AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH IN UNDERSTANDING INTERNET AS
A PRACTICE: A CASE STUDY OF INTERNET CAFES IN A SMALL TOWN

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims at understanding how Internet being a particular technology, integrates into daily practices in a small town. By doing this, it follows a theoretically informed ethnography based research concluding that the relationship between technology and society cannot be grasped by analysing both as separate entities. Hence, it attempts to develop a theoretical and methodological framework that is constantly aware of problems raised by dualistic assumptions analysing technology-society or human-nonhuman as separate entities one impinging upon other. It is this awareness that led the study to apply Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* and Latour's concept of *actant* into its field of inquiry. These two notions promote an understanding that takes into account the contingency of practices and provides researchers with the analytical means to comprehend technologies within the contexts of their "use". It is also denoted by the findings of the study that a particular 'technology' does not create a 'social impact' but as itself being social, it allows this already occurring practice to find an avenue for its expression.

Keywords: The Technology and Society Relationship, Ethnography, Internet, Habitus, Actant.

ÖZ

İNTERNET'İ BİR PRATİK OLARAK ELE ALAN DİSİPLİNLERARASI YAKLAŞIM ÇERÇEVESİNDE VAKIA ÇALIŞMASI: KÜÇÜK BIR İLÇEDEKİ İNTERNET KAFELER.

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Bu çalışma, İnternet'in küçük bir ilçedeki gündelik yaşam pratiklerine nasıl dahil olduğunun araştırılmasına dayanır. Bunu yaparken, teknolojinin ve toplumun birbirlerinden ayrılarak incelenemeyeceğini varsayan bir teorik çerçeveden hareket eden etnografik temelli bir araştırma yöntemi benimsenmiştir. Böylelikle, teorik ve metodolojik çerçeve oluşturulurken teknoloji-toplum kavramlarını dualist bir yaklaşımla ele almanın handikapları dikkate alınmıştır. Bu çizgiden hareketle Bourdieu'nun *habitus* ve Latour'un *actant* kavramlarına başvurulmuştur. Her iki kavram da pratiklerin olumsallığını (contingency) vurgulayarak, teknolojileri kullanımları temelinde kavramaya ve analiz etmeye olanak tanımaktadır. Çalışmanın bulguları belirli bir teknolojinin sosyal bir etki yaratmadığını, ancak kendisinin halihazırda sosyal bir olgu olarak, süregiden pratikler içerisinde ifadesini bulduğunu desteklemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler : Teknoloji ve toplum ilişkisi, Etnografya, İnternet, *Habitus*, *Actant*

To My Mother

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study investigates technology-society relationship by drawing upon particular practices; Internet uses of people in a small central Anatolian district. It seeks to reveal the ways in which technology, being an integral part of life, incorporates with everyday lives of people living in a specific area.

Exploration of this issue within the interdisciplinary field of Science and Technology Policy Studies is in a way related with the perspective that the study aims to provide since it shares the notion that studies of technology and society should not be carried out in separate spheres. During the study, it became obvious that thinking through binary oppositions and constructing polarizations no more helps one to capture the daily life, as there exist a myriad of factors influencing the complex nature of daily practices. However, much of the literature about technology in general, and Internet in particular rely heavily upon the considerations that take technology either as a thing 'filling' a predetermined social purpose or as an independent determinant molding the society in certain directions. Chapter One is devoted to the analysis of such lines of arguments aiming at a review of the literature on the relationship between technology and society

This study maintains that technologies should be regarded as practices rather than stable things[1]. By this way, it does not break completely a new ground since there are a number of similar research studies carried out in the past. The ethnographic research conducted by Daniel Miller and Don Slater –The Internet, An Ethnographic Approach- is one of the foremost studies in that manner. In their study, these scholars do not simply question the 'uses' or 'effects' of Internet medium, they rather depict a broad picture of how members of a specific culture (Trinidadians) seek to make themselves at home in a transforming communicative environment, how they express themselves in this environment and tend to shape it in their own image. The crucial notion in Miller and Slater's work which also influenced the present study is their rejection to draw boundaries between online and offline practices by researching the Internet as a 'world apart'. The scholars state that the earlier generation of Internet

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[1] Therefore it should be stated beforehand that the plural usage of the term "technologies" does not imply things in themselves. More precisely, this study does not employ "technologies" as simple artifacts rather it underlines that the term makes sense only within the encompassing practices.

writing was concerned with the Internet primarily through such notions as 'cyberspace' or 'virtuality'. However, their assertion is that social thought has gained a little by attempting to generalize about such notions and can gain hugely by "producing material that will allow us to understand the very different universes of social and technical possibility that have developed around the Internet in, say, Trinidad versus Indonesia, or Britain versus India." (Slater and Miller, 2000: 1) Their study has been among the most influential works in developing the main theoretical outlook of the present study.

In addition, Bourdieu can be claimed to have a distinctive approach that has much to offer to the studies of technology. As Sterne (2003: 369) states "There are extraordinary institutional pressures on technology scholars to think about technology in certain ways, to ask certain kinds of research questions about technology to the exclusion of others." Bourdieuean approach encourages resisting the force of the 'preconstructed' that weighs heavily upon scholars who tends to study technology outside the mainstream approaches. It calls for an 'epistemological break' with the mainstream approaches to technology. From this view, study of technology is a strategic research site that can lead further thinking about embodied experience, organized movement and the organization of society. For instance, Bourdieu's concept *habitus* serves a fertile ground for studies of technology, though he does not focus particularly on the technological dimension of the concept.

Following the Bourdieuean view, what this study tends to achieve is an epistemological break from its 'object' of study: Internet. In this sense, what is not to be done is clear; Internet is not simply described in its own terms within the framework of this study. This study's burden is to provide real insight into technology as a social phenomenon. Since technologies do not exist independent of social practice, their study necessitates a comprehensive approach that rejects to take technology in isolation from the society in which it is in practice.

The intriguing accounts of technology-human relationship in works of Latour have also been inspiring for this study. Different from the notion of *actor* in traditional sociology, Actor Network Theory provided by Latour suggests that non-human components like artifacts or naturalized constructs like bacteria can be treated as having agency. Such alternative views play an essential role for leaving the dualities behind, allowing us to do away with the growing gap between 'technology' and

'society.' They are further elaborated within the theoretical framework in Chapter Two.

My employment position as a teacher played a crucial role in the research area for this study since it turned out to be both an advantage and disadvantage in conducting the field study. It is common sense knowledge that teachers working in small towns are very much respected by the inhabitants of those areas in Turkey. The smaller the scale of a setting, the wider is the chance of being known by everyone. Therefore, during the preliminary research, people paid attention to every step I made. However, despite my explanations of research purpose, they did not seem to be satisfied and stayed suspicious for some time. Furthermore, I was thought of inspecting for truant pupils or trying to lure some customers for an official cyber-café, which people believed to be the plan of the school administration. This situation appeared to be a disadvantage. It took time to win their confidence and prove that the questions I ask have nothing to do with my position as a teacher.

Advantages were numerous; I was filling up my obligatory work period [2] in the town during my study. Positions of government officials working in the town are ambiguous. They can be regarded as both insiders and outsiders depending on different occasions. For instance, I was treated as an outsider at times when I freely walked along the streets, entered into every cyber café I encountered. For a female insider such an action is quite problematic since people may easily judge her for being immoral. I felt like an insider anytime when I needed help to get in touch with people. Whomever I talk, tried to help me for further information, and oriented me towards other informants. Since I was an outcomer living in the area for two years and learning about their patterns of interaction by both observing and participating, much of my experience was new. Therefore I did not experience typical problems that may associate with being an insider like having taken too much for granted. In interviews, I encouraged further talking on certain issues by follow up questions especially at times when the issue seemed to be common knowledge to the insiders but is obscure to outsiders.

Like in elsewhere, gender matters a great deal in everyday life of the town. It should be noted that being a female researcher created some problems in a social

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[2] Most of the government officials including teachers have to fill their obligatory work period in underdeveloped areas to achieve their assignment for welfare regions. Therefore town, being an obligatory work area, is marked with poor opportunities for education, employment and health services.

setting where much of the informants were men. Field research requires the researcher to take part in a close if not intimate relationship with people s/he is researching. However, traditions of research setting were far from allowing such closeness for the members of the opposite sex. Therefore to some extent, possible silences and absences in data became unavoidable.

In addition to gender-related problems, issues of power stemming from the different positions of the researcher and the researched are noteworthy. It is apparent that the objective of finding out about people through interviews is best accomplished when the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee is non-hierarchical. On the other hand, my position as a teacher inevitably overshadowed some interviews with pupils. Seeing that my position is silencing their voices and resulting in their increasingly reluctant answering to research questions, I took a decision to make interviews with lesser number of pupils. Another problem related with this was that I encountered in conversations with men; they responded with statements they thought I wanted to hear. This was at least, what I sensed. Chapter Three encompasses a further analysis of the problems experienced during the research in providing descriptions of the research setting and giving account of the preliminary research.

Since the aim of the study is to achieve an understanding of how a particular technology integrates and is integrated into the daily practices of people and how people situate themselves within this specific technology, the observation of daily routines of people became crucial for providing empirical data. At a basic level, conducting qualitative fieldwork reinforces an underlying perspective that everyday life is enacted through social interaction. Therefore, it is also crucial to accept that respondents may change their views on issues and to some extent the data that is provided by interviews relies upon the changing interactions among people.

The empirical part of the study depends upon the data collected by qualitative interviews and participant observation. Each interview is conducted with a preplanned main body of questions in hand that helped to begin and guide the conversation. However, it should be noted that in certain cases, I did not get a chance to ask all of the preplanned main questions and in certain others, I customized them to what I think the interviewee might better understand. Therefore, it can be stated that semi-structured interviews were conducted in accordance with the open-ended questions.

The use of participant observation within a culturally and socially defined context is regarded as a signature of ethnographic research design whose purpose is to

describe people (Brink and Edgecombe, 2003). However, adoption of such a method is not adequate enough to call the research an ethnographic one. Since in ethnography, the researcher would have to observe people day after day in their natural environment to observe what they do in all kinds of circumstances. This helps in understanding "what contexts influence their decisions and what other people, and their relationship to the decision maker, do to influence these decisions"(Brink and Edgecombe, 2003: 1029). That is the reason why this study deliberately eschews using the term ethnography in the name of its methodology. It would be a mislabeling given the condition that participant observation mainly took place in the Internet cafes being restricted settings. Despite being an inhabitant in the area, I have to emphasize that I did not participate in the activities of people in all kinds of circumstances; Rather, I observed the floating of life from my own daily routine and documented peoples testimonies by interviews. In this sense, it can be stated that the particular research provided within this study about the Internet-society interaction in a small town, is in its infancy and can be located in a wider framework with further comparative and ethnographical studies.

CHAPTER 2

TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY RELATIONSHIP: A SURVEY ON LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the literature on the theoretical perspectives and discussions concerning the relationship between technology and society. By doing so, it attempts to evaluate the major trends in the literature in order to understand how authors with different concerns formulated the relationship between technology and society. Since the literature is far more complex than the brief outlook provided within the scope of this study, a categorization is applied to provide a better and comprehensible understanding of the writings and the present study limits itself only with elaborating the work of the certain prominent figures. Hence, the major tendencies formulating technology and society relationship are grouped here as technological determinism and social studies of technology. However, it should be stated that these categories are ideal-typical[3]constructions; therefore, it is not claimed that every single work would fit into one or other.

In this chapter it is also aimed to provide a discourse analysis[4] to the studies of technology. Finlay (1987:5) who makes a discourse analysis on new communication technologies will be the main source of reference at this point. She departs from the idea that:

> Any machine is the embodiment of social interests and forces. It contains and reproduces certain procedures. It lends credence and legitimacy to certain discourses. It is not just an empirical object but also a discursive object.

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[3] Weberian notion of ideal type construction denotes a classification system based on abstract constructions in order to assess the phenomena being studied. It should be emphasized that ideal types do not definitely correspond to reality; they are constructed as a tools to understand it.

[4] "Stated in its briefest, most simple form, discourse analysis is the study of the way in which an object or idea, is taken up by various institutions and epistemological positions, and of the way in which those institutions and positions treat it. Discourse analysis studies the way in which objects or ideas are spoken about"(Finlay, 1987:2)

2.1. Technological Determinism

As a main tendency, technological determinism approaches technology as the main driving force behind the society, which is construed to be dependant upon it. In other words, technological determinism appears to place the society at the mercy of technology. Moreover, it is fair to say like orthodox Marxism, which sees economy as the main motto behind all social developments, technological determinism regards technology as the main agent that determines the social life.

Technological determinism is often a taken-for-granted assumption. In most cases, this view is presented as common sense, and by this way it is naturalized. Technological determinist arguments presume that technology molds society by posing it in a certain behavioral, ideological, economic, and social mood.

While it is possible to point out a general category like technological determinism as we do, it is certain that there are sub-categories of technological determinism. Among many possible ways to classify it, sub-categorizations we choose to group technological determinists as optimists and pessimists. Technological determinist-optimists see an essential goodness in technological development and consequently they believe in 'progressive' worth of technological development. On the contrary, technological determinist-pessimists see an essential evil in technological development, as a result of which they underplay technological development as a claimed cause of social deterioration. In other words, pessimists point out to the 'harms of technological progress' that they claim to be either possible or inevitable.

2.1.1. Technological Determinist-Optimist Outlook

The optimist tendency regarding technology may be dated back to Bacon. Bacon in *Yeni Atlantis* (2002) suggests humanity to reveal nature's secrets by deploying intellectual power. He was confident that humanity could acquire the knowledge of the nature and consequently exercise control over it. This version of optimistic view advocates that humans by extension of their capabilities can gain control over environment.

As important and more recent figures exemplifying technological determinist-optimist position Bell and Toffler are certain that technological development serves for the well being of society. Bell (1973) argues that progress in science and

technology will lead to more advanced production processes and consequently positive changes in social relations. He focuses on the effects of science and technology upon the process of production and nature of professions. By doing this he points to a shift from industrial society to the "post-industrial society", a term which he introduced to literature. This shift is underpinned by a change from production of goods to production of services, increasing importance of health and education, research and development and the increase in number and role of professional technical groups. According to Bell, like the centrality of private property in capitalism, knowledge is the central notion around which the post-industrial society is organized. Therefore as the knowledge becomes multicentered by the diffusion of communication and information technology, the power will also be multi-centered. This is supposed to eliminate the problem of bureaucracy and monopoly of information resulting in the flourish of multiple public spaces. Being a sincere advocate of the positive social effects of technological development, Bell counters the common pessimistic arguments about the potentiality of technology to get out of control by asserting that post-industrial society will be marked with an increased control over technology.

Toffler & Toffler (1995) is another well-known technological determinist-optimist. For him, humanity faced two major waves, which are very much related to technological improvements: The first wave resulting in agrarian society and the second in industrial society. He argues that recently the world has been witnessing a third major wave. Today, industrial society is evolving into post-industrial society. Although he sees an uneven development in the world, which means a coexistence of agrarian, industrial and postindustrial societies, he seems to believe in the final victory of postindustrial stage over both agrarian and industrial stages. Like Bell, Toffler argues structural transformations of technology to be the main driving force behind this evolution. Furthermore, he sees an improvement in human condition through such evolution.

When arguments of Bell and Toffler are evaluated together, it can be seen that they both employ an evolutionist discourse. They enumerate stages presuming a linear perspective of progress. Finlay (1987), making a discourse analysis on new communication technologies, takes evolutionism as a discursive procedure[5]. In her

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[5] According to Finlay (1987), discourse is not an amorphous, nondescriptive practice. Rather it is practiced with a certain degree of regularity that she calls discursive procedures. Those discursive rules

analysis, she argues that evolutionist discourse always goes hand in hand with notions of continuity and linearity. Consequently, such evolutionist discourses imply that technological progress is upon us and it is irrevocable like biological evolution. Accordingly, it is assumed that "progress is necessary and ineluctable but it is also desirable because it fulfils the evolutionary march toward the absolute"(ibid: 45).

2.1.2. Technological Determinist-Pessimist Outlook

Technological determinist-pessimists, like technological determinist-optimists regard technology as the main driving force behind the social, however with a critical eye. It can be observed that technological determinist-pessimists mostly problematize technological systems rather than their artifacts. To put it clearly, they concentrate on the effects of technology on 'human qualities' like morality, ethics and so on. To them, technological development has a potential to dehumanize, demoralize, and alienate. The threats foreseen, change with respect to the arguments of each writer. However, technology as a menacing force beyond human control is a common argument embraced by the most pessimistic approaches. All in all, technology is taken as omnipotent, but contrary to optimist current, not beneficial but detrimental.

Ellul (1964) can be mentioned as a significant name, to be located in technological determinist-pessimist camp. In *The Technological Society*, he criticizes the mind-set that he claims to be motivated by the principle of maximizing efficiency. Ellul applies discursive procedure of evolutionism like Bell and Toffler, however with a pessimist outlook. He indicates that progress is inevitable although it is not for the benefit of humanity.

Therefore, he concentrates on the negative aspects of technological progress. He defines "technique" as "the totality of methods rationally arrived at and having absolute efficiency (for a given stage of development) in every field of human activity"(ibid: 25). For Ellul (1964), 'The new technical milieu' is to be distinguished from past by some salient characteristics. It has become autonomous from human intervention and its means gained primacy over ends. Technology in recent world,

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and procedures help to legitimate statements and beliefs in modern world. In her work she attempts to demonstrate why and when those statements were produced as they were. In sum, she tries to uncover the rules and procedures that subtend and legitimate the things we say and believe.

acquired human traits like autonomy, self-generation or unity. This, as Finlay (1987: 72) points out, helps to anthropomorhize[6] the technology.

> By anthropomorphizing technology, discourse on new communications technology assures a place for technology at the centre of the universe arising out of the anthropocentric episteme.

The anthropomorphization procedure is used both to argue for and against technology. Therefore the same discursive procedure is valid for optimistic approach. The case is obvious when the common sensical features attributed to computers are considered. As the fieldwork of this study also reveals, identification of computers as "infallible, intelligent machines" is quite prevalent.

> Whether the positive or the negative side of the anthropomorphization equation is evoked in technological discourse, it is interesting to note that Robbe-Grillet (1963), Nathalie Sarraute (1956), Roland Barthes (1953), and Stephen Heath (1972) have all argued that the procedure of anthropomorphization in the classical novel is a trait of discourse particular to the bourgeois discursive procedure of exchange within the rise of industrialist society. The house is exchanged for the man and vice versa rather than recognizing the authentic value of each. Anthropomorphization is a case of false referential exchange whereby man is equated with machine and machine becomes a signifier of humanity (ibid: 71).

Postman (1992) can be counted as another pessimist. Following an evolutionary approach, he distinguishes cultures as tool using, technocracies and technopolies according to the integrated levels of technology. According to him, technology is both a friend and an enemy. However, he seems to focus solely on why it became a dangerous enemy expressing the need to challenge a 'technological thought-world', which destroys the 'vital moral foundation' of human beings. In fact, the destruction technology brings, can be seen as a cost since its' gifts are not without a heavy cost. He is departing from the well-known determinist claim that:

> New technologies alter the structure of our interests: the things we think about …and they alter the nature of community: the arena in which thoughts develop…. A new technology doesn't add or subtract something. It changes everything (ibid: 19-20).

For Postman (1992), owing to the communication and information technologies, contemporary societies and individuals suffer from excessive information that is information without meaning and control mechanisms. That

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[6] Anthropomorphization of technology denotes ascribing human traits to technological artifacts.

information glut favored by new technologies can be seen as threatening as lack of information. Regulation and valuation of information is vital for societies and this can only be realized in the presence of a moral domain be it religion or an ideology including a transcendent idea. He mainly criticizes the state of mind, which maintains the 'deification of technology', as this will bring the surrender of culture to technology.

2.2. Social Studies of Technology

Social Studies of Technology (SST) encompasses various analytical frameworks that differ in their terminology and approach. It serves as a meeting point for a variety of scholars with differing concerns and intellectual traditions. However what SST studies share in common is the notion that, technology does not develop according to an inner technical logic but it is undeniably "social", influencing and being influenced by social relations. Therefore it can be stated that SST owes its emergence to a critique of such technological determinism. In addition, what these approaches aim to establish is that, apart from including an independent logic, technologies that we end up with could always have been otherwise[7]. It should be emphasized that SST scholars mostly focus technologies in the contexts of their particular uses rather than analyzing a general category of technology like in concerns of Ellul or Toffler.

Social constructionist approaches[8] should be grouped under the heading of SST since they emphasize human shaping of technology by departing from the dualistic presumption on human-technology split. Trevor Pinch and Weibe Bijker are two important names in the literature about social constructionism. Bijker and Law (1992) oppose the idea of a "pure" technology by stating that technologies always embody compromises and trade-offs; a range of heterogeneous factors shapes them. The shaping of technology in their view has to do with the historical, the economical, the political and the psychological as well as with the sociological. Therefore what authors seek is to find multidisciplinary ways of talking about this complexity. Bijker (1999)

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[7] For the exemplification of such perspectives see Mac Kenzie and Wajcman, 1999; Bijker et al.,1987; Bijker and Law, 1992.

[8] Social constructionism expresses a sociology-of-knowledge kind of approach to technology. The main focus here is upon "relevant social groups" of people's involvement in understanding and use of technology that is also called as "interpretative flexibility" of technology.

states that we all live in a technological culture. The goals of social constructionism declared by Bijker are to provide an understanding of this culture, to politicize and to democratize it.[9] In doing this, interpretative flexibility of technological artifacts plays a key role. Social constructionists support the idea that social actors can interpret technologies in various ways. The term interpretative flexibility denotes this condition. They embrace such a standpoint in order to challenge technological determinist understandings.

> Demonstrating the interpretative flexibility of an artifact makes clear that the stabilization of an artifact is a social process, and hence subject to choices, interests, and value judgments-in short, to politics. Without recognizing the interpretative flexibility of technology, one is bound to accept a technologically determinist view. A technological determinist view does not stimulate citizen's participation in processes of democratic control of technology, since it conveys an image of autonomy and the impossibility of intervention (ibid: 11).

However, it is underlined that the emphasis on interpretative flexibility should not lead to a trivial level of observation that considers technology as a human product and therefore subject to any social influences. In this respect Bijker (1999) asserts that social constructionism regards technology not only as 'malleable and changeable' but also as 'obdurate and hard'. He emphasizes that negligence of this point might result in optimistic expectations causing illusions. Thus consideration of this feature is supposed to help us to conceive why one interpretation of a specific technology rather than another has succeeded.

> The relevant social groups have, in building up the technological frame, invested so much into the key technology that this technology's meaning becomes fixed-it cannot be changed easily, and it forms a part of an enduring network of practices, theories and social institutions. From this time on, it may indeed happen that, naively speaking, the technology "determines" social development (ibid: 12).

The questions of how technologies firm up or how things get settled are important for social constructionists since their perspective is criticized on the grounds of neglecting the mutual relationship between the technical and the social. Writers are claimed to privilege society instead of showing how technology and society interrelate.[10] To avoid

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[9] According to Bijker (1999), for politicization and democratization of technological culture, the processes shaping our technologies should be understood. This would allow us to see that our technologies do not necessarily have to be the way they are and help us to create different or better technologies.

[10] For this critique see Williams and Edge (1996).

such a prioritization of society (or it can also be called as a form of reductionism), Bijker and Law (1992) regard what is normally called "the social domain" or "the economic domain" as both heterogeneous and emergent like technology. About the stabilization[11] of technology they state:

> A technology is stabilized if and only if the heterogeneous relations in which it is implicated, and of which it forms a part, are themselves stabilized. In general, then, if technologies are stabilized, this is because the network of relations in which they are involved –together with the various strategies that drive and give shape to the network – reach some kind of accommodation (ibid: 10).

Another criticism addressed to this perspective is that it includes a 'structural exclusion' by solely drawing attention to 'ambiguous' relevant social group's understanding of technology, writers are claimed to ignore women, ethnic minorities and manual workers.[12] (Mac Kenzie &Wajcman, 1999:22)

Grint and Woolgar (1997) make parallel suggestions to that of social constructionists above. They view the 'reality' of objects not as inherently existent. On the contrary, they take it as an outcome of discursive practices in relation to the object. According to this approach, the effects and capacity of technology cannot be analyzed as a stable issue. They are taken to be essentially contingent. The intriguing notion suggested by social constructionist accounts of Grint and Woolgar is that, analysis of technologies should treat them as 'texts' which are 'written' by producers and marketing experts to be 'read' by the consumers and users.

> Construing the machine as a text encourages us to see that the nature of an artifact is its reading. But in trying to escape the dreaded technological determinism, in disassociating the upshot of reading and interpretation from any notion of the inherent quality of the text we do not mean to suggest that any reading is possible (let alone that all readings are equally possible) although in principle this is the case. (Grint and Woolgar, 1997: 72-73)

This notion has been a matter of hot debate. Examination of critiques reveals some other considerations of technology in its relation with the social. For instance, Kling (1992) challenges this social constructionist position by emphasizing that some material properties of artifacts cannot be altered by social constructions. Kling criticizes social constructionist positions on the grounds that they ignore the effects of objects on subjects.

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[11] It is also expressed by the term "closure".

[12] Such accounts are further elaborated under title Gender and Technology.

> An analyst who argues that technologies do nothing by themselves is staking a position close to the folk saying that 'guns don't kill, people do'. In contrast, I would speculate that an increase by 300,000 guns per year in pistol, assault rifle and associated ammunition sales to teenagers in Los Angeles would almost certainly increase the number of murders by shooting (Kling1992: 358).

Kling's objection to social constructionist position is exemplified in his approach pointing that it fails to admit the effects of a fired bullet on flesh and bone. It is no intention here to judge between these writers since they all share the same notion of providing a holistic account of technology in its relation with social. On one hand it can be concluded that these debates are important since they help for betterment of SST but on the other hand a critical eye can find some of them quite exaggerated.[13] At that point contributions made by Hutchby should be addressed, since he aims at broadening the scope of SST by overcoming the problems as the ones pointed by Kling's critiques in this study. The arguments put forward by Hutchby express an attempt to develop an understanding without falling into traps of any kind of determinisms. He reminds that the social constructionist argument does not deny the possible constraining influences of material artifacts. According to Hutchby (2003), the point of discussion was not to suggest that machines do not have effects and for him, technology as a text metaphor does not imply that all interpretations of the text are as good as others. Rather, the question he raises is:

> Certainly juxtaposing different readings of a bridge, or of a computer, or of an aero plane, shows that humans are capable of interpreting the capacities of technologies in varying ways. Constructionist methods, by focusing on such variability, have usefully brought to the fore the recognition that social processes are involved in all aspects of technology, and not simply in its effects upon society. But the question that still looms is: does the aeroplane lend itself to the same set of possible interpretations as the bridge; and if not, why not? (Hutchby, 2003: 446-447).

To provide an answer, Hutchby (2003) makes use of the term "affordance" that he adopted from Gibson[14] for to remark the possible "effects" and "constraints" of

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[13] This statement refers to the critiques of Grint and Woolgar to Callon (1984) who analyzes the evolving actor-network throughout the projection of VEL (electronic car), which resulted with a 'failure'. The establishment of VEL was planned by Electricite de France (EDF). Grint and Woolgar's (1997, 31) critiques of this analysis can be examined to comprehend the social constructionist approach. However it is surprising to see that they ignore Callon's arguments, which are quite acceptable from their view and rather, concentrate on some trivial statements.

[14] Hutchby (2003) states that the concept of affordances is associated with the work of Gibson (1979) in the psychology of perception

technological forms. It is a call for the recognition of the constraining, as well as enabling, materiality of artifacts.

> For Gibson, humans, along with animals, insects, birds and fishes, orient objects in their world (rocks, trees, rivers, etc.) in terms of what he called their affordances: the possibilities that they offer for action. For example, a rock may have the affordance, for a reptile, of being a shelter from the heat of the sun; or, for an insect, of concealment from a hunter…Affordances may thus differ from species to species and from context to context. However they cannot be seen as freely variable…The affordance of something is assumed not to change as the need of the observer changes. The edibility of a substance for an animal does not depend on the hunger of the animal (Hutchby, 2003: 447-448).

The term affordances is utilized by Hutchby (2003) in his suggestion that all technological artifacts have affordances; the possibilities for the action that they offer.

A survey reveals that discussions as exemplified above are abundant in SST literature. Such discussions can be regarded as extensions of never ending debates on agent-structure into the field of SST. The arguments of Hutchby are crucial since he offers a way –consideration of affordances- for not to get stuck in vicious circle.

Another perspective is the one represented by a French scholar Bruno Latour. Though his works cannot be taken within a single line, it can be stated that he embraced the notion of reciprocal relationship between technology and society taking them as inseparable entities. In his work *Laboratory Life* with Woolgar, he provides an investigation of scientific activity through anthropological study. By taking scientists as tribes with their own mythologies, Latour also tends to make demystification of what is called scientific practice. In another interesting book on *Aramis* he evaluates an unsuccessful railway project in Paris. The actors in Aramis project are described as initial designers, other engineers, governments, companies, public officials, institutions, middlemen and spokespersons, each group of actors envisaging the project in different ways. There is another group of actors added by Latour to this list: machines. According to him, the feasibility of the project depends on the activation of both human and non-human actors involved (Latour, 1996:56).

To comprehend the logic behind his involvement of machines to groups of actors, Actor Network Theory (ANT) supported by him (and Callon) should be examined. According to this perspective, there are no purely social relations in a way that, social is always already associated with the non-social. Contrary to the notion of actor in traditional sociology ANT includes non-human components as having agency. Actors might not necessarily be human actors. That's why the term "actants" is introduced.

Actants may be non-human participants like artifacts or naturalized constructs like bacteria as well. For instance Latour (1988) exemplifies the alliance of actants to give strength to a position in the *Pasteurization of France*. In sum:

> An actor-network is simultaneously an actor whose activity is networking heterogeneous elements and a network that is able to redefine and transform what it is made of (Callon, 1984: 93).

In addition to SST literature briefly summarized above, there exist writers who aim at studying technology in its relation to social by paying special attention to matters of gender.[15]For instance, the study by Cockburn and Ormrod (1993) demonstrates how technology relations disadvantage women by taking an example of microwave oven's life trajectory from design office to factories, shops and households. Writers share the general motives of SST scholars in opposing the deterministic accounts of technology but they go one step further in their aim to understand one specific aspect of technology relations: their gendering. Referring to the ANT approach, writers describe a technological innovation -microwave cooking- as the creation of a complicated network of actors, individuals and organizations rather than being a brainchild of some genius. However they note that SST approach avoids any reference to subjectivity and identity therefore failing to gender any of the actors involved.

> Much more can be learned by asking whether the actors are women or men, whether phenomena are represented as feminine or masculine. Once we think about gender we are obliged to think about people and groups in terms of how they see themselves and each other. And it will become clear that gender subjectivity and identity have an important bearing on technologies and technological activities. People as feminine and masculine are also constituted in relations, some of which are technological relations (ibid: 40).

Feminist accounts on technology often question why a "technological change", that is considered as quite capable of transforming tasks and activities, fails to change the fundamental asymmetry and inequality of the relation between women and men. However they are not speaking with one voice. Haraway (1991) is one name calling on women to infiltrate the technical domain without naïveté about or techno phobia for a technology's design, production or use. Haraway (1991) aims to raise new and high expectations of feminist intervention by focusing upon the communication and information technologies such as Internet.

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[15] As examples see: Sorensen (1992), Kirkup&Keller (1992), Wajcman (1991) Balsamo (1995)

The new electronic technologies in particular have raised feminist expectations, such as the possibilities for gender bending, or possibly a genderless society in which the body takes a seat, vanishing in cyberspace-a three dimensional area generated by electronic technologies in which digital data may be visualized, heard, and even felt-some data may even be people. The possibilities of the new information technologies for new ways of thinking or being seem endlessly exciting. In cyberspace, so the postmodern promise goes, the body, long thought to be basis for gender identity and women's roadblock to liberation, may vanish (Oldenziel, p.64).

Much of feminist accounts of technology agree to some point with SST scholars in stating that technologies do not have social effects, but they are social in their very constitution. Furthermore, they add the fact that social is already gendered. Therefore gender and technology, being social relations, are both shaping each other (Cockburn & Dilic, 1994).

As the empirical part of this study also reveals, in a research undertaking the analysis of technology and society, specific attention has to be paid to relations of gender. Seeing that there are only a few female Internet users in the field, made me think on a further project about gendered ethnography of interactions and changing meanings surrounding Internet. It is important to note here that a considerable amount of feminist scholarship has devoted attention to women's limited access to technological domains as well as the lack of women in production and design processes. In that sense, what mainstream approaches illustrate is: women as passive victims of male dominated technological domains. However the view provided by Ormrade and Cockburn breaks apart from mainstream. They are critical for they make us rethink on "lack of women" kind of statements. Sharing the notion with SST approaches, they agree technological innovation is being complete only once the technology is in use. Therefore invention is a beginning and "interpretative flexibility" may allow uses the designer never had in mind. From this perspective, a negligence of women's contribution and use of technology is avoided and women can be seen as genuine actors in the development of technologies[16].

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[16] For an example of "unforeseen" uses of technology by women, see Oldenziel (1996)

2.3. Communication Information Technologies and Internet

In addition to literature survey on formulations of technology-society relationship that is provided in the previous sections of chapter, this part of the study deals with writings on Information Technology in general and Internet in particular. Following the way the ideas presented in the previous chapter, it can be stated that determinist approaches and SST approaches have their extensions under this heading. There are positions heralding a new age marked with rapid transformations in Information Technology (IT) as well as the ones manifesting a social deterioration due to diffusion of IT worldwide.

To start with optimistic vision, Poster (1995) advocates the idea that new communications systems brought "a broad and extensive change in the culture" that amounts to a shift in the way identities are constructed. Therefore if one aims to understand new communications systems, analyzing the transformation of subject positions becomes crucial. To exemplify such a transformation he compares the technically advanced societies of our age with the emergence of an "urban, merchant culture in the midst of feudal society in the Middle Ages" (ibid: 80) This historical analogy implies that people highly engaged with new information and communication technologies (ICT) broaden their scope like the merchants gaining "independent cognitive abilities" owing to their changing conditions. For Poster, the new conditions of subject formation amounts to a decentering and dispersal of the subject. In parallel with changing conditions of subject formation he also identifies the blurring of the boundaries between human-machine, and reality-virtuality as a postmodern phenomenon. In sum it can be stated that, Poster argues emergence of a new social formation by following the determinist claim repeating technology-shaping society. Internet plays an important role in his analysis since he attributes a democratic structure to it, parallel to that of the telephone.

> What distinguishes the telephone from the other great media is its decentralized quality and its universal exchangeability of the positions of sender and receiver. Anyone can 'produce' and send a message to anyone else in the system and, in the advanced industrial societies, almost everyone is in the system… In the recent past the only technology that imitates the telephone's democratic structure is the Internet (ibid: 81).

Poster (1997) states that the grand narrative of modernity that sees Internet as a mere tool of communication fails to recognize the possibilities it offers. Regarding the literature solely concentrating on effects of Internet[17] he states:

> The Internet resists the basic conditions for asking the question of the effects of technology. It installs a new regime of relations between humans and matter and nonmatter, reconfiguring the relation of technology to culture…the internet is more like a social space than a thing so that its effects are more like those of Germany than those of Hammers (ibid: 216).

When his arguments concerning Internet are elaborated, Poster's discourse is not easy to be regarded as determinist or not. On the one hand he comes closer to a dialectical understanding by laying emphasis on the spatial feature of Internet (be it a social domain in which relations occur) but on the other hand he uses the common determinist argument of technology molding society. It is clear that he takes Internet as a technological medium that is characterized by being social and hosting social relations (a notion which this study agrees with) but he falls apart from reaching a holistic approach by underlining that this notion is specific to Internet. In the final analysis, it would be proper to take Poster in line with those "who proclaim a new sort of society that has emerged from the old[18]" being the technological determinist approach in this study.

It is a popular notion to envision a way in which one would like to see technology evolve even though it is clear that we cannot directly predict, control or invent future. Much of the literature on computerization and the changes it seems to offer has futuristic[19] arguments. At that point, Negroponte (1995) is another name taking an optimistic position for future, which he claims to witness greater use of digital technologies. At the heart of these digital technologies lies the "smallest atomic element in the DNA of information"(1995: 14) the bit. Bits, which are increasingly used in today's information society, are about to spread over and constitute a basis for future digitization. For him, digitization points to numerous advantages such as reducing costs, increasing speed, high levels of both error

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[17] They are further elaborated under a separate title in this chapter.

[18] See Webster's classification (1995: 5)

[19] On futurology Finlay (1987) notes "Futurology is a ticket to ignore the past and carte blanche for actions in the present which need never be accounted for: if everything is just about to happen rather than having already happened or being in the process of happening, then the need for policy and decisions can constantly be put off until tomorrow"(ibid: 49).

correction and data compression. Moreover, it offers a better future by reducing the limitations of space and time. But the most important benefit of digital age for him is the opportunity it will serve to empower us. "The access, the mobility, and the ability to effect change are what will make the future so different from the present"(ibid: 231).

While Negroponte (1995) declares such an empowerment, one can find arguments hinting the autonomy of technology in his work *Being Digital*.

> Being digital is different. We are not waiting on any invention. It is here. It is now. It is almost genetic in its nature, in that each generation will become more digital than the preceding one (ibid: 231).

It appears that Negroponte's views are marked with evolutionism and autonomy of technology on the one hand and the foresight of increasing human control on the other. These two seem to be conflicting at the first sight but it should be noted that such conflicting visions are typical for most determinist arguments: Humans control their future by effectively using technology; a tool that has an internal development process and enables us with a better future.

The case with development and increased use of information technology is not that optimistic if we examine another group of arguments. Parallel with the previously stated pessimistic approaches, they vary among themselves in content but meet at a general point of objecting the optimistic arguments.

For instance, Hamelink (1986) criticizes the arguments considering "information revolution" as the most significant historical development of our time. He takes "information society" as a powerful myth that is being told worldwide by numerous storytellers. For him, the myth of the information society has economic, political and cultural dimensions. The commentary of these dimensions, presents a good summary of common determinist arguments.

> *Economy* The information society will witness the end of the capitalist, industrial production with its inherent vices of centralization, expansion, standardization, synchronization, and exploitation. There will be a shift from industrial production to the provision of services in a de-monopolized and diversified market.
> *Politics* The political arena of the information society is participatory. Its decision-making is decentralized and its insistence on greater access to information for all citizens equates with the shift of power from the governing elite to the real democratic process of the push-button referendum.
> *Culture* In the information society, the misery of labor is taken away from the human being and appropriated by the electronic system; flexible and smart robots create unprecedented leisure time. In this Garden of Eden, people enjoy the autonomous

production of a diversity of cultural products. The massive culture of the industrial society gives way to the individualist cultural consumption of products at times and in places that people choose themselves (ibid: 8).

The plausibility of such arguments weakens when history is interpreted from a different view as Hamelink does. From this view, historical processes cannot be regarded as having some fixed and uncontested points of departure like industrial or post-industrial revolutions. Rather,

The information society could be described as a logical successor to previous historical phases. What is termed 'information revolution' could, in a more sober analysis, be seen as equally non-revolutionary as its predecessor, the industrial revolution. (ibid: 8)

He supports the idea based on the view of historical continuity by refuting the arguments assuming historical breaks. For him there is no indication signaling decline of industrial production and rise of service-economy. Relying on the World Bank Development Reports, he shows that service sector is highly dependant on industrial production and could not survive in a de-industrialized economy. When the debate comes to politics he suggests a number of factors militating against the assumption that information society enables participation for everyone. To summarize:

1. Despite the increased volume of available information, more people know less due to the fact that information is becoming increasingly complex.
2. There is an unequal access to information. The spread of computers and Internet demands certain skills and equipment from the users, which are unevenly distributed in the society.
3. The information cannot be a source of power alone. Some material and strategic means are needed to exert power. Knowing the misconduct of ruling mechanisms does not result in revolt.

According to Hamelink, to decide on whether or not something new and revolutionary operates in society, one has to examine the power relationships between the rulers and the ruled. The information society proponents lacking such a realistic perspective fails to recognize the fact that there is no change in the management structure. By focusing on the problem of power, Hamelink rightfully states that technical progress does not necessarily correspond to the qualitative improvement of human life. Contrary to the optimistic arguments, he supports that ICT strengthens the

existing control of the rulers upon the ruled rather than providing an equalitarian society. Problematizing the mechanisms of power in such a way as Hamelink (1986) does is typical for many Marxist approaches.

2.3.1. Internet as a *text*

Some scholars within the social studies of technology explore Internet and IT around the notions of *interpretative flexibility* or *text metaphor*, in accordance with SST approaches presented previously. For instance, technology as a text metaphor focuses on the contingency of practices through which the Internet is made meaningful in both production and use. By deconstructing the notion that artefacts have inherent effects, a focus on the social relations around material artefacts is provided.[20] However as Hine (2000, 35) suggests, some difficulties arise in applying the technology as a text metaphor to Internet. This application is problematic and not straightforward as in the example of computer Hardware Company in Grint and Woolgar (1997). With the Internet it becomes hard to identify any single track through which the technology delivered to its users since:

> Many groups of people, including hardware producers, Internet service providers, applications developers, developers of web pages and newsgroup contributors could be termed producers of the Internet. The Internet user might be found as a category in the work of Internet service provider, or of advertising agencies, or the marketers of Internet-ready personal computers. We could design ethnographic studies to track the ways in which conceptions of Internet user were embedded into particular access points, advertisements or pieces of hardware…Users of the Internet are often, however, producers too in terms of content (ibid: 35).

Therefore to decide on who becomes reader or writer of the text (Internet) is ambiguous. To solve this dilemma, Hine rightfully suggests ethnographic inquiry into the field of Internet. By this way the making of Internet can be explored by focusing on the ways in which the technology and its contexts are constructed.

2.3.2. Internet as *actant*

As briefly summarized among social studies of technology scholars above, ANT perspective provided by Callon and Latour suggests to evaluate the relationship

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[20] For the example of computer hardware company see Grint and Woolgar (1997)

between human and non-human beings, insisting on the inextricability of the interconnection of human and non-human. Their notion of *actant,* denoting the agency of humans and/or nonhumans is relevant for the case of Internet. In that regard, the study by Tarhan (2001,41) concerning Internet as *actant* can be taken as a contribution for social studies of Internet. Tarhan (2001) makes applicable the notion of *actant* for Internet since "the Internet seems to pose a good example of combination of things (machines of various kinds, chips, cables, screens, texts and so on) and people within its real/imaginary space"[21]

Due to the fact that Internet as a text approach is marked with ambiguity around conceptualisation of users; *actant* notion appears to provide a better formulation of Internet-society relationship. Such an evaluation is critical for this study which shares actant notion of Internet since it validates that Internet can only be understood in its use.

2.3.3. Literature on Effects Of Internet

Besides optimistic and pessimistic visions of Information Technology, there exist a broad literature concerning with the effects of Information Technology and Internet. The reason behind placing them under a separate title lies in the fact that they depart from the same method of inquiry, focusing solely upon effects of a specific technology –Internet being the concern in this study- by taking it apart from its historical, economical or sociological context. Moreover, whether technology was seen in a positive or negative light, these views often proceed largely from micro-scaled explorations, taking technology as having particular social effects on individuals. Such accounts echoes that of the social psychological traditions[22]. At first glance it is not easy to classify them, however if we consider that the effects of technologies are also thoroughly social, being results of contingent processes depending upon by who, to whom and in what contexts the effects are represented, it becomes clear that such approaches also evoke determinism. In sum, it can be

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[21] It should also be noted that Tarhan's (2001:164) deployment of the term *actant* is placed within a wider analysis: "in practices whose agency can be explored as regards the logic of practice expressed in broader processes" In that regard, it can be stated that notion of actant is used in a Bourdieuean account. However, there is no such an application in the work of Slater and Miller (2000:8) who also make use of term *actant* for Internet.

[22] For studies exemplifying such a tendency see Baran & Kuloğlu (2001) and Taşkın (2002)

concluded that, examining effects without questioning causes (impact studies) or vice versa (innovation studies), alone have shortcomings and are too often associated with technological determinism.

Recent studies on information technology and in particular Internet frequently evoke this problematic positions even when they claim to avoid such a stand. *The Internet in Everyday Life* edited by Wellmann and Haythornthwaite (2002:35) is a good example for such a case. Editors start stating that:

> Explaining internet behaviour entails understanding that "the internet" is not a separate entity, but instead a complement to ongoing activity. We cannot understand its seemingly contradictory trends without considering a more integrated view of people's lives

But they continue with the discourse to which they seem to be perspectively critical with questionings like:

> Does being on the internet mean being alone? ...What is the Internet's impact on friendships?...Do the dynamics of social interactions on the Internet add to or detract from individual well-being?...Does the Internet perpetuate or exaggerate existing offline behaviour ?...Should Internet behaviour be considered separately from other aspects of individuals' lives ? (ibid.: 24-25)

Although the last provocative question brought with it the expected answer and it is repeatedly underlined throughout all the chapters (the internet's being incorporated into people's lives), the problem doesn't seem to be defeated. An alternative approach intending to break apart from human-technology dichotomy needs to challenge to the grammar of such questions as well. Regarding these constructions in language Chandler (2003) states:

> The assumptions of technological determinism can usually be easily in spotted frequent references to the 'impact' of technological 'revolutions' which 'led to' or 'brought about' 'inevitable', 'far-reaching', 'effects' or 'consequences' or assertions about what 'will be' happening 'sooner than we think' 'whether we like it or not'. This sort of language gives such writing an animated, visionary, prophetic tone which many people find inspiring and convincing.

Parallel with the above stated "literature on effects", there exists a group of approaches examining the impacts of ICT by separating the entities ICT on one side and society on the other. Baruch (2001: 129) supports a similar position by making an interesting resemblance between "excessive use" of ICT and autism.

> Autism is a phenomenon primarily found in children. It is concerned with the manner in which they react and communicate with their environment. It seems that modern society has developed in a way that resembles autism.

Baruch goes on to explain the main reasons behind this analogy as isolation from social institutions and replacement of traditional and effective modes of communication with computer mediated communication.

> One fundamental physical clinical identification for child autism is avoidance of eye-to-eye contact, an element that is an inherent component of IT communication through the net (ibid: 130).

In fact, it is possible to encounter similar critics (even if not that much radical) in the arguments emphasising "the alienating aspect of technologies"[23] Even the term "internet addiction" is being applied to denote this notion which seems to be conceived like an illness. Similar to arguments of Neil Postman, what this sort of views point is a condition of modern slavery; Humans becoming slaves of their products instead of mastering them. However thinking through this duality of master and slave avoids the recognition of complex relations. Mainly, it results in failing to see that humans' turning into "modern slaves" has something to do with their subjectifying the world; making it exterior like a thing that is out there ready to be grasped by them.[24] This problematic position in making sense of the world and our lives is somewhat deeper and needs philosophical inquiry. The scope of this study is limited by only pointing to some arguments of the writers concerning with this dilemma.

2.4. The Dualistic Assumptions in Understanding Technology

The literature on effects of technology together with the deterministic understandings having optimistic or pessimistic concerns that are elaborated in this chapter shows that such arguments are marked with a common pre-assumption; distinguishing between human and technology. Moreover, this assumption about the role of technology in social life is so prevalent like a common sense. Wise, (1997: xiv), focusing on reasons behind such a duality production in his book *Exploring*

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[23] See C.Stoll and M. Slouka in Wellman & Haythornthwaite, (2002).

[24] See Mesut Yeğen (2004)

Technology, concentrates on the "modern episteme" He defines episteme as a term borrowed from Foucault as:

> A hermeneutic horizon that results from a particular set of assumptions and that determines the questions that can be asked of ourselves, our society, our technology or our environment

Wise (1997) claims that the dominant episteme of western, industrialized society is "modern episteme" that is distinguished by its foundation around the production of dualities. He dates the roots of this way of thinking back to Descartes and Kant. According to Wise (1997), the notion of separation between self and other, subject and object constitutes driving force of modern episteme today.

Wise is not the only one to challenge root categories or to subvert traditional borders. Views against production of dualities between human and technology, nature and culture, mind and body are developed among a number of writers. For instance, actor network theory by Callon and Latour denotes such an endeavour; Haraway in her *Cyborg Manifesto* proposes to be a *cyborg*, which embodies the natural, the technical and the social (Haraway 1991:41-42); or Bourdieu with his notion of *habitus*[25] offers a way out of the structure-agency problem without relapsing into either subjectivism or objectivism (King, 2000).

2.5. Theoretical Motives of the Study

Among the approaches elaborated throughout this chapter some certain ones seriously have influenced this study. To make a brief summary of the theoretical inspirations behind this thesis it can be stated that:

1) Internet cannot simply be perceived as a technological artefact impinging upon social processes or contrary, directly in service of its "users". Rather, as stated by SST scholars, Cockburn and Ormrade (1993), its meaning(s) can only be

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[25] Bourdieu defines *habitus* as "sytems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively "regulated" and "regular" without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor." (1977:72)

grasped in its use and apt to change due to the complex relations over time and space.

2) Being inseparable from its use in daily practices, Internet is taken to be an *actant* as in Tarhan's deployment of Latourian term.

3) As suggested by Sterne, (2003: 370) technologies-Internet in specific- are subsets of habitus and organized forms of movement. They are theoretically unexceptional; being "similar to other ways in which we organize social practice through the "*habitus*". Such a Bourdieuean understanding allows us to break apart from dualities and falling into traps of determinisms.

CHAPTER 3

THE RESEARCH METHODS

3.1. Participant Observation and Ethnography-Based Research

This chapter aims to shed light on issues concerning the methodology used with the present study. Since the general framework regarding the methodology is provided within the introduction, this part of the study will elaborate more on the issues of ethnography and participant observation. As briefly described in the introduction, this study deliberately eschews using the term ethnography for its methodology and it employs participant observation with complementary qualitative interviewing techniques. Therefore, it can be concluded that the study follows an ethnography-based research approach despite the fact that itself cannot be defined directly as an ethnographic study.

> Ethnography is the science of description. Ethnographers aim to discover how people define their world, how they routinely behave in everyday life, and how they make sense of experience (Brunt, 1999: 503).

An ethnographic study is a mean for production of deep and detailed insights into patterns of social interaction whereas the present study concerns with exploring around a particular social interaction: Integration of Internet into daily practices of people living in a small town. Within the limits of this study, it is decided to make participant observation in Internet cafes. Yet, as revealed in the theoretical framework, what is studied is not a thing called internet but a relationship and looking at internet-society relationship entails developing insights into the whole social structure of the setting, including its history and economy as well.

Participant observation is preferred to be adopted since it "allows researcher to observe what people do while other empirical methods are limited to reporting what people say about what they do" (Gans, 1999: 540) Despite its disadvantages –being time consuming and labour intensive–, participant observation is a mean to supply empirical findings about practices of people particularly those who are outside the mainstream like about little known or stereotyped populations. My observations

through participating in Internet cafes in the small town provided me to track what people say in interviews. By this way, I found the opportunity of collecting "said" on one side and "my observations" on the other. This collection provided me with the insight into the social setting and even into myself as a teacher living and working in the area. I became more aware of my own location and relatedness to the social setting I inhabited.

Moreover, it should be stated that participant observation has a potential to produce "surprises", entailing openness and bringing unpredictability to context. As an example, conversations with female users and non-users revealed that they feel discomfort in Internet cafes since male users frequently swear while playing games or talking each other. This was what I noted down as "said". However, I have to state that observing such an offensive act was quite difficult. Being a participant, I experienced the same discomfort as they do and reacted as, I suppose, they never do. Such a reaction that may not be regarded as proper for a researcher brought another surprise: male users tried to be cautious in my next visits instead of ignoring my reaction. Henceforth, it is needed to rethink on women's position basically as victims of symbolic violence. Given the fact that females "prefer" complaining among themselves rather than reacting to men who disturb them, may lead us to think more on the relations of dominant and dominated. Dominated may (consciously or unconsciously) contribute the processes of domination by accepting it as natural. Such processes of naturalization perpetuate the gender inequalities and seclusion of women.

Bourdieu's sociology is of great significance for methodological considerations of this study. According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992: 53), sociologist's point of view is a point of view on a point of view or knowledge of knowledge. For this reason, a field researcher should keep in mind that his/her point of view is always operating in research process and this does not necessarily bring a devaluation of his/her findings. Researcher may become part of the social setting and adopt roles as participants but comes to the study with his/her own community inscriptions (perhaps they may be expressed in his/her reactions as well). In that regard, if we turn back to the example with females' complaints, we should rethink before concluding on the contribution of the dominated to the process of domination. Women's keeping silent may not necessarily mean their approval of men's acts since their reaction may not be welcomed like that of researcher's. Departing from this specific example, we can develop insights into ethnographic based research approach

that is: such an approach should recognize how experience is embedded in the flow of history and how objects and subjects are shaped in their own *habitus*. Accordingly, people's reactions have to be regarded as embedded experiences that have a specific history. This point is best summarized in E.P.Thompson's formulation that sees human beings as "part subjects, part objects, the voluntary agents of our involuntary determination"(Willis and Trondman, 2002: 395) Therefore, to achieve a holistic sense of the social as dialectically produced and to avoid data speaking for themselves, ethnographic approach is conjoined with theoretical framework. By this way, theoretically informed ethnographic approach[26] helped me to clearly express my point of view on the data collected (interviewee's point of view).

3.2. Qualitative Interviews and Gathering of Field Data

3.2.1. Semi-structured Interviews

The term qualitative interviewing refers to procedures of data collection and data analysis in the study. As data collection procedures, it is preferred to conduct semi-structured interviews in addition to participant observation. Interviews were conducted between the dates May 2003 and April 2005. Selection of the interviewees is based on random order. It should be noted that not every narrative encountered in the field is included in the study. There had been cases marked with a strong similarity, therefore the ones that are thought to be representative for many cases are selected to constitute the stories in Chapter 4. Internet did not appear to mean too many different things to too many different people due to the scale and structure of the setting. More precisely, the town is a small place with 6 Internet cafes (at the time of the interviews) and contrary to urban areas, users of Internet are closely in relation with each other. Any new possibility of using Internet in a certain direction disseminates among users quickly. It appeared during the fieldwork that people's way of making meaning of Internet is closely in relation with their use. Therefore, as the use does not differ to a great degree in the social context of the town, meanings do not differ that much. This point can also be explained by reference to the term *habitus* that is evaluated at the concluding section of the study.

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[26] For an account promoting theoretically informed ethnographic studies, see Willis and Trondman (2002)

It is remarkable that majority of the interviewees are between ages 25-35. This age group was among the most informative and willing ones to participate. Another important point that should be noted about this group is; a majority of them were assisting in cyber cafes or owners. This fact denotes another social situation in the town that is; unemployed men of this age group who spend most of their time in cyber cafes, later come up with an idea of operating or assisting in a cyber café business. Hence, it is a common occurrence in the cyber cafes to encounter this age group as owners or assistants. Moreover, they are presented as the ones who know much about Internet, respected as 'Internet advisors'. The interviews with teenagers who constitute the rest of the majority, had not been illuminating for this study due to the reasons summarized in the introduction part. Women and elder people had been remarkable as non-users of Internet.

During interviews, an interview script, including a set of questions (which are presented at the appendix) prepared beforehand is used to guide the interaction.   It should be stated that all these preplanned questions were not asked to interviewees, some of them are customized, some others are left unasked. Interviews with 12 people (from the total 23) were tape-recorded and afterwards transcribed[27]. After processes of abstraction and indexing, they took forms of descriptions in Chapter 4. Some of the written forms also include other people's accounts on interviewee and my reflections during the conversations.

3.2.2. Daily Conversations

My daily conversations with friends, pupils at schools or shopkeepers during my daily interactions in the research setting, helped me in a great deal to formulate my research questions, increasing my curiosity on the issue. Despite the fact that they could neither be recorded nor be placed within a formal framework as directly contributing to the field study, their role in this study is undeniably crucial. Therefore, I decided to include the information derived from these conversations in both descriptions of research setting and interview transcriptions where necessary.

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[27] Interview with Necati is exceptional for that it is video recorded and tape recorded at the same time. Having married after getting to know his Filipino girlfriend through Internet relay chat, Necati's case seemed interesting. He was so thoughtful and informative that he offered video recording as a technically practical way to minimize my difficulties in writing.

3.2.3. Text Resources

There are a few written documents about the town. Aiming to provide tourist information, they are largely focusing on the history of archaeological site that is located within the town's borders. The town has two weekly-published newspapers one of which serves as an organ of governor. Recently, Internet access to this organ is established though it is not regularly upgraded. Town's newspapers consist of announcements of services provided by municipality or governor. In this sense, they are operating like bulletins of official services rather than newspapers.

There exist a few web sites prepared by towns' people –teachers and cyber café owners–. Their content is more or less similar with that of local newspapers. In the parts designed for comments of visitors, it can be seen that towns' people living outside the country who often express their longings for the town frequent these web sites.

Given the scarcity of written resources including detailed accounts on cultural peculiarities or socio-economic structure of town, data provided within this study relies upon participant observation, interviews and testimonies of people except with a few statistical data derived from the web page of governor of district.

3.3. Difficulties Encountered In the Field

As part of understanding the everyday social life in particular fieldwork contexts, a researcher learns how to act in accordance with perceived or understood norms and expectations (Coffey, 1999:72). Researcher's position as both an outsider and an insider created some problems besides the advantages some of which are addressed in the introduction part of the study. In addition to these, being a female researcher sometimes made it impossible to take part in the physicality of the setting. For instance, since it is not proper for women to go out in the streets after sundown, during winter there was only a limited time left (about an hour) for me to visit cyber cafes after work. However, it can be stated that even this restrictive situations may serve as a means to gain insight or understanding into that setting. Having encountered such a difficulty, I decided to visit cafes with a male friend of mine from the school. In doing this, I paid specific attention to his marital status. He must have been a married man since otherwise people would easily treat us as a couple and I might have to deal with curious glances or gossips. Therefore, I asked my friends –a

married couple– to accompany me at some evenings. Thanks to their understanding, we visited cyber cafés as three persons till breaking the ice with people.

Another difficulty was due to my employment position as briefly described in the introduction part. Given the fact that most of the cyber cafes serve as places to get away from school for most of the schoolboys, I suppose they would not have been pleased to meet with teachers at those places where they tend to listen to loud music, speak loudly and sometimes smoke cigarettes. At the very beginning of the fieldwork, I had felt a strong feeling of having disturbed teenagers. As the time passed, it was clear for them that my presence at cyber cafes had nothing to do with my position as a teacher, still however, they continued to be "cautious."

Given this situation, teenagers were not that informative. In the interviews, they tended to keep silent rather than expressing their opinions. They mostly gave standard answers to my questions, hinting their reluctance to elaborate more. However, the same cannot be stated for my conversations with female students at school. They were so willing to talk on reasons why they do not prefer to go to cyber cafes. I suppose, they were thinking that my position is critical for a possible change of their social environment. Perhaps, they expected me to persuade the boys in a way not to disturb them in public places.

In summary, it can be observed that people, who had problems in adapting to the social setting, were more informative than the others who were saying that they were generally satisfied with their life in the town[28]. This point is well elaborated by Davies (1999: 79) in her statements:

> It has frequently been noted that good informants are often 'marginal' in some respects in their own society. Probably the main reason why this particular characteristic is so common among those who become key informants is that it places them in a position not dissimilar to that of the ethnographer as a kind of outsider who thus becomes more aware of the assumptions and expectations of their own society, often because they flaunt them or fail to fulfill them.

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[28] The case of Haydar in chapter 3 exemplifies such a point. It could be seen that his observations of the town's daily life is similar to that of a field researcher.

CHAPTER 4

SMALL TOWN: INFORMATION AND REFLECTIONS

4.1. THE TOWN

The small central Anatolian town, in which this research took place, is a county seat, which is the sub-district of a province, Çorum. District governor (kaymakam) is the highest official position and district is also a municipality that has corporate rights and responsibilities. The town has a total population of 53, 193. There are over a hundred villages attached to the town and town center serves as a marketing place for villagers and education center for their children since some of the schools in villages are closed due to lack of a certain number of pupils necessary for a class.[29] Town's provincial capital Çorum is 45 km away from the town center. The main source of income in the town is agriculture. 90% of population is dealing with agricultural activity[30]. Number of the families making agriculture is 8.500. There are also outsiders coming on seasonal basis to work in the fields. Including them, the number of workers on agriculture is estimated to be 26.000. However, except agriculture, there is a little chance for employment like working in small shops, flavour-feed factories or stock rising. There are seven flavour factories and a small feed factory in the town all of which employ only 72 workers. Therefore, unemployment is the most important problem of towns' people. One of the social conditions signaling unemployment is that Coffee-houses ('Kahvehane's)[31] are full of men spending time.

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[29]For villages lacking schools, Turkish government brought an official system "taşımalı eğitim"(mobile education). Since transportation to centers is difficult and expensive for villagers, within this system children are brought from villages to counties by official buses and taken back to their villages after the school for free.

[30] This statistical data is derived from the official site of county governor.

[31] Kahvehanes are traditional public-meeting places restricted to men. Although in cities their importance is considerably reduced, they are still at the heart of most of the villages in Turkey. They play an essential part in everyday life of town. They are open all day long and serve as gathering places of especially elders and unemployed men. In most of the interviews, people stated that crowded kahvehane's of town point to increasing unemployment and underdevelopment of area.

Statistical data provided by State Planning Organization (SPO),[32]classifies provinces of Turkey in 5 groups with varying levels of development (Socio-economic Development Index (SEDI)). Among all districts (872) in Turkey, the town is ranked as 485. According to SEDI rankings, classifying the whole country into 5 groups with varying levels of development, Çorum is counted among the third degree developed provinces in which an agriculture-based economic structure is dominant. It exhibits a structure specific to less developed regions where agricultural sector carries weight. Despite this situation, it is noted that, agricultural efficiency is low and hidden unemployment in agricultural sector is high. These properties are stated to be common and basic characteristics of underdeveloped territories.

When it comes to numbers regarding education, there are 19 primary and 6 secondary schools in the town and a total 32 primary schools in villages. Total number of the teachers is 444 and students are 10.285. In line with low levels of education, low family incomes can be observed. Geographical isolation is counted among factors that negatively affect economy. Since the town is not located on the main road, it does not benefit from advantages like that of its neighbouring town, Sungurlu. Town's people quite often compare their conditions with people living in Sungurlu on the grounds that if they had similar geographical advantage, they would live in prosperity. It can be seen that this competition has also an official dimension since at official web site of the governorship; ex-governor declares his regret for failing to achieve the standards of Sungurlu[33]. By the year 2004, it was announced that a belt highway that will be the shortest route connecting the north and south of Turkey was projected to pass from this town. It is still celebrated by local newspapers in a joyful manner.

The population of the town shows a differentiation in terms of ethnic identity. There are villages identified with high population of alevites and sunnis.[34] Sunni people are populated highly at the center and alevites at the villages. At May 1980,

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[32] See appendices C and D.

[33] Surprisingly however, the data indicating socio- economic development indexes that is derived from the state planning organization (See Appendix D (2004)), shows that there is not a considerable difference between these two towns in terms of development, moreover according to data, the town appears to have higher literacy and urbanization rates.

[34] In its simplest and most abstract definition: Being alevite or being sunni denotes to the attachment to different religious understandings within the domain Islam. However, even this definition may be misleading since there has been no agreement about the content of alevilik due to the different criteria that has been used for its conceptualization. For a detailed analysis of different conceptualizations see Fırat (2004)

shortly before the military coup, there had raised serious social tension, manipulated politically out of this differentiation which alevites call massacres. In the events that took place around city center and several counties including this town, 54 people were killed and many wounded. In the town, almost all shops owned by alevites burned by partisans relying upon the misinformation telling that alevites burned a mosque in Çorum. Many of the townspeople who can recall those days are deeply grieved and it can be seen that they still hold their disturbances. In conversations with sunni people, I had the impression that they did not want to touch upon the matters about ethnic identity and emphasize brotherhood in Islam when it comes to that matter. Although alevites whom I talked were more talkative, they also do not want to remember those hard days. What they often complain is the 'closed structure' of the town and they do not want younger generation to live there. After those days of struggle, people (mostly alevites) started to migrate into areas where they may feel safer in Çorum. As far as can be seen, today, different ethnic identities inhabit different regions in town. Sunni people prefer downtown, whereas alevites are mostly settled around a quarter called 'Yukarı Mahalle'. In villages, population is homogenous. Therefore, the name of each village is a sufficient indicator of its ethnic identity. At this point it should be noted that one of the villages that is inhabited by alevite population, carries significant importance for the town since it embraces an archeological site frequented by tourists from worldwide. This village is known as more 'developed' among others due to its tourism activity. It can even be stated that the village is far more known than the town itself.

Migration is an important phenomenon worth analysing in the social life of the town. As empirical data of this study already demonstrates, young generation has a considerable ambition to migrate to the USA or EU countries. Their position have to be taken in relation with some other phenomenon; Turkey has sent workers abroad and defined itself as a country of "out-migration" over the last three or four decades. In those years of "out-migration", the town has witnessed departure of many groups of people. The town's workers abroad has now become established and they continue to help their relatives and friends for migration. Much of young people living in the town are from low-income groups and un skilled. With many young interviewees, it is reported that they keep living in the town since they could not find any other opportunities but they (especially males) are constantly searching for some ways to live and work outside. Kinship relations and ties based on local origin with out-

migrated people help a great deal at that point. Getting a tourist visa and not turning back (as a way of illegal migration) was the widely resorted way but with increasing control and restrictions for tourist visas it is becoming difficult for people year after year. Some other ways of migration stories encountered in the field research were: making arranged marriages with the help of out-migrated relatives, application for green cards and even trying to enter the USA from the Mexican border. Migration being on the agenda of most of the town's people, coincides with Internet use, as will be demonstrated by the empirical data.

By the emergence of Internet relay chat, migration gains another dimension. Interviews with men of age 25-35 showed that almost all of them hope to find a way to migrate through the relationships they generated by chats.

4.2. The Internet in the Town: An Overview

At the town, Internet began in year 2000 through the country access modem on telephone lines, TTNET. By year 2005, another ADSL that allows a faster connection is laid and all cyber cafes started to use it. Pricing structure has not changed during the process from TTNET to ADSL. It is not regarded as expensive by most of the users interviewed. If a comparison is made between the price of cyber cafes in metropolises and town, it can be seen that they are almost the same.

At the individual level, the cost of setting up Internet at home is quite expensive with respect to use cost in cyber cafes. The difference became much more dramatic with the use of ADSL. However, since ADSL provides the faster connection, it became very popular among much of the users. By April 2005, the application office for Internet stated that demand for the ADSL service provider exceeded supply of bandwidth.

The exact number of Internet access in town is kept confidential but it is estimated by considering the number of applications for interactive banking that at least 10% of the town is using Internet[35]. Still, to reduce the Internet usage into numbers is problematic since; there is not a clear distinction between the 'use' and

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[35] During the interview with bank security (Under section 4.3.6 in this chapter), he cleared the number of interactive banking use as 2500.

'user'. For a comparison with countrywide use, it can be stated that by the date 22.08.2004, 7% of the Turkish population were declared as users of Internet.[36]

Internet is accessed through cyber cafes, workplaces, town's library and increasingly through schools. The new ADSL service provider became advantageous for public offices, providing cheaper connection for wider networks. Whatever the current user number is, it is widely agreed that there has been a considerable growth of Internet use stimulated by such factors such as massive increase in computer ownership and skills, falling prices of both hardware and software and increasing range of activities made available to Internet use. It should also be noted that there was a government commitment to putting Internet-enabled computers in public sector like schools and official services. But there may be far more factors behind the diffusion of Internet in such a short time as Slater and Miller (2000: 31) argue:

> It could be argued that in fact the major breakthrough in the diffusion of Internet media had been facilitated nearly a decade before, when the deregulation of television had introduced people to choosing across a huge range of media in both content and technology as well inculcating a new relation to global popular cultures and media.

Most of the interviewee's web surfing was based around using email accounts (such as mynet, hotmail, yahoo), sending e-greetings cards (especially at Islamic holy nights called "kandil"), gambling[37], playing online games and chatting. I was frequently told that pornography accounted for so rare of surfing, since it was hugely disapproved either socially or legally like the case of gambling. Facilities such as achieving Id numbers[38] and following social security payments are strongly present in current use. Even some people, who never used a computer before, want to see how these services work due to a great excitement the Internet generated. Therefore, it can be stated that Internet alleviated the burden of public information services in the town.

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[36] It was announced at 22.08.2004, NTV, 11:00 news that Internet user number is increased approximately nine times in a three year period, from 450.000 to 4.900.000.

[37] In my visits to Internet cafes nearly all café owners said that they prohibited online gambling, on the other hand, they complained of the other café owners who allow gambling in order to make more money out of it. However almost all the cyber cafés owners were putting the blame on some others and nobody was accepting the 'guilt'. The reason behind it may be the official prohibition of gambling in town by governorship.

[38] Every Turkish Republic Citizen has been given a Turkish Republic Identification Number in 28 October 2000 for getting and sending information between the public institutions and making the service faster for the citizens. In order to inform the citizens about the ID numbers, there is an Internet site, which has a ID number module.

However, there are also cases when Internet widely recognized as a facilitator turns into a troublemaker[39]. In my conversations with an inspector of education in the town, I was surprised to learn that his daughters' online application to a university was counted as invalid since he supposes, he did something wrong. They thought that they have sent the online form but the department secretary declared their application form was absent. What inspector complains at that point is how Internet, being a new phenomena can become a chief mean to achieve critical ends when people's knowledge of Internet is that weak.

As far as it can be seen at empirical work, among all possible uses, chatting is the most popular one. During the period I made interviews, chat was the hottest topic among the respondents. Videophone was regarded as a great facility in the town where most of the people have relatives and friends living outside the country. To communicate them with use of cameras and microphones for a very cheap price is what appeals to people about chatting. During the first year of Internet, it was widely conceived among towns' people that Internet is an instrument only for students and teachers. Therefore, as stated in the interviews, cyber cafes resembled schools, full of teachers and students after school time. However, most of the students' use was based around playing games. After some time, cyber cafes appeared out to be entertainment areas; chatting, gambling, playing games, following latest music fashion became prevalent among people from various age groups.

Another dimension of use directly expresses the social structure of the town. As further elaborated under the next title, traditions of the town confines people's lives in some ways like flirting or even having daily chats among the members of opposite sex is considered as improper. Moreover, especially younger generation expresses their dissatisfaction of mainstream life in the town. They desire to learn about different ways of life. Therefore, Internet relay chat being different from traditional social interaction in numerous ways, serves an ideal condition for especially youngsters to meet with different people and talk or flirt freely with members of opposite sex in the absence of a direct face to face evaluative feedback. Engagement in Internet relay chat can be associated with benefits like great comfort in social interaction and expanded social networks[40].

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[39] For more elaboration on the notion of Internet as a facilitator of public services see Ergur (1998).
[40] Clark's study (1998) is illuminating at this point. Clark compares the relationship on the Internet with "pure relationship" in which she claims a voluntary commitment plays a central role and therefore the

In relation with migration phenomena described above, Internet use in the town has another dimension. As demonstrated by the empirical data, migration motivated Internet relay chats are quite prevalent among cyber-café users. In that respect, an emphasis made by Suner (2001) can be illuminating. In her study on uses of mobile phones she claims that mobile phone ownership is associated with being a part of global culture which Turkish people is in the long run to catch up with. Referring to the terminology of Barthes (1993), Suner (2001: 118-119) aims to read the denotative and connotative meanings of mobile phones. Denotative meaning implicates that mobile phones are devices of communication just like cable phones. But what connotative meaning implicates is that ownership of a mobile phone gives users the feeling of a 'world citizen.' It denotes being everywhere without going anywhere. Her study is concluded with a statement: Mobile phone use can be identified as migration but without actually changing one's location. For the present study, it can not be stated that Suner's notion of world citizen is relevant or not, however, migrating without changing the location, holds to be relevant for most of the users making migration motivated chats[41].

Internet speed is another important issue that users pay attention. During interviews, it appeared that one of the cyber cafes was widely known as the fastest one in town and it was the one nearest to the post office where Internet connection is provided. I was surprised having learned from people that the distance to the post office has something to do with Internet speed.[42]

By year 2004, there were six cyber cafés in the town. Their number increased to thirteen within a year. As far as owners of cafés state, they see their business not very unprofitable in comparison with other enterprises. In some cases, cyber cafes

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ability to trust the other becomes central to its continuance. However, Clark in her article based on interviews argues that teens using Internet relay chats, mostly seek to avoid such an emotional risk because they see it as a potential threat.

[41] See the interviews with Kutay and Mithat under the title stories and findings. It is obvious that they feel themselves different from a 'typical' towns' man and they frequently underline their difference. The way they present themselves includes an emphasis on their relations with foreign people (girlfriends from China and Aruba). They reflect themselves as the ones who are about to go to China or Aruba.

[42] More surprising than that, was one of my friends' bewilderment when I told him the story. Due to the fact that he is a graduate of computer engineering, I was asking him my puzzling technical questions. His first reaction was denying the relationship between distance and speed. After a short research he achieved such knowledge. A common knowledge of people in a place that is marked with ignorance, underdevelopment etc. can as well be a marginal knowledge for an expert living in a metropolis. This condition may be taken as an example of practical consciousness embedded in the use of technology.

were adjuncts to other businesses like mobile phone shops or repair shops. It seems to be easier to earn a living out of cyber café business since user population is mainly but not exclusively young and they are so willing to spend their hours in cafes. Moreover, it should be emphasized that buying most of the things (especially food and clothing) in credit is quite prevalent in the town due to unemployment and low welfare levels of people. But cyber café owners do not have difficulty in earning money like that of other shopkeepers. Since use is so low in price and cafes are full of students willing to spend some of their pocket money in these places everyday[43].

Cyber cafes in town are not very different from each other in terms of physical arrangement, style and kinds of sociality they generated. In most of them, computers are not positioned to give privacy to users. (All screens can easily be watched from owner's table). By this way owners aim to prevent possible abuses like entering sites with pornographical content. In the town's library, there is a small room consisting a few computers allocated only for uses of females. This room is exceptional in a way that officers do not control it. As is revealed in the interview with library officer, Hasan, they do not feel the need to inspect females' use of Internet.

4.3. Stories and Findings

4.3.1. The first entrepreneur to embark upon an Internet café in the town: The case of Ahmet.

The experience of Ahmet is important to understand how the first Internet café is greeted in the town both at the official and social levels. At 52 years old, Ahmet is the oldest of all cyber café owners in town. He was the first to initially come up with the idea of operating a cyber café. Having seen cyber cafes in other towns, he thought that it would not only be a good job but it would also provide an educational experience for the people of the town. He realized his plan in 2000. Up until that time, he had worked as a jeweller. He also thought a cyber café would be a good job for his son who has just completed his military service. His son Cemal, who had nothing to do in those days, was keen on electronics and computers.

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[43] During my observations it appeared that some teenagers with limited pocket money want to be warned after a use of certain time since they can easily forget time while playing games and this may cost too much. So a usual question of café owners to students is "Do you want a time limit?"

Approximately a year after they began, they met with some unexpected obstacles. Despite the fact that Internet café was welcomed by town's people as an instrument for youngster's education at the very beginning, some of the parents in town opposed 'the new thing' in such a negative way that they actually lodged a complaint against him. Their fear was of the 'immorality amongst teenagers' that they claim has risen with the usage of the Internet. As a result of their objections, Ahmet was called on by officials and asked what was happening in his cafe. He explained the nature of his business. Acknowledging the complaints to be justified, the governor of the district asked him to shut all sites that may contain objectionable features.

While explaining his argument with the governor he laughed and said: "I was sure that he knew nothing about the Internet, but gendarme who was with us in that room knew the Internet well. Relying upon gendarme's knowledge, I asked the governor if he knew what the Internet actually was, as it was obvious to me from his request that he did not… It was out of the question to block all probable threats. I tried to tell him this but he seemed not to understand and offered me a solution if I was unable to block the sites myself: I was to phone Superonline, which was our server at that time, and tell them to do it. Gendarme helped me to convince him that it was an impossible request since everyday about a million new sites were joining the net and sites could only be blocked if their addresses are known."

His conversation with the governor did not make any difference. Parents were still convinced that the Internet would be harmful to youths. However, Ahmet stated that the situation had been quite different at the very beginning of it. Initially, people conceived of the Internet as a library that each student may go and learn whatever s/he needs to learn. This being the case, there were many girls as well as boys among the users, and it was not something that was drawing attention in town. Ahmet told that everyday, when they came to open the café at 08:00 they found teenagers already waiting in front of it. However, at the time that I conducted this interview, although the time was 11a.m., there were only a few people in cyber cafés and most of the owners did not even open up until 10:30a.m. Ahmet claimed that cyber café business finished in the town after first two years. He relates this situation to a loss of interest in the Internet itself. Nowadays, Ahmet seems to agree with the complaints raised by the parents. He thinks that teenagers developed skills for the abuse of the Internet in a very short time and lately, the Internet does not serve any good purpose. That's the main reason why he closed down his business in 2002. Another reason was economic:

too many cafes opened within a two year period and the increased competition made it difficult to earn a living out of it. He said, "At the beginning, teenagers did not know how to use computers. They all learned it in our cyber café, mostly by giving harm to our machines, which is normal when a new technology is introduced. There may always be problems or misuse while learning. Taking this fact into consideration, we allowed people to harm technical equipment." After these good times, he claimed that young boys of age 12-18 started trying to search for some sites with sexual adventure in mind. In response, girls started to visit less frequently, until eventually the cyber café served as a place for boys only. Recognition of this fact led Ahmet and his son to block the most frequently used sites, but it was impossible to detect every activity of teenagers on the Internet. Ahmet seemed to be uncomfortable while talking about these facts to a female since it is very unusual in town. Therefore he talked implicitly of a misuse, rather than giving clear details of what such a misuse of the Internet may refer to. He behaved in a way that he expected me to understand the forms of misuse without waiting any clarification from him. (I got accustomed to such action -*talking without saying*- in my experience of 1.5 years in town.)

After his cyber café business, he opened up a business dealing in mobile phones. He is still working at that shop. When it comes to living in town, he stated that he is satisfied with his life. For him, the town is a peaceful place to live, except for serious problem of unemployment. On the question of what defines the town, he had difficulty providing an answer. Eventually, he said "nothing but tranquillity may define the town".

It is interesting that Ahmet does not know much about Internet use. He said he is not curious on this matter and added that he thought this business would rather fit to his son. His role in the business was rather like that of a gatekeeper. It seems that, due to his age and his previous position of reliable tradesman, Ahmet situated himself as a reference for the introduction of 'the new thing', Internet. However, it can be stated that, even his reliability did not help very much for resolving people's prejudices when we consider the social and official reactions to Internet cafe.

4.3.2. The Internet dating that turned into a marriage: The cases of Necati and Jane.

Necati is a teacher and director in a high school. He is 34 years old and lives alone, although he has a wife who is living in another city. He is an unusual case in

that he has experienced computer and Internet use since 1992, the very early stage of its use in Turkey. More unusual than this, however, is his first marriage with a woman whom he met over the net in those days. "Those were the years of intra-net; when I started chatting with my first wife, we were students at the same campus." They were communicating through a local network provided by the university. In those years of university, he had two roommates, both of whom got married to women they met over the net. Their stories are similar except that his friends are still married. During his first years in the town he was married with his first wife and they had a child. Later they came to a mutual understanding that things were not working out and got divorced.

During the year of his divorce, he was using MIRC and AUSNET for chatting. Sharing a mundane life with his friends both on and offline, he said he often spent very intense hours chatting online. For him, there was a problem with Turkish uses of chat medium. Turkish people can act quite different from many of the societies of those that he is chatting with: "Turkish people are using so much argot, and rudeness is very common among Turks". On the other hand, though, he added "Perhaps similar cases may be seen among the others but my English was not good enough to recognize this" Having met with rudeness and argot so often in Turkish chat sites, he started chatting with others rather than Turkish people. He already had a deep interest in meeting people from different countries and learning about different lifestyles.

In the case of Necati there is a hyperawareness that he is 'representing Turkey' and hence responsible for presenting it in a good way by talking decently. He seems quite aware of himself as a 'Turkish' in terms of thinking through his difference and identity in his everyday chats:

"Other people's impression of Turks is not nice. I wanted to eliminate their prejudices. I always tried to be gentle and never used bad words even in times they did. Through the communication on Internet I obtained the opportunity to learn about different countries, different life-styles. I improved my English. I became highly aware that there are various ways of doing things"

He said he always gives accurate information about himself and he always does his best to check if the other's information is reliable or not. He is checking the chat-information of people to decide whether they are worth chatting to or not. Even if there is always a possibility of deception, completely filled chat information expresses

something positive for the beginning and a way of establishing trust for him. Later, he says that he tracks what people say.

He applied the same criteria with his new wife when he encountered her nickname on a chat medium. He liked her nickname and checked her chat information. Having seen that it was completely filled, he invited her for a chat. After chatting for some time, the person told him that she was not actually Jane but she was her cousin and was using her computer and nickname at that time. Later he insisted on talking with the one to whom the chat information belongs and her cousin directed him to the 'real Jane'. At the very beginning of their relation they chatted very often, after some time their contact was complemented by mobile phone calls. The notion of intimacy pointed by Slater and Miller (2000:66) is relevant for this case:

> Stitching the other into a shared everyday world rapidly extends to the sharing of intimacies, problems, perspectives and values, so that you not only feel that the other really knows you, and vice versa, but also that they reliably 'there for you' as a persistent and embodied ethical other…This intimacy can be treated and treasured as something that is largely detached from offline consequences and costs at the same time differentiated from 'the usual stupidity' of casual chat encounters.

As is the case with most couples, they wanted to complement their chat with phone calls and ideally with visits. Necati decided to visit Jane in the Philippines. In the interview with Jane, she said she found his act very courageous. However, Necati does not agree that it took such courage to go and visit her in the Philippines. He states: "It may be unusual in our culture but quite common to those living in other countries since they have wider opportunities and they are ready to travel over the world even to satisfy their desire to live that experience."

Having taken the decision for a visit to Philippines, he went to the Filipino Embassy in Ankara and saw that the people there were also astonished by his story. He stated, "I think it was a rare case for a Turkish person to visit the Philippines, but the reverse happened quite frequently." After their marriage they were to meet with the same people at the annual meetings of the Embassy for celebration of Independence Day. Necati said "Everybody there welcomed us with joy and presented us as the couple who met on the Internet!"

When it comes to questions about the town he holds similar views as other teachers and newcomers living in the town: that it is a safe but restricting place for those in need of a 'social life'. "For instance, if you want to have a walk around or go

and eat ice-cream in a small shop as a couple, it immediately draws attention. There is no way to do such things and avoid the glances of people." But he seems to regard it as a reality of every small provincial town in Central Anatolia. He expresses his hopelessness about the possibility of positive changes in the town. But if he were to make something for it, he would provide a stable road for arrival to Alacahöyük, a historical site that appeals to many tourists. Furthermore, he said the site needs some professional advertising, especially on the Internet in order to be recognized by anyone concerning.

His most intriguing story about the Internet is one that took place during his years at University. "One of my roommates chatted with a girl for a long period of time. They had a long lasting offline relationship, they were about to marry but unfortunately they broke up. Long after this relationship, my roommate realized that there was somebody else using his nickname on the net. His nickname was an English word that draws the attention of most of the chatters. He was surprised to see that the user was Turkish and after chatting with the user for some time, he was shocked to recognize the user as his ex-girlfriend. She was probably using his nickname to trace his probable relations on the net."

His marriage with a Filipino whom he met on the net is known by a lot of people in the town. In the interviews with other people, many of them told their story as an interesting case they have heard. About town's people's reactions to this relation, Necati said, "They are surprised, there have even been some people who came to me and tried to learn a way to do such a thing". Most of the interviews with men in the town show that they have a great interest in getting acquainted with women from foreign countries.

Jane's profession was brain surgery in her country but she is not working in Turkey at the moment. She knows little Turkish, and that's a big problem according to Necati. He said "In order to operate as a doctor, she has to have a clear understanding of Turkish. That will also solve her problems of adaptation. During the early days of her settlement, she was very depressed and could not get used to living in town. Everyday she was deciding to leave. After her meeting with Mandy (another Filipino woman living in the town) they started speaking in their own language and she felt relieved."

At the moment, Jane is staying with the friends she made through her visits to the Embassy. They are living in different cities but they do not seem to regard it as a

problem. They speak everyday for hours on their mobiles. Necati said that lately his use of the Internet is very rare. He cancelled his house connection, which was very slow and uses the Internet from school or on rare occasion goes to cyber cafes. However, he does not seem to have a good impression about the cyber cafes in the town. His worst worry is the frequent use of those places by the under-aged. He thinks that they are so hooked on chat rooms or online games that they neglect many other activities. For him, as the user age decreases, the probable threats may increasingly rise.

Jane accepted the interview so unwillingly that it was difficult on my part to keep the conversation flowing. During the interview she did not want to be in a separate room from her husband so we were not alone. This being the case, I kept the interview short and it is important to note that the data about her mostly derived from Necati's statements rather than her own. He helped me to conduct an interview with her in one of his occasional visits to the city where Jane currently lives.

On the day that we met for the interview, Necati and Jane were with Jane's sister who had come from the Philippines only the previous day. She said that she was also planning to settle down and find work in Turkey.

Like her husband, Jane states that it was her cousin who had initially chatted with Necati and had given him Jane's phone number. After a period of talking on the phone and messaging, they got a little bit closer and Necati decided to go to Philippines.

Necati was Jane's first chat-friend. Before that, she had not spent much time on the Internet. After meeting with Necati this did not really change as they started to use their mobile phones. She states that she sees no actual difference between communication over the net and face-to-face. Meeting Necati offline for the first time does not seem to give her any feeling of anxiety or confusion. She said that she was prepared to see him since he sent some of his photos. There was nothing so surprising "except a bit of a change because he was with a moustache on photos but I saw that he had shaved it off when we met." I asked Jane "if it weren't for the Internet, would you think to live such an experience, marrying with a Turkish man and living in Turkey?" She replied that she believed it was just a fate for two of them.

During the early days of her settlement, she was quite bored in the town. She said "It is a very quiet town and was boring for me as I was all alone but later I got

used to it." About living in different towns she declared "We both do not see it as a problem. The distance of the town to Ankara is only four hours and we can meet whenever we want, and anyway we are always in touch with our cellular phones." She responded to the question about her perception of living in Turkey by laughing, looking at her husband and asking: "Honestly?" Then replied, seeing that he makes an affirmative gesture, "Honestly, it's boring." She said that she had experienced a sense of inferiority from the beginning due to the strange looks she received from people. She was also frightened to have seen so many covered women. At that point, I wanted to learn where she had met those women (in the town or in Ankara where she currently lives). In the town, it is possible to meet plenty of women in the streets at the daytime, wearing long black dresses covering all body parts except eyes and hands that is named as "çarşaf" in Turkish. However, it is a quite unusual thing for the city centre where Jane currently lives. Jane's answer seemed odd to me when she replied "Everywhere." My following question was "Do you think that they constitute a majority in Turkey?" She said she doesn't think so. About the town she currently lives in, she says that she is relaxed and nobody disturbs her. Her statements seem contradictory but given her reluctant attitude, I feel that it would not be proper to try to question her any longer.

Religion seems to be another point of argument in their relationship. Necati is Muslim and Jane is Roman Catholic. She said that they have reached an understanding that is based upon a reconciliation of their cultural differences. However, in my talks with other people it was interesting to see how Jane is usually depicted. Teachers, who often visited them, portray Jane as quite an obstinate person, never allowing Necati to submit his wills over her. They gave me an interesting example of their mutual agreement: Jane convinced her husband to no longer eat meat from an animal that has been ritually sacrificed in accordance with Muslim traditions; and in return, he requested that she stop drinking alcohol and watching Christmas celebrations on TV.

Jane seems to be annoyed by the social pressure in the town. She observed that people apply pressure to those who seem to be different. Jane stated that if she had the chance, she would change the perception of the people in the town. She thinks, "You are free to wear what you want to wear. That should always be the case. But people are so narrow-minded. I think it is impossible to change the minds of those in the town."

It is notable in the cases of Jane and Necati that, even if they are more 'native' to online environments than the rest of other interviewees and their marriage out of Internet acquaintance seems quite extra-ordinary for the town's people, they do not see their online experiences as remarkable or separated from their day to day lives. For instance, they see their first meeting on the net, as a fate for both of them.

The case of Jane and Necati is also important since it exemplifies a marriage of people from different cultural backgrounds through the Internet. As Necati states, their marriage is regarded significant by the people who are bored with their monotonous lives in the town and inspire to see another country, live 'another reality'. For them, Necati is the men who achieved this; therefore he is the envy of those men. However, it can be stated that it was difficult to see this couple's life in the town through rose-coloured glasses. As understood from the statements of Jane, she is still hesitant in taking the decision to stay in Turkey. To become adapted to life in such a small town with totally different traditions was overly difficult for her to cope with and finally she found the solution; to live in the capital city away from the town. On the other hand, her solution does not seem to relieve Necati since for him, it is unusual to live in different cities with his spouse when there is no external obligation.

4.3.3. The idea of separate room for female's 'secure Internet use' in the town:
The cases of Cengiz and Murat.

It should be noted beforehand that the interview with Cengiz was conducted at 2003. At that time, there did not exist an Internet café with a separate room for females but there was this idea in his mind. After two years, when I completed my interviews, in my last visit to the town, I found that his project was in practice at one of the cyber cafes. However, Cengiz was not there. Therefore, I interviewed with one of his friends, Murat. Hence, between these two interviews lies the two-year interval.

Cengiz is 26 years old and single. He is working in a cyber cafe. Previously, he and some of his close friends tried to run another cafe named 'Hasbihal' that served non-alcoholic drinks and nargile and was also known as the only cafe that played live music on certain days of the week. Cengiz seemed eager to talk about their old business. At the very beginning, being the first university graduates among other café owners, they had the idea of doing something different in the town, but they lacked capital. So they searched and found a partner for their enterprise. Cengiz said that they were interested in doing something that may also help to influence the social life in a

good way. He thought that 'Hasbihal' was a very important experience for the town since most of the people living in the town had never been to such a place before. "Their reactions were very important for us, since it was a trial to see if the town was ready for such an experience or not. ..."

Cengiz and his friends thought of 'Hasbihal' as a place of tranquillity for families and friends where they could have a nice drink (without alcohol) and listen to live music. They arranged with a music band from the town centre to come in and play music in the town three days a week. But unfortunately, things did not go well. Cengiz says, "Soon we saw that it was all a waste of time and effort. Our people do not know anything about how to listen to a concert or watch a performance. Having never experienced such things in their lives they were not able to take it seriously, and they went on talking loudly while the band was playing. It was obvious that town was not yet ready for such a thing. We felt ashamed about the attitude directed towards the musicians and decided to end the business at that point".

As with his previous experience, he regards his recent business venture as another attempt to contribute to the 'cultural development' of the town. From the word 'culture' he understands 'knowing more of this and that'. According to him, the Internet is a medium that would help the personal development of people in the town. He gave examples of tests running in Internet and said that by going through these tests, people would prove their knowledge and develop their interest of learning about different things.

One of his complaints was the lack of female customers in the cafe. On this matter, he tries to understand ladies' sensitivity. "There is always the possibility of hearing argot words in cyber cafe. Unfortunately, we could not succeed in preventing this situation. We warn the teenagers often but regret seeing that it has become a bad habit. It just blurts out even at times when they try to be careful. Nevertheless, we are planning to open a separate room for females." Cengiz, who was taking the library as a model, seemed to find his idea quite feasible at the time I interviewed him (19.11.2003). After two years in my last visit to town, I saw that they had realized the project but unfortunately, I could not find Cengiz to talk on this matter. One of his friends, Murat was there to inform me. Cengiz's view of the town was similar with other interviewees. He felt a belonging to it, as it is his hometown but added that for the town to achieve social development, a lot of time and effort is required. Yet, he thinks the town cannot be regarded as a hardship area (taşra) in the full sense. He

corrected me when I used the word taşra in describing the town by pointing out: "If you think that this town is taşra, then it becomes hard to explain the expensive model cars driving down the streets." I get the distinct impression that Cengiz believed that it is justified if he points out the ills of the town, but when an outsider like me has something negative to say about it, he feels the strong desire to 'support' his hometown.

Murat is 24 years old. He is working in one of the biggest cyber cafes. The café is located in first two floors of a big apartment. The computers on the first floor are used just to play games, while the upper floor is reserved for Internet usage. The first floor is crowded, filled to the brim with children and teenagers aged between 12 and 20. They all looked so busy and concentrated upon their business that, to try to interview them at that time would have been an impossible task. Murat is working on the second floor, trying to help customers with difficulties that they meet during computer usage. He also knows how to cope with hardware since he has university degree in electronics engineering. The café he works in is the only one that has a separate room for the use of females in the town. After having talked with him for some time, I realized that the owners were the same people that I had talked to two years ago.

While their project seemed to have some real merit to it, it does not seem to be working out quite as they had planned: the female users were missing. This being the case, the room seemed to lose its uniqueness; with the door being wide open, it was full of male users. Murat told me that the females in the town generally do not prefer to be in the same spaces as men. He related this to the culture and traditions of the town.

When it comes to the matter of chat rooms, he said that there are many users coming particularly for the purpose of chatting, although he himself does not prefer this. His reason for keeping away from chat is quite interesting: "I'm already in contact with people. I have no difficulty in communicating with them. Chat is really popular among people in the town because they have communication problems. They do not have much experience talking with women or people who are different from them. Internet relay chat is absolutely suited to their needs. They are learning how to communicate with other people." It seems that his self-image was different from a typical town person. He differentiates himself with having completed a university degree outside of the town, and having met with different people in larger cities.

About the town he said: "This is my land, I feel some sort of belonging to this culture, but at the same time, I also feel sorry for the state of my condition here. It was very difficult for me to find this job in the town since there are very limited job opportunities for skilled young people. Earning one's living in big cities seems easy to me, as job opportunities are wider. So I wouldn't say no to a job opportunity in a bigger town. Young people of this town don't want to spend time in coffee houses anymore. But our capital owners think that the town is not a good place for investment. They invest their capital outside. If I had a chance to make a change in the town, I would lead investments here so that we can provide job opportunities for all people."

The cases of Cengiz and Murat are remarkable since they seem to undertake a quite different mission when compared with most unemployed men of their age who hopelessly spend their times in coffee houses. They feel that something has to be done for social development of the town. Cengiz's experience of 'Hasbihal' had been an important lesson in this sense. Despite its failure, he does not seem to lose his hope and continued with Internet café business. Both Cengiz and Murat situate themselves as enlightened persons of the town, taking the mission to do something for the town's social development. Being sensitive towards the unequal access of females to Internet, Cengiz pursued the idea of separate room for them. However, it did not change the existing condition. The reasons behind this 'failure' also have specific importance for the present study. Female's absence have something to do with unchanging attitudes of males towards their visiting Internet cafes. Even, I did experience it during my visits as a researcher. With my entrance to Internet café where Murat works, male users turned their hands towards the door and stared a while, trying to understand my reason to be there. In fact, this is a traditional picture that does not change even if I visited cafes repeatedly and no need to state that it is quite discomforting for females. In sum, it should be stated that despite the realized project of separate room for females, barriers to greater female use of the Internet still persisted due to the strong male domination and gender-biased practices in almost every social context of the town.

4.3.4. Migration-motivated Internet relay chatting: The cases of Mithat and Kutay.

The cases of Mithat and Kutay reflect the aspirations of young men to leave the town and its reality, which they equate with boredom and deprivation, behind. It

seems that Internet helps them a great deal to overcome this boredom and provides them with 'new opportunities'.

Mithat is 30 years old and single. He lives winters in the town with his relatives. He said he was not a good student and left the school at the secondary level. He is assisting in a cyber café. The café that he works in seems rather rundown, dirty and neglected. Despite the wideness of the interior of the room, all of the computers are arranged in a single narrow space, with the rest of the room remaining unutilised. Mithat works on seasonal basis: he works winters in the town and summers in Alanya within the travel sector. Alanya has a very different social setting when compared to the town. It is a coastal region where the primary source of income comes from tourism. In contrast to the town, in Alanya it is a commonplace occurrence to meet with different people from all over the world. It can be seen that his life experience in Alanya gave Mithat the feeling of being different from people in town. He made this emphasis often in his conversation; "People here live for the society. With every step that they make, they think of what the others would say. But I think that one has to live for him/herself. I have a different state of mind because of my different background".

Similar to other cyber cafes, the user base here is mostly composed of teenagers and teachers. At the time I conducted the interview, there were no female users present, but Mithat informed me that there were females who visit regularly and he did not face any problems related to this. Mithat said that people use the Internet mainly for the purposes of chat, research (related with term projects of students) and playing games. When more elaboration on games is requested, he added "Even I play games quite often. Not every game can be considered time killing and good for nothing. There are couple of games that help you to think deeper. Red Alert is one of them. It is frequently played by teachers." His defensive attitude gave me the feeling that he had an argument about this matter previously.

Mithat chats with people from other countries on a daily basis. With similar views to those articulated by Necati, he also believes that Turkish chatters are generally rude. As an example of such rudeness, he said that Turkish people suddenly leave the chat without saying anything when they have something to do. But he claimed that he has never encountered such rudeness while chatting to foreign people.

Mithat told that he has met with Internet abuse several times: "Users of age 20-35 have a greater tendency to do that. I always intervene in such cases but blocking

the system is also problematic. It sometimes may result in a total blockage of chat sites etc."

When I asked Mithat about love affairs and marriages conducted through the Internet he replied: "At the moment, you are talking with a person who has had such an experience." His partner was a woman of his age from Aruba. He took her photo out of his wallet and showed it to me. Then he began to tell me his story. "We have been chatting for several hours. Everything seemed all right at the beginning, but my only bad luck was that her country wants a visa from Turkey and she cannot come here because she is asthmatic and her doctor does not allow her to embark upon long voyages. I could not go there to meet her, so we ended our relationship, given the realisation that it was going to be impossible to get together offline. She was a wealthy woman. Somebody else could easily deceive her and take everything she has."

I then asked him how people in the town and his family would have responded, if they had had the chance to get married. He replied, "My family doesn't have any objections to it. And even if they did, I wouldn't care so much, anyway. When it comes to people in town, I can say that marriage between a Muslim man and a non-Muslim woman may easily be welcomed but the reverse might pose a problem. Such social pressure is confining people's lives. It is not like a big town here. We have a population of 20,000 and of these 20,000 people at least 10,000 know each other. If I had a chance to make a change in this town, I would change the minds of those people who only know how to gossip all the time. Young people in the town have nothing to do. They have to decide whether to go to a coffee house or Internet café. There are no other social activities"

Kutay is 28 years old and single. Like Mithat, he said he did not continue his education after secondary school. He is the owner of the fastest cyber café. It has been 18 months since he started the business. He thinks that because it seems to some to be quite a profitable venture, even people who were once merely users enthusiastically tried to embark upon operating a café. This being the case, the number of cyber cafes in the town had increased dramatically in a very short time. Cyber café owners started to compete in a wild manner in order to earn the most money in the shortest time possible. They reduced the prices of usage and quickly filled their cafes with children playing games. Kutay is against the way things are going. He aims to provide service

high in quality, not the cheapest in price. The user price for one hour is YTL1 in his café while he said there are cafes with price YTL 0,25.

Kutay told he had experienced many problems during the process of setting up the business. Police officers applied pressure on them in order to restrict the visit of harmful sites. They were forced to put blockages on sites, which were deemed 'dangerous'. But Kutay believes that the officials who decided upon which sites should be blocked were themselves not informed enough to determine what is harmful and what is not. Officers told them via a declaration that they were forbidding gambling and entering pornographic sites on the Internet and that they would close down any cafes that did not comply. But some indeed shut down, others who were also going against the decree were left open. Kutay thinks that this is a common occurrence in Turkey. Like most of the Internet cafe owners, Kutay complains of weaknesses in blocking the system, since it raises the problem of disconnection to some frequently used sites like mail services and newspapers. He thinks blocking some common known harmful sites solves nothing since decisive misuses always find a way to reach their aims. "If you block this, they will find that. There is a device called a flash disk[44] and it is inserted into computer tower, like a CD. By the help of flash disk, people can enter the sites that we try to avoid. I have noticed some users using a flash disk. I thought that it would be a solution to remove the CD driver and now as can be seen, all of the computer towers are lacking CD drivers. But, for all the solutions you develop, there is always a counter attack."

There is another policy of police headquarters that he is critical toward: coffee houses and Internet should be closed before midnight. He stated he could not understand the logic behind this time limitation by adding that, these regulations they are forced to adhere, deter and limit the Internet usage in the town. For him, since there is no alcohol consumption in cafes, there cannot be security problems.

Kutay thinks that the Internet is an incredible thing that provides communication between people all over the world, which is perhaps the most prominent feature of the Internet for the people of the town:
"There is a programme called skype. By the help of it, you can see, hear and talk with your friends living overseas. Most of my costumers are willing to use this. We prepare everything for them. All we need is the e-mail address of the person they want to be

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[44] This knowledge about flash-disk can also be regarded as a "marginal knowledge" since it denotes a practical consciousness embedded in the use of technology

linked with and of course the same programme must be run at the other side. Unfortunately, however, such uses are very open to viruses. We use anti-virus programmes to try to prevent it, but unfortunately, that does not always seem to work. We do not pay for these programmes and use temporary demos of them."

Kutay does not approve of students' using cyber cafes during school hours. Since he does not want his cafe to be regarded as an escape place of students, he warns them to return to their schools. He wants every cyber cafe owner to follow this policy and be consistent at that point. Kutay seems to be angry towards the indifference of other cyber cafes. He said that they make critical mistakes just to earn some more money. They reduce the prices and do not control what students are doing on the Internet. He feels himself responsible of the possible harm that society may encounter. Kutay thinks that the Internet takes the pressure off the public information offices a great deal. People come and learn their ID numbers or checkout the days of their security payments. These are ways of becoming more aware of citizenship. People who know nothing about computers and the Internet come and try to learn something by watching their friends use. Sometimes, they ask Kutay to teach them basic things such as entering into the web sites they wanted. Kutay observed that newcomers show some typical behaviour. They use computers either in a hard or soft way. For instance, they get very angry when they cannot succeed in understanding warnings in English and press randomly and harshly on the keyboard with their fingers; or alternatively they refrain from trying to do anything and wait for help.

Kutay enjoys chatting. He thinks chatting with foreigners can be an educational experience for people who want to try to learn English. It is an entertaining way of improving one's English and socialising at the same time. He pays attention to the chat information of people. Like in the case of Necati, completed chat information gives him a sense of trust for the other person. He has a girlfriend who lives in China and whose photo lies on the background of his computer. He showed it to me and said that he loves her and wants to marry her. He told me the story of their relationship: "We started chatting about this and that and suddenly felt that we had really hit it off. She works as a sales representative of a motorcycle agency. I could take the distribution business in here but seeing that it will create the problems of spare part, I gave up the idea. In my relationship with her I didn't feel that I was with a foreigner. I felt that she was so close to me. She was no different than a Turkish girl living in this village. Especially at time when I asked her to marry me, she responded

in a very familiar way that one may encounter in Turkey. She told me that she is working to invest some money for her university education. She kindly rejected my offer by saying that she has some future plans concerning career and university education. It was very nice of her to thank me for proposing to her. Such a case is very typical in Turkey. If a girl wants to say no, she does it in a kind and sensitive way by finding an excuse like her education. Anyway, thanks to the Internet, I know so much about China. I learned far more than that can be learned in Geography lessons. If I want I can go to China easily as a tourist. It does not cost much. I have found out that a return ticket costs 900 dollars and I can stay in luxury hotel only for 500 dollars a month."

The cases of both Mithat and Kutay reflect how unemployed and undereducated young men of the town are looking for ways to solve their problems. Although, they were doing Internet café business, they did state that it is difficult to keep the same business in the long run due to economic instability in the town. Mithat who works summers in Alanya within the travel sector told that it is a common occurrence in Alanya for a Turkish man to marry with an outsider. He added that he had many friends who had cross-cultural relationships and through these, they found ways to settle down in foreign countries. Therefore, it would not be wrong to conclude that Mithat and Kutay were seeking ways to turn their chat relations into opportunities that would provide them with the chance to migrate, although they did not clearly express it in these terms.

4.3.5. Internet only for females at the town's library: The cases of Hasan and
    Ceren.

Hasan is 37 years old. He is an officer in the only governmental library in the town. The library is frequented mainly by students. At specific hours, it serves as a waiting room for the students who have nothing to do while waiting for their buses to take them back to their villages after school. At other times, it serves as a meeting place for lovers who cannot find an opportunity to see each other because of strict control in schools (this, I have found out from my students). In the library there is a small room with three computers inside. This room is only for females use. Hasan said that it has been two years since they the computers were brought. Originally, there were seven computers, but now there are only three left. As the governor required

more computers for the office, four of them were transferred. Since all of the other cyber cafes are male-dominant spaces, the small room in library seems to offer an 'alternative' for females.

Hasan stated that they do not allow any boys to use the computers, but as an exception he and the other officers do use the computers when the room is empty. Hasan did not know much about the technical features of the computers. People from outside are contacted to help when the officers are face with technical problems in the library. Since the library is far from adequate for research, Hasan sees the computers as providing a vital function for the students. Therefore, main objective of computer use should be centred upon research purposes. He claimed that girls rarely use the computers for purposes other than research and Internet abuse is less likely to happen when all the users are females. "But on rare occasion, we notice that they enter harmful sites. We have never tried to block the system for Internet abuse, since the cases we encounter are not noteworthy. After all, we can't provide total control on computers. Unfortunately our education and staff is inadequate for this. Our main duty is to deal with the library itself."

While he was aware that some girls use computers for chatting, he did not seem to believe that it is something, which is harmful to them. However, he did assert that it would be better for females to use cyber cafes since computers at the library are far from meeting their needs. The computers are slow and having three computers for a broad group of female students is clearly insufficient. On the other hand, he is sensitive towards females and their needs. "People have bad opinions of girls who frequent cyber cafes. They think that they are doing something immoral. Therefore, females prefer to come here even if they know that our computers are not capable of meeting their needs".

At times, he himself finds the opportunity to use the Internet and utilises his time by surfing the web. He has never tried to join a chat room and stated that he has no need for such an activity. Being happily married with a 13-year-old daughter keeps him busy enough. He also does not have a mobile phone but has recently bought one for his daughter. "Since I have a daughter, I'm often worried about where she is and what she does. In case of emergency, it puts my mind at ease that she has a mobile phone with her at all times." It seemed quite unusual for a father to provide his 13-year-old child with a mobile phone when he himself does not even own one, however, this case is rather prevalent in town where fathers often work in stable places and

mothers stay at home. Accordingly, mobile phones help to control / aid children (especially girls) who are either at school or course or on the streets which are considered to be dangerous. At this point, I must note that nearly all of my female students were complaining about the difficulties they face when they want to wander through the streets. They even told me that when a girl passes through the same street (other than her own) several times a day she becomes known as a bad girl searching for someone to flirt with. To prevent being accused, she needs to walk with either her father or brother. There are cases however, when men on the street 'misunderstood' the girls' walking partner. That is to say, a girl is still under risk even when she is walking with her relative because her relation with him might be unknown. The pressure does not lessen during school hours. Only the people who apply the pressure change. In this scenario, the school management interferes in relations of students. It is nearly impossible for a girl and boy to walk together within the school garden or sit together at the canteen. If they tend to do so, they are quickly warned by teachers. Most of the teachers who put such pressure into practice are worried about school's reputation. Therefore, if students are seen as couples walking in the school garden, they fear that the school would lose its respectability and some narrow-minded parents would take their daughters out of school and leave them uneducated.

To turn back to Hasan's case then, it could be stated that he also does not feel comfortable with the social pressure placed upon women. His hope for the town was in the opening up of new channels that would teach women to express themselves and join in more actively within daily life. He told me that this would only be possible when the cultural and economic level of life in town has risen.

My interview with Ceren took place at the library room for females. She was surfing on the Internet at the time that I entered the room and while she seemed willing to talk her two friends beside her seemed rather withdrawn and shy. Ceren is 15 years old. She is a student in one of the more established high schools that holds a particular significance for being among the first to introduce computers into the educational schema in town. Ceren told that she learned how to use computers and the Internet from her teacher in early times of computer usage in town. Their teacher provided all of the students with a mail address and taught them how to use the Internet for basic research. Ceren reckoned she spends about an hour a day using the Internet at the library. Her school day ends at 11:30 and private course she attends

begins at 15:30. She usually spends her spare time in between at the library. It is important to note that students in their last year of junior high school have to prepare for the LGS exam, which determines the high school they will attend. The exam is held at the national level and the competition for places within the qualified high schools is fierce and requires a great deal of dedication and hard work on the part of the students. Ceren is lucky to be among the economically privileged students who have the opportunity to attain private courses.

She has three elder sisters, all of whom are married. She lives alone with her mother, having lost her father in a tragic accident. One of her elder sisters used to chat on the Internet but now only does so rarely. She told that a close friend of her elder sister had been chatting with a man from another town who she first got to know in chat rooms. They soon got married. These news spread out in the town quickly as she was the daughter of a mayor of district. Ceren stated that the girls' family did not react since they were not like typical despotic families in town. However, everybody else in town thought that they might easily divorce since they saw their relationship as groundless. This preconception needs to be understood within the context of the culture of the town where most of the marriages are arranged according to 'görücü usulü'[45]. People do not rely upon 'strangers', those whose families are unknown to local people. However, Ceren informed me that in this particular case, the 'internet couple' have defied the odds and are still married.

On the Internet, the sites that Ceren frequently enters are about zodiac signs, fortune telling, anecdotes, and funny stories. She said that she has never entered a chatroom and she does not use the Internet for anything else apart from the areas mentioned above. Despite saying this however, Ceren nonetheless seems to feel as if she was accused of doing something 'evil' with the Internet. It occurred to me that her attitude might arise from the fact that adults frequently warn them of supposed 'dangers' and frequently monitor their usage. Perhaps, she might even think of me as

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[45] The term is a common Turkish phrase for arranged marriage originating from the verb to see; *(görmek)*. It points to traditional way of getting married by having the prospective bride seen by relatives of prospective groom. It should be noted that to see does not only refer to get to know rather it implies an approval of family elders as decision makers of marriage. One can not find a standard term for referring to a method which is alternative to an arranged marriage but some ways of expressing the obverse of arranged marriage are relevant like getting married by loving or wanting, (severek, isteyerek evlenmek). As could be understood from the reverse expressions, "görücü usulü" may signal a coercion of families as well. It should not be assumed, however, that when the phrase is used it simply denotes a standard procedure.

one of those inspectors. I asked her if she ever wondered how it might feel to chat with people whom she'd never met before. She replied that she wants to have such an experience but is much too impatient to spend time writing on the keyboard and waiting for answers to arrive. It seems that she desires to use the Internet as she would her mobile phone, with quick messaging back and forth. The complexity involved in the use of the keyboard, as she perceives it, distracts her attention and leads her to lose interest quickly. She also has a mobile phone that was given to her by her mother to be used in the case of an emergency.

Like most of the people in town, Ceren has some relatives living in foreign countries. While she tells me that she would like to make contact with them via the Internet her knowledge of email procedures is not yet adequate. Though she was taught at school how to obtain email addresses, her account apparently got cancelled because she did not use it often enough. She does inform me however, that several days ago she obtained a new email address and is in the process of learning how to use the service.

In 2000, she first visited her first cyber café with her elder sister. In those days the Internet was something very new and both girls and boys were going to cyber cafes to learn how it was used. But Ceren stated that after a very short time the boys had discovered how to search for immoral material on the Internet and they began to look at the girls in the café in a threatening and obtrusive manner. She describes it as "They were staring as if they were going to rape us." It was at this point that Ceren and her elder sister decided not to go to the cyber cafes anymore and use the room in the library instead. Ceren told that while she often dreams that it would be better for her to attend a university and live outside of town, the strong bond she feels for her hometown conflicts her thoughts. "Whenever I travel outside of town, even just to Çorum, I find myself searching for somebody from town. I feel that town's people are much more warm-blooded than people living in bigger towns." According to her, the main problem women face in town is that, they are under strict social pressure. For instance, on weekdays her course ends at 20:00 and she is afraid of walking home alone at that hour. In contrast, she stated that she once visited Adapazarı and saw that women there can walk in the streets until midnight and nobody disturbs them anymore.

As illustrated by the case of Ceren, learning about computer use in general has become part of lycée education since last 2-3 years in the town. Especially in technical

lycées preparing pupils for employment in areas that necessitate certain practical skills like accounting, making furniture, electrical wiring, students are introduced with basic computer use and they are taught how to use Internet for purposes like basic research and how to use e-mail services. However, it should be noted that computer number in schools is not adequate for a class of students. In most of the lectures, two or three students can use only one computer. Moreover, school administrations pay specific attention to keep the computer laboratories closed after lessons due to the reason that the more the computers are used, the frequent the technical problems they face. Therefore, school laboratories do not very much serve for developing teenagers' desire to learn or know about computer use.

Although she is the only one female interviewee in the town, the case of Ceren is quite illustrative for the teenager schoolgirls living in the area. She stated that she was introduced with computer use in her school however; she couldn't develop computer skills due to the lack of a proper space for it. There is only the library room for girls' Internet use. At first glance, this "free space" may seem to be an advantage for girls to feel at ease and use computers but it can be seen that such isolation obstructs the sociality that can be observed in cyber cafes. To express in more concrete terms, it can be stated that, while teenager boys can develop their interest in computers by asking from each other and café owners who service like consultative authorities in cyber cafes, girls are deprived of similar conditions. The room in library is equipped only with three computers that frequently run down and library staff is lacking technical knowledge as understood from the case of Hasan.

In that respect, women's non-use of Internet cannot be taken apart from the wider frame of their *habitus*. Ceren's hesitation to go to a cyber café is closely related to other experiences that women often live in the town like sexual harassment they live in the streets[46]. Moreover, it is apparent in the case of Ceren that her use of Internet also reflects her *habitus*. The sites she frequently enters are about zodiac signs or fortune telling. Therefore Ceren's activity on Internet is similar with that of women in the town, be they users of Internet or not[47].

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[46] This point is further elaborated under title "Display of Gender Relations" in section 4.4.2

[47] At this point, it is useful to remark that most women in the town gather at houses in their free times to have chats. It is common in these gatherings to make various kinds of meals and Turkish coffee is served after meals. After coffee service, it is a common occasion to tell fortunes by inspecting the grounds remaining in coffee cups. Such traditional habits also reflect the gender-linked behaviours in

4.3.6. Internet relay chat as a media allowing mundane daily contact and enabling people to live in families: The cases of Yunus, Haydar and Seyhun.

Haydar is 32 years old. He is responsible for security in a bank. Haydar is completing his obligatory work period in the town. For Bank personnel to obtain permission to work in bigger cities, a 3-4 year time period has to be completed working in isolated towns like this one. So it is not by personal choice that Haydar has found himself living and working in the town. Having previously lived in a capital city, he finds the town to be a rather restrictive place that does not allow one the opportunity for individual development. He is single and he sees this as a factor increasing his boredom. While he personally believes that married couples share a mundane life, he nonetheless concedes that looking after the house and children would probably allow the time to pass a lot quicker.

He uses the Internet for approximately 3 hours a day for purposes like keeping in touch with his friends from other towns by email and chat services, shopping and having fun. He goes to cyber cafés, which he defines as places with a wholesome atmosphere. He prefers cafes with new technical equipment. Since he usually chats with the use of cameras, whether a cyber café includes cameras or not is an important consideration for him. About the Internet in general, he complains of weaknesses in infrastructure.

He never uses his own name, partly for security reasons but also because he wants to hide his 'real' identity as much as he can. His main reason for doing so is that he feels this allows him to be open and honest in expressing himself. He said that people are always masked even in their daily face-to-face relations so masking one's identity on the Internet is not any different. He claimed that he does not discriminate about the sexes and occupations of the people he chats with. He enjoys chatting. He told that his main intention and purpose is to communicate with people and have fun. He believes that talking with people might change many things in life. Yet he does not chat with different people everyday. He has friends living in the capital city and he feels that they have fallen apart because of his work in the town. The Internet at the very least keeps them in contact with each other.

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the town. While men are prepared to endeavour for desired changes in their lives, women are likely to be preoccupied with imagining changes with activities like fortune telling.

Haydar stated that using the Internet is the cheapest way of having fun and socialising for people living in small isolated places like town. "There is no real alternative other than that. There is no other way of having fun and getting excited or learning new things, talking with different people in town. Even in times when you go to city centre, you see that there is nothing new. Everything is the same." On the other hand, however, he did acknowledge that Internet relay chat has also had some harmful effects on people: "When you start talking with people you have never met before, it could affect your vocabulary in a bad way. You may start using abbreviations and argot." For Haydar, playing computer games is also potentially threatening. He believes that it damages one's psychological health.

Haydar is highly critical in regards to the rituals of everyday life in the town. He had a similar vision with Necati as an outsider. However, he was much more reactive against what he perceives as the 'dominant religious atmosphere'. One of his memories on this matter may help to define his position: "I don't fast at Ramadan. Almost all of the people in my neighbourhood fast and they check up on each other during the meal taken before dawn. They claim that this is to help the deep sleepers to help those who cannot wake up easily. They watch to see if the lights of all the houses in area are switched on or off. But I feel that there is something much more disturbing in it than that: I think that this is not only to help those who are fasting, but rather that they are disturbing the people who do not want to fast since they believe that it is something which everybody is obliged to do. Thus, they never tell me that they do not see my lights on but instead wait for an explanation from me. I don't feel that I have to give any reasons for this because I believe it is something very personal. Once I even told my overly curious neighbour that I didn't fast because I am an Armenian. He looked at me in a very strange manner. It was obvious that he couldn't understand my joke. And I think that this is the underlying problem: The people in the town do not want to comprehend anything outside of their comfort zone." He went further and told that living in the town is something like having cancer in that he feels that it weakens his organism day by day. But he did find one thing positive to say: he became aware of such a reality and understood that life is not as easy as it seems to be in big cities.

Despite his reactionary attitude, it could be seen that, he was trying to understand people's state of mind. Like others, he said that town suffers from insufficient investment. All investments that may help to develop the region are made

to neighbouring district Sungurlu. He gives examples such as faculties, jail (which was moved from town to Sungurlu) and the sugar factory that is in the city centre. For him, the town is a very isolated one and people find it difficult to cope with economic problems. Given their lack of education, the town's people have focused their attention upon the afterlife in hope of a future that they do not believe is obtainable for them on earth. Among the many respondents I interviewed, Haydar was the only one who criticized one of my questions. When I had asked him what he thought of women using cyber-cafes in town he retorted that this question is problematic in itself because it poses women as inherently different creatures[48]. He then added that cyber cafes should serve the use of all *humans* in district without resorting to male/female distinctions. For Haydar, it is reasonable for females to opt for inactive indoor activities since they are faced with such strong social pressure when they assert themselves and become more active.

Haydar has a strong desire to complete his work and go back to the capital city where he once lived. "I miss my life in Ankara. I visit my family and friends some weekends but even that makes it really difficult because when I come back to the town, life becomes even more unbearable. In my visits to Ankara I become aware that I even miss the traffic and chaos that everybody else complains about. I am rather a social person that's why I don't want to live in such a small, closed and conservative area. Yet, I am not anxious. I have dreams but I'm not a dreamer. I always try to learn from every difficulty that I am faced with… "

Seyhun is 34 years old and single. He shares the ownership of a cyber café with his cousin. He had known virtually nothing about computers when he decided to open a cyber café business. He believed that once a person had used a computer for the first time, they would always want to use it. He also knew that there were already many users in town. Within the one-year period after he had opened the cafe he had already developed a great degree of interest in computers, and states that he now

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[48] It should be noted at this point that, interview with Haydar made me reconsider the issue about question context and design. Having rethought on a possible gender bias in that regard, I still insist on the usefulness of investigating the attitudes about women's use/non use by this question since in the town there exists a situation –inconvenience of women's visiting cyber-cafes- and this situation should be analyzed by making it open for evaluations. To employ a general understanding of use (by anyone) would ignore the notion that men's use and women's use are not regarded equally in the context of this town.

comprehends most operations to a large degree. Besides the cyber café, he owns a coffee house.

Seyhun thinks that the Internet is especially useful for people who have relatives living in other countries. Some of his own close relatives live in Belgium and he talks with them everyday with the additional use of cameras, and it only costs him a reasonable YTL 0,7 per hour. He does not use the Internet as a mean to meet with different people. He sometimes chats but he does not think that chatting leads to new friendships because he thinks that most people simply lie to each other on chat.

Seyhun believes that the Internet has lost its popularity in the town. Drawing my attention to the chat room he said: "It should be full by now but as you can see for yourself though it's prime usage time there are only 3 – 4 persons." He stated that cyber café users were not the same people who were found hanging around in kahvehanes. But as time passed by, they started to kill time like the ones in kahvehanes and it became the end of Internet for him. Like some of the other cyber café owners, he wants people to use the Internet for purposes like learning something new or keeping in contact with relatives living outside the country. He does not seem to approve the teen passion for playing games.

Three years ago, Seyhun's relatives in Belgium had convinced him to migrate to Belgium. The plan had been to apply for migration by marrying one of his relatives there. Despite the obvious conclusions that one might come to in hearing of a marriage of this kind, he informed me that it was not a marriage of convenience and that he had loved his wife dearly. After they were married they had lived in Belgium for 4 months before Seyhun finally realized that he was not suited to living in Belgium and that he missed his homeland too much. He took his wife to the town with him to settle down but despite his best efforts she could not adjust to his life in the small town. Eventually, they simply decided that they could not accept each other's way of life and got divorced.

Seyhun thinks that the town is a sweet and charming place worth living in but it unfortunately has a very serious problem of unemployment. His only wish for the future is to keep the job that he currently has. He said that he wants nothing more out of life because he does not believe that it is possible to get any more than that. For him, government officials make things incredibly difficult for people to do even relatively simple things such as obtaining permission to open up an Internet business, so for this reason he expects nothing from the state or government.

Yunus is 30 years old, married and does irregular work in construction. Even though he has the Internet at home, he spends most of his spare time in a cyber café owned by his close friend. He thinks that time passes quickly in cyber café with friends when he has no other business outside. His brother and wife live in the USA and he uses the Internet mainly to have face-to-face talks with them. His wife, whom he married in the town by 'görücü usulü', obtained a green card and went to the USA. She is working at the same filling station with his brother at the moment.

Yunus reckons that he spends about 35 hours a week in chatting in total which works out to approximately 4 or 5 hours a day. When he does not chat he surfs the web, enters gambling sites, and tries to keep track of examination dates as he wants to reregister to Açıköğretim[49] where he was dismissed. He plays games like Underground, Fifa and Backgammon[50]. Yunus complains about the slowness and connection problems of the Internet in the town. The cyber café he uses is known as the fastest of town.[51] Still, he says he faces with many problems for instance; his voice goes much slower while talking with his brother. In coping with technical problems, his friends who are graduates of electrical engineering often visit and aid them.

Yunus claimed his main intention and purpose in chatting is to practice his knowledge of English. He feels the need to speak English fluently since he is preparing to go to the USA as soon as his wife settles her affairs. The USA will not be his first experience of going outside the country: He has been to Cuba for 35 days and Russia for 6 months. He says "If you are a good worker at construction business, you give your passport to a company here and they make all of the arrangements for you to go and work in foreign countries. Most of the men in the town go to Russia and Turkmenistan through this method." It can be observed that Yunus has strong self-confidence and in talking with him it is obvious that he finds conversation easy, contrary to most of other male interviewees. He says that during chats he describes himself as he is in his daily life. The only point he often lies about is his occupation. Since it is difficult to describe what he does in English, he makes a shortcut and says

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[49] Açıköğretim is a distance education system applied in Turkey.

[50] It is interesting that backgammon is a game that is frequently played in kahvehanes. This situation may imply that people carry their kahvehane habits into cyber cafes.

[51] Yunus relates this speed to his cafes closeness to the post office that organizes the Internet operation.

that he does not work. Yunus does not like to question people's lives himself so for him, it is not very important whether they lie or not. He has some friends whom he met in chat rooms and has developed close online relationships with. He says he prefers to chat with people he already knows since it isn't easy to get used to the English of different countries.

In contrast, in his face-to-face conversations and chats with his brother, Yunus said that he feels free while chatting: "In face-to-face encounters I can not smoke cigarettes when I'm with my elder brother and I have to pay careful attention to my clothing because he places importance on such things; but if we are simply chatting I don't need to bother myself with such matters. Actually, this is the one and only thing that I can count as a difference between the two forms." However, he thinks that Internet relay chat and face-to-face conversation differ a great deal for most of the people he knows. At that point, he makes a similar evaluation with that of Murat's. According to him, young people who are eager to spend hours chatting in cyber cafes suffer from the same problem. They cannot build a conversation with the members of opposite sex and Internet relay chat appears to be a medium to learn this skill.

Yunus's father is from the town and he was an army officer before his retirement. Because of his occupation, he worked in different cities and moved with his family to wherever his job took him. Yunus compares the town with many other villages that they had been to and says that there is almost nothing to do in the town and that he finds it a very conservative place.

As a case in point of the conservative values of the town he gives the example of female workers working in shops: For him, it is a remarkable thing to count very few females working in shops. "Looking with the eyes of an outsider one can see that the number is not many, but if you are a person living in this town, you could say that it is a great number since there were no female workers 3 or 4 years ago." Though he clearly finds the town to be a boring place to live, he does add quite positively that he finds the tranquillity of the place rather soothing. He talks about a new highway project that is planned to pass through town and thinks one day, if the project is realized, the town will develop and change.

4.4. Women as Internet non-users.

> The issue of women as users of technology also includes women whom we could call 'non-users'. In other words, the question why some groups of women do not use some technologies is equally relevant; this raises for instance the issue of accessibility of technologies (Everts, 1998:7).

One of the most difficult tasks in the fieldwork was to find a female user in the cyber cafes. Although some café owners state that they have a few female customers, it was very hard to encounter them. Therefore, female non-users are asked about Internet. After some conversations with the towns' women of various age groups, it appeared that middle-aged women hardly knew of what the Internet is. Most of them think that cyber cafes are playgrounds for children and they seem not to approve their children's spending so much time in cyber cafes. Situation is different with young schoolgirls of age 15-20. Like in the case of Ceren, they have acquaintance with Internet from the schools. Most of them say that they are curious about its use, however for a girl to go to a cyber café is regarded as improper among town's people and men disturb them when they tend to go to cyber cafés. When they are reminded of Internet access in a separate room for ladies at the town's library, it is understood from the girls' statements that they face with so many technical problems (lock ups, warnings etc.) and they feel uncomfortable to want help from the officers all the time. They claim that they would feel more comfortable if there were female officers at the library.

It is obvious that women's non-use of Internet can not be reduced to poor opportunities in the town, rather it is due to social positioning of the women in the gender structure -culturally constructed inequalities between men and women-. In that account, gender structure should be analysed if the reasons behind women's non-use are to be explored. The factors related to tradition and religion can be seen among the explanatory factors for the normative roles to be played by men and women in the society.

4.4.1. Religion

Due to the Islamic belief, God created men and women differently in respect to their biological, psychological and social characteristics (Üşür, 1991). Koran

determines the status of women in Islamic law. Some studies concerning the status of women have concluded that women are regarded as the weak and inferior sex in Islam (Toprak, 1981).

The position of women in Islamic societies has often been a matter of debate with reference to their roles, culturally determined restrictions like honor and shame upon women's freedom, as well as to the "private world of women" and the "public world of men" Kağıtçıbaşı, 1982). Honor (şeref, namus) which refers to a man's reputation as his place in the community is also very important in traditional Turkish culture and it is closely related to women's sexuality. (Kalaycıoğlu and Tılıç, 200: 30). Therefore threats to man's reputation 'namus' have much to do with position of women, be his wife, sister or unmarried daughter. Even emergences of gossips concerning man's inability to control 'his' women are regarded as threats to his reputation. Thus, in order to preserve honor, man should establish his control over women. Women's participation into the workforce, education and social relations are bound, in a great degree, to the permission of men. Though, it is argued that social change and urbanization weakened restrictions over women and they are replaced at least to some extent by secular values[52], these conditions are more or less relevant outside the metropolitan areas like small towns and villages.

4.4.2. Display of The Gender Relations.

Social life in the town is marked with strict gender roles and it can be observed that in most of the families, women are completely dependent on the men. They dare not do anything against men's orders. The idea of a 'life companion' operates only in families of those who came from metropolises to fill their obligatory work period in the town. Whole socialization period that an individual passes through, creates, justifies and perpetuates the hierarchical and separate worlds of men and women. In this sense, certain behaviours are deemed as socially acceptable and from a young age children are nurtured accordingly. Transmission of values and norms by family and education system reproduce and reinforce the segregation of gender roles in society.

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[52] For further explanations see (Toprak, 1981) and (Kalaycıoğlu and Tılıç, 2001)

At first glance, it may seem odd to one that formal education system holding the mission to impose values of 'modern life' and to foster a rational, secular and egalitarian social order, reinforces traditional ways of thinking. But if the situation is evaluated from missioners (teachers) side, it can be seen that the imposition of such values necessitates a serious confrontation with values of the town and such a burden is undertaken by a very few people. Being a person who came from metropolis, I was surprised to witness that all public schools were operating like Imam Hatip Lycée's[53] whose most visible characteristics are sexual segregation and seclusion of the girls.

> Beliefs and values about sexuality that are highly gendered and essentialist in nature lie behind the teacher's varying conceptualizations of male and female sexuality. These help to legitimize and reinforce patriarchal teacher attitudes that are basically 'supportive' and 'protective' of boys and 'limiting' of girls sexuality. The dominant discourse in the Imam-Hatip lycée attributes the differences between women and men to fitrat (nature) as prescribed by Islam, and defines masculine and feminine identities as fixed, unchangeable entities (Acar and Ayata, 2002: 96).

As is suggested by Bourdieu (2001: 23) in his ethnographic analysis of gender divisions in Kabyle society, "the particular strength of the masculine sociodicy comes from the fact that it combines and condenses two operations: it legitimates a relationship of domination by embedding it in a biological nature that is itself a naturalized social construction."

As explained under the title "stories and findings", strictly separated gender roles of men and women is a crucial factor behind women's non-use of the Internet. During the conversations with my female students who are in their teens, it became obvious that almost all of them want to experience how Internet use might be in a cyber café but only a few of them tried it, since in the town going to cyber cafes is considered as inappropriate for girls. It is conceived like an unwritten rule. Those who tried to break the rule are the ones who are sharply pointed by their 'rebelliousness' at the school and by their 'live and learn' experiences; even they came to conclude that cyber cafes are places full of boys swearing each other and harassing girls. The act of swearing practiced loudly and freely in public areas as a masculine act is worth elaboration here since, it seems to be typical of towns' men. Boys in their early ages learn such behaviours from their elders and supposedly, it is an indicator of

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[53] These are schools training "civil servants" who will be responsible for fulfilling religious services.

masculinity in the town. Bourdieu's (2001: 2) notion of symbolic violence is illuminating in explaining this phenomenon.

> Symbolic violence, a gentle violence, imperceptible and invisible even to its victims, exerted for the most part through the purely symbolic channels of communication and cognition (more precisely, misrecognition), recognition, or even feeling. This extraordinarily ordinary social relation thus offers a privileged opportunity to grasp the logic of the domination exerted in the name of a symbolic principle known and recognized both by the dominant and by the dominated.

In that sense, Bourdieu (2001) emphasizes that symbolic violence can be embedded within a language (or even a pronunciation) as well. In the town, men's swearing is perceived as usual by women even if it takes very offensive forms implying sexual harassment of women. It is conceived like something not good but natural.

Despite the recent situation, it is known that the first year of Internet was quite different: it was conceived as a tool of education and first cyber cafes were operating like town's library, open for the use of both girls and boys. It was with the realization of 'other'[54] uses that girls felt themselves disturbed and in a short period of time, cafes became places only for boys. Surely, there were some adolescent female users – teachers like in my case, nurses or outsiders –who are less likely to be disturbed by town's people and boys in cafes. It can be claimed that, if a women is an outsider (be her officer or teacher) she is not regarded as a marker of a certain family's or town's honor (namus). Rather most people are aware that she might have had a different life style before and she might be accustomed to that. Therefore, their different behaviours are excusable to a certain extent.

At that point, two examples denoting outsider women's experiences will be illuminating. One is an old story lived during 1980's (people could not recall an exact date). A dispute taken to the court between two families is resulted in an order that is fining the "guilty side" as usual. However, men of family considered as guilty, blamed the judge on the grounds that he took a subjective decision making a legal error and day after court they attacked the wife of the judge known as a 'modern' woman 'wearing short skirts ignoring the traditional structure in the town'. They tore

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[54] Pornography and chat flirting.

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her clothes, aiming to leave her naked daytime in the street eye-witnessed by everyone. This story is told by people to tell me how the town changed in a positive way so that we as outsiders can freely walk in the streets even at evenings and no more encounter with such attacks.

Another story is the harassment of the wife of a gendarme who is a commander-in-chief. She is seen as a beautiful woman clothing in a courageous mood. It should be noted that, her clothing can be regarded quite ordinary in a metropolis but it is regarded improper in the town where women (especially married, middle aged women) cautiously clothe in a style hiding their body posture. She was exposed to the verbal harassment of a man while walking in the street with her husband. It is an amazing event since she is the wife of a gendarme and it is largely known that gendarme is a person symbolizing state authority. As a result of his action, he was hardly beaten by gendarme and this event is eye-witnessed by everyone in the street. The story was told to me once by gendarme and his wife and once by a shopkeeper. I asked him if there were no other ways of punishing him but he replied that most of the townsmen are no different from animals and they have to be treated accordingly. When it comes to the shopkeeper's testimony, he told the story to me in order to take care of myself and made a remark on the matter: even a gendarme's wife might be attacked by "ill-mannered" people. In that sense, there are numbers of stories frequently told by townspeople. The significance of these stories for women lies in their advice. They are presented like lessons for beginners.

By the light of frequently told experiences, it can be stated that sexual harassment of women in the streets of the town is a routine practice as being an integral part of *habitus*. In this context, Larkin (1997: 115-116) claims:

> In my own research, I have found that street harassment is such an inevitable part of girls' passage into womanhood that many young women are emotionally worn down long before they ever enter the workplace or academia…Women's experience of harassment probably varies from setting to setting and for this reason, it makes sense to examine the nature of women's harassment in specific situations.

To turn back to the issue concerning women's non-use of Internet, it can be added that though being secondary, low literacy rate of female population in the town

is among the relating factors.[55] As an information and communication technology, Internet certainly necessitates a level of literacy and skills for use (at least one has to be familiar with computer use). In that regard, women and elder people have a disadvantaged position. The privileged ones are young boys since from their early ages they become accustomed to computers by playing games in cyber cafes wherein doors are wide open to them.

4.5. SUMMARY

The point in juxtaposing the stories is not simply to document the 'social impacts' of Internet in a small town. As far as it is concluded by the theoretical motives of the recent study, what is explored is how society and technology influence each other. Therefore, the empirical data derived by the fieldwork reveals the sentiments and evaluations that accompany and give meaning to the process- integration of Internet in the town- by situating them within the life courses of individuals living in the town.

Stories and findings include detailed descriptions and testimonies on widely ranging issues from migration to religion and gender segregation that would at first instance seem unrelated with Internet. However, it should be re-emphasised that this study intends to break apart with deterministic understandings studying technology and society apart from each other, in their own terms. In that regard, aiming to develop an interdisciplinary ethnography based approach, it looks in detail at the ways in which the technology is experienced in use. This is the point, which is evaluated in the literature review part, being the accounts of Social Studies of Technology scholars. As Hine (2000, 8) states:

> Beliefs about the Internet may have important consequences for the ways in which we relate to the technology and one another through it. Ethnography can therefore be used to develop an enriched sense of the meanings of the technology and the cultures which enable it and are enabled by it.

In this sense, empirical data provided within this study, makes implicit some 'beliefs about the Internet', some of which correspond to specific uses, namely;

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[55] Though there is not a current statistical data about literacy rate, underdeveloped towns like the case in this study suffer from low literacy rates among female population. In this regard, there is still an official campaign (directed by the ministry of national education) in the town to persuade families in the way to send their girls to elementary schools.

-Demonising Internet by positing it as a thing that is responsible of 'disseminating immorality' among teenagers.

-Seeing Internet as an instrument that will contribute to the 'cultural development' of the town.

-The prevalence of online applications to Green Card and migration-motivated Internet relay chats indicated that it is a common occurrence among Internet users in the town to take Internet as a facilitator for their already existing endeavours to migrate.

-Regarding Internet as an enabling media for learning how to conduct relationships with the members of opposite sex.

These varying beliefs and uses also point to the richness and complexity of Internet characterized by the flow of relations each of which can be conceptualised by other flows and can take divergent forms. By taking into consideration of such a complexity, it had been feasible to develop an understanding of Internet as an "*actant*" rather than reducing it to a mere technological instrument.

Throughout this chapter, Internet being a social phenomenon is explained within its relation with other phenomena like migration, religion, traditions and gender differentiation since its use or non-use is understandable only by regarding the specific social context in which it is put into use. At that point, if we heed Emirbayer's (1997, 312) words in his *Manifesto for a Relational Sociology*, "Entities of the world – relate!" by the light of the empirical findings in this study it can be inferred that they always already relate but what constitutes the very nature of their relation is what entangles the researchers and it will be further elaborated in the conclusion part.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This study aimed at providing an ethnography- based research approach to Internet-society relationship in a small town. In doing this, from the very beginning of study it is assumed that technologies can neither be framed as separate entities acting upon social practices, nor can they be treated simply as devices serving the needs of relevant social actors/groups. To avoid what Latour (1991:110) calls two pitfalls of *sociologism* and *technologism*, it has to be ensured that technology is itself social and can be understood only within the blending of social processes embodying it. It is influenced by and is influencing social affairs. This kind of a relationship is a dialectical relationship having the full complexity of any dialectical relationship. Therefore, it is rejected to start from two premises, that is, the Internet on the one hand and society on the other. This idea also constitutes the main reason behind preference of a theoretically informed ethnography-based research and it is this awareness of the traps of dualisms that led this study to focus on interrelation of Internet and society from an interdisciplinary approach.

Inhabiting at the area of research setting for 1.5 years, I have found the opportunity to develop a long-term involvement amongst people. Reflections of the evidence from fieldwork are achieved through a variety of methods like unstructured interviews and participant observations. Data from field study revealed that one cannot draw a strict line in between the relations assessed through Internet use and relations occurring on a daily basis –conceived as mundane-. To express it in popular terms of Internet literature: There observed a penetration of online and offline experiences in complex ways and it is claimed that this complexity can best be explored by employment of ethnographic analysis and thinking through the notion of *habitus*.

Habitus, makes it possible for studies of technology to develop holistic approaches by "transcending the sterility of the opposition between subjectivism and objectivism."(Jenkins, 1992:74). In its very definition, *habitus* includes both freedom

and constraint as characteristics of social interaction and serves as an analytical apparatus to do away with dualistic assumptions narrowing the scope of social theory.

The study did not concern itself solely with the "use" of Internet among town's people; rather it posited "use" within the context of *habitus;* ways of doing and being, acquired during the socialization. It would be useful to remark that *habitus* cannot be reduced to a matter of conscious learning or in contrast, values imposed by external forces. It is acquired through practice and includes consciousness as well as unconsciousness; implying structural aspects as well as spontaneous aspects.

When the testimonies comparing recent and past experiences of Internet cafes are considered, it is commonly stated that at early years of use both male and female users were engaging with it whereas recently it turned into a male domain. This situation is closely related with people's *habitus*. At the moment of its inception Internet peaked as something new, helping students in education, providing adults with some facilities or a tool for entertainment. It may be its very novelty that raised curiosity about its possible uses. However, as the time passed by, living with the Internet is naturalized in some way and people's "common sense" shifted accordingly. This process of change is not extraordinary rather it is similar to other ways of doing or seeing.[56] The rise and fall of such novelty in the town may also be related to a form of consumerism and serve as a case study exploring consumer culture but what was intriguing for this study is the tendency of town's people to turn things into matter of immortality. Their *habitus* involves a sedimented way of conceiving the 'outside world' that is strongly influenced by religion and traditions. It is embedded in whole socialisation period of individuals. Consideration of this point shows us **how sociality in the town may influence Internet.**

The natural fit of Internet within the small town also displays behaviours habitual with town's people. The number of backgammon players at Internet cafes was not less or like the case of Ceren, engaging with zodiac signs and fortune telling were typical among schoolgirls. In this sense, it can be concluded that people tend to carry their habits into the new domain of Internet. However, this is not to claim that

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[56] An example at that point: town's people rapidly registered their children to a new school that became known as filled with new equipment and employing successful teachers. After a year time, school is judged to be a place where immortality may flourish and the number of registered female students sharply decreased.

social life was left unchanged by having encountered with this new domain but it is clear that encounter cannot be grasped without understanding sociality in that specific context.

Adults' distaste at the very idea of teenagers flirtation was so obvious that there were cases of female students who were left uneducated due to the doubts that schools would serve a ground for flirtation. Therefore, chat-flirting at Internet cafes seems to be the solution of teenagers at that point. By this way, they try different ways of socialisation, learning how to generate a dialogue with the members of opposite sex. This dimension of Internet use is a hot topic in the literature on Internet. For instance, it is stated by Clark (1998) that Internet allows for more equalitarian exchange freed from social and peer pressures. As physical contact is impossible on the Net, young people communicate with each other free from such pressures. Teenagers' use of Internet in certain ways (so much of their activity in cafes was oriented to Internet relay chats) to gain new experiences (which are strongly opposed by adults in daily routine), shows us **how Internet may influence sociality in the town.**

Certainly, by the light of Ceren's case, it should be re-emphasized that not every teenager goes through same experiences especially when relations of gender are considered. In that regard females' non-use of Internet is in no way different than their non-use of bicycles or cars in the town[57].

The cases of Mithat, Yunus and Kutay who are looking forward to live outside the country revealed that they express themselves with the feeling of being different from town's people. They related this situation to different work experiences they lived in big cities. Strong desire to live outside was quite prevalent among young men in town. Given the high rates of unemployment and lack of different sites for socialisation, life in the town was equated with boredom and desperation by these people. Their migration motivated Internet relay chats express the attempts to find a way out. However, it was often stated that taking visa for town's people is becoming harder day-by-day since they are marked as the people who are constantly in search of not returning. In the field I encountered with some anecdotes like "All Americans

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[57] Since the town is located on geographically level land, it serves as a convenient ground for bicycle users and their number is quite high. It is usual to encounter so many people riding bicycles for their daily arrivals from almost every age group. However, it is impossible to see a woman or even a teenager girl riding bicycle. Similar with the case of the Internet use, bicycle use is regarded as inappropriate for females who reached puberty.

know about town's people" or "Even Americans who have never heard of Turkey know this town as a small country." Suner's notion of "migrating without actually changing one's location" has been helpful in understanding such practices like migration motivated chats.

The case of Necati was perhaps the most interesting of all. He constituted an example to ones who desire to marry foreigners. His experience with Jane was important for the ones who aim to marry and live outside the country. It is drawing attention in this case that Jane and Necati do not tend to attribute Internet a very special feature as a domain in which their relation flourished or a provider of their coming together. Quite contrary, they claim that their encounter was just a fate for both of them. Likewise, during the fieldwork, I did not encounter any statements regarding Internet as a world apart, having a separate reality than 'offline world'. Most people were involving with whether Internet provided adequate or appropriate means to follow practical projects. For instance, checking social security payments, learning about green cards, searching for term homework topics and etc. Furthermore, if we elaborate statements of Kutay, we can conclude that, what appeals him was the familiar athmosphere he felt in chats with a Chineese woman just like the one he may live with a Turkish woman. Therefore this study did not deal with a case of *virtuality* as an experience of extreme 'disembedding' from an offline reality though there is abundant literature concerning with the Internet primarily through such notions as *cyberspace* or *virtuality*. By doing this, it shares the same motives with ethnographic study of Trinidad provided by Slater and Miller (2000). Writers conclude that even if these approaches focusing on separation between *virtuality* and *offline reality* are valuable in certain instances, they are not a good point of departure for studying Trinidadians and many other people. In accordance with them it can be stated that such notions simply do not apply for the case of the small town provided within this study.

Lastly on the matter of developing interdisciplinary approaches regarding technology and society, Bijker and Law (1992) rightfully state that :

> Although technology is important, for reasons we have indicated, its study is fragmented: There are internalist historical studies; there are economists who are concerned with technology as an exogenous variable; more productively, there are economists who wrestle with evolutionary models of technical change; there are sociologists who are concerned with the "social shaping" of technology; and there are social historians who

follow the heterogeneous fate of system builders… The last five years has seen the growth of an exciting new body of work by historians, sociologists, and anthropologists, which starts from the position that social and technical change come together, as a package, and that if we want to understand *either*, then we really have to try to understand *both*.

This study aiming at understanding both is in its infancy and needs to be strengthened and re-examined by further accounts. The findings of this study cannot be generalized and it would be misleading to provide an answer whether its findings are specific to the town or common to many areas. This study does not have a ground for answering such questions. As with other kinds of qualitative work, intention in ethnographic accounts is to provide some kind of understanding of a specific case. However, there may be other social settings that would lead to similar accounts with the one in this study. For instance, some underdeveloped suburban areas are likely to reveal similar pictures. In that regard, further comparative ethnographic studies would add to this study by enriching relational understandings of technologies within various social contexts.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire (in Turkish)

Yaş   Cinsiyet   Meslek   Eğitim durumu

1) İnternete en çok nerede bağlanıyorsunuz? Özel olarak tercih edilen bir kafe varsa tercih nedeni?
2) Nasıl bağlanıyorsunuz? (servis sağlayıcısı)
3) Evinizde internet bağlantınız var mı?
4) İnterneti kullanım süreniz ? (Günde ortalama kaç saat?)
5) İnterneti kullanım amaçlarınız ?
6) İnternetle beraber hayatınızda değişiklikler oldu mu? (Olduysa ne tür değişiklikler? Olmadıysa neden?)
7) İnternete bağlanma maliyetini nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz ?
8) İnternet ile ilgili yaşadığınız ya da duyduğunuz size ilginç gelen bir öykü var mı?
9) En çok ziyaret ettiğiniz site ?
10) Oyun oynanıyorsa en çok oynanan oyunlar ?
11) Chat yapar mısınız ? (Hayırsa 19.soru)
    Evetse a)süresi (günde kaç saat?)
            b)amacı
            c)konusu
12) Chat yaptığınız kişinin cinsiyeti önemli mi?
13) Chat yaparken yanlış bilgi verdiğiniz olur mu ? Hangi konularda?
14) Chat yaptığınız kişilerin yanlış bilgi verdiklerini düşündüğünüz oluyor mu? Hangi konularda ?
15) Yüz-yüze iletişim ile internette sağlanan iletişim arasında ne gibi farklar görüyorsunuz?
17) Sürekli chat yaptığınız kişiler / gruplar var mı ? Varsa hangi konularda chat
    yapıyorsunuz?
18) Chat yaparken kullandığınız özel terimler / jargon var mı?
19) Bilgisayar ve internet kullanımı ilgili olarak ne türden sorunlar yaşadınız / yaşıyorsunuz?
20) Sorunları gidermekte kimlerden yardım alırsınız?
21) Dil konusunda problem yaşıyor musunuz?
22) İnternet kafede özel olarak tercih ettiğiniz bir köşe ya da bir bilgisayar var mı?
    Tercihinizin nedeni?
23) Sizce gelecekte internetle ilgili olarak ne gibi değişiklikler olabilir?
25) Kadınların internet kafeleri kullanmasını nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?
26) İnsanların İlçede internete olan ilgilerini veya ilgisizliklerini nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz ?
27) İlçe dışında biryerde yaşadınız mı ?
28) Buralı olmanın olumlulukları ya da olumsuzlukları neler olabilir?
29) Başka bir yerde yaşamak istermiydiniz, neden?

30) Büyük şehirde yaşamak denince aklınıza ne gelir ?

31) Başınız dara düştüğünde ilk olarak kimden yardım istersiniz?

32) Hangilerini kullanıyorsunuz? a)Bilgisayar, b)internet, c)cep telefonu

33) Sizce ilçeyi en iyi tanımlayabilecek özelliği nedir?

34) İlçede ne gibi sosyal, ekonomik, kültürel gelişmeler bekliyorsunuz?

35) Kendiniz ve aileniz için neler bekliyorsunuz?

36) İlçeyi değiştirebilecek konumda olsaydınız ilk çözmek isteyeceğiniz sorun ne olurdu?

İnternet kafe işletecilerine ek sorular

1) İnternet kafeden önceki işiniz / işleriniz?

2) Başlıca gelir kaynağınız internet kafe mi?

3) Neden internet kafe işletmeyi tercih ettiniz ? İşi kurarken yardım gördünüz mü ? Kimlerden ?

4) Şu an yaptığınız iş haricinde nasıl bir işte çalışmak istersiniz?

5) Ailenizde ve yakın çevrenizde interneti kullananlar var mı ?

6) İnternet ile ilgili olarak olumlu / olumsuz neler söyleyebilirsizniz?

Appendix B: Questionnaire (in English)

Age   Sex   Occupation   Educational Status

1) Where do you most often use the Internet? If there is a particular Internet cafe you prefer give reasons why?

2) How do you connect to the Internet? (E.g. Broadband, dial-up).

3) Do you have Internet access at home?

4) On average how many hours a day do you use the Internet?

5) What are your main aims in using the Internet?

6) Has using the Internet changed your life in any significant way? (If so, in what ways? If not, are there any particular reasons for this?).

7) What is your opinion about the financial costs of connecting to the Internet?

8) Have you or anyone that you know ever had any interesting experiences while online?

9) Which site do you most frequently access?

10) If you play online games, which games do you most often play?

11) Do you use the Internet to chat? (If no, proceed to question 19)

   How many hours per day?

    b) What are your reasons/intentions?

    c) What topics do you most discuss?

12) Is the sex of the person you chat with an important factor?

13) Do you ever give false information while chatting online? On which topics do you most frequently give false information?

14) Have you ever been under the impression that the person that you are chatting to is giving you false information? On which topics do you most frequently have this impression?

15) What difference do you perceive between communications over the Internet

   and that which takes place through more traditional face-to-face encounters?

17) Are there any specific people/groups that you often chat with? Which topics do you most often chat about?

18) Do you use Internet specific terminologies or abbreviations while chatting?

19) What problems, if any, have you encountered while using the Internet?

20) When you encounter such problems, from whom do you seek assistance?

21) Do you ever encounter language problems?

22) Do you have a preferred section or computer in the Internet cafe that you visit? If so, why?

23) What sort of advancements do you believe will take place in relation to Internet technology?

25) What is your personal opinion about females using internet cafes?

26) What do you think about people's relationship with Internet in the town?

37) Have you ever lived anywhere outside of the town?

38) What do you perceive to be the negatives and positives of life in the town?

39) Would you have preferred to live anywhere else? If so, why?

40) What impressions do you have when people speak of large cites?

41) In your darkest hour, whom do you first turn to for comfort and assistance?

42) Which of these do you use? a) Computer b) internet c) cell phone

43) What do you believe are towns most defining features?

44) What sort of social, economic and cultural advancements do you expect to see in the town?

45) What do you foresee for you and your own family?

46) If you had the opportunity to change crucial aspects of social life in the town what would be the first problem that you would attempt to solve?

Some Additional Questions for Internet Café Owners.

1) What was your occupation before you opened up an Internet cafe?

2) Is the Internet cafe your only source of income?

3) What were your reasons for deciding to run an Internet cafe? Did you receive any assistance when setting up the business? From whom?

4) Apart from what you are currently doing now, what other sort of occupation would you have preferred to be employed in?

5) Do you have family or friends who use the Internet?

What do you perceive to be the positives and negatives of using the Internet?

Appendix C: Development performance of Çorum

Socio-economic Development Rank (2003) (46th among 81 provinces)

Variables	Units	Çorum	Turkey	Rank (of 81)
DEMOGRAPHIC				
Total Population	Individual	597.065	67.803.927	38
Proportion of the population living in the city	%	52,24	64,90	51
Fertility Rate	Child	2,66	2,53	35
Average Household Size	Individual	4,67	4,50	46
EMPLOYMENT				
Proportion of the persons employed in agricultural sector	%	67,61	48,38	24
Proportion of the persons employed in commercial sector	%	7,35	13,35	38
Proportion of the persons employed in financial sector	%	5,69	9,67	47
Proportion of regular or casual employee	%	26,27	43,52	62
Proportion of regular or casual woman employee	%	3,49	8,81	55
Proportion of employer	%	1,37	2,61	45
EDUCATION				
Literacy rate	%	83,11	87,30	60
Woman literate rate	%	76,40	80,62	55
Proportion of higher education graduate population	%	4,83	8,42	70
Schooling rates in primary education	%	100,20	98,01	34
Schooling rates in high school	%	36,59	36,92	35
Schooling rates in vocational and technical high school	%	17,73	20,49	48
HEALTH				
Infant mortality rate	%0	51,00	43,00	15
Number of medical doctors per 10000person	Individual	7	13	49
Number of medical dentists per 10000person	Individual	1	2	44
Number of medical pharmacies per 10000person	Number	2	3	37
Number of hospital beds per 10000 person	Hospital bed	26	23	18
INDUSTRY				
Number of plots in organized industrial estates	Plot	155	28.726	32
Number of establishments in small industrial sites	Number	1.327	81.302	21
Number of establishments in manufacturing industry	Number	87	11.118	20
AGRICULTURE				
Agricultural production value per rural population	Million TL	1,188	1,124	33
Share of agricultural production value in national production	%	1,27	100,00	28
CONSTRUCTION	Number	114,547	16.235.830	35
Total number of housing units	%	95	97	52
Proportion of housing unit with piped water				
FINANCIAL	%	0,69	100,00	36
Share in total gross domestic product	Million TL	1,431	1,837	35
Per capita gross domestic product	Number	47	7786	37
Number of bank branches	USD	160	2.249	39
Total exports per capita	USD	45	3.967	53
Total imports per capita				
INFRASTRUCTURE	%	45,70	45,23	45
Proportion of asphalt road in rural settlements	%	97,71	91,28	22
Proportion of total asphalt road	%	98,05	84,98	12
Proportion of population in rural settlements with adequate drinking water supply				
OTHER WEALTH INDICATORS	Number	418	652	40
Number of private cars per 10000 population	Mws	1	1	52
Total electricity consumption per capita	Number	1,014	1,852	52
Total telephone counters per person	%	32	15	8
Proportion of population having a card for free health services				

Source : http//: www.dpt.gov.tr

Appendix D: Comparative statistical Data

	CENTER	THE TOWN	SUNGURLU (Neighbouring town)
Population	221 699 (35)	53 193 (260)	80 840 (158)
Proportion of the Population living in the city (%)	72,77(72)	46,97(342)	43,79(399)
Proportion of persons employed in agricultural sector (%)	45,45 (763)	77,46 (371)	68,34 (561)
Proportion of persons employed in industrial sector (%)	13,88 (88)	2,77(558)	3,39 (481)
Proportion of persons employed in service sector (%)	40,67 (112)	19,77(446)	21,73 (382)
Unemployment rate (%)	7,30 (269)	6,62 (305)	4,65 (488)
Literacy rate (%)	88,46 (237)	84,01 (505)	79,79 (677)
Infant mortality rate (%)	45,06 (293)	30,96 (659)	55,01 (132)
Gross National Income per person (1000TL)	143 189 (97)	30 288 (497)	34 519 (455)

Source : http//:www.gov.tr