

Intimate Governing:  
Public Space, Community and Women in Keçiören

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is about the different ways intimacy plays role in governing, creating and experiencing the public space. It is based on an ethnographic research conducted in Keçiören, Ankara, with a focus on women who occupy the public places of the town and on the places themselves for they are the material expressions of the municipal ideology, desires and fantasies that are formulated in a dialogical relationship with the master narrative of Ankara.

In Keçiören while the desires that shape the spatial strategies reflect the ideals of modernism, middle classness and nationalism, the relationship of the municipality to people is sustained with the use of the Islamic idiom. The Islamic idiom provides both the vocabulary of a common language between the governors and the inhabitants of the district and the moral framework that is based on intimate relations and a communitarian attitude.

Within this context women appear on the foreground in the newly constructed public places of the town. They mediate the translation of the moral order of family into public space and act it out through various practices and stories. This moral order is also based on intimate premises, thus serves to the intimate governing of the district. And finally the thesis concludes that through the use of the Islamic idiom and the inclusiveness of the intimate ways of governing, Keçiören provides an implicit critique of the dominant understandings of public space.

## ÖZET

Bu tezde “samimiyet”in, kamusal alanın yaratılması, yönetilmesi ve deneyimlenmesinde oynadığı çeşitli roller, Ankara Keçiören’de yapılan etnografik bir çalışmaya dayandırılarak ele alınıyor. Bu yapılırken de ilçedeki kamusal mekânların öncelikli kullanıcıları olan kadınlara ve belediyenin hayallerinin ve ideolojisinin elle tutulur ifadesini sağladıkları için kamusal mekânlara odaklanılıyor.

Keçiören’de belediyenin mekâna yönelik stratejilerini belirleyen her ne kadar modernlik ve orta sınıflılık idealleri ile milliyetçilik olsa da, ilçede yaşayanlarla kurulan ilişkiler İslami dağarcığın kullanıma sokulmasıyla şekilleniyor. İslami dağarcık hem ilçe sakinleri ile belediye arasında ortak bir dil sağlayarak hem de insani ilişkilere ve cemaat anlayışına dayanan bir ahlaki çerçeve sunarak, ilçede “samimi” bir yönetim biçiminin oluşmasını sağlıyor.

Bu esnada kadınlar, ilçenin yeni inşa edilmiş kamusal mekânlarında ön planda yer alıyorlar; aile ahlakının kamusal hayata tercümesine aracılık edip yine yakınlığa ve samimiyete dayandığı var sayılan bu ahlakı gündelik pratikleri ve anlattıkları hikayelerle sergiliyorlar. Tez, tüm bunları analiz ettikten sonra, hem kamusal alanda samimiyeti mümkün kılan İslami dağarcığın kullanılmasının hem de bu samimi kamunun kapsayıcılığının yaygın ve baskın kamusal alan algılarına bir eleştiri getirdiği iddiasıyla sona eriyor.

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To my grandmother, the wizard of intimate diplomacy

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This is the story of a place. The story whose leading actress is an urban park. A fascinating, colorful, confusing, popular urban park in Keçiören, Ankara: the Atatürk Botanical Garden. It is a place which introduces new ways of behaving, while maintaining deep-rooted ones. It is a place where people meet people, socialize in all the complicated ways social theories try to name. It is a place that functions as the showcase of a moral order, a proposed harmony. It is a place of continuous building and re-building, materially, discursively, in practice, in narration and in imaginary. So it is a place for the construction of social reality (Gieryn, 2000), which is itself produced as a socially (Lefebvre, 1991). It is the very place through which the theories of public/private (Weintraub, 1997), practice and habitus (Bourdieu, 1990), nationalism and middle classes (Chatterjee, 1993), gender (McDowell, 1999), semiotics (Barthes, 1993) can be read upon. It is the place of women, men, children, elderly, youth, Muslims, secularists, poor, rich, educated, “ignorant”, and an ethnographer, whose task is to understand this place of fascination.

Join the tour first:

When you come across to the two big signboards, one declaring the municipal loyalty to the Republic by “*We love Atatürk and Turkey*”<sup>1</sup> and the other with a warning tone states that “*Alcohol is the source of all evil*”<sup>2</sup>, “*Let us be one; let us be big; let us be alive*”<sup>3</sup>, “*Let us meet; make things smooth; love and be loved; The world does not belong to anyone*”<sup>4</sup> get off the bus, find a place to park your car or slow down your steps, since you’ve almost come to the Atatürk Botanical Garden. If you are eager to enter the park as soon as possible, do not mind the wall, walk in before it starts. If you prefer the “proper” way follow the wall for some meters. On your left notice the gate for a second; it is big, it is brass, it has two inscriptions on it “*The love for the motherland can be measured with the service to it*”<sup>5</sup> by Turgut Altınok on the left and “*This motherland deserves to be a heaven for our children and grandchildren*”<sup>6</sup> by Kemal Atatürk on the right, and it is not an actual gate which aims to shut, to secure or to enclose but to mark the activity of entering, to make it ceremonial. When you are properly in, check the time on the wall clock right in front of you, feel the breeze carrying the smell of roses, don’t mind the well and the ox-cart much, as nobody does, but try not to miss the illuminated photograph on your

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<sup>1</sup> “*Atatürk’ü ve Türkiye’yi Seviyoruz*”

<sup>2</sup> “*İçki bütün kötülüklerin anasıdır*”

<sup>3</sup> “*Bir olalım, iri olalım, diri olalım*”

<sup>4</sup> “*Gelin tanış olalım; işi kolay kılalım; sevelim, sevilelim; dünya kimseye kalmaz*”

<sup>5</sup> “*Vatan sevgisi vatana hizmetle ölçülür*”

<sup>6</sup> “*Bu vatan çocuklarımız ve torunlarımız için cennet yapılmaya layıktır*”

right. There you will see, how the place was, before the park was constructed in 1996: an abandoned, barren, steep, rocky hillside.

Pass the illustration and walk along the running track, conforming to others' speed: if it is early morning speed up, since you hope to get in shape or be fit; if it is an afternoon slowly walk as you are looking for an arbor to leave your picnic bags; if it is a summer night stroll while chatting with family members and observing the leisure walkers. If you have a child with you visit the children's playground on your right by the brook. If you are middle class enough sip your tea in the open air cafeteria next to the playground, keeping an eye on the kid, then buy her an ice cream from the young seller in his fancy corner.

Continue walking; make a U-turn when you get to the second gate of the park, now you are under the shade of the young pine trees of the hillside on your right. The water coming out of the fountain a few meters away is drinkable if you are thirsty and the arbors on the side of the road are not among the most popular if you are tired. But better keep on going and take the turn right, if it is 8.30 in a warm morning for the fitness exercise, if it is a Friday night in summer for the live music event, if it is a weekend noon to find a free arbor for the family picnic, if it is an afternoon to sit on a bench and eat sunflower seeds, if it is an ordinary day anytime just to take a glance at the waterfall and feel the freshness. So anyway, turn right and go to the arena in front of the waterfall. Look at the pretty young, pretty new, born-out-of-nothing woods and the artificial waterfall, join the people sauntering, sitting, dancing, playing ball games, taking pictures, chatting ...etc.

Go there alone, or with friends, relatives, neighbors, family members; take your guests with you, or your children, babies in pram, disabled daughter on her

wheelchair, old parents with canes. But not your lover or a group of young males. Sit in an arbor, on a bench, on the grass, on the earth, on a cloth or on a table in the cafeteria. Wear whatever you want to: Casual clothes, sports outfit, hand-knit vests, headscarves, fancy blouses, slippers, sneakers, sandals, heels, shorts, trousers, long skirts or light coats. Just be modest. Go there anytime: any season, from 5 o'clock in the morning till 2 o'clock late at night, even if you are a single woman. Bring a gas stove, a radio, a CD player, newspapers, rugs, plates, forks, meat, fruits, sun flower seeds, water melon, *dolma*, pastries, cakes, *kısır*, salad, meatballs, beef, tea glasses, pans, a barbecue, a ball, a tent, chairs, blankets...etc. But not rakı, beer or wine, nor game cards. Obey the unwritten rules, engage with the daily practices, find out the trajectories and take part in the quotidian of Atatürk Botanical Garden.

Since this quotidian is the gateway to culture's here and now (de Certeau, 1984), it's the key for reading the spatial text of Keçiören, it is where the conflicts, solutions, the micro-mechanisms of power, embodied history, positions, social classes are hidden or rather become visible. This thesis is an attempt to deal with this routine, the ordinary, and the daily of Atatürk Botanical Garden and more importantly the discourses, narratives and practices that make this ordinary possible and ordinary. So it takes its start with the assumption that the domains of the material and the interpretive, or to say it in other ways the physical and the semiotic work in a mutually dependent way (Bourdieu, 1990).

I first focus on the material aspects of the place I directed my interest on. But rather than seeing the place as a neutral setting that hosts the various relations and practices that will be discussed in this volume, I take it as a text to be read and interpreted. By referring to an urban place as a text I follow the semiological

tradition of Roland Barthes who sees the city as an inscription of man in space which is a deployment of signifiers to be grasped (Barthes, 1994). I see the special salience of this writing in the basic motivation to write, i.e. “to preserve discourse and make it an archive available for individual and collective memory” (Ricoeur, 1981 p.147). So in the first part of this thesis, I try to read and interpret (these two actions are actually inseparable in this case) the spatial text of Keçiören in order to understand the meaning that is tried to be preserved and communicated by the municipality of the district.

The municipal agents who do the writing on the urban space of Keçiören, also write on the stone in its very literal sense, through employing inscriptions and signboards. So while reading the spatial text of the district I try to make use of these inscriptions to move into another linguistic level. Mardin (1989) elaborates on the importance of linguistic devices in the continuity and reproduction of the societies and argues that a common vocabulary provides the members of a society with the maps and guidelines to act, feeling safe in a culture. I follow this track to understand the salience of certain terms and phrases used by the municipal agents in the inscriptions mentioned above, in their daily utterances and also by the inhabitants of Keçiören, as principles organizing their actions and ways of communicating their legitimacy. I borrow the term “Islamic idiom” from Mardin (1989) to mention this vocabulary in general and look for its constituent parts, the “root paradigms” in order to understand the way actors make use of the idiom. According to Mardin (1989) root paradigms function at two levels: “as maps which provide personal guidance in and project a picture of an ideal society but also as items in a cultural knapsack which integrates the individual’s perception of social rules and positions with

signifiers for images, sounds and colors [thus integrating them into daily life]” (p. 7).

Later in the final chapter I argue that these two levels can be translated into two distinct functions of the Islamic idiom that help to create and maintain the intimate public in the district.

### About the Ethnography

This research was carried out between March 2004 and September 2005. The basic method was participant observation, including regular participation in early morning jogs, family picnics, strolling in the evenings, taking pictures, having tea in the cafeteria, even watching the lunar eclipse. During these visits, I was sometimes alone but in other times I was with friends, with my mother, with neighbors and many other women I just met there. So I was often just another frequenter of the park if only I could leave my bag (my notebook, camera, recorder...etc) at home. I carried out in-depth interviews with thirty two women, most of them tape recorded. With almost an equal amount I had shorter informal chats.

My initial attempt was to find women who use the park with the help of intermediary contacts. This approach provided me with almost half of my informants. With this initial group I held the interviews in women's houses, in a Koran school and in a café. In this first set of interviews I was asking pre-set questions which aim to understand women's use of the park and its physical or emotional effect on them. But soon I noticed that asking questions about use, I assumed highly structured schedules for women which they were perfectly aware of and always acted accordingly. Actually the answers were not that certain and even

when they were certain they didn't have much to add to the research since I could trace the patterns of use myself by spending a few days in the park. So later I changed my method, contacted my informants randomly in the garden and asked very broad questions to incite stories. I just picked a group, told them what I was doing and without exception they welcomed me to their table; with tea and food we spent hours talking. During these chats, I often felt lost in the conversation when it turned to gossiping about husbands or neighbors. Still this second set of interviews taught me more about women's conception of the place, the norms they believe in and enact and the hidden principles that I couldn't figure out by just observing. I would prefer to include these informal talks with women under the heading of participant observation, since what we did there was only slightly different from what they do everyday. This difference was basically created by my use of a tape-recorder. It happened to be a matter of curiosity for women at the beginning of each talk and an object of fun later. Some women parodied formal declarations to entertain others or they speculated about the possible troubles their husbands might have after the wives' recorded speech on various topics, ranging from fitness to the headscarf issue. And I noticed that maintaining the smoothness of the talks was much easier when a group of women was joining and the risk of being caught in the question-answer format increased when I interviewed just a single woman. So later on I preferred women groups despite of the hardships of transcribing the tapes in which five women speak over each other to tell variants of a similar story or comment on the others' thoughts.

Beside the women, I met the mayor and the vice mayor three times, interviewed them and collected documents. These two men's easiness with an



interview and almost prepared ready-made answers often declaring a “truth” became the cause of my uneasiness while conducting the interviews, yet allowed me to read these interviews in a very similar fashion I read the inscriptions all around the district and the booklet they published: as texts that aim to fix a discourse.

Still it is possible to say that my main source of insight and information was the fascinating spatial text of the district. So this thesis might be considered as an attempt to carry out an interpretive reading of a text emplaced and embodied.

In the first chapter, the focus is on the relationship of the Keçiören Municipality with the land it governs. So I explore the spatial text of Keçiören in order to understand the municipal aspirations and fantasies which incite the construction of the Atatürk Botanical Garden and all the other parks, monuments and buildings of the district. There I try to situate these fantasies of modernity, nationalism and middle classness, in their relation to the master narrative of Ankara, the capital city of the Turkish Republic and its showcase of modernization.

The theme of the second chapter is the relationship of the municipality with the inhabitants of the district. In order to understand this relationship I propose a closer look at the Islamic idiom that is put in use by the municipal officials through various media, i.e. speeches, informal conversations, inscriptions, signboards. I try to show that the root paradigms of *hizmet* (service), *hak* (right) and *Allah rızası* (grace of God) shape the municipal activities and through a common imaginary they create a sense of understanding and intimacy between the inhabitants of the district and the governors. I also try to enunciate the tight link between this imaginary and the communitarian attitudes of the municipal agents and propose that these attitudes

towards people can be read as an implicit critique of the dominant, secular, middle class approach to public space in Turkey.

In the third chapter I introduce the gender aspect of this attitude and focus my interest on the women who use the Botanical Garden and tell stories about it. I argue that the moral order of this imagined community is established and introduced through the gendered regulations in the park and in some other public places of the town. And this moral order finds its expression in the phrase of “family place”. So this chapter is an elaboration of this phrase and the accompanying morality that prioritizes female use in the public space of Keçiören.

## CHAPTER 2

### RE-IMAGINING A TOWN

#### The Historical Narrative of Keçiören

*Keçiören is a town, where the most important decisions of the Republican History were once made, and thus witnessed the creation of history by housing the command center in which the great leader Atatürk initiated the Independence War. Although being such a town of honor, hosting the comrades-in-arms of Atatürk and the commanders of the war in its beautiful suburban houses, Keçiören was run over by the bad conditions; it had lost its past as well as its hope for the future during the next fifty years. Previously a district of Ankara that refreshed the whole city, the shanties had invaded its hills and plains and it had found itself in a state of chaos brought on by ignorance and indifference. And when ill governance was added to the issue, Keçiören had lost even the basic quality of inhabitability. Until 1994. The decision of the electorate of Keçiören in the 1994 municipal elections marks a cornerstone for the development and change Keçiören has realized. Elected mayor Turgut Altınok and his team hastily have worked on the projects to solve the bulky problems of Keçiören and have managed to transform the district into a locus of attraction in a period as short as ten years. That is why Keçiören is the showcase for the triumph of human will and intelligence; it is the tale of a race from a shanty town to a modern world class city.<sup>7</sup>*

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<sup>7</sup> The municipal advertorial CD. “Cumhuriyet tarihimizin yazılışında en önemli kararların alındığı ve ulu önderimiz Atatürk’ün Kurtuluş Savaşını başlattığı dönemde karargah olarak tarihe tanıklık etmiş bir kent Keçiören. Böylesine şerefli bir görevi üstlenen, bağ evleriyle Atatürk’ün silah

In 2004, right before the municipal elections, the municipality of Keçiören published a CD and a booklet in order to introduce the success story of the mayor, Turgut Altınok. Both of them, as well as various speeches by Turgut Altınok and higher officials of the municipality begin with the above historical narrative.

The story begins with a serenade to the glorious past, continues with the description of the domination of darkness and after the peak point of the 1994 elections, ends with the triumph of human will power, mind and labor. In this chapter I will first discuss the significance of this narrative in the formation of the imaginary of inhabitants of Keçiören as well as municipal agents. I believe in the importance of the narrative construction of history for understanding such a formation in the sense that having a narrative closure always has ideological implications, since closures always have to do with morality. (White, 1975)

The moral story of Keçiören begins with Atatürk's entry to the district. No matter how short it was (in more detailed accounts it is said to last about a month), his occupation of the Faculty of Agriculture as the command center in the War of Liberation eternally marks the district's past. This opening has critical significance when the symbolic power of Atatürk in the Turkish context is considered. The deliberate selection of such a historic event as the beginning of the district's history

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arkadaşlarına ve istiklal savaşının komutanlarına ev sahipliği yapan Keçiören zaman içinde kötü koşullara boyun eğmek zorunda kalmış; aradan geçen elli yıl içinde hem geçmişini kaybetmiş hem de geleceğe umutla bakamaz hale gelmiştir. Ankara'nın nefes alan ve aldırان bir ilçesi iken dağları tepeleri gecekondu işgal etmiş, bir başıboşluk bir aldırانlık içinde büyük bir keşmekeşin içine düşmüştür Keçiören. Bütün bunlara bir de kötü yönetim anlayışı eklenince Keçiören yaşanabilir olma özelliğini kaybetmiştir. Ta ki 1994 yılına kadar. 1994 yılında yapılan seçimlerde Keçiören halkının yaptığı tercih bir anlamda Keçiören'in yaşadığı büyük değişim ve gelişimin de miladı olmuştur. Belediye başkanı olarak görev başına gelen Turgut Altınok ve ekibi, Keçiören'in yaşadığı ağır sorunların çözümüne yönelik projelerle işe koyulmuş ve aradan geçen 10 yıl kadar kısa bir zamanda Keçiören'i yeniden bir cazibe merkezi haline getirmeyi başarmıştır. Bu nedenle insan zekasının, emeğinin ve azminin büyük zaferi; bir gecekondu kentinden modern bir dünya kentine koşuşun öyküsüdür Keçiören."

aims at using this symbolic power, especially exploiting the legitimacy of Atatürk as a reference. By referring to Atatürk as the principal actor of the district's history, municipal officers aim to assure and publicly declare that they have an affiliation to the Republican ideals and the great figure of Mustafa Kemal. So although they belong to the so-called-religiously oriented Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, they claim for a place in the political mainstream by using the main source of legitimacy in the Turkish political scene.

Moreover the untouchable image of Atatürk provides the district with an indisputably high status, the very opposite of its recent position as a lower-middle class residential area. In ordinary memory, Atatürk is related to Çankaya<sup>8</sup> for he spent about eighteen years of his lifetime in his residence there. Keçiören's effort to relocate Atatürk, at least during his first few weeks in Ankara, is actually an effort to share this "honor". And it is not a situation unique to Keçiören, for Atatürk's physical appearance is used as a key element in the narratives of many towns all around Anatolia. A trace of his aura is thus attached to the places he visited<sup>9</sup>. Like all other examples Keçiören is assumed to be predestined to eternal honor and significance with the blessing visit of the great leader of the Republic. Thus Keçiören has nothing missing when compared to Çankaya in order to be considered as elite, modern and popular as the latter has been for decades.

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<sup>8</sup> A district in the south of the city, once famous with its cool hills and vineyards, and is now known as a wealthy inner city neighborhood.

<sup>9</sup> In *Faces of the State*, especially in the section "Cult of Atatürk" Yael Navaro-Yashin discusses the mystical, magical and spiritual aspects of the use of the symbol of Atatürk in today's "secular" Turkish society. She argues that secularism and religion are in a dialectical relationship, so that neglecting the spiritual aspects of secularism at least in the Turkish context leads to an incomplete understanding of the issue of secular state. (Navaro-Yashin, 2000)

So we can consider this opening as the negotiation of the local power holders with the master narrative of Ankara and the Republic. In this dialogue, against the common understanding of center and periphery in Ankara, an honored past is put forward to attain a better status. Once left out of the master plan of the capital,<sup>10</sup> Keçiören can now ask for a place in the center. And this can be a place of dignity, rather than an inner city slum. In the mayor's speeches this desire appears in the following way: *"In Keçiören the social structure is changing. There are too many high ranking state officials residing here now. Retired generals, supreme-court members, bureaucrats want to move here, but this time they cannot afford it."*<sup>11</sup>

These people have usually been the inhabitants of Çankaya.

But the plot of this story is a "romance" as proposed by Hayden White (1975)<sup>12</sup> and romance type stories do not begin with a glorious event and last like

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<sup>10</sup> The first master city plan of Ankara was made by a German planner Jansen, who won the competition held in 1932. In this plan the new capital of the Republic was designed on the axis of Ulus-Çankaya and Tandoğan-Cebeci. Keçiören was not included in the plan for being considered as the countryside because of its vineyards. Yet the city expanded far beyond the expectations and by the 1950's Keçiören was already a residential area but still unplanned. Planning the district has lasted almost 50 years and finally came to an end in 2004.

<sup>11</sup> Personal interview, November 2003. "Sosyal yapı değişiyor Keçiören'de; başbakan, bir sürü müsteşar, genel müdür burada oturuyor artık. Emekli komutanlar, yargıtay mensupları, bürokratlar geliyor, ama şimdi de almaya güçleri yetmiyor."

<sup>12</sup> Hayden White argues that in narrativized historical accounts, explanation of the "meaning" of the story is maintained via three different strategies: 1- Explanation by emplotment

2- Explanation by argument

3- Explanation by ideological implication

The first strategy, emplotment, provides the meaning of a story by identifying the kind of the story, by fashioning the sequence of events into a gradually known story. White, following Northrop Frye, distinguishes between four main generic types: Romance, Tragedy, Comedy and Satire. These types, by themselves, provide the account with an explanation of why that specific event took place after the other one, by constituting the plot and the mood partially using their prefigurative features. See Hayden White *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975, pp. 5-8

Jerome Bruner marks generic emplotment as a quality of narrative in general. Although in his analysis one of the ten features of narrative is its particularity, this particularity becomes meaningful in a story only when it is embedded in a genre. "The 'suggestiveness' of a story lies, then, in the emblematic nature of its particulars, its relevance to a more inclusive narrative type" (Bruner, 1991).

that forever. Every story needs a rupture in order for it to be worth telling and it surely needs a fight between good and evil. So not being exceptional, in Keçiören's story the honorable past is followed by darkness. This darkness stems from both bad conditions and the irresponsible acts of governors. Under those circumstances the district was left in a desperate state, without the ability to fight and challenge the forces of evil since it had lost its touch with the past and hope for the future.

The significant evil of that era was identified as the *gecekondus*<sup>13</sup>. Their appearance on the land of the district which was formerly famous with its suburban houses is depicted by the verb "invasion", quite the opposite of the righteous trade of private property. And this invasion leads to chaos and disorder, the very opposite of orderly modernity. Yet in the CD while the speaker is talking about the dark ages of Keçiören, the first views we see are not of shanties, but a video of war, running soldiers, exploding bombs and smoke. Certainly it is not easy to identify the scene, but it unmistakably connotes the First World War and the invasion of Anatolia.

Consequently the peak point of the story resembles the peak of the generic story of the War of Liberation, which is the Foundation of Parliament in 1920. A similar public will was said to be crucial in changing a nation's/district's fate. The inhabitants of Keçiören took action at a critical moment and decided to give power to Turgut Altınok, thus initiating the war against disorder in the district. In the narrative account of Keçiören's history, Turgut Altınok is the second person addressed by name, the first being Atatürk, and in thus imputed with agency. The regression after Atatürk is finally reversed through this agency. With the projects already in his mind

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<sup>13</sup> Literally *gecekondus* means built-at-night. Throughout the text this Turkish word will be preferred to the terms "shanty town", "squatters" or "slums", to emphasize its unique local quality and various connotations.

before coming to office, beside courage and determination to develop and modernize the district, he mimics his predecessor in the story. So a romantic tale is constructed without a rupture, since one of the two heroes serves as a metaphor for the other. Atatürk's function as a metaphor for Turgut Altınok provides the reader, even whom without any prior knowledge, with a sense of the mayor. Certainly, a metaphor does not identify one thing with another; rather it assumes different essences apart from similarities. Its value stems not from sameness but its use as a guide to help the reader make the correct associations and derive the proper meaning. By usurping a well-known image, the metaphor of Atatürk sheds light on the way to understand, recognize and signify Altınok, who is definitely distinct from Atatürk in many of his aspirations.

### The Spatial Narrative of Keçiören

It was nine years ago when the first inner city waterfall was built in Keçiören, on the 25 m. high rocky abyss standing on the left of the main approach to the district. We were all amazed. But this was just the beginning; falling water was the signal of a dramatic spatial change in Kalaba. Since that day, the waterfall has been enlarged to about a hundred-and-eighty meters in width and been imitated in many other locations. A botanical garden was created on the steep hill opposite the waterfall with a running track and small arbors alongside the not-much-rehabilitated brook. Then came the lake, an *Aqua Park*, gazelles, perfect copies of the Orhun monuments, a shopping mall, a Martyrs Monument for soldiers who died in Eastern and Southern Anatolia, restaurants by the lake, cafes on the waterfall and finally a



fortress dominating the entire valley with its eclectic and weird architecture. New, high and luxurious apartments with colorful facades replaced former *gecekond* houses on the hilltops, and were allowed to be constructed even in the valley, in contrast to the previous regulations.<sup>14</sup>

Thus Keçiören has transformed its physical appearance anew in ten years. And this change was the product of deliberate actions the municipality has taken. Most of the time, the municipality itself built the facilities with its own resources. Yet in some other cases like the shopping mall, or new apartment blocks, it encouraged and provided the legal environment for construction. The architectural and design qualities and characteristics of these various buildings, monuments or arrangements vary enormously yet they still make up a new urban text. This text addresses the inhabitants of Keçiören as residents of a special space, and thus becomes the main vehicle through which a specific ideology of the new urban modern is developed.

The dominating figure in Kalaba Valley is obviously the Estergon Fortress. Having the octagonal plan of the Alanya fortress with a classical Seljukian cupola added on top, the concrete building and surrounding walls coated with white stone, looks at the valley from the top of the hill behind the municipal building. Although it has no physical resemblance to the original Estergon Fortress in Hungary, its name has powerful implications for the nationalist imagery. The name is very familiar to people who are used to epic songs of the Ottoman Military Band of Mehteran<sup>15</sup>. The

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<sup>14</sup> Those few high blocks in the valley were planned by the municipality in order to generate extra income and to attract the wealthy to Keçiören, for they are worth 1500 YTL/m<sup>2</sup> in 2005.

<sup>15</sup> “Estergon Kalesi su başı durak/ Kemirir gönlümü bir sinsi firak/ Gönül yar peşinde yar ondan irak/ Akma Tuna akma ben bir dertliyim/ Yar peşinde gezer tozar yandım kara bahtliyim”

original fortress is pictured in one of the songs as standing on the shore of a river, the Danube; there are no further details provided, since the song is actually about the longing of a soldier in the fortress for his lover. But this information is not important when the sign Estergon Fortress is displaced from the song, and from Hungary to Keçiören. Now it is an empty signifier which is designed to signify the glorious history of Turks and the victories of the Ottoman Empire at the heart of Europe.

Yet this is a myth created only with the name of the building. Its architectural eclecticism and its location do not allow much legibility. It is a fortress in the middle of a recently inhabited district, without the function of military defense. It bears no resemblance to the Ankara Citadel since it is clean, tidy and white. It is just a “fortress” for its own sake, not legible on its own, not meaningful by itself. Just a façade, a theatrical décor without function for four years, since its interior, which was planned to be a museum of Turkish traditional art is still under construction. I cannot foresee what it will come to mean for people after its completion<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> The fortress was opened with a great ceremony in the summer of 2005, after I wrote this chapter. For the next six months until the completion of this piece of work it was busy with visitors from noon till 10 o'clock at night. Now it hosts a museum, which is far more comprehensive than the Ethnography Museum of the Ministry of Culture, several shops, each aimed to be specialized in a traditional craft, but selling Indian fabric and Egyptian glass, and a quality restaurant. It requires further research to make predictions about the attitudes of people towards the fortress and about its possible meanings.



Figure 1: Estergon Fortress and the Waterfall

However, the municipality is determined to complete the myth by constructing an artificial lake just at the foot of the fortress: *Tuna Göleti* (The Danube Artificial Lake). Again the signifier *Tuna* loses its entire signification, geographical and historical content; it turns out to be a signpost of Ottoman borders, thus of imperial greatness in the “metalanguage” (Barthes, 1972) of the nationalist myth. As Barthes (1972) argues, a myth can employ infinite signifiers to do the same job. In Keçiören the signifiers of the nationalist myth are not limited to the Estergon Fortress or the Danube Lake; among various others the masterpieces of “signification” are the replicas of the Orhun Monuments standing opposite the Municipal Building.

The replicas are in the original size and shape, with inscriptions on marble in both Göktürk and Chinese alphabets. Turkish translations are available on a marble plate at the front. They stand by the artificial lake in front of the shopping mall and

next to the Martyrs' Monument. Actually the area is designed to be a square with various different "accessories"<sup>17</sup>. There is a marble gate at the very end of the square, which shuts on an entrance to nowhere. Behind it there is the artificial lake, yet there is not a path from the gate to the lake. It is a dead end. On the right end of the square there is the dedication wall, with a relief of Central Asian Turkic heroes such as Oğuz Kağan and anonymous horsemen. Up on the relief and in the CD it is said that "the replicas are gifts of the mayor to future generations in order to remind them of their nation's rich cultural heritage". They are put there as evidence of the ancientness of the Turkish nation. These marble inscriptions along with the statues of historical Turkish heads of state (From Mete Han to Atatürk) in front of the municipal building communicate nationalisms' favorite motto: From ancient history to the eternal future.

Another basic motive in the spatial rearrangement of Kalaba Valley is the celebration of "nature". Just like waterfall and gazelles, The Atatürk Botanical Garden in the valley is an example of this ambition. Right at the approach of the district, on the formerly barren rocky steep side of a hill, there is now a small inner-city forest. This park is not a product of an ordinary plantation activity. Actually there was no soil and the steepness of the rocky hill would not allow trees to grow. Tons and tons of soil were carried to the site and the slope of the hill was artificially smoothed over with construction machines. Trees were planted and because of the dry climate of Ankara they have required continuous care and watering. Despite the availability of some large areas of plain land more suitable for forestation very nearby, the selection of this steep hillside is significant.

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<sup>17</sup> "Accessories" and "urban furniture" are the terms used by the vice Mayor Terzioğlu to refer to almost any urban design element, which at the same time has a decorative quality.

For two years with its construction process and now with its mere existence, the Atatürk Botanical Garden is an exhibition of the victory of human will over nature. The deliberate selection of an inhospitable land is to show both the will power of the mayor and the success of scientific techniques. This aim resonates with the desires at stake in the foundation of the Gazi Farm by Atatürk in the very first years of the Republic. The insistence of a leader to turn a swamp into fertile land, to “experiment with rational techniques of modern science in order to overcome the reluctance of nature for progress” is particularly significant in this similarity (Akyürek, 2000).



Figure 2: The signboard at the entrance of the Atatürk Botanical Garden showing the former situation of the place

### A Tripartite Fantasy

After briefly looking at the historical and spatial narratives of Keçiören I would like to focus on the issue of what those narratives are meant for. Basically narrative is a linguistic device that is designed to transmit meaning, a special vehicle for the mediation of “ways of seeing” (Berger, 1995). And more importantly narrative is an instrument of mind employed in the construction of reality (Bruner, 1991). The use of the word “construction” here is deliberate to refute an assumption of neutral representation. For, representation of any form is at the same time is a lens to see a glimpse of the Real through. This mediated and partial version of reality is determined by the intentions of the narrator (Bruner, 1991) and so, “...narratives [can be considered] not only as structures but also as acts, the features of which are functions of the variable sets of conditions in response to which they are performed” (Barbara Herrnstein-Smith, 1981). So in this part of the chapter I will discuss these conditions and interpret the versions of reality constituted by the narratives of Keçiören through an elaboration of the fantasies these narratives provide and incite.

Three recurring themes appear in the narratives, as well as in the speeches of higher municipal officials: Critical importance given to planning, use of nationalist signs and a desire for a higher status as a district of Ankara. Analytically --and for sake of simplicity-- each of these themes could be paired with one of the elements of the tripartite fantasy we deal with: Imagination of Keçiören as a modern, nationalist, middle class district.

## The Anti-Modern: *Gecekond*

*Keçiören is the tale of a race from a gecekondu town to a modern world city.*<sup>18</sup>

In both oral and written narrative accounts of Keçiören's history municipal actors summarize the "progress" of the district with the above quoted sentence. For the last three years it has been the motto of local success and development. This summary exhibits both how Keçiören's path of "progress" is understood and represented by the municipal actors and their emphasis on the two sides of this phrase: on one end the *gecekondu* on the other the modern city. In the representations of the local government these two appear as stark opposites. Their opposition is multi-faceted with references to health, planning, order and aesthetics.



Figure 3: Illustration from the booklet

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<sup>18</sup> Both from the CD and the booklet "Bir gecekondu kentinden modern bir dünya kentine koşuşun öyküsüdür Keçiören"

In the booklet, there is a distorted photograph illustrating the municipal victory over the “*gecekondus* problem”. The illustration is striking with the replacement it makes. Ordinary *gecekondus* of Keçiören are replaced with a green void, unlike the ordinary practice of building multi-storey apartment blocks on the space left by several *gecekondus*. The color “green” points out the negative qualities of *gecekondus* much more intensely than apartment buildings. As opposed to the connotations of health, cleanliness and naturalness of the color of “green”, *gecekondus* are unhealthy, dirty and a burden on the environment. Yet this representation is not unique to Keçiören. Indeed, looking at this illustration one could think that the representation of *gecekondus* has changed little since the 1940’s. The first *gecekondus* of Ankara at that time were described by the early Republican newspapers as “ugly”, “unsightly”, “dirty” and the “garbage of the city” (Baydar-Nalbantoğlu, 1997).

It is important to mention that the attitudes towards *gecekondus* did not stay the same during all the years from the 1920s to the 2000s.<sup>19</sup> There was a time in the history of Turkish cities when *gecekondus* were treated as an inescapable and ingenious solution found by the new migrants to the city. Inhabitants of these neighborhoods were seen and represented as disadvantaged and exploited in the 1970s and the beginning of 1980s. The neighborhoods were considered as the signs of a transitional stage of poverty. During that period *gecekondus* owners were able to find sympathy in the media. They were represented in the Turkish cinema as the poor but happy, uneducated but human “other” of the selfish and money oriented urban bourgeoisie (Öztürk, 2004). By the 1990s *gecekondus* began to be represented once

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<sup>19</sup> For a detailed analysis of the representations of *gecekondus* in the academic and popular imagery see: Erman, 2004



again as the ‘dirt’ of the city. Moreover, they became notorious in the news for the so-called *gecekondu mafya*, various other networks of crime, militant political groups and ethnic and religious conflict (Erman, 2004). Being the presumed location of various gangs, thieves, drug addicts, extremists, terrorists, they were not only ‘filthy’ and ‘dangerous’ themselves, but also created the ‘dirt’ and ‘danger’ intimidating all citizens of cities, They were once again and more brutally referred to as the “invaders” to be fought against.

Although in Keçiören, the municipality fights against the *gecekondu*s for being the invaders of the land of the district and see them as dirt that should be wiped out, there is not a conception of these neighborhoods as the birthplace of crime, illegality and various threats to the order. Rather the most often emphasized feature of *gecekondu*s is their lack of planning. They are initially unplanned but also their maze-like streets and continuously changing material body stubbornly resist consecutive attempts of planning, hence the modernist premises of control and order (Baydar-Nalbantoğlu, 1997). At this point the “problem” in the *gecekondu* neighborhoods is represented as the lack, the absence of modernization, more than anything else. Every negative attribute of these neighborhoods would be non-existent if they had been planned regularly. This theme even comes to be the plot of a utopia, the utopia of proper *gecekondu*s narrated by the deputy mayor İbrahim Terzioğlu. In his fantasy, *gecekondu* dwellers would be forced to build their houses according to settlement plans from the very start, which requires preemptive planning of every piece of land. So when a future *gecekondu* dweller came to an area integrated in the master plan, she would be led to one of the certain parcels and would be allowed to build her own *gecekondu* according to a uniform architectural plan provided by the

municipality. If this had been the case then there would not have been any problems about proper urbanization in the big cities. *“But look at the situation now. They came and built their houses very close to each other, sometimes side by side, also they make additions continuously. It is even worse than villages. Neither a village, nor a city, this is gecekondu.”*<sup>20</sup>

It is said that, the most efficient and rational way of treating these indefinable, ungraspable and uncontrollable structures is by ignoring them. So, in the urban transformation projects of many neighborhoods of Keçiören, the municipality rejected considering *gecekondu*s as meaningful units of residence and treated the land as unoccupied. Already inhabited districts of Ayvalı and Ovacık became the *tabula rasa* for the application of ideas of rational urbanization. This dialog with the vice mayor Terzioğlu can be exemplary:

*Hilal: How did you made the settlement plans? According to the already existing buildings and schemas?*

*Terzioğlu :In our town this was needless, since the buildings were not of concrete but of gecekondu. So we did not think that the already existing structure ought to shape the plan. Rather we ignored the gecekondu areas and focused on how a modern town should be. We tried to find out how the urban texture could be more rational, we considered ergonomics and the urban rationality.”*<sup>21</sup>

Municipal planners have begun with classifying human needs and corresponding facilities, then applied them to the land with respect to the “scientific,

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<sup>20</sup> Personal interview.

<sup>21</sup> “-İmar planlarını neye göre yaptınız? Mevcut yerleşime göre mi?

- Bizim bölgemizde bu olmadı, çünkü bizim yaptığımız yerlerde yapılaşma betonarme değil gecekondu olduğu için, mevcut hali imar halidir düşüncesi hasıl olmadı. Gecekondu şeklinde olan yerlerde göz ardı edilerek çağdaş şehir nasıl olur ona göre. Kentsel doku daha akılcı nasıl olur, o gözle baktık, gecekonduların halihazırdaki yerleşimini göz önüne almadık.ergonomik açıdan, kentsel akıl açısından nasıl olur, ona göre davrandık.” Personal Interview with İbrahim Terzioğlu

rational and modern” principles of proper urbanization. Relying on these principles they decided which part of the land should be reserved for residence and which part for public use. Consequently they came to the decision of reserving Ovacık as an urban service area and planned a commercial strip on the side of the highway connection road in an area that at the moment houses thousands of people in *gecekondu*.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, the municipal governors of Keçiören attempt to be “gardeners” in the Bauman’s sense: as a metaphor to demonstrate modern governance (Bauman,1987). Rather than leaving the plants to sprout by themselves, or allow self-made solutions to the problem of accommodation in the city to flourish, the gardeners of Keçiören eagerly plan the land, encourage and sometimes force construction and interfere with the processes. They decide where and what to build as well as how. They “employ modern scientific techniques” to cultivate the land efficiently and design a city of ergonomics and rationality. Yet this rationality is a highly subjective one, often woven with aesthetic considerations, so, for example, allowing a legal but forceful interference with facades as well as with the ordinary practice of regulating the engineering and physical construction processes. İbrahim Terzioğlu, the vice-mayor, explains the reason for their interference with the facades: “*We want there to be modern, cute, contemporary houses. What are those piles of concrete, the soulless buildings, and straight walls? We want it to be dynamic, colorful, and lively.*”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Yet it is important to note that, there haven’t been any *gecekondu* demolitions in Keçiören for the last twelve years. Rather than forcing people to leave their houses, the municipality leaves the problem in the hands of the real estate market, after securing public shares reserved for roads, schools, parks...etc.

<sup>23</sup> Personal interview. “Yani çağdaş, modern, şirin, güzel evler olsun. Beton yığını böyle, ruhsuz binalar, düz duvarlar. Bir hareketlilik olsun diye. Bir renklilik bir canlılık olsun.”

In the imagery of municipal officials the application of aesthetic and rational principals of proper urbanization to the material city environment is a difficult task that requires the mayor and the local employees to have certain qualifications. Being elected does not warrant their success. So İbrahim Terzioğlu argues for a central examination for the candidates in local elections, which would at least guarantee a minimum level of education and knowledge for future mayors. Keeping in mind that being a mayor in Turkey has been mainly dependent on personal ties and good community relations, this suggestion brings something anew, something quite modern. It assumes the calculability of knowledge and talents and brings forth the measurable competencies, thus compellingly recalls Weber's bureaucratic organization which lies at the heart and at the foundational basis of modernity (Weber, 1958)

The desires for modernization often go hand in hand with the aspirations towards economic development; and in Turkish the term "*gelişme*" (development) is uttered both to mean modernization, Westernization and economic growth. This inherent link between getting economically better and being modern (*çağdaş*) is apparent in the attitudes of the municipal agents in Keçiören. The 'modern world city' which sets the desired end of the path Keçiören has been led into, signifies among various things the accumulation of wealth and growth in the district. The abolition of the *gecekondu* neighborhoods serves to both facets of the development, since the multi-storey blocks that has been replacing the *gecekondus* are also a great source of revenue for the municipality. Within the last ten years Keçiören has realized a construction boom in which the proportion of the *gecekondu* land to the total area of the district dramatically decreased from five sixth to one sixth. In 2005

the construction permits issued by Keçiören municipality were as many as the sum of all the permits given in Ankara. The construction business created revenues for the municipality, and because of the population increases it made possible, it also expanded the tax base of the municipality. According to municipal officials, this extra income is used to make investments, which would lead to further growth, besides providing regular services. Thus a cycle of growth is to be achieved especially with the recreational and commercial facilities that are built by the municipality. And to borrow Logan and Molotch's (1996) term "the city as a growth machine" functions well and feeds the ideology of growth.

*This is just a matter of supply and demand. You cannot make it happen immediately. As we make investments in the neighborhoods; for example we built parks with waterfalls in the middle of gecekondus. We didn't make it cheap because it was a gecekondu neighborhood. It is the same here and there. Then people constructed the apartment buildings next to the park. And a supermarket was opened in the ground floor. Later bigger hypermarkets replaced them. So comes the tide of growth.*<sup>24</sup>

### Open Air Nationalism

In "Myth Today" Roland Barthes (1972) differentiates between three ways of receiving a myth, based on the semiological triad of signifier(form)/signified(concept)/sign(signification). The first way requires focusing on the empty signifier and taking it simply as a symbol or as an example of the

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<sup>24</sup> Personal Interview, İbrahim Terzioğlu "Bunlar tamamen vatandaşın arz talep olayıdır. Birden bire olsun dersiniz olmaz zaten. Yatırımlar gittikçe mesela park yaptıkça mahallelere, gecekonduların içersine, oraya da şelaleler yaptık. Gecekonduya yapıyoruz diye basit park yapmadık. Burada neyse orada da o. Tabii hemen yanına parkın apartmanı dikmiş. Altına market kuruldu. Sonra daha büyük hipermarketler kuruldu. Yani bunlar dalga dalga büyüyecek şeyler."

meaning. In this case Estergon Fortress or the Danube Lake in Keçiören might be perceived as an example illustrating the geographical greatness of the Ottoman Empire. The second way of focusing is on the full signifier which is a sign itself in the first order language. This type of focusing allows a deciphering of the myth by understanding the distortion caused by the operation of turning a sign into an empty signifier. In our case this position is reserved for the viewers who, by looking at the artificial lake or the replicas of Orhun Monuments recall the history and geography of the signifier Danube and the inscriptions. They recognize the distortion in this relocation. Yet there is still another position, the position of “the myth consumer”, in which the focus is on the “inextricable whole made of meaning and form”. In this situation the replicas of Orhun Monuments are “the very presence” of the ancientness of Turkish history and the Estergon Fortress is the greatness of the Ottoman Empire itself. So here the reader, the myth consumer, “lives the myth as a story at once true and unreal” (ibid).

This is the way myth realizes its naturalizing and depoliticizing effect. For the myth consumer in Keçiören the continuity of Turkish national history is self-evident in the presence of the Orhun Inscriptions or the Danube Lake. So, with this unique spatial text the nationalist fantasy is locally created and reinforced. The open air text of nationalism maintains the readers with a “natural” and “self-evident” feeling of belonging to a great and rooted nation, and thus provides them with an anchor in eternal time and space.

The process of writing a nationalist text on the land of Keçiören has started with the renaming of some parks and changing the emblem of the municipality in the very first year of Mayor Turgut Altınok’s occupation of the office. His and his

team's efforts to create such a text have always been quite deliberate, as they deeply invest in the nationalist fantasy. In the local elections of 1994 Turgut Altınok was the candidate of MHP (Nationalist Movement Party), while right before the elections of 1999 he declared his candidacy under the flag of SP (Felicity Party), which was the result of his break up with MHP, as a result of intra-party conflicts and power struggles. And his last stop is AKP (Justice and Development Party). Still both in his office and on the wall behind deputy mayor İbrahim Terzioğlu's desk there are pictures of Alparslan Türkeş, the founder leader of MHP. These two men, neither in the interviews nor in their publications even try to explain the reason why they erected the replicas of Orhun Monuments or chose the name Estergon for the fortress/museum. They rely on the assumed, self-evident meaning transmission of the artifacts and monuments. Thus they only reserve a place for themselves as responsible transmitters of national culture, giving gifts to the youth and decorating the city with meaningful "furniture"<sup>25</sup> for people to read and understand (the national greatness and continuity) through spatial manifestations.

This fantasy of historical continuity and national greatness appears to be a dictum used to legitimate any regulation in Keçiören. The issue in hand might well be the dirtiness of the bazaars, picking of flowers or noise in the streets. Providing a remarkable example, in a TV programme, Turgut Altınok, in response to a question about street weddings, justified the necessity of silence and peace in the streets by arguing that "*We are successors of a great nation, we have taught the world what*

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<sup>25</sup> According to İbrahim Terzioğlu, there has always been a need for urban furniture, of which Ayasofya, Galata Tower, Atakule, public statues...etc are the examples. He argues that the Republic has been very unsuccessful and uncaring in the creation of such emblematic decoration even in Ankara, so that now it is their business to adorn the city. Yet the furniture used should not be "shoddy", should not be "deaf". "İnsanlar bu mobilyalardan etkilenmeliler, birşeyler alabilmeliler". Personal interview.

*love, tolerance and civilization is. The streets are our houses as well, everyone has to be sensitive to this issue”.*<sup>26</sup> Yet it is hardly possible to argue that such regulations are only backed up and stem from a nationalist fantasy. Rather they are formulated in the criss-cross of modernity, nationalism and middle class morality.

### Joys for the Middle Classes

On his quest for the agents of nation building in postcolonial India, Chatterjee (1993) addresses middle classes as the agents imagining a new society, and demonstrates the linkage between middle-class desires and nationalism in the formation of a new social order. Their being right in the middle between ruling upper class and disdained lower class provides them the space to maneuver, in order to differentiate themselves from both. And within this space “the middle class stakes its identity on its accomplishments and refinement, moral discourses that it pursues largely through its privileged access to goods and services” (Liechty, 2003, p.17).

In Keçiören the overt expression of this morality appears in the stance towards the “*gecekondu* problem”. With all the negative qualities mentioned above, alongside with the one deputy-mayor often employs in his descriptions, “*iğrenç* (disgusting)”, the depiction of *gecekondus* is highly sensualized and social inequality and the class structure of society are veiled under this discourse of aesthetics. In this representation *gecekondu* inhabitants are introduced as the people without “taste”<sup>27</sup>,

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<sup>26</sup> June 23, 2004, TRT1. From the interview with Turgut Altınok, “Biz büyük bir milletin evlatlarıyız, dünyaya sevgiyi hoşgörüyü öğreten bir medeniyetiz. Sokaklar bizim evimiz, bu konuda herkesin duyarlı olması lazım.”

<sup>27</sup> For a definition and analysis of “taste” see: Bourdieu, P. 1987 *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice. Cambridge: Harvard University Press



people who do not know how to live well because of their ignorance, not because of their limited access to economic, social or symbolic capital. This representation makes possible to contrast the hygiene of a dish washer with the dirt and filth of *gecekondus*, the propriety of three bedrooms with the unhealthiness of living altogether in a single room, the sharp order of apartment blocks with the chaos of *gecekondu* neighborhoods. *Gecekondu* dwellers can only get acquainted with the “joys of life” and “recognize various beauties when they move into apartments” that signify middle class residential habits. There they learn how to live, be “self-confident” and “content”.

The municipality of Keçiören has created various places which are supposed to have a similar function of life-style education. In the newly established tennis courts, running tracks, swimming pools, movie theaters and shopping malls of Keçiören people both learn and perform middle class practices. In the municipal discourse, those facilities are said to be built to meet certain “human needs” and Maslow’s hierarchy of human needs is employed to universalize this “human”. Yet here this idealized “human” is a very specific kind who has a certain habitus, certain tastes and certain practices<sup>28</sup> which become visible in weekend jogging, queuing in front of the ticket desk, enjoying tennis...etc.

In the spatial narrative of Keçiören those middle class desires especially appear in the idealization of suburbia. In the booklet and in the CD Keçiören is said to be a wealthy suburb of Ankara with beautiful country houses occupied by upper middle class families in the early years of the Republic. Even, the first tennis courts

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<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*

of Ankara were built in Keçiören with Atatürk's own initiative.<sup>29</sup> Today's projects refer to that dreamy past before the "invasion of *gecekondus*". However, "[i]t is no more possible to build up a joyful suburb out of this already inhabited district, but it is possible to provide the people of Keçiören with some delights of such a life style in a more compact manner."<sup>30</sup> Within this compactness some features of suburbia are neglected because of the recent situation of the district while some are overemphasized<sup>31</sup>.

Suburban neighborhoods were first founded in Britain in the late eighteenth century in order to provide bourgeois families a homogeneous and sterile environment. Thus, Fishman (1989) defines suburbia as "an archetypal invention of middle classes", which was imagined by middle classes for middle classes. In the construction of suburbs (from Garden City to Kemer Country) the main assumption has been the pollutedness and unhealthiness of the cities. Here "pollution" sometimes refers to environmental problems of the cities, yet often it directly points out people and their activities. Lower classes, the urban poor, migrants and industrial activities are the dirt of the cities thus should be avoided in the suburbs of the middle classes. Green is the sign of this exclusion with its reference to nature, cleanliness, health and purity. In Keçiören municipal suburban ideals are realized through this signification. The municipality is proud of its achievement in building 350 parks in ten years. Although some of those parks are very tiny and limited to serve only the

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<sup>29</sup> İbrahim Terzioğlu, Personal interview.

<sup>30</sup> İbrahim Terzioğlu Personal interview.

<sup>31</sup> An important feature of suburbs is the detachment of residential areas from those of commerce and production. Keçiören does not follow this path, rather the municipal officials try to reverse the district's former position as a sole residential area, "otel kent", by encouraging merchants and traders with newly built shopping malls.

neighborhood, the majestic projects of the municipality like Atatürk Botanical Garden and reconstruction of the Kalaba Valley exhibit this obsession with greenery too.

### Re-locating the Fantasy

Admiration for and contestation of its significant other lies at the heart of Keçiören's self-narrative formulated by the municipality. The Bakhtinian *dialogical principle* governs the narratives in the sense that they assume the existence of the "other" to create a consistent whole (Saktanber, 1994). This "other" appears variably as the master narrative of Ankara, or its signifier Çankaya. The "rivalry" is remembered as having started before the foundation of the Republic and Ankara's appointment as the capital. *"At that time, when the first parliament was founded before the Jansen plan, Atatürk first resided in Keçiören. Thus German scientists planned Keçiören to be the city center. The reason for this was its protected position against the northern winds, thus being not very windy and facing the south."*<sup>32</sup> So the rational choice for the city center would be Keçiören, but arbitrarily or without clear reasons Çankaya was preferred and Keçiören was excluded from Jansen's plan. This preference was recalled by the municipal officials with feelings of disappointment over being subjected to injustice. And this injustice is compared to the justness of the new municipality, as we will see in the coming chapter. Moreover, in the master narrative of Ankara, Keçiören has been marginalized as a district of poverty,

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<sup>32</sup> Personal interview, İbrahim Terzioğlu "O zaman tabii meclis kurulduğu zaman Jansen planı yapılmadan evvel Atatürk ilk Keçiören'e yerleştiği için Keçiören'i merkez planlamış Alman bilim adamları. Sebebi de kuzey rüzgarlarına, şimal rüzgarlarına sırtını dayaması dağlık tepelerine doğru. Yani rüzgar almaması ve güneye bakması."

ignorance and *gecekondus*. So the struggle, both discursive and in practice, is to prove the opposite and claim an honorable status for the district. But, the strategies aiming to create and organize a modern middle class neighborhood do not diverge from the dominant narrative; the municipality does not strategize to open up a respectful space for *gecekondus* in this narrative; rather in conformity with the dominant representations, it works to erase the *gecekondus*, the signpost of backwardness and poverty.

The fantasy I have tried to elaborate above is neither solid, nor unified. It has many conflicting elements as well as some lateral themes. Although literally similar appeals to nationalism, modernity and middle class taste have always been foundational for the Republican approach to urbanism, those desires in relation with some others make up a different composition in Keçiören.

So it is necessary to understand the modern middle class fantasy of Keçiören as it is declared in spatial or written texts, within a dialogical relationship, in which Keçiören finds a place for the expression of its desires and negations, accusations and admirations, disappointments and hopes; but not for critique. The critique of the master narrative takes a more implicit form, becoming visible in the daily practices of people and the Islamic idiom the municipality makes use of against the marginalization and negation of Muslim identity in the Kemalist- modernist discourse. The municipal agents do not overtly and publicly declare their critical stance but with the possibilities of use the places they created sustains, their stance become visible. This issue, with its relation to the Islamic idiom that forms the bedrock of the municipal approach to the inhabitants of the town will be elaborated in depth in the following chapters.

## CHAPTER 3

### *HİZMET* FOR THE COMMUNITY: INTRODUCING THE ISLAMIC IDIOM TO MODERNIZATION

We have so far seen how claims and desires become legible in the spatial and written narratives provided by the municipality in Keçiören. Yet the text to read is not limited to these narratives; indeed paradigmatic quotations of the Prophet Muhammad, of Sufi poets and of the Mayor himself provide food for thought and conceptual paths to follow in order to understand and analyze the prevailing imaginary. These citations literally mark the entrance into the town and introduce how it is imagined to the newcomers. There are two huge signboards right at the approach of the district. On the first one the uncertain and hesitant relationship with the Republican values is set forward through the declaration of loyalty, “We love Atatürk and Turkey”<sup>33</sup>; while on the second one which has three inscriptions, with the calls for unity and love, the borders of the public/community in Keçiören is

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<sup>33</sup> “*Atatürk’ü ve Türkiye’yi Seviyoruz*”

drawn, “Let us be one; let us be big; let us be alive”<sup>34</sup>, “ Let us meet; make things smooth; love and be loved; The world does not belong to anyone”<sup>35</sup>. This belonging goes hand in hand with nationalism: “The love for the motherland can be measured with the service to it”<sup>36</sup> and “This motherland deserves to be a heaven for our children and grandchildren”<sup>37</sup>, yet the rules concerning this spatial belonging are materialized with the saying of Prophet Muhammad about alcohol, “Alcohol is the source of all evil”<sup>38</sup>. And finally the inscription on the entrance gate of the municipal building declares that “The best among people is the one who is helpful and of assistance to others”<sup>39</sup> and lays the ground of the municipality’s way of relating to people.

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<sup>34</sup> “*Bir olalım, iri olalım, diri olalım*”

<sup>35</sup>“*Gelin tanış olalım; işi kolay kılalım; sevelim, sevillelim; dünya kimseye kalmaz*”

<sup>36</sup>“*Vatan sevgisi vatana hizmetle ölçülür*”

<sup>37</sup> “*Bu vatan çocuklarımız ve torunlarımız için cennet yapılmaya layıktır*”

<sup>38</sup>“*İçki bütün kötülüklerin anasıdır*”

<sup>39</sup> “*İnsanların hayırlısı insanlara faydalı olandır*”



Figure 4: The signboard at the approach of Keçiören: “We love Atatürk and Turkey”

First of all it is important to put a distinction between the motto of “Atam izindegiz” and this declaration of “love”. The first one which is popular among the Kemalist middle-classes especially in the times of assumed Islamist threat, is an exhibition of commitment to the Republican reforms and determination to maintain the “regime” according to the principals set by Atatürk himself. It is an assertion of the belief towards the Republican ideals, and a promise to act accordingly. Besides, the statement is directed to Atatürk, by straightforward address. So it is a public promise made frankly to Atatürk himself with the aim of exhibiting an unmediated (even sincere) relationship between him and the addresser. Yet this sincerity is not

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<sup>40</sup> “Atatürk’ü ve Türkiye’yi Seviyoruz”

something individual, rather it is shared by a group of devoted citizens. The verb in plural is a manifestation of the existence of this group (unknown in size) which is a safeguard against the Islamist threat.

So it would be surprising if Keçiören's municipal officials, being seen as the threat themselves<sup>41</sup>, have declared their loyalty in the same way as Atatürkists. But, they still need to assure the Kemalist bureaucracy and the army that they do not aim to "change the regime", or "divide the country". So what is averred is not a commitment as it was the case in the former motto, but a mild assertion that the municipal office is loyal to the Republic. The basis of this loyalty is not belief or conviction but love. The love for Turkey (which visually appears as a map under the phrase) guarantees the loyalty for its "indivisible unity", and the love for Atatürk (which is materialized with the drawing of his head at the heart of the map) at least prevents a challenge to the founding principals of the state.

The aim here is not to read this manifestation as hypocrisy (*takıyye*) as it is commonly preferred by the mainstream media; indeed I want to consider it as an exhibition of the hesitant and dubious relationship of Keçiören municipality with the Republican reforms and ideals, which was partly elaborated in the previous chapter. This hesitant relationship includes desire and reaction, admiration and rejection, approval and negation at the same time. Through various topics and within different areas of interest this dubious relationship of Islamists with the republic has been widely discussed (Mardin, 1993; Göle 1996, 2006; Saktanber, 1994, 2002). Here the issue will be held only in its connection to spatial strategies and the strategies of the

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<sup>41</sup> The political party the mayor of the district belongs to is AK Parti, which is a more liberal and savvy version of the formerly prohibited Islamist political parties, which were considered as a threat to the constitutional regime of the Turkish Republic by the Kemalists.



Republic and the Keçiören Municipality will be analyzed in their relationship to each other.

### The Spatial Strategies of the Early Republican Era

The existence of public places gained importance for the ideology and the representation of the new Republic: Public places were thought as the urban elements that would ‘save the life in Ankara from being a sheer blueprint’... this project could only be realized if the spatial correspondents of the modern life were produced. (Kılıç, 2002, p.123, my translation)

The main concern in the process of building public places in Ankara, the capital city of the Turkish Republic, was creating reflections of modern life which could be read in Kızılay (Batuman, 2002), Sıhhiye Square (Kılıç, 2002), Ulus (Yalım 2002), Gazi Farm (Akyürek, 2000), Atatürk Boulevard (Şenol-Cantek, 2003) and in the İstasyon Avenue (Baydar-Nalbantoğlu, 1997). But within the pace of revolutionism, the primary assumption had been that “the form transforms the content” (Bozdoğan, 2001). So the aimed spatial reflection was not of a lived experience, rather it was supposed to shape and create the modern citizens.

The “visible politics” of the early republican years set the boundaries of this modern citizen via certain spatial as well as discursive strategies (Bozdoğan, 1997). Those spatial strategies worked in two basic ways. They both aimed to provide the facilities of modern urban life in spatial terms and to develop an accompanying architectural language. This language, “*İnkılap Mimarisi*” (Architecture of Revolution) as it was named for the time being, was mainly composed of modernist elements (Bozdoğan, 2001). With reaction to the Ottoman style and its adherent National Architecture Renaissance, *İnkılap Mimarisi* was formulated in the terms of

simplicity, purity and rationality. With simple forms it was aimed to differentiate the material culture of the new Republic from the Imperial era. Bozdoğan argues that the binary opposition of “before and after” was employed, like in all fields of the revolution, to mark this differentiation. The modernist forms of the 1930s were contrasted with the exuberant and ornamental forms of the recent past in the architectural magazines of the time as well as in public newspapers (Bozdoğan, 2001). Use of domes, curves, arches and any decorative elements were abandoned and concrete replaced the so-called “backward” construction materials of tiles and wood (Kılıç, 2002).

With the construction of places designed according to these principals, the stage for a “modern” and “civilized” life was created and within the boundaries of these places certain ways of behaving were introduced to the people of Ankara composed of the newly emerging and mostly new-comer middle classes and the “natives” of the town. Şenol-Cantek (2003) suggests a tri-partite categorization of these people: The first are the citizens (vatandaş) who have strong commitment to the Republic and Kemalist modernization ideals and act accordingly, thus exemplifying the desired modern subjects. The second are the “people” (halk) who maintain loyalty and belief in the republican ideals but have not civilized yet. These, however, can be educated and relied on for carrying the potential of such a change. And the last group is the “masses” (kalabalıklar), who are against the revolution or are unwilling and resistant to change, these have sometimes been ignored, sometimes severely penalized but often forcefully excluded.

The spatial strategies of the early years of the Republic are mainly targeted towards the aim of transforming the people into modern citizens. So public places

were designed to function as “schools for socializing” (Uludağ, 1998, cited in Bozdoğan 2001). These places varied from people’s houses (Halkevleri) to public squares; from train stations to beer gardens. Creating specified places for modern recreational activities occupied an important place in the construction agenda of the 1930s and early 1940s. Çubuk Dam with its Swiss style lake-restaurant, Gazi Farm with the reservoirs of Marmara and Karadeniz, Youth Park and Güvenpark were built with great enthusiasm in these periods. Those places provided the new capital city with recreational activities like swimming, dancing, sun-bathing, beer-drinking, and listening to jazz-bands. which were considered to be part of modern civilized (or Westernized) ways of living.

In order to encourage the appreciation of this new “habitus”, some already existing leisure activities were named as backward and uncivilized. Şenol-Cantek(2003) presents a striking example of this contrast and comparison from an article published in Hakimiyet-i Milliye newspaper in 1933:

The image of the inhabitants of Ankara in Mamak, Kayaş, Hatipçayı is backward; in Gazi Farm, Marmara and Karadeniz [lakes] is modern.

...Try to change as much as you can. If you cannot resemble Mamak to Gazi Farm; if you cannot replace the incesaz of the gardens with an orchestra, you cannot possibly create an image of ‘unity’.

Thanks God neither Mamak nor Kayaş is within the municipal borders. Otherwise, Nevzat Bey [Tandoğan] would be tired of the gluttony of Mamak and Kayaş as much as the construction of Ankara. The Farm belongs to Ankara. What about Kayaş, Mamak? Where do they belong?

To Eyüp, Edirnekapı, to Tanzimat”<sup>42</sup> (Şenol-Cantek, 2003, p. 242)

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<sup>42</sup> “Ankaralının Mamak, Kayaş, Hatipçayı’ndaki görünüşü geri, Çiftlik parkı, Marmara, Karadeniz’deki görünüşü ileridir.

... İstedığınız kadar değıştirmeğe çalışınız. Eğer (Mamak)ı Çiftliğe benzetemezseniz, eğer bahçenin incesazı yerine bir orkestra koyamazsanız cemiyete istediğiniz “birlik” manzarasını mümkün değil veremezsiniz.

Bereket versin ki, ne Mamak ne Kayaş Belediye’nin hududu içindedir. Yoksa Nevzat Beyi (Tandoğan) Ankaranın iymarı kadar Mamak ve Kayaş’ın pisboğazlığı da yorardı.

In those years Kayaş and Mamak with their relatively green environment were among the most popular picnic places for the inhabitants of Ankara. But for the author, this activity of weekend picnics itself was a reminiscent of the Ottoman everyday culture, which was “by nature” backward, ignorant, conservative and tainted. Thus attention of public authorities was called, if they were willing to create a totally civilized nation; though at the same time gratitude was expressed for these places had already been left out of the urban considerations.

Yet, “ignorant natives” did not stay stuck in Mamak or Kayaş. They moved into the hygienic environments of elites in order to watch, to join or to carry on their own practices in these enclaves. People with dirty village costumes stood in front of Ankara Palas to stare at the civilized citizens going in for a ball. Families with their picnic equipment “invaded” the Çubuk Dam area. Young males in their underwear came to join swimmers in Karadeniz and Marmara Lakes in Gazi Farm. Herds and shepherds used main roads as a shortcut to the fields of Çankaya (Şenol-Cantek, 2003). And finally rural migrants came to stay in *gecekondus* with great “disrespect” to the modernization ideals of the capital (Baydar-Nalbantoğlu, 1997).

Founding elites tried to develop various strategies to cope with the situation. Sometimes they left the places to the “newcomers” as was the case in Çubuk Dam and Youth Park. But this was not a preferred strategy since it would mean taking a step-back from the ideals. Şevket Süreyya posits the “right” approach to the problem:

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Çiftlik Ankaranıdır. Ve Kayaş, Mamak? Nerenin biliyor musunuz?  
Eyüp’ün, Edirnekapi’nın, Tanzimatın.”

Great works are accomplished in spite of the great masses. Public man or the hero does not obey the people, instead he seeks what is right for the people despite the people  
...we have to take the contradicting tendencies of our social body under control.<sup>43</sup>

Şevket Süreyya, 17 Teşrinievel 1311 Hakimiyyet-i Milliye  
(Şenol-Cantek 2003:236)

In order to take these ailing qualities of the national body under control the most preferred position was that of educators, who by various didactic techniques, tried to civilize the people. Schools, people's houses, coffee houses, newspapers, radio and how-to-behave books (*Adab-ı muaşeret kitapları*) served as the tools and sites of this mission. These milder disciplinary techniques were thought to work as a filter to differentiate between "the people" who had the potential for change and "the masses" that were stubbornly reluctant or actively resistant. Education was thought to be the most powerful weapon for modernizing the nation, however its results were to be observed in the long term. But it could be too late; the elite of the young republic were obsessed with skipping stages and achieving at least a modern Western image immediately (Bozdoğan, 2001). In order to reach that goal some severe measures were taken, the Hat Law of 1925 being the most prominent example. Even executions took place in order to penalize the disobedient. Şenol-Cantek (2003) describes how this law of dress forced some people to stay in the safe private shelter of their houses. And although the law fights only with the religiously symbolic costumes of men (including the fez, as a remainder of the old regime), urban daily life was regulated with even harsher rules.

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<sup>43</sup> "Büyük iş, büyük kalabalığın rağmına yapılan iştir. Halk adamı yahut kahraman, büyük kalabalığa uyan değil, halka uygun olanı halka rağmen arayan ve duyandır.  
... Milli bünyemizin tezat rüşeymlerini daha şimdiden kontrol altına almaya mecburuz"

In Ankara the governor/mayor of the city Nevzat Tandoğan was the implementer of these rules. During his governorship between 1929 and 1946, Tandoğan was personally involved in the regulation of daily life in the new capital city. His efforts were concentrated on maintaining the modern image of Yenışehir, by taking various formal and informal measures. He did not allow people without a proper dress to appear in the newly constructed modern parts of the city. He prohibited the passing of herds and caravans through the main streets. With strict exclusion he even did not let “native” children play in the “showcase” streets. During his time in office crime rates in the city were said to be very low and poverty stricken natives and any improper looking member of the society were hidden from the view of the elite. Neither the streets nor the modern public places were open to the access of these masses (All from Şenol-Cantek, 2003). So from the first moment the ideal of a “classless unified society” is wounded with the spatial organization of the capital city and regulations concerning this organization. For the sake of creating a wholly new life-style dominant in the city, a spatial segregation was applied to protect the citizens from the people. And when these prohibitions were not enough to achieve the goal, public authorities were called to take extra measures, as it could be seen in the complaint telegraph of the governor of İstanbul fifty years ago: “Halk plajlara tahaccüm etti, vatandaş denize giremiyor” (People invaded the beaches, therefore citizens cannot bath).<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Although this telegram that is said to be sent to Ankara by Fahrettin Kerim Gökay, the governor of İstanbul, may only be a rumor, its wide acceptance and remembrance still make it significant to understand the approach of the public authorities and the people’s conception of them.

## Spatial Strategies of an Implicit Critique

*This is the first time Keçiören met tennis courts; but interestingly enough the first tennis courts of the Republican period were actually established in Keçiören. Atatürk established them in Gazino. The name Gazino was given because of this.... In the evenings people wore their smartest clothes, enjoy themselves while the gramophones were playing; just like strolling in Beyoğlu in the Ottoman period. In these times, really elite people used to live in Keçiören. The first tennis courts existed at the same period. Now we installed them again here. They are usable. It is a reality that Keçiören is growing very fast. And this development owes much to the local government. The district became more modern, more contemporary.*<sup>45</sup>

According to the vice-mayor Terzioğlu, with its tennis courts, basketball grounds, swimming pools, movie theaters, supermarkets, urban parks and museum, Keçiören is now “more modern” and in accord with the contemporary urban planning norms. Their efforts look comparable with the republican modernization movement in the 1920s. But in what sense? The answer to this question becomes a bit complicated when one spends a day in the Atatürk Botanical Garden. Because everyday the Atatürk Botanical Garden becomes the stage for the parade of all the “unwanted” of the early modernization period. From the morning prayer till 10 o’clock in the morning, the park is crowded with walkers and joggers. Only a tiny percent of these people who come to exercise, most of them men, dress “properly” for the activity. Common occupiers of the place in the morning are women with

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<sup>45</sup> Personal Interview, İbrahim Terzioğlu: “Şu anda Keçiören tenis kortunu ilk defa gördü ama enteresandır ilk tenis kortları yine Keçiören’deymiş Cumhuriyet döneminde. Atatürk Gazino’da yapmış. Bu Gazino dediğimiz yerin adı oradan geliyor zaten. O Fatih parkı var ya oradaki kavakların olduğu yerde, ilk tenis kortları Atatürk’ün emriyle yapılmış orada. (...) O zaman akşam oldu mu insanlar en güzel kıyafetlerini giyer, Osmanlı’daki Beyoğlu’na çıkar gibi işte gramafonlar çalar, kemanlar çalar sefahat yaparlarmış. Keçiören’de hakikaten elit bir grup o zaman yaşamış. İlk tenis kortları o zaman varmış. Şimdi yeniden tenis kortlarını burada kurduk. Kullanılabilir düzeyde. Yani şu bir gerçek ki Keçiören çok hızlı gelişen bir yer ve bu gelişmede tabii ki mahalli idarelerin rolü çok büyük. Daha modern daha çağdaş olmasında”.

loosely tied cotton head scarves and long, casual skirts, women with neat silk scarves and long coats, women with hand-knit vests and slippers, old hunch-back men with canes, beards and prayer caps, men with pajamas and t-shirts, women who wear skirts or coats over their trousers. And in the evenings and weekends they come with all their families. Sitting on the grass or in the arbors they grill meat or chicken, make tea on gas stoves, eat sunflower seeds and fruit, listen to music on portable radios, play ball games, take naps in the sun and read newspapers. They are the people whom Tandoğan tried hard to keep out of the sight of modern citizens during the 1930s and early 1940s.



Figure 5: Early morning joggers in the Atatürk Botanical Garden

I want to argue that the municipal officials of Keçiören consider themselves as the sovereigns of the land of Keçiören and their relation to the population should be understood within some “root paradigms” other than the modern disciplinary



techniques. Concerning “modernization”, their aim is not to modernize the inhabitants of the district, but to modernize the district itself which means providing better infrastructure, better appearances and thus attract wealth. Their spatial strategies stand on two distinct discursive grounds. One of them employs the terms of change, development and modernization addressing the material environment, while the other usurps the vocabulary of an Islamic idiom. So the final aim of those spatial strategies becomes providing people a “modern” environment as “hizmet” (service).

### Islamic Idiom: Working for the *Grace of God*

On the wall above the main entrance of the municipal building it is written in huge letters, “*İnsanların en hayırlısı insanlara faydalı olandır*” (Roughly meaning: The best among people is the one who is helpful and of assistance to others). And this saying of the Prophet Muhammad is not only inscribed on stone, but is utilized in almost every discursive act of municipal officials. This religious dictum with its other-worldly reference is said to be the guiding principle of the municipality. It is one among the many other religious citations the municipal agents make in order to organize, regulate and communicate their activities. The employment of this Islamic idiom marks and sets the boundaries of municipal actions taken in Keçiören. Borrowing the definition made by Şerif Mardin an “idiom” is “a special language used in a specific sphere of social relations” and it is decipherable through its congruent parts, the “root paradigms”, “a term used by Victor Turner (1974) to characterize clusters of meaning which serve as cultural ‘maps’ for individuals, they

enable persons to find a path in their own culture” (Mardin, 1989, p.2-3). I want to argue that being part of an Islamic idiom the saying of the Prophet, in collaboration with the terms *hizmet* (service), *hak* (right) and *Allah rızası* (grace of God) function as the root paradigms that shape the imaginary of good personal conduct, which lies at the heart of municipal activities in Keçiören. The governors of the district first assume responsibility to God; so their responsibilities to people and their actions always refer to this highest moral authority.

Thus in the municipal discourse *hizmet* appears as a moral duty. Although it signifies the ordinary services that municipalities are obliged to provide by law, it has greater significance for creating larger areas of responsibility. The inscription at the entrance of Atatürk Botanical Garden states that “*Vatan sevgisi vatana hizmetle ölçülür*” (The love for the motherland can be measured with the service to it).

Moreover the initial political party of Turgut Altınok, MHP, used “*hakim değil hadim devlet*” (Servant state, not a ruling state) as their motto for years, while for FP it was “*Halka hizmet Hakka hizmet*” (Service to people is service to God).<sup>46</sup>

So *hizmet* is not only a tool for winning the elections but also a moral and religious duty which promises other-worldly gains. In this way “service to people” is made equal to “service to God” and “the best among people is the one who is helpful to others”. Municipal officials are highly motivated with this religious morality of *hizmet* that can be observed in what İbrahim Terzioğlu says: “*If you appraise people,*

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<sup>46</sup> Investigating the social history of the usage of the term *hizmet* is beyond the scope of this research, yet I think it is important to point out its use in the populist politics in Turkey. After the forced, top down Westernization years of the single-party regime the criterion of success has sharply changed. “Modernization” or “keeping pace with the West” has continued to carry their discursive value and practical use, while short term satisfaction of the needs of citizens has gained emphasis. Within this populist political paradigm votes have become the indicator of success. *Hizmet* appeared as part of this search for consent by trying to make people happy.

*if you serve them, you get something anyway in reciprocity. Either in the form of gratitude, or votes. Or in the guise of a pray, if you believe*”<sup>47</sup> This idea is shared by the people as well. Hatice, an inhabitant of Keçiören says: *“I came across the Mayor in front of the fortress. I said ‘My Mayor, you make us live in such a place like the heavens, I wish God may accept you to his heaven ’”*<sup>48</sup>.

This way of employing the term *hizmet* is not unique to politics. It has a wider use and signification among various religious groups as well as individuals. A perfect example is provided by the followers of Said Nursi. Their work in the community schools all around the world or cooking in Ramadan for students living in dorms are considered *hizmet* which is only performed to gain God’s grace and consent. The importance of the term is magnified by the tales of altruism told to the young members. In these stories people give up all the earthly pleasures, even their young wives and children to work for *hizmet*. In the more common usage *hizmet* does not always demand that much. Paying for the construction of a school or a fountain, publishing a book, even founding a factory can be classified under this name. Yet within all these usages the term has its value in its reference to “*Allah rızası*”.

But for the municipal officials, *hizmet* cannot only be understood within this framework of other worldly reference: in Keçiören the nationalist discourse goes hand in hand with the religious one, and thus transferring the promise of other worldly gains resulting from very earthly acts to the benefit of the nation. The nationalist discourse is also embedded in the term, which is displayed in Turgut

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<sup>47</sup> “İnsana değer verirsiniz, hizmet ederseniz, bunun karşılığı bir şekilde mutlaka döner. Ya teşekkürle döner ya oyla döner. Ya da duayla döner inanıyorsanız.”

<sup>48</sup>“Başkanla karşılaştık kalenin orada, hemen dedim ‘Başkanım siz bizi böyle cennet gibi bir yerde yaşıtıyorsunuz, Allah da sizi cennetine kabul etsin.’”

Altınok's inscribed saying: "The love for the motherland can be measured with the service to it". Here *hizmet*, coded as the marker of the love for the motherland, signifies one's duty towards the nation. The requirements of this duty can well be met by military service (also called *vatani hizmet*) or with the construction of a park. And all the ends of *hizmet* are not heavenly, rather in the nationalist imaginary it has a very critical goal clearly expressed by Altınok:

*The reason of existence of everything is the man. The most beautiful creation of the God. One should trust, value, believe in and pay service to man. The state becomes stronger only this way. What makes the Ottoman Empire is this motto: Make the people live, for the state to live*<sup>49 50</sup>

So, it is possible to say that two underlying themes motivate the officials in their municipal activities and provide the imaginary ground of legitimacy: God and the endurance of the state. These two goals can only be reached by *hizmet* to people. Who are the people to be serviced? In this case regarding the formal area of influence, the people are restricted to the inhabitants of the district. They belong to the lower end of middle classes, until 1994 five sixths of them were living in *gecekondus*, most of them migrants to the city. Religion has a role to play in the lives of many, and more than half of the women on the streets and in the parks use headscarves.<sup>51</sup> They celebrate weddings on the streets dancing with "Ankara" folk music performed with *electro-bağlama*. They wait in long queues to buy cheap

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<sup>49</sup> "Herşeyin temeli insan. Allah'ın yarattığı en güzel varlık. İnsana güvenen, inanan, kıymet veren hizmet eden olmak lazım. Devlet ancak böyle güçlenir. Osmanlı'yı Osmanlı yapan da işte bu: İnsanı yaşat ki devlet yaşasın."

<sup>50</sup> For an insightful analysis of the importance of "devlet" in Ottomans and the ways of employing religious discourses for the maintenance of "devlet", see Mahcupyan, 1999

<sup>51</sup> These generalizations do not rely on a population research, but are based on the data collected by fifteen years of habitation and two years of informed observation.

bread. They hang around in front of the waterfall to meet peers. They spend their weekends barbecuing in the parks. They have the “unpleasant look” which is defined relentlessly as pre-modern, backwards, lower class or “*taşralı*” (provincial) seen through the eyes of the Kemalist middle classes, when read through the dominant narrative of Ankara.

Unlike the early modernizers of the city, Altınok and the municipal team do not attempt to change these features of the inhabitants of Keçiören by focusing on people. They built a hall for weddings and reserved it for the use of the poor free of charge, but haven’t banned the street weddings. They haven’t taken any precautions to avoid sunflower seeds consumption in the parks and they declared the entrance fee of the Aquapark as 2 YTL<sup>52</sup>. They have scheduled a shuttle in the mornings in order to encourage the women living on the physical margins of the district to come to the Atatürk Botanical Garden. In summer they organize live music nights in the park in which folk and popular Turkish music is performed and audiences dance.

With all these arrangements as well as the spatial allowances of the facilities that are built, the municipality of Keçiören have succeeded; the public places of the Kalaba Valley have become over-crowded, busy all along the day and night, limited only by the weather conditions. The crowdedness of the places and the physical appearance of the crowds create the implicit critique of the Kemalist spatial strategies and the accompanying marginalization and negation of Muslim identity in the Kemalist-modernist discourse<sup>53</sup>.

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<sup>52</sup> In the summer of 2005, in a privately owned aquapark in Ankara the entrance fee was 14 YTL and in İstanbul Büyükçekmece it costed 20 YTL per person.

<sup>53</sup> For the limits of brutality of this discourse see the newspaper article of a columnist, Mine G. Kırıkkanat:

During the last 80 years the discursive violence and wish for material exclusion have hardly changed as it is exemplified in the newspaper article quoted in the footnote. The elite of this country can still be as brutal as some of their predecessors<sup>54</sup>. Desire for the oppression of and spatial discrimination towards the unwanted “pre-modern” visual forms of society is still rampant. I want to argue that the spatial strategies and the discourse used to legitimize those strategies in Keçiören look very similar to the ones employed by the Kemalist elite when taken at face value, but an implicit critique and resistance is on the stage in the public places of Keçiören. This is a critique provided by exhibition, by visibility, by the daily practices of people, by the allowances the public places have provided for activities of an “anti-modern” sort, in which “unwanted” people are eagerly involved.

Gürbilek(1992) argues that, leaving aside the encounters for the sake of transforming and modernizing, the majority of the population of Turkey has been

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“The travelers on the coastal road [in Istanbul] have a sight of a kilometers long lawn by the road: While men in their underwear lounge on the ground, women in black kerchiefs or with headscarves wind the barbecues, prepare tea or rock their babies. Within every ten square meters this sight is repeated; our dark people cook meat by the sea to which they turned their backs. You cannot come across to a single family that grills fish. May be, if they loved fish and knew how to cook it, they wouldn’t lie in their dirty white underwear, they wouldn’t itch and fart and definitely they would not be that short legged, long armed and covered with hair” Mine G. Kırıkkanat 27 Temmuz 2005 Radikal.

Original text:

“Sahil Yolu’nda ise kilometrelerce uzunluktaki çim alan kenarından geçen arabalardaki seyircilerin görüş zaviyesinde olduğundan, manzara da mangal düzeyindedir: Don paça soyunmuş adamlar geviş getirerek yatarken, siyah çarşafly ya da türbanlı, istisnasız hepsi tesettürlü kadınlar mangal yellemekte, çay demlemekte ve ayaklarında ve salıncakta bebe sallamaktadırlar. Her 10 metrekarede, bu manzara tekrarlanmakta, kara halkımız kıcını döndüğü deniz kenarında mutlaka et pişirip yemektir. Aralarında, mangalında balık pişiren tek bir aileye rastlayamazsınız. Belki balık sevseler, pişirmeyi bilseler, kirli beyaz atletleri ve paçalı donlarıyla yatmazlar, hart hart kaşınmazlar, geviş getirip geçirmezler, zaten bu kadar kalın, bu kadar kısa bacaklı, bu kadar uzun kollu ve kıllarla kaplı da olmazlardı!” Mine G. Kırıkkanat 27 Temmuz 2005 Radikal

<sup>54</sup> Falih Rıfkı, Aka Gündüz, Abdullah Cevdet...etc. For a detailed analysis see Funda Şenol-Cantek (2003). As an example consider: “Tenasüp davasını sokakta kazanalım. Eciş bücüş bir sürü kadın erkek; bohça gibi karınlar, yağdanlık gibi gerdanlar, paytak bacaklar, soluk yüzler...Bir de Paris sokağını, Berlin bulvarını, Stockholm caddesini göz önüne getiriniz. Selim Sırrı yirmi senedir cüce uzatmağa, kambur yassılamağa çalışıyor” Falih Rıfkı (1932), *Roman* in Şenol-Cantek (2003).

ignored by the republican elite and middle classes until the 80's. It is only after 1980 that they became visible and claimed for their voice to be heard. It was the decade of "the return of the oppressed", but "the oppressed never comes back as itself" (Gürbilek, 1992:107). Ordinary early morning clients of the Atatürk Botanical Garden are motivated by the contemporary discourses of health and beauty. They come to get in shape, strengthen their muscles, loose weight, and improve their cardio-vascular performance. Some of them come due to medical advice, yet more often they decide its necessity due to contemporary commonsense. The assumption that one's body is her/his own property and it is something re-shapeable and controllable lays the foundation of this knowledge, including medical discourse. Motivated with this modern assumption about the body, *gecekondu* dwellers, religious women and men spend hours on the running track everyday. The oppressed and unwanted come back in their so-called improper costumes and "anti-modern habits", but with very modern desires.

Back to the main point: At face value municipal agents' desires for modernizing the district recalls the earlier Westernization/modernization period of the 1920s-1930s. Some architectural elements like public parks, sports facilities and venues are built in order to make the district "more modern" and closer to its glorious past, in which it was imagined as an elite suburban neighborhood. But this is not the only foundational motivation for municipal activities. Rather within the map provided by the root paradigm *hizmet*, a room for the visibility and participation of

the oppressed of the Kemalist regime is created. Thus the premises, contradictions and values of the Republic are implicitly discussed and criticized<sup>55</sup>.

“Let Us Meet; Make Things Smooth; Love and Be Loved; The World Does  
Not Belong to Anyone”<sup>56</sup>

This piece of poetry by the poet dervish Yunus Emre welcomes the visitors of Atatürk Botanical Garden at the entrance, explaining the reason why the municipality wants them to come together in bodily coexistence in a park and what the basis of being an inhabitant of the district is. This basis is laid upon the narrative of community, which relies on love. And realization of this ideal of community depends on some spatial and material requirements, which can be met by the municipal spatial strategies.

According to İbrahim Terzioğlu the basic function of the public places the municipality constructed is making people meet and get to know each other:

*You have asked: ‘How people use the facilities you built?’ People meet, people unite, get closer. Go to the Botanical Garden in the mornings, [you will see that] veiled women meet women in mini skirts and they get unbelievably close with each other. There, great friendships are established. They themselves say: ‘Here we got rid of many prejudices.’ Uncovered women meet the ones with headscarf. They recognize that the other’s name is not Maria or Katie. When*

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<sup>55</sup> This criticism also finds its expression in architecture and design. With the extensive use of ornaments, arches, vaults, timber decorations, tiles and roses the modernist architecture is overtly neglected. This shoddy revivalism of traditional forms usually ends up with highly eclectic styles, as it is the case for the Estergon Fortress and the municipal office building.

<sup>56</sup> “Gelin tanış olalım/İşi kolay kılalım/Sevelim sevillelim/Dünya kimseye kalmaz” Yunus Emre



*they figure this out, there comes unity. This is hizmet. Hizmet is education, it is unity. In Keçiören this love is established well.*<sup>57</sup>

So at the first stage, the public places of Keçiören are places of encounters, through which people get to know each other. These meetings are imagined far different from the anonymous encounters of the metropolitan life described by the theoreticians of modernity.<sup>58</sup> They are not the coming across of total foreigners in public places, with the necessary *blasé* attitude of civic life. Rather these encounters are thought to be followed by the curiosity for knowing the “other”, a reciprocal recognition, and lead the way towards the establishment of personal ties, which are the basis of a community.

According to Iris Marion Young (1986) politics of community depends on the Derridaian concept of *metaphysics of presence* which “presumes subjects who are present to themselves and presumes [that] subjects can understand one another as they understand themselves.” (p.1). Such a presumption works on the deletion of difference both spatially and temporarily and makes the subjects not only knowledgeable but also fully understandable. So the goal of the establishment of community is to “overcome the otherness of other in reciprocal recognition”. This reciprocal recognition is the recognition of an assumed sameness, a shared inner

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<sup>57</sup> “Biraz once şunu sordunuz “Yapılan yatırımları insanlar nasıl kullanıyorlar?” İnsanların kaynaşması, buluşması, hakikaten Botanik’te sabah saatlerinde gidin, tesettürlüsünden mini eteklisine kadar her insanın ve inanılmaz derecede samimi oluyorlar. Tabii, birbirleriyle. Orada büyük dostluklar kuruluyor. Bunları kendileri söylüyorlar: ‘biz burada bir sürü önyargılardan kurtulduk.’ Başı açık olan hanım kardeşlerimiz tesettürlü olanlarla karşılaşıyor. Birinin adının Maria olmadığını ya da Katie olmadığını görüyorlar. Bunu görünce de bir bütünlük, bu hizmettir aslında. Hizmet eğitimidir, kaynaşmadır. Keçiören’de bu sevgi çok iyi sağlandı.”

<sup>58</sup> See Simmel (1971), Weber (1958) and theoreticians of Western public sphere like Habermas(1991), Sennet (1977), Arendt(1958), Negt and Kluge (1993) who assume the post-enlightenment rational individuals as the actors of these anonymous public encounters. With slight differences they all argue that these encounters of individuals with free will to bind themselves with contracts, in order to achieve the common good for the citizens of the liberal democratic nation state, is the basis of civil society and the political public sphere.

essence. According to scholars of community, communal ties are created and strengthened in face-to-face relations; which lead to a mutual understanding between subjects. Face to face encounters are assumed to remove the veil between individuals and make them naked and transparent to each other. Within the closeness and intimacy of face-to-face relations, subjects approach each others' internal selves and therefore recognize and understand the other person. Thus the opaqueness of the individuals dissolve and mutual recognition takes place. This is the deletion of the otherness of the other.

This imagination not only ignores the differences between individuals, but more importantly it assumes unity, and, in order to achieve this unity, constructs an exclusionary matrix. Because the possibility of the deletion of otherness is limited, certain differences cannot be bracketed. Communities are to be formed on the basis of already existing commonness. They presume shared properties among its members, be it locality, sexuality, race, class...etc. The common ground which allows the desire of community in Keçiören is said to be the shared locality, thus community relies on co-spatiality. Yet the declarations of the municipal officials exhibit that there is a search for some other essential sameness, a ground of familiarity between the inhabitants of Keçiören . The qualities that lay this ground are Islam and Turkishness. The quote above suggests that Marias and Katies are not accepted in the desired community, yet it is of no importance because even the women with mini skirts are not Katies or Marias but they are probably Fatmas or Gültens. So the differences between individuals are bracketed and made invisible with the condition that they are Muslim (and Turkish). From the first moment, people of Keçiören are presumed to share sameness within their external differences, which

can thus be easily overlooked. The nationalist and Islamist imaginary of the municipality re-appear in the desire for community.

The desire for the establishment of a community is thought to be realized through “love” which will be created in the encounters in public places of the district. This emphasis on “love” is especially important for it provides the ethical ground of belonging to Keçiören. In order to make this point Chatterjee (1993) starts with Hegel’s explanation of the nature of the family, in which it is argued that the family is not an institution based on contract, that contracts are accidental and completely contingent agreements between individual free wills. Contracts can be declared invalid any time and every individual has the right to do so: to leave the responsibilities of the contract aside and get involved in another. By contrast the first moment in the foundation of family, either the one you are born in or the one you establish yourself, is “love”, a feeling that adds to the issue an ethical component. This is the critical component which avoids secession and maintains the endurance of the family, more efficiently than any external law. I want to follow Chatterjee’s argument in re-reading this narrative of family as the narrative of community, which employs “love” as its ethical ground.

For the municipal officials of Keçiören public encounters are significant for they allow the creation of love between the inhabitants of the district. And this love is important for laying the ethical ground of the foundation of a community within certain geographical boundaries. Love creates the possibility of considering Keçiören as a family and interpellating the inhabitants, who are historically familiar with the idiom, into the game. Nükhet Sirman (2005) argues that after negotiations of almost a century in the literary arena of Turkey, “love” is marked and constructed as the key

term of the legitimate foundation of the Turkish family and the Turkish nation, each being imagined in relation to the other. So for the officials and the inhabitants of the district the significance of “love” both for the over-arching imagined community (the nation) and the microcosm of family is clear and well-known. In this context it is made possible for the municipality to re-use a poem of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and render it meaningful for the purpose of creating a community in a contemporary locality in Ankara.

This call for love is made for the sake of community, for the sake of unity. In order to be “one, big and alive” love serves as the glue of the social structure and the narrative of community provides a tool to deal with social differences. Within this narrative of community born out of love, the nationalist fantasy of “classless unity” is thought to be realized. According to the vice Mayor Ibrahim Terzioğlu:

*[Our principle has been] not making regional discrimination. There is one saying of Mayor: “We will never make regional discrimination”. Even, the slogan of the election in 1994 was “There is grace in unity and evil in discrimination” It is one of Hacı Bektaş Veli’s sayings. Excuse me, a hadith, the Prophet Mohammad’s saying. Hacı Bektaş Veli’s one is like that: “Let’s be one, let’s be big, let’s be alive” I guess, he [the mayo] practiced that, consciously. He tried not to make any discrimination among people and to allocate investments equally to each region. In other words, he worked in the mood of “We are a family, we are the inhabitants of Keçiören.”<sup>59</sup>*

*Hizmet* is the basic tool of the municipality in order to achieve this goal of creating a sense of community in Keçiören. It is thought to work in three related ways; first it provides the material grounds of meeting, as in the case of public

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<sup>59</sup> Personal Interview “Bölgesel ayrım olmama. Başkanın böyle bir sözü vardı “biz asla bölgesel ayrım yapmayacağız.” Hatta 94’teki sloganı: “birlikte hayır var, ayrılıkta azap var” diye Hacı Bektaş Velinin bir sözüydü. Hadisi şerif pardon. Hacı Bektaş Veli’nin de “bir olalım, iri olalım, diri olalım” diye. Zannedersem adam biliçli bir şekilde bunu uyguladı. İnsanları ayırmamaya çalıştı, her bölgeye eşit yatırım yapmaya çalıştı. Yani “biz bir aileyiz, Keçiören’liyiz” psikolojisiyle çalıştı”

places, second it creates the feeling of equal treatment among the inhabitants and third it creates the pride of living in a district which is quickly getting modernized and beautiful. These three reasons also give way to the emergence of new social actors, in which the community is crystallized.

*With these activities and services in Keçiören, people began to love each other more than anytime else. For example, what happened, mostly? Association of the Inhabitants of Keçiören is established. Why has it not been established before? There were inhabitant associations of Yenimahalle and Çankaya. But consciousness of being an inhabitant of Keçiören has been emerged, now. As Mr. Mayor always says; you can come from Çankırı, Van, Hakkari or Erzurum but if you live in Keçiören at the moment, you are an inhabitant of Keçiören, firstly. This consciousness of being an inhabitant of Keçiören has been created by this 10-year of work which supplied possibilities for people to know each other, better.<sup>60</sup>*

In Western political theory, civil society is thought to be composed of free rational individuals, the media, actors of the market, various interest groups and legal organizations which represent them (Habermas, 1991). Especially in the recent political discourses these foundations and associations are considered as the basic elements of the civil society, or even equal to it. But in this normative and universalistic approach communities are not rendered as significant actors in the public sphere because they are overlooked as backward (Chatterjee, 1997). The institutional, formalized bodies are supposed to be created in order to represent the community, thus serving the needs of the states to achieve modern *governmentality*.

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<sup>60</sup> İbrahim Terzioğlu, Personal Interview “Keçiören’de de işte bu yapılan aktiviteler, yapılan hizmetlerle, insanların daha çok birbirini sevmesi. Mesela en çok ne oldu? Keçiörenliler derneği kuruldu biliyorsunuz. Neden daha önce kurulmamıştı? Yenimahalleliler, Çankayalılar var da. Bir Keçiörenlilik bilinci oluştu. Sayın başkanımın her zaman söylediği bu, Çankırlı Vanlı Hakkarili Erzurumlu olunur ama şu anda Keçiören’desiniz, önce Keçiörenliyiz. Bu Keçiörenlilik bilinci bu 10 yılda yapılan çalışmalarla insanların birbirlerini tanımasıyla yaratıldı.”

The Association of the Inhabitants of Keçiören cannot be understood within this paradigm. First of all, the aim of the association is not to represent a certain group of people who came together with the motivation of a certain interest. Rather its only foundational principle is belonging to a piece of land. This belonging is thought to provide the basis of a *gemeinschaftliche* attachment, just like the communities of birth-of-origin (hemşehrilik), which have long determined the axis of local politics in Keçiören (Kurtoğlu, 2004) as well as everywhere else in Turkey<sup>61</sup>. The main function of this association, alongside the development of a consciousness of belonging, is improving charitable activities. It is not supposed to be a political actor, or make any claims on the basis of community, or to participate in decision-making processes. Rather it is appreciated for delivering some community functions like responsible altruism and charity, as it is described in the booklet:

*Associations and foundations are important civil society organizations that have given good examples of social assistance and support in the Turkish history and still function in the same way. These organizations that were established by the people with a common goal play important roles in supplying unity and togetherness in society. The Mayor of Keçiören, Turgut Altınok who believes in the principle that there is blessing and service where unity and togetherness exist, is always an intimate supporter of associations and foundations.*<sup>62</sup>

The community functions of mutual help and cooperation are not only expected to be delivered by these civil associations, rather the municipality itself

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<sup>61</sup> See *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, Thematic Issue: Hometown Organizations in Turkey, for the importance of *hemsehrî* networks in the wider political scene of Turkey

<sup>62</sup> From the booklet: “Dernek ve vakıflar Türk tarihinde toplumsal yardımlaşma ve dayanışmanın güzel örneklerini sergileyen ve bugün de aynı fonksiyonları icra eden önemli sivil toplum kuruluşlarıdır. Aynı amaç etrafında toplanan insanların oluşturduğu bu kuruluşlar toplumda birlik ve beraberliğin sağlanmasında ve insanların bir araya gelmelerinde etkin bir rol üstleniyorlar. Birlik ve beraberliğin olduğu yerde bereket ve hizmetin olduğu bilincini kendine ilke edinen Keçiören Belediye Başkanı Turgut Altınok dernek ve vakıfların en yakın destekçisi durumunda.”

works as a charitable organization under the title of *hizmet*. Free services of ambulance, transportation of the deceased, distribution of food and clothing, wedding halls, circumcisions can be listed under this title.

Another frame for the behavior of municipal actors is provided with the root paradigm of *hak* (right). It designates the limits of moral behavior and shows the borders of responsibility as well. A short story might be useful to explain how this works: Two years ago a very old woman living alone in an apartment had an accident and her knees almost lost their function. So she was not able to use the ordinary Turkish toilet. But she could not get a Western one either. When we met her she was very angry with the mayor, murmuring that “*Why does that man occupy that office while I am suffering? If he is the mayor, God will consider him responsible for this old lady too. I do not wave my rights on him!*”<sup>63</sup> When he heard about the incident the mayor found this argument sound and ordered municipal workers to build up a new toilet in the woman’s house and visited her himself to “*helalleşmek*” (waving rights).

This concept of *hak* even appears to be determining in the very modern appeal for planning. While he was arguing that already existing settlements were not considered meaningful while they were planning the *gecekondu* neighborhoods of Keçiören, İbrahim Terzioğlu also adds that “Nobody’s rights were violated, it was just”<sup>64</sup> The municipal strategy to maintain justice was to rely on face-to-face dialogues in search for consent. The mayor, Turgut Altınok visited houses, organized

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<sup>63</sup> “O adam niye orada oturuyor ben bu kadar sıkıntı çekerken? Belediye başkanı olduysa Allah bu yaşlı kadının hesabını da ondan soracak, hakkımı helal etmiyorum”.

<sup>64</sup> Personal interview: “Ama hiçkimsenin de hakkı yenmedi.”

coffee-house meetings and relentlessly talked with the households to learn their demands and persuade them to accept the plan.

Şerif Mardin comparing the modern theories of society with the Islamic conception, argues that Western social theories start with individuals but then immediately aggregate them to blocks, which function as parts of a machine. In contrast “both in theory and in practice Islam banked on human networks and not on blocks” (1989, p.11). This world view gives way to a *personalistic* approach to the society, in which each *person*’s position and linkage to the others is set and people are related to each other with well-known concepts. In this framework nobody is considered as an atomic individual who only functions as a tiny part of the bigger machine of the society; rather people are rendered meaningful in their wider interpersonal relations and positions in social networks, like family. Only within such a framework could the notions of *hak* and *hizmet* be rendered meaningful, pointing to the critical importance of interpersonal obligations in the government of a district and positing the mayor in the “team of the just” (Mardin, 1991).

Because of this wider conceptualization of the social order, face-to-face relations are considered to be of critical importance. Through this very personal way of relating to people the feeling of a community is established and an intimate relation between the municipal organs and the inhabitants of the district is presumed. *“In our new system even paying taxes can be done through the internet. But we want the citizens to come to the municipality at least once a year to check if the municipality is existent and to visit the mayor. That is why certain services are still*



*being provided here*”,<sup>65</sup> says Turgut Altınok, the mayor who spends many summer evenings in the Botanical Garden, visits different mosques every Friday and keeps an eye on the bazaars by physically being there. There is not a formal scheduled rendezvous system for visiting him or any of his deputies; the doors are open to anybody, unless they are busy.

This *gemeinschaftliche* attitude does not only shape the areas of responsibility or ways of contact but also affects municipal knowledge. Modern *governmentality* (Burchell et al, 1991) is only possible with an understanding of society as blocks that are suitable for classification, objects of qualitative and quantitative analysis. Unless society is thought to be formed by atomized, anonymous individuals it is not possible to approach it with methods of modern knowledge generation. Thus the municipality of Keçiören does not have a proper population data. According to İbrahim Terzioğlu, they know the district well but haven’t needed to document their knowledge, claiming “it would be totally useless” to do that. Their knowledge is based on their informal encounters with people and the experience of ten years. It is an intimate knowledge that is based on face-to-face relationships. It takes account of the original homelands of households, their religious orientation, economic status but is not clear about the issues of demographics, i.e. age, sex, occupation, literacy level...etc. This intimate knowledge creates the imaginary idea that the municipal agents know exactly what people need since they believe that they personally understand the people they encounter.

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<sup>65</sup> Personal interview “Yeni sistemimizde vergi de dahil olmak üzere tüm işlemleri internete koyduk aslında. Ama biz yine de vatandaş yılda bir sefer de olsa gelsin, belediye yerinde duruyor mu baksın, bir gezsin belediyesini, başkanını görsün istiyoruz. O nedenle bazı hizmetler hala buradan veriliyor”

So, in Keçiören what is planned and organized in accordance with principles of modernity and rationality is only the land, not the people. In this sense the municipality of Keçiören is the bearer, owner and the gardener of the land of the district. Their attitude towards people cannot be understood within these terms, but requires a comprehension of certain root paradigms which are derived from the vocabulary of the Islamic idiom.

In the next chapter a further examination of the rhetoric of the municipality will be held, this time in order to argue that the public places they created house and enforce a specific gender matrix and a morality that finds its expression and affect in this gendered spatiality. This way the metaphorical connection between the family and community will be analyzed and the specific role women are assumed to play will be illustrated.

## CHAPTER 4

### A FAMILY PLACE: CALLING WOMEN OUT OF THEIR HOUSES

There is talk of “family” in Keçiören. Municipal agents, inhabitants, women strolling in the parks mention “family” in contexts of security, familiarity, “the healthiness of the social fabric”, tolerance, kinship, household, and morality. Contributors to this talk often employ the term as if its meaning and significance is shared and clear to everybody. Not being discussed in itself, in this relentless talk about it, the family becomes the key word in a discussion on community and order. Through negotiations on who is family, the exclusionary matrix of an idealized communal order is constructed.

“Family” functions at different levels. First of all families are imagined to be the basic units of the society. In particular, the community of Keçiören, and in general the whole society is thought to be composed of a network of families. This thought reveals itself in the emphasis of the healthy fabric of society as directly related to the overall health of the family as an institution. The second use of the term is related to the moral regulation of public places of the district. Family functions in this attempt of regulation both as the semiotic sign of a moral order, as a basis of

legitimacy, as the source of regulatory norms and as the idiom of intimacy which makes the regulations as smooth and as less contested as possible. Moreover “family” introduces the question of gender to the municipal ideals. Women are referred to and directly addressed within the framework of family and they come up with responses again making use of the same term.

Municipal agents imagine the Atatürk Botanical Garden as a place of families, designed exclusively for families, to serve therapeutically to the spiritual needs of persons with the further aim of the improvement of their family and community lives. To maintain the health of the community, which is understood to be a wider network that is composed of smaller networks of families, it is necessary to serve the mental and spiritual needs of the latter. It is a communal responsibility to assist family members to handle their familial duties. The understanding of *hizmet* necessitates this assistance for the sake of the greater good, the good of society, for the maintenance of a ‘healthy social fabric’. In the example of the Atatürk Botanical Garden the assistance is provided in the form of a *huzurlu* (peaceful) atmosphere, a place to relax and recover from the daily tensions of harsh life conditions. Mayor Turgut Altınok describes the benefit of the newly built parks of Keçiören as providing social therapy:

*Our aim is to yield our people beauties apart from daily concerns. Such things have an influence on health, as well as domestic violence and peace. I mean we provide kind of social therapy.... That's why family collapses: the lack of this kind of social therapy. Women come here and find friends. They even come at night and drink tea. If you cannot go out of your house, this also affects your emotional state. Now there is even shuttle from the running track. We make such a contribution.*<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Personal Interview “Bizim amacımız insanlarımıza gündelik hayat gairesinin dışında güzellikler vermek. Böyle şeyler sağlığı da, aile içindeki şiddeti de, huzuru da etkiler. Yani bir çeşit sosyal terapi sağlıyoruz. (...) Ailenin çökmesinin nedeni böyle sosyal terapinin çok olmaması.

This social therapy is assumed to prevent the family from disintegration. The municipality of Keçiören suggests and argues for a model of assistance to the “healthy” family structure via its public services like parks. The healthy family structure is especially thought to be maintained by women’s physical and emotional labor. Moreover women themselves are considered as family. So mayor Altınok associates his argument about the breakup of family with the problems of women. He argues that the confinement of women is one of the reasons of the contemporary problems of the family structure. He sees a social benefit in women going outside and meeting with other people. Yet, going outside the house does not necessarily imply an exit from the private sphere. Rather the solution of qualification of a public place as family place addresses an extension of the private beyond the boundaries of home.

Women are invited to public places not only with concerns of social therapy, but also they are assumed to perform an important function in the construction of community. The desire for community, its reliance on face-to-face relations and the implications of both the ideal and the methods to achieve it have been discussed in the previous chapter. The quote which was elaborated there at length also displays who is responsible for the representation and reproduction of the community<sup>67</sup>. For the desired community, the labor of women is requested, to create mutual

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Buralara hanımlar geliyorlar arkadaş buluyorlar. Geceleri bile hanımlar oturuyorlar çay demliyorlar. Evinden çıkamıyorsun, bu insanın ruh halini de etkiliyor haliyle. Şimdi yürüyüş yolundan servis bile var. Böyle bir katkı sağlıyoruz.”

<sup>67</sup> “Biraz önce şunu sordunuz “Yapılan yatırımları insanlar nasıl kullanıyorlar?” İnsanların kaynaşması, buluşması, hakikaten Botanik’te sabah saatlerinde gidin, tesettürlüsünden mini eteklisine kadar her insanın ve inanılmaz derecede samimi oluyorlar. Tabii, birbirleriyle. Orada büyük dostluklar kuruluyor. Bunları kendileri söylüyorlar: ‘biz burada bir sürü önyargılardan kurtulduk.’ Başı açık olan hanım kardeşlerimiz tesettürlü olanlarla karşılaşıyor. Birinin adının Maria olmadığını ya da Katie olmadığını görüyorlar. Bunu görünce de bir bütünlük, bu hizmettir aslında. Hizmet eğitimidir, kaynaşmadır. Keçiören’de bu sevgi çok iyi sağlandı.” İbrahim Terzioğlu, personal interview.

understanding and love in their encounters with their fellow co-residents. This understanding is assumed to establish solidarity and unity in the district and more importantly allow the exhibition of a harmonious co-existence of both sexes, people with different class standings and religious orientations.

At this point it is important to make a few points clear about the meaning and implications of public sphere in Turkey. Sirman (2006) compares the understanding of public in Turkey with the Habermasian notion of the public sphere that is the unbounded, accessible sphere of communicative action, discussion and negotiation to reach a consensus on the common good (Habermas, 1991). She argues that the Turkish public sphere has never been the space of interaction and free argumentation, rather its role was restricted to being the showcase of modernization. The architectural implications of this ‘display’ approach were discussed in the previous chapter. Sirman (2006) points out the fact that this conception of the public far exceeds the spatial strategies and determines the very structuring of the public sphere, a structuring obsessed by nothing but exhibition, by display. Then what is to be displayed has always been the primary question to be answered. The answer has long been certain: the ‘successful’ and quick modernization of the nation. In this respect, the entrance of any ‘unfitting’ element to this glossy picture created an anxiety, which even led to brutal exclusion as can be observed in the accounts mentioned in the previous chapter or in the never-ending discussion on headscarf<sup>68</sup>.

Although the exhibition that is held in Keçiören is radically different than the desired, allowed and thus the dominant exhibition of modernization that has long been enforced; it is based on the same understanding of the public sphere: a

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<sup>68</sup> For an example which disclosed that even the Turkish Parliament should have been understood as a showcase, see Tank (2005)

showcase. The difference is created not by a dissimilar understanding of public but only by the elements that are put on display. I want to argue that what they want to demonstrate is a moral order which is presumed to create the harmonious co-existence of (acceptable) differences. Thus the municipal agents of Keçiören invite women to be visible as actors (or better actresses) and to perform in this staging of the so-called tolerance, harmony and peaceful co-existence. The answer to the question of why especially the women of the district are invited to perform this role is first related to the same history of the public in Turkey. Again according to Sirman (2006) the question of the public sphere has always been shaped around an anxiety about the role of women in this representation. In the hasty modernization period women's visibility and access to the public were defined and regulated by their being the showcase, the primary exemplars of the process of Turkish modernization. Since then the female body has always been the target of the discussions on what to show in the public and what to seclude. A second reason for the calling of the women of Keçiören to perform the display work is related more to the content of the exhibition at stake. In the context of Keçiören women are invited to public places for the sake of the moral order they imply, which will be the main topic of this chapter.

The invitation of women to public places brings with it the question of how order is to be sustained, considering that most of the public places in cities have been exclusively used by men and there has been a convention that the benefits of these places are reserved for men. In other words, how to locate women in public places while thinking within the bonds of the sustained correlation between the dichotomies of public/private and male/female? The resolution of this problem requires dealing with different, yet intermingling and highly dependent factors which affect women's

decision and possibility to go outside of the house. There is a composition of issues of safety, modesty, patriarchal relations in the family and domestic responsibilities. Besides some practical daily arrangements, these issues require a moral re-ordering. Within the newly introduced patterns of daily life a matching moral order has to be invented by both the municipality and the women contributing by their existence in public parks, bazaars and gardens of Keçiören. My argument here is that, the intricate composition of the above mentioned issues is discussed and attempted to be resolved at once with the utilization of a familiar idiom: “family”. Through renaming the public places as ‘family places’ a well known framework for codes of behavior and feelings of attachment is introduced into a new setting. But, however compact, it is no easy solution. Such a phrasing of a place requires constant negotiation and reconstruction. Its fragility entails not only the labor of the municipal organs but also of the people who use it, especially of women.

So, in the Atatürk Botanical Garden, discursive and physical constructions run simultaneously to create and protect this uneasy solution every other day. For women this labor entails different activities, like steadily inhabiting the place, cooperating with municipal officials and park guards about the codes of the place and keeping an eye on the parks to maintain the observance of these rules. Besides these material contributions and the municipality’s discursive power of declaring the Atatürk Botanical Garden as a family place women contribute to this process of materialization through constructive and reconstructive narratives. The dissemination of certain stories and phrases about the park helps the materialization of the imagined family place through reiteration (Butler, 1993). Occupiers of the park incessantly cite the term ‘family place’, assuming certain qualities of the place, but also denoting a



certain type of use and conception. This chapter focuses on this regulatory ideal of a “family place” and tries to understand the regulations, practices and devices which makes the materialization of this ideal possible.

In the first chapter I tried to elaborate on the aspirations of the municipality in imagining Keçiören as a modern, middle class, nationalist neighborhood. Narratives of this desire were argued to be legible in the spatial text of the district. The Atatürk Botanical Garden was illustrated especially as an example of middle class aspirations resembling the desires that shaped middle class suburbs. The park not only displays these previously discussed desires but also provides an approach to the answers provided by the municipality to the gender question.

The conceptualization and description of the Atatürk Botanical Garden as a family place is tightly interwoven with the gender discourse of the municipality. A ‘family place’ concomitantly raises questions about ‘women’s place’ in a locality. Questions about women’s proper place, ways of treating them and gender relations precede but also are transformed throughout the process of establishing a new spatial order in Keçiören.

### *Hanımlarımız*<sup>69</sup>

The first clue about the gender conception of the municipality stems from the terms used to refer to women. The words chosen to represent women unfold the municipal imaginary about identity and acceptable behavior of women. In their speeches, in the published material and throughout the interviews municipal agents

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<sup>69</sup> “Our women”. Yet the use of “hanım” rather than “kadın”, which is the equivalent of *women* has a significance, which will be discussed throughout the chapter.

refer to women with the phrases “hanımlar”, “hanımlarımız”, and “hanım kardeşlerimiz”. Besides being a polite address, “hanım” denotes a specific aspiration about women who tend to appear in public places. The use of the phrase “hanım” envisions both the existing image of women in the eyes of the municipality and their ideal.

The word “hanım”’s history of social production and usage give clues about this ideal. The contexts “hanım” has been employed and the social actors who use the term point out the important division between the Kemalist elites and the pious Muslims of Turkey.<sup>70</sup> In Islamic discourse in Turkey women as a category are always referred to and addressed as “hanımlar”. This trend is reflected even in official names: Associations are named like “Hanımlar İlim Yayma Cemiyeti”; municipal women’s centers are called “Hanımlar Lokali”.<sup>71</sup> With the utterance of “hanımlar” women are addressed with respect and any connotation of sexuality is avoided. The Kemalist counterpart of this phrase is “bayan”. Carrying the similar baggage of masking sexuality, its meaning differs from “hanım” predominantly because of the context it is used and the actors who utter it. “Bayan” is the referent of women in mainstream TV channels, newspapers and in the univocal vocabulary of the early Republican elite discourse. It is the referent for “public women”; for example women as doctors, as electors or as wives of high rank officials are called “bayan”. In contrast “hanım” has a connotation of the domestic sphere, and thus it assumes the private “women”. “Bayan”’s association is again with respectability but

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<sup>70</sup> Saktanber (2002) observes that Muslim men and women address each other as “bey” and “hanım”, not only in incidents of anonymity but also when they have a history. Even spouses address and refer to each other as “bey” and “hanım”.

<sup>71</sup> An important exception to this is formal women’s branches of political parties and two feminist umbrella organizations of Muslim women organizations of Istanbul and Ankara respectively: “Gökkuşuğu Kadın Platformu” and “Başkent Kadın Platformu”

this time more in a secular and public context; referring to a morality but not explicitly to a religious one. Moreover the modesty of “bayan” stems from its asexuality, the agents’ desires to ignore the differences between men and women, therefore to equalize women to men, by assuming men as the norm. Yet “hanım” from the onset works on the gender difference, addresses women as “private” subjects, presumes the inherentness of the difference and regulates it by veiling sexuality. So “hanımlar” are supposed to be modest, just because from the first moment they are coded as women, who have a sexuality to be masked.

Therefore, while talking about women as “hanımlar” municipal officials assume a veiling of sexuality rather than asexuality. They claim for an understanding of women not as sexually coded referents, rather they emphasize respect-worthiness and modesty. “Hanımlar” does not invite the sexual gaze, but another kind of male staring; respectful, distant yet protecting. Addressed as “hanımlar” women inhabitants of Keçiören are invited to public places with high value, respect and esteem, with the condition that they behave like “hanımlar”, i.e. honorable, modest and avoiding any revelation of sexuality.

Respect is the highly emphasized attitude towards women in Keçiören. Women are said to be valued by the municipality and precautions are taken to protect them from any harassment or disrespectful treatment in public places. The over-told example of the case is the reformation and renovation of neighborhood bazaars. Regulation of the bazaars was one of the first tasks undertaken by Turgut Altınok right after he was elected in 1994. Bazaars were objects of common complaint, because of the noise, hassle, cheating and dirt. The municipal agents say that especially women were feeling annoyed and uncomfortable because of the

harassment. With the new regulation any kind of shriek was forbidden, vendors were forced to wear uniform overcoats and ID cards with photographs. With the weighting devices installed in certain points in the bazaar, fair trade was enforced. ‘Civil codes of conduct’ were enforced with the regular inspections by municipal police (*zabıta*), the A team and the mayor himself. By warning or punishing the vendors, they compelled ‘polite and humane’ treatment of the customers. Since the bazaar shoppers are predominantly women these controls turned out to be lectures of how to behave in front of women. Respect appeared as the basis of demand to regulate conducts of bazaar vendors. A woman, who has been living in Keçiören for 15 years, narrates with appreciation that the municipality has succeeded in its efforts to establish an order of respect:

*The respect for women in Keçiören is very good. First of all the tradesmen call us differently. I mean, formerly they were harassing women even when they were selling vegetables. These are all ended. There is good control, there is not a single garbage on the ground.*<sup>72</sup>

Mayor Altınok claims that this new order of respect created trust and an accompanying self-esteem among women. It is claimed that, being respected and fairly treated, (even) women of lower classes who have to use the neighborhood bazaars for the sake of cheaper prices now feel safe and valued in Keçiören:

*Women who were going to the bazaar were vulnerable. Hues and cries, scorns, insults, as if their bread would be stolen from their dinner table. We have broken this wheel. We provided human beings with the means to live humanly.*<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> “Keçiören’de kadına saygı çok güzel. Esnafının bir kere hitap şekli farklı. Yani, eskiden kadınlara sebzeyi satarken laf atıyordu esnaflar. Bunlar filan kaldırıldı. Güzel bir denetim var, yerde çöp yok.” Fatma İmancı

<sup>73</sup> “Pazara giden hanımlar ezik gidiyordu. Bağırış, çağırış, aşağılanma, hakaret, sofrasından ekmeği çalınacak. Biz bu çarkları kırdık. İnsanımıza insanca yaşama imkanı sağladık.” Turgut Altınok

Within this framework of guaranteed respect women are invited to populate the public places of the district. Yet this call assumes a certain kind of women, which is made clear by the use of the phrase “hanımlarımız”. And by nature “hanımlar” is not an all inclusive category. The municipal officials of Keçiören tend to see women through the lens of the family. Another popular usage of the word “hanım” sheds light to this understanding. “Hanım” is widely used in Turkish as the equivalent of wife. Men mention their wives as ‘my *hanım*’ and it brings along the connotations of the respectable mistress of a house. So with the utterance of this referent first of all women are seen as (potential or already) mothers and wives. As disclosed in the quote about social therapy, they are invited to go out for the sake of their positions in the family. They are served respectfully for they are wives, mothers or to-be-mothers.

This understanding of respect assumes the translation of hierarchies that prevail in the family to public places. Respect in any context is the keyword around which the existing social hierarchies are performed. It is a tool of regulating and controlling the behaviors of social inferiors whose inferiority is determined in reference to these hierarchical positions. In the case of family these positions are based on gender, age and proximity in kinship, telling every *person* its predefined place, hence the access to respectful behavior. So, respectful behavior is in the first instance, the observance of these hierarchies. In the public places of Keçiören, where women are prioritized, a new hierarchical structure is established by borrowing the terms of the family, but slightly transforming the hierarchies that mark it. While the axis of age is kept untouched, the gender hierarchies are subverted as such that

regardless of their position in their own families and their age, all the men in the parks and bazaars are expected to behave respectfully towards the women patrons of these places. Yet such subversion is not much contested since it refers to a common repertoire of the terms that are borrowed from the rhetoric of family and the Islamic idiom: women as mothers and “hanımlar”.

Women who use the Atatürk Botanical Garden count the respectful treatment they experience there as one of the defining characteristics of the place, which makes their use possible. Besides and in relation to “respect” their narrations and descriptions of the garden aggregate around the phrase “family place”, with reference to two terms as its foundational features: safe and clean.



Figure 6: Family lunch in the arbors

## Feeling Safe and Secure

*I can go that park alone with my children when they get bored, I mean there is nothing to be afraid of.*<sup>74</sup>

What women feel afraid of often goes without saying. They do not mention directly what they refer to yet all other women know that it is sexual harassment, rape and/or murder. Fear shapes women's shared understanding of place and their mental maps of the city. These maps are shaped by the circulation of the narratives of female vulnerability (Stanko, 1990) to the threat of rape. Susan Brownmiller (1976) argues that rape is a form of social control by men over women. And this control usually creates its effect through the stories that call for a corresponding action. These stories of rape and crime suggest that women must always be on guard when outside the home. They posit the outside as inherently dangerous and home as safe. Thus fear aligns bodies to spaces (Ahmed, 2004). This is one of the mechanisms that make the exclusion of women from the public space possible and even wanted by the women themselves.

Again according to Sara Ahmed, fear is an embodied experience. "In fear the world presses against the body; the body shrinks back from the world, in desire to avoid the object of fear. Fear involves shrinking the body; it restricts the body's mobility precisely in so far as it seems to prepare the body for the flight" (2004, p.69). This flight often involves the complete avoidance of certain places and organization of time accordingly. Certain places signaled and labeled by fear are

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<sup>74</sup> Fatma İmancı "Ben gönül rahatlığıyla çocuklarımı alıp tek başıma bile gidebiliyorum o parka canları sıkıldığında, öyle korkulacak bir durum yok yani."

avoided and the ones marked with safety and security allow mobility of and use by women. Shaped through a narrative and visceral knowledge, the dark and abandoned city parks were thought to be among the possible locations of this threat, so especially at nights they are better avoided. Shrinking their bodies, trying to be invisible through various media, staying indoors after dark, accompanying each other when there is something urgent or really desired to do at late hours and avoiding deserted or ill-famed places are the strategies that every woman in male dominated cultures learns at a very young age. These strategies of flight always involve a turn towards the home, which is the sign of safety and love, the opposite of fear and anxiety (Ahmed, 2004).

The Botanical Garden is defined with the absence of fear, being a home-like place, safe and secure. This feeling of security is observable in the bodily expressions of women who frequent the park. Female bodies freely occupy place, without feeling the need to shrink and behave reserved.<sup>75</sup> The absence of organizing and regulating fear of sexual terrorism is maintained by concrete and immediate precautions among which the alcohol ban is the most often cited. Women highly appreciate this ban and see it as a guarantor of the security and safety of the place. It is even mentioned in a way so that it appears as the source of safety par excellence:

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<sup>75</sup> An incident displaying such an enlargement of the body took place when I was having breakfast in the garden with a group of women in the summer of 2004. The women I had been chatting with for a while were actually waiting for a friend of theirs to arrive. This woman, Ayşe, appeared after a while, cheerfully waving at the others. She was wearing a long overcoat and a headscarf. It was a windy day and the wind suddenly untied her scarf, it didn't blow away but her neck became visible. She showed no attention to this incident and kept walking her head upright, hailing the others. When she sat on the table she carelessly tied her scarf back and began a joyful and loud chatter. I came across the same group of women on the street leaving the park after several hours. This time all their clothes were tidily checked, they were walking close to each other, silently talking their bodies slightly bent forward.



*Suzan: Nothing bad would happen there*  
*Gülcan: 'Cause there is no alcohol.*<sup>76</sup>

The assumption of such a direct relation of any fearful or unpleasant incident to the use of alcohol resonates with the inscription at the main entrance of the park: “*Alcohol is the source of all evil*”. Not always in the appearance of such a direct causality, but often alcohol consumption is brought up in the context of (the non-existence of) some situations like “disturbance”, “disorder” and “dirt”. So even if these expressions of unpleasantness are not explicitly and directly related to alcohol a certain association takes place. The word “alcohol” calls upon these to-be-avoided situations and in the context of the park it is independent of the women’s own attitude towards drinking alcoholic beverages. The alcohol ban is approved and appreciated without reference to religion but to safety.

At this point Ahmed (2004) provides powerful insights, arguing that fear slides between signs and bodies; changing its affective value in this circulation and sticking different signs together. Thus, fear does not reside inherently in any particular object of fear, rather it creates its affect through signs that come to embody the fearsomeness in the circulation of narratives, discourses and experiences of fear. The slides between signs and objects are shaped by multiple histories, past histories of association. The past histories of attaching fearsome situations to alcohol consumption and single men, stick them together as the threat par excellence.

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<sup>76</sup> Suzan: Orada hiçbirşey olmaz  
Gülcan: İçki filan olmadığı için

## Eyes on the Park/Maintaining the Order

*God bless Turgut Altınok that he always keeps an eye over the park.*<sup>77</sup>

Chatterjee (1993) argues that in communities the subjective rights must be negotiated within the ascribed field of the ethical life of the community. In Keçiören this negotiation takes place in the public places of the district. “Alcohol is the source of all evil”, a saying of Prophet Muhammad is written on the top of the sign board at the approach of the district and reminds the incomers the rights they have to surrender in order to become a member of the imagined community. Although its tone is not prohibiting or warning, the stating of it as a fact, makes the implication clear: Certain acts and behaviors are not allowed in the public places of Keçiören.

This rule is not written as a rule per se; rather it is made known by the phrase above and through word of mouth. Almost all of the informants I have interviewed were sure about this ban, although there is no prohibition sign in the parks. The rule is mainly made known by exemplary practices, which are described by İbrahim Terzioğlu in the following way:

*The mayor himself worked here with self-sacrifice. We made the controls ourselves. We warned the false behaviors. “This is not good” we said, “would you like that, if someone did this in front of your house, your wife, or near your daughter?”. They always apologized. Sometimes we warned over-drunk people with the language they understand, “if you do that...”, we told much more.*<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Suzan Sarica: “Allah razı olsun Turgut Altınok’tan orayı hep göz altında tutuyor”

<sup>78</sup> Peronal Interview “Başkan burada bizzat özverili bir şekilde çalıştı. Kendimiz takip ettik. Yanlış yapanları uyarıyorduk yani. “Bu yaptığınız doğru değil” diyorduk, “sizin evinizin önünde, sizin hanımınızın önünde bunu yapsalar, sizin kızınızın yanında bunu yapsalar, içip içip şunu yapsalar sizin hoşunuza gider mi?” “Özür dileriz” deyip gidiyorlardı. Bazen de alkolün dozunu kaçırın insanları da anladıkları dilden uyarıyorduk, “şöyle yaparsan böyle yaparsan” diye, daha fazla söz söylüyorduk.”

In the parks and other public places of Keçiören the legendary *A Team* upholds the observation of the rules. This unofficial security team of the municipality functions much like a gang responsible for peace in the district and the preservation of order, thus they are allowed to take “necessary” measures when any kind of immoral or forbidden act takes place. There are many stories about their methods, but what I heard were not by primary witnesses; rather they were like widely known rumors about physical coercion such as the ones below:

*Ayşe: No body drinks here. My son says "mom, they take the drunk men to Bağlum and give a beat there". Nobody drinks in Keçiören's parks.*

*Hilal: Who do beat?*

*Ayşe: There are security guards here. I mean drinking alcoholic drinks... If not... I mean there is nothing unmannerly.<sup>79</sup>*

*Halit: I mean if they see a kid drinking beer, they pour the beer over his head.<sup>80</sup>*

The security (thus the homeliness) of the park is often related to the direct surveillance of the mayor and his personal involvement in the issue is highly appreciated. He is assumed to directly monitor all the public places of Keçiören. But this ever-seeing-eye does not do this via a panoptical surveillance structure, rather through personal involvement and interference. He keeps an eye on every single bazaar and park by simple being there. His visits to parks give women the feeling of being protected. The stories about these visits relate that he almost everyday comes

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<sup>79</sup> “Ayşe: Hiç kimse içmiyor. Benim oğlum söylüyor, ‘anne’ diyor, ‘içene Bağlum’da götürüp bir temiz sopa atıyorlarmış’. Hiç kimse parklarda alkollü içki kullanmıyor. Keçiören’de...

Hilal: Kim sopa atıyormuş?

Ayşe: Burada şeyler var canım, güvenlikler var. Yani alkollü içki... Öbür türlü.. Yani terbiyesiz hiçbir olay yok.”

<sup>80</sup> Halit “Yani bir çocuk parkta içsin hemen birayı alıyorlar lak kafaya döküyorlar.”

to the park, asking people about their complaints, walking with them, drinking tea and playing backgammon.

Neither the mayor's nor the park guards' gazes are the only eyes scanning the park; the responsible gaze of the inhabitants themselves is also important. Against any kind of violence, but especially against sexual violence, it is a well known and widely used strategy to manipulate and get the public attention. The deliberate use of the crowd as a safety net against harassment relies on the assumption of the availability of a similar reflex among the others against such an assault. The careful gazes of the strangers on the streets come together to become a guard against any violation attempted by a single stranger. A similar argument holds for the Atatürk Botanical Garden. The crowd, being interested and observant towards every others' actions acts as individuals' protective shield against harassment. The collective gaze of the visitors to the park and especially of women keeps the 'suspects' away from the park.

But there is another gaze prevailing in the park which does not function on the basis of threat and exclusion but by providing a smooth sense of trust and safety. This is a conduct which ensures the other about the person's trustworthiness, safety and confidentiality. It is a way of assuring the other that he/she will not cause any harm to him/her, be respectful and distantly protecting. This is the exact opposite of the hate stare as well as harassment. Embodied and expressed through gestures, posture, use of the voice and facial expressions, the civil inattention recognizes trust as having foundational value in social encounters. It is the:

“Trust as ‘background noise’ - not as a random collection of sounds, but as carefully restrained and controlled social rhythms. It is characteristic of what

Goffman calls ‘unfocused interaction’ ... Encounters with strangers and acquaintances – people whom an individual met before but does not know well – balance trust, tact, and power. Tact and rituals of politeness are mutual protective devices, which strangers or acquaintances knowingly use (most on the level of practical consciousness) as a kind of implicit social contract.” (Giddens, 1990, p.82-3 as quoted by Saktanber 2002, p. 202)

Saktanber (2002) describes in detail the manners of Muslim men and women during encounters with strangers and acquaintances. In her description avoiding a direct eye contact between men and women, keeping a respectful distance, maintaining a modest posture by carrying the body slightly bent forward and lowering heads appear to be the indicators of trustworthiness. With their bodily gestures of the mentioned sort and by addressing each other as *Bey* and *Hanım* these men and women create a distance of respect and modesty and in the process communicate the message that ‘you can feel safe with me’. Men especially convey the impression that they would protect the others if anything threatening were to happen. Saktanber argues that “these behavior patterns perpetuated these women’s sense of freedom in living in an Islamic environment” (2002, p.203). A similar form of civil ritual prevails in the Atatürk Botanical Garden. It is strikingly obvious in the running track. Although joggers and walkers face the others walking in the opposite direction all through the path, they behave as if there is a screen between two paths. They stare the ground, look directly ahead or busy their eyes on the roses but clearly avoid the eye contact of other joggers, unless they know each other<sup>81</sup>. The same

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<sup>81</sup> I remember feeling terribly uncomfortable while doing the observation in the park. My staring was obviously irritating other joggers, so I cut off walking and spent hours hiding myself in an

inattention is the norm in all parts of the park, in benches, on the grass or in the arbors spread all around. Although people often feel free to ask for salt, newspapers or sharing a table, they keep a respectful distance in the times of encounter and avoid any other contact. Yet they establish a relationship of trust with their neighbors in the park with slight gestures. The women I interviewed were highly appreciative of this quality of the park. It was always on the list of what they like about the park and found its expression in the phrases like ‘nobody is interested in anybody’, ‘no one looks at the others’, ‘everybody is on her/his own business’.<sup>82</sup>

It is important to keep in mind that what is described here is different than the *civil indifference* described by Giddens (1991), referring to Goffman, as a ritual of the modern metropolitan life. Both of these theoreticians of modernity describe the ways of treating the unknown strangers on the streets as genderless. Yet both what Saktanber (2002) relates about Muslim women and men and what is experienced in the Atatürk Botanical Garden in Keçiören has a strong reference to gender. Although it is a convention that no one directly looks at some one else, people try harder to avoid eye contact with the opposite sex and especially men are expected to avoid looking at women. The ‘trust as background noise’ requires a ‘gendered civil indifference’.

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arbor. It worked to avoid most of the eye contact and I was able to smile to give a message of trust in accidental and rare occasions of contact.

<sup>82</sup> ‘Kimse kimseye karışmıyor’, ‘kimsenin kimseye baktığı yok’, ‘herkes kendi halinde’

### Cleanliness and Potential Pollutants

The Atatürk Botanical Garden is described by women as ‘clean’ in both material and metaphorical senses. The material cleanliness is appreciated but more often the possible elements of pollution in this place are the single men. They are definitely not welcomed in the park (actually in the vast majority of the parks in Keçiören). The measures taken against single men and teenage boy groups operate in various levels and appear in various forms. Yet there is not a single written and obvious statement discouraging them to visit the garden. The rules restricting their use of the park are always unwritten and often arbitrary. The existence of these regulations is made known through different techniques employed both by the park guards and by women.

When single men and teenagers show up in the park, park guards keep an eye over them, and make sure that they are aware of this surveillance. If they do something ‘improper’ (like drinking, hassling women, making noise, playing cards, walking through the prohibited forest...etc.) guards intervene. The degree of the intervention varies between polite warning and violently taking out of the park. Women also take measures against these ‘unwanted’ people, implying their inappropriateness for the park. They ask them to leave their seats in favor of women and argue for the rightness and even naturalness of this claim. The example below is particularly important for showing the hierarchy of the claims:

*If somebody comes here as a family the security guards give the priority to the women. For example last year it happened to us. Two young men were sitting there (in the arbor), chatting and eating sunflower seeds, so they could also sit on the nearest bench because there was no child with them. First we asked them to leave their*

*place, but they did not, "We are also citizens" they said. Of course we did not reply. While we were talking, a guard came and said "you know there is a rule in the park, women and children are first. Let's take you to the benches, guys". Of course they did not oppose. We sat down there, and drank tea. I mean respect for women is very nice. I don't know, we can go there with contentment. I mean we do not experience what we had heard about parks. I mean there is nothing disobedient here.*<sup>83</sup>

The clash of demands resolves in priority being given to female use; and (the women being equal to family) to family. Women even argue for this right to prevent single men from joining the morning fitness sessions. Men who join the session with their wives are considered acceptable 'as family' yet single men are treated as possible sources of harassment. Their intentions for joining the exercises are questioned, and women even ask the men who do not have an accompanying wife to leave the place. This questioning of intentions is even at stake for just being in the park. This request for elimination of single men relies on certain assumptions about sexuality and gender segregation is requested on the basis of the assumption that the male gaze and the female body are necessarily sexual. Relying on this assumption, women sometimes request the complete elimination of single men from the parks, and this request is considered as sound and legitimate by the municipality.

Şükran Günaydın told the story of meeting the mayor in the neighborhood park which once she was used to take her grandchild.

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19 Fatma İmancı "Eğer aile geldiyse öncelikleri bayana verdiriyor görevliler. Mesela geçen sene bizim başımıza geldi, iki tane genç orada (*çardakta*) oturmuşlar sohbet ediyorlar çekirdek çitliyorlar, hani kenar bankta da oturabilirler çünkü çocuk falan yok yanlarında. Biz önce kalkmalarını rica ettik, istemedi çocuklar, 'Biz de vatandaşız' falan. Tabii biz bir şey söylemedik. O sırada biz konuşurken bir görevli geldi, 'biliyorsunuz', dedi, 'parklarımızda böyle bir şeyimiz var, öncelikle hanımlar, çocuklar. Sizi banklara alalım gençler' dedi. Tabii o zaman hiç itiraz edemediler görevliye. Biz oturduk orada, çayımızı filan içtik çocuklarla. Yani kadına saygı filan çok güzel. Gönül rahatlığıyla gidiyoruz, bilmiyorum. Yani daha önce o parklarda duyulan olaylar şeyler şu anda yaşanmıyor. Yani şey diyorum, serkeş bir durum yok yani."



*What is your complaint”, he said. I answered “we have just moved here, I take my child to the park, but all the men are there. There are young mothers around, we are there as grandmothers, we amuse our children, but these men watch us shamelessly. I am old at all, they cannot do anything to me but the young women feel uncomfortable and ashamed. There are lots of parks why don't they go those parks, but here?”. “What do you want me to do?”, he said. “You will put a signboard there. You will surround it so that nobody will enter, apart from women and children.” “With pleasure”, he said.<sup>84</sup>*

The cafeteria serves as a ‘safer’ place for the single men and teenagers who are not even allowed to hang around in the park freely. Though, even the cafeteria is in no way free of control. The waiters keep an eye on the male groups, just like the park guards, but this time employing more implicit strategies.

*C: Let me tell you something, for example the fellows who run the cafeteria help us. When we are two women here, they can hinder the men sitting on the table next to us, from disturbing us. This is a nice thing.*

*H: Have you experienced this before?*

*S: I mean this happens every time. This is the male nature, as soon as he sees a female...*

*H: What do the fellows do then?*

*C: They come to the table at once.*

*S: They warn the other table "please be careful."*

*C: They ask loudly "which table is disturbing you?"*

*S: Or they come to our table and ask "Would you like to take anything, sister?" and warn the next table "They are our friends, so don't make a mistake".*

*C: I mean they solve the problem on their own way.*

*S: I mean it is a clean park, clean.<sup>85</sup>*

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<sup>84</sup> “Dedi ki “nedir şikayetin?”. Dedim “biz buraya yeni taşındık, çocuğumu götürüyorum parka, ne kadar erkekler varsa parka geliyorlar. Etrafta genç anneler var, biz babaanneler varız, çocuklarımızı eğliyoruz, salıncaklarda sallıyoruz, bu adamlar utanmadan oturuyorlar bizi seyrediyorlar. Ben hadi yaşlıyım bana bir şey yapamazlar ama gençler çekiniyorlar utanıyorlar. Bir sürü park var neden o parklara gitmiyorlar da buraya geliyorlar?” “Ne yapmamı istiyorsun?” “Oraya levha koyacaksın. Kenarını çevreleyeceksin kimse giremeyecek, buraya sadece çocuklar ve anneleri girecek.” “Başımın üstüne” dedi.,,

I asked her if there installed a signboard. She said ‘of course’, but couldn’t tell the exact phrasing of the warning.

<sup>85</sup> Selin and Cansu “C: Size bir şey söyleyeyim, mesela burada Kafeteryayı işleten arkadaşlar bize yardımcı oluyorlar. Burada iki bayan olduğumuz zaman yandaki masalardaki erkeklerin rahatsızlık vermesini engelleyebiliyorlar. O güzel bir şey

The argument concerning the cleanliness and single-men-free nature of the park is repeated over and over. By arguing that single men are not allowed in the parks, women work for the narrative construction of a ‘clean’ environment that they desire, perfectly aware of its fragility as a reality:

*There is a family under every tree. It is a decent place. Definitely there is nothing disturbing from outside. For example, singles etc. They are not allowed, I mean. There is nobody to disturb the family. There is such a rule.*<sup>86</sup>

When compared to ‘safety’, ‘cleanliness’ has a more metaphorical quality. Although sometimes the referent of filth is the actual trash on the ground, single men and young people (teenager boy groups or lovers) are slipped in the same sentence along with the bad odor of the stream that flows in the park. And many of the women I interviewed were afraid of the existence of these groups as they might be afraid of a smear of the filthy, yellow brown water onto their clothes. What makes the young people, especially young males such a threat? And what is it that they may dirty that women feel frightened?

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- H: Öyle bir durum oldu mu hiç?  
S: Yani her zaman oluyor. Erkek psikolojisi, dışıyı gördü mü  
C: Yani laf atmazlar da yanımızda bağıra bağıra yüksek sesle konuşurlar.  
S: Sandalyeyi çeker şöyle, yakın oturur. Konuşulur biz de dinleriz. Başka türlü olmaz olsa zaten bir şey olur.  
H: E o zaman arkadaşlar ne yapıyor?  
C: Hemen masaya gelir  
S: Yandaki masayı ‘biraz dikkat eder misiniz?’ diye uyarır.  
C: Hangi masa sizi rahatsız ediyor diye yüksek sesle sorar  
S: Ya da bizim masaya gelir “Bir isteğiniz var mı ablam?” filan diyerek o masaya, “Tanıdık, bir yanlışıınız olmasın”ı duyuruyor bir şekilde.  
C: Yani kendi içinde çözmüşler problemi.  
S: Yani temiz bir park, temiz.”

<sup>86</sup> Ayfer Demirel “Her ağacın altında bir aile. Çok nezih bir yer orası. Kesinlikle böyle dışarıdan rahatsız edici bir şey yok mesela. Bekarlar filan. Alınmıyor yani. Aileyi rahatsız edecek bir insan yok. Öyle bir kaide var,,

This issue is related to the framework of honor (namus) and the honorable acknowledgement of women. What is threatened by the existence of single men is the honor of women, who claim their right over this place, and it is exactly this threat that makes them claim rights over the place. This is the threat not only (and even primarily) of physical assault, rather it is an intimidation of their recognition as women of honor: it is a risk of being known as immodest by being in a place known with its disobedience to moral norms, of being besmirched. So a kissing couple is also a threat to the modest women sitting on the benches by creating the risk of harming the reputation of the place. By being known as a clean family place the Atatürk Botanical Garden is an “authorized space” (Pratt, 1998), meaning that its patrons are certain (women of honor); the usage is regulated (exclusive family usage); and metaphors are set (clean and safe). In this sense it is a place like home, in which women put so much effort to keep clean and safe. So it is a place where women securely go out without any suspicion that might sully their modesty and their and their families’ honor. Moreover they are respected as discussed in the section on the gender discourse of the municipality. Women are treated as ‘hanımlar’ in the Atatürk Botanical Garden.

It would be misleading to think about this recent coming out of women merely within the terms of acceptance of an invitation. Rather women and the municipality often negotiate and/or cooperate to create the possibilities of coming out and women have their own unprecedented reasons to come out of their houses. While talking about their motivations to use the parks, women mention the safety of the park and their comfort in being there, yet they more often talk about their own incentives. Women come to the parks of Keçiören for good health, to chat with their

friends, just for the fresh air, to stroll, to entertain their kids, to loose weight, to escape the boredom of home. Their activities slightly differ on the basis of class and religiosity, but meet less on the basis of municipal vision than the simply expressed (yet never simple) desire of coming out.

“Women now come out in Keçiören”<sup>87</sup>

The declaration, “women now come out in Keçiören” suggests, from the onset, the recentness, rareness, curiosity and uncommonness of this fact. The common situation, the norm is embedded in the remark that women normally cannot go outside their houses that freely. So what turned this unordinary activity of going out, which is highly conditioned by gender inequality, codes of modesty, and fear into a very common one for female inhabitants of Keçiören? And what is the significance and content of coming out for women, that causes the phenomenon to be emphasized with such joy and pride?

Women do more than twenty different activities in the park, from sports to lace making. These activities scatter both spatially and temporally in the daily routine of the park. In an ordinary day sport activities begin very early; especially in summer people come to walk and jog around five thirty, just after sunrise. This is the time when the number of men and women are almost equal, since most of the visitors come with their spouses. Single women are very rare, though small groups of women exist. These people only populate the running track and strictly control the time they spend in the park. They steadily do the activity (walking, jogging or exercises), chat

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<sup>87</sup> Fatma Imancı: “Keçiören’de kadınlar dışarı çıkıyor artık.”

while walking and hurry to leave the garden on their scheduled time. Until nine o'clock this athletic group enlarges and the proportion of women gradually increases. Single women as well as large female groups come to the Atatürk Botanical Garden to walk and also to join the fitness session around eight o'clock.

The fitness session is held in the arena in front of the waterfall; the exercise begins at 8.15 everyday, including weekends. It lasts for forty five minutes and is mainly comprised of basic fitness movements. A young man voluntarily provides guidance. In Spring the group consists of sixty-sixty five persons, yet in summer it exceeds well beyond ninety. In accordance with the distribution of walkers, women make up the majority. Most of the men are husbands accompanying their wives and single men are not quite welcome.

Some of these exercisers and walkers stay on in the park for a while to have their breakfasts in the arbors. These groups, as well as the ones who come for this purpose, are solely comprised of women and their children. Some of the groups come together for the specific purpose of having their *gün* (gatherings), while others are made up of friends, neighbors or relatives who came together to have a day out. They come carrying many bags --sometimes in wheel-carriers-- full of dishes, vegetables, fruits, snacks, equipment for cooking, table cloths, blankets...etc. Also they often bring gas stoves to make tea, if they do not use thermoses. These groups occupy the arbors as well as the picnic tables and the grass under the trees until the evening. They eat, drink tea and chat. While they are sitting in the arbors, some women busy their hands with handcrafts like lace, embroidery and knitting.

Close to dusk most of the women groups leave their places for families who come to have their dinners in the park; or husbands drop to join them. They either eat

their home-made dinner or grill meat/chicken using barbecues. During summer evenings, any place to sit (including the grass) is occupied by families who stay almost until midnight. The running track, the arena in front of the waterfall and the cafeteria are also overcrowded with families, groups of women and young girls. Notwithstanding the rare evening joggers, these groups leisurely saunter in the park all evening up till late hours of the night. Even at these hours women keep the majority. They make use of the park from five o'clock in the morning till one o'clock at night.



Figure 7: Breakfast in the arbors



Figure 8: Morning Exercise

Women usually describe their activities in the park as getting fresh air, relieving stress, and most often, a way to be healthy. What they mention is both physical and mental health. All the women I interviewed said that going out gives them relief and peace, reduce their level of stress and make them feel more energetic. They often relate this psychological benefit they acquire in the park to the physical atmosphere: Trees, roses and water.

*It is a garden of Eden. I like the brook, grass, roses so much. Hear, they water the flowers, fis fis fis and the sound of the waterfall. I like the grass so much. I feel myself walking alone on a path in the crowd.*

*You can drink water there as well, and go to the restroom. Nobody disturbs others. I can walk a long way without getting bored. I advise this to everybody. I suggest the shuttle for those who uses the hill as an excuse. I forget myself in this park, how can one forget herself?*<sup>88</sup>

This intoxicating experience described using the metaphor of the Gardens of Eden is not unique to this woman. Rather many of my informants talked of similar experiences of a spiritual sort, a feeling of meditation and a losing of the self. This individual spiritual experience of cleansing often accompanies the psychological benefits of ‘going out of the house’. In most of the narratives gathered in the course of this research, ‘the house’ was depicted not as ‘the home’, implying warmth, safety and intimacy when compared to the outside, but rather as the site of mandatory seclusion and confinement compared to the relative freedom and openness of the Atatürk Botanical Garden. This seclusion and confinement is apprehended by women as a primary source of psychological illnesses, like panic attacks, depression, obsession or alienation.

*For example my mother is panic attack, even going outside and talking to someone makes her different. Think of yourself staying at home, you feel yourself as a machine. Having exercise is very good not only physically but also psychologically.*<sup>89</sup>

*I mean the weather is so nice sister, and also the ambiance. Children can play here with comfort, and also the women. Sit down here instead of home. What is there at home? People cannot leave from television. I mean this is the case. We act as robots. I clean my house*

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<sup>88</sup> Sevim Kambur “Orası bir cennet bahçesi. Dereyi, yeşilliği, gülleri çok severim. O çiçekleri suluyorlar ya fis fis fis, şelalenin de sesi. Ben yeşili çok severim. O kadar kalabalıkta kendimi yalnız bir yolda yürür gibi hissediyorum. Hem orada su içebiliyorsun, tuvalete girebiliyorsun. Kimse kimseyi rahatsız etmeden. Uzun bir yol sıkılmadan yürüyebileceğin. Herkese tavsiye ediyorum. Yokuşu bahane edenlere de servisi söylüyorum. Ben kendimi unutuyorum parkta. Saat 11’i bulduğum oluyor. İnsan nasıl kendini unuttur?”

<sup>89</sup> Gülay “Mesela benim annem panik atak hastası, çıkıp birileriyle konuşması bile onu farklı yapıyor. Sadece evde olduğunuzu düşünün, insan makine gibi oluyor. Spor yapmak sadece fiziksel yönden değil psikolojik yönden de çok güzel.”



*everyday. That's right sister, you do all these things because of boredom.*<sup>90</sup>

*N: I began hating people, I mean everything seems to me so artificial. As if I expect wickedness from everybody...*

*H: Does coming here make a difference?*

*N: It is a bit right, very different from home. At home, you look at the walls and they look back at you. You switch on the television but get bored, and switch on the radio but get bored. I walk from one balcony to other and chat with people if there is somebody on the other buildings.*<sup>91</sup>

In these citations from the interviews it appears that the therapeutic effect of the park does not only stem from its physical environment but also from the opportunities of sociability it offers. Women believe simply meeting other people has a positive effect on their mental health. And this imagined value of sociability is what makes them consider their houses a place of confinement and going out to the park as an improvement in their lives. This is what makes going out an achievement and a highly appreciated activity. Even seeing people, observing them or just the co-spatiality is highly valued. Yet the garden offers more: regular attendance creates acquaintanceships and this allows the foundation of new friendship ties.

*People make friends there. They start visiting each other. A few days ago I met a woman. She has blood pressure problems, cannot loose*

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<sup>90</sup> Mediha “Yani hava güzel ablam, ortam da güzel. Çocuklar burada rahat oynuyorlar, kadınlar da rahat. Evde oturmaktansa burada otur yani. Evde ne var ki. Televizyonun karşısında insanlar ayrılamıyor. Yani öyle. Robotlaştık yani. Her Allah’ın günü evimi silerim süpürürüm. Evde olunca sıkıntidan yapıyorsun ablam vallahi doğru.”

<sup>91</sup> Nesibe: İnsanlardan nefret etmeye başladım daha doğrusu, her şey bana yapmacık geliyor. Herkesten kötülük beklermiş gibi bir...

H: Buraya gelip gitmek filan fark ettiriyor mu?

N: Oluyor tabii biraz, evdekinden çok farklı. Evde duvarlar sana bakıyor sen duvarlara bakıyorsun. Televizyonu açıyorsun ondan sıkılıyorsun, radyoyu açıyorsun ondan sıkılıyorsun. Balkonlar arasında mekik dokuyorum eğer karşı yan binalarda birileri varsa bir iki onlarla laflıyorum.

*weight. Her doctor made her lose eight kilos, but in the winter she had them all back.*<sup>92</sup>

Losing weight was not only the main topic of the conversations between newly met women in the Atatürk Botanical Garden but also of our interviews. Except a few all the women I talked to said that they had at least for a period of time used the park for bodily concerns. The primary reason of coming to the garden for physical exercise is the desire to lose weight. Reshaping their bodies and keeping them under control, related to appearance or to health concerns, are the motives that drive women of Keçiören to parks. Some walk to heal their knees, some to strengthen their muscles, other women try to reduce the negative effects of menopause by pumping in estrogen through physical activity. They share secret recipes for medications and herbs and tips on local body shaping like wrapping themselves with plastic bags. They discuss the advantages of trainer shoes and sports suits. They argue for their knowledge about human anatomy and gather new information on the mysteries of the body. They safeguard each other while using the exercise equipment and try to avoid turning their backs to men when they have to bend forward. Some argue for the inappropriateness of joining the fitness session when men are around; others disagree claiming that all the men participating in the exercise are accompanying their wives.

So in the Botanical Garden a performance of modern middle class desires and knowledge on body takes place in a field where competing claims and truths co-exist in conflict. This is a field hosting competing cultural assets, consumer demands,

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<sup>92</sup> Sevim Kambur “İnsanlar müthiş arkadaş ediniyorlar orada. Misafirlik başlıyor aralarında. Geçen gün bir hanımla tanıştık. Tansiyon hastası, bir türlü kilo veremiyor, doktoru zayıflatmış. 8 kiloyu almış gene kışa.”

media influences, a revised morality and translated norms of various hometowns due to migration. So in Liechty's (2003) words it is the space of class as a process always in need of re-doing.

Following Weber and Bourdieu, Liechty (2003) argues that "it is in fact through the 'performance' of middle class life that the middle class(es) makes and claims space"(p.255). Tracing this line of thinking I want to argue that the Atatürk Botanical Garden not only serves as an exemplary site of middle class desires carried out by the municipality which were discussed in Chapter 1, but also a (conflictual) stage of middle class performances. These performances include the activities of jogging and physical exercise, as well as clothing, bodily gestures and utterances on certain topics like health. Still this field is never univocal; it allows the encounters of competing claims about the body. An illustrative narrative of an encounter may account for clarification of this point.

In a sunny morning in July 2004, I came across a woman sitting in one of the arbors in the garden and making lace for her daughter's dowry. She was dressed in daily clothes, pointing to a lower class status: long loose skirt, slippers, loosely tied cotton headscarf and a hand knit vest. She welcomed me to her table and answered my questions about herself and the park. She was residing in one of the few *gecekondus* left on the surrounding hills. She said that she was used to coming to the park normally in the evenings with her children and/or husband to stroll or to make tea. But for a while she was accompanying her daughter in her morning walks, since the father did not allow the girl to come alone. Later the girl appeared in her sports suit, trainers and baseball cap and sat with us, telling her reason for using the park: *"In summer people wear light tops, I cannot. I told my mum, then we started. If you*

*are overweight nothing suits good.*”<sup>93</sup> She was also joining the morning exercises broadcasted on TV in front of the screen and said that they helped a lot while raising her consciousness about her body. The mother was approving, yet she seemed to have no intention of joining the activity to shape her own “over-weight” body and she said that she found it meaningless to dress ‘for outside’ to come to the park. Anyway all she was doing was sitting in an arbor keeping an eye over the daughter and preparing her trousseau.

The account of these two women exhibit very different attitudes towards the body and visibility that co-exist in the Atatürk Botanical Garden. The mother does not approach her body as something to be displayed. The clothes that she chose to wear in the park aim to conceal and cover her body, without emphasizing it. Instead, for the young girl her body is to be seen, to be displayed: her clothes are the accessories that make her body look better. She comes to the park to get in shape, hence to achieve a better look, a more delightful visibility. Still her desire of being looked at, being seen is very ambivalent. While she is laboring for her future look she doesn’t want to be the object of the male gaze that is directed to her breasts which move as she jogs. So she prefers the idle parts of the park to avoid being watched and seeks protection in her mother’s caring stare. The girl, desiring both to be secluded and to be seen, and the mother, staring to protect and to seclude, both of them positioning themselves differently in the same moral field, exhibit the intricateness of negotiation in a city park in a district of Ankara. The municipal claim for unity gives way to a conflictual field where performances of different desires, class dispositions as well as religious and moral attitudes intermingle and are

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<sup>93</sup> Mehtap: “Yazın ince badiler filan giyiliyor, ben giyemiyorum. Anneme söyledim öyle başladık. Kilo olunca hiçbir şey yakışmıyor.”

counterpoised to each other. It would be too naïve to take these claims having equal power of influence given the surrounding effects like media or consumer demands. Still class is by nature a process and the middle classes of Keçiören are inventing and performing themselves in the daily inhabitation of the Atatürk Botanical Garden through various contentions, agreements but more importantly encounters.

### A Moral Regulation

In Keçiören the creation of a middle class life style through performances accompanies the creation of a moral framework that makes these particular performances possible. Women are called to the parks and public places (like the bazaars) of Keçiören within a rhetoric of family which assumes the transfer of familiar values of the family to the public space, thus the invention of a moral order of family. According to Hunt (1999) establishing and working for a moral order is an act of ‘governing’. He borrows the term ‘governing’ from Foucault who defines it as “structuring the possible field of action of others.” (Foucault, 1982; quoted by Hunt, 1999 p. 4) In Keçiören this structuring is performed through the transfer of terms and codes of the intimate sphere of family to public places.

In this way the patterns of behaviors that are organized according to gender and age are transformed and transferred in order to manage the manners of the inhabitants of a district. The patterns of behavior that are accorded to the morality of family are based on sincerity and respect, the implications and the basis of which we have seen in the previous pages. This understanding of respect prioritizes women for being “hanımlar”, who unreveal sexuality and behave modestly. The municipal

officials, park guards, maintenance workers, market vendors and waiters in the café treat them with a respectful distance and protect them anytime the danger of assault arises. What they need to do to maintain their status as respectable “hanımlar” is to be modest and comforting. They are required to provide the warmth of unity, love and sincerity to the others who reside in the district. So they are the constructive elements of the family, that is the basis of morality in Keçiören.

But remembering every matrix has its outside; who, then, is not family? The answer to this question requires a continuous reformulation, in parallel with the ever undone nature of the ethos that is worked on. Before focusing on the answers provided it is important to remember that this moral order has a very certain spatial basis: it is experimented in spatiality and simultaneously creates the place it refers to. So the defining characteristics of the place, the morality, also give us hints to the answers provided to the question of the boundaries of family. As we can learn from the places of Keçiören, the basis of the moral order of family is the exclusion of the people who are not considered family and the possible offenders of the prevailing norms, i.e. single men and youth. They are defined as strangers who can harm the moral balance created between the members of family; a balance which is dependent on trust and feelings of safety. They can intimidate the ‘safe’ and ‘peaceful’ family atmosphere by drinking, harassing the modest women of the district and more importantly by exhibiting sexual desire, which is strictly restricted in the sphere of family.

Any trace of sexuality is firmly regulated and if possible avoided in the Atatürk Botanical Garden. Lovers who embrace each other, or kiss are harshly warned to leave the park. This regulation against performances of sexuality is widely

appreciated by the women who patronize the park. They demand the regulation and support its moral basis that lewdness should be prohibited in a place of family. According to Hunt (1999) moral regulation is not necessarily done from above. As often, the claims for regulation come from the middle or even from below. And often these different strata that have different tools and powers to manipulate the field, cooperate to reach their aims. The municipality of Keçiören and the women work together to regulate the manners in the parks of the district. Moreover, again following Hunt (1999), it is important to emphasize that moral regulation is not only about governing others but also deals with governing the self. Women, who frequent the parks in Keçiören, behave modestly and accept guilt when they come across its obligations. The illustrative story below was gathered in a long breakfast with five women in the park, in the summer of 2004. First Nefise is answering my request for a description of the place, and a few hours later she tells her friends her own experience:

*N: I mean families... The environment is also good. Youth cannot hang around as they wish, hand in hand. Because it is a family place*

*H: They can't? How come? Does someone warn them?*

*N: Of course. They warn them saying "behave yourself, there are families here". You see everywhere, young people hang out. We saw in the Gökçek Park just a while ago, oh forgive me, the boy even kisses the girl. But there is no such thing here. I mean, it is all families, not too much youth. Everybody comes to sit with family.*

*...*

*N: They don't allow. Even I and Arif [her husband] were sitting like this [the husband's arm on the shoulder of the woman, lightly embracing], they said "don't do it" [giggling].*

*A: It is very good because the children who come here learn such things and do wrong. In Altınpark neither. Nothing like kissing, embracing.*

*N: But the Gökçek park! We were having dinner there, a young girl and a guy came and sat in the corner of the park. I had a glimpse. They are embracing, kissing...*

*T: Indeed they do.*

*A: But it is very disrespectful also to the other young people coming.*

*H: How did you respond when they warned you?*  
*N: We didn't respond. We just said "you are right"*  
*H: Did you move away from each other?*  
*N: We sat like this [showing that they separated] I mean, we didn't care much. We said it is right. It doesn't look good anyway*  
*A: We provide bad exemplar if we behave that way.*  
*N: This is right! But I see in Gökçek they sit and kiss*  
*A: I haven't seen once, I have been here for years.*  
*N: Not here*  
*A: I haven't seen in Altınpark either.*  
*N: I have just seen it. We went there just a while ago to take a walk, the youth...*  
*A: There are more security guards there*  
*T: Young people stroll there*  
*Ayten: Family, family, it is all family here*  
*A: Nobody behaves improperly. Not in the parks around here. There is no such thing as "let's go and sit under the trees". No one can go there. If they do then the guards are always around.*  
*A: People get wild seeing each other. They provide bad examples for the youngsters. Not everybody does though*  
*N: Of course if everybody sit in the way we do, sit that close, what would then happen? They are right I mean.*<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Nefise: Aile yani... Yani şey ortamı da güzel. Öyle gençler gezemiyorlar yani istedikleri gibi. Elele kolkola. Aile ortamı olduğu için.

Hilal: Gezemiyorlar yani nasıl? Biri onlara bir şey diyor mu?

Nefise: Tabii canım. 'Aile var burada kendinize dikkat edin' diye uyarı yapıyorlar. Gençler mesela her yerde görüyorsunuz, geziyorlar. Geçen Gökçek'te gördük mesela afedersin öpüyor bile oğlan mesela kızı. Ama burada öyle bir şey yok. Hep aile yani gençler pek yok. Herkes ailesiyle geliyor oturuyor yani.

...

Nefise: Yaptırmıyorlar. Biz bile Arif'le şöyle oturuyorduk (Kocası kolunu kadının omzuna atmış) "yapmayın" dediler (Gülüşme)

Ayşe: çok güzel çünkü buraya gelen çocuklar onları öğreniyorlar yanlış hareketler yapıyorlar yani. (Arkada Nefise de benzer şeyler söylüyor). Altınpark'ta da yok. Öyle öpüşme koklaşma benzer şeyler hiç yok.

Nefise: Ama Gökçek Parkı var ya. Geçen orada yemek yiyoruz. Bir genç kızla genç oğlan geldiler oturdular parkın köşesine. Gözüme takıldı. Sarılıyorlar öpüşüyorlar koklaşıyorlar

Teslime: Yapıyorlar canım...

Ayşe: Ama çok ayıp gelen gençlere karşı da.

Hilal: Öyle deyince ne dediniz siz?

Nefise: Bir şey demedik yani 'haklısınız...'

Hilal: Ayrıldınız mı?

Nefise: Böyle oturduk (aynı olarak oturduklarını gösterdi). Yani..

Nefise: Üzerinde çok durmadık yani, doğrudur, dedik. Yani çok hoş olmuyor zaten...

Ayşe: Biz de kötü örnek oluyoruz, öyle yaptık mı

Nefise: He, valla! Ama yukarda görüyorum ben Gökçek'te oturuyorlar, öpüşüyorlar.

Ayşe: hiç görmedim ben kaç senedir buradayım.

Nefise: Burada değil

Ayşe: Altınpark'ta da görmedim

Nefise: Onu da yeni gördüm. Geçen oraya gittiydik yürüyelim diye orada gençler..

Ayşe: Orada güvenlik daha çok.

Teslime: Orada gençler geziyor

Ayten: Aile aile, burada aile



The moral order of a “family place” in the Atatürk Botanical Garden is maintained through material regulations but, another tool as important as the regulation itself is the rhetorical devices that are used to address the place. Thus it is not only a physical creation but also a narrative one. The family place of the Atatürk Botanical Garden is materialized through a steady labor of reiteration. More critically than the discursive and coercive work of the municipal agents, women perform family in this public place with their daily activities and thus reiterate the norms which make the place a family place. In order to clarify my point I want to quote extensively from Judith Butler (1993). Although Butler basically focuses on the materialization of ‘sex’, I think following a similar vein may help to understand the materialization of a discursive device like ‘family place’ in a physical space, thus the emplacement of a regulatory ideal:

The category of ‘sex’ is from the start normative; it is what Foucault has called a “regulatory ideal”. In this sense, then, sex not only functions as a norm, but is part of a regulatory practice that produces the bodies it governs, that is, whose regulatory force is made clear as a kind of productive power, the power to produce-demarcate, circulate, differentiate- the bodies it controls. Thus ‘sex’ is a regulatory ideal whose materialization is compelled, and this materialization takes place (or fails to take place) through certain highly regulated practices. In other words, ‘sex’ is an ideal construct which is forcibly materialized through time. It is not a simple fact or static condition of a body, but a process whereby regulatory norms materialize sex and achieve this materialization through a forcible reiteration of those norms. That this reiteration is necessary is a sign that materialization is never quite complete, that bodies never quite

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Ayşe: Hiç kimsenin uygunsuz bir hareketi yok. Bu çevredeki bu parkların hiç birinde de yok. Sadece burada değil. Yani ‘şu ağaçların altına gidelim’, ‘şurada oturalım’, kesinlikle yok. O ağaçların altında filan hiç kimse oturamaz. Eğer oturuyorsa da güvenlik de geziyor orada.

Ayşe: Millet birbirini göre göre azıyor zaten. Yani gençlere de gerçekten kötü örnek oluyorlar. Herkes yapmıyor ama

Nefise: E tabii yani, onlar bizim oturduğumuz gibi otursalar da, herkes yani daha bir yakın daha bir samimi otursa o zaman ne olurdu? Haklılar yani.

comply with the norm by which their materialization is impelled.”  
(1993, p. 1-2)

The significance of this quote for the aspirations of this study stems from the understanding of the body as the most immediate of places (McDowell, 1999). As the literature of feminist geography and works on body and space taught us, bodies in particular and places in general are both effects of power, sites of contention and realms of the realization of discourses. Yet, places are not *tabula rasa* to be inscribed on. They bound, limit, mark and transform the discourses while actualizing them. The alteration especially relies on the incompleteness of materialization, which is unavoidable, considering the processes of reiteration that make materialization possible.

In the Atatürk Botanical Garden a material place of family is continuously created and worked upon via the utterances and rhetorical gestures, as well as, daily usage. The quotidian and the stories told by the occupiers of the place go hand in hand in the materialization of the moral regulatory ideal of family. Yet with every visit to the park, with every story to be told about the park there appears a gap: that is, a gap between the reality of the park and discourses about it. Within this gap there is a room for maneuver (Stewart, 1996) for women who both sustain the moral ideal of family in a public place but also subvert it. The subversion is made smoothly within the moments of silence and emptiness created in the difference between reiterations of the norm and it is no way one directional. Its traces can be found in a single woman's walk at night; in the physical exercise sessions which serve the contemporary desires on appearance, thus how to be seen; when mixed sex teenage groups come to musical events that are held in front of the waterfall or women say

that their friends are of more family to them than their actual kin and gossip about their husbands, mothers-in-law. Thus even within every citation of the norms the meaning of family slightly alters, making it fluid and uncanny, difficult to capture and freeze.

Women of the park stick to this ambiguous representation of a family place. They use the term and materialize it with their use of the park. This is an ‘investment’ in a discourse, a certain representation in the sense De Lauretis makes use of the term: “Then what makes one take up a position in a certain discourse rather than another is an investment ..., something between an emotional commitment and a vested interest, in the relative power (satisfaction, reward, payoff) which that position promises (but does not necessarily fulfill)” (1987, p. 16).

Women, who use the park, invest in the moral order of ‘family place’ to play tactically in the field of patriarchal relations in their own houses and of the public places of the district. They try to improve their positions, gain respectability and enlarge the sphere of movement (see Sirman, 1995). They gain benefits from investing in a familiar moral order and world view (i.e. family) to create a new locale of negotiation. Yet while uttering the phrase ‘family place’, they alter the meaning of the family (in bits and pieces through reiteration rather than direct confrontation) in this context and the municipal representation of women as “hanımlar”; they move in and out of these two binding terms tactically (de Certeau, 1984). Both against and in compliance with the municipal strategies of creating a moral order they invent tactics of their own to deal with the patriarchal power balance in their households. They take the respect implied and materialized through the rhetoric of ‘hanımlar’ and use it for their own ends, self- consciously or not.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

This thesis began with the exploration of the fantasies that shape the municipal desires in their attempts to build a town anew in Keçiören. I argued so far that they imagine the district as a nationalist, modern, middle class neighborhood and formulate their spatial strategies in accordance with this tri-partite fantasy. Later I continued arguing that the municipality's way of relating and treating the people of the district requires the relocation of this fantasy by focusing on the communitarian desires and the Islamic idiom that is employed. I based my argument on a differentiation between the land and the people of the district and claimed that different approaches to these two, mark the curious transformation of the district in the last twelve years.

In Chapter Two I tried to describe at length the communitarian attitude of the Keçiören municipality. In order to develop this thesis further, I want to repeat some of the points I made. There I have based my argument on the municipal discourse of love. Following Chatterjee's (1993) thoughts about the non-contractual base of

family and community, thus their reliance on love as the foundational ethical basis and the glue to keep them from decay, I have tried to illustrate the municipal aspirations for love. Thus it is a relationship of intimacy that is desired as the ground on which the inhabitants of Keçiören would interact with one another. The issue of belonging is served as a problem of intimate love between the strangers (that are now no longer strangers) who live in a district of a population of 1 million. Besides, a rhetoric of intimacy is employed not only between the inhabitants but also between the municipality, especially the mayor himself and the people. Knowing people's needs through face-to-face encounters, understanding them and responding to these needs in the framework of *hak* and *hizmet* Mayor Altınok believes in and enacts an intimate relationship between his electors and himself. By visiting the parks and the mosques, by being physically close to people of the district he creates the myth of a humble, intimate, and just governor and an omniscient eye who feels personal responsibility about the affairs in his reign. This intimate way of relating to people of the district lays the ground of the *gemeinschaftliche* attitude of the municipality which shows itself especially in the understanding of *hizmet* that serves as a 'root paradigm' to regulate the governing of the land and the people of the district.

The appraisal of personal, face-to-face relations in communitarian politics is well known<sup>95</sup>. As argued before, they are highly valued particularly for their presumed positive affect in the creation of mutual understanding among the people partaking in these relations. In Keçiören women are called to public places to establish this mutual understanding, respect and the feeling of unity. Yet they are not called alone but with a whole set of values and norms that accompany the

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<sup>95</sup> See, among others, Joseph (2002) and Young (1986)

private/intimate sphere that they are supposed to be used to occupying and mastering. Hence, they are called as “hanımlar”, the respectable modest mothers. And with women and (for women) the moral order of family is called to appear and reign in the public land of the district. A morality has been negotiated to prioritize women in some public places within a familial rhetoric, which is called to extend the boundaries of home and serve as a common ground of intimate morality in the encounters between the dwellers of Keçiören. The call for women takes place in the form of arranging the public places of the district according to their imputed needs. Regulations to provide safety, security and respect, give women the freedom of movement they enjoy in public places. They are made to feel that they have the support and protection of the municipal agents when they appear outside their houses. And their movements in public places which are regulated through familial terms calls for a rethinking of the already subtle public/private distinction of social and urban theory. The introduction of the element of intimacy creates the core of this rethinking. So before moving to the debate on public/private distinction I want to clarify some points on this issue:

The Islamic idiom that is introduced throughout this paper with a focus on the phrases *hizmet*, *hak*, *Allah rızası* and *hanım* functions in two levels to create the imagination of intimacy in the ways the municipality relates to people: It creates a culture of intimacy and lays the ground of the “cultural intimacy” (Herzfeld, 1997). The first level is about the certain ways of action, a certain attitude towards people. Employing phrases like *hak* and claiming to work for *Allah rızası* the municipal agents of Keçiören relate to the people of the district as *persons* (Mardin, 1989). Compared to the assumed bureaucratic anonymity of modern state institutions, this

approach enforces a culture of intimacy between the governors and the inhabitants and allows the sprouting of personal relationships. In the second level, in the background, the idiom functions as the common language which makes the demarcations between the power positions transmutable. According to Mardin (1991) in Turkey, from the Ottoman times onwards, there is a conceptualization of the society as composed of two tiers: ruling elites and the masses. Yet, this strict differentiation has been tolerated and these two tiers of the society have been made tightly connected to each other by Islam and the uses of the Islamic idiom. According to Mardin (1989) sharing the same social imaginary and being able to reach and usurp the same idiom is what makes the social legitimation of the social structure and processes possible in Islamic societies. Looking at a different set of relations in Greece, Herzfeld (1997) relates the dissolution of the possibility of clearly defined and immutable levels of power, to the existence of a common ground, a ground of “cultural intimacy”. With the existence of this feeling of intimacy the upper and the lower tiers of the society cooperate, trust each other and the social processes run smoothly. Tiers of the society come together and assume a shared sameness by employing a common vocabulary especially when they have to face their external opponents and rivals. Because, cultural intimacy is based on the pride of a shared knowledge that is out of the reach of strangers and rivals. So the language and the cultural secrets make people intimate to each other because of their exclusiveness. I would like to argue that the Islamic idiom that is shared in Keçiören is the basis of this cultural intimacy while creating a culture of intimacy, because it is part of the implicit critique the municipal agents develop in cooperation with the inhabitants of the district against the dominant Kemalist discourse.

This two way implication of intimacy creates a subversion of the deeply believed binary opposition of public/private in the public places of Keçiören. Explanation of this point requires a closer look at the ‘great public/private divide’. Being first (and thankfully for some students of social sciences still) only analytical and heuristic categories to understand and describe the differential organization of the life of the people and the state, the concepts of public and private have had their own history of varying definitions and significations. Jeff Weintraub (1997) differentiates between four different yet overlapping ways of demarcation: the first is “the liberal-economistic model” in which the distinction is made between the state administration and market economy. The second is “the republican virtue (and classical) model” that sees the public realm in terms of political community and citizenship, analytically distinct from both market and administrative state. This is the over-influential understanding of Jürgen Habermas and many other political scientists. The third approach sees the public realm as a sphere of extra-domestic sociability of citizens, neighbors, colleagues, leaving the private to the individual’s domestic life (including the family). And the last distinction is employed in the feminist analysis and draws the line between the larger economic and political order and the family.

Within all of these frameworks, the public is characterized as being exclusively devoid of intimate relations. This lack necessitates a depiction of the public as cold, rational and mechanistic. The elements (differing depending on the approach we employ) that form the public act like the parts of a machine running in the guise of interpersonal and institutional networks. And the real humane relations and personal attachments can only take place within the boundaries of the private



sphere, namely home. Thinking within the framework of these theories it is not possible to understand the public of Keçiören which is created and maintained via the performances and discourses of intimacy. The public imagined in Keçiören is a communitarian public as opposed to the public sphere of Habermas (1991), which consists of individuals who communicate in this public being free of their private attachments and who are so rational that they can find the single right answer for the resolution of the social problems, thus achieve the common good.

Indeed, in Keçiören, the public markets and public parks, the local associations and even the local city council are imagined as fields where intimate relations are to be performed and be the source of a greater good. This greater good is a communal good, which assumes a shared interest of the totality in the well being of every single individual. This imagined community resonates with the *mahalle* (quarters) of the cities in the Islamic world. Ludwig Ammann (2006) describes the *mahalle* of the Islamic cities as being a site of intimacy and privacy. After discussing the signification of the public/private divide in the Islamic civilization and the differences from its Western counterpart, he argues that in the cities of the Muslim world it is possible to organize daily life according to the principles of intimacy since the *mahalle* functions as an enclosed community which is even defined in the terms of kinship. “The family is writ large indeed in the neighborhoods where the closeness of enclosed co-residents is interpreted as kinship, strengthening the esprit de corps of solidarity. Here, social unity is formed through a mutual sense of *qaraba* (closeness/kinship) comprising family, patron-client and neighbor relationships” (p. 105). A similar feeling is expressed by several of my interviewees, when they refer to the other people populating the parks of Keçiören as “*akraba gibi*” (like kin).

Yet Keçiören is too great in size and population to be a *mahalle*. Face-to-face relations are impossible to create and sustain. But the language of intimacy which functions in between family and in the idealized *mahalle* can be translated to the public spaces of a modern urban area. And thus, this public of fictive *akrabas* subverts the assumptions which stem from the variants of the Western public/private divide and more importantly the prevailing power balance between the two opposing sides of this divide, in the contemporary large cities of Turkey. And anticipates a moral order that is put on display in the very public places of the capital city of the Turkish Republic, enforced and strengthened by the codes of intimacy that take strength from an Islamic idiom.

I want to argue that this moral public should also be understood in the dialogical relationship Keçiören and in general the political and social actors with an Islamic orientation have with the Kemalist elite. Gürbilek (1992) argues that from the onset the public space in Turkey has been imagined through a vocabulary of intimacy. Atatürk, as the figure of the father of the nation, educated the public personally, thought them the modernized modes of behavior being a role model and interfered with the most intimate moments of life by giving orders on how to dance, how to eat and how to dress. The state itself has always been imagined as ‘the father state’ and the political actors followed the example of Atatürk claiming a fictive kinship with the nation and with each other (Bora, 2004). Moreover the structure of the public have never allowed free entrance, the number one condition of the public in the western theory, i.e. accessibility; rather the consent of the ruling elite, the army and the father state has always been necessary for one to enter this domain. This consent-bounded public space made it possible for personalities like Nevzat

Tandoğan, who forcefully excluded the villagers from the new capital's showcase public places, to rule the capital city for seventeen years and the headscarf issue to be debated for the last twenty years (Sirman, 2006).

Keçiören counterpoises the public space of the Republic which is composed of secular middle class citizens who have necessarily Westernized/modernized appearances, with a public that is regulated with different principles. As intimate as the ones just mentioned, these principles which rely on the communicative and imaginary value of the Islamic idiom and the metaphor of family, govern a public which is similar neither to the various publics of the Western theory nor to the desired public of the elites of the Republic. The borders of exclusion drawn in line with the desired morality, this particular public in Keçiören aims to display, exemplify and prove the possibility of a harmonious, modest and highly regulated coexistence of “men and women, rich and poor, lower and upper classes”.

Approaching the public space of Keçiören as a showcase might be questionable considering the moral framework which allows the “unwanted and invisibles” of the Republic move to the foreground and gain a respectable visibility. Each showcase aims to display something and at the same time hides another. I argued that the hidden of the Republic become visible in the public places of Keçiören but I left the question of what remains/is hidden not clearly answered. Although I provided some hints about the exclusion of youth and “immoral” people, and the negative attitude towards, I had to leave many other points unnoticed. So what is tidied up for display in the showcase and what is left to be concealed requires further investigation of the topic. And only after such a research the analysis I made here would be closer to complete.

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