

THE MALLIFICATION OF URBAN LIFE IN ANKARA:  
THE CASE OF ANKAMALL

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE MALLIFICATION OF URBAN LIFE IN ANKARA: THE CASE OF ANKAMALL**

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This study investigates the emergence of a shopping mall based urban life in Ankara. As the city is under the siege with the mushrooming growth of shopping malls, the urban life gains a new attribute. The economical, social, and cultural institutions and activities of the city are collected under the roof of the mall, and distinctions out of the shopping mall are formed and reproduced around the consumption activities of the mall. Based on a qualitative research which was conducted in ANKAmall, this study investigates the shopping mall experience of the different segments of population in terms of income group, age, and gender. Shopping malls present an idealized urban life in Turkey by providing individuals to articulate with Westernization, modernization, and globalization processes in their everyday lives. While the everyday life goes under transformation in the shopping malls through the juxtaposition of irrelevant spheres, they also become the center of attraction for different segments of population despite their restrictive dynamics such as socio-technological control. The subject of

the mallified urban life is the consumer, while its culture rests on the intersection of modernization and globalization.

Keywords: Shopping mall, urban life, consumption, Ankara, identity.

## ÖZ

### ANKARA'DA KENT HAYATININ ALIŞVERİŞ MERKEZİ ODAKLILAŞMASI: ANKAMALL ÖRNEĞİ

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Bu tez Ankara'da alışveriş merkezi odaklı bir kent hayatının ortaya çıkışını açıklamayı amaçlıyor. Kent mantar gibi çoğalan alışveriş merkezlerinin kuşatması altındayken, kent hayatı da yeni bir nitelik kazanıyor. Kentin ekonomik, sosyal ve kültürel kurumları ve aktiviteleri alışveriş merkezi çatısı altında bir araya gelirken, alışveriş merkezi dışındaki farklılıklar da içerideki tüketim aktiviteleri etrafında biçimlendirilip, yeniden üretiliyor. Bu çalışma, ANKAmall'da gerçekleştirilen nitel bir araştırmaya dayanarak gelir grubu, yaş ve toplumsal cinsiyet değişkenleri doğrultusunda nüfusun farklı kesimlerinin alışveriş merkezi deneyimini inceliyor. Alışveriş merkezleri Türkiye'de bireylerin Batılılaşma, modernleşme ve küreselleşme süreçleriyle gündelik hayatta temas etmelerini sağlayarak idealize edilmiş bir kent hayatı sunuyorlar. Alışveriş merkezlerinde gündelik hayat birbirinden keskin bir biçimde ayrılmış mekan ve aktivitelerin iç içe geçmesiyle bir dizi dönüşümden geçerken, alışveriş merkezi sosyo-teknolojik kontrol gibi

kısıtlayıcı dinamiklerine rağmen farklı kesimler için çekim merkezi olmayı sürdürüyor. Alışveriş merkezi odaklı kent hayatının kültürü modernleşme ve küreselleşmenin kesişimine dayanırken, öznesini de tüketici oluşturuyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Alışveriş merkezi, kent hayatı, tüketim, Ankara, kimlik.

*To My Family*



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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

### **ABBREVIATIONS**

LC: Lower Class

MC: Middle Class

UC: Upper Class

F: Female

M: Male



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Like the factory of the 19th century, shopping mall is one of the key institutions to understand the modern society. The significance of the factory sprang from the fact that the way of participating to the relations of production in factories was strongly affecting the life outside the factory. While the factory embodied the change in the economic sphere as the product of the new economic mentality, it also impacted on the formation of the individual, the social position of the individual, and the mode of social relations in the society. The way of participating to the relations of consumption affects the life outside the mall, as well. However, the significance of the shopping mall is not restricted with that; because, there is not a clear separation between the life in shopping mall and the life outside the mall as the mall claims to be a city in itself by collecting the institutions of the city under its roof. Therefore, while on the one hand the shopping mall reshapes the inequality, public space, discovery of identity, attribute of social groupings, flow of everyday life and urban culture; on the other hand, at the same time, it becomes the setting where its impacts can be explored most saliently. This study examines the mallification of urban life. This concept of mallification refers to the changing urban life as a result of the mushrooming growth of the shopping malls. This study mainly questions how the distinctions outside the shopping mall are reproduced in the mall and what kind of an urban life comes out of from the interaction of the distinctive attributes of these consumption-based spaces and the experiences of different

segments of population in the context of Turkey, specifically Ankara, where consumption sphere coincides with modernization, Westernization, and globalization of the country. Before elaborating on the issue, I articulate the historical background and sociological significance of the shopping mall and the importance of the subject in the context of Turkey.

### **1.1. The Shopping Mall: Definition and History**

The shopping mall is a product of the collection of different elements of the retailing sector in an enclosed atmosphere and under a single managerial organization in order to supply consumers with one-stop shopping. In addition to being a center of shopping, they are also a center of social and cultural life (Pride & Ferrel, 1983: 275, cited from Alkibay et. al., 2007: 2). Sociologically, the shopping mall is a consumption-based social space constructed by the intersection of different networks of social relations. It can be defined in two levels. First, economically a shopping mall is a consumption machine that transforms capital into money through the consumption of goods and services by visitors. Secondly, the mall is a site of everyday life where social values are exchanged (Gottdiener, 2005: 126-8). Providing a single, stable definition of the shopping mall is difficult since the definition varies according to the type of mall being analyzed. There are three main types of malls: the “community shopping mall”, “regional shopping mall” and “super-regional shopping mall” (Alkibay, 2007: 10-8). This categorization is based on the total covered retailing area of the malls. The more the covered retail area is enhanced, the more the mall becomes a centre of socio-cultural activities. Beyond this traditional categorization, the new trend is theme parks which are founded on a huge area and provide consumption of experiences rather than of commodities. Generally sociologists examine the super-regional malls and theme parks. The table below summarizes the traditional categorization:

Table 1: Three Types of Shopping Malls

Types of Malls	Total Average Retailing Area (m2)	Average Visitor Potential (Thousand)	Anchor Tenant
Community Mall	14.000	40 - 120	department store
Regional Mall	37.000	More than 150	One or two department store(s)
Super-regional Mall	74.000	More than 300	Three department stores

The first completely enclosed, climate controlled, indoor shopping mall was Southdale Mall in Minnesota, built in 1956 by architect Victor Gruen (Krupa, 1993: 2; Jackson, 1996: 1114). Although malls are now widespread all over the world, they are generally identified as a symbol of American culture. According to Jackson (1996: 1111), malls are the common denominator of American national life and the best symbol of American abundance:

*The Egyptians have pyramids, the Chinese have a great wall, the British have immaculate lawns, the Germans have castles, the Dutch have canals, the Italians have grand churches. And Americans have shopping centers (ibid.).*

The shopping mall, however, is not totally an American innovation. While Gottdiener (2005) sees the Grand Bazaar of Istanbul as the ancestor of shopping malls, Jackson locates their roots in earlier stages of history:

*The enclosed shopping spaces have existed for centuries, from agora of Ancient Greece to the Palais Royal of pre-revolutionary Paris. The Jerusalem bazaar has been providing a covered shopping experience for two thousand years, while Istanbul's Grand Bazaar was doing the same when Sultans ruled the Ottoman Empire from the nearby Topkapı Palace. (Jackson, 1996: 1111)*

Although the roots of the shopping mall can be found in earlier examples of enclosed retailing spaces, the mall is a product of a specific historical moment with specific social dynamics. For Cohen (1996: 1050), the shopping mall phenomenon in the US is linked to the post-war American consumer

who continued spending as if there were no tomorrow. To her, this excessive consumption created a non-vicious circle of Keynesian economic growth: spending created more production, production created more wealth, and wealth created further spending (ibid.). The birth of shopping malls is firmly based on the emergence of modern consumer culture and with the impact of Fordism. As Lee (1993) argues, Fordism not only brought about changes in the organization of labor and means of production, it was also a transformation of an entire way of life: people lived differently, worked differently, and satisfied their needs differently. In this period, consumer goods became readily available for the majority of people, and were no longer restricted to the middle and upper classes. In addition, as the conveniences of life became more affordable, people needed to spend less time on everyday chores, and they had more time to spend on leisure goods and activities (ibid., p: 85). Increases in discretionary income and time, and the reduced physical demand of most jobs, provided the means to pursue personal achievement through leisure activities and through the acquisition of status-conferring goods (Nicosia & Mayer, 1976: 72). The impact of Fordism on the formation of the mall is twofold. First, it impacted the retailing sector in terms of the abundance of goods; second, it provided the material and social conditions for the pursuit of goods for the majority.

According to Gottdiener (2005: 121-2), the birth of the shopping mall is linked to the dispersal of population and economic activity from the city center to the whole metropolitan area. The mall is a product of the restructuring of the marketplace accompanying the suburbanization of residential life (Cohen, 1996: 1051). Lacking a community life in suburbs, the shopping mall supplies both the consumption and community life needs of suburbanites (Lewis, 1990: 121). Therefore, the shopping mall provides a vision of how a community space should be constructed in an economy and society based on mass consumption (Cohen, 1996: 1053). In addition, the post-war period witnessed an enormous increase in the level of automobile

ownership in America. Accompanying the increasing role of automobiles in social life, the design and organization of public spaces have experienced a major transformation (Southworth, 2005: 121). As consumers became dependent on and inseparable from their cars, traffic congestion and parking problems prevented commercial expansion in traditional business districts of cities, where developable land was scarce (Cohen: 1996: 1052).

There are other reasons for the mall boom in the US between the 1950s and 1960s. According to Hanchett (1996: 1083), racial tensions in the city center pushed the upper and middle classes to the suburban areas where shopping malls were spreading rapidly aided by the accelerated depreciation of taxes for developers. Hanchett claims that latter was the most important factor in the shopping mall boom (ibid.). For Jackson (1996: 1115-6), however, there were additional factors that made it advantageous for developers to invest in shopping malls, such as cheap suburban land, weak land-use controls and zoning regulations, the government's automobile travel subsidy, and greater room for growth compared with downtown.

Since their advent in the 1950s, the number of malls in the US has reached 48,000.<sup>1</sup> The more the number has increased the more they have become powerful economic forces. Total shopping mall sales equal approximately 675 billion dollars annually, which is more than half of the total retailing sales in the country. Thirteen percent of the GNDP of the U.S.A. comes from shopping malls. In addition, eight percent of the economically active population is employed in shopping malls (Alkibay et. al., 2007: 31). Furthermore, founded in 1957, the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) is based on the country. Having seventy-five thousand members in

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<sup>1</sup> This data was collected through a telephone interview with Turan Konuk, who is the research department expert of AMPD on 14.07.2008

more than ninety countries<sup>2</sup>, ICSC is a globally strong interest group. On the other hand, the mall has become an inseparable part of everyday life. After the TV, going to the mall is the most important leisure activity in the US (Cohen, 1996). After home and work/school, the mall is the place that most Americans congregate (Goss, 1993: 25). After explaining the historical roots of the shopping mall, the next section articulates the sociological significance of the shopping mall.

## **1.2. The Sociology of the Shopping Mall**

What makes shopping malls sociologically significant is their intersection of different networks of social relations. In line with Mayer and Nicosia's argument about the sociology of consumption, malls are sites of sociological exploration as long as they are related to broader social changes in cultural values, non-consumptional institutions, norms, and activities (1976: 69). According to Miller et. al. (1998: 78), the discourse about shopping malls is about the role of the state, the future of the city, the aesthetics and nature of public space, and the regulation of the free market. Hanchett (1996: 1082) adds that malls are also sites for examining the expanding service economy, major public policy discussions such as the efficacy of federal urban spending, and the growth of an under-class physically isolated from places of employment. In addition, the mall is also related to the increasing importance of shopping in society. According to Falk and Campbell (1997: 1-2), shopping structures the everyday lives of urban people as the main realm of social action, interaction, and experience. As relatively new institutions, shopping malls reflect the changing dynamics of everyday life, public spaces, construction of identity, and globalization.

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<sup>2</sup> This data was collected from the home page of ICSC <http://www.icsc.org/about/about.php>  
14.07.2008

Shopping malls have for many years been an inseparable part of everyday urban life in all capitalist societies. The economic and recreational institutions of the cities converge under the roof of the mall and create a compressed, minimized, and interiorized form of the city center (ibid. p: 9). The everyday life of the mall is composed of modern and postmodern components. The modern components mainly concern architecture, interior design, and managerial issues. The rational plan of the shopping mall creates a fantasy urbanism devoid of weather conditions, traffic congestion, air pollution, and disadvantaged segments of population (Southworth, 2005: 154). Early developers of the mall thought that the rationalization of consumption and community in the mall was no less important than the increased quality of transportation through highways (Cohen, 1996: 1055-6). The interior design of the mall is rationally planned to stimulate visitors to make purchases (Gottdiener, 2005). As Simmel (1990, cited in Paterson, 2006: 63) argues, rationalization results in the generalization of exchange relations, in which objects are substitutable and exchanged for others, and money facilitates this. The preponderance of exchange relations in shopping malls not only facilitates the commodification of goods but also organizes leisure time in a systematic, ordered, reasoned, and controlled way (ibid., p: 26). In addition, commodification impacts social relations between visitors and salespersons. As Ritzer (2001) argues, the salespersons' communication with consumers is not spontaneous. The words of salespersons are like the cues of a scenario; they are also standardized.

However, contrary to Weber's argument about the disenchantment of the world as a result of the rationalization, the rationalization in the malls creates enchantment, which is the basis of the postmodern components of shopping malls. The rational design of the mall creates a partial loss of the sense of the here and now (Conroy, 1998: 63). The monumental architecture, luxury design, perfect order, air-conditioned weather, excessive cleanness, abundance of commodities, and brilliant lightning system turn the mall

experience into an extraordinary one. Everyday life becomes an aesthetic and spectacular life in the mall where the borders between the luxurious and mundane, the ordinary and extraordinary, popular and high culture are annihilated (Featherstone, 1996).

The central role of shopping malls in everyday urban life engenders discussion about the notion of public space. In modern societies, marketplaces have been seen as public spaces that mediate the relation between the state and society (Voyce, 2006: 270). Voyce sees the mall as a rupture from earlier public spaces that were based on equality and free access (ibid.). Mass consumption has created a new landscape in which people gather in the commercial, private space of the mall rather than a central marketplace, parks, streets, and public buildings (Cohen, 1996: 1079). Public space is constructed freely in its disorder and is identified with free speech and equal access rights (Voyce, 2006). Voyce goes on to argue that the controlled and ordered space of shopping malls restricts democratic rights (ibid.). According to him, the shift from urban public spaces to the quasi-public spaces of shopping malls results in the increasing role of private companies in town planning, showing the preponderance of neoliberal discourse in the mall (ibid.). Critiques of malls often claim that they are socially divisive, excluding those who don't have access to private cars, who lack the necessary cultural and economic capital, and who are undesirable because of threatening behaviors (Miller et. al., 1998: 77). The emphasis on freedom in public spaces is replaced by security and order in the mall. As urban public spaces are increasingly identified with crime, shopping malls become like a prison in reverse: they keep deviant behavior on the outside, and form a consumerist citizenship inside (Voyce, 2006: 273). Location and the possibilities of public transportation contribute to the visitor profile of the mall. The fewer public transportation opportunities, the less heterogeneous the visitor profile will be (Backes, 1997; Cohen, 1996). Contrary to common argument, after describing the middle class majority of department store



visitors, Corrigan (1997: 50) argues that all classes of people could enter these spaces, and so each class in its own way could achieve a form of consumerhood through what has been called the democratization of luxury. On the other hand, Lewis (1990: 122) argues that the collectivity of the mall does not create a community in true sense. He argues that community is characterized by the *gemeinschaften* spirit of communal and primary relationships in which intimacy, sentiment, and a sense of belonging exist among individuals. To him, the collectivity of shopping mall represents the bringing together of demographically similar persons in a locale (ibid.). It is important to mention that many critiques of malls romanticize public spaces. It is not entirely clear how democratic and open urban public spaces are for different segments of the population. In addition, as surveillance strategies are applied, the freedom of public spaces must be questioned. It seems that the problems of the shopping malls are based on unequal economic development rather than the structure of them.

The increasing number of shopping malls and their growing attraction for urban people are also related to the identity of the social agent in capitalist societies. According to Weber (2002), capitalism emerged from the self-denying ethic of Protestantism, in which working hard was the sign of being elected for salvation in the afterlife. Weber claimed that working hard for other worldly purposes was replaced with working hard for the sake of financial gain as the main motivation of agents in capitalist societies (ibid.). As capitalism and the nature of labor evolved, work has lost its central place in the construction of identity. As Sennett (2005) argues, work has not remained central in the construction of self-narration because of its flexible character during post-Fordist organization. The increasing role of consumption in the construction of identity is related to the “status panic” of the new middle classes. According to Conroy (1998: 74-5), the shift in the middle classes from traditional land ownership and entrepreneurship to the new middle classes of corporate managers and employees made income a

criterion of middle class social status. However, the income criterion made the social prestige of the new middle classes more uncertain than their predecessors. Therefore, the new middle classes depended on the goods they consumed to express their social prestige (ibid.). Today, people keep working hard in different forms, but given more resources, they choose to spend them on greater consumption (Slater, 1997: 18). Bocock (1997: 56) argues that the motivation for working hard has changed from gaining an otherworldly reward to owning, or dreaming to own, more commodities. That is why shopping malls are hothouses of social groupings based less on fixed, shared background or class structure, and more on shifting, shared feelings, affinities or identifications (Paterson, 2006: 50). The shopping mall can be seen as a material habitus in which different stores address different dispositions resulting from different economic and cultural capital (Miller et. al., 1998: 187). As Backes (1997: 6) argues, in buying products with certain images and associations we create ourselves, our personality, our qualities, even our past and future. In addition to making economic choices, consumers are involved in a creative reworking of gender, ethnicity, and class in the mall (Miller et. al., 1998: 187). The mall becomes a form through which the nature of identity is discovered and refined (ibid.).

Shopping malls are like globalization museums. Their similar architecture, design, and managerial aspects annihilate geographical differences and render geographical distances meaningless. As Jackson (1996: 1112) argues, shopping malls are widespread all around the world; Hong Kong has as many modern malls as any metropolitan region in the U.S., and tourists in Kowloon might easily imagine that they are in Orlando or Spokane. According to Ritzer (2003: 191), malls are examples of the globalization of nothing, since they are social forms that are devoid of distinctive and substantive content. Beyond the architectural similarities, desires are also globalized through shopping malls. As Askegaard et al. (2003: 337) argue, global luxury brands have become the symbol of the desired consumer life.

Therefore, what one buys in Beijing is not just a hamburger, but a portion of America, the good life, and freedom (Paterson, 2006: 66). However, the encounter of global culture with local culture in the mall does not result in the domination of the former over the latter or vice versa. Globalization rather brings the hybridization of the global and local in a mutual interaction. In the mall, an interesting hybridization of tastes and entirely different conceptions of space and ways of spending leisure are constructed. Although shopping malls are an American invention, they do not necessarily fulfill the same functions in other parts of the world (Abaza, 2001: 101).

After drawing a general framework about shopping malls, I try to be more specific in the next section. In the following section, I try to explain how the changes in the retailing sector affected the social change in Turkey.

### **1.3. Transformations in the Retailing Sector of Turkey**

Transformations in the retailing sector have affected social change of Turkey. This effect can be seen especially in the expansion of Western values into Turkish society (Orçan, 2004: 101). According to Işın (1995, cited from Orçan, 2004: 103), in Ottoman society until the nineteenth century daily life was organized around the mosques, which represented the religious life and *çarşı*, which represented economic life. Following the opening of the first department stores such as Bon Marché, Baker, and Bazar Allemand in the nineteenth century in Istanbul, Western consumption patterns have expanded in ways that involve lower classes too. As a result, department stores became new requirements of everyday urban life. In this way, a new social type that had reasons other than traditional ones to be in public spaces emerged. For the first time in nineteenth century, allured by the goods in the department stores, people had other spaces than traditional ones to socialize in Istanbul (ibid).

In the republican period, small-scale, capital-weak, independent, and family owned retailers dominated until the 1980s (Tokatli & Boyaci, 1998: 346). The first change in this period appeared with the authorization of municipalities to serve people in the retailing sector (Cengiz & Ozden, 2002: 2-3). The first Migros in Turkey was opened in Istanbul jointly by state and the Swiss company Migros in 1954. Two years later, the GIMA supermarket chain was founded by the state to serve Anatolian cities. This trend continued in 1970s with the supermarkets of municipalities (ibid.). Until the 1980s, Turkey relied on a development strategy based on import-substituting industrialization. Starting in 1980,

*a more outward-oriented development strategy, which aimed to develop the export potential of the country by recognizing and coming to terms with global competition conditions, replaced the previous strategy and affected both production and consumption patterns in the economy (Tokatli & Boyaci, 1998: 345-6).*

In this period, although small-scale retailing continues to dominate, large-scale retailing has gained power. The driving force of this transformation has been domestic corporations and international retailers. The result has been the rise of corporate power and the introduction of foreign capital through partnerships with Turkish firms, making possible the large investments required by new consumer demand (Erkip, 2003: 1074). In this period, the main domestic corporations in the sector were Fiba Holding (GIMA), Koç Holding (Migros-Turk), Boyner Holding (Çarşı department store), and Sabancı Holding (Carrefour). In addition to domestic corporations, international retailers also entered the market. Metro International (1988), Carrefour (1991), Booker (1997) are food retailing examples. In fast-food retailing, McDonalds, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and Pizza Hut entered the market in the late 1980s, and Burger King and Subway in the 1990s. Benetton (1986), Levi's (1989), and Mothercare (1988) are examples of international retailers in clothing (Tokatli & Boyaci, 1998: 347-9; Yanıklar, 2006: 78-85).

It appears that compared with Western societies' gradual modernization in the retailing sector, the experience of Turkey can be described as jumping

rather than a gradual movement. For instance, majority of Turkish people experienced the shopping mall without seeing a department store. As there has never been a jumping betterment in the economic condition of the people, the rapid growth of retailing sector after 1980 shows that the jumping condition is a result of the formation of an appropriate atmosphere for the investment of the big capital holders. The reply of the people did not get late as the shopping mall became the dream of the people through TV.

From 1980 on, retailing became more and more powerful in the Turkish economy. Today, following energy, education, and the health sector, retailing is the fourth biggest sector of Turkey's economy. The turnover of the sector in 2007 is 150 billion dollars. 5.5 billion dollars of 21 billion dollars total foreign investment was for retailing in 2007. The retailing sector is one of the biggest employers in the country<sup>3</sup>; 2.5 million people are employed in retailing. Moreover, 250,000 new employees will be added to this number in the next three years.<sup>4</sup> Today, the sector gains more power with the mushrooming growth of shopping malls, especially in the big cities. In the next section I explain the shopping mall boom in Turkey with the help of statistical data.

#### **1.4. The Shopping Mall Boom in Turkey**

Turkey has been living the shopping mall boom for the last few years. Since the establishment of the first mall in 1988, the number of malls in Turkey has reached 186. Moreover, in the next three years the impact of the boom will be intensified with the addition of 170 new malls<sup>5</sup>. Compared to the previous three decades, the shopping mall boom in Turkey is clearly a phenomenon of the 2000s. In the 1980s only three shopping malls were opened, the country

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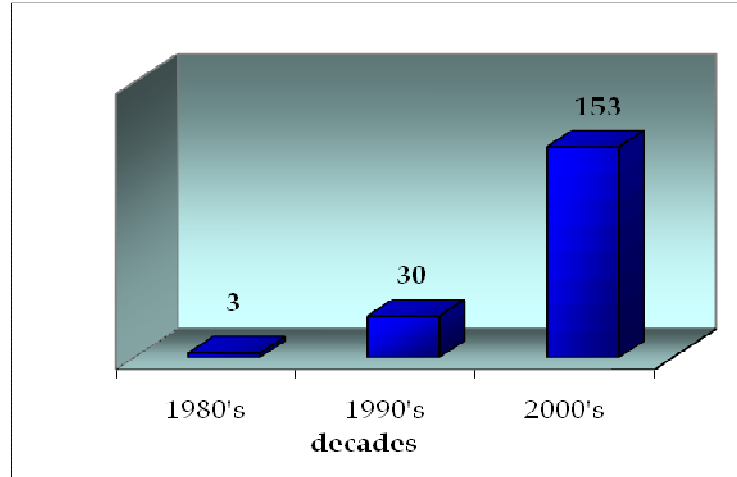
<sup>3</sup> Bu sektör 250 bin eleman arıyor [www.hurriyet.com.tr](http://www.hurriyet.com.tr) 16.06.2007

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.ampd.org/images/tr/Arastirmalar/Sektorel\\_Bilgiler/organize\\_perakende\\_sektoru\\_ozet\\_Ocak2008.ppt](http://www.ampd.org/images/tr/Arastirmalar/Sektorel_Bilgiler/organize_perakende_sektoru_ozet_Ocak2008.ppt) last visited in 14.07.2008

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.ampd.org/images/tr/Arastirmalar/Sektorel\\_Bilgiler/organize\\_perakende\\_sektoru\\_ozet\\_Ocak2008.ppt](http://www.ampd.org/images/tr/Arastirmalar/Sektorel_Bilgiler/organize_perakende_sektoru_ozet_Ocak2008.ppt) last visited in 14.07.2008

had thirty new shopping malls in the 1990s, and since 2000, 153 new shopping malls were opened in Turkey.

Table 2: Number of Shopping Mall Openings Per Decades



Source: Available at <http://www.ampd.org> 01.06.2008

According to February 2008 data, the total retailing area of Turkey is approximately four million square meters and the total retailing area per thousand people is 53.5 square meters.<sup>6</sup> Despite this growth, Turkey can still be called destitute of shopping malls compared to European countries. As it is shown below in the Table 3, Turkey ranks twenty-fourth among thirty-four European countries in total retailing area per thousand people:

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<sup>6</sup> This data was collected through a telephone interview with Turan Konuk, who is the research department expert of AMPD on 14.07.2008

Table 3: Total Retailing Area Per Thousand People Among European Countries

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>1000/TRA (m2)</i>
1	Norway	783.9
2	Sweden	332.1
3	Holland	323.1
4	Austria	267.3
<b>24</b>	<b>Turkey</b>	<b>53.5</b>

Source: Available at <http://www.ampd.org> 01.06.2008

It might be seen as a paradox to claim both that Turkey is experiencing a shopping mall boom and is destitute of shopping malls. However, the source of this paradox lies in the density of shopping malls in the big cities of Turkey. There are sixty-four shopping malls in Istanbul, and the total retailing area per thousand people in Istanbul is 120.4 square meters. Although there are not many shopping malls in the east part of the country, there are startling investments in relatively small eastern cities of Turkey. Misland in Elazığ is one, which cost 150 million dollars<sup>7</sup>. It is not difficult to foresee that the number of malls will increase in the eastern part of the country since the people there show a great interest in them. The mall of Kayseri, Kayseri Park, was visited by 650,000 people in the two months following its opening<sup>8</sup>. As it is shown below in the Table 4, seventy-eight new shopping malls are planned to be built in Anatolian cities in the next three years:

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.gazetevatan.com> Elazığ Elazığ olalı Böyle Yatırım Görmedi 29.07.2007

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.referansgazetesi.com> Kayseri Park İki Ayda 650 bin Ziyaretçi Çekti 10.08.2006

Table 4. The Number of Shopping Malls in Anatolian Cities and in Istanbul<sup>9</sup>.

Cities	Active	In process of building
Istanbul	64	47
Anatolian cities	122	78

### 1.5. The Shopping Mall Boom in Ankara and ANKAmall

Having the first shopping mall in 1989, the number of malls in Ankara reached twenty-four in 2007. What is more important is that twelve of them were opened in the last two years. ANKAmall, Atakule, Armada, Antares, Bilkent Center, Cepa, Karum, Panora, 365, Minasera, and Galeria are some of the malls in Ankara. The covered retail space in Ankara has reached 332,000 square meters, but it is expected to reach 1 million square meters in 2015.<sup>10</sup> Approximately 36,000 people are employed in shopping malls in Ankara.<sup>11</sup> With the continuing construction, the city resembles a huge construction site of shopping malls. The increasing visibility of malls implies a significant change in urban life. According to Ortaylı (2008), in the earlier years of the capital of the republic, the intellectual atmosphere characterized the urban culture; the bureaucratic, educational, and cultural institutions' buildings dominated the architecture of the city. Social life coincided with cultural activities and Ankara was the cultural vanguard of Turkey. However, the city lost its attraction in 1970s (ibid.). In modern Ankara, as the number of shopping malls increases rapidly, the social, cultural and economic life of the city is being reshaped. The impact of shopping malls in the city is not restricted to the transformation of retailing sites. Old retailing spaces such as YIBA and Modern Çarşı have already lost their attraction for the majority of the population. Apart from rivaling department stores and brand-name

<sup>9</sup>[http://www.ampd.org/images/tr/Arastirmalar/Sektorel\\_Bilgiler/organize\\_perakende\\_sektoru\\_ozet\\_Ocak2008.ppt](http://www.ampd.org/images/tr/Arastirmalar/Sektorel_Bilgiler/organize_perakende_sektoru_ozet_Ocak2008.ppt) last visited in 14.07.2008

<sup>10</sup> [http://yapitr.com/turkce/Etkinlikler\\_EtkinlikHaberleri\\_Detay.asp?NewsID=53703](http://yapitr.com/turkce/Etkinlikler_EtkinlikHaberleri_Detay.asp?NewsID=53703) 10.07.2007

<sup>11</sup> AVM'ler istihdam merkezi gibi oldu  
<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ankara/8258488.asp?gid=140&sz=82087> 19.02.2008



chain stores in Kızılay, shopping malls are taking the role as the new centers of the city. Briefly put, shopping malls signify the emergence of a “mallified” urban life in Ankara where people shop in the mall, work in the mall, meet in the mall, eat in the mall, sit in the mall, wander around the mall, pay their bills in the banks of the mall, go to the movies in the mall, stay in the hotel of the mall, go to concerts in the mall, and wander the exhibition spaces of the mall. In the mallified urban life of Ankara, interesting confrontations appear. Lower classes and upper classes, suburbanites and *gecekondu* dwellers, high culture and popular culture, global culture and local culture all confront each other in shopping malls. With the impact of Keynesian economy policies, Western countries witnessed the emergence of the affluent worker who abandons the proletarian lifestyle for the universe of goods and variety of consumer options (Wildt, 2003: 111). Without experiencing the emergence of affluence for themselves, the lower classes nevertheless experience new modes and relations of consumption in the mallified urban life of Ankara. In addition, gender also is also affected by the new mallified urban life. Department stores had provided an experience of modernity especially for upper class women in Ankara (Tutalar, 2007: 9). Shopping malls provide the same experience for wider segments of the population, including lower class women even if they are accompanied by their husbands. Even though the coincidence of popular culture and high culture, and global culture and local culture in shopping malls creates a more inclusive mall culture in which existing inequalities outside of the mall continues.

ANKAmall, as the biggest mall of the city, is the most appropriate sites to examine shopping malls. Founded in August 1999 as Migros Shopping Mall, its name changed to ANKAmall after its expansion in 2006. The mall was developed by Hamburg-based ECE Management Company and it is still managed by the same company. It is located next to the intersection of highways to Konya and Istanbul. In addition to private automobiles, it can be reached by a wide range of public transportation vehicles including subway.



Illustration 1: A view of ANKA mall  
Source: <http://www.ankamall.org> 30.05.2008

Constructed with four floors, ANKA mall covers 106,000 square meters of retail space. In terms of covered retailing space, it is the biggest mall in Turkey. It offers 6000 parking spaces. The mall houses more than 300 shops including banks, a travel agency, drugstore, dry cleaner, herbalist, and the biggest Migros supermarket of the country. It also has a food court with twenty restaurants and a movie theater complex with a capacity of 2,353, featuring 10 movie theatres and a theatre saloon. It also includes approximately ten cafes and two play centers.<sup>12</sup> In addition, a five star hotel was opened next to the mall in May 2008. Lastly, it also houses a consumer consultation desk of Yeni Mahalle governorship. ANKA mall employs more than 3000 employees. It is visited daily by approximately 60,000 visitors during the week and 100,000 visitors on weekends.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> ECE home page

<http://www.ece.de/en/geschaeftsfelder/shopping/listedershoppingprojekte/center/ama/> 10.06.2008

<sup>13</sup> Büyük AVM'lerde Ziyaretçi Sayısı Dudak Uçıklattı

[http://www.yapi.com.tr/turkce/Haber\\_Detay.asp?NewsID=56082](http://www.yapi.com.tr/turkce/Haber_Detay.asp?NewsID=56082) 10.01.2008



Illustration 2: A View from the Indoor Area of ANKAmall

Source: <http://www.ankamall.org> 30.05.2008

## 1.6. Plan of Chapters

The discussion starts in the third chapter with the transformation of everyday urban life into a mallified form in Ankara. Shopping malls annihilate the well-known cause and effect relations. For example, being continuously watched and controlled becomes one of the attractions of the malls. In addition, the socio-spatialization of everyday life which is known as the reference of social behavior is annihilated in the mall. The luxury and ordinary, aesthetical and mundane coincide in the mall resulting in a spectacular everyday life. It appears that the magic of the mall differs in accordance with the social condition of the individual outside the mall. However, there is magic for everyone in the mall except the older generations of low income groups.

In the fourth chapter, the dynamics of the quasi-public space of the malls are examined. The chapter is shaped around the question how shopping malls can be inclusive while there is socio-technological pressure on low income groups and deterioration of the democratic rights. The freedom as the main

characteristic of the city life changes with the secure mall life. In the rationally planned shopping malls every centimeter square is identified with stimuli of consumption that is why the visitors of the mall turn into being consumer citizens. Shopping mall is like a material habitus for people with different economic and cultural capital. It seems that the inequalities outside the mall reflect to the mode of relations of consumption. I argue that the inclusive feature of shopping malls is linked with its relation with modernization and westernization, the increasing impact of consumption in the everyday life, the deteriorating conditions of urban public spaces, and providing a liberating space for women.

In the fifth chapter, the relation between consumption and discovery of identity is examined. While consumption transforms into being reward of work, it becomes the reference point in the construction of self-narrations. In the light of the self-narratives of informants, three social types of the mall are examined in this chapter, namely, social consumer, distant consumer, and window shopper. I argue that the discovery of identity in the shopping malls is not independent from the position in the socio-economic sphere. I try to show that the role of shopping mall in the discovery of identity is not limited to consumption activities which it provides. For different reasons shopping malls become central in the discovery of identity for different segments of population.

The sixth chapter is about the intersection of globalization and modernization in shopping malls of Ankara. Modernization of consumption sites through shopping malls signifies Western, hence more advanced lifestyle in Turkey. Based on mainly rationalization, modernization in the mall creates the basis of homogeneous globalization such as architecture, design, and managerial issues. On the other hand, globalization in the mall is not completely a homogeneous process. I argue that the coincidence of global and local agents in shopping malls engender a glocal experience. In this

chapter, reactions against globalization are also examined. It appears that globalization in shopping malls of Ankara is both desired and disapproved process that is simultaneously familiar and alien to the residents of Ankara.

In the seventh, conclusion, chapter, I argue that the mallified urban life creates shopping malls' domination in the social discourse of the city. In this chapter, I also try to summarize the findings of the study as the answers of the research question.

In this chapter, following a path from general to specific, I tried to explain the historical roots and sociological significance of shopping malls. In the next chapter, I explain the design of the study involving the issues about methodology, method, and sampling.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **METHODOLOGY AND THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY**

The objective of this study is to explore the social roots of the transformation of everyday urban life into a mall based one in Ankara. The rapidly increasing number of the shopping malls in Ankara has been enormously approved by the residents of the city. The shopping malls have been fast becoming the component of everyday urban life for different segments of population. This study mainly asks “what are the social roots of the shopping malls’ attraction for different income groups, age intervals, and gender in Ankara?” In line with the common view, the shopping malls are one of the building blocks of the material basis of the social life out of the shopping malls. It is clear that the ways of participating to the relations of consumption in the shopping malls are one of the determinants of the social position and accompanying socialites of the agents in the society. This study, however, investigates how the shopping malls as the material basis of the social life are socially experienced in the urban life. What attracts the different segments of population about the shopping malls, how these people from different income groups, age intervals and gender experience the social life of the mall, how the spatial shift from the urban public spaces into the quasi-public spaces of the shopping malls impacts the social life of the residents of Ankara, who are the subjects of social life of the shopping malls, and what kind of a culture comes into existence as a result of the social life of local agents in the global spaces of the shopping malls are the main questions that this study deals with.

The main motivation of this study is the mushrooming growth of the shopping malls and transformation of them into ant nests in the near past of Ankara. The earlier studies on the shopping malls mainly emphasized the patterns of social exclusion and the resulting homogeneous middle class visitor profile as the problematic sites. Although the similar patterns of social exclusion exist in the shopping malls of Ankara, the attribute of the visitor profile is heterogeneous especially in the city center shopping malls. Despite the suburban shopping malls' visitor profile is relatively more homogeneous; it is possible to see there the visitors from the gecekondu districts of the city. This relatively heterogeneous visitor profile points out that the shopping malls in Turkey has a peculiar meaning. In order to explore the social life of different segments of population in the shopping malls, the biggest mall of the city, ANKAmall has been selected as the site of the study. Being built near to the city centre, ANKAmall can be reached via public transportation vehicles such as subway, buses, and dolmuşes. The variety of the visitor profile has been thought to be compatible with the objective of the study.

The unit of analysis in this study is the visitors of ANKAmall. The visitor profile of ANKAmall ranges from gecekondu dweller to suburb dweller, from woman to man, from elderly to teenagers. Their class position differs enormously; one can be a patron of a private company while the other is unemployed. Their mode of social relations is also different; while some of them have traditional social life which is spatially centered in neighborhood and socially focused on neighbor and relative visits, the others' social life is physically centered in suburbs and socially focused on secondary relations. Their purpose of visiting to the shopping mall varies: they may visit to the mall to shop for the satisfaction of needs, to run after their desires, to articulate with Western lifestyles via consumption activities, to be aware of social discourse of consumption, to shop around by visually consuming the mall, to find new patterns of socialization, to have a new flirt, to distinct himself or herself socio-spatially from what is seen as the lower culture of the urban public spaces, to make a family outing, to escape from the bad

weather conditions. Their shopping mall experiences tell us about the changing social, economical, cultural, and spatial fields of urban life. Through their shopping mall experiences, we see the traces of a new urban way of life in Ankara, in which the enchanted shopping malls become rival of the urban public spaces; the visitors experience a new form of identity, that is, being consumers; and a hybrid, glocal culture flourishes.

## **2.1. Methodology**

In order to present social explanations to the intellectual puzzle of the research question, this study applies to qualitative methodology. It is mainly grounded in a philosophical position which is broadly interpretivist in the sense it is concerned with how the social world interpreted, understood, experienced or produced (Mason, 2002: 4). Therefore, this study sees texts, cultures, and historical periods as the interrelated system of meaning which can be clarified only from a within gaze (Ringer, 2003: 2). In relation with the research question, this study rests on that the nature of the attraction of the shopping malls consist of the narratives of the social actors (visitors) about their actions, attitudes and motivations in the setting of the shopping malls. In addition to that the knowledge of the attraction of the shopping malls can be reached through the interaction between the supra-individual setting of the shopping malls and individuals' experiences on this setting. Bourdieu argues that every collectivity has theories about the world and their place in it: how the world is, how it ought to be (Jenkins, 1992: 68). He states that these theories are learned and constructed in, through and as a part of everyday life (ibid.). In the context of this study, the attraction of shopping malls is tried to be learned via the narratives of the everyday life practices of the visitors.

This study sees the attraction of the shopping malls in Ankara concerned with the broad substantive areas of urban life, consumption, identity, and



globalization. To find the relation of the attraction of the shopping malls with those given areas, a qualitative research was conducted. After deciding clearly the research question and selecting ANKAmall as the site of the research I started visiting the mall to know the site of the research and the actors of it. During the pilot interviews I understood that the shopping mall experience is not restricted with shopping experience. I saw that the shopping mall experience can be better understood in relation with the individual meanings of the local society's dynamics such as Westernization, modernization, and globalization. Therefore, qualitative research was more appropriate to get the accompanying meanings of shopping mall experience. In addition to that to piece together the knowledge of the given substantive areas to provide explanations to the research question, qualitative research was appropriate. Because, it crosscuts disciplines, fields, and subject matter (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994: 1). A complex, interconnected family of terms, concepts, and assumptions surround the term qualitative research (ibid.: 1). This study has been designed as a bricolage to connect the individual narratives of visitors about the given areas in order to find explanations to the research question.

The method of the research was selected as field interview which involves asking questions, listening, expressing interest, and recording what was said (Neuman, 2000: 370). Conducting a field research about the shopping malls, as Slater and Miller (2007: 8) argue about consumption studies, can be seen as light or superficial compared to traditional topics of inquiry. However, even the most trivial objects and practices are the conduits through which one can see a wider sociality being mediated (ibid.). The interviews were designed as semi-structured. Although the same question set was applied in each interview, sometimes additional questions were asked in relation to the given information, and wording of questions had to change in some interviews to better clarify them.

The interviews were carried out between April 2007 and July 2007. Along three months, the interviews were carried out in different days of a week and different times of a day. I observed that some segments of population have a specific time schedule to visit the mall. For example, retired men visit to the mall following the opening of the gates to make their morning exercises while the retired women visit the mall to spend their time between lunch and dinner. Lower classes visit the mall at the weekend, in the most crowded time while the upper classes prefer visiting the mall in the calm hours, evening of weekdays. Before the field work started I was suspicious about the time period of the research. Because it was spring, I was afraid of finding the mall empty since the weather outside was alluring. However, the mall was as colorful as the nature and as crowded as the outside.

The interviews consisted of twenty-six questions but number of questions increased when it was seen necessary to ask additional questions. The questions were collected under six sub-categories of the main research question. Namely, these sub-categories were the place of the shopping mall in the everyday life, the shopping mall and the city relation, shopping mall experiences, the mall in the identity construction, the comparison of bazaars and shopping malls, and the shopping mall and globalization relation (See Appendix for the questionnaire). Some of the questions were direct information questions and generally were not followed by additional questions such as *how often do you visit the mall*. Some of the others, however, were more open-ended and mostly followed by additional questions such as *how do you describe a shopping mall to your friend who has never seen a mall*. When my question set was completed I was thinking some of the questions would not be answered because they are not clear enough. These questions were mainly the ones about shopping mall experiences' relation with Westernization and globalization. However, during the pilot interviews I saw that they work well and I did not re-arrange them. But I had to word them differently to make more understandable in some of the interviews.

The interviews were mainly conducted in the mall. However, it was generally hard to convince people to make an interview in the mall simply because they do not want to waste their spare time by answering my questions. Sometimes although some of the informants were interested in participating to my research, since they had not enough time or since they planned to spend their time with their friends they rejected to make an interview. In such conditions I got an appointment from the visitor to make an interview if possible in the mall, if not at home. Of course, conducting a research about the shopping malls in the mall is more appropriate. However, it is also inappropriate for two reasons. Firstly, the noise of the mall distracts both researcher and respondent. Secondly, the shopping malls are identified with everlasting movement which makes harder to stay stable for a long time at one point of the mall to make an in-depth interview. Sometimes while our conversation continues in the food court, the other visitors warned us about that it was not kind to occupy a desk without consuming anything while they were waiting to find an empty desk. It appeared that if you are not consuming you are not a consumer citizen.

The interviews lasted for between forty minutes and two and half hours. The duration of interviews was related to the respondent's level of concern and the researcher's ability to clarify the blurred questions. Before the research began I was suspicious about if woman respondents would accept to make interview with me. However, some of the longest interviews were made with women. Especially retired women, for whom the shopping malls were the settings of new socialization patterns, were the most willing informants. The hardest interviews in terms of gaining the trust of the respondents were the ones that I made with young girls. They were uncomfortable to sit with a stranger man.

Apart from in-depth interviews, I applied to observation, taking photo, media scanning, statistical data, and interview with the manager of the mall,

and executive of Shopping Center and Retailers Foundation as additional sources of information. I tried to keep a field diary to record my observations. I applied to my observations a lot to comprehend the dynamics of the mall on which the experiences as the subject of the individual narratives take place. In some of the chapters I used photographs of the mall in order to complement the ideas in the text. From January 2007 to June 2008 I scanned the main stream newspapers, namely Milliyet, Hürriyet, Vatan, and Referans, and some of the internet sites to learn about how the social discourse of the shopping malls is reflected and constituted by the media. In some of the chapters I applied to statistical data to support my claims about the shopping malls and the increasing role of consumption. The resulting knowledge of this study is a combination of the data collected via the given methods.

## **2.2. Sampling**

During the field study I conducted 34 interviews with the visitors of ANKAmall. I reached forty visitors in total; however, additional six interviews could not be completed because of the schedule of time of the visitors or they found the interview longer than they expected. In the selection of the sample age, income group, and gender have been taken into account. I reached to informants through purposive, and snowball sampling. At the beginning, I selected the informants regardless of any criteria such as income, gender, and age. After I completed half of the interviews, I applied to purposive sampling to find the appropriate informants in terms of age, gender or income group. It was especially difficult to interview with the lower income group visitors since they visit the mall as family or friendship group. In those situations I applied to snowball sampling.

I aimed to have equal distribution of interviewed men and women; yet, when the field study was completed the data consisted of nineteen men and

fifteen women. The reason of unequal gender distribution of respondents was mainly the difficulty of conducting a qualitative research in the mall. The visitors are continuously on the move. They shuttle among stores, passages, and flats of the mall. When they have a seat, it is either for eating in the food court or for resting in the cafes. In order to make an interview I generally had to intervene them while they were shopping, eating, and resting. Conducting an in-depth interview in a setting where time was among scarce resources was the main obstacle to have an equal distribution of the gender of respondents. When women were not accompanied by men it was easier to get acceptance. However, when they were together with men I was mostly rejected.

Nine informants were coming from high income group, fourteen informants were from middle income group and eleven informants were from low income group. In the separation of the informants into income groups individual income statue was taken as the basis. In this study, low income group consists of the informants, whose individual income statue is lower than 1000 TRY; middle income group includes the informants whose individual income statue is between 1000-2500 TRY, high income group involves the informants whose individual income statue is more than 2500 TRY<sup>14</sup>:

Table 5: Distribution of Income Groups in Terms of Gender

<b>Income Group</b>	<b>Woman</b>	<b>Man</b>
High Income	4	5
Middle Income	7	7
Low Income	4	7

<sup>14</sup> In the separation of the sample into income groups I benefited from the data from TUIK's web page: [http://www.tuik.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?tb\\_id=24&ust\\_id=7](http://www.tuik.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?tb_id=24&ust_id=7) 05.09.2007

The ages of twelve informants were between 20-35, another twelve informants were between 36-55, and ten informants were over 56. In addition to that education, occupation, lived neighborhood, and marital status were asked to comprehend better the social life of informants out of the mall. Seventeen of the informants were university graduate; fourteen of them were high school graduate while only three of the informants were primary school graduate.

Table 6: Age of the Respondents

Age Interval	The Number of Respondents
20-35	12
36-55	12
56 +	10

The occupations of the informants range from worker to boss. Two of the informants were housewife, and another two of them were university student. Seven of the informants worked for a private company as worker, eight of them worked in white collar positions of the private sector. Seven of the informants were retired employees of public sector while eight of them were working actively in the public sector. While low income informants lived densely in Mamak, Keçiören, and Sincan, the middle income informants lived in both inner city districts (such as Bahçeli, 100. Yıl) and suburbs (Yıldız), the high income informants lived densely in suburban villas around Çayyolu.

### **2.3. Limitations of the Field**

Gaining access to the shopping mall as a field requires official permission of the mall management. Conducting a research without permission carries the possibility of being intervened by the security guards. The difficulty of the shopping mall as a field begins after gaining official access. Social life is experienced in a compressed form in the shopping mall. Even the change's

itself changes in these places. People are on the move, setting is on the move. The researcher has to catch the every single instantaneity and piece them together in order to get a complete comprehension of the mall. It is not easy to carry out a qualitative research in this environment. Maybe since the shopping mall, in essence, is a private space, visitors sometimes reacted as if I was intervening their private life. I sometimes felt like a pollster ringing the bell while I was asking people to make interview.

The hardest part of the study was reaching different income groups to make interview. Since they are recognizable from the physical appearance of people, it was relatively easier to find informants from different age intervals and gender. However, it was hard to find specific informants in terms of income groups. Since it was not clear until the respondents directly explained to their income, it was hard to find the right visitor with appropriate features in the first attempt. It was especially hard to interview with low income visitors in the mall since they are either with family or friend group. Therefore, I had to take appointment to interview with them. In some cases the interview was carried out at home or work of the informant. Some of these interviews could not be completed since they were busy in their works while others lasted very long sometimes shifting to irrelevant issues. Another issue in the field was about establishing trust relations with the informants. In some of the interviews, it was hard to make informants believe that I was conducting this research for my study. They asked how much I earn per interview. It seemed irrelevant to conduct a sociological research in the mall for some of the informants. In those times I benefited from the official permission and my METU identity card.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE CHANGING URBAN EVERYDAY LIFE IN THE MALL

Since the opening of the first shopping mall of Ankara in 1989, the city has been witnessing a mushroom growth of shopping malls. In the continuing process, the city gained a view of huge site of shopping mall construction. The site of construction expands from day to day and the city is surrounded by new shopping malls. At the end of 2007, the number of malls in the city reached to twenty-four. What is more important is that this number has doubled in the last two years. Shopping mall construction in Ankara is seen as one of the most profitable investments for the big capital holders in Turkey. That is one of the reasons why the number of the shopping malls in Ankara is expected to reach 200 in 2015. The increasing number of the shopping malls in Ankara implies social, economic, and cultural changes in the city life.

For the last few years, I have been witnessing the emergence and formation of mallified urban life in Ankara. The economy, culture, institutions and social activities have been shifting from the city center to the shopping malls. The end result of this process is a city under the roof of the shopping mall. The shopping malls have been one of the biggest business sectors in cities. ANKA mall involves 300 stores and approximately 3000 employees. It is claimed that the sector needs 250.000 new employees for the new shopping malls that will be opened in different cities of Turkey<sup>15</sup>. A shopping mall is

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<sup>15</sup> Bu sektör 250 bin eleman arıyor [www.hurriyet.com.tr](http://www.hurriyet.com.tr) 16.06.2007



like a central business district around which the urban life is shaped. The cultural activities, such as going to cinema, theatre or concert have been the part of going to the shopping malls. The social activities such as meeting with friends, sitting in cafes and eating in restaurants have also been the part of going to the shopping malls. Only by going to the shopping mall one has the possibility of doing everything in a city. As a result, mall comes into view as an ant nest: as the space of endless circulation of population. In addition, shopping malls, in a very short time, have been the part of everyday life in Ankara. It is now possible to see shopping malls in the city maps and web sites of the city. Moreover, their names are used in the destination signs of public transportation vehicles as a station. Shopping malls are now an inseparable part of the urban life in Ankara.

In this chapter, I try to explain the magic of the shopping malls in the urban everyday life. Firstly, I try to articulate the new dynamics and resulting new experiences in the shopping malls. In this section, I emphasize the surveillance and juxtaposition of activities in the shopping malls which make them into centers of attraction. Secondly, I try to explain the different experiences of the magic of the shopping malls for the informants from different income groups, age intervals, and gender.

### **3.1. The Magical Dynamics of the Shopping Malls**

For the residents of Ankara, it is possible to draw the architectural typology of the shopping mall: the shopping mall is a huge building that consists of three or four storey. The first two floors are separated for wearing stores and the upper floor consists of food court, book store, and cinema. The huge size of the shopping mall's building and the vast parking area in front of the building are seen as the most distinctive features of the shopping mall that separates it from the other buildings in the city. Even if one has never been to a shopping mall these features of the shopping mall architecture are learned

through media. However, more than the architectural feature, the magical aspect is emphasized in the description of the shopping malls. A shopping mall is a magic box which compresses everything in the same place. As a retired clerk says:

*Going to the shopping mall is similar to going to many places such as restaurants, cafes, grocery but at the same time it is different from all of these places. When you describe a restaurant you talk about the specific activities that one can do in a restaurant. For example, you say that a restaurant is a place where you eat something. The difference of the shopping mall is that you cannot say any specific activity to do in the mall. You can do everything in the shopping mall (65, M, MC<sup>16</sup>).*

In this magical atmosphere of the shopping malls, a new kind of social life comes into existence in which, as Helten and Fischer (2003) argues, security is one of the most alluring aspects. The informants emphasize that they walk around comfortably in the shopping malls without controlling their pockets because of the low possibility of purse-snatching: after police stations malls are described as the second most secure place in the city. The trust based social relations, however, does not spring from the character of social relations; it is rather a result of security system. The panoptic feature of the shopping malls seems to create trust in the social relations. The roots of the trust, however, are not social. Even though it seems paradoxical, the trust in the social life of the shopping malls is related to being watched and being controlled. Therefore, the trust in the mall is not due to the people but to the security system. The trust issue in the social relations of the urban life, which Jane Jacobs (see Jacobs, 1969) had dealt with years ago, seems to be solved in the shopping malls; because, people are not as much anonymous as they are in the urban public spaces. Therefore, the description of the mall visitors as “decent people” is related with spatial security technologies. The visitors of the mall are regarded decent not only because they have relatively high

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<sup>16</sup> LC: Lower Class  
MC: Middle Class  
UC: Upper Class

social, economic and cultural capitals; even in the opposite condition, visitors are regarded as decent because it is thought that regardless of the degree of capitals one has, mall transforms people into decent ones. Regardless of income, age and gender variables, the security aspect of the shopping mall atmosphere and the decent aspect of the visitors are emphasized by all informants. While male informants exemplify the decent character of the social relations in the shopping mall with the absence of the danger of purse-snatching, women emphasize the absence of disturbing man gaze on women:

*The shopping mall is one of the rare places in which you can walk around comfortably. If you go to Saman Pazarı you have to pay attention to your wallet. But in the shopping mall you can care with your wife and children more than your wallet (45, M, LC).*

*While walking around Kızılay I feel disturbed. All the men stare at me as if they will immediately attack. But the shopping mall is a modern space and the visitors are decent (34, F, UC).*

As the capital of Turkey, Ankara is seen as a bureaucratic city which is incapable of satisfying the expectations of the residents. Most of the informants say that Ankara is a relatively new city, which lacks an entrenched culture and natural beauty. While talking about urban life, most of the people complain about the lack of alternatives in the city. Under such circumstances, the shopping malls are seen as an oasis at the middle of a desert. In defining the city life in Ankara; Kızılay, Tunalı Hilmi Street, Bahçeli, and Ulus are given primary significance. However, although these given districts of the city are the heart of urban life, the deteriorating conditions of them are the main subject of the residents' complaints from the city. These given public spaces are seen under the invasion of the groups that are identified with crime. Therefore, the urban public spaces are insecure with an endless hubbub. The traffic, noise, crowd and dirtiness of the public spaces are also among the most emphasized factors that push people from these spaces. In addition, there are some unsocial factors in this process, as

well. Weather conditions and time of the day are very affective in arranging activities in the public spaces. Walking around the city in hot and cold weathers is seen unhealthy; on the other hand, being out at late hours is thought to be dangerous. As a result, public spaces are to be escaped and the ties between these spaces and people are decreased to a functional level.

The address of this escape is most of the time a shopping mall. Going to a shopping mall creates the simulation of walking around the city that refined from its problems. The design of the mall most of the time imitates the urban public spaces. In the shopping malls, the activities of the urban public spaces are presented in a street-like atmosphere. The atmosphere in the mall is pure, free of danger and disturbance (Southworth, 2005: 151; Backes, 1997: 3). The security guards at the gates, cameras in every corner, the orderly design and stainless cleanness prevent a possible deviance in the mall. The absence of socially disadvantaged groups, such as beggars, prevents a possible distraction. Shopping malls are rationally planned to make visitors think only about shopping (Gottdiener, 2005). Even the weather and time are rationally controlled in the mall. The air-conditioned environment and lighting system creates a space that is not affected from the linear movement of time and nature (Ritzer, 2000).

The shopping malls as the address of escape from the city are not wholeheartedly welcome. Residents of Ankara long for open air activities. They live a paradox between the desire and practice of how to spend leisure time in the city. Most of the informants express that they prefer open-air activities but they immediately add that they can rarely do that. The shopping malls in Ankara seem to create various questions in the minds of the residents. On the one hand, while the new spaces of social change are consumed more, on the other hand, the less consumed spaces are romanticized. While people do enjoy the time they spend in the shopping malls, they often mention the good old days on the urban public places such

as the streets and squares. While, on the one hand, shopping malls are seen as a part of Turkey's Westernization process and articulation with the global world, on the other hand they are approached with caution. This springs from the fear of over-consumption and of losing the traditional type of socialization that was established in the urban public spaces. Especially for the older generations who grew up in a protectionist economy, shopping malls signify excessive consumption. As the economy of the country has so many problems, they see the investment in the shopping malls as a waste. According to them, the economic sources should be invested in production to accelerate the economic development of the country. In this rationale, while factories provide opportunities for employment and for increasing savings, the shopping malls are seen as traps that waste the productive resources. Moreover, some of the informants think negatively about the foreign shareholders of the shopping malls. They blame foreign shareholders to make profit from the local sources, hence draining the surplus created in domestic business.

The skeptic attitudes towards shopping malls do not, however, prevent people from visiting the malls. The general tendency is to identify the shopping mall with Westernization and modernization processes. The positive attitudes towards shopping malls lie in the everyday life experiences of individuals. Shopping malls are perceived as enchanted spaces of a disenchanted city. The huge size of the mall, the juxtaposition of a multitude of goods and activities, the extravagant design of space, the lightning system and the endless variety of commodities are the major factors that mesmerize the visitors. The image of walking around in the shopping mall is like being Alice in the wonderland.

For most of the residents of Ankara, shopping malls were not familiar spaces only twenty years ago. Therefore, malls are still the new parts of the city. What is new about the shopping malls is not only about the abundance of

goods, but rather, their style of presentation. Malls remove the strict boundaries between different activities and spaces juxtaposing everything in an unfamiliar manner (Nelson, 1998). In the past, occupational specialization coincided with a designated space such as a specialized store: butchers, green-grocers, tailors, bakers, manufacturers would work independently from each other. Malls collect everything that plays a role in the economy of the city under one roof. Such juxtaposition of unrelated activities and places makes the mall almost like a magical place. Most of the informants say that they thought they were in a dream when they first visited a shopping mall. To see the garden tools and different kinds of bread sold in the same place was previously unimaginable. The extreme variety of commodities and services in the mall is another source of enchantment. This feature of the mall transforms it into a material culture museum in the everyday life of the city. As if they are looking at the objects that are protected in a glass sphere, people walk around the mall looking at the new commodities behind the window. The main difference between museums and the shopping malls is the inversion of what is worth to see in the shopping malls. Also, the activities have different meanings. The museum is identified with high cultures but visiting a mall, that is, “museum of the new”, is part of everyday life of the city. A similar dynamic can be seen in the coincidence of luxury and ordinary in the shopping malls, hence amalgamating high culture and popular culture. Malls are extraordinary places but ordinary parts of the urban life. They, however, transform daily life into a fablesque environment at the same time. As a young professional says malls open doors to a dreamland that pass through ordinary life using the ways that ordinary people use everyday:

*Whenever I find myself at the entrance of ANKA mall, I feel as if I am entering in an ultra-luxury hotel, as if I am in the Hilton. This place is like a huge palace with its pleasant and bright luxury environment where you can easily reach by just using subway. (27, F, MC)*

Up until now, I tried to explain the general features of “magic” of the mall. In the following section, I try to show the different magical attributes of the mall for the different social positions.

### **3.2. The Fragmented Magic of the Shopping Malls**

Other than these general features that transform the mall into an enchanted space, there are a number of reasons that make the mall a magical aspect of city life. The magical aspects of the shopping mall change with regard to income group, gender, and age variables. For lower income informants who mainly live in the gecekondu areas of the city, going to the mall is a touristic journey. For them, visiting the shopping mall is not similar to loitering in the urban public spaces. It is a special activity that requires caring more about their physical appearance. This attitude might be related with the purpose of going to the mall. For the lower income groups, going to the shopping mall is a respectable leisure activity. For them, the shopping mall is not that much related with shopping. Shopping in the mall is a dream which exceeds the family budget. Stimuli spreading from the stores create an atmosphere that is preponderated by the shopping messages. This atmosphere creates double effects for lower income groups: consciousness of incapability and daydreaming. The messages spreading from the stores call visitors to purchase the goods that are exhibited behind the windows as if these goods magically keep the meaning of life. For the lower income groups, however, loitering in the passages of the mall reminds them of their economic incapability. This reproduction of the consciousness of economic incapability is one of the reasons why lower income groups visit the mall rarely. As a young worker expresses; if they had more money they would visit the mall more:

*Actually, I would like to visit the mall more. But when we come here as a family, I have to pay at least for the food which is something I cannot afford. But if my salary were higher I would visit the mall more frequently (28, M, LC).*

On the other hand, the endless shopping stimuli in the shopping mall engender daydreaming. It would be expected that the unreplied shopping stimuli to create a blasé attitude in the visitors (see Simmel, 1950) but it seems that these stimuli are not the source of disturbance, but rather the source of daydreaming. What is dreamed in front of the store windows is the future upper social mobility, having a better life by means of the goods. Therefore, while on the one hand the shopping mall experience reproduces the disadvantaged position of the visitor in the economic structure, on the other hand it creates a hopeful future dream as an escape from the pains of reality. The daydreaming in the shopping mall as a compensation of the relative deprivation can be seen in the following expressions of a young security guard:

*While shopping around the stores, I start dreaming. You inevitably dream about what you don't have. I ask myself whether I can have them, and whether I can have a better future (25, M, LC).*

Above, going to the shopping mall was described as a respectable leisure activity for the lower income groups. This respectable attribute of the activity is related with sharing the same place with the people from high culture. The relatively democratic aspect of the quasi-public space of the shopping malls creates a new meeting point for different groups in the city life. Following the establishment of the republic, the public space was identified with the elite culture (Erkip, 2003). Participating to the public space required knowledge and interest about the cultures of modernity such as theatre, dance, and opera. It has inevitably spatially segregated the groups with high cultural capital and lower cultural capital by decreasing the encounter with the others to the lowest degree (ibid.). The shopping malls seem to annihilate this spatial segregation by gathering different groups under its roof. The common point in this meeting is not citizenship but being consumer. As consumers, both income groups gather in the quasi public space of the shopping mall. In this relatively more democratic structure of the quasi-



public space of the shopping malls, in order to keep up with the luxury decoration and the middle and upper middle class majority of the visitors, the body of the poor is reshaped, aestheticized. Thus, the care with the physical appearance does not only spring from going out of the home but also from contacting with people of high culture. The impact of going to the mall on the body of the poor can be seen in the following expressions of a young worker:

*For me, going to the mall is like appearing on the TV screen. I sometimes see TV stars, singers in the mall. I may even run into the prime minister in the mall. Therefore I care for my physical appearance; at least, I don't come without wearing make up (28, F, LC).*

Although the youth of gecekondu areas see malls as part of their social life in the city, the older generations equate going to the mall with a thriftless activity, that is, a waste of money. For the youth of gecekondu areas, their parents are strangers of shopping malls. When they visit shopping malls, they are uncomfortable. The fear of being unable to keep up with the other visitors seems to create shyness which is the main source of uneasiness that older generations of lower income visitors live in shopping malls. The traces of this pressure can be found in the following expressions of informants:

*There are differences between me and my parents in terms of our social lives. For example, my parents do not visit the shopping mall. They have rarely been to these places. They fear from the security measures and the shopping mall environment. (23, M, LC).*

*My father gets angry when I visit the shopping malls. He thinks that malls are not places for us: they are for the wealthy people. Their styles of dressing and speaking and their tastes are different from us according to my father. (34, M, LC).*

While explaining the flexible structure of the contemporary capitalism, Richard Sennett (2002) argues that the innovations of information technology makes older generations disadvantaged in the services sector against youth. In a similar way, shopping malls as the center of global life-styles are visited

more by the youth who can more easily follow the rapid changes in lifestyles. In consumer capitalism, identities are fluid. For the older generations who want to maintain their consistent identity, consumer capitalism is an alien culture. Even when they visit the shopping malls, they are passive in their behaviors, almost like excluded. In the luxurious and aesthetic environment of the shopping mall, even if their entry is not prevented by gate guards, they feel themselves restricted. This can be seen as passive social exclusion as it is not implemented by the policy makers of the shopping malls. What alienates the older generations of rural migrants is habitually unfamiliar environment of the shopping malls. It should not be forgotten, however, that shopping malls are just one of the spaces in which passive social exclusion can be seen. Following Bourdieu (1984), we can argue that passive social exclusion can be seen to drive out of one's own habitus.

For the lower income youngsters, however, shopping malls provide new type of encounters with modernity. Spending most of the time at home which is identified with tradition young generations make a sharp distinction between their leisure time in the mall and their family life. Thus, for them shopping malls are the places where they escape from the traditional to the modern. The shopping malls also provide them a place of escape from the pressures of family and school. This feature of the shopping malls makes it the most appropriate place for permissive gender relations. Especially for males, the mall is the podium of an endless fashion show that is full of beautiful girls. The shopping malls are sometimes visited by young males only because it is seen as the place of matchmaking:

*In my first days in Ankara, I visited ANKA mall with my friends only to see beautiful girls (25, M, LC).*

*One of my friends found a girl friend from the shopping mall. The girl was a salesperson in one of the stores. For a period of time, we had visited the shopping mall only to see that girl. After our third visit to the store they started dating (23, M, LC).*

Simmel claimed that the aesthetical sphere is distinct from the everyday life (Featherstone, 1996). In the shopping malls, however, this separation is annihilated. What is aesthetic is not only observed but also experienced in everyday life. This is what makes the shopping malls spectacular places. In the shopping malls, the aesthetic coincides with ordinary. In general, the aesthetic appearance is identified with female. The aesthetic environment in the shopping malls affects the physical appearance of males as much as that of women:

*I prepare myself carefully before going to the shopping mall as if a woman is going to a restaurant for dinner. That is, I comb my hair, and wear a nice dress (32, M, MC).*

The transformation of men's physical appearance into an aesthetic one implies a change in the gender in that men just as women became interested with their physical appearance. In the shopping malls, that is, in the aesthetic spaces of everyday life, both genders are expected to pay attention to their physical appearance, or they feel the need to look smart and beautiful.

For the middle-aged lower income families, visiting the shopping mall is similar to a touristic journey. This activity is seen as the responsibility of the main bread-winner, that is, the male who is the household head. Men are responsible for taking the wife and children out for this activity. The opportunity for the family to get together through this is a rare occasion. Lower income families prefer to spend leisure time by doing gardening. For most first generation migrants, leisure time activity is one that creates the possibility of reproducing rural life in the city. Spending a whole day in the shopping malls is seen as waste of time and money. They prefer Kızılay, the downtown. They go to Kızılay for shopping while they go to the shopping malls for other activities. In their minds, Kızılay is the place where one meets the fundamental needs, whereas, the mall is seen as a place to fulfill desires. For the family activities of lower income groups the mall is the place where one can enjoy life as an entertainment center.

For middle income groups, the shopping malls are inseparable part of city life. They visit the shopping malls more frequently than the other groups, that is, they have the strongest relation with the mall. This strong relation is more visible in the everyday life of young professionals. They visit the mall even for lunch. As consumption activities are central to their identities, the shopping malls are seen as places for self-realization. The atmosphere in the shopping malls is not strange for them; they are as comfortable as they are in their private spaces. For them, the mall is just a more orderly form of a shopping street. Therefore, going to the mall does not require a special care with the physical appearance. In addition to the security, luxury design, and the decent character of the visitors, the mall is described as a necessity of modern life. As it is clear in the following expression of a housewife, the shopping malls are seen as a modernization of the shopping space in the city:

*When I first came to Ankara, there were Sümerbank and 19 Mayıs stores, then YKM followed them. After the opening of Atakule, new shopping malls replaced all of them (46, F, MC).*

The shopping activity seems to be as much part as leisure activities in the shopping malls. In other words, shopping and leisure seems to be coincided. It seems impossible to make separation between shopping for and shopping around activities for the middle income groups. They express that even if they do not aim to shop, they generally leave the mall with the shopping bags in their hands. The capability of purchasing is the main difference of the shopping mall experience of middle income groups from the lower income groups. Therefore, the visitors from middle income groups are more active in the mall. They can reply the stimuli spreading from the stores.

Especially for women, replying to the stimuli is seen as ability, because, for them, shopping is a thrift. Knowledge on when to shop, where to shop, with which credit card to shop is seen as ability and a kind of thrift. This thrift understanding reflects the change in the mentality of middle income groups.

The new thrift mentality focuses on the relation between price and quality. In this mentality spending much money for a good might be a thrift because the purchased good is branded and quality which means that the purchased good can be used for a long time.

Like lower income groups, middle income groups also sometimes visit the mall as a family. However, for the middle income families, the mall does not have to be experienced as a unit. The members of the middle income families follow the traces of their tastes in the mall individually. While the wife sees the shopping mall as a place where the whole day can be spent joyfully, for the middle income husband, it is a functional place to save time while completing the shopping list. For the middle income families with children, shopping mall is for both the children and adults. The mall removes the spatial separation between children and adult activities as one can find both activities in the mall. This juxtaposition of different activities is time saving and convenient, in that while the adults do shopping the children play.

Benjamin had argued that in the passages of the 19th century Paris loitered the agent of the modern society traveling among sensations: flaneur (Tester, 1994). Featherstone (1998), on the other hand, argues that flaneur as a social agent has undergone some transformations with regard to the social change. Appearance of the department stores and the shopping malls, according to him, changed the gender of the flaneur. In the interiorized place of the shopping malls, flaneuse comes into existence as the agent of modern society. Middle income women browsing the mall from store to store, travelling among sensations, and spending long time in the mall characterize the new form of flaneur.

Generally speaking, middle class youth are the most frequent visitors of shopping malls. Distinct from the youth of the lower income groups, middle income youth more actively experience the mall. The shopping mall is a

special place for their flirts, too. However, beyond this, the shopping mall experience is central in their self-realization. Nevertheless, the retired women seem to have more intensive relations with the shopping malls. The retired women have both time and money to spend in the shopping malls. The shopping malls give the opportunity to elderly women, who otherwise lead a passive life, to be more active outside of home. In this escape from home, the shopping malls are the main site. The shopping malls in this sense are lively places for elderly women:

*I feel happier when I visit the shopping mall. I feel that there is life in here. When I stay at home, however, I am alone. I do not like watching TV all the time. When I come here I feel myself linked to life. (61, F, MC)*

*When I visit the mall, I believe that I am happier and more peaceful. I believe that I find here the pleasure of life. I live the happiness in here. Actually, I don't do many things in here but at least I am away from the boring atmosphere of the home. I find here the power of life. This power comes from shopping or the possibility of shopping (67, F, MC).*

This strong relation with the shopping mall turns the quasi-public space of the mall into a private space. The social activities that are identified with the home such as family and neighborhood gatherings are held in the shopping malls. A similar mall impact on social relations has been observed among housewives in the relatively small Anatolian cities<sup>17</sup>. However, our research marks that it is retired woman whose social life is most mallified. The mallified social gatherings reveal the changing aspect of the visits: the chores of the preparation process of the visit seem to be annihilated. For example, what is presented to the guests in the mall gathering is not home-made but mall-made:

*I have not seen my sisters for 3 months. Two days later, we will meet here for lunch, and then we will go to the cinema. Before leaving, we will chat by sitting in one of the cafes (61, F, MC).*

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<sup>17</sup> Kayseri Park 2 ayda 650.000 ziyaretçi çekti, [www.referansgazetesi.com](http://www.referansgazetesi.com) 10.08.2006

For the upper income groups, the shopping malls are generally visited for shopping. Therefore, activities in the mall are need centered. However, the term need is not used here in its biological meaning. For the upper income groups, luxury and branded goods are among their needs. Their thrift mentality is based on time. Therefore, the middle income groups' motto "the best quality for the best price" is not valid for them. Their motto is rather "time is money". To them, browsing the stores and comparing the prices are the shopping mall chores which take much time. In their short duration in the mall they visit their regular stores and if they like something, they purchase without hesitating.

For upper income groups, the shopping mall is not that much an enchanted place. The more their number increases the more they are disenchanted. The more the new malls are opened the more it is clear that mall has a standardized structure. As a chief executive of a firm expresses the same architectural features, the same stores, the same cafes, and the same restaurants are the sources of standardization, that is, disenchantment:

*I have a friend from the U.S. who admires visiting malls. But it seems boring to me because it is hard to find individual differences among malls. All of them have the same stores. There is nothing distinct about the shopping malls (45, M, UC).*

This similarity of the malls, however, changes when the visitor profile of each mall is taken into account. Although they generally accept the mall visitors as decent, they add that they are more comfortable with the visitors of suburb malls such as Bilkent Shopping Center. They seem displeased to see the annihilation of strict borders between them and the lower classes, because they see this annihilation as a degeneration of the culture. The emergent culture in the malls, for them, is a fake culture. Thus, going to the shopping mall is not a respectable experience which requires a special preparation. As a high level expert expresses, meeting with the others in the mall is seen as a possible danger of conflict which is to be escaped:

*After my sister gave birth we went to the mall. Because we have a stroller, we wanted to use the elevator. But we had to have a quarrel to get in because the people who can go up with moving stairs got in the elevator before us. Now, I also have children but I fear to go to the mall because of the possibility of discussing with the others (34, F, UC).*

For upper income groups, the shopping mall is not a place to have a good time by escaping from the hubbub of the city. The mall itself is also to be escaped. For them, the address of escape from the city has become fundamentally a suburb. The upper income groups visit the malls more frequently. They just pop in to shop in the mall on their return from work. The shopping malls are a kind of stop between the home and work. They stay in the mall, however, very short. It is a place for meeting needs. They sometimes order their dresses from abroad as some brands may not be available in the mall.

### **3.3. Conclusion**

In nearly twenty years, for almost all sections of population in Ankara, the shopping malls have become part of life. This has to do with the unique aspects of shopping malls: the juxtaposition of different commodities, services, stores and the annihilation of the borders between luxury and ordinary, aesthetic and mundane. As such, the shopping malls are enchanted places for the residents of the city. The shopping mall experience transforms the urban everyday life into spectacular for different segments of the population. However, the magic of the mall is not experienced equally. It appears that the more the income of the individual increases the more the shopping malls are disenchanted. While the shopping mall experiences of the low income visitors are extraordinary, for the high income individuals, the shopping malls are ordinary aspects of the urban life. It seems that the inequalities in the relations of production reflect into the shopping mall experience. The inequalities are also experienced differently in shopping malls. In the following chapter, I try to explain how the inequalities are



experienced by consumers through the formation of consumer citizenship in the quasi public spaces of shopping malls. In addition, I try to find the answers of the question “how shopping malls can still be inclusive while there are restrictions in the democratic rights of and socio-technological control over low income groups.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **THE PARADOX OF THE SHOPPING MALL: THE RESTRICTIVE BUT INCLUSIVE QUASI-PUBLIC SPACES OF ANKARA**

Like the cases in the U.S., as well as Europe, shopping malls in Ankara are quasi-public spaces. In the U.S. and Europe, the primacy of security in the shopping malls is argued to put limits on the access of disprivileged segments of population. In addition, the rational organization of the shopping malls to make visitors consume more is criticized for excluding the low income individuals and for engendering homogeneous visitor profile. However, the visitor profile of the shopping malls in Ankara is far from being homogeneous. The shopping malls in Ankara are becoming more and more inclusive for various people from different backgrounds. In this chapter, I try to explain the reasons of why shopping malls become congregating spaces for various people in Ankara. In the first section, I try to illuminate the similarities and differences of the shopping malls from urban public spaces. In the second and third sections I try to explain the unique dynamics of the quasi-public spaces of the shopping malls. In these sections, I mainly articulate the primacy of security, rational organization and consumer citizenship in the malls which, like Western cases, puts limits on the access of the disprivileged segments and creates high self-control mechanism for low income visitors. In the remaining sections I try to explain how the shopping malls can be inclusive despite these restrictions. In the fourth section, I analyze how taste differences reflect spatially into the use of shopping malls. Finally, in the fifth section, I emphasize the central position of the shopping malls in experiencing Western, modern lifestyles,

participating to power relations in the society, liberating women from traditional sphere and having a hybrid culture of elite culture and popular culture.

#### **4.1. The Shopping Mall as a Quasi-Public Space**

In the last years, parallel to the expansion of shopping malls in Ankara, the city has witnessed the emergence of a new public space. The expansion of shopping malls around the city has increased and the covered retail space has reached 332 thousand square meters, while it is expected to reach 1 million square meters in 2015<sup>18</sup>. This development implies the multiplication of the public space in a mallified form in the city (Gottdiener, 2005). As a result, the frequency of going to urban public spaces has decreased as the public space is brought to people in a mallified form. The mallification of public space implies the emergence of a quasi public space in shopping malls. It basically refers to the shift of main public space activities, such as seeing and being seen, meeting, chatting, etc., to retail spaces of shopping malls. On the other hand, urban public space may refer to any public space outside the shopping malls, particularly to the city center.

In the U.S. as well as Europe, the relation between public space and shopping malls is outcome of the expansion of shopping malls in suburban areas. However, in the context of Ankara, the increasing attractiveness of malls is not only related to the expansion of malls in suburban areas; ANKAmall, as a city center mall, is visited daily by approximately sixty thousand visitors during the week and hundred thousand visitors on weekends<sup>19</sup>. More and more people prefer to shop and spend leisure time in the mall rather than in Kızılay, which was once regarded as the main symbol of public space of Ankara by its residents. The increasing attractiveness of the shopping malls in the social life is partially linked with spatial design of the mall. The design

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<sup>18</sup> [www.milliyet.com.tr](http://www.milliyet.com.tr) 17.01.2008

<sup>19</sup> [http://www.yapi.com.tr/turkce/Haber\\_Detay.asp?NewsID=56082](http://www.yapi.com.tr/turkce/Haber_Detay.asp?NewsID=56082) 10.01.2008

of the mall can be described as the spatial attachment of stores, food courts, and movie theatres that are connected by means of passages reminiscent of urban public spaces with trees, seats, pools and exhibitions (Gottdiener, 2005). Therefore, the shopping mall experience involves more than just shopping. Shopping malls become civic centers, a point of attraction for thousands of city dwellers (Lewis, 1990: 121).

As a result of this process, remaining shopkeepers in Kızılay experience a regular decrease in their profits. The shopkeepers are planning to survive by creating an alternative shopping mall-like organization<sup>20</sup>. Losing the public and customers as its visitors, the urban public space is in danger of turning into a space without any significant public, as the retail spaces of the malls have been gaining a public attribute. The architect of the first shopping mall of the world, Victor Gruen, said in the opening of the Southdale Shopping Mall that “Southdale is not the usual strip-of-stores plan; we are planning to create a community” (Nelson, 1998: 45). Such a new community now consists of a significant part of Ankara’s population. Shopping malls are no longer a part of city; rather they became the center of gravity in the contemporary city life (ibid., 53).

The increasing impact of shopping malls on city life can easily be seen in Ankara. For most of the informants in my research, the shopping malls have already become the symbols of the city among Atatürk’s mausoleum, Ankara Castle, Kızılay, and Ulus. Moreover, malls have even become part of tourism agencies’ city tours. They are the destinations of city dwellers who take their visitors from the other cities of Turkey, as mentioned:

*When we have visitors, my husband and I take them first to Anıtkabir. Then we show them Kızılay, Ulus, and ANKAmall. The last time my niece came from Gümüşhane we took her to ANKAmall. She was fascinated.*

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<sup>20</sup> Available at <http://ankara.hurriyet.com.tr/ankara/> 13.01.2008

As a result of the expansion of shopping malls and their increasing importance in city life, a new city landscape in which public space gains different attributes than its predecessors has come into existence. Public space is the realm of our social lives in which the unrelated crowd interacts with each other anonymously (Krupa, 1993). The general landscape of public space can be described as market places, streets, parks that are surrounded by public buildings (Cohen, 1996: 1078). This general aspect of public space as the medium for both economic and social interactions is equally valid in the case of the malls. The mall itself can be seen as the modern market place where goods on the counter have been replaced with commodities in shop windows and on shelves. While individuals try to satisfy their wants and desires as well as their needs, social interaction becomes increasingly coincided with economic relations. Streets are replaced by passages which can be seen as shopping streets. The mall replaces parks with its cafes, restaurants, passages, and entertainment centers. Those individuals who would previously go to parks for morning sport now walk in the passages of the mall. Those individuals who would go to parks for a picnic with family now sit in cafés and restaurants of the mall as family. Those families who would take their children to parks now take them to the entertainment centers of the mall.

As an aspect of the public sphere, the public place is a political space distinct from the state and the economy; an institutionally bounded discursive arena that is home to citizen debate, deliberation, agreement, and action (Villa, 1992: 712). According to Habermas (1974) public opinion can be shaped and influenced through the public sphere; the right to free speech is an inevitable part of the public sphere. In addition, access is guaranteed to all citizens. However, there is no guarantee of access into the mall for all segments of population. Even if it is a scarce occasion, the security guard has the power to prevent one's access if he or she sees that person as a threat to the order of the mall. Being a public sphere, there are various issues to be discussed

around each table or in each family or friend group in the mall, similar to any urban public spaces. These conversations vary from mundane subjects, such as magazines, fashion, TV programs, football or gossips about others, to serious issues, such as policy, cultural events or religion. However, unlike other public spaces there is no politically activist person who may distribute political leaflets or express his or her idea to others in the shopping mall. Political activism is forbidden in the mall because it is seen as a source of disturbance by the mall's management. Therefore, the unheard voice of commodities is the only high volume in the mall which preponderates the conversations of every single group. As Miller and others (1998a: 76) note, whether urban public spaces have ever been open to all is a debate. What is more important, however, is the transformation of urban public space as it has been losing its character of being the center of city life. Today, people come together more frequently in shopping malls, where a new public space emerges on the retail private space.

"Here flowers will grow, birds will sing, and it is going to be spring" (Nelson, 1998: 228), Victor Gruen once contended while describing the shopping mall as an ideal space for an ideal community. Therefore, the plan of a shopping mall, according to Gruen, was also the plan of a community life that meant the spatial reconstruction of the lost small town life of the USA via shopping mall (Philips, 2002). In non-American societies, however, the mall may imply more than the search for the old community life. In the context of Ankara, the mall does not simply imply a search for the lost character of social life, but rather it represents the emergence of a new center of social life and a rival to the urban center. The shopping malls in Ankara provide the experience of a desired social life: the experience of Western and modern social life. These aspects are as significant as erasing the quasi character of the public space of the shopping malls. However, before explaining the meaning of the mall experience, below I focus on why the public space of the mall is quasi.

#### 4.2. From Free to Secure Public Space

The medieval German adage “city air makes people free” (cited from Park, 1915) emphasized “freedom” as the main characteristic of an idealized urban public space. In the same vein, the shopping mall creates its own adage; “the mall makes people secure” emphasizing security as one of the most important characteristics of an idealized, shopping mall space. The freedom in the urban public space refers to its uncontrolled nature while this freedom is subordinated for the sake of security in the mall, as a result of the highly controlled and ordered space of the shopping mall (Voyce, 2006). Today, experiencing safety rather than “freedom” in public space has become a priority for residents. For the dwellers of Ankara, public places are a spatial reflection of risk society where one walks restlessly due to the possibility of an explosion, or theft risk. The mall, on the other hand, is exempt from such fears. Although the gate guards and security system do not guarantee that there is no possibility of theft, knowing that the mall is surveyed and controlled continuously by the security system creates a relief for visitors:

*I think security is the most important aspect of the shopping mall. For instance, I shop and I can put my bags on a chair comfortably. I cannot do the same thing in Kızılay; I fear (27, M, MC).*

*I fear in Kızılay. I always think there may be an explosion or that someone may steal my wallet. I walk around Kızılay cautiously. But there is no fear in the mall. I can have fun in the mall and I can smile in relief (25, M, MC).*

It is argued that the emphasis on security in the shopping mall deteriorates the democratic condition of the public space. The priority of security restricts the entrance of the disadvantaged segments of population, such as beggars, into the mall. They are seen as a threat to the order of mall. Therefore, the main attribute of the urban public space as being open to the participation of all citizens is not valid in the mall. In addition, high security controls turn the mall experience into a high self-control experience for low income visitors. This self-control mechanism comes into existence as a result of being

intimidated by socio-technological control of the shopping mall. Although social control is an indispensable part of social life, it is more strongly felt in the shopping malls. The social control in the mall is a socio-technological control: the luxury decoration of the place, the aestheticized physical appearance of its visitors, and the technologically controlled security structure of the mall creates new social norms with which lower income visitors are not well-acquainted. The lack of necessary economic and cultural capitals for a complete adjustment to these new social norms of the mall creates a continuous fear of making a social faux-pas for lower income visitors. Therefore, the socio-technological control of the mall means a decrease in freedom for some lower income visitors:

*The environment in the mall is different. The modern architecture of the mall restricts me. I have to walk more carefully there; I cannot be as comfortable with my behavior as I am in open air spaces (29, M, LC).*

*The first time I went to the mall I did not know that there were security cameras. I learned this from a movie, that the behaviors of visitors are watched. After that movie I pay more attention to my behaviors in the mall. For example, I do not speak and laugh loudly (28, F, LC).*

For middle and upper income visitors socio-technological control of the mall is the main source of order. As Ayata (2003: 41) argues, order is significant for middle classes, because distinction among social classes is possible where there is an emphasis on order. For them the filtered order of the mall provides comfort in their behavior in the mall. Free from traffic jam, air pollution, noise, bad weather and crime of the city center, the mall presents a desired place to middle and upper income visitors to experience different life-styles free from the pressures of low educated people in urban public spaces:

*The population in Kızılay is more diverse; there are some parts of the population whose life-styles and world views are different. As a result they look at me differently. This is what disturbs me the most in Kızılay. In the end, there are biases on both sides about the others (34, F, UC).*



*In Kızılay there are some people who do not want to adjust to the city life. It really disturbs me. The mall, however, is more ordered. People who visit the mall are adjusting more (55, F, MC).*

The socio-technological control in the mall exhibits a significant analogy between the extent of accumulated economic and cultural capitals and the degree of freedom in the mall. Accordingly, the more the one has higher capitals the more s/he has freedom in the mall. This analogy is illustrated in the diagram below:

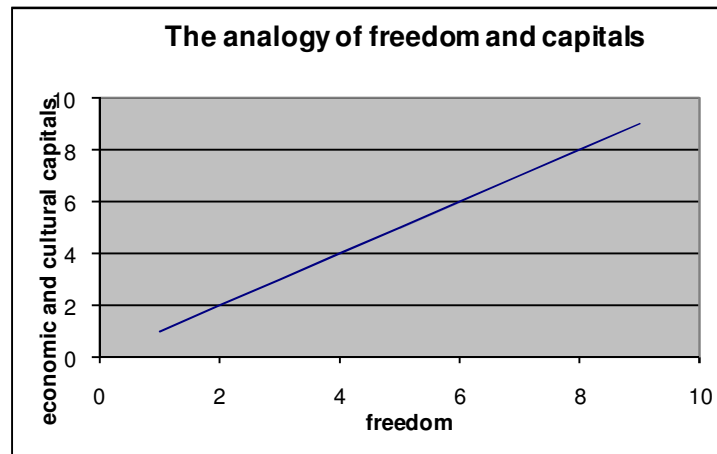


Figure 1: The analogy of freedom and economic and cultural capitals.

The analogy between the extent of capitals and the degree of freedom alters the main attribute of urban public space that is equally open to the participation of all. The mall is equally open to all who may shop or at least who do not distract the attention of others who may shop: briefly, the mall is open to all consumer citizens (Voyce, 2006). Nevertheless, the rights of assembly and free speech are also restricted in the mall. Therefore, the civic character of the malls is associated with commerce. This strong relation of the shopping malls with commerce re-engenders question marks about the relation between lower classes and shopping malls. It is argued that shopping malls enhance social disintegration of local togetherness in the city by discouraging lower classes from visiting the shopping mall (Southworth,

2005; Cohen, 1996; Voyce, 2006). The critiques also include that the shopping mall comes into existence as a lifeless space that consists of homogeneous population annihilating the soul of the city that rests on plurality and tolerance (Miller and others, 1998; Nelson, 1998). In the end, the shopping malls are criticized for just retaining the ostensible characteristics of city life while eliminating the possibilities of public expression and social adhesion (Backes, 1997).

However, we can argue that these cases are not always valid for all shopping malls. For instance, in Ankara, the shopping malls are becoming more and more part of the lower income individuals' everyday urban experience despite the high social pressure on them. In Ankara, the threat of social disintegration and homogenization are more visible and significant in the shopping malls. Unlike urban public spaces, such threats are more visible in the mall because they come into existence as a combination of structural inequalities and socio-technological control of the mall.

A new community life comes into existence in ANKAmall but the mall community cannot be seen as a real community in the traditional sense. The relation between place and agents is temporary and the members of the mall community are anonymous. Therefore, the social relations among members are superficial. For this reason, the crowd in a mall can be considered as a lonely crowd (Debord, 1995). Like the Western experience of malls, social relations among visitors are generally mediated through consumer goods and services in ANKAmall. Especially for middle and upper income visitors, the main possibility of establishing social relations in the mall is with the sales-persons. Interacting with other visitors in cafes, restaurants or stores is instant and temporary. The shopping mall does not have its own community that bears the characteristic features of the space. Rather, the mall seems to cement the old community ties that were established outside the mall such as with family, kinship, workmates and friends (Miller, 1998b). The cement-like

attribute of the shopping mall is clear in the expressions of civil servants below:

*As a family we go to a restaurant weekly. Since the opening of shopping malls, we have been going to the restaurants in the mall. My husband and I are working and our children are going to school, and we cannot see each other much. Therefore, this activity is a special event for our family (45, F, MC).*

*The last time I was in ANKAmall, we celebrated my grandchild's birth day in one of the cafes (57, M, MC).*

The socio-technological control in ANKAmall as indicated in other studies on the shopping malls exhibits a strong relationship between the capital and freedom. This, as I have argued, puts low income visitors into a disadvantaged position in the mall. In addition, below I argue that the rational organization and consumer citizenship of the shopping malls are other dimensions of the restriction on the disadvantaged segments of population in Ankara.

#### **4.3. The Rational Organization of the Mall and Consumer Citizenship**

The consumption-oriented character of the social relations in the shopping mall is related to its rational organization. The mall has its own bureaucracy. The social life of the shopping mall starts with the opening and ends with the closing of the stores. The opening and closing times are strictly regulated by the mall management, along with the social life. In other words, social life in the mall is strongly tied up with the bureaucracy of the mall. Especially in winter, the day starts with the opening of the mall for retired people. Since the weather is cold, they wait until 10 am when the mall opens, and do their morning exercise in the mild, air conditioned atmosphere of the mall, as a retired man expresses below:

*I prefer to make my morning sport as soon as I wake up. However, in winter I wait until 10 am. I go to ANKAmall by car. I walk along the passages for 30-45 minutes. After resting in a café I return back to home (65, M, MC).*

Secondly, the rationally controlled heating and lightening systems make all day long shopping and use of mall space possible. The roof of the mall is constructed from glass so that it receives sun light that creates a natural atmosphere. Even in the absence of sunshine, the lightning and heating systems provide a lasting shiny and comfortable environment so that everyday can be a shopping day, which is free from the effects of weather outside. Most informants maintain that they sometimes visit the mall just because it is protected against unfavorable weather conditions. While they see the air-conditioned atmosphere as a positive feature of the mall, they also complain about it. Even if they have not planned to shop, they may find themselves shopping:

*I generally go to the mall to satisfy the needs of my family. Sometimes I go just to have a walk in bad weathers. But even at such times I leave the mall with bags in my hands. There are a lot of sales campaigns and discount promotions in the mall. While walking around you are lured by them. I fear to lose my control and be a consumerist.*

Thirdly, since the architecture of the mall restricts the visitors' relation with the world outside, the lightning system leads to a temporary loss of time awareness. Unlike factories, where time is divided into small segments in order to increase efficiency, it is hard to keep track of time in the mall because its efficiency depends on the lack of time awareness. This aspect seems to create a paradox in the use of the mall. Especially the middle income people express that they love the shopping mall because it presents everything in one place, and that saves them time. Yet, they also state that they are often startled when they recognize the amount of time they spent in the mall:

*Before going to the mall, I plan how long I will stay in there in accordance with my purpose. For example, I go to the mall to buy a dress and I expect to leave the mall in two hours. But when I leave, I realize that outside it is evening already. I think that it*

*is related to what the mall offers. There are many stores where I can find the best things with the best price (46, F, MC).*

Fourthly, there is no place for discovery in the shopping mall where visitors can easily be aware of what they can find just by looking at the list of stores. By contrast, the city center is open to surprises and open to new discoveries. Without any pre-conceived order, the stores are spread around the city center, which makes new discoveries possible. In the rationally organized shopping mall the possible ranges of prices and quality are predictable whereas in the urban public space it is always possible to find a cheaper commodity with high quality. This rational character of the shopping mall space is well emphasized by a teacher:

*I feel that I walk around when I am in Kızılay, but not in ANKAmall. I feel that I search in Kızılay, but not in ANKAmall. In the mall I follow the arrows, but in Kızılay I walk to where ever my feet would take me. I can act according to my free will in Kızılay. In the mall I feel like I am in a subway, which always goes in the same direction. Hence, in Kızılay, I discover new things (32, M, MC).*

Fifthly, the rationally controlled mall environment creates a unique atmosphere for consumption. Since stores pay rent for each square meter of land, the mall is organized in a way so that visitors spend most of their times inside the stores. Even the placement of escalators is planned to stimulate visitors to consume more. The passages are generally tight if not filled with cafes to provide visitors with a rest after or during the fatigue of shopping or windows shopping. As the stores are a part of the chain of consumption, when a visitor is engaged in a circle of the chain, engagement with others is automatically triggered. For example, shopping or windows shopping is seen as an exhaustive activity that requires refreshment of energy and rest. As it is clearly expressed in the statement below, shopping activities in the mall creates hunger and fatigue, which direct visitors to the food court and the cafés for refreshment and rest:

*When I go to the shopping mall, first I stroll in stores, looking for commodities I search. When I am tired, I take a break to eat something in the food court. Then if I still have to look for things, I keep shopping. At the end, if I still have money I take a rest in one of the cafés (26, M, MC).*

Consumers, however, should not be seen as un-rational agents. Even though they express that they sometimes find themselves acting un-rationally, it appears that the drive to such behaviors is well grounded in thinking. While losing time awareness or making unplanned purchases, the consumer is always seeking some kind of economic gain and an advantage: paying less for a normally more expensive brand or for a better quality commodity. Therefore, it can be argued that in the shopping mall we can distinguish between two types of rationality. The first one is the rational organization of the mall which rests on the principle of efficiency, that is, on the calculation of the number of visitors, and controlling the design of the mall to direct visitors towards stores. The second is about the behavior of visitors. The rationality of the consumers is oriented to spending money rather than the saving. Therefore, consumers, as rational agents, calculate their own as well as their families' purchasing power, their tastes, the exchange and symbolic value of the commodity which will contribute to their status. As a result, the rational mentality of the consumer is based on consumption as it is emphasized below:

*If I make unplanned purchases it is mostly related to sale campaigns. For example, I see that a commodity of a brand I like is cheaper than it is normally, I buy it (46, F, MC).*

The rational design of the mall aims increasing the efficiency of the space and creates a compressed and miniaturized city that affects individual and group behavior. Benjamin had described the 19th century Paris arcades as the world in miniature (Nelson, 1998). In the same way, the shopping mall can be regarded as the city center scaled down and interiorized (Campbell&Falk,

1997). The compression is an aspect of the shopping mall with two dimensions: firstly, it refers to the gathering of the institutions of the city under roof of the shopping mall; secondly, it refers to the compression of public and private spaces under the roof of shopping mall. In terms of the relations between the agents of private and public spaces of the mall, the agents of private space seem to be more dominant. The shopping malls are owned and managed by a private company which makes profit by means of leasing property to stores. On the other hand, the mall is built for the use of the public; rents of the stores depend on the level of consumption, hence the significance of the visitors (Copeland, 2004). The rules of the mall are regulated by a private company, the structure of the mall privilege the private property owner. For Voyce (2006), the shopping mall is the discursive area of neo-liberalism which creates a new kind of citizenship: consumer citizenship.

In the urban public space, citizenship is bounded with the nation state. This traditional citizenship rests on the mutual rights and duties between citizen and the state. In the shopping mall, people are not directly related to the state with the citizenship ties. The regulations about the design of the space and the behavior of visitors are produced by mall management, not by the local government. Therefore, the basis of consumer citizenship is the market economy rather than the state. Consumer citizens are equal in being consumers and normally they receive the same quality of service regardless of who they are if they are part of the economic relations in the same level. Then again the equality of being consumer means the equality of being unequal. The extent of being consumer is a relative criterion, and so is citizenship. Lower income visitors see the concept of consumer citizenship in relation to the economic and cultural capitals one has. In this perspective, consumer citizenship is not inclusive enough for the low income visitors. As a cleaner observes, the concept of consumer citizenship is related to being wealthy:

*Kızılay is open to public; it is the place of citizens while ANKA mall is the place of the rich. Many people visit the mall but they are the ones who have the money to spend, the ones for whom the cost of living does not matter. They also have a good education and their jobs are better than mine. They eat their meals in the restaurants, I eat at home. They have what I don't have, and I have what they don't have. That is why they visit the mall more than I and why I use Kızılay more than them (28, M, LC).*

In summary, in addition to the socio-technological control, the rational organization of the mall also dispriviliges low income visitors by stimulating consumption activities which they cannot always reply. Unlike the traditional citizenship of urban public spaces, the consumer citizenship of the shopping mall implies strong relations with the economy and class structure. As I explain below, the economic power and the tastes of the visitors are reflected in the spatial sphere as an extension of habituses.

#### **4.4. The Shopping Mall as an Extension of Habitus**

The strong relation between the capital and the use of the space bring the shopping mall into view as an extension of habitus. In this perspective, the spatial reflection of the tastes that compose the economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital is a way of differentiation among social classes<sup>21</sup>. This differentiation, however, is not related to visiting the mall; in other words, it does not refer to a distinction in which lower income individuals use urban public spaces while upper income individuals use the shopping mall. The distinction is related to the way these spaces are used. For lower income visitors, the urban public space is the place where they feel free from control and where they enjoy the easiness of improved relations with sales persons. The economic relations of the urban public space are seen as more advantageous for lower income individuals. In urban public space they can find cheaper goods. They find it more difficult to do shopping in the mall as

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<sup>21</sup> In the operationalization of Bourdeu's concept of habitus, we apply only economic and cultural capitals. For a detailed discussion about the concept habitus see Bourdieu, 1984.



the goods sold there are of higher quality and have high prices. Generally speaking, the lower middle income individuals go to fast-food restaurants and to cinema with their families or in larger friendship and kinship group. For lower income visitors, the mall is an extraordinary experience that breaks the ordinary flow of everyday life and presents itself as a special activity. This aspect is well emphasized below in the experience of a gate keeper:

*The special feature of ANKA mall is that you can find everything in the same place. In Kızılay you can find different prices in the same place, that is, everybody can find something for himself or herself in Kızılay. I don't shop in the mall, I shop from Kızılay. I like Kızılay better. The people who shop from ANKA mall have better economic conditions, although the cinema and the food court are used by everybody. Almost everyone can do all of the same activities except shopping from stores in the mall (27, M, LC).*

For middle and upper income visitors, the shopping mall is where they feel free from the problems of the city center and where they establish superficial relations with sales persons. They are a strong part of the mall economy. While for middle income visitors' economic transactions include both shopping around and shopping for activities, for upper income visitors economic transactions consists mainly of the shopping for activities. The difference between the two income groups is related to different perceptions on thriftiness. For middle income visitors, price and quality comparison and finding the best quality with the best price is a kind of thrift, which is a combination of the calculation of both exchange value<sup>22</sup> and sign value. For upper income visitors, however, thrift mentality refers to saving time since sign value is the only criteria of economic transactions:

*I visit almost all stores for my needs in the mall. I compare prices and quality before purchasing. If something is not urgent I wait for the sale season. Searching may take me all day but it is worth it (45, F, MC).*

*I choose the shortest way from the parking lot to the store. I shop and leave (45, M, UC).*

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<sup>22</sup> For a detailed discussion of value concept see Baudrillard, 1998.

The mall, then, is a spatial congregation of people from different habituses. The mall is partially shared by each habitus. In terms of the use of the shopping mall space, each habitus has its own foci. The food court and supermarket is the habitus of people with low economic and cultural capitals. Almost every part of the shopping mall space can be seen as a part of the habitus of people with middle economic and high cultural capitals. The boutique restaurants and stores are the part of habituses of visitors with high economic and cultural capitals. This distribution of the focus points of each habitus in the mall does not exhibit a pattern of strict segregation. Rather, there is a transitive element among the focus points of habituses, which provides spatial togetherness for people from different habituses. The distribution of habituses in the mall is summarized in the diagram below:

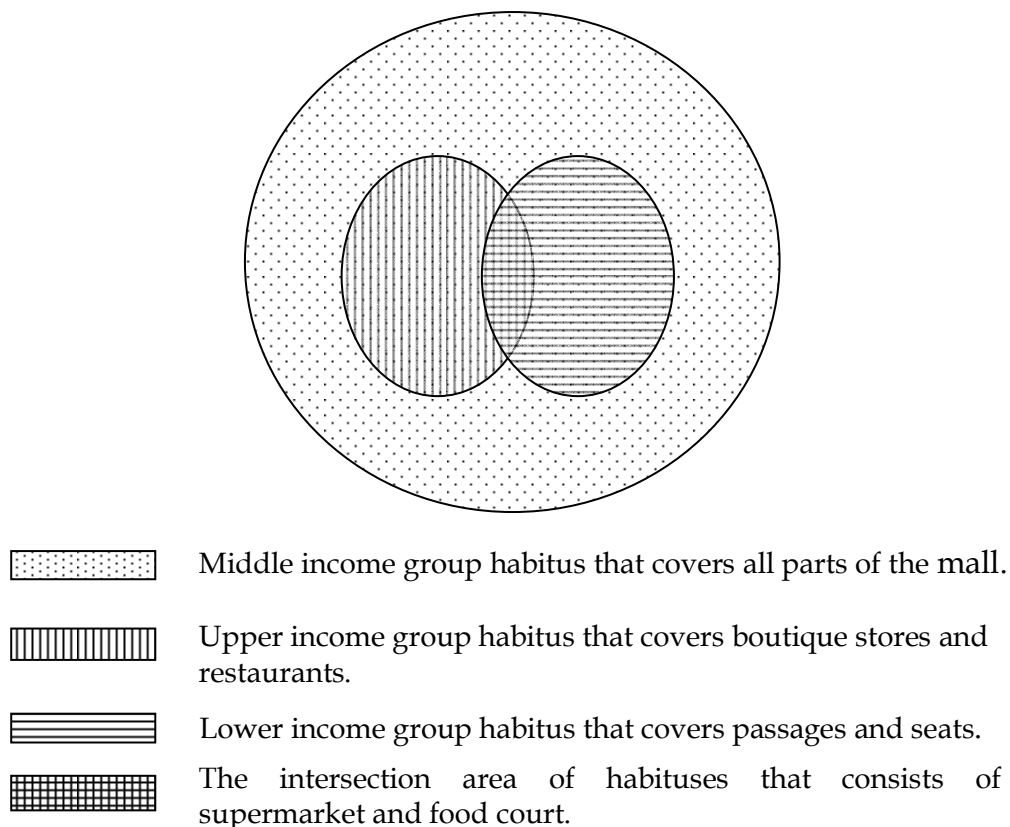


Figure 2: Distribution of habituses in the mallified public space.

In this section, I tried to show the spatial reflection of the tastes in terms of the economic and cultural capital of the visitors. I also showed that the spatial segregation is transitive rather than being strict. In the following section, I try to explain the inclusive character of the shopping malls for different segments of population.

#### **4.5. The Shopping Mall as an Inclusive Space**

As I argued the shopping mall is restricted to some sections of population because of socio-technological control and consumer citizenship, both of which tend to put limits on rights of equal access, free speech and assembly. At the same time, however, ANKAmall keeps attracting people from different segments of population despite restrictions and inequalities in access that stem from the market and relations of consumption. Being close to the city center and easily reached via mass transportation makes the mall accessible to wider terrains of population. In this section I discuss factors that attract visitors to the shopping mall and make it into a congregating point for individuals of diverse backgrounds.

First of all, for the residents of the city, shopping malls are the leading symbols for Turkey's Westernization and modernization in everyday life. The mall is perceived as a modernized form of the bazaar. In the first place, traditional bazaars are seen as a place where people are easily cheated whereas the price standardization of the shopping mall effectively prevents to this. The presentation of products and goods, the relations between the sellers and the customers and the very nature of the marketing people in the bazaars are identified with a backward traditional culture. In this perspective the shift from bazaar to the mall is a shift from the traditional to the modern in the consumer culture. Price standardization, the cleanness of products and environment, freedom of choice, the quality of commodities, guarantee certificates, well-educated sales persons, and the distinctive salesperson-

consumer relations in the shopping malls are the components of new consumer culture:

*I see malls as bazaars that open every day. Unlike bazaars, though, consumer satisfaction is central in the malls. The system of bazaar rests on cheating the customer. Sellers are low educated. Moreover, the sellers do not always let you choose. But, there is standardization in the mall; consumer is in the center. I think malls are for the good of everyone (57, M, MC).*

In addition, the modernization of the shopping culture through the shopping malls is also seen as an advance in terms of quality of life. Shopping branded commodities, consuming as Western people do, sharing a similar shopping experience with Western people, strolling in the luxury and excessively clean environment of the mall are some of the elements of this advanced quality of life. The mall visitors tend to see shopping experience before the malls almost as depressive as when finding the basic goods extremely limited. Then, the shopping malls seemed like a dream that they learned about from relatives or friends who lived abroad. Even when shopping malls were opened the dream-like atmosphere remained. The variety of stores, commodities and brands was not something that the residents were acquainted with. The shopping mall as an aspect of the emerging new urban life has become the setting where shopping experience and lifestyles resembled Western way of life:

*In the past, my brother would often go abroad. When he returned, he would tell us about shopping malls which we could not imagine. Fifteen years ago, I visited a mall for the first time. I was so happy to see such places in Turkey (65, F, MC).*

*When we first saw the mall we said "anooo!". We were so startled with purchasing socks and bread in the same building. We were happy to see these places in Turkey (57, M, MC).*

The relation of people with the shopping mall indicates a similar pattern with Simmel's (2003) trickledown theory of fashion. In the early days of shopping malls in Ankara, it was almost exclusively a high income

individual's experience. Middle income visitors strolled in the mall with great pleasure and admiration but doing little shopping whereas the lower income individuals rarely visited them; when they did, it was only to satisfy their curiosity. This relatively restricted access of the middle and lower income individuals to malls was mainly due to high prices. It is generally assumed that it was mainly competition among the malls and stores that led to price reductions and made lower income people to do shopping in the malls. Meanwhile the high income individuals' attachment to the malls has weakened as they considered that with the rapid inflow of all classes of people into the malls there remained nothing distinctive about them:

*When I first saw the mall I admired it. After that, I began visiting more frequently... Now there are a lot of malls and I get bored with spending time in the mall (34, F, UC).*

*In the early days of shopping malls, they addressed high income groups and we just spent a lot of time there without shopping... Now we can shop there, too (67, F, MC).*

*At the beginning, the mall was so alien to us... Now we got used to it (45, M, LC).*

As these statements clearly indicate the shopping malls are now visited by a wider section of the population. Although they experience the mall differently, the branded commodities, the modernized image of shopping, and the experience of Western lifestyles are common to people from all backgrounds.

Secondly, the activity of shopping and window shopping in the mall also has a power dimension. Status in contemporary Turkey depends increasingly on consumption. However, consumption is also associated with the space of the mall. Visiting the mall, knowing specific store in the mall, shopping there, following sales, campaigns, learning about prices changes and best offers, helping others in their shopping decisions provide individuals to accumulate cultural capital, which helps them to increase their power. Veblen (1899; cited from Tomlinson, 1990: 1) contended that the basis of good reputation in an

industrial community rests on pecuniary strength; and the means of showing pecuniary strength are leisure and conspicuous consumption of goods. In Ankara, for lower income individuals, visiting the mall, telling the mall experience to friends or family members, wearing branded commodities on special days are rather the means of showing one's capability of being as much part of the society as middle and upper income people. Therefore, the lower income individuals do not compete with the upper income individuals in determining lifestyles; they rather seem to struggle for reaching the quality of life of upper income individuals in the consumption sphere. The shopping mall setting plays a crucial role in this process because all these aspects of modern life are presented there.

*In the mall I see people whose shoes are Nike, whose t-shirts are Versace, whose jeans are Levi's. By consuming from the mall I mean that "Look, I am not as rich as you but I can dress wear like you" (28, M, LC).*

*When I buy something from the mall people ask me where I bought it. Answering them that "I bought it from ANKA mall", I imply that I can purchase good brands from luxury stores; I am part of the game (19, M, LC).*

Thirdly, the emergent mall culture seems to be inclusive of different cultural identities. The mall culture is a combination of elite culture and popular culture that appeals to diverse sections of the population. The luxury design, the lightning system, and the spectacular architecture of the mall address elite culture while the movie theatre, fast food culture, and commodity culture are elements of popular culture. Compared with the elite culture of the public spaces in the past, this hybrid nature of the mall culture is more inclusive. For instance, a student trio from Hacettepe University Conservatory performs a concert in the mall twice a week and play violin, contrabass and flute in the main passage of the first floor of the mall (See the Illustration 3 below). Although their instruments are more appropriate for classical music, their repertoire includes songs from Turkish popular music, too. As soon as the concert begins, visitors stop shopping or strolling and

gather around the safety fences of each floor to watch the concert as if they are watching the concert from the balcony of an opera hall. One of my informants drew a parallel between the inclusive image of a mosque and the shopping mall:

*In ANKAmall you can see the fundamentalist Islamists and Alevis, Turks and Kurds, rightists and leftists, the poor and the rich... All these different groups desire to consume in the mall. Once they leave the mall they keep going in their own way. The same aspect can be seen only in the mosques (32, M, MC).*



Illustration 3: ANKAmall Trio Concert

Fourthly, different segments of the population gather in the mall as a result of the deteriorating conditions in urban public space. According to Gottdiener (2006), public spaces are the problematic parts of contemporary cities; unequal development segregates the city spatially, and public spaces are mainly the disprivileged. In Ankara, specifically middle income residents think that the city's public spaces have deteriorated: they are disorderly and lack aesthetic qualities. In addition, the pedestrians complain the city is increasingly designed for automobiles as the pavements are tainted and invaded by cars. In addition, the inner city does not satisfy the automobile drivers either since finding appropriate parking spaces is a crucial problem. On the other hand, shopping mall provides solutions to the problems of both pedestrians and automobile owners. Apart from being a space which is free

from the traffic problems of the inner city, the shopping mall also become the address of family outings by car since it is not problem to find empty parking space in the shopping mall and the parking space is free of charge. Furthermore, the design of the urban public spaces, ignoring the disadvantaged position of the disabled people, lead them to shopping malls where they can participate the social life more easily since the design of the space provides them the freedom of movement. Moreover, noise and pollution in the city push people away from inner city shopping areas.

*Sometimes I cannot believe that Kızılay is the center of the capital. Because it is so dirty. In the summer I cannot breathe in Kızılay because of the disgusting smell (21, F, MC).*

*As a pedestrian I feel subordinated in Kızılay. There are not enough pavements and the existing ones are narrow and dirty if they are not invaded by the cars (25, M, LC).*

The deteriorating municipality services especially in the urban public spaces of Çankaya district as a result of the political polarization among the municipalities of Ankara make the mall an obligated socialization environment for the residents of Çankaya. Including the metropolitan municipality as the majority of the municipalities of the city are from Justice and Development Party (AKP), the residents of Çankaya complain about that they are consciously deprived of the services of the municipality because they voted for Republican People's Party (CHP). Another issue of complaint on the metropolitan municipality is that it re-shapes the urban public spaces in the light of conservative values such as the transformation of the symbol of the city from Hittite sun to mosque and the establishment of audio systems for the azan even in the subway stations. Therefore, shopping malls gain special meaning for "secular" people since their values dominate the atmosphere of the mall and they are free from the symbolic violence of the conservative policies of the municipality.



The deteriorating conditions of public spaces in the city are not only related to infra-structure; but also to the changing socio-cultural environment. The upper and middle income people tend to distinguish: the good old days and what they see as the deteriorating conditions in public places at present day Ankara. In the past, mainly the educated, highly cultured and modern people, that is the ladies and gentleman used to inhabit the public spaces in the city. These groups put the blame on migration, the invasion of the public space by the migrants. Migration in their view has totally changed the culture of the city. The culture of Kızılay is characterized by male dominance, which makes it difficult for women to be on their own. The new culture of Kızılay is regarded as intolerant to different lifestyles. Therefore, the attraction of the mall is also seen as a search for spatial distinction:

*In the past the center of the city was Ulus. Later it shifted to Kızılay. Today, Kızılay has become Ulus and ANKAmall has become Kızılay (34, F, UC).*

*I think that Kızılay does not provide the necessary atmosphere for women to stroll on their own. When I am in Kızılay, I want to leave the as quick as possible (65, F, MC).*

Fifthly, according to Firat and Dholakia (2000), modernity involves taking nature under control. The central heating and air conditioning systems which provide the most visible experience of modernity in the everyday urban life are the major source of attraction in the malls. The control of temperature annihilates the effect of bad weather conditions. Most residents prefer spending time in the shopping mall simply because it is free from extremes of cold and hot weather. As a university student expresses below, especially winter can be named as shopping mall season:

*I prefer to go to Gölbaşı or Çiftlik but what can I do there in the cold of Ankara? Most of the time we come to the mall as a last resort because there is no other alternative (21,F, MC).*

Sixthly, the gender dimension is also significant in that, the shopping mall is the leading public place in bringing men and women together. When gender dimension is taken into account, we can say that the shopping mall is more

feminine than the public spaces in the city. It has a liberating effect on women (Erkip, 2003; Featherstone, 1998). There are some reasons for feminization of the shopping mall. Especially for housewives and retired women of middle income groups, the shopping mall presents an opportunity to go out of home and to socialize outside of the neighborhood and home. Especially middle income women in Ankara see the shopping mall as a secure place where they can stroll on their own. The home-centered socialization patterns based on neighborhood and consist mainly of the neighbors' and relatives' visits have significantly shifted to the shopping mall. The traditional forms of sociability continue to exist; yet, especially middle class women prefer socializing on a more individual basis. The pre-shopping mall days are seen as routine and rather monotonous. Then women would gather mainly at home. The shopping mall has been a break from this routine. After the malls women do not have to wait for the bazaar day to go out of home with other women. Life, for them, has become more spontaneous. In addition, in previous days, children tied women to home. Following the shopping malls, women felt more comfortable in leaving home with children. Mothers see the mall as a safe, orderly, clean and entertaining place where they do not hesitate to take their children. It can even be argued that the most loyal visitors of the shopping mall are babies. Especially on weekends, shopping mall resembles to a play ground. Parents think that shopping malls are the appropriate spaces to take their children out of the home because malls are healthy in terms of providing stable weather temperature and hygienic environment. This baby friendly attribute of the mall makes parents addicted to shopping mall. Unlike the middle income women, lower income women go to the mall mostly with families, that is, accompanied by their husbands while both young and single lower income women visit the mall with a group of friends; hence, in their case mall experience is with men and largely determined by men. Men think that women are not disturbed by the gaze of other men in the mall. Even though the low income women are accompanied by men, their shopping mall

experience provides a significant change in their identities. Since men think that the mall visitors are decent men's control on the physical appearance of women decreases. Like weddings or the other carnivalesque events, the shopping mall visit gives her the chance to be how she wants to be rather than how her husband or boy friend wants her to be.

In Turkey, the urban public space has been the area where modern life-styles since the early periods of the Republic have been displayed. Women were visible in the public space, but the modern lifestyles, promoted by the rulers of the country were identified with elite culture. On the contrary, the shopping mall has its almost unique culture that brings together elite and popular cultures, and in this sense is more inclusive. In the shopping mall, women from different income groups, neighborhoods, and education levels come together. Following fashion and wearing branded and elegant dresses have almost been the norm of all segments of population's lives, but this is more significant for women. The new consumption patterns and lifestyles spread by the mass media and urban life has a profound impact on women. The desire for following the fashion makes women from all segments more visible and active in the shopping mall. The spectacular environment of the mall is associated with the lives of the international celebrities and leading brands. Fashion becomes a constituent element of identity. As Advidsson (2005) argues, brands are seen as something in common with the others. Even in the lives of lower income women, brands are the precondition of having status and being recognized in the society. As a low income woman expresses, branded commodities are five times more expensive than the unbranded ones but it is worth paying them:

*I can buy five t-shirts with the price of one branded t-shirt. But when I buy dress from the bazaar I fear that the others will know where it is from. I feel better and more comfortable when I wear branded dresses (28, F, LC).*

In the shopping mall, women are associated closely with the activity of shopping. The traditional division that relates man with production and woman with consumption is somewhat challenged as women join the labor force and men get increasingly involved in consumption. Despite these changes however, consumption is still overwhelmingly women-dominated activity. Shopping from the mall is identified with aesthetics and this is also an overwhelmingly feminine domain. Such association reinforces the relationship between women and shopping:

*Of course women visit the mall more frequently! Because we love to wear nice things and look beautiful. Because we love shopping (45, F, MC).*

#### **4.6. Conclusion**

Although lower income people feel themselves uncomfortable in the shopping mall due to socio-technological control and their limited consumption capacity, they nevertheless visit the mall frequently. Similarly, the shopping mall brings men and women together as such it is a public place where people come together and mix. The shared places of the shopping malls, such as the food courts, passages, the super markets allow the gathering of people from different social and economic backgrounds. It should be emphasized, however, that this mixed character, more democratic and multicultural elements of the shopping malls cannot always hide the existing inequalities. Although the shopping mall space is shared by different segments of population, there are significant differences among the visitors in terms of the frequency of visits, the duration of the visits, the patterns and relations of consumption and the meaning attributed to being in the mall vary. The existing inequalities are often reflected and reproduced in the shopping mall. Income level is crucial in determining the frequency and the duration of the visits. However, in the case of upper income groups increasing purchasing power does not make them spend more time in the mall. The middle and low income visitors spend more time checking prices

and quality of goods. As income level decreases, the likelihood of visiting the mall for window shopping, strolling, sociability and simply as pastime activity increases too. Finally, in the case of low income groups the relative decline in the frequency of visits goes together with increases in the duration of the visit. In their case visiting the mall is a comparatively more collective experience.

The shopping mall does not replace the urban public space completely. As a kind of open air museum the urban public space is the part of the history of the city whereas the shopping mall is not, though it may in the future. Stone (1954) argues that in identifying location for the shopping experience the ethical considerations of protecting the small entrepreneurs do play a role. This ethical consideration involves a moral obligation to support urban public spaces in order to protect local history and culture. Hence, the city residents are advised to limit their mall visits and experiences strictly with shopping and consumption. As I tried to argue in the case of ANKAmall, however, the visitors are attracted by a multitude of activities that take place in the malls: eating out, meeting friends, physical exercise, window shopping, shopping, play and entertainment for children, musical displays. It appears that shopping malls in Ankara rest on a paradox. In the shopping mall, the structural inequalities combining with the socio-technological control creates a high self-control mechanism for the low income individuals. In addition, the rights of free speech and assembly are also restricted. Such disadvantages are expected to create social exclusion for low income individuals. However, apart from having a homogenized visitor profile, the structure of ANKAmall exhibits a mixed attribute. Unlike the many cases shopping malls are new centers in urban life, and a rival to the city center in Ankara. Although a search for a community life can also be seen, this is a search for Western, modern community life. Being built a source of social status and power, the shopping mall liberates women from the constraints of traditional life and provides residents with a more inclusive urban culture.

In this chapter, I mainly put the emphasis on the quasi-public space attribute of the shopping mall through the experiences of the agents from different segments of population. In the next chapter, I try to give a more complete explanation about the agent in the mall. Below, I articulate the consumer as the product of different networks of social relations.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE CONSUMER IN THE MALL: THE SOCIAL TYPES OF ANKAMALL

The segment of population for whom consumption is significant in social life has enlarged enormously over the last few decades in Turkey. While the social norms and values were becoming consumption-oriented, the individual identity was also based on consumption during the same period. In contemporary urban life, as Williamson (1982) argues, our senses cannot escape from the bombardment of consumption messages. While reading newspapers, watching TV, listening to the radio, surfing on the Internet, walking around the city, and even talking with others, consumption is ever-present (ibid.). Even if we do not consume in practice, the idea of consumption is always alive in our minds. It seems that the mutual activity of the individuals that makes unrelated people into the “we” of modern society is consumption. As Gottidener argues (2000: 14-7), increasingly issues of work, production, and corporate daily life are not the building blocks that bind people together in friendship networks in modern society. Instead social ties are now centered more around mutual concerns regarding lifestyle, leisure, family life, home ownership, and the spectacular everyday discourse (ibid.). Thus, the consumer is the central figure of contemporary urban life. Providing to the consumer the multitude of commodities and activities of consumption, the shopping mall has been the consumer Mecca (Liechty, 2003: 88) for the residents of Ankara and in Turkey, too. In this chapter, I aim to look at the different kinds of consumers in the ANKAmall

as distinct social types. In the light of the income, gender and age variables, I introduce various social types of consumers: the “social consumer” for whom the mall has been an existential home with consumption as compensation for the deprivation of the past, the “distant consumer” for whom the mall has been central in his or her distinction from urban public spaces and the nouveau-riche, and the window shopper who is less visible in the material relations of consumption in the mall.

### **5.1. The Consumer**

Over the last few decades, except for economic crisis periods, there has been a constant increase in the total household consumption expenditures of citizens of Turkey. After the 2001 economic crisis, during 2002 to 2006, the total household consumption expenditure of the country increased from 7 billion to 16 billion New Turkish Liras<sup>23</sup> (TRY). Although there was an accompanying increase in the GNDP rate during the same period, the dazzling increase in credit card debt reveals that there is no parallel between the rates of household income and household consumption expenditures. The economic data for 2002-2004 shows that there was an improvement in the economic condition of the poorest quintile, but during the very same period the propensity to save decreased from 17 to 10 percent. The research also shows that the decrease in the propensity to save is widespread in every segment of the population (Yükseler & Türkan, 2008). Moreover, in 2007, consumer credit and credit card debt exceeded 86 billion TRY. While the disposable income of Turkish people annually increased by an average 4.5 percent, the total consumer credit and credit card debt increased by 30 percent in 2007 (Uras, 2007). Such evidences show that the traditional propensity to save more by diminishing consumption expenditure has been disappearing. The consumption patterns compatible with economic power

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<sup>23</sup> TÜİK Tüketim Harcamaları İstatistikleri [http://www.tuik.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?tb\\_id=22&ust\\_id=7](http://www.tuik.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?tb_id=22&ust_id=7)  
09.05.2008



have been losing their validity while the contemporary society, as Ritzer (2001) argues, has been turning into a society of debtors.

This shift from saving to spending in the economic mentality of the society involves a shift from self-denying subject to self-gratifying subject for whom shopping has been a way to discover who he or she is. In more general terms, this is a shift in the identity of the modern subject from worker to consumer. As Weber (2003) contended, the motivation of working hard to reach an otherworldly reward has been lost over time. Today, although in different forms, people keep working hard, but given more resources, they choose to spend them on greater consumption (Slater, 1997: 18). It seems that the motivation for working hard has changed from gaining an otherworldly reward to owning, [or dreaming to own], more commodities (Bocock, 1997: 56). This study shows that the significance of consumption in the discovery of identity is not related to a decay in work. On the contrary, similar to arguments of Gottdiener (2000: 14), most of the informants say that work, career, and the making of money remain the most powerful domains of social activity. The research also indicates that the activity of shopping, for a big part of the informants, is seen as a leisure activity which is placed in a secondary position as compared with work. However, as Huat (2000: 5) argues, the owned commodities are signs of quality of life and this holds true for the visitors of ANKAmall. Work is important as long as it supplies the economic power necessary for achieving the commodities. While informants complain about the increasing burdens of work such as flexible work hours (which means working more than necessary), they think that these burdens are acceptable only if they supply the economic power to experience the pleasures of shopping. Shopping turns into being a reward for working. The informants themselves express this relationship very clearly:

*After I started working I began spending money. I saw that it is nice to spend money. I realize the meaning of work when I shop. If I do not shop I would not be able to work.*

*Because I consume more I can say that my life standard increased. The more I consume, the happier I am (26, M, MC).*

*If I had opportunity I would prefer to spend all of my time in the mall. I spend most of my time in the work because I have to. If I had not worked, how could I have shopped (28, F, LC) ?*

As Sennet (2005) argues, under the flexible conditions of late capitalism, work loses its central importance in constituting personal narratives. Like factories in the early periods of capitalism, shopping malls in the contemporary society present ways of forming narratives which add purpose and meaning to individual lives (Campbell, 2004). This is one of the reasons why shopping malls have turned into being a daily pilgrimage destination (Ritzer, 2000), and why commodities have turned into magical, almost holy, objects. In line with Goss' (1993: 25) findings on shopping malls in the U.S., the Ankara shopping malls can be claimed to be the third place beyond home and work/school where people congregate in the city. Starting from 10.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m., during twelve hours, there is an endless circulation of people coming to and leaving ANKAmall. While some of them leave the mall with bags in their hands, or with dreams of shopping in the future, and smiles on their faces, others are in a hurry to start their shopping. These people undertake various activities in the mall, ranging from the satisfaction of needs, the emulation of others, the pursuit of pleasure, the assertion of status, window shopping, etc. (Campbell, 2004: 27).

In the stores and passageways of ANKAmall hurries the main figure of modern urban life: the consumer. The consumer in the mall is an ordinary person who can (almost) be anybody in society. The consumer might be man or woman, rich or poor, young or old. The consumer might have a job or be unemployed. The consumer has a family and friendship network. The consumer might shop for meeting needs, satisfying desires or dreaming of a

possibly higher social mobility with the help of the commodities in the mall. The practices of the consumer might be modern or postmodern. As in the dynamics of the fashion concept of Simmel (2003), with the very act of consuming the consumer separates himself or herself from others, but at the same time he or she unites with others. In the formation of the consumer, the role of the mall is central, because what is exchanged in the mall is not restricted to money and commodities. Values too are exchanged in the mall. Furthermore, the values of the society about what is good, what is right, and what is beautiful are formed to a significant extent in the mall through consumption activities:

*In the shopping malls we are getting used to worship. This worship, however, is not a religious activity. It is rather a ritual which recommends us to be clean, well-dressed, handsome, and different through consumption activities (32, M, MC).*

The reference point about how one aims to be is also becoming more and more related to how one dreams of consuming. Therefore, using consumption activities as a language of identity has become a social norm in the modern society. While social values become consumption-oriented, commodities become the carriers of meaning as the fundamental components of identity. The commodity goes one step further toward losing its ties with the labor that produced it. It turns into being an object in itself which becomes the carrier of cultural meanings such as wealth, power, prestige, respect, etc. (McCracken, 1986: 71). Thus, the mundane preferences of brand, color, and style of a commodity become the major part of the discovery of identity. If the identity of the modern agent, as Giddens (1991: 5) consists of multiple choices that provide the sustaining of coherent, yet continuously revised self-narratives, the mall is the most appropriate place to investigate about him or her. Depending on the differing conditions of economic power, age and gender, I try to outline below specific social types of consumer, namely the social consumer, the distant consumer, and the windows shopper, all of whom I encountered in ANKAmall.

### 5.1.1. The Social Consumer

In the period between 1800-1850, thirty arcades were constructed in Paris to accommodate a significant social type who became a key figure in understanding the urban experience of that period: the flaneur. The flaneur was a stroller who was constantly invaded by new streams of experience and who developed new perceptions as he moved through the urban landscape and crowds (Featherstone, 1998: 910). The flaneur wandered without aim, or the aimless stroll was his aim; he wandered in search of the aim of his wandering (Bauman, 1994: 139). The crowd was his domain, just as the air is the bird's, and water that of the fish (Tester, 1994: 2). His passion and his profession were to merge with the crowd. Therefore, he was driven out of the private sphere and into the public by his own search for meaning (ibid, p. 2). Strolling as the main activity meant a large leisure time which required independence from social commitments and family life (Shields, 1994: 64). As maker of the order of things, he had the privilege of being himself or someone else he chose while strolling in the crowd (Tester, 1994: 5). Briefly, the flaneur was an extra-ordinary figure who was on vacation from reality and living life as a play (Bauman, 1994: 141-2).

Although it is sometimes argued that the flaneur was a specific figure from a specific period, today we can still see the flaneur strolling in the passages and stores of ANKA mall. Similar to the socio-spatial changes of nineteenth century Paris, Ankara has been passing through a process of rapid rural to urban migration and socio-spatial change as a result of the mushrooming growth of shopping malls since 1989. However, the flaneur in the mall is somewhat different from that of the earlier century. The flaneur whom we see strolling in the mall is fundamentally a woman: hence, a flaneuse. The flaneuse, as a social type, is a social consumer which, as a category, specifically includes the retired woman and the housewife who have left behind some of her commitments to work and family. The appearance of the

flaneur was a result of a changing social spatialization of everyday socio-economic relations in the nineteenth century (Shields, 1994: 67). The appearance of the social consumer in the mall is likewise linked with two intertwined changes. The first change is related to the changes in personal life. She finds herself at a new beginning after retirement. The process after retirement is expressed as the beginning of a new socialization process which is full of the fear of remaining alone. The second change that accompanies the first is related to spatial changes in the city. The mushrooming growth of shopping malls around the city came at a time when the social consumer was in search of new places for socialization. In line with Lewis' (1990: 126) argument, the mall is the main life setting for elderly persons. Especially for the social consumer, for whom visiting the mall has been a routine activity, the mall becomes one of her main connections with life. In the account below, an informant expresses the central position of the mall in her life:

*Before retirement, I had always thought that after retirement I would find myself watching TV, sitting on a sofa. Therefore, I delayed my retirement date many times. But now I stroll in the mall rather than watching TV (51, F, MC).*

The process after retirement is identified with the private domain which is seen as boring and becoming a passive subject who has to spend most of her time watching TV. The mall experience, however, makes an important inversion in the condition of the subject. The passive subject of the private domain turns into an active observer of the shopping mall. First of all, the mall experience made her into a woman of the crowd, like the flaneur of the nineteenth century. As was explained in the earlier chapter, as a result of deteriorating conditions in urban public spaces, these are seen as places which one should pass quickly. Therefore, escaping from the boring atmosphere of home means strolling in the crowd at the mall or having a seat and watching the crowd of strolling people. As a social consumer expresses below, the mall thus becomes the existential home of the social consumer and

strolling in the mall becomes one of the main purposes and pleasures of her life:

*Almost every day I come to the mall. If I go out of my home, it means that I am at the mall. Even if I need nothing, I come to the mall. I enjoy watching shop windows and people. The mall gives me the energy of life and it has been a habit for me (67, F, MC).*

The strong attachment of the social consumer to the shopping mall is related to her search for socialization rather than a search for commodities. Completing a university education and participating in the work life as a woman was not as widespread in Turkey, as forty years ago in Turkey. At that time, the consumer did not have access to a rich social life with people who share the same socio-economic status. She felt distant to the home-centered, traditional neighborhood relations. Thanks to the mall, the retired woman compensates for the absence of neighborhood relations with the social relations of the mall. In her new socialization pattern, her compass for social relations has been her tastes. She finds her “taste neighbors” departing from her own consumption preferences:

*When I was young, I would accompany to my mother in the bazaar. She would always talk to other women whom she does not know in the bazaar. When I criticized her, she would reply, ‘What is wrong? I am Muslim, she is Muslim.’ After retirement I started visiting the mall frequently. I saw that the other women who were sitting in Zeynel Çilli were like me. I met with them. Why not? She likes Zeynel Çilli; I like Zeynel Çilli (63, F, MC).*

Consumption activities are an inseparable part of the socialization search of the social consumer. As Featherstone (1998: 916) argues, the contemporary shopping flaneuse [flaneur] enjoys as much mingling with the world of commodities on display as mingling with the crowd. The activity of observing in the mall became a touristic activity which supplies the social consumer opportunities to meet with the commodities and brands that she has seen on TV screen but never experienced in the past. The activity of observing, therefore, becomes an activity of compensating for the

deprivation of the past when life was not as colorful as at present. Now, she wanders in the mall slowly, looking at the shop windows and shopping people, sighing and wishing for a rebirth. The more the seduction of the commodities is enhanced, the more the desire for strolling increases. However, because the seduction of the commodities is so strong, the activity of strolling [that is, *flanerie*], which was earlier based on urban landscapes, is more and more identified with the activity of shopping. As a social consumer expresses below, the things that occupy the gaze of the *flaneuse* and thus complete her incomplete identity becomes more and more shopping-oriented:

*I feel that I am happier in the mall. I am happy because I shop here and see people shopping in here. I believe that I find the energy of life in here which springs from shopping or the possibility of shopping (67, F, MC).*

The social consumer is at the centre of the world while she is in the mall. If the *flaneur* were a figure who went botanizing on asphalt, the social consumer as *flaneuse* is a figure who goes botanizing in the mall. When she is in the mall, she is automatically in the crowd; she does not have to stroll to be in the crowd. She generally takes a seat in the food-court and observes the other people. She enjoys observing people from far away. She makes comments about the behavior of the others, criticizes their tastes, evaluates what is right or wrong, and sometimes thinks about what she would do if she were in the position of another person. Briefly, the *flaneuse* is a social type for whom the mall is an obligatory habitat where she escapes from the loneliness of the home and finds the enjoyment of play with the crowd by strolling, which is identified with shopping.

### **5.1.2. The Distant Consumer**

In contrast to the social consumer, the distant consumer in the mall refers to urban men and women from upper middle income group that aim to

distinguish themselves there from the emulative consumption patterns of the nouveau-riche. The distant consumer is disturbed by what is happening in the urban public spaces. He or she feels a deep longing for the past when there was a rich social life at the city center. The distant consumer is both physically and socially distant from social life and its actors in the urban public space, such as migrants from the eastern parts of the country. The social distance between the distant consumer and the migrant springs from their lifestyle differences rather than where they came from. Lifestyle refers to patterns of behavior that distinguish people through the articulation of their acts as well as reasons for and meanings of these acts for the agents themselves and for others (Chaney, 1999: 14). Differences in lifestyle refer to shared, common activities that name and separate a group from another. According to the distant consumer, what is common to people of Kızılay is a low level of education, a less developed aesthetic perception, an ambiguity about where to belong, and an over-interest in woman and football issues in their everyday life speech. Like many other people, the distant consumer also complains about the chaotic life in Kızılay. However, the disappointment with Kızılay is not restricted to its chaos; the distant consumer seeks to see order and aesthetics in his or her environment. The layout and architecture of buildings, the harmony of colors, an aesthetic urban plan and design are also what the distant consumer looks for in an urban public space. Also, Kızılay becomes a source of anxiety even for those who goes there out of necessity. Thus, the mall, as an appropriate setting for his or her gaze, provides a spatial-cultural distinction in the social life of the distant consumer. He or she thinks that the mall cannot be completely invaded by the others because visiting the mall is strongly related to purchasing power. In addition, even if the visitor profile of ANKAmall gets closer to that of Kızılay, the distant consumer thinks that the mall transforms the attitudes and behaviors of its visitors, which is why the mall culture keeps remaining decent:



*Kızılay is full of people who don't want to accept the city culture. This disturbs me. But there is an order in the mall. Even if it's the same people who visit the mall and Kızılay, they do not behave as they do in Kızılay (55, F, MC).*

*While walking in the city, I mind the design of the place, the placement of buildings, harmony of colors, etc. These are absent in Kızılay; that is why I am disturbed from being there, whereas I walk comfortably in the mall because there is order and harmony (45, M, UC).*

The distant consumers see the mall as a center where they can express their distinction most saliently. For them, visiting the mall is an ordinary activity. They are as comfortable at the mall as though sitting at home. The general concern about physical appearance while going to the mall is not a relevant concern for the distant consumer. The distant consumers are comfortable with their appearance as much as with their behavior. Neither the security system nor other visitors can execute a social pressure on them. This seemingly cool attitude towards the mall is linked to their disinterested approach. At the beginning, the shopping malls were attractive and enchanting for them, too. We can argue that the distant consumer has already consumed the enchantment of the mall. As the frequency of visits increased, the experience of a similar environment in other malls of the city made visits to the mall an ordinary part of urban life. Therefore, the distant consumer visits the mall mostly for shopping purposes. From being an enchanted place once, the mall turns out to be an ordinary aspect of modern life:

*At first , the mall was completely new. My wife and I always wanted to be in the mall. But when their numbers increased, they became the necessities of modern city life (58, M, MC).*

The weakening relation with the mall means more individualization for the distant consumer. While the social consumer finds freedom outside of home, the distant consumer feels comfortable at his/her suburban home. Shopping

in malls is a social activity for the distant consumer. The measurement of the richness of their social life in the malls is their economic power. They align themselves with rooted brands that determine their compass in the mall. The general tendency of the mall visitors is to make price and quality comparisons before the shopping decision; this, however, does not characterize the behavior of distant consumer. First of all, there is no strict shopping season for the distant consumer. Following the sales campaigns of the stores to buy cheap is not an integral part of the distant consumer's shopping mentality. He or she may visit the mall any time, during lunch, after the work or on weekend. The mall is a practical place for the distant consumer, because it supplies the opportunity to stroll among one's favorite stores in a short period of time. The visit of the distant consumer is shopping-based. It means that it is more likely for the distant consumer to do unplanned shopping. Moreover, the spontaneous purchases are seen as some kind of fun:

*There are some stores that I like to stroll past in the mall such as Paşabahçe. When I go to the mall, I visit these stores. During these visits even if I don't need a specific thing, I frequently buy something. This is the most amusing part of my shopping mall visit (34, F, UC).*

As the carriers of cultural meaning, the branded commodities embody one's consistent tastes. The distant consumer is conservative about brands in the sense that he or she often prefers the same brands. New popular brands, sales and promotional campaigns of the other brands have little effect on his or her brand preference. For the distant consumer, wearing or using a brand for long years shows that he or she is not a nouveau-riche. Thus, consistency in brand preferences is one of the most significant means of distinguishing oneself from the nouveau-riche. The distant consumer is a special customer of specific brands. He or she is informed by the brand managers about the new season's products via catalogues that are mailed to him or her. The distant consumer's tastes are not restricted to the stores of Ankara or even

Turkey. He or she also shops for other brands that cannot be found in Turkey. Through relatives who live abroad or by directly ordering from the Internet, the distant consumer becomes a cosmopolitan consumer:

*I am a special customer of some of the stores which mail the new season's products to my address... I follow the other countries' stores, as well. Because I go abroad frequently, I buy some of my dresses from there. These foreign brands are what attract the others most about me (45, M, UC).*

For the distant consumer, the mall provides a spatial-cultural distinction from the deteriorated culture of the urban public spaces of Ankara and a social distinction from the nouveaux-riches. For the distant consumer, the nouveau-riche refers to those who consumes excessively, despite their low economic and cultural capital. The distant consumer is disturbed by the blurring borders between social classes and complains about the emulative character of the nouveau-riche consumption patterns. The nouveau-riche is criticized for constructing a fake identity which rests on image rather than on deep-rooted values:

*What one wears has been one of the criteria in assessing who he or she is for a segment of the population. But I think brands on their own do not show the quality of people. As long as one's consumption pattern is not related to his or her economic power, I think that he or she has a fake identity (34, F, UC).*

For the distant consumer, the consumption pattern should be linked to and in accordance with economic power. Therefore, the nouveaux-riches' excessive consumption with the help of credit cards sweep away this relationship. The distant consumer distinguishes himself or herself by making the enchanted the disenchanting, and the luxurious the ordinary. Restricting the mall visit to shopping-based activities, giving more significance to sign value than exchange value, visiting frequently but staying only briefly at the mall, and having cool attitudes and behaviors in

the mall, the distant consumer builds a distance between himself or herself and the nouveau-riche.

### **5.1.3. The Window Shopper**

The window shopper refers to men and women of rural origin from low income groups whose acts and meanings are based on subsistence economy. The window shopper works for a low wage or works in the non-paid labour sector as a housewife. The social condition of being a windows shopper means a low level of leisure and economic power. The life of the windows shopper consists of a routine cycle: waking up, work; going back home. Therefore, visiting the mall is a rare and extra-ordinary occasion. It is not always consumption-based. The window shopper is a social type whose disadvantaged position in the relations of production generally makes him/her less visible in the material relations of consumption in the mall.

The mall experience for the window shopper is a new kind of carnivalesque<sup>24</sup>. As in the carnivals, the mall experience provides freedom from traditional social control. However, the social control of the family, relatives, neighborhood, and work is replaced with the socio-technological control of the mall. While the mall creates a suitable place for the experience of individuality, similar to other spaces of socialization outside the sphere of traditional social relations, the consciousness of coming from the lower income groups, that is, the lack of feeling that one belongs to the mall engenders high self-control for the windows shopper, as if strolling in an alien territory. For the window shopper, the mall is primarily a place for people with higher economic and cultural capital. The social control in the mall is related to the window shopper's effort to be with these people. For the window shopper, pretending to be an ordinary visitor in the mall may mean leaving his or her ordinary identity at the entrance to the mall. The

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<sup>24</sup> For the concept carnivalesque, see Fiske, 1999.

window shopper pays excessive attention to his/her physical appearance, way of speech, and mode of behavior in the mall. He or she wears the most befitting dresses, speaks more kindly, and behaves more carefully. Contrary to the relaxed mood of the distant consumer in the mall, the window shopper is on tenterhooks. For the window shopper, being relaxed means wearing brandless dresses, which is almost equal to strolling bare in the mall. As is seen in the account below, the window shopper suggests that wearing branded dresses, which is strongly linked with economic power, is a precondition of being comfortable in the mall:

*I cannot stroll with slippers in the mall. Since I do not pay for branded slippers, I cannot be comfortable with them. But upper income groups can comfortably stroll in the mall with slippers, because theirs are branded (45, M, LC).*

The window shopper image is closely related to language. In everyday life, the window shopper speaks with the rural accent, which is seen as more vulgar compared with the urban Turkish accent. In the mall, the aestheticization of physical appearance is accompanied by the changing accent of the window shopper. This also involves a fundamental change in identity. As in molting, the window shopper changes his/her ordinary identity at the entrance to the mall and assumes a temporary mall identity which helps the window shopper to play the role of an ordinary visitor:

*Outside the mall, I am from Angara, but inside I am from Ankara (28, M, LC).*

*The general profile of the mall consists of the richer and more educated people. This profile enforces you to change, to be like them (45, M, LC).*

The window shopper visits the mall mainly during weekends. He or she is content with mingling with the crowd, because being part of the crowd shows that the window shopper is not outside of what is popular and prestigious. The window shopper is a social visitor, that is, he or she visits the mall either with the family or with a group of friends. If it is a young men's group of friends, the search for flirting is a more prevalent purpose

than the search for commodities. However, consuming in accordance with the tastes of girls is an inevitable part of the young male window shopper's mall experience. On the other hand, in case of a family visit, the mall visit becomes a family outing:

*I must confess that I come to the mall for girls. In the mall I try to wear a style that girls will like. I drink cappuccino rather than tea to attract the girls (23, M, LC).*

*Once or twice in a month, I take my wife to the mall. We spend all day in the mall. We eat fast-food and maybe go to the cinema (25, M, LC).*

For the window shopper, the mall is a different world than the one that is ordinarily experienced. The window shopper sees the mall as a place where the discourse that rests upon the value of consumption in the entire society takes him/her to. Since the TV programs, urban landscapes, and conversations among people are about consumption activities, the window shopper comes to the mall to see the spirit of the age and society. For the window shopper, the mall is a place where the European or American way of life is experienced in the everyday life sphere. However, the window shopper's relation with this sphere is rather restricted to food court and sometimes the cinema. Even if he or she does not easily become part of the shopping process in the mall, the window shopper strolls on every floor. The purpose of the window shopper's mall visit is to learn more about consumption activities, to be a part of the social discourse about consumption activities. For the window shopper, the mall is a modern fable in which he or she can participate. Like fables, the setting and the actors of the mall are extra-ordinary. The world of commodities promises to present everything about the world of consumption. They see the other visitors in the mall as people having high economic and cultural capital and they themselves have the opportunity to take part in this fable. The mall experience provides the window shopper the opportunity to witness the fable by strolling in its setting and the illusion of being an actor in the fable,

even though rarely, by shopping from the mall. The mall experience creates the feeling of belonging to an alien world:

*I do not belong to the mall. Here the decoration is luxurious and the people are kind, tolerant, and educated. But when I am in the mall, I feel that I am one of them (19, M, LC).*

The window shopper is comfortable in his/her own district and in Kızılay. They feel comfortable in these places because they have personal relations with shopkeepers and benefit from low prices. Unlike the distant consumer, the window shopper prefers personal relations with salespersons, because only in such an intimate atmosphere can the window shopper stroll freely in the store, ask questions about goods, try on dresses, and bargain on prices. The window shopper rarely purchases goods from the mall. This is firstly because of high prices, and secondly about the distant and impersonal attitude of salespersons. The window shopper complains about the classifying gaze of the salespersons who themselves work for a minimum salary and live in gecekondu areas, just like themselves. Furthermore, they think that the sales persons claim superiority:

*The salespersons of the mall see themselves as superior to me. They are cold and arrogant toward me. I am disturbed by their classifying gaze. When I enter the store, they behave as if I do not exist (29, M, LC).*

The window shopper is torn between wants and obligations. On the one hand, the window shopper is lured by commodities, and on the other hand she/he considers costs. Although the credit card may help them to forget calculating costs, the window shopper is always conscious about the money in his/her pocket. As a result of the dilemma between desires and obligations, the window shopper strolls in the mall, often daydreaming about the commodities. Branded commodities are the absent pieces of an imagined identity for the window shopper. The tastes that help to constitute identity are beyond the purchasing power of the window shopper. The

unsatisfied window shopper takes on a blasé attitude which springs from the economic incapability of replying to the stimuli of the mall. Therefore, while the mall provides relief for the social consumer and the distant consumer, it may be a source of anxiety for the window shopper, and leave him or her with unrequited stimuli of desire:

*Strolling in the mall is great when you shop but if you cannot purchase something that you want, it becomes bad (28, F, LC).*

For the window shopper, shopping in the mall takes place for the basic needs and electronic devices. Shopping for individual wants is rare, but when the window shopper makes an individual purchase, it carries a special meaning. The commodity purchased from the mall is a sign of social status, therefore it is worn or used on a special day. A branded commodity carries two meanings for the window shopper. Firstly, it is a sign of status and even superiority in the window shopper's own social environment. Secondly, brands are the components of identity which form the first impressions about a person. The special meaning of the branded commodity is clearly expressed below:

*There are some brands that I consistently use. When I use these brands, people ask me where I bought it. Answering these questions makes me happy (22, F, LC).*

*To me, it is nonsense to pay for branded jeans. But sometimes I buy them. While going to work, I wear any jeans that I bought from the bazaar. But to a social event, I wear the branded one. I do not want people to judge me by the brandless dresses I bought from the bazaar (23, M, LC).*

Even though buying for individual wants is rare, these represent a significant change in the shopping mentality of window shopper. When today's window shoppers compare themselves with their own parents, they consider themselves as thriftless. In their eyes, their parents dedicated their entire life to their children. In the past, having many children and saving for children was the main aspect of the culture of poverty. They describe their relation



with consumption as consumption craziness rather than as ascetic approach to consumption. The modern window shopper does not only aim to satisfy the needs of the family; he or she also dreams to satisfy his or her own wants. Their shopping mall experience should be understood in relation to this change in the shopping mentality. The difference between the shopping mentalities of the two generations is clear in the account below:

*My parents did not live their own life. My father has worn the same shoes for years, because he had five children to buy shoes for. Our consumption patterns changed. To change my shoes, I do not wait for my shoes to be torn (25, M, LC).*

Although the window shopper visits the mall rarely, he or she is content with the increasing number of shopping malls. Because, the window shopper sees the shopping malls as the modernization of the shopping culture, the betterment of urban life, and as a social service. For the window shopper, the mall is for the good of everyone. The mall provides a high level of circulation for commodities, a fixed price policy, certified quality service, and a clean and orderly space for shopping. In addition, the mall indirectly ameliorates the infrastructure of the city. For example, the main motorway around the mall is renewed; the parking lot of the mall decreases the traffic problems of the city. Moreover, for the window shopper, the mall is for the good of country's economy, as well. First of all, the mall is a source of employment for the unemployed population of the city. Secondly, the mall contributes to the economy by paying taxes. For these reasons, the windows shopper thinks that shopping malls are for the good of the whole society:

*I think that each district of the city should have a shopping mall. In this way the traffic problem of the city can be solved... Moreover, we give up bazaars and groceries. When you say to the grocer that this bread is stale, he does not care... In addition, the unemployed people can find jobs in the mall (45, M, LC).*

## **5.2. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I tried to explain the changing role of consumption in the society. The transformation of the consumption from the satisfaction of needs to reward of the work creates an accompanying change in the values of society. The chain of social change ends up with the shift of the center of self-narratives from work to consumption. In this chapter, I tried to articulate three social types of ANKAmall through their self-narratives about their participation into the relations of consumption. This study showed that consumer as the main agent of the modern society is a product of broad network of relations. The distinctive character of each social type implies that the shopping mall experience and ways of participating to the relations of consumption have roots outside the mall. The consumer would be bare if I had explained him/her remaining only in the consumption sphere. I argue that the discovery of identity in the shopping malls is not independent from the socio-economic sphere. Although the shopping malls are one of the places where the replacement of reality and simulacra can be seen saliently, the shopping mall experience is not a complete simulation. My study shows that degree of accumulated economic, cultural, and social capitals strongly affects the discovery of identity in the shopping malls. The excessive consumption as the mutual aspect of different identity discoveries carries different meanings for each income group. Comparing the consumption patterns between generations for each income group is better way to understand the increasing role of consumption in the discovery of identity rather than comparing different income groups, even if it sometimes shows the change more dramatically. The distinction of consumption patterns still exist among different income groups. This study shows that the more the income enhances the more the shopping mall experience coincides with material relations of consumption. Briefly, the consumer society is not a break from the predecessors. Relations of production are one of the main components of discovery of identity in the shopping malls. The main change

is seen rather in the values of the society such as the criteria of individual success. The measure of individual success in the contemporary Ankara seems to be the extent of participating to the material relations of consumption. This is why the shopping malls are the main sites of discovery of identity in the city.

In the earlier chapter, I put the emphasis on the space; and in this chapter, I elaborated on the consumer as the agent of the shopping mall. The acts of the agents in the space of the shopping mall bring into existence a distinctive cultural experience which is an outcome of the coincidence of modernization and globalization processes. In the following chapter, I try to explain the culture of shopping mall in Turkey.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE INTERSECTION OF MODERNIZATION AND GLOBALIZATION IN THE MALL

In Turkey, modernization has been one of the main dynamics of social change for many years, but globalization is a relatively novel but powerful component of current social change. As shopping malls are fast becoming socio-economic and cultural centers of Turkish society, the intersection of modernization and globalization indicates that important transformations are taking place in Turkey. This intersection rests on free market economy and individual as the main agents, focuses on the economic sphere, draws on the shopping malls as the spatial symbol, and stimulates success through shopping, preferably in the malls. Since 1980, as a result of the free market economy, the flow of imported goods has increased, media and advertising sectors have become prominent, and the new elites have continuously recommended the virtues of consumption (Bali, 2002). These transformations have been accompanied by the modernization of the relations of consumption, and as a result, the traditional bazaar has become old-fashioned. In addition, global culture has become part of the everyday life of Turkish people, mostly through mass communications media such as television that convey and promote global lifestyles to large segments of population. In this chapter, I try to articulate the intersection of modernization with globalization as experienced in the shopping malls. Firstly, I examine the modernization of the relations of consumption in the light of my informants' bazaar and shopping mall experiences. Secondly, I frame globalization in the shopping malls as "glocalization," that is, the

combination of structurally homogeneous and experience-based heterogeneous phenomena (Helvacioğlu, 2000). Lastly, I discuss reactions against the manifestation of global culture in the shopping malls.

### **6.1. The Shopping Mall Modernizes Us**

Shopping malls in Turkey represent an idealized social order in the everyday life of modern society. Turkish people tend to see shopping malls as a part of the ongoing project of Turkish modernization, which is identified with reaching the same quality of life level as Western societies. Especially for the urban, highly educated older generations, the shopping mall is one of the success stories of the country's modernization process and as such has become symbol of the country's development:

*When the first shopping malls were opened in Turkey I was happy to see them in the country. At last we too had shopping malls like the developed countries of the world (63, F, MC).*

While the traditional retailing spaces of bazaars are based on a disarrayed and temporary structure as well as resulting disorder and lack of control, shopping malls evoke senses of permanence and order, and are accessible twelve hours a day. In addition, the managerial organization of the mall provides comfort and a suitable order for the consumption experience that is protected from bad weather and supported by the brilliant architecture, luxury decoration, and a glittering atmosphere. These factors turn shopping malls into everyday consumption palaces where everything is an object of consumption. The ease of every possible consumption activity within malls creates a sense of amazement in visitors:

*I fear to lose my way in ANKA mall. Sometimes I spend much time to find the gate that I came in. I think it would be better to have a map of the mall with me while strolling in the mall (22, F, LC).*

In the bazaars, the consumer's power is weak. Here, the choices he or she faces are restricted, and food is the main item for sale. Bazaar shopping is based on the satisfaction of needs. The weakness of the consumer's power in the bazaar is based on two things: lack of variety and the seller-dominated consumer-seller relations. Product mix is important especially when goods are bought for desire rather than need. Although bazaar counters have different styles and colors of dresses, they lack the richness of cultural meaning that contemporary brands in modern consumer culture offer. The traditional retailing system of bazaars does offer relatively low prices and the possibility of bargaining. However, goods that are sold cheap in the bazaars are used in mundane daily activities, whereas in modern urban life, branded commodities are a widespread social norm. Transactions in the bazaars lack regulation, a problem that prevents bazaars from standardizing the price and the quality of goods. The lack of standardization in the bazaars establishes a disadvantaged retailing culture for consumers. Since the seller has the power to decide upon and change the price, the bazaar can be thought of as a cheating-based retailing culture. The disadvantaged position of the consumer in the bazaar annihilates the trust in the economic transactions of the bazaar:

*I don't trust bazaars. I expect to eat tomatoes but when I return to home I see that all tomatoes are rotten. How can I trust? (28, M, LC).*

*Cheating is widespread in bazaars. Prices change according to who is buying from the seller's counter (67, F, MC).*

The deceived consumer of the bazaars turns into a conscious consumer in the shopping malls. In the mall, economic transactions are implemented in accordance with new criteria such as the certificate of guarantee, expiration date, fixed price, tally trade, and sales campaigns. Although these new criteria do not mean that consumers are not cheated in the malls, they become part of consumer mentality and create trust in the economic transactions that occur there. In constituting trust-based economic transactions, standardization plays a major role. In other words,

standardization in shopping malls is a sign of high quality of goods. As standardization increases, the quality of purchased goods becomes more predictable. Moreover, standardization in the mall extends beyond goods, as it is widespread in every social and economic activity in the mall. For example, principles of entrepreneurship, cleanliness of stores, and customer relations are also standardized here and are monitored by experts. The following account exemplifies the relation between standardization and trust:

*I trust in the shopping malls. I know that experts make controls in here. I think they are examples of how our economic life should be. There are principles in here about how a store or a barber should be. Moreover, shopping malls are clean. Even lahmacun is prepared by machines, and workers wear gloves while serving it (34, M, MC).*

In addition, the variety of prices, colors, quality, and styles of products addresses the tastes of consumers and facilitates choice-based shopping. Even if the consumer shops for the satisfaction of needs, desires are inevitably attached to his or her choices, since choosing among many alternatives adds personal meaning to shopping. While the plurality of choice begets freedom in the relations of consumption, the credit card furthers such freedom by dissociating consumer choice from the amount of money one has in his or her wallet. In the mall, the only limit to shopping is one's credit limit. Although prices are higher in the mall, sales campaigns compensate for the absence of bargaining. One can speak of such freedom of spending and shopping only as long as profits are being made, of course.

The modernization of the retailing space is reflected in the social relations of retailing. While traditional retailing requires personal contact with the seller, consumer relations in the shopping malls are impersonal. The consumer is directly in contact with commodities in the malls, which provide a more comfortable environment than the bazaar. Direct contact with commodities also decreases the seller's pressure on the consumer. In traditional retailing

spaces, the only aim of the seller is to convince the consumers that the commodity they are interested in suits the buyer. In the mall, however, the sales-person merely gives suggestions about what suits the consumer, if needed. The persistent sellers of the bazaars are replaced by the expert salespersons of the malls. In addition, salespersons' communication with customers is standardized in the mall. While the reactions of sellers in the bazaars are spontaneous and arbitrary, salespersons in the malls communicate as if they are acting in accordance with the scenario of a movie:

*I cannot shop from the bazaars because I cannot make sure how the seller will react if I decide not to purchase an item I am interested in. But I comfortably purchase in the malls because I know how the sales-persons will communicate with me (58, M, MC).*

The modernization of the retailing space affects social relations between consumers, as well. Although the modern consumer culture in the shopping mall is seen as an advancement of civilization, it is often viewed as representing a deterioration of social relations. The intimate social relations of the bazaars are being replaced with distant, impersonal relations in the malls. That is to say, a high level of standardization and institutionalization is predominant in social relations in the mall. This shift reflects different consumption mentalities inherent to the two spaces. In the mall the consumer's priority is to find the suitable commodities for their lifestyle. Shopping for lifestyles is at the same time a search for distinction. Thus, the resulting sociality of the malls is far from the intimate sociality of the bazaars. Social relations in the malls are individualistic and interactions are superficial. The poor social life of the malls, however, is a result of a heterogeneous visitor profile. Visitors from *gecekond* areas and suburbs meet in the mall. Although areas such as supermarket, food courts, and corridors provide common ground for visitors from different districts of the city, people are together only temporarily in these spaces and this does not lead to firm social relations. On the other hand, the intimate social relations of the bazaars rest on previously established social relations. Because each district



has its own bazaar, visitors most likely live in the same district or neighborhood and in general they already know each other:

*I am acquainted with most of the people in the bazaar. Some of them are my neighbors; some of them have been guests to my home. Therefore, I am able to chat with them for minutes. But I rarely run into people I know in the mall (46, F, MC).*

Another impact of the modernization of retailing space is related to gender. In Turkey, bazaars are identified with women just as coffeehouses are identified with men. Although women frequent the mall, single men also stroll or shop there too. Additionally, shopping malls affect the division of labor between men and women within families. In the past, the wife would shop for other members of the family including the husband; however, as one of the informants expresses below, husbands have started accompanying wives while shopping since the malls opened:

*My husband would not accompany me when I went to the bazaar. Moreover, I would buy clothes for him. But now he decides on what to purchase in the shopping malls (45, F, MC).*

In particular, middle and upper-income visitors complain about the deteriorating social relations in the malls. Although they do not shop at the bazaars, they romanticize them nonetheless. As they complain about the individualization of social life in the malls, they long for the intimate social relations of the bazaars. However, they think and speak of individualization in the mall as they experience the weight of work ethic in their life more than the modernization of the retailing space. It seems that their work ethic stimulates them to work hard, and their social life individualizes.

## **6.2. The Global in ANKAmall**

Globalization, as reflected in ANKAmall, is a bifurcated process: It has both homogeneous and heterogeneous meanings; it is both a desired and disapproved process that is simultaneously familiar and alien to the

residents of Ankara. The resulting “glocal” culture rests on the meeting of global (developers, branded chain stores, restaurants, and cafes) and local (visitors) agents in the mall. The global agents are the representatives of a global logic of capitalist accumulation (Salcedo, 2003), which aims to make a consumption machine out of the shopping mall. In this sense, the aesthetics, architecture, and design of shopping malls constitute the homogeneous aspects (ibid.) that do not carry many local features. The local agents, on the other hand, are the residents of Ankara whose social conditions are quite regulated by the socio-economic and cultural structure of the place. They are also the carriers of a cultural memory that adds meaning to their personal lives.

#### **6.2.1. The Homogenous Aspects of the Globalization in the Mall**

The homogeneous globalization of shopping malls is related to the architecture, interior design, and management issues. The developer of ANKA mall is ECE (*Einkaufs-Center Entwicklung*, which can be translated as “shopping center development”) Management Company, the European market leader in administering inner-city shopping centers. Founded in 1965, the activities of the Hamburg-based company range from development, construction, leasing and long-term management as well as investment. In fourteen countries, the company has completed ninety-seven malls and has twenty-six under construction<sup>25</sup>. The architectural designs of the completed malls vary from historically-oriented to futuristic themes, the company takes into account local interests as well as existing local settings. Nevertheless, the inner dynamics of all the malls are similar, almost homogeneous. Under architectural and design differences lies the same philosophy: turning shopping into an extraordinary experience; making the mall an everyday touristic destination; providing packaged programs to allow visitors to spend the whole day in the mall; and, making profits from consumer

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.ece.de/en/geschaeftsfelder/shopping/> 14.07.2008

activities. Although the global philosophy of the shopping mall rests on creating alien experiences in the local, these alien experiences often can become familiar practices through time. In other words, shopping malls become non-territorial global spaces, where one feels that one is at a touristic destination when at home and at home while in fact abroad, as one of my informants described:

*I think shopping malls are global spaces, because when I go to a mall in Turkey I feel like I am not in Turkey. When I go to a mall in the U.S., I do not feel I am in the U.S., either. I think my emotions in a mall do not spring from any culture or any country (45, M, UC).*

Another global aspect of homogeneity in the shopping mall concerns the brand mix. Most of the brand names are foreign. Even the local stores prefer using foreign brand names. Moreover, even the local stores with Turkish brand names, such as herbalists, *döner* or *lahmacun* fast food restaurants also are far from being a part of the local culture. The alienation of traditional retailing to its own context is linked with keeping up with the modernization of consumption relations and global marketing methods. For instance, the McDonaldization<sup>26</sup> of local foods in the shopping malls creates new forms of local food consumption: a local fast food. Although they claim to keep their unique tastes, the rational division of labor in the production process as well as the inclination for fast food in the local food culture transforms the local into something new. The homogeneous globalization in the shopping malls is not about *what* is consumed but rather *how* it is consumed. Although the food culture of the shopping mall can be seen as heterogeneous because of the variety of cuisines in the food court, the underlying tendency of global homogeneity is obvious in the principles of preparing those local cuisines. This paradoxically creates a new local cuisine that many informants see as a new experience:

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<sup>26</sup> For a detailed discussion of McDonaldization, see Ritzer, 2001

*I prefer eating lahmacun from Hacıoğlu in the mall, because its lahmacun is different from what we are used to think as lahmacun. They present it like hamburger (64, F, MC).*

The engine of global homogeneity in the shopping mall springs from the rationalization of the relations of consumption. It rests on the simplification of economic transactions. The impact on the social sphere is the primacy of money over social relations. In the shopping mall, money and credit cards talk more than people, and the necessity to communicate with others decreases. In other words, the native language of the shopping mall is money, which, as Simmel argues, is the measure of everything (Jung, 1990, 62). As one of the informants explains, this process trivializes differences among people:

*Assume that you do not know Turkish, but you have a MasterCard. You can do everything in the shopping mall without being noticed by the others that you are foreign. I think it is the same in all of the shopping malls around the world (26, M, MC).*

### **6.2.2. The “Glocal” Experiences in the Mall**

Globalization is not an all-encompassing process of homogenization; rather, it is a complex hybrid of homogenization and heterogenization (Robertson, 2001; cited in Ritzer, 2001: 167), which can be named “glocalization” to indicate that the two processes take place simultaneously, completing each other (Helvacıoğlu, 2000). In the context of the shopping mall, the term refers to a range of local experiences and meanings of the global aspects of malls. Similar to many Eastern Europe countries (Salcedo, 2003: 1092-3), shopping malls in Turkey represent the abundance of goods and a Western, and thus more advanced, lifestyle. Similar to the shopping malls of Chile (ibid. p: 1094), they are the expression of a new prosperity in Turkey. This is why shopping malls are as much tourist attractions as shopping spaces,

drawing visitors from all over the city (Prochile, 2001; cited from Salcedo, 2003: 1094).

“Glocalization” in the shopping mall is mostly related to the local experiences of global lifestyles. The image of global lifestyles at the local level in Turkey is based on people’s prior experiences with Hollywood movies, soap operas, TV programs, newspapers, and magazines. Shopping malls take this image to another level by articulating the global lifestyle in two diverse ways: Firstly, the luxury design of the mall creates an ambiance of a film setting, as if merely being there gives one a chance to meet a celebrity. Secondly, the mall’s consumption activities enable visitors to move beyond the film setting to actually live like celebrities by emulating their consumption patterns. Eating hamburgers from McDonald’s or Burger King, drinking Starbucks coffee, wearing brands like Tommy Hilfiger, Nautica, Levi’s, Swatch, and Nike indicates more than the imitation of consumption patterns. Through commodities, the social values that the celebrity is thought to represent are assumed too. In the shopping mall, commodities, especially those of global brands, seem to have unlimited power to define social values and one’s status. The commodities in the mall have the power to make a person feel like a successful businessperson, a Casanova, or an ideal housewife. In other words, the atmosphere and consumption activities of the mall create the effects of an alternative, simulative global life in which the individual selects his or her role by choosing the appropriate commodity. Global lifestyles are reproduced in the local culture as a result of the interaction of individuals’ identities outside the mall and images of the global inside the mall. Although the global lifestyle is homogeneous, practicing these lifestyles has heterogeneous meanings with regard to the local culture. The “glocal” aspect of shopping mall culture can be seen in the following accounts:

*The shopping malls are the only places where we can contact with Hollywood movies, TV programs. They carry the West into our neighborhood. They carry the brands,*

*lifestyles. Contacting with this culture is not possible in the coffee houses; it is possible only in the malls. You can be like movie stars by shopping from the famous branded stores of the malls. (26, M, MC)*

*When you look at the space of the mall you find almost nothing special to Turkish culture. Yet, I cannot say that malls are foreign to Turkish culture, because people in them are Turkish. For example, after eating in the McDonalds I leave the dishes on the table, and while returning home I see gecekondus and dolmuşes along the road. Therefore I cannot make sure if it is global or local. (45, M, UC)*

Offering global culture as touristic experience in a local setting, shopping malls become neither dominantly global nor local. Shopping malls are spaces where the residents of Ankara stroll and take photos. Consuming global brands, such as Starbucks, they experience a simulation of being in another, mostly imaginary, geography. The menus of global food brands are like a global map of various local tastes. For example, drinking Jamaican coffee turns the shopping mall experience into an exotic activity, in which people collect elements of a lesser-known culture. In this sense, shopping malls are late capitalism's international fairs. Unlike the well-known nineteenth century world fairs in industrialized nations, shopping malls provide a tour of commodified forms of various local cultures, which is consumed by larger segments of the population. In Turkey, the more economic power increases the more exotic the meaning of touristic consumption activity becomes, of course with the help of global brand chains such as Starbucks and Gloria Jean's. On the other hand, low-income visitors' touristic experience is restricted to well-known cultures such as America through global fast food brands such as McDonald's and Burger King. The homogeneous structure of shopping malls accommodates heterogeneous touristic experiences through global brands.

What is common to the diverse touristic experiences in the mall is that they are organized as daily holiday packages. Depending on visitors' habituses,

which refer to the visible outcome of a person's social identity determined by fixed social structures of society (Wilska, 2002: 196), the contents of the package change. Visitors with low income and education levels perceive the shopping mall as a touristic space in comparison to their more traditional social surroundings. Therefore, their daily holiday package consists of strolling in the passages and the stores of the mall making few economic transactions, which are mostly carried out in fast food restaurants and sometimes in the movie theater. For them, fast food restaurants are the most likely to be visited in order to experience the global culture. Moreover, the significance of fast food restaurants for them is that they combine the global with the popular culture of the local. Hart (2002, cited from Carranco, 2006: 6) argues that the local production of the global is constituted as an imaginative involvement. For lower income people, imaginative involvement with the global culture refers to dreams of having a better quality of life in the local:

*While I walk around the stores of ANKAmall, I dream of a future when I can come to ANKAmall more frequently, eat whenever I want from Kentucky Fried Chicken, and wear the original Levi's jeans (25, M, LC).*

On the other hand, visitors with higher income and education levels use the shopping mall as an agent to connect with global brands that open the doors of global geographies for them, finding the mall to accord with their modernized social relations. For them, imaginative involvement with the production of global culture in the local rests on past experiences abroad or on mass culture narratives of social life in foreign countries. According to them, the local culture is not good enough to satisfy their expectations. Therefore, malls offer an escape from the problems of local culture by presenting global brands as components of an ideal, cosmopolitan society. Their daily holiday in the shopping mall rests clearly on economic transactions. While shopping takes a relatively short time, the longest and most attractive part of the holiday package in the mall is the time spent in

boutique restaurants and global cafe chains. While the consumption of branded commodities provide articulation with global lifestyles, social relations in the chain cafes simulate a cosmopolitan environment, where the main subjects of conversation are one's experiences abroad:

*I see a cosmopolitan atmosphere in shopping malls. I generally shop from Nautica and Lacoste where the customers compare prices with other countries (45, M, UC).*

A more salient outcome of the "glocal" culture of shopping malls can be seen during religious and national days and festivals such as ones during Ramadan and on April 23 or May 19, as well as during national reactions against terrorist attacks. In those days national symbols such as flags and posters of Atatürk are displayed in the main entrance and passages of the mall, on doors or store windows, and, exhibitions or shows are organized by the mall's management. One of the most grandiose of such events was the "*sevgide güneş gibi ol*" (be like sun in the love) exhibition held during Ramadan in 2007. UNESCO had declared 2007 as Mevlana Year, and the management of the mall organized an exhibition jointly with Atlas Geography magazine. The exhibition animated Mevlana's migration from Belh to Konya in photos of his route as well as in sculptures of the whirling dervishes that reflect Mevlana's philosophy of love and tolerance. In addition, the corridors of the mall were ornamented with placards on which passages from *Mesnevi* were written. Here, "glocalization" becomes clearly seen in the intersection of two opposite philosophies in the passages of the mall. The Mevlevi order of dervishes focuses on spiritual motion and emphasizes an ascetic lifestyle, rejecting worldly activities such as shopping and consumerism. The impact of the Mevlevi order on Turkish culture is embodied in the proverb: *bir lokma bir hurka* (one morsel, one cardigan). On the other hand, the global philosophy of consumerism is embodied in the motto, "want more," stimulating worldly desires to possess more.





Illustration 4: Mevlana Exhibition in ANKAmall

Source: Özcan Yüksek, available at <http://www.cografyam.net> 01.06.2008

While the exhibition informs visitors about the life of Mevlana and increases their curiosity about his philosophy, at same time it is part of a marketing project to attract more people to the mall in order to increase profits. In addition, the exhibition also functions as a barrier against the disparaging opinion that shopping malls ignore local culture. The coexistence of global and local cultures in the visual sphere of the mall registers more in the minds of people than it would elsewhere. The images of global brands and retailers coincide with the Mevlana exhibit. In the symbolic sphere, however, the values of the local culture remain superficial, as if they were the values of far-away geographies. As a result, the creeds of Mevlana remain hung from the ceiling as romantic sentiments while visitors keep shopping to satisfy their this-worldly desires. Mevlana's creeds, which praise asceticism as a way of life, conflict with the way of life in the mall.



Illustration 5: Mevlana exhibition in ANKAmall

Source: Özcan Yüksek, available at <http://www.cografyam.net> 01.06.2008

The impact of “glocalization” on local social relations can be observed during Ramadan festivals, too. Religious festivals play an important role in the local culture to enhance solidarity and community through customary visits to relatives and neighbors. During the last few years a new tradition has been established; it is a well-known fact that the upper classes use these festival times as vacation. Traditional social relations weaken especially among the younger generations of lower and middle classes, as well. While traditional social relations in these festivals have been identified with social spaces such as mosques, homes and fairgrounds, shopping malls are also quickly becoming popular festival destinations. While the traditional social relations in religious festivals continue to exist, visiting the shopping mall, eating in fast food restaurants, going to the cinema, and spending money collected from relatives and neighbors are activities that have become inseparable from the meaning of the religious festivals for the young. As one informant expresses, shopping malls reduce the importance of traditional social relations for younger generations:

*I cannot believe the crowd I see in the shopping mall during religious festivals. Apparently, people come to the mall before visiting their relatives. I, on the other hand, inevitably visit the mall because my child loves the mall (32, F, MC).*

### **6.3. The Local Reactions to the Global Culture in ANKAmall**

The global culture of the mall is both desired and disapproved of by the residents of Ankara. It is desired because it brings an abundance of goods, yet, it is disapproved of because many think it degenerates the local culture. The positive reaction springs from the quality-of-life improvement from acquiring name brands and participating in consumer society, an improvement that invokes the prosperity of the West. The pre-1980 period is associated with long queues for purchasing food to satisfy basic needs. In the period since the advent of the malls, on the other hand, the picture has reversed: Global brands line up to satisfy the desires of people. Therefore, as the informants below argue, the abundance of goods in the mall is seen as an inseparable part of modern life:

*In the pre-1980 period, you might be arrested because of having foreign money in your pocket. On the other hand, Turkish Lira had no power to purchase things because you had to line up to buy something. Everything is so different today. We cannot decide from where to shop (51, F, MC).*

*We cannot give up the shopping malls. They are the absolute necessities for our lives (45, F, MC).*

The negative reactions emphasize the degeneration of the local culture. Their primary critique is about the disappearance of the values and accompanying sociality of the local, traditional culture. Especially for the older generations who grew up with the “domestic goods week” activities, the widespread use of English and consuming imported goods are sources of discomfort, as one informant claims:

*We’ve become consumerists. The domestic goods week is a thing of the past now. Even our food culture has changed. Our food culture consists of soup, main dish, and rice*

*but now we eat fast food. I would like to celebrate the domestic goods week but there is nothing to do. We have to change (51, F, MC).*

The older generations often complain about the excessive consumption of youth, who are the vanguard of consumerism. They see the youth as responsible for older people's transformation into consumerists, hastening the disappearance of the unique values of the local culture. It is feared that the intimate social relations characteristic of the local culture will be lost. Most of the informants criticized shopping malls for imposing the values of American capitalism that rests on individualism. For instance, the impact of American capitalism on the values of the local culture is seen in the shift from caring about inner beauty to caring about physical beauty. The resulting change in values is called a corrosion of character according to local people:

*In the shopping malls I see local people who are different from what is thought about them. The main characteristics of our local culture are hospitality, helpfulness, and tolerance. In the mall, these values are replaced by the individualism, though (32, M, MC).*

The emphasis on imitating consumption patterns has been a critical issue in Turkey for a long time, especially regarding Westernization. In the same way, the articulation with global culture in shopping malls is criticized by the informants for being an artificial effort. It seems that globalization is perceived as a project like Westernization in Turkey. Therefore, globalization is generally seen as improving social conditions. In this context, how Turkish people experience global culture is criticized by the informants rather than how global culture affects the local culture. Global culture is identified with consumerism and shopping malls are viewed as guilty of presenting the setting for this association. It is usually stated by the informants that the global culture is an outcome of economic and technological improvements in developed Western societies. While Western societies are seen as the

originators of the global culture, Turkish people are criticized as its consumers. Therefore, consuming global culture in the shopping malls is a fake globalization for the informants. For an approved experience of globalization, a high level of economic development and the accompanying mentality change should be attained, according to most respondents. They state that the existing mentality rests on the emulation of global lifestyles in the sphere of consumption. However, since it is based on emulation, the global experience in the shopping mall seems rather rootless. According to informants, as long as the measure of globalization is purchased commodities, it will only result in a commodified version of globalization in Turkey. A commodified lifestyle prevents globalization from expanding to other social spheres and beyond consumption. The account below reflects these criticisms clearly:

*I suppose our globalization experience resembles starting to read a book from its concluding chapter. We started to globalize with shopping malls, that is, by consuming. I think imitation is our social illness. Where are the economical roots of shopping malls in Turkey? We are used to copy the others. I have no problem with having quality goods and fine consumption settings places in Turkey. But I just ask why we do not have the same quality in economy or education? (55, F, MC)*

#### **6.4. Conclusion**

Modernization and globalization coincide in the shopping malls of Turkey. Although these two processes are effective in all spheres of the society, the residents of Ankara come into contact with them primarily through shopping malls. Modernization in the shopping malls mainly builds on the rationalization of consumption relations. In particular, the standardization of commodities, services, social relations and spaces creates the bases for homogeneous globalization. While shopping malls are criticized as being home to the imposition of the global on the local (Ritzer, 2003), this essay shows that the forces of homogeneous globalization come into contact with local culture and agents, resulting in a process that can be called

“glocalization.” Even though the similar architectural aspects, interior designs, management methods, and mix of brands from all around the world point out a significant relation between globalization and homogenization, this approach cannot present a complete explanation of the force of globalization in the mall. Shopping malls are nothing without visitors. They are sociologically significant as long as they have an impact on society. Therefore, analyzing globalization in the shopping malls without taking the experiences of visitors into account is problematic. This study shows that homogeneous aspects of globalization constitute the basis of heterogeneous experiences of globalization. This is because these globally known aspects of shopping malls attract the local people to these places. Shopping malls are seen as worth experiencing because, as Langmann (1992: 40) argues, they are signifying and celebrating edifices of consumer culture in the contemporary world. The resulting “glocal” culture rests on the coincidence of global and local cultures as in the example of the coincidence of Mevlevi order and consumer culture. In addition to that tourist experiences and lifestyling practices of visitors are other components of glocal culture in shopping malls of Ankara. Another heterogeneity that this research shows is about reactions to globalization in shopping malls. While globalization is desired as it is identified with the increasing quality of life, it is also disapproved of since it is thought to degenerate local culture.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

The mallification of urban life can be seen as a part of a long process of the establishment of a consumer society in Turkey. We can argue that with the mushrooming growth of the shopping malls, the previously flourished consumer society became a “peculiar type of market society” in Turkey. As Grazia (1996; cited from Frierson, 2000: 243) described the consumer society, while Western capitalist system of exchange expanded, the organization of institutions, resources, and values around ever larger flows and accumulations of commodities constituted the modern aspects of the consumer society in this period. In addition, in the same period, “goods transformed from being static symbols around which hierarchies were ordered to being more directly constitutive of class, social status, and personal identity” (ibid).

Although the conspicuous consumption patterns can be seen during the tulip age and after the opening of department stores in nineteenth century, they were generally restricted with the practices of Ottoman leisure class. The economic mentality of the majority in this period was embodied in the proverb *işten artmaz dişten artar* (money is made not by increasing earnings, but by limiting the consumption) (Faroghi, 2000: 21). While this Muslim economic mentality of the period involves similarity with the Protestant Ethic in terms of taking an ascetic stance by denying the desires about consumption (Weber, 2003), it does not include a notion of salvation through working hard. As the reference point of individual success was based on

being included by the state bureaucracy or military, other branches of work life, such as trade, remained in a secondary position. As Mardin (2007: 24) argues, wealth was seen as a part of the position in the political bureaucracy among the members of upper strata in the Ottoman society. This wealth mentality lacked the spirit of capitalism which sees making money as a purpose in itself. In addition to that except the elites of the period, it is hard to run into the self-gratifying subject of the Romantic Ethic (Campbell, 1984; cited from Corrigan, 2003). Even though we cannot mention from the emergence of consumer society in the sense of capitalist and modern market society, as Frierson (2000) argues, we can see the creation of consumer culture in the late Ottoman society. Mixed with patriotism, the selective modernization, Westernization, and civilization as the main dynamics of the consumer culture of the given period keep its impact on the consumer culture of modern Turkey.

While the modern consumer society of Turkey rested on strong economic roots with the country's transition to free market economy, the previous changes in the cultural sphere during the Republican period paved the way for a rapid expansion of the values of the consumer culture into the social life of individuals. Starting in 1950 but intensifying after 1980 the reference point of Westernization has shifted from Europe to US in Turkey. The Europe centered Westernization rested on the philosophy of Enlightenment, signaled the school as the spatial symbol, promised success through education, and showed teacher as the model citizen. The America centered Westernization, on the other hand, rested on the values of the American dream, promised success in the economic sphere, showed entrepreneur as the model, and signaled shopping mall as one of the spatial symbols especially in the late 90s and 2000s. The ideal of the period was to transform Turkey into a small America which embodied in the slogan of the term's prime minister "*each neighborhood will have a millionaire*". The Turkish American Dream has never become a reality. Each neighborhood has never had a millionaire, but



shopping malls are now carrying a miniature America into each neighborhood as the cultural values of this ideal became widespread in all segments of society through the media. Therefore, both the distance between Muslim and making money through trade, and ascetic approach toward consumption disappeared as the motto of global consumerism “*want more*” replaced the motto of traditional attitude towards consumption “*bir lokma bir hurka*” (one morsel one cardigan). We can argue that following the visibility of the spirit of the capitalism, the approaches towards consumption have changed in Turkey. In the same line with the argument of Bocoock (1997: 56) as the burdens of working conditions are acceptable insofar as they provide the means of reaching the almost holy commodities in the modern Turkey, the shopping mall visits turn into being a daily pilgrimage (Ritzer, 2000), and the shopping mall itself becomes a consumer Mecca (Liechty, 2003).

This study can also be seen as a description of the social life of the modern consumer society in Turkey focusing on the shopping malls. The increasing number of shopping malls and their accompanying attractions indicate a new mode of urban life in Ankara where the impact of shopping malls is not restricted to merely visiting them. Shopping malls dominate the urban landscape through their ads on billboards, buses, the walls of houses, and of course through their huge buildings. In addition, they also appear in newspapers and on TV either as ads or as the subject of news stories. Moreover, they are topics of conversation. Briefly, they dominate the social discourse of urban life and visiting a shopping mall is one of the components of this discourse.

The mallified urban mode of life presents the familiar components of urban life in an unfamiliar, magical form. The magic of the mall rests on its rational socio-spatialization. In shopping malls, all parts of an urban economy are rationally juxtaposed to provide all possible goods or services. The juxtaposition of irrelevant economic actors under a single roof creates a new

experience for visitors who were used to being part of economic relations with regard to specialization based economic spatialization. Nature is also rationalized in shopping malls. The indoor area of a shopping mall is always shiny, mild and colorful regardless of the weather outside. It annihilates the relation between planning a day outside and the prevailing weather conditions. Moreover, shopping malls are luxuriously designed as everyday consumption palaces by eradicating the difference between luxury and ordinary. In addition, shopping malls are controlled by security systems. Although being watched engenders pressures on social life, visitors still see it as an advantage that provides comfortable socialization free from the fear of purse-snatching. In the end, shopping malls are a this-worldly, modern heaven. The unwanted aspects of urban life have no place in it and the remaining parts of urban life exist in their best form: the mild and shiny atmosphere, the aesthetical physical appearance of visitors, the abundance of commodities, and crime-free environment. This study shows that the shopping mall based spectacular urban life in Ankara has its own space, subject, and culture.

The distinctive space of shopping mall-based urban life is the quasi-public spaces of shopping malls. Shopping malls are replacing urban public spaces such as parks, streets and squares as gathering points; they are places to go to see and be seen. However, some restrictive elements of a shopping mall's space make it quasi-public. Apart from being strictly closed to the access of disadvantaged segments of the population, low income visitors experience the shopping mall under socio-technological pressure. The extravagant atmosphere, aesthetical physical appearance of the middle and upper income visitors, and the incapability of responding to the endless consumption stimuli turn a shopping mall into alien territory for low income visitors. Also, the awareness of being watched by security cameras can leave low income visitors on tenterhooks and with the fear of making a social faux-pas. On the other hand, the socio-technological control of the mall is a desired

component for middle and upper income groups who emphasize social order in their social lives. The shopping mall can be seen as a material habitus which addresses the tastes of people with different backgrounds. Although each habitus has different foci in the mall, food court, super market, the passages provide an intersection area for different habituses.

The inclusive character of the Turkish shopping mall can be linked with its relation to the Westernization of Turkey, liberating aspect for women, and the increasing role of consumption in social life. As I mentioned above shopping malls provide the most suitable sites for different segments of population to experience the values of US-centered Westernization through consumption activities. Another aspect of the inclusive character of shopping malls is that they are female dominated. Women are traditionally responsible for the family shopping, and the problem-free atmosphere of the mall also provides a suitable setting for women to leave the home without being accompanied by men. For women, the relative decrease in the impact of disturbing looks from men provides a comfortable mood for socialization in shopping malls. This study shows that a new pattern of social life is coming into existence in shopping malls, especially for middle income women. Their home-centered social life is being replaced with a mall-centered one. Routine outings are being replaced with more spontaneous ones, and traditional female gatherings are also taking place in shopping malls. In brief, shopping malls provide a modern social life for women; one that is devoid of family and neighborhood pressure.

The increasing role of shopping malls in urban life is also related to a significant increase in consumption in society. Consumption seems to be one of the most important resources in the power struggles of society. This study shows the different meanings of consumption for different segments of the Ankara population. Upper income visitors use consumption as a way of expressing their distinction with their lifestyles and practices, expressed

through the branded commodities of boutique stores. Middle income visitors use consumption as the best way of expressing their middle class identity through knowledge of specific stores in shopping malls, different campaign periods, and credit card selections which offer the best benefits. Shopping malls provide the most suitable sites for middle income visitors to implement their spending based on a new thrift mentality which rests on the calculation of sign value and exchange value. Lower income visitors, on the other hand, use consumption as a way of expressing their existence in the power struggle. They see branded commodities as signs of quality of life rather than the components of lifestyle practices. Therefore, consumption activities compensate their relative deprivation in relation to production, which is embodied in the sentence of one of my informants, "I am not as wealthy as you, but I can consume like you."

This study also shows that shopping malls become places of identity discovery. As working conditions become more and more flexible, the impact of work on identity decreases. Although work still dominates the everyday life of the urban population, the motivation for working is changing from having more money in order to save more, to having more money in order to spend more. Briefly, the purpose of working is becoming a this-worldly target of having more commodities, and greater consumption is becoming the reward of working. In Turkey, this change can be seen from the decreasing propensity to save and the increasing attraction of shopping malls in everyday urban life for different segments of the population. At the same time, credit card debts have been rapidly increasing. As a result, consumption patterns in accordance with incomes have been disappearing.

The subject of the shopping mall-based new urban life is the consumer rather than the worker. The consumer, however, cannot be defined only with reference to the act of consuming. This study shows that the consumer is rather a product of a wide network of social relations, including work. The

consumer is someone whose social life is arranged around consumption activities, and whose individual success is measured by the way of participating in the relations of consumption. Therefore, shopping malls are the home of consumers. This study, by introducing the social types of ANKAmall, shows that the strong relation between shopping malls and consumers does not only depend on the abundance of consumption activities in shopping malls. The purpose of visiting the mall can be different such as a search for socialization, a search for distinction from the nouveau-riche and the actors of urban public spaces, and the desire to participate in the social discourse of consumption with shopping around activities. In those conditions, consumption inevitably articulates the purpose of visiting the mall. That is to say, consumption activities are the mediators of organizing social life. This study also shows that there is not one type of consumer in shopping malls. The social conditions outside the mall are reflected in the consumers. The annihilation of the parallelism between income and consumption patterns does not mean that income has no impact on consumption activities. On the contrary, the inequalities outside the mall are reflected in the mall as the differences of frequency of visiting, duration of the visit, freedom in the mall, type of activities in the mall, and the degree of participating in the material relations of consumption. The disadvantaged consumers in the mall are the low income visitors, that is, window shoppers. They visit the mall less frequently but stay longer in the mall by shopping around with minimum economic transactions, or daydreaming about future upper social mobility through commodities. In addition, they develop a high self-control mechanism while strolling in the mall to protect themselves from the possible reactions of other visitors and security guards.

The shopping mall culture is a hybrid culture mainly consisting of high culture and popular culture, global culture and local culture. The intersection of popular and high cultures encourage shopping malls to address cultural tastes of different segments of the population, hence creating a meeting point

in urban life for different segments of the population. Another attractive aspect of shopping mall culture is the modern shopping culture. Although modernization in the retail sector had begun earlier than shopping malls in Turkey, it was only partial. Shopping malls modernize everything that can be consumed and can be subject to the social relations of consumption. The most significant component of the modernization of the shopping culture is the standardization of price and quality. It was one of the most needed changes in the shopping culture for all segments of the population. Consumer rights in the modern shopping culture make consumers sovereign in the material relations of consumption, as compared with the seller dominated relations of consumption in the bazaars. However, the most characterizing aspect of the shopping mall culture is its glocal aspect. It is generally argued that shopping malls diffuse a homogeneous global culture. This study, however, shows that in shopping malls globalization turns into glocalization with the juxtaposition of homogeneous (developer, architecture, design, managerial issues) and heterogeneous (visitors and local culture) agents in the process. The homogeneous components of the process are mainly related to the capitalist logic of shopping malls. The philosophy of the shopping mall aims to make a consumption machine by turning shopping into an extraordinary experience; making the mall an everyday touristic destination; providing packaged programs to allow visitors to spend the whole day in the mall; and, making profits from consumer activities. The impact of the global homogeneous aspects can be saliently seen in the McDonaldization of local cuisines. This study shows that the homogeneous aspects of the process are one of the most attractive components of shopping malls in the local culture since they are the subject of curiosity and their impact turns the local culture into a new experience. The glocal aspects of shopping mall culture spring from the imaginative reproduction of the global culture in a local context. It can be seen most saliently through the direct confrontation of local and global cultures in the setting of the shopping mall. This study also shows that when this

confrontation rests on conflicting values, like the confrontation of Mevlevi order and global consumer culture, local culture becomes a mere ornament in the mall.

In conclusion, I tried to articulate the process of the mallification of urban life, that is, the shopping mall based new urban life of Ankara in terms of its new everyday life, public space, identity of the agent, and culture. In all of these segments I aimed to show how the distinctions out of the shopping mall are formed and reproduced in the shopping mall. It appeared that the distinctions out of the mall strongly affect the social life of shopping mall. However, there are some peculiarities of the mallified urban life. For instance, women are more visible and active part of this new urban life. Furthermore, it also appeared that, even though it is the general tendency, the discovery of identity in the shopping mall is not always restricted with the acquired dispositions through the socialization process; it can also take place in the light of how one aims to be. Another peculiarity of the mallified urban life is that although the inequalities out of the shopping mall are reproduced in the mall, shopping malls become a heterogeneous gathering place for different segments of population. Briefly, shopping malls represent an idealized and desired urban life in Ankara. Unlike the shopping malls of the US, they rival the city center rather than compensate for the absence of community life in the suburbs. Providing a problem-free urban life in their ordered, luxuriously designed buildings, shopping malls become the magical parts of everyday life in Ankara. In addition to presenting objects of desire as commodities for consumption, they also provide a consumption-based experience of the desired processes of Westernization, modernization, and globalization. These factors cause shopping malls to be inclusive, despite their restrictive dynamics.

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## **APPENDIX**

### **THE QUESTION FORM**

#### **A. Shopping Mall in Everyday Life**

1. What do you do in your spare times when you decide to go out of home?
2. After the opening of shopping malls did your city life change?
3. Is there a difference between the days you visit the mall and you don't visit?
4. How do you describe the activity of going to the mall?

#### **B. Mall and City**

1. According to you what are the spaces that symbolize Berlin?
2. Is there a difference between mall and public space? (the unique aspects of two spaces).
3. When you have visitors from out of the city or country where do you take them to see the city?

#### **C. Shopping Mall Experience**

1. If you have been asked to use the adjectives to describe a shopping mall which adjectives would you use?
2. Can you tell your first day in the mall?
3. Let's assume that you have a friend who knows nothing about shopping mall. How would you describe the mall for him/her?

4. For what purposes you visit the mall?
5. Can you tell your one day in the mall?
6. How often do you visit the mall?
7. Where do you spend mostly your time in the mall?

#### **D. Mall in the Identity and Social Relation Construction**

1. Which is more valuable for you: time in the mall or time in the work?
2. According to you are the social relations in the mall different than the other spaces?
3. For you, does shopping mall affect or change people's behaviors?
4. Does shopping mall create a human model?
5. Do visitors of the mall have similar features?

#### **E. The Comparison of the Shopping Patterns**

1. Do you shop from market places?
2. What are the differences between market places and malls?
3. Which one do you prefer?
4. Are there differences between the people who shop from the mall and people who not?

#### **F. Mall and Global Culture**

1. Are there specific brand stores that you definitely go when you visit the mall?
2. What do brands mean to you?
3. Is the culture of the mall close to the global culture or the local culture?