşkede eşya, metinler, semboller ve hatıralar aracılığıyla toplumsal anlamlar, değerler ve güç eşitsizlikleri üretilir ve yeniden üretilir. Erkeklik de kültürel bir yeniden üretimdir ve dolayısıyla eşitsizlikle ve nesnelere doğrudan ilintilidir. Nesnelere kurulan ilişkiler aracılığıyla hâlihazırda var olan erkeklik normları nesnelere aktarılır ve nesnelere alımlanmasıyla bu normlar sosyal ortamda yeniden üretilir. Başka bir deyişle, nesnelere yapılan erkeklik performansları nesnelere eril anlamlar katarken, aynı zamanda tüketim aktivitesi olarak değerlendirilebilecek bu performanslar erkekleri *erkek* yapan eril sermayelere dönüştürülür.

Böyle bir kavramsal çerçeveden yola çıkarak, Ankara'daki modifiyeci araba kültüründe erkekliğin otomobil aracılığıyla nasıl kurulduğunu; otomobilin nasıl bir eril sermayeye dönüştürüldüğünü; bu eril sermayenin nasıl erkeklikler kurduğunu, ekonomik olarak dezavantajlı olduğu gözlemlenen genç erkeklerin eril kimliklerini tüketimle kurmasını sorgulanmaya değer bularak inceleyen bu etnografya çalışması Eylül 2015 – Ağustos 2016 arasında yürütüldü. Şehrin kenar mahallelerinde bir araya gelmiş, çok da sıkı olmayan bir şekilde örgütlenmiş arkadaş gruplarının arasında katılımcı gözlem metoduyla bilgi toplandı.

Yukarıda bahsedilen sorulara cevap vermek için öncelikle otomobilin incelenmesi gerekmektedir. Otomobil asla sıradan bir tüketim nesnesi değildir. Temel işlevi zamana bağlı mekânsal değişim olan bu nesne, modern şehri yeniden inşa etmiştir. Bu gücü zamanı ve mekânı yeniden yapılandırmasından gelmektedir. İnsanoğlunun daha önce hayal edemeyeceği hızı, kapıdan kapıya ve zaman tarifelerine bağımlı

olmayan ulaşımın hizmetine sunmuştur. Fakat bu hız ve özgürlük içinse asfalt kaplı yollara bağımlıdır. Bu yüzden modern şehirler otoyolların etrafına kurulmuş, şehir merkezleri otoyolların hâkimiyetine girmiştir. Öte yandan, otomobil Fordizm diye bilinen bir üretim biçiminin isim babası olmuştur. Fordizm sadece fabrikaların içini ve işleyişini değiştirmemiş, kontrollü tüketim aracılığıyla modern şehirde gündelik hayatı bir fabrika işleyişine çevirmiştir. Bu yüzden ki modern şehirli için otomobil, bağımlısı olunan, sıradan bir nesnedir ve fakat bütün nesnelere gibi içinde üretildiği ekonomik ve politik mantığı kendisinde taşır. Bu nedenle, eşitsizliğe dayalı kapitalist üretim modu, tüketim aracılığıyla gündelik hayata yansarak kadınların, yoksulların, çocukların ve yaşlıların şehirden itilmesine sebep olmuş, şehrin arazisini iş, eğlence, meskûn mahal gibi bölgelerin sınırları içerisine sokmuştur.

Ankara özelinde düşünürsek, otomobilin icadından sonra kurulan bir şehir olarak Ankara'da otoyolların etrafında kurulmuştur. Bir kasabadan bir metropole dönüşse de şehrin kurulduğu zaman planlanmış olan yoksul kuzey-varlıklı güney ayrımı hâlâ devam etmektedir. Şehir her ne kadar fiziksel olarak büyümüş olsa da tek merkezli bir makroformu vardır ve varlıklı yerleşim bölgelerine yakın olan bu merkeze yoksul semtler otoyollarla bağlanmaktadır. On yıldan fazla bir zamanda gerçekleşmekte olan neoliberal kentsel dönüşüm politikaları her ne kadar şehirde yeni merkezler kurmayı amaçlasa da bu konuda başarı sağlanmış değildir. Üstelik bu dönüşümün tamamlayıcısı olan ekonomik yapılandırmalar arazi ve ev fiyatlarının artmasına sebep olmuştur. Şehrin kenarlarında yaşayan otomobil meraklısı gençler içinse bu ekonomik yeniden yapılandırmalar borçlanma ve ekonomik güvencesizlik anlamına gelmektedir. Ekonomik olarak ileriye göremezken bir yandan da banka kredileri sayesinde artan tüketim güçlerini ise ekonomik şartlar yüzünden deneyimledikleri sıkıntı, bunalım gibi sorunları aşmak için otomobillerine aktarmaktadırlar. Otomobil bir yanda şehrin makroformu yüzünden bağımlı oldukları bir araçken öte yanda modifiye aktiviteleri sayesinde



bir eğlence platformu sunmaktadır. Ve daha da önemlisi, ekonomik dezavantajları yüzünden dışlanmış oldukları tüketimle tanımlanmış şehir merkezine erişim ve bu merkezde ilgi çekmelerini sağlamaktadır.

Modifiyeci gençlik, modifiyeli araçların yer aldığı ve modifiye etkinliklerinin gerçekleştirildiği fiziksel olmayan mekânı piyasa diye tanımlamaktadırlar. Piyasa kavramı ilgi çekici çünkü aslında pazar ve pazaryeri anlamına gelen bu sözcük, otomobillerin değişimine atıfta bulunmamaktadır. Daha ziyade, piyasa kavramı eril sermayenin sergilendiği ve dolayısıyla erkekliklerin gösterildiği sembolik bir pazaryerine işaret eder. Bu pazaryerinde çeşitli sınıflardan çeşitli araba meraklısı erkekler ve erkeklikler yer almaktadır. Orta sınıf araba meraklısı gençler kendilerini modifiyeci olarak tanımlamaktan çekinmekte ve kendilerine araba “hastası, meraklısı” veya tuningçi demektedirler. Modifiye ve tuning arasındaki farkı anlatırken ise doğrudan erkeklikler arasındaki farka işaret etmektedirler. Orta sınıf araba meraklılarına göre modifiyeciler akılsız, aşırı ve tehlikelidir. Aynı ayırım modifiyeciler tarafından da tuningçilere karşı yapılmaktadır fakat bir farkla: Tuningçilerin korkak, bilgisiz ve ilgi budalası olduğu iddia edilmektedir. Bir başka araba meraklısı kategorisi olarak tanımladıkları etiketçiler ise ilgi budalası olmakla suçlanmaktadır. Bu suçlamalar erkeklikle doğrudan ilintilidir çünkü Türkiye toplumunda erkekliğin en temel tanımlarından olan mertlik, yiğitlik, delikanlılık ve ağırlık gibi özelliklerin işaret ettiği iki uç arasındaki dengeyi bulma kapasitelerini hedef almaktadır. Başka bir deyişle, tuningçilerin arabalarını mekanik anlamda iyi modifiye edemediklerini ve gösterişçi olduklarını iddia etmek, orta sınıf erkekliklerinin ağır ve mert olmadığını iddia etmektir. Ya da etiketçilerin mekanik anlamda arabalarını geliştirmeden sadece dış görünüme odaklandıklarını iddia etmek, aynı toplumsal sınıfta oldukları diğer erkekleri delikanlı ve yiğit olmamakla suçlamaktır. Dolayısıyla, bir yandan kendi erkekliklerini doğrularken, görünüşü ve mekanik gücü dolayısıyla da otomobillere eril karakterler isnat edilmektedir.

Peki, bu eril anlamlarla yüklenmiş modifiye otomobillerle erkeklik nasıl yapılıyor ve bu erkekliği besleyen toplumsal koşullar nelerdir? Öncelikle bu araçlar sokak yarışlarında kullanılıyor. Sokak yarışları üzerine sürücüsünün eril kimliği yüklenmiş araçların yarıştırılması olduğu için sembolik anlamda sürücülerin erkekliklerinin rekabete sunulması olarak okuna bilir. Bu yarışlar sonucunda cesaret, risk almaya isteklilik, sürme becerisi ve mekanik ustalık ödüllendiriliyor. Bu bakımdan, bu yarışlar işçi sınıfının kol gücünü vurgulayan erkeklik ideallerinin bir yansıması. Diğer taraftaysa, otomobillerin ifade kapasitesi vardır. Görünümleri olsun sürülme biçimleri olsun bize sürücüsü hakkında bir takım ifadeler sunar. Arabalar çıkartmalarla, boyalarla, eklenen ve çıkarılan parçalarla kişiselleştirilirken, yani sürücünün kimliği arabaya yansıtılırken, iki temel unsur ön plana çıkmakta: Temiz bir görüntü ve güçlü bir motor sesi. Temiz bir görüntü, bir silah olan kılıca benzetilirken güçlü motor ise çoğu zaman ruhsatlı tabancaya benzetilmekte. Silahlarla otomobiller arasında yapılan benzetmeler bir yandan çok basit zira silah da otomobil de Türkiye bağlamında erkeklikle sembolik olarak ilişkilendirilmektedir. Öte taraftan bu silahların ne için kullanıldığı merak uyandıran bir soru. Bu yüzden silahları kullanan erkeklere ve bu erkeklerin eril kimliklerinin kurulmasındaki temel toplumsal koşullara bakmak gerekmektedir.

Bu üç ana unsur aile ve babayla olan ilişkiler, kadınlarla olan ilişkiler ve etnik azınlıklarla olan ilişkiler olarak tanımlanabilir. Modifiyeci gençler babalarıyla olan ilişkilerini temsil ederken sorunlu olarak tanımlamaktadır. Bir otorite figürü erkek olan babalarıyla problemlerin temelinde ise ekonomik başarısızlık vurgulanmaktadır. Babalarının kendilerine yeterli ekonomik olanakları sunmaması, kendi ekonomik dezavantajlarının sebebi olarak görülmektedir. Önceden bahsedildiği gibi ekonomik başarı eril kimliğin kurulmasında önemli bir etken olduğu için, ekonomik başarı beklentisine uyum sağlayamayan genç erkekler babalarına karşı bir hınç duymaktadır. Kadınlarla olan ilişkilerde ise görücü usulü evlilik belirleyici bir rol oynamaktadır. Erkek olmak geleneksel olarak kadına

hüküm kurma anlamına gelse bile şehirde büyüyen ilk nesil olarak modifyeci gençler bir yandan sevdikleri kadınlarla romantik bir ilişki kurmak isterken bir yandan da ailelerinin ayarladığı görücü usulü evlendikleri kadınlarla hiyerarşik bir güç ilişkisi kurmak zorunda hissediyorlar. Bu yüzden, evlendikleri ve evlenmeleri tabu olan kadınlar dışındaki her kadını kendilerinin bu açmazı olarak görüp, iffetsizlikle suçlarken esasında kadınlara karşı da bir hınç ifade ediyorlar. Etnik azınlıklarla olan şiddetli ilişkileri ise bir yandan bir “mimli” yaratma ve böylece kendilerinin “mimli” olmadıklarını doğrulama yolu olarak okunabilir. Öte yandan, nu şiddetli ilişkinin temelinde de yine bir hınç duygusu yer almakta çünkü etnik azınlıklar daha önceden tamamen kendilerine ait olan vasıfsız işlerde rekabet yaratmakta.

Tüm bunların ışığında öne sürülebilir ki kent yoksulu modifyeci gençler, erkekliklerini yaralı ve parçalanmış bir kimliğin üzerine kurmaktadır. Bu yara, ellerindeki imkânlar ve hedefledikleri konumun uyumsuzluğundan; kendilerini tanımlama gücünden yoksun olup başkası tarafından tanımlanmaktan, yani ontolojik bir şiddete maruz kalmalarından doğar. Bu yaradan, mağdur eden olmak isterken maruz kalan olmaktan ortaya çıkan ise hınç duygusudur.

Hınç duygusu Nietzsche'nin deyimiyle hayali intikam alma eylemlerine yol açar (1967). Bu açıdan baktığımızda, bir silah olarak otomobil bu hayali intikamların alınmasında kullanılmaktadır. Üzerine eril anlamlar yükledikleri ve dolaylı yoldan kentte eril varoluşlarını gösterdikleri otomobiller, hınç duygusunun köreltici etkisi sebebiyle hatalı bir biçimde kendi dezavantajlı durumlarının müsebbibi olarak gördükleri kişilerden, hayali bir biçimde sürüş aracılığıyla intikam almanın silahları olarak görülmekte. Fakat Bourdieu'nün hatırlattığı gibi (1995) hınç duygusu, tam da hayali intikamlar sebebiyle başarısızlıkla sonuçlanmakta ve de kurulu düzeni yeniden üreten umursamazlığa ve hatta muhafazakârlığa dönüşmekte. Böylece, birbiriyle doğrudan ilişkili olan cinsiyet düzeni, ekonomik yapı, ayrımcı kent hayatı,

her ne kadar karşı çıkılsa da bu karşı çıkmanın paradoksal durumu sebebiyle yeniden üretilmektedir.

## C. PERMISSION FORM FOR THESIS PHOTOCOPY

### 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 : Aktürk  
Adı : Sarper Erinç  
Bölümü : Sosyal Antropoloji

**TEZİN ADI** (İngilizce) : BECOMING A MAN ON THE STREETS:  
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF JOYRIDER COMMUNITIES OF  
ANKARA

**TEZİN TÜRÜ** : Yüksek Lisans  Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
3. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz.

**TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ:**