

GLOBALIZATION AND SHOPPING MALLS IN ANKARA:
FOUR CASES

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ABSTRACT

GLOBALIZATION and SHOPPING MALLS in ANKARA: FOUR CASES

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This study aims to understand the glocal character of shopping malls and consumption patterns in the specific case of Ankara. The shopping mall has been a manifestation of globalization in the changing urban space as well as culture in Ankara since the 1990s. It has marked a significant shift from local dispositions of consumption and retailing, too. The study explores how this shift occurs in Ankara with regard to four aspects: spatial reorganization of urban space via malls; changing consumption patterns and urban public culture; the rise of organized retailing; and, finally, the interplay between the global and the local in commodification processes. The data was collected from semi-structured interviews with twenty-eight salespeople in four malls, namely Beğendik, Arcadium, Ankamall and Optimum. These four cases each display a distinct blend of global currents and local orientations. It was realized that malls are increasingly popular for they signify a much-needed urban space and public life for the socially and culturally differentiating people in the city. Orientations of mall visitors vary regarding age, gender, neighborhood and occupational differences, while urban or rural identities can be also effective in the social practices in different malls. The ways shop employees differentiate themselves change according to their perception of consumers in a certain mall, too.

Keywords: Shopping malls, Ankara, consumption, globalization, organized retailing, local, glocal, public space, salespeople.

ÖZ

KÜRESELLEŞME VE ANKARA'DA ALIŞVERİŞ MERKEZLERİ: DÖRT ÖRNEK

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Bu çalışma, Ankara örneğinde alışveriş merkezlerinin ve tüketim örüntülerinin global karakterini anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Alışveriş merkezi, Ankara'da 1990'lardan beri değişen kent mekanı ve kültüründe küreselleşmenin bir tezahürü olmuştur. Alışveriş merkezi, yerel tüketim ve perakendecilik eğilimlerinde de belirgin bir değişime işaret etmektedir. Bu çalışma, bu değişimin Ankara'da nasıl meydana geldiğini dört yönüyle araştırmaktadır: kentsel mekanın alışveriş merkezleri yoluyla yeniden düzenlenmesi; değişen tüketim örüntüleri ve kentsel kültür; örgütlü perakendeciliğin yükselişi; ve son olarak, metalaşma süreçlerinde küresel ve yerelin etkileşimi. Araştırma verileri, Beğendik, Arcadium, Ankamall ve Optimum'da yirmi sekiz satış görevlisi ile yapılan yarı-yapılandırılmış mülakatlar yolu ile toplanmıştır. Bu dört örneğin her biri küresel akımlar ve yerel yönelimlerin farklı bir karışımını ortaya koymaktadır. Alışveriş merkezlerinin, toplumsal ve kültürel olarak farklılaşan sosyal tabakalar için çok ihtiyaç duyulan bir kamusal hayat ve kentsel mekanı ifade ettiği; dolayısıyla giderek popüler oldukları görülmüştür. Alışveriş merkezi ziyaretçilerinin yönelimleri yaş, cinsiyet, semt, mesleki farklılıklar açısından değişmekte; kentsel ve kırsal kimlikler de farklı alışveriş merkezlerindeki toplumsal pratiklerde etkili olabilmektedir. Mağaza çalışanlarının sosyal farklılaşma yolları da belirli bir alışveriş merkezindeki tüketiciyi algılarına göre değişmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Alışveriş merkezleri, Ankara, tüketim, küreselleşme, örgütlü perakendecilik, yerel, global, kamusal alan, satış görevlileri.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Underhill writes that the shopping mall is “an American innovation, but it has gone completely global” (2005:143). Discussions that try to situate shopping malls outside the United States and much of the Western world find out that uniform characteristics such as architectural functions, aesthetic contemporaneity or the placement of global brand stores have been combined with the local context and formed peculiar cases wherever shopping malls have been built. In Sao Paolo, Brazil, shopping malls reflect stark segregation and enormous income gaps in the city; in Japan, segregation or safety are hardly issues in shopping malls, yet the scarcity of space is a problem (Underhill, 2005: 144; 146). In the Post-Socialist Eastern Europe, the mall as an inner-city spatial form signifies an “advanced” lifestyle and the increased presence of Western goods together with the protests of local, small retailers against malls (Bodnar, 2001; cited in Salcedo, 2003: 1092-1093). In the Middle Eastern countries such as Kuwait, the state has been noted to contribute to shopping mall development (ibid.: 1096); whereas in Egypt, the development of malls is transformed by the Islamic character of the country and leads to the emergence of a distinguished public space for the young or female population whose movement in the city is otherwise restricted (Abaza, 2001). In each of these cases, malls have been identified according to the particular historical, social and economical conditions and the orientations of local people as well as institutions such as state or religion. In order to argue against a homogeneous picture of shopping malls around the world, Salcedo points that these “artifacts of globalization”, as de Mattos named them (1999; cited in Salcedo, 2003: 1084), do not directly stand out as the expressions of “homogenization and segregation of consumption” outside the United States:

When malls in other countries are examined, it becomes clear that they are the outcome of “glocalization” processes that combine the post-Fordist capitalist logic of mass production and consumption with local political, social and cultural influences that introduce significant variation. (Salcedo, 2003: 1084-1085)

In the particular case of Turkey, shopping malls constitute another case for the encounter of the global logic of development with the local context and practices. These urban consumption places mark the reorganization in the name of ‘modernization’ of urban space, commerce and sociality in Turkey alongside a greater connection with non-national elements in economy and culture. These changes have been linked with the country’s open approach towards the world beginning with the 1980s (Tokatlı and Boyacı, 1999; Erkip, 2003). Erkip sees that the urban transformation in the specific case of Ankara highlights that malls are perceived to be carriers of modernity as well as a potential means of segregation between different social groups in the city (2003). She states that the development of shopping malls is the extension of the rapid accumulation of capital in the urban space, suggesting that “shopping malls and office towers, as the complements of luxury housing, are the responses of large capital, which has been looking for new investment areas” (Erkip, 2003: 1076). Throughout her article, the presence of shopping malls has been noted to coincide with rising identity politics and leisurely use of urban public places; therefore, it is seen that malls provide a place for these transformations in Ankara. Tokatlı and Boyacı (1999: 192) focus on the case of Istanbul and draw attention to the 1990s as transformative years in which the national state withdraws from economic development and “private entrepreneurship” breaks through. As a result, “greater integration with international markets” becomes possible in the retailing sector, too, while the authors perceive this integration in the form of “uncritical import of Western culture” on the one hand (ibid.: 188), and diversifying urban commercial spaces on the other hand (ibid.: 192). Helvacıoğlu describes the changes that took place after the 1980s Turkey, and suggests that since then:

[T]he rise of consumption culture, introduction of information technologies and the encouragement of a business-oriented lifestyle interrupted social and political values in the country. (Helvacıoğlu, 2000: 332-333)

She perceives that globalization and the accompanying consumer culture together with “an export promotion strategy” (ibid.: 332) signal a decline in state-protectionism; however, this transformation has actually shaped a “hybrid bourgeois

class structure”, which is open to neo-liberal social transformation, still, partly dependent on “state policies” (ibid.: 333). This is remarkable if one compares Ankara with Istanbul, the former being portrayed as the bureaucratic capital and the latter being portrayed as the “capitalist” capital in the words of Tokatlı and Boyacı (1999: 187). Such a differentiation remarks that Istanbul has long been deemed as the city which is in more harmony with global currents, while Ankara has remained much closer to the legacy of the nation-state.

1.1. The Legacy of the Department Store:

In order to understand the peculiarity of shopping malls in Turkey, one needs to think about the emergence of ‘department store’ in the country. Zafer Toprak (1995) describes the background for the first department stores in the Ottoman Istanbul. He writes that commerce and consumption habits underwent a sharp differentiation beginning with the mid-nineteenth century. Greater interaction with the European culture brought with it a greater familiarity with the Western habits of consumption, while the visual attraction of advertisements and magazines added to that change (Toprak, 1995: 26). Traditional production and consumption patterns were limited mostly by local production; the range of produced and sold items was limited; whereas an Ottoman middle class and its consumption and lifestyle were visible in Louvre, Au Lion, Bon Marché or Bazar Allemand, where the merchandise manufactured in or transported via Europe were sold (ibid.: 25-26). A money economy was settling, and the commercial as well as consumption space was divided into two in the city (ibid.). Toprak writes that the significant part of population in Istanbul maintained the traditional consumption patterns provided by the traditional commercial space such as the Egyptian Bazaar in the southern part of the Golden Horn; whereas new consumption places popped up in the other part (*Cadde-i Kebir* or the Grand Rue, which became *Istiklal Caddesi* later; Pera and Karaköy-Galata) and in the form of department stores, which were the extensions of department stores in the big cities of Europe such as Paris, Berlin and Vienna (ibid.: 26-27). The location of these stores were close to where non-Muslim residents of Istanbul at that time lived, too, and things sold in these department stores expressed a refined taste for both Ottoman middle class and non-Muslims in Istanbul, states Toprak (ibid.)

Tokatlı and Boyacı, too, focus on the effect of those department stores in the Imperial Istanbul, as they discuss the transformation of commerce throughout the Ottoman, Republican as well as post-1980 periods. They state that “[i]n the nineteenth century, the influx of European machine-made goods devastated local manufacturing, when commercial treaties allowed the cheaper circulation of foreign products” (1999: 184). Local manufacturers were deeply affected by the invasive introduction of such foreign goods in the city, whereas the local started to transform itself in the sense of adopting the market patterns of incoming trade goods and habits (Toprak, 1995; Tokatlı and Boyacı, 1999). Based on these accounts, it can be suggested that the emergence of department store as a new form in Istanbul towards the end of Ottoman reign highlights that consumption of luxury or fine materials led to the transformation as well as differentiation of social groups depending on their proximity to Western culture, specifically European culture. During the late nineteenth century, the implementation of the department store in Istanbul did not address mass population; it remained limited to those who were acquainted with the Western culture. It referred to the refined tastes that were even realized to be an inseparable part of modernization in the city. Coming to the 1980s, Tokatlı and Boyacı mention that foreign capital, merchandise and consumption patterns make themselves visible once again; although not in the form of department stores. They highlight the similarities of late-nineteenth and late-twentieth century in the city regarding the reflection of consumption patterns on urban places (1999: 192). They remark that the organization of retailing estimates to its Western counterparts, with many supermarkets and malls developing under the name of national and transnational companies, while global brands take their place in these spaces. According to the authors, the change in the years prior to the Republican era is similar to that of the years of which global currents become obvious at the local level, because both the former and the latter periods are marked with developments that try to make the city “a more modern and Western city” (ibid.)

In Ankara, the development of department stores reveal a different pattern than that of Istanbul, in the sense that development of modern commercial centers and places for urban sociality occurred after the establishment of nation-state. In fact, these were the projects that combined with and completed the nationalization of urban space and culture. In the book ‘*Bir Zamanlar Ankara*’, one sees that photos of

the urban commercial space in the old Ankara reflect a traditional composition prior to the reorganization of urban space in the Republican era. The city was not populated much and the commercial center mainly consisted of Ulus with shops and bazaars. One of the main public and commercial centers of the city was *Karaoğlan Çarşısı* near *Ankara Kalesi*, according to the book ‘*Bir Zamanlar Ankara*’ (Börtüçene, 1993: 58). This commercial center was described with obvious insufficiency and poor design. It is told that there were hardly any stores with finely designed shop windows. *Karaoğlan Çarşısı* began to renovate after the Ulus monument was placed in the neighborhood in 1927, it is noted.

The Republican period signified the betterment of infrastructure and alleviated the conditions of urban public and commercial spaces, as in the above example in Ulus. The use of national capital and the meaning of development as reflected on the urban space can be materialized in the below sentences:



Photo 1: From the Old Ulus (Photo from the book ‘*Bir Zamanlar Ankara*’)

Karaoğlan Caddesi, yazları tozan, kışları da çamurla kaplanan toprak bir yoldu. 1923’te parke döşendi. Cadde solda Taşhan’la başlardı. (...) [H]anların caddeye bakan alt katları, Milli Mücadele yıllarında efeler ve çeşitli gurupların toplandığı kahvehaneler ile doluydu. Ankara’nın ilk sinemalarından Yeni Sinema da burada açılmıştı. 30’lu yıllarda sinemadan çıkan Ankaralılar, dilerlerse izledikleri filmlerin Hattat Esfeyzi tarafından hazırlanan anı kartlarını tütüncü dükkanından satın alabilirlerdi. (Börtüçene, 1993: 60)

It can be argued that the national capital referred to the spatial renovation of these local places as well as the construction of new centers that would be identified with Ankara. In the writings of Saktanber (2005) and Gürbilek (1993), the social value of

newly constructed public and entertainment places in Ankara is mentioned, while the excerpt above illustrated how a modernized commercial center referred to a social center, as well. The meaning of modernity can even be materialized in the small change that the cobblestone pavement “*parke*” made for the street. The movie theater and consumption of images that have been reproduced from the movies could be added to the effect of practicing a national idea of modernity.

The department store emerged in the 1960s in Ankara, and it is understood that it became a representation of urban identity and practicing urbanized modernity. The famous department stores that were concentrated in Kızılay and Ulus were stores such as YKM and Vakko. These department stores in Ankara are in fact the branches of the same stores in Istanbul. For instance, the multi-storey YKM was originally opened in Istanbul, but became identified with Ankara later on. Its developer Nuri Güven was from Sivas; in 1961 he opened the second and third branches of YKM in Ulus and Kızılay, where the store became much more famous¹. It is even noted that YKM was even considered a state enterprise in the minds of some residents of the city². Considering the previously mentioned foreign capital in department stores in the years prior to the foundation of the Republic, it seems that YKM stood as a national form of modern urban shopping place especially after when it expanded to Ankara. Furthermore, these stores aimed to address the upper strata, whose consumption practices were differentiated from the local practices. The upper strata connected to the non-local elements in culture, economy and thus consumption more easily due to a change in their perception of living in the urban, caring for the house, the self and the family, as we infer from Kıray (2005 [1960]).

Vakko, which was founded by Vitali Hakko, a non-Muslim entrepreneur in the early Republican era, similarly originated from Istanbul. In Ankara, it took place in the 1970s close to other department stores in Kızılay. The advent of Vakko started with small-scale manufacturing and a hat shop; it grew into ready-to-wear retailing and became called as a brand after the name of its developer. Following the development of such a department store in big cities of Turkey, it turned out to be an international brand. It is noted that this is an outcome of identifying with the

¹ http://www.ykm.com.tr/Kurumsal_Hakkimizda_Tarihce.aspx

² Arıoğlu, İ. 40 Yıldır Ankaralının buluşma Noktası YKM. *Hürriyet*: April 11, 2007. <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/4984921.asp?yazarid=12>

Republican reforms and values³. According to Tamer, such developments surely became part of what is considered the national pride, since the developer, Hakkö, pointed to the Republican values as the carrier of change into the lives of people and what made them see such possibilities of commerce and change. In the same news article, it has also been noted how his work connected to the way ‘life’ in the city was changing for upper class women, who started to get outside the house either for work or socializing, and started to include ready-to-wears and contemporary fashions in their daily lives.

At this point, it is helpful to inquire upon the meaning of consumption in the implementation or practicing of modernity. Modernity means a break with the traditional in the simplest sense (Featherstone, 1998 [1991]:4); however, with specific emphasis on urban space, it means being exposed to complicated and dense experiences, continuous change and interaction with strangers, while visibility plays the central role in becoming part of the modern:

[Modernity] draws attention to the texture of commonplace experiences in the metropolis, to an environment characterized by continuous flux and frequent encounters with strangers. (...) There is a new stress on display and the visual –on looking. Modern urban existence, with its transience and uncertainty, demands new morals as well as new fashions. (Nava, 1997: 57)

In this sense, consumption and modernity intersect because they have an emphasis on the visual culture as well as the explicitness of seeing and being seen. Such an association also tells that hierarchical relations of classes and genders with the city realign based on their differentiated levels of awareness of certain visual and material culture. Kıray’s study on the modernization of consumption in the late 1940s’ Ankara at the dawn of department stores and long before modern shopping malls reveals that the westernizing and administrative city was a place of status competition (Kıray, 2005 [1960]: 76). Remarkable concentration of wealth was noted (ibid.: 75). New occupational positions at bureaucracy and trade discarded static agricultural privileges, and created a distinct social space of “anonymous” interactions (ibid.: 76). The city at that time hosted old and new assets together (ibid.: 77). In this changing city, Kıray observed transitional strata, whose conspicuous practices became a means of expressing their proximity to a class of upper status (ibid.: 76). Following that, looking into household consumption together with leisure

³ Tamer, M. Bay Vitali ‘Şapka Devrimi olmasa Vakko olmazdı’ Derdi. *Milliyet*: 12 December 2007. <http://www.milliyet.com/2007/12/12/yazar/tamer.html>

practices in the city became a rich source in order to assess the shared and the different patterns among different strata. She wrote that the upper strata in Ankara were familiar with the Western, or the European, habits and consumer goods (usually ready-to-wear and women's accessories) through Istanbul, too (ibid.: 106). The rise of modern consumption places in Ankara in the form of department store in later decades marked the local availability of such culture of consumption and fashion.

The first shopping mall in Istanbul had been built in 1987, and in 1989 the first mall opened in Ankara, almost thirty years after the department stores became visible in the downtown. Considering the relatively late availability of department store in the city, Ankara seems to catch up with Istanbul, regarding mall development and a globalized retailing, more quickly than it was supposed before. This brings out the issue of pace and technological change, which can be considered the essentials of globalization, too. Newly built malls seem to be more dynamic and technologically smart than the previously built examples; while the construction and the design takes less time. News of growing retail sector together with the furthering of entertainment and leisure options in the city signal the sophistication of urban life, alongside a moving capital to and from the city. In doing this, malls indicate the differentiation of taste, shopping and pleasure, as well, while the stark contrast between the conventional and brand new bazaars and public places are visible to the eye.



Photo 2: Ankamall (Photo by Laçin Tutalar)

Malls also highlight the changing gender composition of urban public, with their enclosed environment, where outside effects have safely been removed and the comfort of an intimate place has been promised. Recalling the aforementioned example of Karaođlan arşısı in Ulus, too, male presence in coffeehouses was mentioned, while photographic content suggests that females were rare; they used to be seen usually in the company of males in their family. As for local manufacturing, producers were men. The actual users of public space were men, too. Shopping malls, following department stores, created spaces for women, making shopping and recreation the main themes outside the home. In Gima, another department store in Kızılay prior to the rise of malls, the visit to the department store was enjoyable through shows that especially addressed women:

*Ankaralılar ilk yürüyen merdiveni Gima'da gördüler. Dönemin modacıları, Kızılay Gima'da reyonların arasına serilen halılar üzerinde defile düzenler, Ankara sosyetesinin hanımları bu defileleri kaçırmazlardı.*⁴

Still, it is apparent that the department store provided entertainment and luxury for women of the higher strata. With the shopping malls, change in the gender composition of urban space is observed. Malls provide spaces where people can be without direct reference to their age, gender or occupational differences. In that sense, it is expected to attract female population who cannot otherwise have enough options to go outside the home. The growing presence of shopping malls in the city also indicates that a wider audience is able to frequent the mall, unlike the relatively higher profile of department stores. It is not only for the upper strata of the population; lower-middle strata frequent shopping malls, too, because malls emphasize greater anonymity now in the more diversified city and avoids making a primary emphasis on spending. The emphasis is rather on looking.

This research depends on the central question of how the rising number of malls in Ankara and the changes they bring about are experienced in different neighborhoods and specific segments of society. The construction of malls as new urban landscape and social centers in the city does not situate them in the urban life without the resident population's peculiar status regarding the changing public experiences and consumption patterns. The mall is a global form; yet, the space inside the mall is subject to expressions of locally consistent relationships and

⁴ Yardımcı, B. Gima'da Ankara sosyete defile izlerdi, Migros kamyon marketti. *Milliyet Business*: May 9, 2005. <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2005/05/09/business/bus14.html>

orientations towards each other as well as towards consumption. Does the urban spatial reorganization through malls take place similarly in different examples? How do people of different strata understand the global changes that transform their lives through malls? Are there differences between women and men, the elderly and the younger population, or people of diverse socio-economic status –and even occupations- in their use of mall spaces and consuming habits? How do the relations between strangers take place in the mall? How do the changing organization and picture of sales work differ from the previous patterns in the same job?

In this discussion, globalization is viewed in a dynamic approach, in which the subjective becomes visible in many changes globalization brings. Robertson states that the definition of globalization must point to more than “a process which overrides locality” (Robertson, 1995: 26). He argues that globalization is not simply a homogenizing process; the relationship between the global and the local is complicated, because they are not always antagonistic of each other’s values. As a result, the attributes of the local such as ‘home’, ‘community’ or nation-state have transformed in this process and taken new meanings that carry traces of both the old and the new. Following this, the local in this study can be referred in the gendered, status-differentiated and subjective meanings given to the experiences in the mall. In different malls, social relations between buyers and sellers of different status and gender are operative beyond the consumption process and changing trends. Brands or the design in malls may carry homogeneous characteristics at the first glance; however, it is the social relations that make the place meaningful in the global-local discussion. For instance, malls are described as liberating public places for women, who have been associated with the private sphere of home more easily than the male-dominated public places. In such settings, the transformation in relations between women and men are worth examining on the shopfloor in a mall. Similarly, customers and sellers have different statuses on the shopfloor, and involve in peculiar representations of their status towards each other. Having said that, the study attempts to explore the gendered or status-laden responses to the mall-centered urban life, and it focuses on different examples of the mall as a new urban form in Ankara.

1.2. Plan of Chapters:

The discussion starts with an inspection of the urban landscape in Ankara after the emergence of shopping mall in the third chapter. The mall is different from the traditional commercial spaces such as bazaars in the sense that it has more controlled and standardized surroundings. While the tendency is to locate malls outside downtown areas, malls still form close ties with certain neighborhoods and the mall's social air is determined by the location it is established. The order of interior space suggests familiarization of space despite non-conventional ornaments and designs. Controlled and over-designed interiors stress the modernization of shopping and leisure places, while details and the refinement become important. Yet, the mall's spatial meaning differentiates according to the neighborhood it attracts.

The chapter four starts with a discussion of the effects of global culture, technology and media on increased mobility in the city and the changing consumption habits. Shopping malls attract people with an open approach to change together with those who remain more reserved against change; both types are exposed to abundance and variety of the mall. There are differences at the level of neighborhood and consumer types in responding to such variety and abundance. The second section tries to point to the peculiar ways people use the malls depending on their age, gender, class status and occupational backgrounds. The relations between the staff and visitors appear to be influenced by these peculiar characteristics of the local residents. The chapter continues with questioning how the identity of a consumer before large retailers is shaped in the shopping malls in Ankara. Then, a new conception of public space is discussed, as public activities are seen to attract mainly the youth and families; thus. The mall is an important actor in shaping a new leisure culture in the urban space.

The fifth chapter focuses on the changing retail work environment under global influences. The mall marks the shift from traditional towards national or multinational retail sector. Retailing becomes more organized, and higher organization brings with it an independence from the local bonds. That is, large retailers hire greater numbers of retail workers; have the freedom to manage this labor without much unionization process; are also able to transform the identity of shop worker in accord with the novel organization of malls. The mall also stresses the remarkable shift from male to female labor in the retail work, which is described

as a low-skill service occupation. The controlled environment of the mall attracts female labor easily, because control is understood as safety from harassment and a set against the direct sexual description of labor, while the labor may still involve indirect sexual connotations between customers and workers of opposite genders. Female labor is seen everywhere from pay-desks to warehouse, and from cleaning personnel to security guards in the mall. The factual evidence also suggests that the sales worker starts to define herself/himself with a new status before customers.

The final chapter that uses the factual evidence attempts to focus on the commodity and its presentation in the mall. The merchandise in the mall maintains non-local features, from its packaging to branding and display. The appearance or the package of the item becomes more important than the product or the merchandise itself, which is quite in line with the mall's emphasis on the 'visuality'. The brand comes up as an important conveyor of the meaning a commodity has for the consumer. Shopping malls bring to mind imported brands and items immediately; there are also national retailers that refine their merchandise and design and differentiate from the local ones. However, the local orientations of consumers towards consuming luxury or thrifty items vary between the studied malls.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY AND THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to explore how the development of shopping malls, which have now become part of the urban landscape in Ankara, is perceived and experienced in different neighborhoods and specific segments of society, as the local population gain a new status and a new understanding of urban life in this process. Shopping malls are sites that arouse much of the discussion about economic and cultural globalization in the non-Western world. These places are where the transformative influence of globalization encounters local dispositions that have historical bounds with the place. The research starts with a preliminary question of how consumption practices in the malls in Ankara reveal the relationship between the global influences and the local orientations, and tries to explore the global-local connection in spatial, consumption, commodity and retailing transformation via the mall. Is there a sheer antagonism between the global and the local? How do the global with the local intersect and take up new meanings that cannot be fully comprehended without reference to each other? One also observes a blend of change and continuity or stability in the local; thus, how does the local start to refer to a mix of local social dynamics with patterns that respond to the global?

Four shopping malls in Ankara have been selected as the sites for the study in order to assess the homogenizing effects of globalization together with the diverse influences of the local dynamics. It is anticipated that local dynamics make themselves visible through these four examples. It is also taken into consideration that these four cases estimate to four peculiar forms in the global development and history of malls. The studied malls, Beğendik (a department store), Ankamall (a regional mall), Arcadium (a suburban mall) and Optimum (an outlet mall), globally represent different periods in the history of development of malls. The department store has not been a popular form since the rise of malls; suburban malls belonged to

the mid-twentieth century with the emergence of suburban welfare; and, regional and outlet malls have risen in the recent decades worldwide. Yet, these examples all have concentrated in the last few decades in the urban history of Ankara. Beğendik is a department store in downtown Ankara, while Ankamall is literally detached from any neighborhoods; Arcadium is centrally located in a well-off suburb, while Optimum resides close to a few neighborhoods that have different population profiles but share the common detachment from the city center. In making comparisons between these four cases, it will be possible to look deeper into the process of homogenization as well as diversification.

The unit of analysis in this study is salespeople. They spend more time in the mall than consumers do, and witness the commercialization of space, of tastes and of time in shopping malls. Moreover, they work where others relax. This peculiar status separates them from the mainstream profile of consumers, while they remain in close proximity to those who are, compared to them, financially better off and socially as well as culturally much differentiated. It should be remembered that salespeople will subjectively reflect those differences between consumers' and their financial and social backgrounds, as their relations with buyers are shaped according to those status differences. Shopping and consumption practices in the mall also bring with them continuous status competitions that situate the consumer and the shop worker before each other. At a simpler level, shop assistants are retail *workers*, no matter how much their job definition situates them in the service sector. They are responsible to maintain the order and the flow of purchases and service to customers in the store, while customers approach these places with a pre-intention to receive service and enjoy their time. It can be argued that the change and order in the mall are inscribed on their lives; because, they are part of the mall at least ten hours a day and they consume the order that surrounds them, too. They visually consume the mall, even when they are not able to spend money on it. Likewise customers, salespeople are face to face with the merchandise in stores. In their statements, their subjective stance tell us how they situate shoppers in relation to their general idea of a consumer, and how they compare themselves with those who are called 'visitors' to mall.

2.1. Methodology:

At a glance, shopping malls are described by continuous movement and briskness that are obvious to the eye. However, the brisk character of the mall also gets in the way of the observer to study the change comprehensively. Experiences are short-lived; design on shop windows and in the corridors change continuously; tables in the food court are occupied and free within a short period; it is hard to keep track of the crowd. Doing qualitative research in the shopping mall in order to interpret this variation and flux is thus an advantage. The aim is to look into people's experience of the mall and interpret the pieces they single out in consumption of the urban space through the mall. Qualitative methodology relies on "context" and "assume that a detailed understanding of human experience is gained by exploring (...) complexities" (Rossman and Rallis, 1998: 8). It does not try to control the searched subject; qualitative researchers "do not extricate the people from their everyday worlds" (ibid.). The research is "interactive" (ibid.: 8; 26), since the researcher is:

involved, face-to-face, with participants in the study. In experiments or surveys, (...) participants interact with standardized sets of procedures or written questionnaires; they have little or no contact with the researchers. Qualitative studies, [on the contrary], take the researcher into the field, into complex and varied interactions with the participants. (ibid.: 26)

This is exactly how this study approaches the issue at hand and tries to disclose salespeople's experiences. In that, it sets out with an interpretive approach, which accepts beforehand that there are "multiple realities" in the social world rather than a single truth, and values "interaction" between the observer/researcher and the observed/researched to be enriching way to learn more about the issue (Corbetta, 2003: 14).

Inside the enclosed shopping centers, it is much easier to collect statistically meaningful information by asking practical and short questions to participants. Malls and brands engage in such surveys themselves; however, others' attempts to receive information from visitors in a similar way are considered annoying for the privacy of the shopper. People may not be equally interested in answering questions if they do not think that this is part of a research on the betterment of consumer service or they are not likely to give information if they do not expect some promotions, either. Salespeople are different, though. They wanted to talk. It was either a *temptation* to respond since they considered this to be an enjoyable experience that they involve in

conversation with a stranger to whom they did not have to sell something, or a *change* from the routine of their workplace and a chance to give meaning to their own observations outside a company training session. Therefore, it was relatively easier to interact with salespeople. Normally, employers are not involved in the work process on the shopfloor, whereas in interviews with the department store staff in Beğendik and Arcadium, it became necessary to contact the administrators. In Ankamall and Optimum, this was not a primary concern for salespeople, and in smaller stores in Arcadium, no permit procedures were required. This is considered to be an outcome of the magnitude; the former places are smaller, while the latter two are much too big for keeping track of people, including employees.

The research was carried on through in-depth interviews. The interview in the qualitative research is defined as “a questionnaire with open questions” (Corbetta, 2003: 269). However, the interview process in this study is best described to be semi-structured, since the information was received in a conversational mode rather than in a strict sequence of questions that follow the same order of concepts and numbering of questions. Corbetta (ibid.: 270) points that in this method, the “order” and the “wording” in questions depends on the researcher’s initiative:

Within each topic, the interviewer is free to conduct the conversation as he thinks fit, to ask the questions he deems appropriate in the words he considers the best, to give explanations and ask for clarification if the answer is not clear. (ibid.)

The interviews were carried out between March 2006 and June 2006, and consisted of twenty-four questions, which were constructed based on four aspects of the shopping mall. Namely, these aspects were *space*, *consumers*, *goods* and the *work* life in the mall (See Appendix for the questionnaire). Questions such as “who are the ones you easily/hardly convince?” focused on a single aspect, in this example the consumer, whereas there were questions whose answer could be related to more than one aspect. For instance, the question “what attracts customers to the shopping mall?” is a general question, as the answer reflects on the space, the specific entertainment that aims to attract certain consumers among others and the commodity, which is quite differentiated in the mall. The interviews lasted for between thirty minutes and three hours, sometimes in more than one session. The difference between the shortest and the longest length of interviews should not be surprising, since the length of the interview depended on the respondent’s ability and clarity on the issue as well as the researcher’s experience to convert confusing and

unclear information into a meaningful conversation. The interviews were mostly carried outside the stores and inside the shopping mall so that the respondents felt free to speak while they were still able to have visual clues that could remind them of additional information. Still, the interaction with the respondents was not limited to the interview process; visits to store and chattering with the salesperson established familiarity. It seems that the fact that I am young as they are became an advantage in interviews with the younger staff, who perceived my friendly manners towards them. The older staff, on the other hand, were more experienced that they made more detailed comparisons, and that led to a more efficient use of time, also making the conversation richer and easy to flow. The interviews with the younger salespeople reflected the change they went through and the precarity of their status when they compared themselves with their peers and other young people that are in a better position in terms of educational and economic capital.

The longest interviews are the ones in which collecting information was not easy since the interviewer was more prone to misunderstanding the question or change the subject. Then, the order of questions was changed, just as it was indicated regarding the nature of semi-structured interviews, and questions were rephrased or divided into pieces that made it easier to receive meaningful comments from the salesperson. The time of interviews were arranged according to salespeople's lunch or coffee breaks and free days. Although salespeople were eager to participate in the study, they were bound by the concentrated order of the workplace. At those times, the interviews were completed in two or three sections on different days. It was originally expected that the information collected throughout the interviews would be tape-recorded; however, a few salespeople did not want to have their voices tape-recorded, perhaps fearing that their voice could be used to identify them. In such instances, the priority was given to the flow of conversation, and the information was written in a detailed form afterwards, following short notes written down during the interview.

Additional sources of collecting information involved observation, taking photographs as well as complementary interviews with mall administrations. Observations in the mall and on the shopfloor were the initial as well as the inseparable method of collecting information about the mall. Taking photographs is not normally allowed inside the shopping mall, because it is considered to violate the

privacy of the shopper. However, sometimes a visual representation is far more helpful in comprehending contrasting elements such as global influences and local orientations in the same setting. The mall environment in Optimum and Ankamall was photographed via permission from the mall administrations, whereas either the permission or visual material requested from the mall administration could not be obtained. Finally, short interviews with the mall administrations –except Beğendik– were conducted. Although preliminary contacts were conducted at the administrative staff in Beğendik, it was not possible to complete the interview. These short interviews that lasted about half an hour were considered as a supplementary source of information about the specific mall studied. They reflected on issues, which did not come up or ignored to some extent by salespeople. They also provided a general outlook of the administrative level about the development of malls in the city and in the country.

2.2. *Sampling:*

Between March and June 2006, 28 interviews with salespeople were conducted. During the field study, I reached 36 salespeople; however, those additional interviews failed to reach completion due to the salesperson's own schedule of time and continuous delays for weeks to reach them again via phone or at the agreed date. Similarly, it was expected at the beginning that 15 saleswomen and 15 salesmen would be interviewed; yet, at the end of the study the data consisted of interviews with 16 women and 12 men. The busy nature of retail work was simply an obstacle for accomplishing the desired number of interviews. The respondents were reached through both snowball and convenience sampling, because I was often directed to a friend of one salesperson in another store, mall or sector, but I was stuck at times since the acquaintance of a salesperson put off to help due to business or personal excuses. Sometimes, starting a conversation with a salesperson at a less busy time of the day was far more successful to convince them to a talk during their coffee break. Interviews inside the mall were carried on weekdays and in the afternoon, when the mall is relatively quiet and peaceful. At weekends, the mall is much crowded that makes the place and people in it resemble those in a carnival.

Seven people from Beğendik and Optimum each, six people from Ankamall and eight people from Arcadium were interviewed. First, salespeople from large and

the most crowded places such as food courts, supermarkets and department stores were sought, since these places draw more people with diverse backgrounds. Second, shop employees from smaller stores in the mall were sought; these shops may rather sell to a differentiated customer. Salespeople who sell (i) food, (ii) apparels, and (iii) luxury or lifestyle commodities were compared. The last group constitutes of a variety of commodities from furniture and home accessories to gourmet and health products. Six people sell food either in supermarkets or food court. Fifteen people work in stores or departments that sell apparels and related accessories. Three of them work in men’s wear sections and five of them work in women’s wear; whereas eight of them work in unisex clothing stores. They sell to men, women and children. In the third group of luxury consumption, six salespeople were interviewed. The choice of stores was based on the ease of communication with the staff members.

The sample in the study is by no means representative of the retail employment in the city; still, it may provide intriguing information about the status of salesperson. The respondents were asked questions about age (see Table 1), marital status, family, lived neighborhood and education (see Table 2). These questions helped understanding the salesperson’s background outside the mall.

Age Interval	The Number of Respondents
19-24	8
25-29	14
30 +	6

Table 1: Age of the Respondents

Education Level	The Number of Respondents
Did not study after high school	18
Graduated from university	6
Enrolled in a program at the open-university	4

Table 2: Education of the Respondents

Seven among twenty-eight salespeople are married and six of them have children. Spouses or sisters of six salespeople work in the retail sector, too. Intra-sector marriages are common, according to salespeople. Fathers of seven salespeople used to work in public sector; others were self-employed (e.g. taxi driver, car mechanic, running a corner shop –*biife* or *bakkal*-), or worked in the industrial sector. Mothers are usually housewives. The information on the neighborhood the respondents live in

indicates a parallelship with income. Most salespeople live on the minimum wage plus the premiums from the sales. Twenty-two in twenty-eight respondents provided information on where they live in the city, whereas others did not return an answer to this question due to their time-restraints or reserved approach during the time of the interview:

Neighborhood	The Number of Respondents
Eryaman, Etimesgut	7
Dikmen, Öveçler	5
Yenimahalle, Batıkent, Keçiören	5
Mamak, Cebeci, Kızılay	3
Çayyolu, Bilkent	2
N/A	6

Table 3: Where do the Respondents Live?

2.3. *Limitations of the Field Study:*

Although doing qualitative research has been a plus in comprehending how people experience change and continuity in the mall, there have been a few obstacles before and during the data collection process. The sales job itself is one of them. The job is demanding, and its pace is insensitive to individual needs. It is easy to convince most salespeople to talk; however, it is not that easy to complete the conversation, because they are always in a hurry. If the interviewee is a store manager, she feels more authority to use her time independently. However, in most cases, the salesperson is free at lunch or coffee breaks. She wants to eat and finish the meal so that she can have a cigarette with tea, while I want her to talk. Here, the researcher has to be aware of time constraints while insisting to receive a satisfactory answer when the respondent thinks an average answer is enough.

The controlling nature of the retail work in the mall may also get in the way of learning what salespeople individually thinks of and sees in the mall, if the respondent feels an urge to comply with the opinion of his/ her firm when asked her opinion about her workplace. Even after the necessary permission is taken from the administration or the employer, a considerable effort is made to ensure the interviewer that this information will not be used to identify her or her employer. Many salespeople are enthusiastic about explaining their jobs as well as the customer types they observe; however, they can also conflate what they experienced on the shopfloor themselves with what they have learned in the training sessions.

Another issue between the interviewer and the interviewee is gender. Male respondents were easier to communicate, yet, the gender of the researcher might have played an important role in this. Age differences did not exist between the researcher and most salespeople; therefore, it was possible to carry out the interviews in a friendly manner, as it has been stated before. When the two combined, carrying out the interview process has not been easy at times, though. Sometimes, it was sensed the salesman thought that it was strange the way he was being asked to spend his lunch break in the food court with a female he has not known before. One salesman in Ankamall did not want to be alone with the interviewer, and offered to have the interview when they have lunch with a fellow salesman. Another salesman in Optimum told that he did not want to be seen with someone of the opposite gender in the mall after work by other salesmen. He suggested that fellow salespeople misunderstood such instances. At those times, it was distressing to see that gender intervenes with the interviewing process.

When part of an interview with a saleswoman had to be carried out in a different public place outside the mall, trust rather than gender became an issue. Nevertheless, it did not interrupt with the information gathered during the interview except a single case of a salesgirl who had been in Ankara for three years. She had migrated to Ankara from Eastern Anatolia after she graduated from high school; she remained quite hesitant; several times during the interview she asked to see the student identification of the researcher. It became my primary concern to win her confidence before we could discuss any questions.

Finally, if a respondent suggested that she has time for talk during the lunch break and invited the researcher over to the food court, the meeting could resemble a focus group, as well. Friends who had their lunch breaks at the same hour took a seat in the same table. Telling the interviewee beforehand that it could be best if the interview is carried out alone did not work. Salespeople were curious. Moreover, it could be a chance to make contacts with more salespeople. Sometimes, having friends of the respondent near us was helpful, because others, listening in, could not help participating in the conversation and reminding the salesperson of an additional point to make. The interaction became more powerful and natural at those times. Still, it was not desired much since what one salesperson commented on could save another salespeople from deliberating for an answer.

CHAPTER 3

SPACE

*“Bugünün teklifsiz kültürüne bakarken, (...)
aklıma iç denen şeyin ancak bir dış olursa
gelişebileceğini (...) getiriyorum.”
(Gürbilek, 1993: 122-123)*

Spatial designs of shopping malls in Ankara are subject to a crude uniformity, which is loosened by local influences. Such architectural uniformity that goes hand in hand with local variety indicates the “glocalization” of space; as Salcedo states, “malls are geographically bound expressions of a negotiation between mall developers as representatives of a global logic of capitalist accumulation, on one hand, and local characteristics, on the other” (Salcedo, 2003: 1084). This chapter examines the exterior and the interior spaces of a number of malls in Ankara from this particular perspective.

3.1. *The Exteriors:*

Malls that have been developed in the last twenty years in Ankara could physically be categorized into *downtown*, *suburban* and *regional* malls. First, urban change in Ankara has reduced *downtown malls* that were initially built at the liveliest downtown locations to neighborhood malls. According to Crawford, such malls “serve a radius of 2 miles” (Crawford, 1992; cited in Salcedo, 2003: 1086) and consist mainly of a supermarket, selling usual needs (Goldner and Portugal, 2002: 229). Secondly, *suburban malls* in Ankara are built where the working populations concentrate in high-rises or gated communities. They represent the use of shopping and leisure time privately and effectively. Thirdly, *regional malls* usually cover around 45,000 m² with one or two department stores (ibid.). Examples of regional malls in Ankara are on their way to become more than enormous marketplaces and transform into *super-regional malls*, which cover around 80,000 m², have more than

two department stores (ibid.) and look like a touristic “amenity” (Eisinger, 2000; cited in Salcedo, 2003: 1086). They also function as business centers, having office spaces to rent out. Following this categorization, I compare the external spaces of malls in relation to their (i) location in the city and (ii) exterior designs, with also supportive accounts from salespeople.

Downtown malls are seen as “projects that revitalize the whole downtown area” since the 1980s as West and Orr (2003: 195) emphasized in the case of United States. According to this, retailers, planners and local governments turn to department stores in idle downtowns after suburban retailing reaches a degree of completion. Downtown malls become “economic engines” and “jewel”s through remarketing the locale and increasing jobs, tax revenues, “liveliness” and politicians’ perceived success (West and Orr, 2003: 195-196).

Beğendik is the case that represents downtown malls in this study. The department store opened in 1993 on 25,000 m² total enclosed area under the Kocatepe Mosque near Kızılay, a crowded downtown area in Ankara. At that time, “large shopping malls were designed in the urban quarters close to the city center”, according to Uludağ (2004), who states that economic liberalism and lifestyle changes were linked to new architectural aesthetics after the 1980s. Beğendik fits this pattern as a department store in a mixed-population downtown, where existing tastes of market harness new spatial and visual aesthetics. In this case, the global trend was mixing up with local capital from Kayseri and coming out in the more humble form of a department store rather than mall: “Encouraged by the economic changes in Turkey and demographic concentration in cities”⁵, Beğendik entered the retail sector in Kayseri in 1986 and continued in Ankara in 1993.

Exteriors of Beğendik are marked by modesty⁶, compared to recent malls. Being relatively older than contemporary shopping spaces, the department store is a two-storey building, small in size and without swanky exteriors. Perhaps, Beğendik corresponds to a meaning that is different than the one associated with the magnificence of shopping malls. Its placement under the Mosque does not allow for

⁵ <http://www.begendik.com.tr>

⁶ Gürol (Beğendik) tells about modesty: “Five years ago, Beğendik opened a store near Mersin. My sister lives there and she told me that people were afraid to go in because the mall was ‘like a space-base to local people’”. Later on, the mall was handed to another local retailer. He interprets that “the outlook of a shopping mall should not conflict with local cultural identity.”

complete changes in outside image. Having concrete exteriors and hardly any glass surface outside, Beğendik seems to be a natural component of the Mosque. Besides, the main entrance is not separated from the street; one can encounter the lottery-man, a few vendors or rest for a while in the park on the frontside.



Photo 3: The front entrance of Beğendik (Photo by Laçın Tutarlar)

Gül has worked here for about ten years now and indicates that Beğendik has taken the advantage of “being at a crossroads between Kızılay and Küçükesat”. However, Beğendik is far from a ‘jewel’ as indicated for downtown malls in West and Orr’s study. The department store seems less popular than suburban and regional malls now. Among the sales assistants, Aysun says that Beğendik is now “like a usual hangout place or a buffet”. An exception to this is visitors of the Mosque. Tourists and foreigners in the city visit the Mosque and extend their visit to the department store⁷. Aysun states that foreigners get somehow accustomed to this space. Beğendik’s connection to the Kocatepe Mosque seems to be its most local character, but, recalling Salcedo on the use of local culture in mall space, the attachment of shopping to a religious place is not a local story. For instance, the Catholics’ church was built in the Megamall in the Philippines, and it was “found that 60% of churchgoers patronize the mall after each mass”. Therefore, the mall developers began to call the church their “best anchor store” (Kenyon, 1998; cited in Salcedo, 2003: 1097). A similar trend can be observed in Beğendik.

⁷ I have personally experienced an example of such visits by French dancers who came to see the Mosque and shopped while they were in the department store, too.

Suburban malls are attractions of a different spatial organization that is distanced from the city but more concentrated in itself. ‘Suburbia’ by definition invalidates monocentered city; it is the result of decentralized metropolitan development (Gottdiener, 1995: 124). “Since World War II, there has been a major shift in the composition of metropolitan areas to a polycentric form, with sprawling commercial strips and housing developments filling much of the space between cities and spawning new business districts” (Faulk, 2006: 630). Following those transformations, suburban malls have been emulated in other parts of the world in the form of spaces in “middle class suburb” (Peter Taylor, 1999; cited in King, 2000: 5). Suburban culture is described as “a consuming culture” which finds meaning in a shopping mall (Silverstone, 1997; cited in King, 2000: 5). Depending on postcolonial city-development, King states that “suburbanization depends on the internationalization of the economy” and that makes hybridity of “suburban spatial and architectural forms” more visible (ibid.: 5-6).

Arcadium, which is a suburban mall in Çayyolu, a middle to upper middle class suburb that is developed in the 1990s in west Ankara, can be seen within this perspective. Built in 2003 on 40,000 m² enclosed area⁸, the five-storey building has 80 shops, an underground car park, a fast food center, 7 movie theaters and restaurants. The mall is at five or ten-minutes’ reach by car for most residents of the neighborhood. It has won popularity over the previously built shopping malls in the neighborhood, among which we can mention Galleria, the first suburban mall in Ankara, built in 1995. Arcadium is a center of a commercial and social node, while Galleria loses out to Arcadium and retires into a mall with lessened facilities as some shops shift to more comfortable street stores around Galleria. That is, the mall is nearby the local theatre house and the ongoing construction of a great Mosque of the district, the former of which is a manifestation of Republican modernism and the latter of modernized religion in the lives of the secular middle class dwellers. Commercially, on the other hand, Arcadium shares this central position with a national chain-supermarket across the street and shops (e.g. Burger King and Pepper Mill) that symbiotically exist under the same roof with a supermarket. The open-air weekly market is used to settle in close proximity, too.

⁸ <http://www.arcadium.com.tr>

From the outside, the mall appears plain but in accord with contemporary fashions in buildings; identified with brick-colored concrete, transparent glass surface and geometrical irregularity of design, besides a wide and neat entrance. It is argued that Arcadium awakes spaciousness⁹ in the minds of visitors, enabling natural light to come through wide glass in the food court and the restaurants such as the Pizza Hut. Such a stimulating view is blocked in Galleria with a thick plate glass surface, and in Beğendik that has very little transparency.



Photo 4: Arcadium from Left to Right: the Theatre, the Mall, the Mosque (Photo by Laçın Tutarlar)

Located on an empty field between the surrounding housing areas, Arcadium is spatially inferior to malls such as Armada, according to the shop assistants, who see that the former has limited spatial attractiveness since it mainly appeals to households in the district. This is a natural outcome for a suburban mall, though. Nazlı, who works in the food court, thinks that the popularity of Arcadium cannot be like that of Armada, which is a distinct case: “Armada is a brand. It works for the entire city. But Arcadium is a local place, which serves to businessmen who are, for instance, involved in construction business around here.” On the contrary, every interviewed shop assistant indicates the presence of movie-theater as a spatial attraction that counteracts the inferiority to other malls. “[This place] draws people for it has the biggest movie complex around. I myself would not prefer it to somewhere else, because the design is very good”, tells Emel, who works in the supermarket. All in all, the middle class residents of Çayyolu can easily reach other

⁹ <http://www.arcadium.com.tr>

malls with their cars, yet in Arcadium they can enjoy their suburban isolation. The mall prevails as a space to hang on even under the most awkward circumstances: “People may come into the mall late at night after a walk on snow, when the life is cut out by the snowfall and we are impatiently waiting for the closing time,” says Özge to highlight the consumption of time and leisure in this suburban space.

Regional and super-regional malls are distinguished by their huge constructions and locations at the intersection of several districts or at the reach of many roads, thus serving to a greater population. Regional malls have been mentioned to land on 45,000 m² on average, and super-regional malls possibly reach up to 150,000 m² (Goldner and Portugal, 2002: 229). According to Crawford, regional malls in the case of the United States “serve a 20-mile radius”, while super-regional malls “serve a multi-state area” (Crawford, 1992; cited in Salcedo, 2003: 1086). These spaces also perform like “festival centres” that are “situated in areas which attract tourists and essentially geared to leisure activities, offering restaurants, fast-food bars, cinemas [...]” (Goldner and Portugal, 2002: 229). Whereas previously mentioned types of malls already include most of these features within their space, the biggest malls are actually extensions of the “hyper-mall culture”, which indicates that the “needs of a human being, from eating and sleeping to buying and socializing, can be met in a single building”¹⁰. This culture of ‘entertainment’ reflects that super/regional malls are spaces of a much higher concentration in cityscapes.

Optimum Outlet Center has derived from a fairly small outlet center towards a complex that is likely to resemble a regional mall. Factory outlet malls, which express “contemporary” reorganization of “discount retailing” in the United States, increased there three times between the 1980s and the 1990s (Conroy, 1998: 65). Those outlet malls in the U.S. are noted to have adopted “new construction areas” rather than their previous habit of re-using ex-“industrial sites” (ibid.). The archaic form of outlet mall in the country had been established within a department store in Boston in 1909 (ibid.), whereas spatial references of outlet malls now remind the author of “super-regional malls” actually, following John Aschenbach (ibid.: 66). This ‘contemporary’ trend seems to be adopted in other countries, as Optimum

¹⁰ Terni, Claire. (1997) *How Public is the New Town Square?* Course project for Anthropology 226 in the University of Rochester. Available online:

<http://www.courses.rochester.edu/foster/ANT226/Archive/Fall98/2.html>

Outlet Center reveals the condensation of brand outlets in a single mall in Ankara. Optimum Outlet Center opened in 2004 on 27,000 m² enclosed area as a four-storey building¹¹. It is located at the intersection of roads of several lower middle and middle class neighborhoods including Etimesgut, Eryaman and Sincan in the northwest Ankara. Uludağ (2004) notes that a few other “shopping malls and outlet centers have been distributed along the highway towards the west.” Among them, Optimum has taken advantage of being at the crossroads that link Ankara and Istanbul as well as Ankara’s several neighborhoods. Therefore, the outlet mall has recently expanded its leased enclosed area to 68,000 m² and on November 2006 inaugurated its bigger complex with up to 156 stores, including cafés and 12 movie theaters. The mall administration expects that Optimum will be an attraction center for those who either pass on the road to Istanbul or who travel to Optimum for daylong visits from various districts of Ankara¹².

Regarding the exteriors of Optimum Outlet Center, it is observed that “these buildings carry simple, minimalist, box-like architectonic qualities without any reference to their environmental urban settings” (Uludağ, 2004). Optimum, like Arcadium, is built on an empty field and surrounded by suburban housing areas. This building is partly obsessed with light on a dark highway; on the front surface, light bulbs cover downwards the roof at every inch at night, some of them hanging loosely over the concrete. The walls are decorated with light, as well. The outlet mall shares architectural uniformity with Arcadium. Similar to Arcadium, Optimum has a half-glass and half-concrete surface. It looks like an average –before reopening in May 2007– suburban shopping mall, though it has the potential to become a ‘festival center’, as described by Goldner and Portugal (2002).

Shop assistants emphasize the spatial power of Optimum Outlet Center in its region, too. Before the mall was expanded, it was an outlet center with already the impact of a regional mall. Like a node in a network, it has attracted people from distant neighborhoods such as Çankaya and Çayyolu. Now the regional characteristic of the mall is more emphasized as it is announced to be the biggest outlet center in Turkey. This center will probably be more pronounced as a space for entertainment due to bowling and ice-skating centers available on the terrace floor of the mall.

¹¹ <http://www.optimumoutlet.com>

¹² Interview with Optimum administration, November 2006.

Aslı, who works in the children's wear shop, says that "here, many consumers are asocial. They won't go downtown often [because] the city center is far by bus... So, such a place was a must for the neighborhood." She adds that when bowling and ice-skating centers open, it will be a great opportunity for those who have limited options within their neighborhoods. Obviously, there are smaller shopping centers and supermarkets around; however, they are either lousy in appearance or so small that people only buy and leave, following Ayfer's statement, who works in a jeans' outlet and lives in the district.

Ankamall, formerly known as Akköprü Migros, is another outstanding case of transformation from a regional to a super-regional mall. Located in Etlik, in north Ankara, at the intersection of the main roads to neighboring cities, the area was transformed from a wholesalers' marketplace (Gimat A.Ş.) into a mall. Previously, the land was the property of a public enterprise that was sold-out to private business in 1995¹³. Unlike Arcadium or Optimum, Akköprü Migros was built in 1999 on the remnants -of the old Gimat Center-, which seemed detached, simple and very local-in-sight. At that time, Akköprü Migros was known as the largest *regional* mall in Ankara. At the beginning, the four-storey Akköprü Migros had two department stores in addition to the usual facilities like movie theaters and food court. There is also a metro station at the location, which transports people between Kızılay –the city center- and the suburbs in west Ankara. Yet, Armada, an A-class shopping and trade center founded in 2002 in the north-west Ankara, began to mutilate the spatial popularity of Akköprü Migros, according to Akköprü's mall administration. Hence, the mall mutated into a super-regional mall with a total enclosed area of 293,000 m², added to previous 126,000 m², having a movie complex, new department stores, 300 stores preferably with global and transnational brands, a DIY market (Koçtaş), and a five-starred hotel with over 500 beds¹⁴. The supersized mall opened in May 2006 as the Turkish name 'Akköprü AVM' switched to a half Turkish, half English title, Ankamall.

The enlargement in Optimum Outlet Center considered the continuity in external design; however, a dissonance in structural design between the old Akköprü and the new Ankamall hits the eye. The old mall carries steel and concrete and

¹³ <http://www.yenigimat.com.tr/istirakler.aspx>

¹⁴ <http://www.yenigimat.com.tr/istirakler5.aspx>

attaches huge placards of stores on the front walls; but the new complex involves no signs other than the Ankamall logo over the steel. The old building is connected to the new through non-transparent corridors. Furthermore, the entrance of the old mall is marked by height and luminosity, whereas the newly constructed building allows transparency of inside. Finally, the hotel is a high-rise with plate glass. This contrast in appearance indicates that the aesthetic preferences in external design changed from 1999 to 2006, from clearly surrounded spaces and definite borders to sheltering but transparent, stimulating and voyeuristic architecture.



Photo 5: Ankamall from Left to Right: the old part, the new part, the hotel and the subway exit
(Photo retrieved from <http://www.yenigimat.com.tr>)

Variety of spatial forms in Ankamall, including a DIY market and a hotel accompanying business and shopping centers, highlights that among the two malls that lead as regional attraction spaces, Ankamall looks like “touristic amenity” and is more global businesses-oriented, while Optimum’s outlet organization is more entertainment and discount-oriented. In Ankamall, the spatial transformation from a traditional wholesale area towards almost a hyper-mall signals the potential to attract a large audience. The Prime Minister’s opening speech for Ankamall in May 2006 also characterized the mall with modernization and development of the country. The concentration of global brands and services at the local level supports this disposition.

Hence, the urban landscape as well as the commercial space in Ankara is increasingly understood with reference to mall complexes and their positioning,

which add local essence to imported and somehow isolated massive posture. In the next section, the focus shifts from the exteriors to the interiors that combine uniformity and divergence.

3.2. *The Inside and the Outside:*

The inside of a mall usually presents major *contrasts* with the outside environment (Gottdiener, 1995; Backes, 1997; Miller et al., 1998). The contrasts can be observed better in the inside than on the façades, as Backes (1997: 11) states:

Usually situated in suburbia, the buffer between country and city, the mall is a combination of competing and contradicting qualities: present and future, artifice and nature, ‘Muslim opulence and Calvinist practicality’ [Davis, 1991: 6], community and individual, futuristic technology and traditional family values, settlement and escape.

The ability of a mall to highlight these contrasts drives its popularity. The mall either separates internal space from the normalcy of daily life (Gottdiener, 1995: 133) or “relies on the existence of other, less salubrious sites” (Miller et al., 1998: 28) to embrace people who consume delightfully. In this sense, privatized inner space of malls creates an antagonism with streets. In the cases in the United States, local streets are portrayed with crime, decay, disorder and uncertainties; whereas malls are continuously over-clean, neat, weather-conditioned and widely decorated spaces, ideally devoid of crime. In Ankara, one can see a disorder environment in the streets due to never-ending constructions and describe the street with littered walkways; however, the main contrasts between malls and streets do not concentrate around grave problems of crime and decay. What differentiates malls from streets is luxury. Malls are “furnished ‘urban interiors’ ” (Uludağ, 2004) and characterized with features such as “comfort”, “safety”, “security” and “pleasantness” (Doğu and Erkip, 2000: 737), which lead to a peaceful state of uniformity. The use of light deeply contradicts dark roads or gloomy streets and neighborhoods. Inside, light captures the senses and makes certain details visible for the visitors’ pleasure. Unlike the usual environment in a city, the mall is expected to shine extremely. On the other hand, “indoor lighting is soft to prevent glare on shopfronts and to highlight the natural colors of the commodities on display” says Goss (1993: 32). Visuals and signs separate inner space from outside and spot the differences within inner composition; they may either ease the “wayfinding” or lead to a loss of perspective, which will eventually cause people to stay longer (Doğu and

Erkip, 2000: 737). Ironically, spatial design in a mall emulates elements of both natural and human-made environment. In order to balance the dose of contrast, fountains, green spaces and natural light are available inside (Goss, 1993: 36).

Inside Ankamall, these contrasting elements are used the most extensively. Whereas sales assistants initially stated that it is only a ‘nice’ place to walk; they began to see it as a magnificent place after the expansion. “We get lost in it when we stroll.” says Ayça from one of the oldest department stores in Akköprü, specifically after the old part merged with the new. Previously, interiors were decorated with fountain, palm trees, well-lit corridors and cafés on the strollway. The food court was filled with metal tables and chairs. Only the top floor received natural light.



Photo 6: Ankamall (old complex)



Photo 7: Ankamall (the new part) (Photos by Laçın Tutarlar)

Through the corridors that change Akköprü Migros to Ankamall, design seems fresh and sharp. The newly built spaces use natural light more than the former; restaurants are of a minimalist design; waiters serve in the boutique cafés; the indoor space is also decorated with fake trees; there are park-like free lounges to rest, and leather armchairs to watch the atrium. Outlook of shop windows changed along with new brands imported into the mall. “Ankamall now attracts a higher profile... This [old] building seems outdated. The administration will need to update lighting, floors...” says Zeynep, who works in an international furniture store. Particularly after the opening, the space has been overloaded with placards and visuals.

Regarding internal design, Optimum employs similar elements. The mall is furnished according to what the mall administration depicts “modern” as opposed to heavy, classical furnishing. At the time of the study, the hall on the entrance floor was filled with leather seats, which are displayed by a home furniture store in the mall, too. The orange-colored leather seats in Optimum indicated convenience and the ease of supply, while those brown leather chairs of Ankamall look like home furniture that are more classical and elegant in style. Before the new opening, there was a café with straw tabourets on the entrance floor; it resembled a Turkish coffeehouse. In the newly opened part of the building, there are now wooden benches and fake palm trees. On the top floor, there is the food court, and it receives natural light. At night, however, there are fluorescents, some of which are colored. “Those lights make for a decent center. It is enjoyable...” thinks Onur from the supermarket. Away from the food court, there is a cool-looking café with again leather chairs at the basement floor. Nevertheless, in this outlet center, the attention is expectedly more on discounts and commodities and less on the presentation of commodities, unlike in Ankamall, Armada or Arcadium. The design is usually simple and inconspicuous. The exception to that is visible in shop window designs, e.g. jeanswear shops’ windows, as well as in the new building. “All the shelves are tidy; but we considered decorating the entrance with jeans on the floor, as if they fell down”, states Ayfer from the jeanswear shop. This change in design should be considered in relation to the shops’ sales capacity to the neighborhood. Finally, in Optimum, another trend that is obvious in Ankamall prevails: Light is employed to decorate the corridors in the new building much more than it was in the previous mall.

Suburban Arcadium has a smaller space, yet is conspicuously decorated inside. The mall enjoys a wide entrance and more of natural light. It provides plastic chairs in the food court and illuminates the court with fluorescents, which are not colored as they are in Optimum. The boutique café at the basement floor used to fill the empty space between stores on both sides. Later, the space has been restyled by Dunkin Donuts, a seated space without finite borders of a store. There is a short distance between this seated space and the strolling area, indicating a less divisive, and perhaps a more inclusive, organization of space. Likewise, Özge senses that stores should be devoid of formal entrance; entrance should be wide open, without doors. People should not hesitate to step in. If Arcadium seems to temper contrasts, it is because the composition of visitors to the mall is not quite heterogeneous. After all, suburban malls are ‘built’ public spaces, where “residents can literally shop without leaving home or be at home without leaving the shops” (Goss, 1993: 18).



Photo 8: Arcadium (Photo retrieved from <http://www.wowturkey.com>)

Finally, in Beğendik, goods are placed in plenty and positioned close to each other. Entrance is not long and leads directly to a small atrium, which goes to every direction inside the department store. Light is modest and available only by inside enlightening; corridors are at medium width, compared to previously discussed malls. There are no windows inside; therefore there is no window shopping; one can touch and wander freely. Considering that the elderly, the retired and housewives visit the store, it has the outlook of a big bazaar. However, this design can be a familiar or disturbing order, depending from where one looks. Gürol from furniture department states that small stuff like lamps are catchier if displayed in the margins rather than in the center. Otherwise that stuff may stand as if it will fall on people

and people will not differentiate among them. On the other hand, it is better if there is an overall symmetry inside. If strollways are wide, people will be able to roam comfortably and stroll as if they are on a walk on the shore, according to Gürol.

The shopping mall is a form of architecture, which does not represent the common reality of city outdoors, and it expresses a divergence from urban public space. Malls in Ankara are among “the site[s] of Turkish urban modernity” (Erkip, 2003: 1073). This kind of modernity in space models an imported rather than invented construction style that globally exists and decorates this frame with elements of nature, which will not disturb the visitors even though these are fake. The spatial transformation of local marketplaces in the name of modernity as globalization is recognized under a single roof and logo, as it is in Ankamall. While space is named in accordance with foreignness (see Arcadium, Optimum, *Ankamall*) and the pronunciation is confusing for many people, the design is appreciated and considered as a great attraction by many. As in Optimum, using tradition in spatial design will make people feel at home, while being in Ankamall feels more like being in the high-society. In Arcadium, though, space is high-styled but familiar to local residents. Beğendik, on the other hand, depends more on the established signs, with little make-ups for space. Contrasts of light, weather, sight and signs certainly do exist in these spaces. Nevertheless, people seem to enjoy the oppositions presented through fabricated but comfortable spaces of shopping malls, indicating “purity” in Abaza’s conception, that is, “modernity” in Erkip’s note (Erkip, 2003: 1078).

CHAPTER 4

PATRONIZING THE MALL

“[I]n these self-contained, exclusive spaces, they enter a world of simulated social promotion. Here, they feel as though they can participate in a better world (...).” (Mona Abaza, 2004)

In Ankara, malls are differentiated from local marketplaces and old public spaces in the city, as mall administrators call this new urban form as “*yaşam merkezi*”, where comfort, privacy, leisure and entertainment are the main motivations. Speed, movement, compactness and novelty count in the marketplace together with abundance, stretching of temporal limits, leisure and consumption of promotions. Globalization in the shopping mall means a break-away from what is local or domestic, regarding (i) the relationship with the global culture and the mobility it brings, and (ii) the mall’s animated character that attracts people and release them temporarily from the constraints of personal lives, home, family or the community that binds.

Firstly, the city has become familiar with global consumer culture since the 1990s through items such as “credit cards” (Erkip, 2003: 1074) and “cell phones” that encourage consumption and ease mobility beyond individual ability (Suner, 2001; cited in Erkip, 2003, 1079). The mall increases mobility by inflating the value of people’s time and money. Time and money flow fast in the mall as people demand swiftness, manipulate the limits of their income by credit cards and explore novelties that did not previously exist in their surroundings. Abundance, practicality and service are the themes that come up in the interviews, indicating new social and occupational groups that form their identities and lifestyle in relation to the global mobility of capital and culture. According to salespeople, customers feel a hidden obligation to purchase if they receive attention from the seller in a local shop, while the privilege to taste for free is significant in the mall. The latter creates a sense of

consuming-without-purchasing via promotions, window-shopping and on-sale periods. It renders consumers the right to view and taste more, making customer satisfaction the ultimate aim. This is also the “sovereign” consumer, who begins to search into and “control” what is being sold to her (Keat, 1991; cited in du Gay and Salaman, 2000: 79). ‘Customer satisfaction’ is a developing concept alongside transnational corporations in Turkey; yet, it has already been operationalized in the mall: Consumers constantly learn about new attractions and merchandise introduced via malls and begin to choose pretentiously. Salespeople state the commercial-moral value of treating customers irrespective of appearance or social standing in order to build trust, which is the central orientation of many consumers.

Secondly, the mall ameliorates the constraints of the city and the community that binds. According to this, shopping malls in Ankara mark a divergence, albeit temporary, from the status-quo for many residents. The Republican Ankara was identified with its “defensive” rise against the previous affluence of imperial Istanbul (Ergun, 1997; cited in Erkip, 2003: 1078). The writings of authors such as Saktanber (2005) and Gürbilek (1993) shed light onto how order, collectivity and dynamism against status-quo defined the public life in this rising city. In the mean years, however, public spaces in Ankara became part of “the old” and the “status-quo”, as Saktanber indicates (2005: 201). In the highly dispersed city, life is inside the house. Much of urban leisure activity that involves women, youth and children proves to be expensive. Thus, shopping malls penetrate into the local by increasingly providing that liveliness together with order in an all-in-one package in suburbs and at important nodes of the city. It provides a chance to be in the public without disturbing the limits of privacy. Lunch with colleagues, weekend trips, movie-going, loitering, socializing, dating, entertaining kids and school trips occur at the same time here. Malls host exhibitions and concerts that take people out of their daily routines and introduce ‘the new’ to them in spectacular ways. The mall is an “appetizer” in the words of Ankamall’s administrator¹⁵, implying that the mall communicates especially the younger population by attracting them to the ‘new’ and the ‘unusual’. For instance, a young couple of conservative background that disapproves dating can meet in Optimum, where they are part of the crowd that surrounds them. Children are attracted by an exhibition about model dinosaurs inside the corridors of Ankamall.

¹⁵ Interview with Ankamall Administration, in March 2007.

Sales staff in Optimum notes that people with lower incomes start to go out as a family in an orderly and economic place. For housewives, malls extend the limits of domestic life. The elderly use Beğendik or Arcadium extensively, too, since it frees them from spending the day isolated at home.

Shopping malls transform the domestic; however, the presence of the domestic patterns is very powerful in the mall, too. People interpret what the mall has to offer in very peculiar ways. They can occupy shopping malls in Ankara with practices such as bargaining, women's tea-parties that are known as "*gün yapmak*", or matchmaking. The value of time and money has increased along with the mobility in the city; however, more shoppers respond to this by almost day-long shopping trips in the city with their limited budgets. People are obsessed with 'touching' merchandise even when they are not supposed to; deliberating the most economic options, collecting images and services offered in the mall recklessly, and leaving the stuff in shopping carts or returning much of what they purchased. Salespeople state that the majority of shoppers lose their "consciousness" in the mall and are learning how to shop rationally. The minority that shops economically and in accordance with a globalized lifestyle is likely to spend less time in the mall, though. On the other hand, the staff observes that consumers do not trust salespeople, whom they think to be people who are after quick profit-making, and try to avoid salesperson's attention, fearing that they will be compelled to make purchases. This may be the response of the local to the globalized organization of marketplace. Salesperson looks like a cunning stranger to many shoppers, who think of themselves deprived of control in the shopping process. Consumer resembles a confused tourist on the shopfloor, and tries to state his authority through impatient and quick-tempered responses to the seller. Shoppers are still dominantly female, as the mall reinforces home-related consumption, shopping for the home and the family.

According to the portrayed relation between the global and the local in the mall, it is possible to delineate four common tenets in changing consumption patterns in Ankara: (i) *increased mobility*, (ii) *social and occupational groups* that identify themselves in relation to global and local references, (iii) *customer satisfaction* that materializes in consumer rights in general and in brand shopping in particular, (iv) *a new public space* observed in movie halls, food courts and themed entertainment zones inside the mall. In each of these, the global is difficult to separate from the

local; therefore the two is illustrated together.

4.1 *Increased Mobility*

The advent of shopping malls in the capital city since 1989 has enhanced physical and financial mobility, developing local consciousness about a global consumer culture. “Growth” and financial mobility are now understood in accord with “a liberal, market-oriented, outward-looking development strategy” unlike many decades before the 1980s (Erkip, 2003: 1073-1074; 2005: 89). Wealth has increased in the form of “average income” or “bank credits”, which were eventually channeled into consumption and leisure (ibid.: 2003: 1074). Private cars and credit cards relate to the idea ‘I own the means to have more and live better’, while the use of cell phones and the internet lead to an awareness of places that one is not currently present at. These trends altogether are central to the effect of shopping malls to disseminate a lifestyle that is based on the intensive use of (i) money and (ii) time; among various segments of the society. Zeynep describes how shopping habits changed with the mall:

You have a plethora of advantages [here]. (...) Malls have to involve all [kinds of] stores inside. Shopping malls exist so that people do not have to buy one thing from here and another from there. [The mall] has its disadvantages, too. When work population comes here on weekdays, they are already tired. They prefer weekends; but there is insufficient space in the parking lot. Many things escape from their notices in the crowd, and merchandise is always left in a mess.

Zeynep depicts shopping malls as the new social centers of the city:

These places are much denser at weekends. People enjoy eating out once in a week or a month; and you have the option of fast-food; you have more than one alternative [in the food court] –whether it is plain fare or the usual fast-food. [Then, there are] the movies... [This is] a center where you can meet all of your needs. Think of it as a complete store, an emporium. [The mall is] a weekend amusement; a change instead of sitting at home; a place to visit with friends and relatives; somewhere outside the house; sometimes a place to get away from the acquaintances.

The mall is a concentrated place that easily rules out the city as we know it:

Warm in winter, cool in summer... [People] have reasons to avoid the outside if you can satisfy them here. You get exhausted when you shop on the street in summer; can't find a place to take a breath. Here, you can put every detail into use. (Zeynep, Ankamall)

4.1.1. *Physical Mobility in the City:*

Car ownership asserts financial standards and increased physical mobility, being a subtle indicator of status. First of all, a mall is attractive due to its parking

lot. Ankamall has a parking lot with 5,600 cars capacity¹⁶; Optimum has 2,500 cars¹⁷; Arcadium takes 1,000 cars¹⁸, while Beğendik¹⁹ takes only 450. Each mall is a new sightseeing as much as a marketplace, sometimes visited by all the family. Gül points to the association between cars, malls and status differentiation:

You know, looking at automobiles in its parking lot is sufficient to understand the type of customer who patronizes a certain mall. (Gül, Beğendik)

People drive to mall from distant quarters so as to extend their visits to relatives and friends to a city tour, or simply escape the weekend routines. This signifies that the dispersed city has suburban attractions and odd downtowns now:

Those who are unable to take their friends or significant others anywhere else enjoy this place. People drive here as family or couples from distant neighborhoods such as Çankaya. This place is easier to visit for those with private cars; more customers stop in after 5 p.m. Well, if I were married, I wouldn't take my wife to Kızılay after the workday; I would take her to somewhere more pleasant and relaxing, somewhere we can dine. Because, the ambience in Kızılay is not as good as before; it has turned to a place that you come across jobs more. (Onur, Optimum)

Those who drive here from Cebeci, Mamak or Or-an to visit their acquaintances at weekends drop in Optimum in curiosity, too. Some visit the mall regularly; some visit a different mall each week. On weekdays, this is a place for those who travel a short distance from the near neighborhoods, particularly after 7 and 7.30 p.m. to do market shopping after the evening rush hour. (Ayfer, Optimum)

Shopping becomes an expedition for those who see visits to mall as the main weekend activity. Given that it takes less time to drive the distances in Ankara than in Istanbul, each mall is a new landmark that makes the city a smaller place:

This mall is primarily a place where people from the neighborhood shop. It is visited by others from distant locales, too. People are sometimes here to simply say 'I've seen here, I've bought these from there.' A number of malls are visited by some people such that each week a different one is the destination. They even happen to be in two malls during the same day, comparing prices. (Emel, Arcadium)

Think of Armada; 'let's go to Armada', people say. Not that they are going to buy a specific thing; they are bored. [They go] just to window-shop, to have an idea of several goods, and so on. There are but people who overdo that, of course. They depart for another mall after they are done with Armada; or, they depart for Armada after they are done with some other shopping mall. (Ali, Beğendik)

Speaking of the United States, Underhill (2005: 33) comments that crowd by "rowdy young people" in the mall can be prevented once the giant shopping malls

¹⁶ http://www.yenigimat.com.tr/ANKAmall_2.aspx

¹⁷ <http://www.optimumoutlet.com>

¹⁸ Alışverişin Gülümseyen Yüzü: Arcadium. *Ancyra*: June 9, 2006. <http://www.ancyragazetesi.com/haber.asp?id=258>

¹⁹ <http://www.begendik.com.tr/magazalar/kocatepe.html>

are located out of the reach of public transportation. In Ankara, the availability of public transport as well as shuttles is crucial for enhanced circulation of the young together with the unemployed, the retired and female visitors in the malls, though. In Ankamall, public transport via subway helps boost circulation. It is observed that during the day the mall attracts a population from surrounding districts and Kızılay, coming to Ankamall for lunch, coffee or meeting for an hour or so. Young strollers in malls in Ankara are the remarkable portion of all visitors and they are not necessarily called an undesired population in the mall. Teenagers or unemployed young ones dress up conspicuously to the extent they feel necessary to appear in the mall, although they do not belong to the actual shopper profile of the mall. There is also a negative side of such young frequenters to Ankamall, according to Zeynep. She points to particularly young, unemployed and male strollers, who form a pure contrast with the formerly dominant, premium shoppers she used to see in the mall corridors. Other classy malls opening elsewhere in the city add to this, and Zeynep argues that people of upper strata begin to frequent Ankamall less:

Classy malls just like Armada open and you see your customer frequenting there. (...). It is easier to reach here since there is subway, though. With newly added stores, [Ankamall] will reach its old potential, if the customer circulation to here is maintained at a level equal to there [Armada]. There has been a decline for sure; faces have changed. These faces do not please us sellers, compared to former years. Easy transportation is the reason for this. (Zeynep, Ankamall)

On the other hand, Özge compares Ankamall with Arcadium:

Circulation is always greater in Ankamall, because crowd attracts crowd. Even though it is close to a district such as İskitler, the importance of Ankamall does not decline. It addresses group B and B-plus²⁰. The highest revenues of the stores are from Ankamall. (...) People with no clear idea of what to buy drop in, too. (Özge, Arcadium)

Subway construction that continues on the Eskişehir Road is going to link city center to Armada and Arcadium soon, too. According to Halil, this will have a converse effect on the suburban mall, while the city center is livelier than Arcadium:

This place is like an arcade. Shoppers are occasional. Once the subway is completed and off to a start, shoppers will be even less frequent. People come here if they have to, if they are going to purchase; whereas in Kızılay, government officials roam [arcades] during their lunch breaks, and they buy if they intend to. Circulation is greater and continuous there; [sellers] definitely make money. (Halil, Arcadium)

²⁰ Gül (Beğendik) describes the meaning of customer groups: “In the retail sector, we group customers into three: A, B and C. Armada refers to A, more correctly A-plus group of customers. 5M Migros [Ankamall] addresses group B. Then, group C consists of the average-income earners, the common people.” B-plus will mean a transitory group between A and B.

The customer in Optimum depends on both car ownership and shuttles between mall and several districts around, from Elvankent and Fatih to Çayyolu. The outlet mall draws a mixed population that equally depends on private cars and shuttle services:

Customers are coming even for the daily market shopping in Adese [supermarket] only. Shuttles prompt a great percentage of such visits. (Ayfer, Optimum)

There is no underground transport to here yet. This changes the look of the mall a bit. Mainly, customers with private cars frequent here for now. (Mustafa, Optimum)

Compared to other malls, including the suburban Arcadium, Beğendik is mainly noted for its pedestrian visitors. It has lost many of its potential customers to other malls. The mall is in downtown and very close to several bus-stops; however,

Küçüksat, Kızılay, the upper-reaches of Kocatepe, Seyranbağları and –if we go a bit further in distance- people from neighborhoods such as Mamak and Kurtuluş come to the mall. Shoppers are usually from this milieu, while people who are already downtown shop here for small things, like a bottle of water and so on. (Aysun, Beğendik)

The parking lot is free of charge in many other malls; however, it had to be modified in Beğendik. There is insufficient parking space in the downtown such that people who do not directly aim to visit Beğendik consider of using its parking space when they are in downtown. People, who are not actually visitors to Beğendik, are able to leave their cars in the parking area for a fee. In this sense, the regulation is quite influenced by the location of Beğendik:

[The customer] may leave his car in Beğendik's during the day, considering that he anyway has a daily expense of at least twenty liras. So, the rule is not a problem for him. (Nuray, Beğendik)

Finally, automobilization with the added effect of financial ability brings the popularity of city centers down:

Downtown centers were of course more prominent when malls were not so numerous and widely dispersed within the city. Even the shopper in Kızılay was better than the shopper in Ulus. In those days, Tunalı Street was so exclusive for the general public; it was a location where not anyone could go anytime. Now, Tunalı has become an easily accessible, ordinary street. (Mustafa, Optimum)

Before, the shopping center of Ankara was Ulus and Kızılay. Now it is totally different. It is even different than five years ago. People don't generally prefer going to Kızılay. The income differences are clear [in that]. Shopping [for quality] in Kızılay is not the same as five years ago. The shopping centers of Ankara have shifted towards Armada and Çankaya. (Onur, Optimum)

4.1.2 *The Financial Mobility in the City:*

The use of *credit cards* implies a non-static relationship with money. It has long replaced the practice of buying on account of shopkeeper (*veresiye*) and

transformed the meaning of ‘shopping for needs’ in the variety of products in the globalized marketplace. On the one hand, purchasing power is still comparatively low in Turkey than in many developing countries (Demirel, 2001; cited in Erkip, 2003: 1074). On the other hand, people hardly make substantial purchases without credit cards. Credit cards have been used intensively since 1992, and there were 14 million users in the country by 2001, Erkip notes (ibid.). The credit card signifies “a new individual” who does not refrain from any of his pleasures; his identity and lifestyle are affected by the “mass media” and “global economic integration” at work and at leisure; and, he appreciates money to live better (Ergur, 2005: 129). His financial freedom depends on installed payments that divide into months and even years. Interviews reveal that people who are not even one of these new individuals buy more by means of credit cards; thus, credit cards become a means of pretending to spend as people of higher strata do:

Our lifestyle is changing, of course. For instance, ten years ago credit cards were not common this much. Buying power has increased; consumption has intensified too much. Purchasing useless but wanted items has become frequent. Credit cards are the biggest motivators of this. You start to buy anything, needed or not. It is fine for the store, but it is a burden for the buyer. (Zeynep, Ankamall)

Zeynep expresses that they, as mediators of consumption, resemble their customers and cannot put a distance between consumption and their own desires, either. She utters the discrepancy between the desired thriftiness and the actual indulgence in shopping, which is also observable in salesperson’s consumption behavior:

We, too, buy things we don’t consider a need, yet find cute enough to have. How much of your monthly income can you put into shopping? If you can calculate this, it’s fine. But, the minimum wage doesn’t pay your debts back. [The store] receives the money from the bank anyway. We try to avoid offering too many installments for customers; it’s not pleasant for them to see the plan of payment for an entire year. It’s not to my advantage to make ten monthly installments, but customers expect you to have this option, because every [store] has. (Zeynep, Ankamall)

Credit cards represent *haste* that reflects the rapid transformation of marketplace. It seems that shopping with the credit card suggests the opposite of modest consuming behavior; and implies stretching one’s limits at least virtually. Salespeople indicate that people compare their status with others through dependence on credit cards, mainly when they do not have purchasing power that others can see:

The card owner earns little and hungers for buying. If he doesn’t have buying power, he will pay by credit card. [He] sees others filling their shopping bags with eggs, butter, things. This poor guy doesn’t have the chance to buy them all, [but] banks hand out credit cards to everyone. He gets one, and wants to do like the others do. That’s what’s happening in Turkey now. It is quite pitiful, indeed. (...) It goes on for

a couple of months, living in debt; then it's the same: People cannot go on buying whatever they want. (Gürol, Beğendik)

Below, two salesmen express personal worries and biases towards the local use of credit cards, as they extend it to a narration of privatized consumption. Mustafa sees that people here are too self-oriented, and they indulge rather than make rational choices in consumption. In that, he makes comparisons that go beyond his current workplace, Optimum. Similar to Zeynep, he draws attention to the inconsistent behavior of most mall shoppers. Individual practices are conspicuous, yet the actual (financial) conditions are weaker. Ali's account supports that many shoppers display actually a virtual affluence on the shopfloor:

[In Germany] one or two banks give a credit card to you, whereas [in Turkey] people get credit cards from every bank. There, shopping centers are closed on Sunday; here, you work seven days a week. There, such places close doors after 8 p.m., certain bars and cafés remain open; even they close early on Sunday night, because next day there is work. No such regulations here. I know that a draft bill suggested shopping centers in Turkey close early on Sundays, but large retailers disliked that option for they would lose money. (Mustafa, Optimum)

Credit cards are abused in our country already. At the first glance, you see people filling shopping carts, [yet] they can't pay in cash. This is reckless shopping, you know. You don't have the money and you use credit card in excess; you buy bagfuls of goods while you don't need that much. As a westernizing country, we fell into this habit around 1994, in my opinion. (Ali, Beğendik)

Ali tells that, typically as most salespeople, he does not have much time and money to spend for entertainment or shopping for his own desires. To him, struggles people take on for maintaining a life are noticeable in the daily life, as he stresses such hardships over material well-being many times during the interview. From his words, we infer that those who mainly focus on such struggles to make a living are not actually much visible in malls, although many mall shoppers display an inconsistent behavior with their actual financial abilities:

You see people shopping from gross markets; they buy in great quantities there. Well, we are told that people are suffering from the lack of money and jobs. Yet, people shop so hastily that as if they are smuggling goods from a fire. They aren't satisfied with the sufficient amount of either food or textile. I've also heard many times that people usually waste what they purchased, because they buy too much and the products go rotten. (Ali, Beğendik)

The abundance in the mall is integral to the impulsive use of credit cards, too, while such impulsiveness is either readily perceived by the shopper or prompted by the staff. In many instances, people stroll around and look at the merchandise by themselves; however, as well as in shopping for style or expensive items, the staff's role to prompt consumption is much easily highlighted. In this study, Ankamall and

Arcadium would be the best places to observe this. At this point, salesperson starts to put himself/herself in the place of supposedly affluent customer and realizes that his/her stance before the consumer is essential to convince the buyer. This also gives clues on how the sales worker familiarizes with the well-off shoppers instead of putting distance between them and his/her own situation. Thus, the sales worker pretends to change status according to the consumer's perceived status:

The customer comes in and asks for glass, for tobacco-box; asks for the medium size of [that shirt]. He purchases it and leaves. But, it is important to make them purchase what they did not intend to. No belt wanted? Give him belt. No vase needed? Give her vase. Well, they should leave the store loaded. (Serkan, Arcadium)

Things that catch the eye in a mall are distinct and unexpected things. One forgets what he came here for, once he enters the door. (...) In a local store, he would have bought a single jacket he wanted. There is variety in the mall, though. When the customer enters the store for jeans, he sees matching garments, cotton trousers, shirts, jackets and belts. (...) If there weren't a chance to pay for these by the credit card installments, I don't think the shopping habits would have changed that much. (Ebru, Ankamall)

Interviewees highlight that the older generations were not born into such abundance; their parents knew scarcity and used to think need-oriented. Salespeople who are around 25 years old are able to note the sharp increase in the supply of variety for our pleasure and the desire to possess this variety:

Life in the society differentiated. So did the way we shop. Before, kids were out to play all day on the street; now they don't even leave the house. They are surfing on the net, seeing new stuff and commercials all the time. Credit cards come to your rescue as wants and the desire to purchase them increase. (Erdem, Optimum)

The use of the credit card is a virtual increase in status for especially the lower middle strata. Therefore, the conflict between the use of credit card and the burden of debts is continuous:

A credit card is as if it's for free, since you don't pay by cash in your pocket. Once the debts become too much and you go through stressful days, you start to economize and try to make ends meet. The same sort of stressful things happened to my relatives. They did not start to buy normally as soon as their financial situation restored, though. They waited, as if they wanted to make sure their situation is stable forever... (Erdem, Optimum)

In the past, purchases were rare; acquisition and consumption was slower. Salespeople describe consumption patterns that are closely dependent on certain times of the year and referring to certain places in the city:

In my childhood, new shoes were bought only at *Bayrams*; I would walk with some old, worn-out shoes and not make a fuss about it. How many different shoes are on the market now! The desire to [follow] trends, to buy brands has boomed. I know times I slept hugging my new shoes; now we don't await *Bayrams* to buy new shoes. We wouldn't take torn shoes to the store; we used to get them repaired by the

repairman. Now, you bring your shoes to the place you've bought them; if there is a problem with them, you call the store to account. (Erdem, Optimum)

Such accounts highlight the views of lower middle to middle classes towards acquiring new goods today, too. Erdem's father is a taxi driver, and the parents had migrated from their hometown Kırşehir to Cebeci district in Ankara before Erdem was born. In his statement, Erdem reflected his family's thrifty approach towards buying clothing and apparel. In the below statements, the interviewees name the old marketplaces of Ankara, while these places turn to less frequented routes for even the middle-income, thrifty shoppers, who would look for and find better buys in those areas:

You couldn't find anything in small retail places. In the mall, I buy everything at the same time. In a single store, you buy a need; if you need furnishings, you go to the furnisher's. In the mall, I buy something even if I don't need it. Shopping habits change inevitably. I can shop for every tiny need. In Kızılay, you choose from among what is available. Before, there was *Sümerbank*, there was *Çıkırıkçılar [Çarşısı]*, and we used to buy our needs there. Now, the mall is advantageous. (Gürol, Beğendik)

Çıkırıkçılar Yokuşu and such places are a different kind of shopping space in Ankara. It's not shopping; people go to tour there. It is a distinct pleasure. (Ayfer, Optimum)

Gürol goes on to state that we are an over-consuming society; however, he does not retain that this trend is significant in different parts of the globe. Similar to many other interviewees, he observes reckless consumption on the shopfloor and portrays this as a local (national) characteristic. In that, he expresses a general feeling of belatedness to catch up with the 'modern' that is present at developed societies:

We don't have a plan for our lives. We haven't matured over certain things. I've known many European customers; they buy what they need. They don't care for the package. (...) We are way behind them for at least 70 or 80 years. They've learnt to buy wisely; we've just started learning it. The new generation is growing up in an abundance of things around them, though. So, you have a wider perspective about things. You reach everything. (Gürol, Beğendik)

A similar account is provided by Emel, who recalls the tourists in a summer camp she participated with her friends:

Those foreign guys seemed satisfied with what they got. Dressed comfortably, they didn't worry about luxury. We, on the contrary, don't give up the indulgence and we want to have the best. If you refrain from some of your pleasures, then you can get some other things you wish for, though. (Emel, Arcadium)

Most of these accounts understand the local in direct opposition to the modernized other, who inhabits an exceptional place in the globe, too. Their attitude towards the domestic (national) and the much too generalized global requires one to denote Robertson's (1995) account on "the local in the global" or "the global in the

local". He focuses on the "local-global problematic" and argues that the "global is not in itself and of itself counterposed to the local. Rather, what is often referred to as the local is essentially included within the global" (Robertson, 1995: 35). In our cases, reckless consumption, over-curiosity for the variety of goods, inability to make rational choices on the shopfloor, or simply over-indulgence are understood to be the characteristic of the local. However, these can be recognized in different geographies where shopping malls exist, as well. What salespeople depict as the local today is an altered state of the local that was affected by the global. Robertson implies that global trends take on a "pan-local basis"; they effect the local (ibid.: 37); whereas the global will not leave the local out, because it makes the world a smaller place "by the linking of localities" (ibid.: 35). When salespeople refer to the local past of shopping habits versus the image of rational, need-oriented people, they are comparing the particular with an imagined, ideal, universal model. In that, it is possible to find the traces of globalization seen as a homogenizing and modernizing trend for the entire world, following Featherstone and Lash (1995:4), who figure out that for "homogenizers", "the universal is [mainly present] in the particular." When the global affects the local, as it does in the case of credit cards, it proposes a variety rather than homogeneity of meanings for people of the local, though.

Ergur argues that the effect of credit cards is their ability to make purchases and payments "invisible" (Ergur, 2005: 139) as individuals adopt "hedonistic" and pleasure-oriented practices rather than "saving-oriented", old habits (ibid.: 130). This seems to be instrumental in our study in a number of cases, each of which gives a different meaning to the credit card. This meaning is closely attached to the status of card user in the society. For instance, women generally seem to be mobilized by the credit card; it is not simply reckless consumption; the freedom to give their own decisions is highlighted. Burcu's account reflects that males used to make the payments, while she now observes a divergent tendency:

People are more likely to make purchases when they are here with the entire family - wife, husband and children. It happens quite often that the woman herself buys now with the credit card, too. She seldom asks the man to pay. (Burcu, Ankamall)

In this example, getting hold of the credit card at the counter may have a transient effect for the woman, whose husband will perhaps pay the installments. Moreover, the purchase is invisible for women, depending on the magnitude of the purchase.

Speaking of furnishing purchases, women may be actively involved in the decision-making process, yet men take pleasure in making the payment:

In every way, payments are done by the man. Even when it is the woman, who decided to buy... Men may enjoy buying this sort of things, too, but they don't bring it out into the open. If they do, then they are living for the pleasure of this life he lives for once. He wants everything the way he likes. (Zeynep, Ankamall)

There is still continuity in this trend with what Ayata denoted as symbolic consumption as the extension of woman's relation to man's income status. According to him, men in families of a rural origin had the last say in big purchases such as for the guest-room; while women in families with a considerable background in the urban and holding office positions have a greater share in such big purchasing decisions (Ayata, 1988: 16). He adds that men continue to afford such consumption of home furnishings, similar to what Zeynep on the shopfloor accounts for today. On the other hand, women who hold such office positions and have higher income and social status spend conspicuously.. Sometimes, they do not even make their shopping decisions themselves; they leave it to the salesgirl. This is more observable in malls such as Ankamall and Armada that serve to the exclusive shopper. In these malls, middle class shoppers want to be attended. They patronize the salesperson as much as the store, while the salesperson, usually a female staff member, becomes conscious of this desire and positions herself as the special attendant of the shopper:

When I worked in Armada, I remember a customer who forgot her 1.5 billion liras-worth-suit in the store for two years after we made fitting changes on the suit. We used to follow the customer about there. We picked the clothes to go to their houses to display them. They await attention and pay for it. They decide on the clothes and send their drivers later to get them from the mall and make the payment. (Aslı, Optimum)

I have customers who trust [me] enough to say 'I'm going to send the credit card to you, you simply save these clothes for me', because I won't sell something that doesn't fit her. It is important to make the customer feel that she is important. (Ayça, Ankamall)

In a district where people have lower or moderate incomes, parents can use the credit card for indulging family, while they refrain from making purchases for themselves, because they actually come to malls for others (in the family):

You see, families usually visit the mall at weekends, and you can observe that visitors on weekdays are likely to pay in cash, while visitors at weekends tend to use the credit card for payments. (Erdoğan, Optimum)

In well-off districts, concerns over credit cards center on the issue of security. Salespeople start to take care of the customers' money in a sense. It is Emel's

conviction that salespeople are expected to monitor the spending here, whereas doing the same thing would be considered an insult to the card user in lower class districts:

People here don't react much negatively when we need to check their identities against credit card fraud. I believe people react against this rule around Yenimahalle, Keçiören and Eryaman. They say, 'Do you think I have stolen the card? What the heck I am going to do with a stolen card?' But around Çayyolu or places such as Gaziosmanpaşa and Çankaya, there won't be such a response. (Emel, Arcadium)

A number of interviews highlight savings-oriented customers in Ankara, compared to Istanbul.. Ankara has been a city much populated by public sector unlike Istanbul. Here, salespeople tend to view people in Ankara as people of a moderate living. They are more thrifty and likely to calculate how much they save; as they may prefer buying enduring goods if they pay a good amount of money. In addition to this, the extremes in status are supposedly less observed in Ankara, salespeople assume:

There is too much money in Istanbul. There, people with money to waste come into the store, too. In Ankara, that doesn't happen much. People enter the door, asking for the most useful stuff to them. Much of the sales are paid in installments. (Gökçe, Arcadium)

[Customers] immediately ask the number of installments when they pay with the card. People love installments now. When looking at something, they ask: How many installments? How much is this; do you offer discounts? Do you offer additional discounts? Nowadays, the new legislation on the VAT causes an extra-discount in prices, too, and people are rushing to purchase. (Serkan, Arcadium)

The customer likes to buy the stuff cheap. They also like to buy brands, the proper stuff that is sold *in the store*. They have the chance to do so in '*sosyete pazarı*', you know. They can go there if they want the both. Anyway, we can't satisfy the customer. (Nuray, Beğendik)

They say, 'we pay five liras for anything that is not even useful, why not pay for this?' They see the price and say, 'I'll just have it.' and they buy it to use and throwaway soon. Just like tissues. If they have a credit card, they buy two instead of one. (Eda, Optimum)

Salespeople are not authorized to offer discounts which are not set by the store, brand or retailer; however, customers bargain with them and ask for additional discounts. Particularly in Arcadium and Optimum, shoppers do not seem to differentiate between the local stores and the mall much. In a local store, shoppers may ask an additional discount for the merchandise that is already discounted. In the mall, this motivation continues.

I guess they think: the less I pay, the more I get! They say, how much would you discount for us? Women ask to the salesgirl: What is the last price of this for us, honey? Some shoppers haggle for an extra bowtie in addition to what they already purchased, insisting that it would accustom them to the store. (Halil, Arcadium)

There is no bargaining [in the mall]. All shoes, all available types are displayed in the store; [whereas] in the boutique-shop, it is the bargaining style. (...) The price is higher, considering the bargaining share. If you are a special customer, the price goes down for you. [In Optimum], the two [marketing style] conflates with each other. They ask if there is discount, but the price *is* written on the label. Customers shop as if they are in a local neighborhood store and they await greater attention, too. (Erdem, Optimum)

It is interesting to see that bargaining behavior prevails in these two malls, which are similarly located close to suburban areas, yet different in their expected shopper profile. Arcadium addresses a richer suburban population, while people that Halil mentions of are probably a limited portion of shoppers to the mall. Optimum, on the other hand, suggests that customers, who are not going to buy exclusively, may await the attention the premium shoppers receive in return for their money:

It is not advantageous for the salesperson to pay extra attention if the customer is not going to buy. They haggle for ten minutes for the stuff they can buy in three minutes, and as they are haggling, we serve to 200 customers when in fact we could make a sale to 300 [people]. (Erdem, Optimum)

In Ankamall, the emphasis on ‘cheaper’ is mainly noticeable in stores (e.g. jeans stores) that attract the window shopper with the actual spender. In that sense, it is possible to encounter the lower and upper ends of society in the same place in Ankamall.

There are those who find it expensive here. They ask for cheaper jeans, looking at the cheapest jeans on earth that costs only 49 liras. But, the price is fair, because you are shopping in the mall, you are buying a brand! (Ebru, Ankamall)

4.1.3. *Changing Temporality in the City:*

The sense of *time* as a scarce resource and the obsession to use it in the most effective way are critical in understanding the continuous movement in the mall. Interviewees state that people need an urge to be practical in their shopping and leisure activity, either because of the heavier workload in the urban or the daily time that is divided into many fragments and demanding activities. Thus, *swiftness* (in service) as well as *compactness* (of activity) appears as the essential attributes of the shopping mall:

What makes shopping malls attractive is that you can find lots of things at an arm’s reach in a supermarket. You can find whatever you are looking for, from A to Z... There are things you can’t find, of course; but that is a rare incidence. People used to go in and out of stores [in different neighborhoods] to do their shopping when such shopping centers were not present. It was because things were not presented in order in one single place. People would certainly go down to Kızılay and Ziya Gökalp Boulevard and from there to Ulus to buy a single thing. (Ali, Beğendik)

Two different accounts perceive the use of time in the mall differently. Both understand that time is precious in the mall; whereas the former realizes that using time for shopping more effectively gives people extra time to indulge themselves:

Now, the shopping mall has it all: Food court, movie-hall, restaurants and cafeteria are all present in the mall. People shop and afterwards they decide to stay for a while, drink a couple of tea and chatter. (Ali, Beğendik)

Fast food means little time. This is usually true for students. Students [always] come here hungry, and it is quite a challenge to satisfy hungry people. Government officers, retired people and businessmen are not necessarily in a hurry, when they are eating out. Of course, they have limited time, too, but they are not in the same position with students or personnel in the mall. The personnel have thirty to forty minutes to eat lunch and rest for a while; therefore, I make particular effort not to deliver their orders late. (...) All of them are prepared in five minutes or so, anyway. (Nazlı, Arcadium)

Values such as pace, simplicity, convenience as well as entertainment can at first be emphasized particularly for a certain population whose time is the most scarce; however the mall attracts those who do not seemingly need to use time much practically, too. By introducing such values as the essentials of urban life today, the mall makes them available for the wider public. These values refer to wisely used time for the housewife as well as the businessman. Gül sees that large retail spaces definitely keep with standards, and by these standards they assure variety:

People are afraid of wasting time now; they think of how they can get what they want without wasting a moment. (...) I shop at the mall, because I know I will see everything together -from food to household gear. The mall means the complete place that all these stuff is present. It means having them immediately. It means variety, since price is good in large markets; there are promotions and gifts you receive with the thing you bought; there are discount shelves. Food is also fresh, because the demand and circulation are always greater in these centers, unlike in a grocery shop. (Gül, Beğendik)

Traffic or pedestrians interrupt the convenience of using time and space practically in downtown, whereas in the mall people do not have to be alert continuously to outdoors' effects. Ayfer observes that people come to the mall as family; when families are here, complexity of the mall can attract them in different and individual ways:

In department stores in Kızılay, almost everything is available and organized into floors. Merchandise is the same. Food is available in cafes and restaurants inside the same building. (...) When we say that it attracts everyone, we mean family: The father rests in the food court upstairs, kids go shopping downstairs, and they are all in the same building. Facilities are divided into floors; the supermarket is usually at the entrance floor, and an entire floor is reserved for the food court, and these could be the reasons that the mall is addictive. (Ayfer, Optimum)

These reflections on the fast pace of life in shopping malls are integral to the picture of Ankara as a city, where movement instead of stagnancy and present rather than past start being emphasized. Recalling the early Republican period, time in Ankara was closely connected to the rising and dominant meaning of public life in the capital city. Ankara was mobilized at that time by a vigorous, collective “spirit” accompanied by the nation-state and by urban-centeredness rather than self-centeredness of its citizens (Saktanber, 2005: 206-207; Gürbilek, 2003: 62). In fact, the developing city identified the “future” of the new state, unlike Istanbul as the “past” with unwelcome connotations and materialized an opposition between the past and the present in the process to become a nation, Saktanber reports (2005: 202-203). Soon, Istanbul rose up over Ankara by symbolizing the “new” and the “future” (ibid.: 203), while Ankara ended up being associated with “status quo” and the “past” more (ibid.: 201). Still, Ankara is distinguished from Istanbul by its “order” and “disciplined” character, which makes the city an easier place to inhabit (ibid.: 231). Similarly, Gürbilek discusses Ankara as the city associated with government, bureaucracy, order and “an officer’s utopia”²¹ (Gürbilek, 2003: 62), yet continues to mention the rising popularity of Istanbul as the city associated with money flows and investor’s utopia, while it poses “a different modernization” than Ankara suggested (ibid.: 68). In fact, Ankara challenges this stagnant status today through the presence of transnational and global networks of developing businesses such as “finance”, “advertising”, “investment” and “consumption places” in the city (Erkip 2003, 2005; Helvacioğlu, 2000).

These influences and their fast, personal and exclusive ways to change the way things are in the city are reflected in a number of additional services implemented inside the shopping mall, too. For instance, malls provide services such as bank offices, dry cleaners, hairdressers or playgrounds for children that save time and indicate the use of time intensively, comfortably and privately. In this sense, interviews mention the peculiarity of playgrounds to help parents, especially mothers, who are able to take their kids to mall when they come here for shopping; yet, do not have to stick with them during shopping:

There is a children’s theatre downstairs, where kids’ wear stores are present, as well. Parents leave the kids here and mind their own businesses in the mall. This is great

²¹ This comment is about Y.K. Karaosmanoğlu’s novel: ‘Ankara’; yet, it may as well be applied to the city.

luxury for them. Otherwise, people will be distracted and get upset when the kid starts to cry in the middle of shopping. (Aslı, Optimum)

The store is more crowded on Saturdays than on Sundays. I think people prefer resting at home on Sunday. The whole family is in the mall at weekends. [Females] may drop in with their family just to purchase the thing they individually deliberated and looked during the week. She will show it to the husband in order to have it. Sometimes, they leave the kids upstairs in the playground or to the food court and come down to the supermarket section with their spouses, too. (Aysun, Beğendik)

On the ground floor, there is a playground for kids. Some people go about their own shopping after they leave their children there. (Ayça, Ankamall)

In Arcadium, such exclusive service to parents is not directly provided by means of the mall, although there are attractions for kids, too. It is told²² that one cannot see many children in Arcadium during the day, because kids spend most of the day in kindergartens, although parents are used to taking their children to mall at weekends or on special days. Many visitors to Optimum, however, cannot afford to leave their kids to such care-taking centers during the day or they will not need to do that because children are with their mothers at home.

Communication technology accompanies this shift in the perception of time. For instance, the internet is highlighted as a rich source of information and a powerful influence on the local. Helvacioğlu points that “communication technologies [are powerful] in constructing images of ‘home’, ‘community’ and ‘nationhood’ and produce virtual loyalties via Internet, fax and cellular phones” (Anderson, 1992: 13; Robertson, 1995: 30; cited in Helvacioğlu, 2000: 327). Listening to salespeople, it is understood that the presence of such technology transforms people’s perception about the world around them and increase the awareness of a lifestyle that is not spatially and temporally restricted by the local or the national:

In the ‘80s, baggy trousers were the trend. We wouldn’t wear them now, but it was the fashion then. Girls used to wear tight jeans; it seems funny to think of them today. (...) We start to live in an increased pace, and dress more comfortably. We perhaps buy what is already highly demanded by others around us, instead of what *we’d* like to have for ourselves. We are changing. Twenty years ago, things used to have a slower pace; now they are all much denser. Life moves at the pace of a computer. (Erdem, Optimum)

The local can be reframed by slowness and insufficient information about the latest changes from the perspective of an individual who prefers to put technology and information to the center of her life. According to such outlook, the global is

²² Interview with Arcadium’s Public Relations Office, January 2007.

portrayed as informative and helpful in order to have a wider perspective. In Özge's statement, this is called a lifestyle, and it is available via their store:

I get surprised to see that I learn from the customers in the store. They are terrific information sources themselves; there are people who constantly read and discover [about the healthiest diet]. They tell themselves: I should receive this much of vitamin A and that much of vitamin C. People here spend time on the internet to find out [the latest information about the healthy diet] from the American media more than a dietician or nutritionist does. There are people who arrange their daily lives on this basis. (Özge, Arcadium)

Compared to Özge, Emel views the influence of global media in a rather pessimistic frame. During the conversation, the internet is defined as a means of escaping loneliness as people use it mainly for entertainment purposes, e.g. chatting. She sees that people in the mall are disorientated; although she does not directly consider the global as a disintegrative force, she refers that the family life, for instance, must be dissatisfying for those visitors so that they end up in the crowd of the mall. In contradiction to Emel, Özge stated elsewhere that the family is a strong asset of Turkish society.

I think what we see in the mall is people with a lack of faith and the absence of any motives. During the day, you see young people spending hours in the food court. Some frequent the mall everyday; starting from 11 a.m. they take their seats in the food court. They do nothing but meet with friends. There is much of affectation in the mall. Those with plenty of time and nothing to do are here. Retired people, housewives and middle-aged women, especially if they are quite unhappy with family life and their houses, rush here. (Emel, Arcadium)

Special days such as Mother's Day, St. Valentine's, New Year's Eve or *Bayrams* (referring to religious feasts rather than national celebration days here) signify periods that lead people to rush into store during those specific times of the year, as well. Those days are times when movement and density in the store increase. Shopping starts one or two weeks earlier at those periods, and continues until after a few days. Some of these celebrations imply new habits in the sense that they carry a global character instead of a continuation of traditions (except religious feasts):

Those days are the busiest days in the mall. People find the exact thing they were thinking of. The mall is an attractive place for those who, for instance, wish to take their mothers to lunch or dinner on this day, or provide many options if they'd like to buy a present to her. (Nazlı, Arcadium)

Sales are great for fifteen days before the New Year's Eve, while on other special days, the crowd lasts for one or two days around that day. (...) A lot of customers find their way to the shop anyway during these times. Yet, a great many of them think that there are faults with those items. They consider such merchandise to be defective, if it is put on sale on these days. Customers are so cunning that they continuously monitor what is changing on the shopfloor. (Gül, Beğendik)

On the other hand, those who come into store to receive service on *Bayrams* are portrayed as insensitive people who do not even remember that it is actually a holiday:

Some customers want the impossible to happen. Here, you can see someone coming to store in the morning of the first day of *Kurban Bayramı* to tell you that he wants *Kayseri mantısı*. You answer him that you haven't got them ready yet. He doesn't understand and insists that you provide some immediately, and then he blames you as the salesperson for failing this order, whereas he should take his complaint to producer or the retailer. (Ali, Beğendik)

The use of cell phones is another example that emphasizes mobility at the present. Erkip reports that cellular phone is a powerful "symbol of 'global culture' " in the regard that using a cell phone indicates the sense of "being elsewhere" even if the one using it does not have physical mobility (Suner, 2001; cited in Erkip, 2003: 1079). In the mall, it symbolizes retailer's and store's one-to-one communication with customers; it is the means of informing customers about offers and promotions even when the customer does not think of it:

For instance, we have recently agreed with Turkcell about this. We send text messages to customers via phone operators. We leave flyers on café-tables in the mall. You should be persistent if you want to convince people. I made a thousand customers after four months passed since I came here. Before, the staff hadn't kept any records [of shoppers]. These are essential to convince the most indecisive customers that are hard to please. (Aslı, Optimum)

The store follows its customers by the membership cards; there are times when people are text-messaged about new products or discounts. These are also published in the [store's periodical]. There are times when 80% discounts are made. When people hear about these offers through such media, you can watch them rush into the store, in order to buy sneakers by Adidas, Nike or Kinetix for unbelievably cheap prices. We've seen it; they sold out before people could even obtain a pair. People don't obtain these because of need; they want to have those since they're cheap and then they put it somewhere in the house. (Hakan, Ankamall)

Such reminders of the merchandise in the mall also gives way to collect pieces and items that are not readily useful, while such collecting behavior might as well be considered in relation to the years when there was no such abundance of commercial goods in the country:

We've become a consumer society after all. Whenever there is a day or week of discount, we keep track of it and buy and store things at home, especially the nicest brands. (Eda, Optimum)

People purchase from the same product more than they need, because they see there is discount in that product and they say 'maybe I'll need it.' So, they keep several things that they don't ever use at home. I know this from myself. I know times that I bought something in plenty because I liked the look of it. At home, there is a pile of towels, bathrobes and stuff that haven't been opened for once in years. (Gürol, Beğendik)

As time spent inside the mall increases, the sense of time as ‘present’ dominates and it is understood that people appreciate that time is solely their property, while they are detached from others in the same place. In the studied malls, detachment from the local, which is actually bound by the place and the people in it, is significant, regardless of comments that malls function as social centers for the certain neighborhoods they are located in. In other words, people are observed to be overwhelmed by the pace or the movement in the mall and its difference from the actual order of their lives. They continuously move inside the mall, while they actually stay at the mall without moving anywhere else in the city. As a result, customers are primarily focused on themselves and often turn out as self-absorbed and pretentious shoppers. For instance, Eda, who works in Optimum and lives near the district, views customers to be impatient and short of tolerance when receiving service. According to her, people are increasingly self-absorbed in their interactions with salespeople and other customers, although interviewees such as Ayfer points to Optimum’s proximity to the residential areas. Eda works in a department store, where many people come in and out during their promenade in the mall corridors. She stresses her kind manners to strangers she sees on e.g. bus stops and at random places, suggesting that she awaits similar responses from others, too. However, it is not possible for her to see the same attention from customers at her workplace. Ayfer, on the other hand, points to the slow-paced time and the friendly ambience in the mall, unlike regional malls such as Ankamall and Armada. The fact that she works in a smaller store must be influential in her view of the mall as a friendly place. The same is observed in Erdinç’s account:

Customers like it here in Optimum, because they see people whom they are familiar with. It gives a sense of the neighborhood. I know that people of the same neighborhood frequent here. They know they can relax and feel comfortable here. (Ayfer, Optimum)

During the week, people read their newspapers or hang out with friends here. The food court is quite crowded at weekends, [and this poses a problem to] restaurants that have their own tables and reserved corners. A woman once ordered her meal there and after the meal, she stayed to read a book. The waiter asked her to leave if she was finished with eating. You see, she must leave so that others will get seated. She paid for the meal, she received service, she enjoyed her meal, but the waiters didn’t enjoy it when they had no other free tables. (Erdinç, Optimum)

Salespeople in Optimum recall a generic type of customer in Ankara who is quite different from that of Istanbul in her hesitant and confused stance in the store.

Mustafa, who worked in shopping malls in both Istanbul and Ankara, compares the two:

The customer in Istanbul spends time and makes you spend long minutes with her if she really intends to purchase. In Ankara, the customer browses; browses for more; takes all the clothes down to the counter; browses a little more and then leaves. (Mustafa, Optimum)

Such indecisiveness seems to have become the attribute of many lower-middle strata shoppers in Optimum today. ‘Looking’ is the dominating activity in malls; whereas in Optimum this takes a longer period of time and dominates much of the shopping activity in the store:

The customer in Optimum stares at the merchandise and deliberates more. In Karum or in Bilkent, customers decide more swiftly. They pick up things for their shopping bags and pay. Besides, they are far more civilized there. In [Ankamall], they ask for your help and expect that you give the apparels to them. In here, the customer either cries out rudely: ‘is there anybody here?’ or they serve themselves; unpacking the goods; untidy the shelves, making a total mess. (Erdem, Optimum)

In his statement, Erdem also desires to keep the customer in Optimum away from the counter, where he supposedly wants to convey his own status, his limited authority in the store notwithstanding. In ‘civilized’ settings, the boundaries are set and clear; it seems that consumers do not step into the service giver’s space. Perhaps, Erdem is even less subject to judgments of shoppers who try to convey their own messages about service and hospitality in the store, because he is male.

Time passes slow in Optimum. According to Mustafa and Eda, the outlet mall has a reduced number of visitors after May; people visit their villages and move to rural areas for the summer, when schools are on vacation. At other times, consumers occupy the mall for long hours, because the outlet mall functions as a social center primarily for the neighborhoods around. Strolling in Optimum resembles to a promenade:

People stroll in the mall for the sake of strolling; [while] the ones who do shopping usually don’t spend much time inside. They don’t like to be in here for long. Public employees mostly shop in downtown, where they are practically closer to stores as well as their workplaces. Half of the visitors, who waste their time in such shopping centers, come here with the purpose of affectation. They drop in to see around or to show off their latest shirt. (Mustafa, Optimum)

In Arcadium, there is a reverse association between the amount of time spent in the mall and the awareness as well as the purchase of globally significant trends. The customer in Arcadium is someone who is quite familiar with the global circulation of products, services or lifestyle as well as “order” and “discipline”,

which were attributed to the domestic culture of nation-state's capital, Ankara. According to Serkan, the customer in Arcadium appreciates order and neatness; he wants to see everything clear and handy, although shopping malls may normally be characterized by attractive little details that tend to disorient people from what they initially intended to see:

Customers want to find their way out easily inside the store. They like to see something they are looking for in a second. They don't approve untidy shelves and the mess in the store. It's normal that shelves get untidy during the day, yet they don't like to look at this disarray. (Serkan, Arcadium)

Likewise Optimum, time in Arcadium slows down particularly during summer; however, the reason is the yearly visits to cottages rather than to the family and villagers in the countryside:

We do business in winter, actually. In summer, there are few people in the district and in the mall. They all go on a holiday. Sales staffs are the ones that actually frequent the mall in the summer time. You would see them walking around, because they are bored; time does not pass here then, because the mall limits itself with the neighborhood. For instance, it is a place where people spend their minutes while they wait for the movie to start. (Halil, Arcadium)

Özge states that their customers visit the mall usually when they intend to spend money on things they are accustomed to use. These people are not confused by the mall, because they already know about the store's globally marketed products and what they are going to buy. It is remarkable that Özge identifies with the store as well as with many customers, while throughout the interview and observations, she stands up as equal to the patronizers of the store. Later in the interview, she defines her shopping behavior similar to their actual customers; she does not stay much in the mall; she tries to finish with shopping as soon as possible since she has limited time and patience to remain where she already spends her workday.

There are people here who already knew us before we entered the retail sector in Turkey. They were already buying our products from abroad. These people are our core customers, and there is a second group of regular customers who follows them. (...)These first and second groups come into the store, pick the item they were thinking of and pay it at the desk. It happens so fast! (Özge, Arcadium)

The middle aged and elderly population in Arcadium is considerable, and those visitors do not modify their needs and timing according to the order of the mall. Emel illustrates the case of older female shoppers, who take it slow and therefore seem "funny" to Emel, whose job is to move swiftly and without pauses, unlike them. At other instances, Emel admiringly speaks of customers in Arcadium, who are either influential people or busy professionals. Salespeople imply that nice manners

of customers towards sales staff make the staff feel the status difference less. The bluntness of difference is most disturbing when the salesperson is likely to live or share similar values, neighborhood or social environment with customers, as in the case of both Emel and Özge. The former interviewee lives in the district, while the latter lives in Bilkent, seemingly due to his husband's occupation, too:

During the day, women frequent the mall more. They shop until the last minute, walk the entire supermarket, stop at each department. When they end up at the pay desk, they say 'please hurry up! I'm going to be late for the shuttle.' The shuttle sets off at 1 p.m. for instance, but the customer has arrived at the desk at five to 1. Of course, she will be late. We call the shuttle-driver and tell him to wait for five minutes more so that she makes it to the shuttle. (Emel, Arcadium)

Such customers generally say that their needs are urgent. However, they shop for something they postponed for days. Once, a woman dropped in the store early in the morning, even though she saw us cleaning and preparing the store for the day. The door was not open yet, but she tried to enter. I warned her, pointing to the door and the hour. After a while, the same woman came to the store and complained to the store manager about me. She almost screamed: 'Your employee didn't let me into the store!' Later, I learned that she was a regular customer. (Özge, Arcadium)

In Beğendik, usually middle-aged women frequent the department store. Ali observes that confusion and boredom attract them to the store. It is often the case that boredom makes people pretend to shop in order to start a conversation. In fact, starting a conversation usually comes up as an essential part of being in Beğendik, and many women, namely middle-aged housewives, form temporary acquaintance with the sales staff, without much reason to express a status differentiation from the staff. Aysun and Ali draw attention to the elderly and women, who are not in a hurry to leave and spend considerable time chatting with the staff, while Duygu remains relatively shy and not willing to communicate with the customers unless they approach her.

Older people try to make long conversations with me as I count each item at the desk. They take it slow to put the items to shopping bags. They even wait and chat a little more. (Aysun, Beğendik)

Perhaps the customer is depressed. Maybe she wants to talk. She looks at t-shirts and stuff indecisively, but I'm helpful even if she doesn't seem to be a buyer then. Maybe she will buy later. (Duygu, Beğendik)

A lot of women in Turkey are housewives. I remember one of them, with whom we chattered over twenty minutes about the products. She left without taking anything and I thought she left the mall, but I later saw the same woman talking to another salesperson. The woman was in the supermarket for more than three hours, buying nothing. How large can be this supermarket? [It's] quite odd that she was able to spend three hours inside here. I thought maybe she didn't have somewhere else to visit; maybe she felt unhappy and took a walk. Too many people do such things, though. I think it's strange. (Ali, Beğendik)

Still, interactions at the entrances or the pay desks in Beğendik present solid examples of how self-absorbed buyers detach themselves from the local time as well as the place of service. They are mainly concerned with personal priorities; the moment they are being attended to; and, their place in the queue, rather than the person who gives that service to them:

People rush into the store early in the morning when the department store opens its doors. The merchandise does not disappear from the shelves, but people are obviously running towards them. (...) Did we just come out of years of shortage? Why is it so urgent? (...) [They are here] particularly on Sunday mornings or the first days of *Bayrams*. Let's think of people who are on their way to work. It's okay for them to come into the store at that hour. Yet, people sneak out of their warm beds at the weekend to come to mall and wait until it's open, with the entire family. (Ali, Beğendik)

Let's assume that regular customers make purchases with the special club card that they received from the store. Let's assume that you forgot to ask a customer with the club card to hand it to you at the pay desk. He will never give it unless you ask him to, while he holds it in his hand. Let the cashier ask for it, he thinks. After a while, he remembers the card and blames you for not asking whether he has a club card. (Aysun, Beğendik)

In Ankamall, privacy, leisure at weekends and self-centeredness become the ultimate characters of the usual shopper. Time is spent by sitting in the food court, watching others and browsing the shelves in the supermarket or the departments in the store.

In the store they forget about themselves and the others around them; they get lost in the merchandise. The customer strolls around the shelves for five hours, but she can't wait for two more minutes for the POS device to respond. If she waits in line for the pay desk, she may get bored; she puts down the garments and leaves the store. Most quarrels in the store take place at the pay desk anyway. (Ayça, Ankamall)

Being a migrant in Ankara and probably influenced by her own experience, Ayça continues to describe a detached individual in the mall:

10 p.m. is an early hour for [customers]. I've once seen a woman who is here at that hour with her new-born baby. There is no association with the neighborhood; no relatives, no business to attend. There are no social relations. So, she can do here whatever she likes. She stays for hours, if she doesn't have anything to do. No one will ask her anything if she doesn't do anything but stay here. (Ayça, Ankamall)

Burcu points to how the customer in Ankamall is occupied with the merchandise as she is able to help herself on the shopfloor, and ignores the presence of salesperson:

Salesperson depends on premiums paid per sales. Some people are so strange [that they forget it]. A woman looked at jeans and decided on a pair of them. I got closer to her and asked if I could help and take the tag to direct her to the pay desk. She suddenly shrugged her shoulders and scolded at me: 'Nooo, you won't! You didn't help me. (Burcu, Ankamall)

4.2. *Social and Occupational Groups:*

Given the aforementioned value of wealth and pace, the mall becomes a leisure space more than it is a shopping space, even when shopping is the main intention. In the interviews, three groups are specified such that the consumption of leisure defines their status and differentiates them from the general public. First, women are depicted as the actual patrons of the mall. Since the department store, shopping has conflated with leisure and provided women with privacy and liberty outside the home (Backes, 1997; Bodnar, 2002). The second group consists of private sector employees with greater financial and cultural capital, while the “new rich” that appears in conflict with urban “manners” (Helvacıoğlu, 2000: 340) can be involved here due to their increased wealth. The former in this second group is compared with the top-level officials in the public sector, while the latter is usually depicted as big spenders whose appearance deceives salespeople and does not signify their actual wealth. Finally, the third group of regular visitors to shopping malls are the retired, more specifically, retired men.

4.2.1. *Women:*

When authors such as Backes (1997) and Bodnar (2002) mention the feminization of public space, they are drawn into the discussion of private spaces of the department store and the mall that look like a public space to women. Backes (1997: 2) relates the department store and the middle class femininity, which is about “looking”, “desire” and “leisure”, while she considers that the same attributes are significant in the mall, as well. For her, the mall is an inclusive space for women who have been “excluded” from the domains of “male power and production” (ibid.: 10). Similarly, Bodnar compares the flaneur in the nineteenth century arcades of the European city with the flaneuse in the department stores: According to her, the actual patrons of the department stores in Europe were “middle-class non-working” women, as the department store defined the public space designed for the “respectable” women (Bodnar, 2002: 4-5). Coming to the twentieth century, Bodnar realizes that particularly the suburban shopping mall became a site “where the *flaneuse* can finally roam around in a not all-female crowd with the privilege of just looking, and do other things than shopping –just as the *flaneur* did.” (ibid.: 10-11; emphasis in the original).

Although the history of the department store as well as the shopping mall in Turkey does not coincide with their counterparts in the western world, the cases in our study seemingly support that shopping malls are places where women are free to move without directly being the subject of the “male gaze”. The male gaze was the characteristic of the flaneur and his approach to the modernizing world and objects around him (ibid.: 4). Previous discussions on women’s relationship with money and time pointed to the extent women were immune to such male presence in a so-called feminine environment. In this section, however, it is discussed that department stores as well as shopping malls denote privacy in a public setting, while women are still dependent on men to fulfill their leisure and shopping desires. Throughout the interviews, the male gaze is mentioned in a number of activities that objectify female shoppers besides female sellers in the mall. Moreover, malls are perceived to be somewhere between public space and home, and women shoppers do not feel at ease when they encounter other women in this space, especially in a position to serve their husbands. Women spend most of their time for home related consumption, anyway. Mothers and wives are usually considered dominant decision-makers regarding the needs of the family and the home. Women in the department store or in the mall hardly experience leisure devoid from shopping, while men are usually put into a more idle position unless they start to involve in the dominating activity of looking in the mall. Yet, the object of attention for particularly younger men can easily be other women.

In Beğendik, wives of bureaucrats and old government officials used to frequent Beğendik before the increase in the number of shopping malls in Ankara decreased the popularity of department stores. They used to visit Beğendik in the company of their female friends and some of them continue to do so. In Beğendik, one observes that those ‘respectable’ women convey their status in the department store through a serious evaluation of fastidious service, cleanness, order and a taste of design.

It is difficult to convince the customers who know it all. [These are] usually educated, aged, Kemalist women -you understand that at the moment they approach the counter-, who have known the years of Ataturk. Women who grew up with the idea of revolutions of those years –they certainly have an Ataturk badge on the collar- are never the ones you can please and convince. You can only sell something to them after you’ve made friends, by answering ‘yes, you’re right’ to everything they say. (Gül, Beğendik)

These themes of fastidiousness and design are essential for the urban middle class women in their guest rooms at home, too (Ayata, 1988: 10-11); therefore, it would not be a mistake to claim that these women perceive the department store (as well as malls) similar to their guest rooms:

She had the Atatürk badge on her jacket as usual and she was dressed elegantly. She commented on the display of some goods, saying: 'You have placed something fashionably elegant near such inharmonious stuff.' She fussed that this is not proper for such a center and that she would go complain about this to customer relations. Such [old ladies] [who know it all] are the hardest to please. (Gül, Beğendik)

On the other hand, customer profile in Beğendik has changed after the recent economic crises and newly opened malls in Ankara. Gül indicates that women from more modest social backgrounds and lower incomes have gradually started to spend time here and approach goods, comparing prices rather than shopping:

Customers with modest and low incomes approach counters more easily than before. They compare and say: 'I'm just looking'. They approach stuff that is conspicuous but cheap in price. There is a type of customer who moves between malls and compares prices, then comes to you to state that she finds your prices high. We even learn the market-pricing of things from our customers and we save time and energy of making a market research before we set a price for the merchandise. (Gül, Beğendik)

Bodnar mentions that the "flâneuse" belonged to the department store, where women "could stroll unaccompanied, observe, not be observed, be playful and shop" (2002: 5). In the departments of Beğendik, women look around by themselves; however, they can be accompanied by men during purchasing, when younger females take males with them to shopping or they take responsibility of shopping for males. Previously, Aysun stated that women "[looked] during the week" in Beğendik before they "show it to the husband in order to have it" at the weekend. It seems that the effect of formerly mentioned financial freedom through credit cards is limited, as many women in middle and –more modest- lower middle strata continue to shop with males, looking for subtle, if not direct, approval.

Among women, there are so many individual visitors here. If they are here on their own, they appreciate the salesperson's idea on a garment. They'll stroll around, try on everything and exit, if no salesperson pays attention to them. When salesperson attends them, they could make some purchases. (...) Some girls bring their boyfriends and stroll together. At those times, they could make purchases just because they are bored. (Duygu, Beğendik)

A married couple came to look at jeans. The woman asked for lycra jeans. I know what she really [can wear]. She has her husband with her, and [it is obvious that] she won't wear low waist, tight jeans. Does it make sense to give her a pair of tight jeans she won't actually wear? At the end, I made her try two pairs and she decided on one

of them. The customer said what she'd like to have, I analyzed well what she can wear, and shopping didn't take much time for her. (İbrahim, Beğendik)

It sometimes takes the form of flirtation, when men are customers and the gender of the shop assistant is seen integral to the service given. The female retail worker is thus objectified sexually by male customers:

Male customers' relationship with cashiers at the desk is quite weird. For instance, they take a couple of items to the pay-desk and go back saying 'Oh, I forgot to get something.' They come back and keep us waiting: 'Now I forgot to get the other thing.' Finally, they say: 'I can't help looking at your smile.' You can't just tell him to take everything from the desk and come back when he's finished with shopping. (Aysun, Beğendik)

In Ankamall, the mall has facilities such as the food court and corridors that make it easier for women to see and to be seen, unlike Beğendik. According to Bodnar, the "interior space of the mall is less private than that of the department store" in the sense that it does not merely address women but a greater population, who comes to terms with safety, cleanness, order and privacy, which are conventionally attributed to spaces for women (2002: 10-11). From this perspective, even Beğendik presents a different model than that of the nineteenth century department store. On the other hand, an interview at the food court of Ankamall casts some light upon the presence of the 'male gaze' inside the mall, as well. We carried out an interview with Hakan there and he pointed to young men sitting in the food court in small groups. They were doing nothing except chattering over a cup of tea and a few cigarettes, looking around and smiling as if to friends at other tables:

On weekdays, mothers and daughters spend the entire day here. Eighty per cent of visitors to Ankamall are female, if you ask me. Women meet their female friends here on weekdays, and come back with their husbands at weekends. (...) I think this place is a good opportunity for housewives. For instance, the movie is about to start and the customer kills time here until the movie starts. They hang around and try on clothes in stores. (...) Young males also come here to meet and chat up with females, hoping that young ladies pay attention to them. I think this is disturbing. (Hakan, Ankamall)

In Ankamall, staff observes that women are in the company of other women when they are mainly 'looking', and they move around in the store in a confused state.

Women are the regular customers of this [home accessories] section as well as the entire mall. Women, housewives, middle-aged women... You're finished if you come across them on the shopfloor. They ask endless questions; scramble; hardly make any purchases. They look around a hundred times, yet they decide to buy only twice. Women stare, stare and stare more [at the merchandise]. (Burcu, Ankamall)

Burcu compares the female customers in her previous workplace, Tunalı Hilmi Street, with those in here, and recalls upper middle-class femininity over there. Then

she returns to depict women here as a different class, who does not wish to receive service; they rather make an inventory of the commodities on the shopfloor:

It was much different when I used to work in Tunalı Street. Working women and the wives of members of parliament used to patronize the store. They choose and look carefully. Here, the customer is awful. I was shocked to see that when I first started to work here. Women from Şentepe and Yenimahalle come here. I don't despise them, but it's the way they are. Compared to here, the customer in Tunalı expects to receive special attention. I could keep with them for longer periods. They awaited service there.

In this description, Burcu also tries to convey that she *is* differentiated from many customers she serves. As she recalls her previous experience among upper class women, it seems that her tastes have been refined then, whereas she is not happy with her current circumstances. Such female shoppers in the department stores and large stores of Ankamall do not bother to express boundaries between salespeople and themselves. In smaller and elegantly portrayed stores, they hesitate to enter anyway, says Ayça. Burcu continues to depict the customer in the large stores:

(...) Here, once women come into the store, they are here with all of their family. They spread into the store and don't even buy a single thing. They ask unexpected questions: Do you have quilt for single blanket? At what length and width? What is the price then? They ask so many nonsense questions that I almost say whoa! You can see it [on the product yourself]. They enter the store with the entire household. In the store, they scatter stuff and leave off. They are quite a crowd! (Burcu, Ankamall)

Likewise the salespeople in Beğendik, Burcu observes a tendency in many women in Ankamall to depend on their husbands when they desire to purchase things:

Women, who come to mall with their husbands, are actually taking their husbands to the mall in order to ask their opinions about the thing they consider to buy. It becomes quite a trouble if they are out to shopping together. Men don't like to shop and are bored enough to ask women to buy it and leave the store. Women fall into the details of the material, while men will buy easily. Men are actually the perfect shoppers. (Burcu, Ankamall)

In Arcadium, women of an upper-middle and middle class status tend to use the mall as a suburban social center. For instance, food court in the mall provides an alternative space for women's tea parties, which are called "*gün yapmak*" in Turkish. There are women who prefer to gather in the shopping mall instead of home, and, they are served in the mall while they would be serving others at a tea party at home. The mall also becomes a site for trade:

Housewives arrange their tea parties in the mall. Even women who are self-employed come here and meet other women in the food court and try to sell them cosmetics. (...) Sometimes, housewives who gather weekly in the mall talk to us in advance about the food they want to serve to their guests. For instance, they wish to serve home-made meals, salad and special dishes such as *yaprak sarma* to about

thirty guests or so. (...) If the number of guests is high, an additional meal or drinks are our promotion. (Nazlı, Arcadium)

Ayata states that for the urban middle classes, service and hospitality during such gatherings at home are among the measures of being a good housewife (1988: 11). He argues that it is important to offer a variety of food, swift service and tasteful food to guests as much as to keep the guest room clean, neat and conspicuous (ibid.). However, the specific use of the suburban mall by women indicates a divergence from this practice in the sense that women start to consider the interiors of the mall to be an extension of home and the private sphere. While salespeople as well as the cleaning personnel in the food court undertake the responsibilities of a housewife, leisure is expanded to outside the home. This practice would not be that much feasible in Beğendik or Ankamall, because Beğendik does have a smaller fast-food area, where people can occupy for shorter periods, and Ankamall has a huge food court, where women would not be able to hear much of what they speak in the movement and the noise of the space. In the new building of Ankamall, elegant cafés and patisseries are added; however, they attract businesspeople and the youth more since these small cafés require spending more and differentiate its customers from the general public in the mall, both physically and symbolically.

Finally, Optimum is depicted as a gateway to the contemporary urban life for the women of the district, including its social spaces such as the movie center, inexpensive but fine recreation areas and stores. In fact, the mall functions as a gateway for much of the population in the district. The regular customers that frequent the outlet mall from close neighborhoods form quite a complicated profile. In Eryaman, public employees, private sector employees, university youth as well as sexually marginalized populations inhabit. A rather rural-origined, relatively conservative population mixes with low-income as well as self-employed population in Fatih and Sincan. All of them see each other in Optimum, while they also see other outlet shoppers from distant neighborhoods here. Erdinç compares the outlet mall with other shopping malls in the city:

Optimum would be the 'village', if you consider the other malls in the city. Akköprü [Ankamall] would mean the 'town', while Armada would stand for the 'city' then. There is Migros Shopping Center near here in Eryaman; it is expanding its complex now, too. People of Eryaman would go there much more easily; they would also be able to buy alcohol [from the market] there, too. Besides, this mall addresses people in Fatih, Sincan and Etimesgut. (Erdinç, Optimum)

Women besides many other visitors use the mall as a social center, while females seem to have found a comfortable, privatized alternative to male-populated places:

This is a meeting place for the ladies in the weekdays. Those who have business to attend around this district drop by here. People, who are employed as commercial representatives, are mobile during the day and if they are around here, they have their lunch in the mall. Singles and married couples choose the evening to come here. Finally, families crowd the space at weekends. (Erdoğan, Optimum)

One word that would describe Optimum for its usual inhabitants –the salespeople– would be ‘warm’. This attribute of Optimum functions in a quite different way than it does in the suburban Arcadium, though. Women who frequent this place enjoy its relative social homogeneity; however, they are not quite spenders:

Ladies can hold their tea parties here. There are those who request, for instance, ten spoons for one single dessert, and this is not even profitable for us, ten plastic spoons cost more than a dessert, still, we serve it [this way]. For them, it becomes a means of getting out of the house at least. (Erdoğan, Optimum)

If you took the woman in Sincan to Anka Mall, she would feel lost and uneasy there. She couldn’t shop comfortably in another place where class [difference] makes itself noticeable. Here, she would feel much different, though; she would feel reassured. (Onur, Optimum)

Aunties come to shop from the stores in here. They make the payment with crumpled banknotes they bring with them. [You understand that] she has saved that money somewhere in order to buy stuff for her grandchild. (Ayfer, Optimum)

Optimum most likely represents the urban experience for females that seem to have limited experience of different fashions outside rural or neighborhood communities and have even remained outside the previous urban profile of Ankara. Ayfer gives an example of a female shopper, who remained indecisive and vague as she tries to shop for an image she was not used to. Ayfer’s example points to a woman shopper who is unsure of her status in the store, and demanding that the sales staff takes care of her more personally and acts like a personal assistant to her:

She wanted to try a red sport coat. It seemed she wanted to buy it, yet she couldn’t decide. She told us that she was used to wearing classic cut and she was worried that people would laugh at her. We assured her that no such thing would happen. She looked around and remained indecisive. Seeing us waiting, she said to us: ‘Please have a seat.’ Then she moved to hats; she said she should wear hats, however she had never tried sport hats. How could she go out wearing this? Is it fit for her? Finally, she turned around and asked me to try the hat so that she sees how it fits. (Ayfer, Optimum)

Ayfer states that she had even caught the sight of old women with their ‘shalwar’s, when Optimum was first opened. Females with headscarves are more easily observed in Optimum, although their presence in other malls is not negligible. Younger

females from conservative families are also observed to feel ‘reassured’ in Optimum, too, in a similar way to what Onur stated. Eda notices that this place is such a safe haven for young females, too:

One of the first things that come to mind about here is that it is warm in winter. People tend to drop in here immediately. For instance, young lovers come here for the movies, for spending time together. This place is the kind of trip they can involve in. There was nothing of this kind for the people of Fatih or Sincan before. (Eda, Optimum)

Optimum is a place where even young females from the more traditional as well as more conservative segment of society come to mall with other young females as chaperons; however, they may also spend time in the food court with a newly-met friend from the opposite gender, while other female friends in her company spend time with some window shopping. Encounters between the young people of opposite gender in Optimum cannot be reduced to such glimpses, of course. However, the shopping mall introduces an urban lifestyle, secured by impersonal relations as well as shorter distances from home and the segregated neighborhood. These aspects of dispersed urban living are noticeable in the movie-going as a social activity:

Movie-hall is significant [in attracting people to Optimum]. It was women who rushed into the mall to see the movie ‘Babam ve Oğlum’ in the weekdays. If they think of going to Kızılay for the movies, they will have to go 30 kilometers. It is much more reasonable to be here. (Ayfer, Optimum)

In Optimum, relations between female customers and saleswomen do not point to sharp expressions of status differences. Unlike in Burcu’s account, a saleswoman is able to display affectionate and friendly manners towards customers, who do not openly state a proximity to an upper stratum. For instance, Ayfer is receptive of the difference between female patrons of shops in Optimum and in more classy stores or malls that rather attract people with upper status. Yet, she does not show pretension against such modest buyers/visitors in Optimum. Having worked as a saleswoman for ten years now, she tries to differentiate her status from the average seller by making a sales career with the help of university degree at the open university. Yet, she does not like to articulate a distanced position from those women she finds commonalities with. She also lives in the same district with her family, and conveys that it is pretty enjoyable to observe older female shoppers; it seems that she perceives familiarity between them and her own surroundings. Malls such as Armada can disturb her, making her feel she is being surveilled and measured by the sales

staff there, while in Optimum, she states that they mainly try to draw people closer and urge them to enjoy their time in the mall without feeling alienated.

Last but not least, when malls are called living centers (articulated as “*yaşam merkezi*” by mall administrations), it is meant that malls are associated with a specific public space where one feels at home. In the home-like space of shopping malls, women have been stereotyped as natural shoppers, recalling their traditional role of shopping for the home and the family. This traditional image of women does not cease to continue, although men start to buy for themselves or their homes. Much of the merchandise in the stores of the malls is associated with home-related consumption, anyway. It is told that females are more interested in shopping and the details of merchandise than men are. They spend more time in the store and are perceptive of nuances inside the store. According to salespeople, such behavior is even an inherent characteristic of women, while in fact shopping malls reinforce such stereotyping:

The man definitely depends on the opinion of his wife whether or not he is going to buy it. The wife dresses the man. Those men who shopped on their own bring the garments back to the store, and tell us that they liked them, yet their wife didn't. Now, there are working wives much more than there were previously, that is, they [have to] think of their husbands more. (Serkan, Arcadium)

Females are choosy. They ask about stuff and want to learn about different options. You can observe this in male shoppers; however, it is not that discriminating. Women are more perceptive; while men are shy [to communicate]; they confine themselves with just looking. Anyway, his wife purchases his needs so that he doesn't need to pay attention to the garments. (...) Women tend to be jealous of saleswomen when they are here as a couple, too. Men, on the other hand, can shop just because they think the salesgirl is beautiful. (Gürol, Beğendik)

Mothers, wives and even girlfriends are dominant decision makers. Men are either less visible in shopping experience or women do not leave the traditional image of family shopper. Salespeople refer to several instances in which females seem to engage in evaluating merchandise and the store similar to home. Men, on the contrary, are more likely to remain at a secondary position *during shopping* when females (often their wives) decide for them:

Women like to engage in conversation and they get lost in too much detail. They question the every single thing, whereas I can serve anything I like to men. Men either know what they want to order or don't spend much time and effort to think about it. When couples are here, men wouldn't choose the dish his girlfriend doesn't like. He would eat what the female approves. I do the same myself. When I'm with my girlfriend, I try to be more polite, I eat with manners such that I don't get a real taste of the meal. (Erdoğan, Optimum)

There are women who shop from the men's wear department without their husbands being present in the store. The man has to like the clothes if the woman decided on them. Those garments do not return to the store if woman picked them. (Serkan, Arcadium)

I know instances that I couldn't sell to a male customer because of his girlfriend. It is easier to sell to people when they are alone in the shop. (Mustafa, Optimum)

It is only noted in Arcadium that salespeople notice a different tendency when younger couples come to mall. In the relatively small corridors of Arcadium, they see young couples who do not try to interfere with each other's preferences.

When men and women order a meal in the food court together, they try to take the same thing. Women usually know what they want and clearly state it to the salesperson. They also direct their spouses to certain choices, since men are not as much decisive as women. They deliberate, while women lists him the options. However, it is different with the young married couples; they don't direct each other to a certain, common menu. (Nazlı, Arcadium)

When people are here as a couple, they get on well with each other. They listen to each other. Men are patient; whereas in another neighborhood, they would supposedly want to leave the store as soon as possible. [When they don't want to stay in a certain store] couples even offer to stroll the mall individually and meet at a certain point afterwards. (Gökçe, Arcadium)

Female shoppers in these home-like centers are likely to be jealous of other women, particularly in a position to serve their husbands. Saleswomen have many stories of how females try to leave the saleswoman out of sales process, and how saleswomen learn to cope with such indeterminate status of women in the mall:

When spouses come to the store and you sense that the wife has personal weaknesses [in her relationship with her husband], you leave the man aside and begin to tell the woman about the product. You do so even when it is the husband who asks questions, even when the product will be bought for him. Women make you realize that detail, while men continue to ask new questions unintentionally. (Özge, Arcadium)

Among the young and the middle-aged women, there are so many who become jealous of their husbands and therefore come too harsh on them. These are also indecisive, the hardest to please customers. (...) Men refrains from purchasing unless they ask their girlfriends' or wives' opinion, too. (Ayça, Ankamall)

Women that visit the store in groups interfere with the decisions of other women in the group, too. Ayça points that women are already more indecisive than men and they become confused by merchandise:

She might have had a quarrel with her husband before she came here. This place looks like a theatre, then. They satisfy themselves by [reflecting these quarrels to salesperson] or they manage to calm down through shopping, even though they don't have the purchasing power. Women who shop with other women are impossible to convince. The female friend either feels jealous or dislikes the garment on her. So she makes her hesitate, and the woman does not purchase. (Ayça, Ankamall)

Middle-aged women visit the mall in groups. They are usually with another female friend. The age of her friend doesn't matter; women feel comforted when a friend approves of what she is looking at. (...) Time spent for looking gets longer when they are looking at stuff with other women. Everyone asks something else; every one of them is interested in a different thing, and they don't focus on a certain item. (Zeynep, Ankamall)

4.2.2. *The New Rich:*

Private sector blossoms in Ankara alongside the aforementioned investment, finance and business networks, while public sector employees continue to coexist with them. While Erkip states that “[t]he group with the highest incomes has constituted the basis of a new consumer culture and lifestyle under the influence of global consumption patterns” (2003: 1075), it is not always easy to trace how such highest incomes make themselves visible in the shopping mall. In Ankara, shopping malls are frequented by people with higher incomes as well as increased knowledge of a global lifestyle; public officials with relatively mediocre budgets and lifestyles that are actually a blend; and, people who do not signify their actual wealth. Among them, the last group usually consists of people whose financial means are great, yet this does not always reflect in their appearance or manners. In this sense, these shoppers can be considered in line with what Helvacıoğlu attributes to “a newly rich class” that apparently “lacks proper manners” (2000: 340). In our study, a statement of the new rich is significant in salespeople's accounts; however, those with cultural capital differentiate from the rest of the new rich in the way they display their wealth on the shopfloor.

In Beğendik, the changing customer profile in time indicates a shift from member of parliaments, statesmen and ambassadors to a rather modest profile of public employees. Gürol describes a customer, who is relatively new in the city and aims to adapt to the fashion and the culture of urban life. This customer primarily relies on salesmen to decide for him:

Customers like to be directed. For instance, an old cabinet member used to say: ‘What do you have for me, Gürol? You know the job, you choose the jacket, combine everything [to it] and add accessories to that’. Casual clothes are similar to that. He suggests you choose whatever is necessary. He says okay to everything you offer. He doesn't try to choose himself; you're going to help him. On the other hand, foreigners, those from embassies help themselves. He himself chooses and decides. In our society, you are expected to tell what suits him the best; trust is important here. (Gürol, Beğendik)

He describes the shopping behavior of retired bureaucrats and statesmen also from the rural Turkey- the previously dominant profile in Beğendik, while he suggests that those (male) customers with a rural-origin in a sense depend on the salesman to maintain their appearance through shopping. The salesman feels a level of authority over the shopper during such transactions. The interviewee also indicates that customers such as academic people, who are with certain intellectual and cultural capital, are quite different and freer in their decisions:

A newly-elected cabinet member will wait for your help, if he isn't sure how to choose his outfit here, if he's come from the East, if he doesn't have –for instance- more than grade school education. He says, 'You decide.' He asks, 'What can I have for such a meeting?' There are customers who have proven themselves, though. They have their own taste in clothing. They've surely seen every kind of place. Yet, this is a small group. Many customers try on for hours and ask us to hold the garments, because they'll see it with their wives once again. (Gürol, Beğendik)

Today, public officials with lower incomes seem to frequent Beğendik, though:

You can't see people from the every segment here. It is mostly the public employees and families. Prices are moderate for those who can afford to shop here. (Duygu, Beğendik)

Encounters with people, who are not able to keep the social distance that is expressed by their status, overwhelm the salesperson in Beğendik. Ali is one of the salesmen who consider that politeness is a sign that such differentiation is expressed in civility. In his statements, he also signals that those overwhelming encounters with well-off customers imply an uneven increase in wealth and status. It is interesting that the salesperson awaits to see that social distance between the shopper and himself in order to perhaps secure his position as a decent worker on the shopfloor:

I don't address customers in the second-person singular, yet, they don't mind doing so, as if we've known each other for forty years. A male customer speaks to his wife on the phone and the wife scolds at him for buying the wrong stuff. After the man finishes the phone-call, he scolds at me [instead of his wife]. (...) You see a well-dressed woman in a fur coat, coming towards the counter. As soon as she starts speaking, she rudely gives her orders. (Ali, Beğendik)

Ankamall's newly constructed part, with its top-brand shops, specialized department stores as well as a new concept of cafes and restaurants distributed inside the mall instead of a single, big, common food court, addresses a differentiated population. The actual shopper in Ankamall is someone with above-the-average status; however, Zeynep underlines that they cannot be sure of the customer's occupation, yet they understand the quality of life of the shopper according to the neighborhood:

Our store addresses the upper and upper middle strata. We deliver items to well-off neighborhoods. The smallest apartment out there is 160 m². We may not know our customers' jobs unless they tell us or they become regular customers. It is easier to recognize them by the neighborhood they live, though. This is because we keep a log of our deliveries to neighborhoods rather than to persons. Our customers are more cultured, sophisticated people. They know how to communicate [politely]. (Zeynep, Ankamall)

Ayça indicates that one would mostly see urban working population aged between 25 and 40 in Ankamall; however, the new part of the mall implies a group with different tastes than would be available in the food court. Those cafes serve snacks, drinks, salads and dishes, and a much private space for conversation. One can use the food court for unplanned meetings; whereas the new division of Ankamall has clearer borders, therefore turns out to be less attractive for much of the middle and lower-middle strata that patronize the food-court:

The new side has recently affected us badly; yet it will get better soon. They told us that these are the most famous, global brands. Still, I did not sense a big difference yet. Now the food court is more crowded than before, though, when everybody ends up in the food court. When you're there, you see people crammed, because there isn't any fast food place over there in the newly-opened side. Everyone comes to the food court after they see the entire mall and we can't even find a chair for lunch. (Ayça, Ankamall)

On the one hand, people who do not have the sufficient means to make purchases stroll the corridors of the mall. Those people are not always visible in the crowd, though, especially when the windows and commodities are far more interesting than snapshots of people. It seems that salespeople are more likely to recognize them than customers do. Gökçe recalls a day when she used to work in a store that sells supplementary nutrition in Ankamall, indicating that the mall is a place where the extremes in status meet:

A man who was apparently poor –we understood it from his outfit- stood with his family at the door outside the shop for a while. Finally, he entered the shop and told us that his child was a cardiac patient and it was suggested that his child use this product to get better. But the product will cost 90 liras and it seemed too expensive for him. We felt quite sorry. It was a real chance that we then encountered in the store a wealthy man who asked about what is happening over here and paid for it when he learned about the issue. (Gökçe, Arcadium)

On the other hand, stores in the mall are differentiated within a spectrum of more and less expensive garments or goods. In that, Canan describes the customer who almost invisibly strolls and shops:

The one you think is a big spender compares prices and looks for the discount shelves. You may still see that she wears brands. Then a seemingly penniless customer comes in and asks you to show him the new season. (...) You can guess

about the customer in a street-store; however, you can never be sure in here. (Canan, Ankamall)

As Arcadium is frequented by businessmen or university lecturers, the flow of shopping activity inside the store is different. Gökçe stresses that people around this district “do not resemble Turks” in their polite manners:

There is a different taste of shopping here. People here are distinguished in their manners towards salespeople, in their dressing style and occupations. (...) It is confusing when the woman we saw in sweats at the weekend is the same woman we see in fur coat on a weekday. She must be an executive, we guessed. (Gökçe, Arcadium)

There are two types of the most affluent frequenters to Arcadium. One has the money and the means to display his wealth in the store through shopping. Stores almost revivify thanks to these shoppers. We had such an encounter with those big spenders while we were in the middle of a talk with Mehmet, who worked in a store that sells tobacco and alcoholic beverages, the type of luxury that he associates with culture and capital. Two middle-aged men stepped into the store, one of them rubbing his hands and the other following him as if on an inspectional visit. They seemed to be relaxed and so comfortable that as if they were the owners of the shop. They greeted the salesperson and asked him how the things were going. Mehmet responded to them, saying that things were calm and quiet these days. The answer to that was: ‘Let’s give it a boost then!’ Five minutes later, they had done shopping and left. Mehmet continued:

This place is truly for the affluent. Men without money, to be more accurate, those with lower incomes do not frequent such places. People seldom drop in for small stuff such as cigarettes or tissues. Mostly engineers, businessmen, top-level executives are here. We see them so often that we are almost relatives with them. Some of them have known here since long ago, some have learnt it recently. (...) In the end, people with a good income and high [taste of] culture frequent here. (Mehmet, Arcadium)

In saying ‘we are almost relatives’, Mehmet situates himself as someone who shares familiarity and equivalent status with those affluent customers, because he sees them more frequently than his own social milieu. Besides, he is knowledgeable about the customers’ taste here. However, this is only a temporary effect. In his position, he does not usually direct and make suggestions to those well-off customers about which product is worth buying. The customer usually knows for himself. The other type of the most affluent ones is likely to show off in the mall and in the store, yet do not differentiate on the basis of profession but of their new richness:

Customer who is in here has money. (...) Profession doesn't matter. You might be earning well in a rather uncertain profession, and that can get you a relatively good living. (Halil, Arcadium)

According to Halil, the new rich in the district consists of those who have got rich via their land property and rents:

He hasn't come for purchasing anything, if he enters the store with his hands in his pocket. He is here for affectation. You greet and welcome him into the store, but he doesn't pay attention to you. He enters the store, holding his car key or the cell phone at hand. (...) He goes in and out of stores just for the sake of his pleasure, buying nothing, doing much affectation and swarming around in the store. (Halil, Arcadium)

One is inclined to think of Optimum to be consistent with the neighborhood's average purchasing power at first because of its emphasis on discount sales and reasonable prices that attract thrifty shoppers; besides, many visitors seem to be estranged when they are addressed impersonally as 'gentlemen' or 'ladies'. They are easier to communicate when you call them as if you are speaking to people in the traditional sense, indicate salespeople. Male customers sometimes call salesmen similarly traditional names such as '*yeğenim*', too. On the other hand, big spenders are not occasional here. Sales staff observes absurdity in manners of those shoppers who buy in great quantities:

People with a vulgarian taste have popped up after the 80s. (...) Since then, tolerance is likely to lower down as much as socio-economic status rises. Shopping becomes a statement of 'I have the money, I am a purchaser and you pay attention to me.' Especially when she thinks she is very important personality that has changed the world around us, she becomes quite snobby. It is very hard to deal with those. (Eda, Optimum)

Similar to what Canan commented on Ankamall, wealth is displayed in quite strange ways here, at least in the eyes of salespeople. Ayfer illustrates one of these cases, in which being stranger in the city is equally influential to be labeled as a big spender without the usual urban manners:

One of those customers who don't object to the price, who don't ask for a discount... I guessed [from his face] that he was from around Erzurum. He came near the closing hour and bought four pairs of jeans. At the counter, he handled keys to our staff and told him to fetch his purse from car. It was a SUV, and there were too many credit cards in the purse... He paid, and made our staff carry the bags. I was worried when the boy didn't return shortly, I thought if anything happened to him... I even thought whether the man was mafia, too. (Ayfer, Optimum)

What salespeople realize is a heterogeneous population around Optimum and an incongruity between appearance and wealth. According to salespeople, those cases

do not even look like a customer; yet they may be able to purchase more than they expect:

Sometimes you see customers that even don't know how to wear shoes in the proper way, and they have platinum credit card in their pocket. He is able to waste 1000 liras in one single occasion. How do you treat such a man? It is obvious that you will benefit from serving him. (Mustafa, Optimum)

4.2.3. *The Retired:*

This section is about the retired population that is considerably large in Arcadium and Optimum. In Beğendik, middle-aged females as housewives as well as retired women were highlighted to use the mall extensively; while in Ankamall the younger urban professionals are more significant and the elderly are not likely to frequent the mall as much. Arcadium and Optimum are, however, located in suburban Ankara, indicating that an overwhelming retired population chose to move to these neighborhoods. Moreover, it is the retired men who frequent these malls in the way middle-aged females or housewives do. In that sense, that retired population reminds of the “generalized flaneuse” Bodnar attempted to depict as the successor of female presence, which was dominant in the department store. According to her, the flaneur as historical human form of the modern urban space as well as the flaneuse that of the modern commercial space (of the department store) do not anymore dominate our sight; however, the “*flaneuse* has lost her femininity” and became “generalized” within “the entire middle class” in its search for safety, order, warmth and aesthetics that have been meaningful with the shopping mall (Bodnar, 2002: 11; emphasis in the original). One would be right to employ what Backes calls the “blandness of shopping mall” (1997: 5) in order to understand why suburban shopping malls are attractive for the retired population, too. Considering that those retired people were mostly the public employees who knew the old Ankara, it is easier to associate them with such regulated spaces of the new Ankara. These retired old men who have turned to be either “boring” or “pretty” for the younger population are the remnants of the Republican elite, reports Saktanber (2005:233).

In Arcadium as well as in Optimum, they spend long hours in the shopping mall; they start to socialize with friends in the mall. Sitting in the food court in Arcadium for a few days, one sees the same faces, some of which even choose the same table to sit and occupy themselves by the same hobby –of horse races in our case- everyday.

Those who are in the mall day and night are the ones who have nothing else to do. They are people who meet with friends or who have retired from work. This is the group who has seen the life and lived it. This place is quite comfortable, as well. In the park, I don't see many people, because they are all here. (Nazlı, Arcadium)

She points to another frequenter who is here almost everyday. According to her, '*Oktay Bey*' is always dressed in suit and tie; he is very gentle, gracious and overly careful with the way he behaves in the mall. He merely drinks tea most of the time. During our conversation with Nazlı, we witnessed him pouring the tea over the table; he stood up quite embarrassed and moved to clean the table until Nazlı insisted several times that he should move to another table. The food court is a place where aged people such as him find reasons to move, unlike many other customers who would call and wait for the cleaning personnel. In the neighborhood, much of the retired population is also associated with certain occupations:

Some retired, old people -these are usually the military officers- especially speak at the pay desk as if they are giving out orders. Others [public employees, lawyers, doctors, etc.] pay special attention to the staff that shows concern for them; they offer help in case that you need some help outside the store. They are all influential people. (Emel, Arcadium)

There are many military officers here. Most of them are retired, yet, they bring order with them here. Security is not a concern even when it is crowded; whereas Ankamall is crowded with every kind of men. There, you hear a man saying he is a tradesman and he pulls out rolls of money out of his packet before the counter. (Gökçe, Arcadium)

Gökçe associates order, manners and the peaceful environment in Arcadium with a certain type of homogeneity, i.e. a historically meaningful homogeneity that dates back to the locally established discipline and order of the military as well as the nation-state in the city. In that sense, it is not the same homogeneity that globalization is argued to pose. Halil mentions the same occupational group to extend their occupational order into the store:

The military-men are different. They are used to lead a disciplined life and they don't change much after they retire. They maintain well with a few suits to wear. When they are here with their wives, wives tell them not to think of this place as their workplace. When they see their higher ranked colleagues in the store, they ask us to pay attention to the one with the higher rank before, saying 'our order is not urgent.' We get surprised since there is enough staff to take care of everyone in the store. (Halil, Arcadium)

The courteous manners of the elderly are highlighted in Optimum, too. They are differentiated from the rest in their thoughtful approach towards salespeople:

The elderly is so nice. They always request things kindly and say 'if you please.' They do not forget to thank the salesperson who gives service to them. (Eda, Optimum)

Salespeople get to know them in person here, too, just as it was in Arcadium. The retired perceive the mall as a source of movement that they are lacking of. However, it is noteworthy that the dissimilarity between Arcadium and Optimum lies in the difference between the ‘*bey*’ (Mr.) and the ‘*amca*’ (old uncle). The former indicates a previously urban identity, whereas the latter account stresses the conjunction of the urban and rural identities. It also notes the necessary familiarity between seller and customer:

There are old uncles who drop in here alone, just like ‘*İbrahim Amca*’, who is a retired military officer. He is always here [in the food court]. Why, his wife is at home, but he usually comes alone. Maybe he feels bored at home. (Erdoğan, Optimum)

Retired men occupy the mall, for instance. One of them catches my eye; he comes to mall everyday, he brings his daily paper, *Cumhuriyet*. We greet each other when we come across in here; he politely waits until you pass him by. I remember seeing him in other shopping centers. He is bored, I guess. So, he travels between different malls. Maybe, he likes to see some crowd, and this place is not over-crowded, either. Maybe, he is quiet himself, yet likes the movement around him. (Aslı, Optimum)

Retired people are observed to enjoy the similar things as women do, in addition to frequenting the mall with the similar objective of socializing. Attractions that draw the elderly to here are also different than those that draw younger people, as they seem to provide some nostalgia played out in the mall:

We have a special design at the bakery corner. Women cook “*gözleme*” inside the bakery and the customers can watch them as they shop. Young people do not realize such differences, yet women and the retired liked the idea. Retired people take the shuttle in the morning to come here and buy their fresh-baked bread. They also want variety. Women chat with those women who roll the dough and cook “*gözleme*” over there; sometimes there are little treats to the customer. You know, people become happy with such small things. (Onur, Optimum)

4.3. *Consumer Sovereignty:*

Shopping malls –similar to department stores- are specified marketplaces where people are free to stroll around and see, touch and try merchandise without an obligation to purchase. In that, it marks the divergence from the dominant role of local shopkeeper as the one who mediates consumption. Bodnar, likewise Corrigan, points to the standardization of prices and free access to the shopfloor (Corrigan, 1997: 50; Bodnar, 2002: 5) starting with the department store. Consumption starts with looking, yet, it is not limited to looking in the mall; rather, shopping is much about the excessive behavior of handling goods and the unintentional strolling in and out of stores, as sales staff’s authority in the store is reduced by standards and further controls:

This is not like the bazaar. In a bazaar, you attract the attention of a customer who intentionally looks at your counter. In the mall, the customer looks whenever he wills to. There are boundaries such as window shops and doors [between the seller and the buyer] here; in a bazaar, customer has no barriers [before the seller sees him]. People don't mind entering in and getting out of stores in the shopping mall, because they know there is the freedom to see and no obligation to purchase. Before, they used to enter when they were to purchase. (Halil, Arcadium)

In Ankara, this seems to have led to a negative framing of the local as the center that restricts such freedom of movement. The privilege to taste is significant in shopping malls, and this materializes in the increasing ability and the tendency to view, taste or *touch* the things displayed on shelves as well as promotion stands rather than see the salesperson mediate on these. Zeynep explains that the touching prevents the sense of being a stranger in the mall. If the customer feels like a complete stranger on the shopfloor, she will not make purchases:

In the middle of the shop, she knows that she shouldn't be touching these ornaments, yet she can't help. We don't purchase a thing without touching it, even when we are abroad. If we warn customers to stay away from the shelves, this will repel them. Instead, we try to help, asking whether they think of purchasing anything specific and remaining at an optimal distance from the customer. They don't approach with the intent to harm, yet they want to see how a specific ornament would fit their furniture. (Zeynep, Ankamall)

Touching the apparels is an inherent part of shopping for those who do not have all the clues about the lifestyle a commodity presents:

Touching is attractive, because [it implies] connection via hands. Eye contact is never enough. Even if the customer is unable to make a purchase, she may want to imagine a garment on herself or an ornament at her home. There are those who buy without even looking at the product closely; however, this is quite the minority. That small group knows enough about the product beforehand, and they take your word on it, too. (Zeynep, Ankamall)

When he touches, he makes sure. We feel we cannot understand without examining the good at hand. It is not the same for foreigners; they are able to buy things without feeling them with the hand. Touching is essential for us, though. The customer deliberates while he holds the good at his hand and turns it around for minutes. He checks the price, although he sees it from afar; he is not sure whether he should buy or not, whether it is quality or not. (Onur, Optimum)

The ability to touch or taste is essential in the shopping mall, because it is the most direct way people can assess the quality and the use of goods and services, some of which they were previously unfamiliar with. People are offered to taste food or accept promotions in supermarkets and sometimes in the corridors of the mall:

The customer wants to touch and taste the product. We have to let them touch; however, they don't always purchase what they have touched. The customer wants to taste the olives; when I give him a single olive, he asks to see the olives in plenty, saying 'I may want to taste more than one.' The man who asks this may be a cultured

man, yet he may also be selfish enough to attempt to touch more olives than he could taste from the same row. (Ali, Beğendik)

Promotions and taster stands inside the store at weekends boost the attention as well as the sales. Think of the chocolate puddings we serve to our guests in the bakery and pastry department. The visits are three times higher at weekends than in the weekdays, so such promotions always draw more people. (Onur, Optimum)

Salespeople state that people cannot help touching garments in the shop even if they see the same models on shop windows and hangers. Perhaps rather unconsciously, touching becomes the primary means of understanding quality in such a setting, while it further ensures the accessibility of the goods:

People don't recognize sample t-shirts on hangers and grab one of those on the shelves. Some customers touch everything! (...) We already pay attention to fold t-shirts with print and glitter on the front side carefully so that their brand and marks are easily noticed. Yet, people tend to think shelved material is different than the hanged material. (Ebru, Ankamall)

Garments and apparels in the shop shouldn't be overly packed or folded. They should look in plenty and a bit untidy [so that] the customer doesn't hesitate to touch. (...) In large department stores, you would see sales staff is usually occupied by design and tidying. They don't serve directly. The customer should be able to move around freely, see for herself and take it. (Aslı, Optimum)

The customer inevitably touches the merchandise when you handle it and draw attention to its nice fabric. This is more common in females. They will not decide to buy something they weren't able to touch. (...) Then, a thousand people unfold the things on shelves; a thousand times I fold them again. The customer thinks that this is what salespeople are for. (Ayça, Ankamall)

In exclusive shops, customers are even offered the chance to try furniture and several objects at home before they make a final decision:

Many people regularly visit us to see what's new and once they buy from us, they always come back to buy again. We let them try and see how our stuff fits their houses and guest rooms. They are also welcome to exchange what they bought with other stuff in the store. So, it is always about the customer satisfaction. (Zeynep, Ankamall)

When salespeople point out that the customer feels empowered, they immediately feel the urge to mention advantages of the globalized marketplace such as free access, hand-contact, little treats and consuming without purchasing. When du Gay and Salaman stress a business-laden concept of consumer sovereignty, they write, following Abercrombie, that the empowered customers today do not resemble "the passive, easily pleased customer of Fordism"; they are rather addressed as trendsetters and the leading source of feedback for companies, because they are continuously "searching", "demanding" and "forcing change and movement upon producers" (du Gay and Salaman, 2000: 78-79). In the former outlook on the

authority of consumer, people are portrayed with their self-contained practices. It is told that customers are fretful about details and service so much that a small carelessness can easily be a source of discontent and complaint, costing the firm or the shop a considerable loss of money or prestige. However, many customers here are not in a position to control much of the shopping activity while they spend long minutes by the shelf, trying to make sure which is the best buy or the best quality. In the latter outlook on the “sovereign” consumer, as Keat calls it, the buyer is someone who deliberately “controls” the production and the marketing processes (Keat, 1991; cited in du Gay and Salaman, 2000: 79). Du Gay and Salaman have underlined a “quality-conscious consumer population” within the changing organization of production and work, arguing that the “fragmentation and differentiation of demand for goods and services [has become] a conspicuous and widely accepted feature of modern Western economic life” now (ibid.: 77). In other words, people are more affluent than before; they judge quality and differentiate between styles; as a result, the new system of production and service situate consumer in a central position to assess and decide the market outcome of a certain product. The “demanding” and “knowledgeable” customer seems to be a dominating figure in the globalized retailing and consumer industries (ibid.: 79); however, the empowered consumer in the malls in this study can still be identified by a lack of control on the shopfloor and making up small strives with salespeople.

On the one hand, people still imagine the salesperson in the mall in the way they think of those in local shops. Sales staff argues that people feel obliged to make a purchase when they enter and spend some time in a local store; they do not feel they are welcome when a clerk accompanies them blatantly. This is more likely when the buyer is a stranger who drops in the local store incidentally and does not know the seller in person. Thus, customers maintain similar preoccupations in the mall. Some customers make extra effort to neglect the sales staff’s attention, fearing subtly that their interaction with the staff will require doing some purchase:

The customer wants to be recognized inside the store; however, she doesn’t like direct attention from the staff. Leave her alone; wait for a small gesture when she wants to be attended. (...) The customer can be disturbed by the salesperson’s attention. She may think I am trying to sell something to her in any way. You can’t get out of a store in Ulus without buying anything, you know. She thinks the same way here. However, only in high style-shops here you definitely enter to purchase. (Ayça, Ankamall)

The customers can please themselves in the store. It is not like before; the customer is irritated when you directly welcome her and ask her 'How can I help you?' (Serkan, Arcadium)

Salesperson is often a stranger to the customer, and stereotyped many times as someone who will try to take advantage of customers by making them pay as much as she can. Salespeople indicate that they have to consider brand's and firm's prestige beforehand. If a customer later thinks that she made purchases that were affected by the salesperson rather than her own decision, the purchased goods are likely to return to the store:

If you like it, take it; if you don't, no need to feel compelled to take it. This is the way people can shop here. (...) This is a large store; the customer does not drop here accidentally. She may ask the next time she makes her way to the store: 'How did you give these to me? They don't look nice; they don't fit to me...' (Ayça, Ankamall)

People think that salesperson's duty is to sell anyway and tell you that whatever you try on looks good. However, we cannot continue to work here if we do so. The garments may not look so good no matter how you exaggerate it and you have to win the customer's confidence by informing about other options. Customers are more likely to take your word when you honestly say 'let me show you another model.' Your attention becomes true instead of fake. Everyone in the store is happy then. (Canan, Ankamall)

On the other hand, customers do not always know enough about the material, the use and the quality of the merchandise. The mall is a place full of brand stores, and much of the conversation about branding focuses on the brand-mania and the reckless consumption of images or identities. However, brands also interfere with the individual ability to assess the quality of food or clothing. Aslı recalls the past, when women were more acknowledged about materials and they used to be responsible of household consumption, taking care of food and dress in traditional ways at home, and making frugal decisions by limited resources:

Our mothers used to know, for instance, the silk and the clothing well; they were able to differentiate the quality from the rest, because they used to tailor their own dresses. Now, quality has become synonymous with the brand, although brand does not always amount to quality. [Taking the brand quality for granted] has become a kind of mannerism. (Aslı, Optimum)

Regardless of the increase in working female population, women are generally less involved in such consumption today. The dependence on ready-to-wears and packaged food is significant; yet, it seems that people are also deprived of control in the production process of the shelved commodities:

The tendency to touch is also a sign of variety. There are so many choices; therefore the price will determine the customer's decision. Products are in many colors and shapes. They all effect the customer's decision. (Onur, Optimum)

People are likely to touch the goods in the store without exception. They have the natural inclination to do so. There are people who even smell the shoes in order to understand whether it is genuine leather. They say: 'These shoes don't smell like leather!' Shoes are shelved in stores after many chemicals are applied to preserve and make the leather shiny. How could it smell after all? (Erdem, Optimum)

Customers try to gather new information about what they buy and to control the shopping process by constantly learning about styles, uses of the merchandise and technical details from the salesperson. The staff can only win their confidence through giving information to them. Otherwise, they remain reserved, as they consider themselves insufficiently informed about the goods and the production process. In such one instance, Özge slowly explained the use of the product to the customer, who was at first a bit distrustful. First, the customer seemed quite reserved. She said she was a pharmacist, so she conveyed that she knew the issue well. Özge told her that she used to be a medical professional before; then the woman started to listen more carefully:

Don't forget to use this product with milk. I used to have it for myself, too. So, if you have difficulty in using it the way it is suggested, then I can suggest you to mix it with fruits so that the taste gets better. (Özge, Arcadium)

The woman turned the box around to see the expiry date, while Özge continued to tell her that the product had just arrived and how they needed to use it. Aysun illustrates another case in which people tend to survey the employee in the store even before they buy a brand product:

The familiarity with the product beforehand is influential in their decisions. Customers don't want to waste money for something tasteless to them. Sometimes they see a new product and curiously take it to the cart. It is only a momentary desire. Then they withdraw, thinking that the family won't like its taste. (...) They take four different types of cheese into shopping cart, and leave two of them at the counter, keeping the familiar ones. (...) They also ask us at the desk whether we have tried these new ones. Customers hesitate to take the product when they receive the answer no. (Aysun, Beğendik)

The customer in the shopping mall is 'demanding', yet not usually 'knowledgeable', if we choose du Gay and Salaman's words to compare their picture with the picture here. There are chances for small strives between salespeople and customers, as consumers try to state their authority through quick-tempered responses to the seller. Sometimes, customers insist that they know better about the quality or the material of an item. In this case, salespeople either try to convince the

buyer about the quality of the material or remain silent, nodding their heads to anything the customer says:

A female customer returned a woolen pullover to the store; she thought it was of poor quality because it's become fuzzy. She didn't accept that we send it to the factory to clean it, either. She insisted that we change the pullover with a new one. It is hundred per cent woolen and pure woolen clothing will normally become fuzzy soon. She didn't know that. If she had bought woolen mixed with polyester, the pullover wouldn't have become fuzzy. (Aslı, Optimum)

We learn the products through instructive sessions as well as the website. Knowing the raw materials and the method of manufacturing –whether it is veneer or massive—are the essentials of service. It's not even probable to answer the customer randomly. (...) When we say it is mahogany and the customer corrects us saying it is from walnut-tree, there is no need to insist, though. If the customer tries to tell you that he knows better than you do, you stop informing about the merchandise. (Zeynep, Ankamall)

There are of course those who like to flaunt [with their knowledge]. If I see this type, I won't talk much, I won't try to convince. I just answer yes or no. (Mehmet, Arcadium)

Those who know nothing about particular products directly ask the salesperson. Mehmet stresses that even pronunciation of a brand or a product reveals how well-informed the customer is. This is also about the level of familiarity with globally circulating taste and lifestyles, which was discussed in the previous sections:

It becomes obvious from the manner he speaks of the brand. For instance, Cabernet is not pronounced as 'Cabernet'; if the customer utters the last letter when he asks the wine, then I can be sure that he doesn't know much about wine. The difference between fake articulation 'Cabernet' and the original is a big difference. Even as the salesperson, I have to say it right. (Mehmet, Arcadium)

The authority of consumer is also defined by consumer rights that aim to prevent unfair trade and give customers the chance to call upon the producer, exporter or distributor firm and the responsible store in case that a disagreement arises between the buyer and the seller. However, salespeople note that most consumers do not know their rights well. For instance, the customer has the right to return defective goods to the store within fifteen days and request that the defective good is changed, repaired, renewed for free or that the amount of his purchase is paid back to him²³. Only the well-off customers are fully aware of such regulations and do not try to abuse them, though:

Consumer rights regulations render customers the right to return the purchased goods, to make inquiries about a defective good and so on. These rights sometimes cause disputes between customers and shop employees. In this neighborhood, we see that the customer is curious to know many details in sales; they are critical of the

²³ <http://www.tukoder.org.tr/dikkat.asp>

service and the quality, because they are economically and socially well-off. They await much attention and sometimes become over-fretful about the service they receive. (Murat, Arcadium)

This is also what differentiates stores in a shopping mall from a local store:

When you buy something from a shop on the street, they will probably refuse to take the good you want to return. Here in the mall, making returns is easy. (Murat, Arcadium)

The self-interested customer here is someone cautious about mistakes. They know what they can demand well and will return a good if they think it's faulty. They can even bring back something that was fine but not packaged in the way they desired. That is, the customer can challenge the shop employee, warning that she didn't want fatty meat, for instance. Of course, the brand image rather than the product itself is the main factor in such responsiveness of the customer. (Emel, Arcadium)

On the contrary, many people are noted to either abuse these regulations or do not know the extent of consumer rights. People can blame the salesperson for a small detail which is not necessarily in control of the shop employee:

The customer is distrustful, no matter how honest you are. They remember the previous cheats on them by other tradesmen, and think you will do the same. Inexperienced shop employees especially are a great risk since they may forget to mention minor details about the product and cause trouble. The customer purchases a lamp, but does not consider of looking at the light socket when the lamp seems not to work. It is a simple issue; yet, the customer comes back to the store angry, yelling at us: 'Why didn't you tell me that? How come can you make such a mistake?' (Zeynep, Ankamall)

Returns are usually problematic. In some cases, you understand that the man bought the suit for the evening; he wore it for a few days and brought it back to you. You look for a defection in the good; you can't see any faults, though. If there is a problem with the good itself, he could have also caused it, as well. One never knows it and in such a situation there is nothing else to do but take it back. (Gürol, Beğendik)

Returns are accepted by brand stores in order to prevent the loss of prestige. Salespeople assume that if a customer leaves the store dissatisfied, it will strike back as the loss of many customers, regardless of the reason for customer dissatisfaction. Many salespeople conclude: "The customer is always right." On the other hand, Aslı observes that in Optimum customers go from one extreme to the other in practicing their rights:

Here, people don't know consumer rights, or, they think they know it, yet fail to practice it right. Customers are able to return what they purchased in fifteen days and receive their money back. Yet, they are not aware of this. Or, they come to the store without the shopping slip and tell you in rage to take the clothes back. The store is liable for the change, but only when it receives the shopping slip. People are quite ignorant about these details. (Aslı, Optimum)

4.4. *A New Public Space:*

Shopping malls bring in a new sense of public space that is much commercialized and interlaced with entertainment, luxury, comfort and privacy. This poses a very different meaning for public space than is conventionally understood. There are conflicting meanings of public space in the mall; the idea that “a public space [is a place] that facilitates community” in the conventional meaning opposes the perspective that malls are where “social control” and “hyperconsumption” prevail (Salcedo, 2003: 1087). The mall is a “quasi-public environment” according to Sandıkçı and Holt (1998: 309), who argue that “the mall attempts to simulate the public space, [yet] it rigorously controls the movement of people, display of commodities, and range of activities.” Although control and standardization are common themes in every aspect of malls we examine, the mall continues to be an inclusive space for many people, because the organization of activities in the mall does not make visitors feel social and economic gaps between themselves and others. It does not mean that those gaps melt into air inside a mall; however, most people are already indulged by the spectacular images and events that emphasize private ways of entertainment there. In these instances, people do not necessarily feel responsible of problems that take place inside the mall, either, because there is always a security guard or charged personnel to take care of the situation.

In particular, shopping malls in Ankara stress a divergence from the past meaning of the ‘public’ in the city. In Gürbilek’s (1993) and Saktanber’s (2005) writings, Ankara is a rapidly developing capital city, where a concept of urban public space is being constituted through new outdoors and places. In her study on the late 1940s’ Ankara, Kıray pointed to outdoor leisure activities alongside other urban entertainment forms. She indicated that it was much common in the lower middle stratum to have picnics rather than movies –a rare entertainment at that period- or visits to farms, and males were much more likely to be visible in such activities (Kıray, 2005 [1960]: 91-92). Eating out, movie going and going out at night were mostly for the middle and the upper strata (ibid.: 100-103). The public activity for people who had close ties with state and governmental institutions was closely linked with the type of leisure in which women started to be seen together with men in their families mostly in these new public spaces. Saktanber’s discussion on the literary accounts of the era indicates that such activity cannot be imagined without watching

plays and opera, public concerts in *Halkevleri*, and gatherings at which the nation's cultural productions are praised, as well; these leisure activities demonstrate the successes of nationalization in the "westernized yet not cosmopolitan" Ankara (Saktanber: 2005: 218). Ankara could not be considered as much cosmopolitan as Istanbul was, since the public was likely to take over the private in the early Republican Ankara, as Gürbilek (1993: 62) highlighted, and diversity in appearances or identities was not a common issue. It is stated that private lives were either excluded from the delight of public experiences or reduced to hinder against such development (ibid.: 61-63).

It can be argued that public space has started to be understood with private, commercial and consumer connotations in the city rather than nationalistic joys and open public spaces in the urban. Much of the above-mentioned activities have reduced to a secondary status, while shopping easily integrates to the new attractions a mall presents to the city residents. Salespeople relate the rise of the shopping mall in Ankara with a change of cultural orientations. According to this, a culture of promenade indoors has replaced the culture of entertainment outdoors. Erdem recalls when an amusement park (*Lunapark*) or spacious urban spaces such as *Gençlik Parkı* were the fashion:

That culture [of outdoor leisure] has ended. There is not a fine open place to spend your time with family or friends anymore. As malls grow in number, these places are suggested to be appropriate for the entire family. Old places have gone under restoration process, but people will prefer them only in summer because there is nothing new in those places. In winter, when people think of seeing a movie, they realize that [a good movie hall] is in the mall, too. (Erdem, Optimum)

There has developed a habit of promenade in the city, as malls have increased in number. [Being] in the mall has become a culture of promenade. (...) From nine in the morning until five in the evening, the place belongs to women. (Halil, Arcadium)

Emel draws attention to the public character of the mall, indicating that the public space is also profoundly bound by commercial activity:

People choose the mall to go out for market shopping especially at weekends. This marketplace is also a promenade, where people dress up for [seeing and being seen]. Few people stay at home at the weekend. One week, they visit Carrefour and the next week they are in [Ankamall]. (Emel, Arcadium)

Many activities such as eating out, movie going or getting small presents for children in a shopping mall require spending money; still, a promenade to mall is not necessarily expensive. Therefore, it becomes harder to exclude common people from being part of the mall. Serkan classifies a peculiar type of visitor in malls as "çay

müşteri”, whom:

[they] named it among [themselves], because this is the promenading person. He does not aim to buy anything. He strolls the mall and inside the stores at no cost. (Serkan, Arcadium)

This person is still called a ‘customer’; however, his only relation to consumption in the mall is the cheapest leisure activity of ‘drinking tea’. Similarly, Onur considers the hardship of affording expensive leisure activity, being also aware of cheaper ways to spend time in the mall:

The mall is not much attractive for people who feel the pecuniary restraints of going out in couples or groups. For instance, when you go to Armada and you choose to eat a meal and then see a movie, you spend at least 80 liras. This is not a small amount for most people, considering that almost 50 per cent of these people works in the public sector, around 15 per cent works in private sector, and the rest is self-employed [or not employed]. It is not always feasible to spend 80 liras a day. (Onur, Optimum)

Considering the increasing emphasis on privacy and entertainment, it is possible to associate the mall with the youth, who is also the closest group to global trends, novelties, diversity, change and mobility. The mall also shares attributes such as spontaneity, variety and liveliness with the youth. The attractiveness of malls for young people was also pointed by Mona Abaza, who argues that “[i]n Egypt, (...) because of the shortage of public gardens, the newly built malls might not be spaces for shopping, but rather for youth to socialize and mix in groups” (Abaza, 2001: 101). She draws attention to the growing youth population in Egypt and suggests that young people “feel as though they can participate in a better world, even if in most cases that participation goes no further than window shopping” (Abaza, 2004). Ankara has a similarly growing young population, since the university youth is quite visible in the city. In Ankara, the relation of the younger population with shopping malls is perhaps unusual, too, because the malls provide them with attractions beyond home, school and other urban centers in the city. Saktanber (2005: 226) realizes a discrepancy between the public activities of early Republican era and the practices of younger population today. She states that those young people in her sample have a “subjective” stance that does not require them to be formal and courteous; this is also due to their familiarity with the virtual technologies that enable anonymity (ibid.: 222). She denotes that the youth is quite indifferent to the leisure activities of the Republican Ankara (ibid.: 226). In this picture of urban space, bars, movie halls, cafés, coffeehouses, universities and subway transportation exist (ibid.:

226), while “home” prevails to be an equally important and intimate meeting place, a characteristic of Ankara according to Saktanber (ibid.: 232).

Malls have been discussed as the extension of home-environment for particularly suburban population in Ankara. In addition, malls are attractive for younger population when urban experience is absent in the neighborhood. In Optimum, it is found out that going to mall is a powerful means of belonging to the city, while the activities for young people go further than window shopping, a finding quite contradictory to the Egyptian case of young people in the mall. The mall liberates many young people in the neighborhood even through a bar that has branches in Ankara, and eating turns out to be the prevalent activity in the mall:

In the mall, there is a bistro-bar, which certain people can enter. For instance, it attracts people in Eryaman much. (...) People who dwell around here enjoy having leisure time. Eryaman is also a student-neighborhood. (...) This place is such that you can spend time with any friends. (Aslı, Optimum)

Shopping malls address young people. People who are over 40 may prefer to have a picnic with family, but, youngsters, dating and newly married couples prefer to be in the mall. (Erdoğan, Optimum)

Young families inhabit in the neighborhoods around Optimum, too. The mall takes place in their daily lives, as their occupational lives bring in more tasks and little time:

Think of an ordinary young couple. The man is at work during the day, and the woman sees her friends in the afternoon. It used to be different before. When the woman arrives home around evening, she has to cook dinner, and the man is at home around 7 or 8; if he sees that the dinner is not ready, then he says ‘let’s go eat in Optimum.’ (Erdoğan, Optimum)

More traditional or lower income families practice eating out via shopping malls in suburbs. Besides, Optimum is an interesting case since it involves fragments of global culture as well as of the new urban space for younger population. The mall has a small corner for computers that are connected to the internet, and the place is haunted by kids and teenagers alongside other users. It is a simple attraction; however, its implication can be immense for a youngster who does not have access to the internet at home. Ayfer recalls a day when schoolchildren from a village of Ayaş were taken to Optimum to see a movie. Erdoğan adds that escalator is one of the attractions in Optimum. In the food court, he is able to observe the escalator and same people going up and down the staircase for minutes; he supposes that these are the people who must have found this mechanism quite curious.

One can also observe themed entertainment zones at a modest scale in Optimum. Part of these social attractions within Optimum carries a local and nostalgic character. They stress going out as a family; while such variety boosts sales:

Each Wednesday night between 8 and 10 p.m, there is a special event: Local nights. Aydın Night, Malatya Night, Urfa Night. Each week a city is chosen, and local, distinguishing products of that city or region are displayed; local music is played; local meals are prepared. The festival place is arranged in the café [that looks like a local coffeehouse] on the entrance floor. For instance, a singer sang the local songs and people were served *çiğ köfte* on Urfa Night. These events draw people pretty much. People come to watch them with the entire family. (Ayfer, Optimum)

Other events may give a sense of the ‘unusual’. Onur illustrates such an event that the organizers are happy to see that the event coincides with a national holiday, so more (young) people will be drawn to the mall:

A circus from Mongolia comes and they will be reserved the parking lot for a performance by 600 people. It will take place on the 19th of May. A great many people are expected on that day. In such cases, people who do not normally come to mall drop by to see what all this is about.” (Onur, Optimum)

After the expansion of its complex, Optimum introduced features such as bowling and ice-skating platforms. These platforms are enclosed in the entire mall area, while the design can still be considered enormous compared to the previous, similar examples. Although administrations and salespeople mention families as key frequenters, these places try to attract younger population, i.e. kids accompanied by their parents and teenagers.

In Arcadium, young frequenters are quite differentiated from the average youth. Nazlı points that those are students in the near universities; they usually live in well-off families; they drive to Arcadium outside class hours or for lunch, and spend considerable time in the food court. There is a loafing culture rather than a promenade. Speaking of these student frequenters, Nazlı recalls young girls among them with their make-up, conspicuous appearance and dressy style. She says, “They are overdressed but I like them the way they are.” It is hard to see much make-up on her face on the shopfloor, whereas she normalizes the view of the customers at around her age. She feels an urge to state that she is able to normalize them. In addition to that, Arcadium, likewise Optimum, is described with warmth of an urban ‘living center’ for the youth, too, through summer festivals and events:

Such festivals are the advertisements of the mall. The one that Arcadium organizes may not be a gigantic event; however, people would start to think why there are no

attractions or concerts, if these were not happening. These support the popularity of Arcadium. (Nazlı, Arcadium)

The suburban mall functions like a social center that combines the elements of the traditional culture with concerts, festivals and competitions, too. These activities do not try to involve the nostalgic element in them as much as Optimum does; they seem to imply efforts to spice up the life in suburbia, rather than to arrange great entertainment complexes, unlike Optimum or Ankamall:

What draws people to the mall is the mall administration. They call writers to sign their books and singers to meet their fans. The day Kerem Cem [a young pop-singer] visited the mall, our sales were marvelous. Various performances such as *Hacivat and Karagöz* during the Ramadan attract children. The stores in a mall –except department stores- cannot individually charm people this much. (Serkan, Arcadium)

It is remarkable that tradition transforms into performance in such settings. A similar shift can be observed in nostalgic local shows in Optimum, too. In that, they possibly receive a hybrid character and become a third, different type, because they do not take place in the original setting of the mentioned tradition, while the subject of those shows is not totally stranger to eye. This reminds of what Urry discusses as the “tourist gaze.” One aspect of the tourist gaze is that it depends on the “division between the ordinary and the extraordinary” (Urry, 1990: 12; cited in Corrigan, 1997: 143). Another aspect of it consists of looking for “signs of typicality” in order to rip them from the real practice and put them into “unusual contexts” (ibid.). Recalling local singers and local meals in the mall, Optimum at the north end of Ankara presents the population there with what does not originally belong to Ankara. In Arcadium, events that carry a traditional essence and that do not assume domestic characteristics coexist; yet, both events attract people on the basis of their incongruity with the routine and actual daily practices.

If Optimum has been identified with the sense of belonging to the city, Ankamall can be considered to combine this with a greater share of the tourist gaze by introducing spectacular yet much stranger elements to its visitors. Ankamall is supposedly an “appetizer” in the visual sense²⁴; therefore, it seems that youthfulness is deeply embedded in space rather than depicting a group of visitors. Model dinosaurs exhibited in the corridors of the mall, Paul Klee paintings hanging down the ceilings, celebrating the year of Mevlana by visuals at various spots inside the mall, inviting famous models and actresses to Ankara and the worldly-renowned

²⁴ Interview with Ankamall Administration, in March 2007.

Commedia dell'Arte 'the Italian Comedy'– are some examples that try to whet the local population's appetite for the non-local. The administration sees the efforts to increase the liveliness through such organizations as a part of competitive business in the worldwide sector of retailing and shopping mall complexes. The emphasis on fashion, culture, art and history can become a means of attracting attention at a national and transnational scale. It can be argued that the combination of these elements would have a cosmopolitan character for the mostly young shopper who watches these installations.



Photo 9: Ankamall (Photo used by the courtesy of Ankamall administration)

Ankamall resembles a museum rather than a social and community center; for instance, the mall administration reports that the model dinosaur exhibition quite inspired kids who watched the models in amazement and uttered: “Mom! I want to be an anthropologist.” The mall, which creates a public space that is heavily based on visual consumption and takes on the role of a museum, is apparently an urban form that “allows us to act as tourists even in our own home towns” (Corrigan, 1997: 144). Stability is not necessary in such visual abundance, though; spectacles in the mall are of a temporary character; one exhibition is settled; another exhibition is dismantled. The mall administrator notes that the mall performs an informational role of museums that are not very popular nowadays by laying the basis for a greater consciousness about the world around.

In the enlarged complex of Ankamall, distinctive interior decoration coexists with a simulation of conventional public space. The newly-built side separates from the old part in its comfortable, leather chairs that resemble those in a guest-room,

while cafés and wooden benches are intended to remind of the good old street. However, one would not see such a street become real in any neighborhood of Ankara –except a few cases in the upper reaches of Tunalı Hilmi Street. The new part of the mall underlines differentiation and even a subtle exclusion on the basis that these places convey a much more elevated status in order to give a larger view of the entire mall and more private space to visitors.



Photo 10: The new interiors of Ankamall (Photo by Laçın Tutalar)



Photo 11: Imitation of the street café in Ankamall (Photo by Laçın Tutalar)

Although shopping malls in Ankara generally have an inclusive character to draw people from any background, promenading turns out to be the disturbing practice of loitering when undertaken by groups of males, who stroll in the mall in the way they are in the old public spaces. Zeynep tells that the male gaze returns to the tamed spaces of malls, when big events such as a movie that uses themes of heroism, crime, aggression and men in black take place in the movie halls of the mall:

Events like ‘Kurtlar Vadisi’ the movie are a bit of disadvantage. When it was on show during holiday, people who came to watch the movie were not that pleasant. We didn’t enjoy being in the mall during that time. I mean, we couldn’t even go to the food-court [because of] disruptive young men in colonies... I can’t name it in another way, [I know] they are human as well, but, I mean, it became like the Ulus Square. Such things disturb us staff, and, of course my customers would leave such environments after a few times they encounter such cases. (Zeynep, Ankamall)

Compared to other three malls, one does not observe specific attractions that aim to draw younger population to Beğendik. İbrahim states that people think of this place as a mosque and decide to visit it, while they subsequently find themselves inside the department store:

Foreigners come here. For instance, exchange students from Iran... They think of shopping, because they say jeans are of better quality here, and they are right. In Iran, there is no textile industry in the sense we know! (İbrahim, Beğendik)

Beğendik does not have a considerably wide meeting place inside the department store. Leisure is not one of the first things that come to mind here, as salespeople do not tend to think of department store as a great attraction. Still, celebrations on special days throughout the year catch the attention of salespeople, and it is possible to find the traces of a touristic interpretation of the space:

The space was decorated for the New Year’s Eve, and people photographed the decorations with their mobile phones. The ordinary, metal shelves turned into something beautiful and attractive. It was kind of pleasing to the eye. People like such variety, so things should continuously change in such places. (...) In one of those promotion days in the store, a home-textile journal was distributed by a clown, so it both attracted mothers and children. (Aysun, Beğendik)

In this chapter, the change in the urban space and culture of Ankara has been delineated in four aspects. Firstly, shifts in the meaning of money, time and their emphasis on mobility are seemingly the most salient effects of globalization; however, the change is more meaningful when the local past and the relationship of the city with modernity, development and the world outside are considered with respect to the global today. Secondly, it can be suggested that the local is still more

persistent in Ankara, compared to Istanbul, because new and established social groups in the city differentiate under the influence of globalization as they also exert their previously urban or rural identities in the consumption and leisure places of the new Ankara. In this discussion, the differences are taken into consideration by a comparison of neighborhoods as well as of status groups such as women, the new rich and the retired people in detail. In that, it has been anticipated that a general picture of the change from the modernist city of the nation state towards the fluctuating city of the globalizing nation state can be provided. Women seem to benefit from such a change, as well, because the mall enables them to pursue more free time on themselves, freeing them from home or the community bonds they have. Thirdly, it seems that the consumer is confused by all this change around himself or herself. The mall gives the consumer the chance to have a greater say in the consumption process; however, the customer does not have the same authority in the production process. People try to understand the quality either by touching items or addressing brands as trusted producers and distributors. Fourthly, the mall becomes a refined public place, while it also signals, together with the department store, the feminization of public space, therefore making safety, comfort, luxury and privacy the main concerns.

CHAPTER 5

WORKING IN THE MALL

*“Culture (...) is seen to structure the way people think, feel and act in organizations.”
Paul du Gay (1996:41)*

This chapter underlines transformations in retail work along with local representations of status and consumption of retail workers. Shopping malls are deliberated as workplaces, and retail work is more exclusively dependent now on the global transformations in space and labor. Such transformations isolate or enclose retailing space in ways that are not nestled within people’s actual living spaces. They also control labor and sales process by commercial and technological standards that are beyond the authority of single retailers. Culture of retail work is thus transformed by the global reorganization of services that values standards of precision over traditional authority and methods in a shop. Salespeople become culturally familiar with standards of the mall, and do not consider local retailing pronounces personal development and understands change. The discussion is in two sections: The first is about the global rationale of commercial aesthetics in retail work, with remarks on *labor, body* and *skills*. It lays examples as to how local attributes on labor, body and skill fit into the “culture of the new capitalism”, to use Sennett’s (2006) expression. The second is on how global routines blend with the staff’s status. Salesperson is said to improve in ‘status’; yet, education, gender and age findings get in the way of this improvement. They are culturally distinguished from their counterparts in local shops; however, they are also financially and culturally overwhelmed by the mall. The way that retail workers consume the mall reflects this contradiction further.

5.1. Conceptualizing Retail Work

Retail work in Turkish managerial and popular conception has changed remarkably by the introduction of multinational retailing. Retailing applications have

keenly started to pronounce a globally significant aesthetics on salespeople's bodily representations and manners. Such aesthetics is service-obsessive. It objectifies retail worker as an indispensable part of store and the brand. Salespeople should be commercially pleasant, i.e. styled, if not beautiful. Even so, they do not consider themselves sales-oriented; reasoning over detail, speed, standards and information comes first. Those rational patterns mix with local dispositions of hospitality and inferiority, which are profoundly persistent in service-giver's image, and they should be examined by a combined understanding of globalizing *space* and *labor*.

5.1.1. *A Global Interpretation of Retail Space:*

Changing spatial preferences for retailing in major cities in Turkey dismiss domestic forms for globally observable trends in retailing. Through shopping centers, retail space moves towards higher standardization and monopolization. Stories of Turkish supermarket mergers under a brand name describe this process even outside the malls²⁵. Brands stand up for higher performance in managing space, services and sales workers. The scope of retail space manipulation is thus beyond the mere antagonisms of architectural design or visual contrasts. It is the re-organization of workers and retail space by means of divergence from individual designs towards standardization and the use of (re)discovered profitable lands.

Mohabeer's reflection on big-box shops in Toronto mentions sales workers' standardized labor and its limitation on the genuine contact between buyer and seller. He describes the success of " 'giant retail complexes' that fill 'abandoned' sites of production and consumption" (Mohabeer, 2004: 1) and how those big-box shops offer what small retailers do not. This new type whops small retailers in inhabited districts by concentrating space, shopping time and items, and compels even national retailers to follow "big-box powerhouses, [which are] most often transnational, [but] typically American" (ibid.: 3), whereas personal communication between seller and buyer in this space is weakened:

Never to be found are the clerks who are supposed to have the knowledge to assist consumers to find those goods that will magically solve their needs....no, instead, big-box retailers are not 'full service' at all. They pride themselves on being 'working warehouses' in which employees are not invested with knowledge of goods or services, but rather act as semi-skilled, glorified stock handlers. (ibid.)

²⁵ See below examples of small and medium size retailers in Turkey, merging and standardizing:

'Yerel ve Bölgesel Perakendeciler Ulusal Markalar Yaratacak.' *Referans*: 4 June 2007.

'Yerel Perakendeciler Hareketlendi: Makromarket Nazar'ı Satın aldı.' *Referans*: 22 February 2007.

Kenny reflects on “monopolization” over retail space and large retailers’ winning over small ones, increasingly during the 1940s and the 1960s in the South Africa (Kenny, 2004: 481). It is a similar story of transformation of labor under the modernization of retailing. Concomitantly, Kenny conveys that it served to “concentrate large number of workers under one roof” (ibid.). Changing use of space by retailers brought along an easier access of females to jobs at “chain stores”, i.e. “feminization” of retail labor, as well as “self-service” retailing and racial hierarchy in tasks, i.e. “deskilling” (ibid.: 480-481).

The field study highlights that department stores, food courts and supermarkets in malls attract greater retail labor and standardization. A larger retail space and/or a network of numerous shops in different malls bring about company codes that are beyond the control of individual workers or store managers. The job is described by supervisors and employers; means (technology) and methods (how to treat customer) of service are readily available, and the challenge of retail worker is to operate efficiently with those. In interviews, centralization is reflected in salespeople’s appraisal of ‘good’, i.e. rigorous, organization of big spaces, time-management, and precision in every instance of service. In ‘big box’ example, quality of service materialized in self-service and greater social distance between deliverers and shoppers. In the case of shopping malls in Ankara, impersonality, distance and speed are significant, too. It is no coincidence that the salesperson in a food court is a swift worker; she will not make it otherwise. Food courts call for quick, simple and truly impersonal communication. Cashiers in supermarkets should be fast and attentive in cases of long queues. In contrast, self-service mixes with a customized, slightly slow service in delicatessen’s, bakery, clothing departments or specialty stores, where salespeople pay attention to curious or confused customers. In those spaces, one cannot directly speak of sheer control over labor, because there are so many attractions happening beyond the labor process and salespeople smooth this process by inferring that some authority and learning are offered to them. That is why a saleswoman in an elegant department store was so proud to tell me that working in a large retail company, she has learned the science of service and marketing that applies in the rest of the world, too.

Does the particular neighborhood of the mall increase the likelihood of interaction with locality and smooth the standardization of labor? To start with,

Ankamall has the largest –branded- retail space and the highest number of department stores. There are 6,000 people employed in the retail area only²⁶. During my visits to the mall, I observed that worker-consumer interaction is at a pragmatic level, although salespeople claim to develop close relations with regular customers, who acquire special service for their money. What they develop is customer-loyalty in fact. Salespeople are often at a secondary status and invisible when conversations do not go beyond asking simple, urgent questions and shoppers inquire a salesperson to make a purchase: “We fold [clothes for shelves] more than serve [in person]”, says Hakan, who is also aware of the fact that sales employees are less visible than the goods are. The department store may as well be a retail area that promotes brand-conscious aesthetics for a certain class of shoppers. Brand recognition provides information on quality, size and model of the item and substitutes for most of interaction. Salespeople present the goods and the foods rather than prepare them. The focus is on display and “objects” in stores, where interaction is of secondary importance, as Durakbasa and Cindoglu state (2004: 93). The global aesthetics of objectification reveals itself here as commodities supersede most of the help and information delivered by salespeople. Large retail spaces are comforting for consumers, who are free of being personally attended and being compelled to buy, a burden employees associate with shopping from traditional retailers. Less interaction with salespeople secures a sense of being in the market without buying in the market.

Optimum employs 1,500 people, being the second largest mall (after its enlargement) in this study²⁷. The standardization that is attributed to large retail spaces is visible here together with a modest degree of contact between salespeople and the locals. Such contact goes beyond the formal codes for two reasons: It is an outlet mall and it has become a haunt for people of the district. On one hand, employees are continuously busy with shelving and re-shelving goods. The outlet mall is a space of more frequent circulation of goods; therefore salespeople may be more consumed by the routine of the mall. To a complete stranger, salespeople seem to move like nannies who tidy up the space after kids, that is, consumers, who find things with good prices in the outlet mall. On the other hand, this is the point where standards of large retailers begin to be undone as the social air of the mall resembles

²⁶ <http://www.yenigimat.com.tr/istirakler5.aspx>

²⁷ <http://www.optimumoutlet.com>

that of a styled bazaar, where people can find items at discount prices. Greetings on the shopfloor should normally have a formal tone, e.g. ma'am; however, Optimum is also denoted with visitors with a rural background. Some customers who live or used to live in the rural areas can be addressed less formally, e.g. 'aunty' by the salesperson. Ayfer states that sometimes grannies visit the mall in the company of their daughters or sons, and it is possible to see them in the way they were dressed in the village. For her, being formal to them would be repelling. Conversations with younger customers can start with the formal, impersonal tone, but may continue with salesperson addressing them in the second person, too, depending on their cultural and gender affinity.

Unlike the former examples, Beğendik is a department store that is not a part of a mall. It employs around 700 people²⁸. Standards and controls differentiate Beğendik from the downtown; yet, salespeople within the store are not necessarily weak in communication with buyers, since the store is still part of life in the neighborhood. People in the neighborhood do their daily shopping in the department store, where personal communication between buyer and seller can go beyond the determination of organized retail space. It is also close to several groceries, supermarkets, shops and cafés dispersed within the neighborhood. Not many grocery stores or shops at the locale have their own parking lots, standard work-hours, a myriad of counters, sales staff with ID badges and customer service. Beğendik for many is an exceptional place in the downtown. It creates a sense of familiarity along with regularity. In downtown streets, shops close down or change hands; whereas there is stability in Beğendik. Personnel changes in Beğendik too, but the well-organized service space is a primary reference. A regular customer, who is a member of parliament from a small city, relies on Gürol, who politely discerns his liking and dresses him well for his position. Food is another source of modest talk. The customer shops for cheese and olives from the salesman on his way to other shelves in the supermarket; next time they engage in a less formal conversation. Then, between a resident and salesperson, communication is probable and even unavoidable; it can be similar to that in a grocery's in the district. Yet, salespeople are expected to be more interested in the order of store rather than in consumers, who hold the initiative of interaction with seller. Customer can always opt for

²⁸ <http://www.begendik.com.tr/magazalar/kocatepe.html>

prepackaged cheese. Self-service thus endures, as the seller refrains from entering the buyer's self-involved zone:

Customers help themselves, and I keep folding t-shirts here, I don't attend much unless someone asks me something. (Duygu, Beğendik)

In Arcadium with about 1,000 employees –the average²⁹ is 1,500 for small shopping malls-, the retail space looks like a local center, yet, labor is much standardized, while the well-off population demands high-paced and customized service. An example from a large store is indicative of the nature of the authority in the large retail space. The store manager, seemingly an ambitious businesswoman, would not allow interviews in the store, lest such intervention may slow the busy work process. What is new in the mall is that strictness and anxiety about the order of work. A friendly, second visit to that store was nervously interrupted by the store manager, who stood between the researcher and the shop assistant and started to discuss with her a new to-do-list for the evening. The message is: “Talks that are not directly for ‘sales’ are a waste of time on the shopfloor, and in this place, you cannot busy salespeople unless you are shopping.” An exception to that seems to be the middle-aged, old and retired people from the neighborhood. They form warm and friendly relations with salespeople. Many interviewees state that the elderly care about them more in person and show sympathy to their tiring work conditions. Well-off customers, who are pleased with the service, help them find better jobs. The reliability of social contact between seller and buyer is dubious, however. It appears that the staff likes these compliments; whereas impersonal and opaque relations on the shopfloor prevail unless interaction takes place in a very small store. People do not shop in the supermarket in Arcadium the way they are in the local weekly bazaar. Moreover, salespeople in Arcadium are not expected to behave as sellers at the bazaar. In the greenmarket, labor speeds up and down according to customers who aim for ‘the best time to shop before it is too hot’ or ‘to choose the ripe fruit before the evening’. In the supermarket, labor is routine from morning till night; the mall has things fresh and available even at 9.30 p.m. In the mall, there is no time for chit-chat; salespeople's words represent the store's identity, not theirs. One needn't draw attention to products loudly or in words. Signs (price labels, tags) do that. Under

²⁹ Türk, E. ‘Modern Çarşılar İş Kapısı Oldu’. *Milliyet: Kariyerim*. 23 July 2006.

these circumstances, labor is opaque to shoppers; sales workers' personal being in the mall remains closed to consumers.

Parallel to these, traditional main-street retailing in Ankara is observed to become outmoded as large retailers seize both existing and lately-built commercial space and standardize it. Retailing aesthetics in traditional stores are more modified by salespeople and their "direct", "personal" ways and sensitivity towards customer (Durakbasa and Cindoglu, 2004: 93). However, the traditional retailing spaces have a bad reputation regarding labor and service, according to salespeople. Half of the interviewees (14 out of 28) in malls negatively framed manners of sellers in traditional stores. They imagine small retail spaces with patchy spatial organization and abrupt, direct and informal manners of those who labor in there.

There is difference [between small retailers and large ones] in their view of *trust*. Here [in chain supermarkets] staff receives training; is informed about sales, products, customers... [In the grocery store] there are no such things. (Onur, Optimum)

We are not directly involved [in the market] as salespeople. Everything's out in the open and you don't ask for it. In a [small] market, the clerk follows you around. But here you are relaxed; nobody tails you (...) Customers feel [at home]. (Emel, Arcadium)

[Clerks] cry and almost attack you as soon as you step into underground bazaar in Kızılay and shops on the street. We also greet and bow to customers, but take it easy and not insist unless customer wants help. (Eda, Optimum)

In other words, techniques of large retailing pioneers influence the connotations about salesperson outside their enterprises. Few others think that small stores around downtown government offices make money because of officials who shop there out of necessity. Shop workers in malls advocate large retailers for whom they work and consider the clerks in many downtown stores disturbing and/or uneducated. Such thinking perhaps overestimates the large retailing, as people continue to shop from traditional stores and small or middle-sized markets, too. Nonetheless, even small retailers are not anymore small and are hardly devoid of appreciation of big-businesses or branded standardization within their organization.

Then, the contradiction between small-traditional retailers and the large ones is also recognizable on the main streets identified by branded retailing. On a high street in Ümitköy in the well-off district of Arcadium, duplex houses occupied as a new commercial area near the residential area is a good example of that. Each duplex house is a separate, roomy shop rented by a branded retailer. Old and new shops

(home decoration, restaurants, electronics and textile) are on both sides of the open-air retail street. Five salespeople, who work for the nation-famous and world-famous brands that follow the same service and design criteria in every branch store outside and inside the malls, do not portray labor outside the mall negatively and state that there is a slight difference between the mall and street retailing. Those salespeople acknowledge that shops on the main street provide far more initiative and luxury to shoppers outside the determined route in a mall. Open-air shopping malls, which are designed for the exceptional shopper with a fascination of good old open-air strolling in a new form, are one step forward from this. Knowing that A-level customers would rather avoid the *dull* atmosphere of malls, staff becomes highly cultured on the widely spread norms of retailing and identify with the new retail spatialization:

As [our firm] opened their first branch in Ankara, they preferred a mass-circulated area like Migros Akköprü (Ankamall). But their stores in the United States have also started to shift towards high streets. We follow the same course, too [for a desired group of customers]. It is not likely that we offer a different pattern. (Zeynep, Ankamall)

5.1.2 *A Global Interpretation of Retail Work:*

Service sector is prevalent in the new economy and in the Post-Fordist organization of labor, which detach and reattach labor towards higher rationalization beyond geographies. Post-Fordist rationality transforms industrial and spatial dependencies of mass production and mass consumption in order to continue making profits (Dirlik, 2000 [1996]): Industrially, it underlines services, which markets leisure, entertainment and presentation rather than supplies. It expands spatially to run into diversity, often confronting the local labor by a difference in method and technology. In the case of shopping malls, salespeople meet an entirely different, technologically interwoven world that is in contradiction with the teachings of either conventional methods or an older and experienced retailer. They also sense the stagnation in the old practice against the network of large retailing. To live what can be typified as a culture shock at home, they do not need to have first-hand experience of retailing. Only three (all male) among twenty-eight salespeople had previous experience as a local retailer. In modern retail industry, they see that service nuances are planned consciously, calculated and manipulated to please the consumer and maintain the branded fame. New employment schemes are thus said to transmit “‘Toyotist’ methods” (Durand, 1998; cited in Lindsay and McQuaid, 2004: 300) or

share attributes with ‘Taylorism’ (Thrift, 2005; cited in Wolkowitz, 2006: 70) by their demanding and controlling nature. Oddly enough, shop employees do take direct responsibility in the shop, where producers and investors are not present. They are not the producers of apparels; yet, they can proudly claim on clothes, dishes and accessories more strongly than the ones who fabricated or transported them to marketplace. This is the business culture that gives emphasis to independence and “personal initiative” (Sennett, 2006: 46); however, there are “disorienting and ultimately degrading” elements when it comes down to work (Sennett, 1998; cited in Lindsay and McQuaid, 2004: 299). For a ‘working’ majority, there is little “individual autonomy” (Durand, 1998; cited in Lindsay and McQuaid, 2004: 300). Meanwhile, attributes of the work/place such as efficiency and predictability seem to grow subtle and become harder to recognize wherein the ‘pleasure’ of selling, making aesthetic comments on items and the power of serving are glorified over the burdens of the job. Considering those highlights, retail work is argued to involve in a “rationalization process” (Ritzer, 1996; cited in Gamble, 2006: 1464) of *labor, body and skills*.

First of all, labor in retailing is intensifying in the manner that “contemporary capitalism” proves to be a “replay of Taylorism” and “produc[e] new kinds of managerial and worker bodies that can work harder and more attentively” (Thrift, 2005; cited in Wolkowitz, 2006: 70). In contemporary retail spaces, customer service is an overextending task. Observations and interviews show that ideal salesperson surveys the consumer from a distance; keeps an eye on consumer at each request; tidies stuff in store continuously; exhibits studied manners and never much-changing posture in the store, while giving standard and immediate answers to always-unpredictable customers. However, demanding work is tolerated by salespeople, no matter how erratic their mood is for the day or how discontent they are with this order. Even when they are unable to keep up, most interviewees justify this totalistic ideal on the basis of consumer satisfaction, which is, in reality, prone to subjective criteria:

[Customers ask] why the store is closed so early? What they call early is 9.30 pm! In the summer, it is 10 pm. (...) Well, people in late evening drop in here if they are to buy anything, and where do they go, if it is closed here? They are right [to complain]. I would behave similarly if I were the customer. (Aysun, Beğendik)

Flexibility as a global structural change becomes the prevailing character of labor in the 21st century (Parry et al., 2005: 6), following the perceived Taylorist mindset and the vaguely justified consumer orientation. Put simply, flexibility³⁰ is “to adjust readily to different conditions”; it brings positive, powerful connotations of self-will into mind, too. In retail service, though, it goes hand in hand with strictly defined tasks and decreased autonomy that are reminiscent of Taylorist expectations. The study shows that being flexible is to change according to the demands of customers and employers. It conveys the intensive but ambiguous and strenuous organization of *tasks* and *time* in the shop. According to Sennett (2006: 47-48), flexibility promotes “task-oriented labor” and evades “fixed-function labor”. Greater emphasis on task-orientation entails dense multitasking:

If the customer could only see how we toil at the back [of the counter], preparing the food and so on, he would be shocked! We fix every problem back there. As we prepare [the food for display], new food arrives; we take them in, we replace others; meanwhile, we rearrange the old. The job is never quite done; you have to keep with customers, as well. (Ali, Begendik)

When you are in charge of everything, say –warehouse, department, products on display and on shelves... You are held responsible for all of it. [Then] you are quite estranged from the sales. (Ayça, Ankamall)

Sennett underlines that flexibility at work is also about the “casualization of labor”, which means shorter contracts, less welfare benefits and a more adaptable worker, who assumes “immediate” and “small-task” thinking (ibid.: 48-49), as illustrated above. An example from Arcadium shows that such casual work is observed even in small-capacity malls where we would normally expect less fuss about service. One potential participant in the research postponed the interview three times because each time he was unexpectedly told to fetch new-arrivals; his timeline and duties were quite erratic. Another salesman, Halil from a small, classical men’s wear store is critical of such instable order at work. According to him, it is not clear what you are actually employed for. Is it the aesthetic proposition of consumption, or, mere portorage? Casualization is also about the mounting number of young, part-time workers. Many of them start as part-time employees after school, because they see no career prospect in their training area whatsoever. Those part-time workers can tend to quit job more easily in order to seek another job, thereby increasing the turnover rate. Retail work can be a safety net against idleness or worse jobs. Either

³⁰ <http://www.websters-online-dictionary.com/definition/flexible>

employed part-time or full-time, it is rarely the case that salespeople remain in a stable position for long, which is a restatement of that

In an era of transnational corporations, footloose organizations, short-term economic choices and flexible working, for many the idea of standard employment or a job for life has fallen by the wayside. (Felstead & Jewson, 1999; cited in Parry et.al, 2005: 6).

Time spent on small tasks is also a time spent on fixing constant messiness to make things seem untouched, while actually anyone who comes into store adds to this mess. There may be a daily list of chores, but it would prove to be nonsense, since last-minute arrangements are due. Work-hours are flexibly arranged, too. Salespeople state that there are normally eight-hour shifts, either between 10 am-6 pm or 2 pm-10 pm. Lunch breaks are approximately at a certain time; however, the breaks and shifts can be rescheduled by store or section managers, especially at department stores. Shifts may last longer than eight hours, an afternoon shift may easily move to an earlier hour or lunch may last less than 45 minutes, due to increased customer circulation in the store and new arrivals. Unlike street shops, window dressing should be done during less busy hours when the mall is not occupied by consumers, e.g. after 10 pm. Tasks and work-hours are quite extensible, considering the endless flow of commodities, design and consumers in malls.

Secondly, body is rationalized in retail work in the sense that salespeople's bodies should be presentable, i.e. "disciplined, cultivated and pleasant" (Corrigan, 1997: 58). Body is normatively framed in a language that clings to pre-existing assessments on service labor. Ayfer reflects how deep this normative frame can be for a customer (outsider), recalling the salespeople in the decades-old department store *Vakko* in downtown Ankara until recently:

I was even shy to enter [the store]. The staff was so tall, nicely groomed salespeople with very charming faces that you could hesitate to ask a thing. (Ayfer, Optimum)

To her, such spaces are "cold"; nevertheless, decent. Added to that, a salesperson should be dynamic, malleable (as a young person), good looking, pleasant (as a female), disciplined and humble (as an attendant). This language of good service would fail, though, without previously normalized codes of appearance and self-control, which become a prerequisite of being public and decent. Body becomes aestheticized, as "aesthetic labor" symbolizes "all the aspects of the body that appeal to the senses" (Wolkowitz, 2006: 86). It is commonly denoted that aesthetics in services is about "looking good" and "sounding right" to the consumer (Nickson et

al, 2003: 191). The idea of a good salesperson again revolves around the fact that he or she is, using Wolkowitz's remark, a "self-regulating body" (2006: 60), who is believed as well to represent "expressive but empty signs of corporate branding" (ibid.: 55).

Department stores and chain-stores are the foremost examples of such corporate identity. Ankamall with the highest number of retail workers, chain-stores and specialty shops is the right place to observe that a worker's body, from dressing for work and hair-style to accent and make-up, is part of a brand. Saleswomen wear fine, plain trousers/jeans, single-colored shirts or t-shirts -according to the popular (e.g. a brand for youth) or classical (e.g. a brand for businesspeople) style. They have fashioned haircuts and hair colors, and, either moderately high-heeled or sports shoes. Accessories and make-up are fine, but should not be flamboyant. Salesmen dress up similarly plain, with the exceptional attention paid to hair-style and accessories like watches or shoes (either sport or excessively classy). Between the conspicuity of shoppers and the subtle presence of the cleaning and security staff, salespeople are bodily plain, mentally labor-intensive, leisure workers in the mall:

You might be ill, you might be downcast. But you try your best not to pass it on to [customers]. They might think like '[she] treats me bad, [she] does not like me, [she] is ridiculing me', you know. You have to smile in order to sell. (Canan, Ankamall).

It is expected that salesperson is constantly genial and attentive. (...) Since it is hard to show some congeniality all the time, this job can be quite difficult to bear without those anti-stress pills we sell. (Özge, Arcadium)

Nickson et al. (2003: 193) mention a bunch of stunning cases in which wearing "glasses", being "too fat", "ugly", "quiet", "aged", "tattooed" or racially different kills appetite aesthetically and is "excluded" from the service area. Cases in this study, on the other hand, correspond to rationalization of body less ruthlessly. Firstly, those who seriously lack appearances that move customers are already 'excluded' from the front-line. Those people do not even apply. Secondly, criteria of beauty or difference are relative, too, since employers may underline cultivation and elegance, which lead to being 'polished'. Looking pretty is more important than being beautiful; looking normal is more important than being of a different origin. However, an intriguing observation supports that certain traits are excluded from labor in malls if they are not marketable to mainstream consumer aesthetics there.³¹

³¹ The conservative character of the scarf may be another cause of such non-employment in malls, however, there are saleswomen with headscarves, working in traditional retailing.

For instance, one does not see saleswomen with headscarves in those styled malls much, although women with headscarves are present in malls as consumers. Uniforms as well as the dress codes in retail work automatically hinder any bodily sign of religiosity or conservatism. During the field study, there was only one encounter with a saleswoman with headscarf, and it was in Optimum, reminding that the mall is also a recruiter from the near neighborhoods with conservative, rural migrant population. As for age, most interviewees were between twenty and thirty years old. Only one in twenty-eight was a middle-aged man with grown up kids. Seven salespeople were married; six had children, one (female) was divorced with children. Regional or ethnic differences are not as clear as black or white, either; for instance, salespeople's accent has no traces of being rurally or ethnically different. They have a certain degree of urban experience; twenty-five of twenty-eight salespeople have been in big cities (Ankara and Istanbul) for at least two generations (they and their parents). Finally, resident symbols of dressing, accent, posture or face are harmonious with norms of presentable sales staff; therefore found unproblematic:

Those who deal with customers should be in a presentable form. Being well-spoken, in good form [and] wearing uniformly is expected. (...) It would be disturbing if [he is] in some motley dress, as it is unconventional. (Gürol, Beğendik)

[Customers] must not see that salesperson is weary or worn-out. A smart outfit with a neat hair-cut and a clean shave would also give a novel touch. (Ayfer, Optimum).

You have to display self-respect towards yourself in the first place. If you barely have any make-up on your face or your hair adjusted, [customer] says 'you cannot even sell to yourself. How come will you sell to me?' (a female colleague tells Serkan, Arcadium)

It is good that they provide [standard] outfits. Everybody would wear so [unsuitably] different, if they chose [their outfits] individually. (Ayça, Ankamall)

It is clear from these accounts that what would be included and excluded in retail work is internalized by salespeople through socialization in the mall. Concerns over being presentable spread as a fashion and normalize among salespeople, who see each other in food courts or at corridors. A salesperson who does not follow fashion is rare. Such accounts also bring to mind that the achieved degree of self-discipline through elegance can function as a set against customers', supervisors' and fellow salespeople's power over the salesperson in the workplace. Rationalized body is a statement of individual authority on the shopfloor.

Salespeople do not seem to question the norms such as correct accent, proper make up or hair and the sufficient demonstration of ‘self-respect’. *Salesmen* are more likely to criticize the way sales work shapes worker’s body and manners. Only 4 men and 1 woman expressed direct discontent with workplace rules that determine their appearance. For them, changing costumes after work is a relief from all-day’s fatigue, or wearing a cap at delicatessen’s can be funny and close to insult. Still, customer orientation is uttered by sales staff so as to justify somehow a class-laden or business-laden and marketable assumptions on (worker’s) body. Few exceptions exist, which slightly challenge the operating commercial aesthetics on worker’s body:

Some customers happen to react to my overweight. Once, a man had said, ‘you ain’t selling nutrition products] being this fat!’ [And] How I *do* sell!.. (Gökçe, Arcadium)

My boss prefers classical wear, but I think classical trousers are not suitable for here. I move [stuff] up and down, open boxes. I know times that I wore out one pair of trousers in a month. I need to [move] comfortably, otherwise I cannot respond to [customer’s] demand. (...) I think it is irrational to have such a regulation in here. (Zeynep, Ankamall)

Such accounts retain that a liberating rather than controlling air prevails in smaller stores of global specialty retailers, unlike supermarkets and department stores, where staff perceives greater surveillance. Zeynep works for a global furniture retailer, and she has higher autonomy at her small workplace. Likewise, being formerly a nurse, Gökçe’s technical knowledge to persuade customers outweighs her overweight. Perhaps, this is because the products are the primary attraction in these stores. These places are also the finest examples of ‘personal initiative’ and ‘independence’ of the new business culture situated in the preceding pages. Yet, greater autonomy hardly brings less self-regulation. Eighteen salespeople from department stores and supermarkets were interviewed; while the rest worked in small shops or specialty stores with a smaller number of employees. Some of these see their small workplace as their own. Still, there is regulation at the expense of individual autonomy. Halil tells that the company’s management agreed with a catering firm to deliver lunch to every branch store. As a result of this, they do not leave the store even at lunch. Erdinç draws attention to a mostly unnoticed but critical detail in the food-courts: the music. According to him, the music is routine at the food court, where they spend most of the day. He is quite a music-listener in his

private life, and he complains about the restricted playlists he cannot change at workplace. He adds, jokingly: “We are learning English, anyway.”

Thirdly, skills in retail work refer to improved role of *emotional* and *social skills* as well as continuous *training* at work. Skills imply a split from “qualifications”, which are of a characteristic or former education and rarely count for the job (Nickson et al., 2003: 191-192). They are highlighted as “masks” to be cultivated through trainings. Corrigan quotes:

One knows the salesclerk not as a person but as a commercial mask, a stereotyped greeting and appreciation for patronage. (Mills, 1956 [1951]: 182; cited in Corrigan, 1997: 59).

Later, Nickson et al. (2003: 201) also realized that skills are “masks for tasks” for insufficient people in order to find a place in the new, service economy. Salespeople in this study have at least a high-school diploma and benefit from the educational etiquette they received, although their previous career and educational capital are different. In our study, there are bartenders, accountants, dietitians, once self-employed but bankrupt exporters, mechanical engineers, nurses, communication technicians, graduates from university and vocational schools with medical, electronics, or (fashion) designer knowledge. Some hold that they have no chance to be employed in their area of specialization. Some tell that a friend or a far relative encouraged them to apply. Before, they had little experience of marketing. After a while, they *learned* to objectify themselves and ‘appreciate patronage’, following Corrigan’s statement. They have changed their perspectives and lives to be service-oriented. They have started to talk about the positive outcomes of this job, while they state thereafter they cannot bear the tiresome and stiff demands of the same job. In other words, the organization of work is said to pose “a conflict between character and experience” (Sennett, 1998: 37; cited in Lindsay and McQuaid, 2004: 300), if previous educational prospects or qualifications are considered to be extensions of one’s character.

In this process, emotional labor is interpreted as the “management of feelings” (Nickson et al., 2003: 191); or “the effort employers require workers to put into evoking or shaping, as well as suppressing, feelings in themselves and others” (Hochschild 1983; cited in Wolkowitz, 2004: 77). The first aspect of emotional labor is pertaining to self-control. It is the ability to control their own state of mind in order to bear with uneasy situations and with the arrogance, intolerance or simply the

indecision of customers. 'Stay cool whatever happens in the store' summarizes the point of emotional self-control. Customers more than often view salesperson as an indispensable part of the store and see them as natural marketers. However, they are not. Every interview brings up the issue of mental and physical exhaustion at the end of the workday. Salespeople with five-years or more experience are more likely to comply with this order, while others with little orientation are stated to burst into tears and show impatience when a difficult situation arises; they state they are not accustomed to being scolded by customers.

The other aspect of emotional labor is to impress the feelings of customers. An ideal salesperson is service-obsessive, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Particularly in clothing retail, they are emotionally involved in consumption activity on the shopfloor. They are expected to and they do inspire trust and urge *better* sales by 'touching' consumers, which is a new emphasis on a known method of sales. This is the "commercialization of feeling", following Hochschild, who pronounced the term 'emotional labor' in the 1980s (Wolkowitz, 2004: 77):

If you don't chat with them, orientate and treat them like your friend, I don't think customers would walk around [the shop] for long. If you are in this sector, you have to have the gift of the gap and you mustn't desolate customer. (Ebru, Ankamall)

Let the customer feel that you are making a favor to them. It does not have to be a big [discount]. It is just the pleasure of giving that feeling. (Erdoğan, Optimum)

Selling is not the goal. Offering hints, product warranties are important. Later, [he] will come, to ask for hints, if not to buy. (...) In this way, you are [a] reliable [man to him]. (Gürol, Beğendik)

We say 'looking forward to see you any time' rather than 'looking forward to see you again'. The latter refers to a more unbounded servicing time. It goes beyond mere shopping; it is like saying, 'visit us even if you didn't come for shopping'. (Ayfer, Optimum)

Emotional labor, understood as sincerity and trust, seems to be an engineered hospitality. The aim is to impress customers in order to make them come back again and to reproduce a space, which stands out with the goods in it, as an intimate place. In every interview, trust is given a critical emphasis together with the classy service that are absent outside the malls.

The second component of skills includes "social inputs" such as "skills of personality, congeniality and good humor" as well as a "quick, attentive [and] trained mind" (Casey, 2000; cited in Wolkowitz, 2006: 54). Beyond physical strength, those

are now central to customer services, as salespeople learn how to use their “social skills”, i.e. “empathy” and “communication”, as Nickson et al. (2003: 191) name it:

Through dialogues, you [sense] what you can sell, when you chat about ‘what is your job?’, ‘where do you live?’, ‘how many children do you have?..’ and so on. You offer clothes for that particular work. You offer a card case for that office. (...) Conversations, you know, reveal everything. (Serkan, Arcadium)

Pertaining to ‘social skills’ in this job, salespeople adopt what is called “theatricality” (Hopfl, 2000: 197; cited in Nickson et al., 2003: 190). Perhaps, this is the most salient statement of transformation in local sales identities and adopting commercially pleasant and significant personas, because they believe in such drama:

A large family with several children entered the shop. (...) They were nice, friendly people. [He recalls their similarity to a funny family in a popular TV serial.] I drew their attention with a few jokes, and I pulled them away from other salespeople and lined them up. We tried shoes for each of them. I said ‘let’s take opinion of each one after another and decide’ and I sold them 12-13 pairs of shoes. As they leave, I handed a shopping bag to each, shaking hands and sending them off. (...) I was chosen the staff of the month. (Erdem, Optimum)

After-sales service is sort of remembering (...) ‘with whom they came’, ‘what they bought’. I call and inform them that new items of their interest have arrived, [items are] on sale; or [maybe customer] has become ill... I take notes [of everything]. I call and inquire after their health. They think ‘Oh! She’s remembered me!’ At that moment, there arises selfishness in customer; whereas I do not actually remember but read it from my notes. (Aslı, Optimum)

On-the-job trainings offer and rationalize ‘personal improvement’ and further disqualify less regulated work outside large retailers, malls and chain stores. Skill-training is found globally auspicious by retailers, because it familiarizes salespeople with products and customers; it increases self-identification with brand and organization aesthetically, and, socially. A number of interviews laid outstanding cases of which training changes one’s career vision. Ayça from Ankamall often talked as if conveying text from a training session; she wholeheartedly expressed gains from training and working for a national retailer. She started this job after she moved from Zonguldak to Ankara with her family, when her father was retired. After high school, having not much prospects for the future, she has made a career here, learning to use personal initiative and getting over the controlling environment of the mall. Likewise, Aslı spoke with great confidence about her specialization and her love of the job, her first experiences notwithstanding:

I started to work in [an international supermarket chain]. My first supervisor was a tough man; he used to pull clothes down to the floor and instruct us to re-shelve them! I used to cry a lot, suffer a lot but I learnt a lot from him, too. (Aslı, Optimum)

Another case is from the post field interactions with Gül. She stated warm relations with customers in Beğendik, where she learnt much in the daily process at workplace. She also reckoned women's chances of promotion at a workplace are fewer, having been in this sector for more than ten years now. After a few months, I met her again in Armada, another high-profiled mall in Ankara. She had a fresh outlook; she was content to be there and to realize how little that she knew about sales. This is perhaps because training process differs in the two national retailers. The latter employer is among the ones that follow global trends heavily and invest on staff through nation-wide, but Istanbul-centred trainings once a week or a month. Comparing these to a study by Gamble (2006) about skills development of retail workers in China, we can argue that trainings by large multinational retailers make salespeople compare their improvement with a larger world. Gamble holds that retail workers see personal and career improvements rather than a sheer deskilling, while their work is organized by the rational management of time and duties (ibid.: 1485). According to an employee in that study, "many domestic retailers, such as his former employer, did not have a training department" and he declares: "I've learnt a lot here. People make progress every day" (ibid: 1474).

5.2. *Identifying Retail Workers*

International retailing transforms the conventional image of sales worker, and alters its perceived status. Sales work is deemed a *better* social status by Turkish retailers, in view of their discussions on skills and aesthetics. A divergence from established status of sales workers is leveled by its associations with education, gender and age. Changes in employment structure, such as increased services and flexibility, on the other hand, bring a new order to "worker's relationship with non-work activity" (du Gay, 1996: 4), i.e. with consumption, in our focus. Therefore, the identity of salesperson in relation to large retailers and new mottos of organization is a *blend* of refined practices with mundane realities.

The status of sales employee has become more sophisticated. Former prejudices embedded in "sales clerk" (i.e. *tezgahtar*) are negated and translated into "sales assistant" (i.e. *satış elemanı/danışmanı*). A 'shop clerk' is framed quite negatively due to low-status and gender associations (Durakbasa and Cindoglu, 2004: 96). On the contrary, 'sales assistant' states a more gender-neutral and

“preferably middle-class” identity (ibid.), accentuating the friendliness and equivalence of seller to consumer. Sales assistants modernize as they acquire good manners instead of “disorderliness” (Corrigan, 1997: 58) and acculturate for shopping centers (Durakbasa and Cindoglu, 2004: 96). It is suggested elsewhere that “[d]ue to the fact that a sales profession has somewhat a negative reputation, and sales is certainly not for everyone, these companies are trying to attract employees for these positions, calling the positions differently.” (Adidam, 2006: 139). Businesses in Turkey also indicate that titles at work change due to technological innovations and restructuring organizations, making sales work “more attractive”³². Besides, this has now invented a language of self-image by which retail workers, many of them being young, separate their prestigious work from that of wretched ‘clerks’. No salesperson who is acquainted with multinational retailing tolerates being called a clerk anymore:

She says ‘you are my image-maker; my wardrobe is full of clothes you’ve chosen for me’. I understand her style. I am able to [advise] her. (Ayça, Ankamall)

I compare [myself] with cashiers in small markets where I live (Mamak); there is no greeting, no service. They are indifferent, reluctant and negligent; unlike here. (Aysun, Beğendik).

This linguistic transition in retail work in Turkey is similar to transitions in other cultures’ organizational identities. For example, du Gay provides that changes in the organizational culture in the 1980s Britain launched “a culture of enterprise” (du Gay, 1996: 56) that encourages staff to be self-motivated (ibid.: 61) and adopt workplace as their own through “a discourse of excellence”, i.e. increased “service quality” and “flexibility” (ibid.: 59-60). This *introduced* a “novel image” (ibid.: 62) of individual, who develops “self reliance, personal responsibility, boldness and a willingness to take risks” (ibid.: 56).

This ‘bold’ mindset and the perceived increase in status are significant in the interviews. The recruited number in retailing is higher now, and employment chances in a fine store have increased. The job is graceful and safe, compared to other less qualified jobs, having a fixed and populated workplace. The job does not require technical ability; the desire for perfection would be sufficient for a start. According to many interviewees, there is always the opportunity to be promoted if one works properly and willingly:

³² Süzer, H.D. ‘Unvanlarda Dinamik Dönem’. *Capital:Aylık İş ve Ekonomi Dergisi*. November 1, 2005.

When this place earns money, we earn money, too. (Emel, Arcadium)

People realize our quickness in service at the counter. They ask ‘how do you get this energy?’ Probably it is because I possess the job I do and my workplace very much. I have embraced this place as if it is my own [place]. (Nazlı, Arcadium)

Few, who are familiar with more retailing companies, are able to evaluate the negative side of retail work more realistically. Mustafa, for instance, worked as a warehouse clerk in a mall in Istanbul before. He went to high school in Turkey, but his family has migrated to Germany and he has bonds there. He compares the work conditions, closing hours and days between here and there. He mentions that while stores close earlier in the evening and on Sundays in Germany, salespeople in Turkey are over-active and overworked.

Changing trends in education, gender and age constructs are globally meaningful in retail work; yet, the change in these aspects at the local level are influenced by the global culture of business. However, existing factual evidence is confusing. In the first place, educational levels among retail workers indicate a spurious change in their status. Back in 1994, a study by Boratav had placed (shop) clerks, along with “waitresses”, “security guards”, “office-boys” and “drivers” in “unskilled service labor” category (Boratav, 2004: 24-25). Those jobs did not require higher education according to that; majority of unskilled service workers had primary or secondary schooling (ibid.: 36). Since then, schooling profile has improved. Retailers have begun to seek “high school graduates” and “polite” people, “preferably [with] a middle-class background” (Durakbasa and Cindoglu, 2004: 96). Even specific undergraduate schooling for retailing has been initiated recently in the country. In this study, there are eighteen high-school graduates, several of whom failed to attend to an enrolled undergraduate program at the open-university. The remaining ten interviewees have full or some degree of higher education; six have graduated from a university and four continue to study business administration at the open-university. The university graduates, on the other hand, grabbed sales work as a way of subsistence survival after school:

An [individual] cannot bear any job. We used to have ideals before, [but now] when university finishes, you will work wherever you find a job. (Erdoğan, Optimum)

Those who sounded enthusiastic about being sales clerk, too, expressed their lack of satisfaction. The university graduates again felt they were not employed to use the

skills they attained during higher education, and imagined pursuing a different career:

I am fed up with [this job]. I imagine myself seated before a computer, touch-typing. I am over with this [job]. (Burcu, Ankamall)

Turkish retailers, on the other hand, report that “mostly high-school graduates are recruited. University graduates see retailing as clerking and do not wish to apply” and they assert that “there are great career prospects.”³³

Gender, specifically women’s status in retail work, displays a change where new retailing improves the job’s status. Employment in the mall involves the “*feminization* of labor”, attracting many females to shopfloor, as Kenny (2004: 480) put into perspective. To what extent does the feminization of shopfloor can change the established limits for women? Shopgirl in Western culture³⁴ had core association with malls; regarding women’s liberalization from private sphere and female seller as a stimulator of shopping. In Turkey, female presence in sales work took place relatively late, but women’s greater participation in retail work is now observed, taking a middle course without much destroying cultural references about female labor:

I have seen that the customer buys to receive attention when the seller is a woman. But it is not like ten years ago. Back then, a saleswoman was a rare incidence. There were cultural restrictions. Women have started to pursue careers anyhow. Still, men are more advantageous [to hire], because you can’t order deliveries and physically tiring tasks to a woman but to a man. We couldn’t have sent out female staff to tailor’s. Male staff goes, although they don’t want to, yet can’t insist that women can go. (Gürol, Beğendik)

For women, retail work in the mall can be safer, compared to traditional retail spaces. The mall is a crowded place and relations have an impersonal character. Durakbasa and Cindoglu (2004: 94) draw attention to women’s uneasy relation with public life in several cultures and point out that shopping malls in Turkey have provided anonymity and freedom for women to be in public without being sexually attended. Likewise, conversion from shop clerks to ‘sales assistants’ divorces gendered meanings of the job and load it with professionalism. Saleswomen speak of the confidence they gain in the mall, which, for instance, enable them to manage stores without the idea of male supervision:

³³ Tarcan, A. ‘21 bin kişiye yeni iş umudu.’ *Akşam*: January 31, 2006.

³⁴ See examples for this from European literature, such as Emile Zola’s *Au Bonheur Des Dames* or Victorian identifications of shopgirl.

I wouldn't be as much comfortable in a shop or arcade in the town. Here, security staffs as well as cameras make me relax against [the idea of] robbery and such, as I close down the store late at night. (Ayfer, Optimum)

However, empowerment and autonomy in the mall can be seen at the expense of the “appropriation of women's sexuality by men” within the power relations in customer services (Delphy, 1984; cited in Wolkowitz, 2006: 83). Female identity in retail work is framed by a male understanding of it. Women are stated to feel safer, working in “chain stores” in the “impersonal” space of shopping malls (Durakbasa and Cindoglu, 2004: 98), dressed uniformly and avoiding direct expressions of sexuality. This is observed in the food courts, supermarkets and stores that provide uniform shirts and trousers to their employees. Skirts or similar feminine signs are not convenient at work, even when the employee is physically less involved with the warehouse. There were seven salespeople who were not obliged to wear uniformly. Casual wear in sportswear stores are considered to be uniform-like, too, because t-shirts and jeans are given by the store to incorporate salespeople in the store's image. I would remember those seven people with the color of they wear rather than their gender. Nazlı, for instance, hardly wore any colors other than white. The color will make the customer think that this place is clean; in addition, Nazlı does that for keeping the counter clean and neat. Two men among seven preferred casual wear, but one was not directly involved in preparing the food; the other was not selling food, as it was a liquor shop. Other women too did not openly deviate from wearing uniformly. Only two women wore blouses with a feminine cut and dressed up in vivid colors. They were store managers. Such cases are examples to autonomy where women can outdistance the regulations and standards. Also, standardization reduces women's sexual attractiveness to a subordinate level, it does not minimize it. This is most evident when customers assume that the service given on the shopfloor extends to sexual attention:

I can't keep with male customers like I do with females. (...) He buys, because *you* offered it. Or, he keeps looking after he's done with shopping. (Ebru, Ankamall)

Once, a male customer around 32 years old had exclaimed to us: ‘Where have the old cashiers gone? Before, the girls in here used to be more beautiful. Pay-desk girls of today are little kids yet. [I ask Aysun about her answer to this statement.] I said nothing; just smiled. (Aysun, Beğendik)

Such occasions lead saleswomen to convert sexual depiction of their labor into a “defense mechanism” against these sexual connotations and adopt a “sexless” self at workplace (Durakbasa and Cindoglu, 2004: 97). However, this is easier said than

done for young, exceptionally beautiful, eye-catching saleswomen as in the case of Ebru. She has blue eyes and a soft voice. She recalls male customers who stalked her after work, when she worked in the downtown branch of her employer. Had she been employed by a retailer outside the mall now, she would perhaps give in to the urge to quit. In the mall, it is not impossible to molest saleswomen, but it is harder to do it openly and directly. She can only be aloof and reserved against such cases, which reminds us of Ayfer's comment on the cold elegance of Vakko saleswomen.

In case of male retail workers, "men's bodies are also aestheticized" (Wolkowitz, 2006: 85), whereas aesthetics is considered to dictate on women's portrayal more than on men's. Men in customer services should be "clean" whereas women in the same sector are required to be both "clean" and "presentable" (ibid.: 82). However, young salesmen are mindful of a change in this trend as they are expected to be presentable and to follow a men's fashion. Gürol, the oldest among the interviewees, is fine with his neat appearance; he is highlighted with his practicality and authority on the shopfloor. Hakan and Murat, on the other hand, pay attention to be attractive beyond neatness. Their hair-style, fashion jeans, shoes and accessories such as watches and cell phones reveal a style in relation to brand they sell, which is in accord with the rise of "style-conscious masculinities" (ibid.: 88).

Gendered relations in the mall stimulate sales, put together with 'aesthetic' and 'emotional' labor. A shop assistant is usually considered to serve more comfortably to the same-sex; however, where seller is the driving force in consumption rather than buyer, salespeople indicate that they are good at selling to the opposite sex:

In lower strata, salesman reaches women and saleswoman reaches men more easily. In upper strata –these are also regular customers- consumer is more interested in the product than salesperson's gender. (Özge, Arcadium)

A man would be fine working here, if he were active, vigorous, quick and persuasive like me. But I have advantages in working here as a woman. Females get along better with females about food. They are good at communicating with males, too. Male customers also find buying from a female more attractive. They find the voice attractive. Men's situation is more difficult than women if they are going to be salespeople. (Nazlı, Arcadium).

Durakbasa and Cindoglu (2004: 97) observe that gender and status overlap and become a source of cultural conflict on the shopfloor. They state that it is most remarkable in the interaction of women as consumers and sellers. Saleswoman is seen as culturally subordinate to female customers who insist that they know goods

and servicing better. Interviewees had a great share of such conflict, too. Several of them have stated repeatedly that they are trained to know about goods and materials that products are made of. Especially saleswomen insist that they do not try to sell by all means; they sell wisely, that is; evoke trust and make sure sold goods are not returned. Still, sales workers are indirectly humiliated by female customers or hindered by female companies of male customers:

A couple goes shopping; but at times in which wife looks down on saleswoman, she blows up the sales. I had a similarly blown-up sales. A regular customer of mine once came with his wife. I sold them clothes amounted to million liras. The wife stared at me and said to her husband, ‘these don’t suit you actually...’ and they refrained from buying. (...) She just wanted to irritate me, to prevent me from earning that money; not that she bewares of me [as a woman selling to her husband]. (Canan, Ankamall)

Young labor force is also predominant in the mall. The mall asks for speed and flexibility, which seems easier for the young to undertake. More significantly, new positions by mall openings attract young graduates with no job experience, while public sector as well as part of private sector requires exams and longer application periods before employment. A Turkish retailer sounds encouraging: “Being high-school graduate is not bad in retailing career. We educate young people and let them take up a new profession.”³⁵ This is evident in Gamble’s study, in which international retailers in China are denoted to prefer “fresh recruits”, i.e. recent graduates from high school, who do not have any work experience and can keep learning in a new “learning environment” (Gamble, 2006: 1472). In other words, those young employees have no experience in Chinese “state-owned enterprises”; therefore, they are considered immune to “poor working habits” coming from past (ibid.).

However, much of retail work is seen equivalent of “McJobs”, which is “a career choice for people who held none”, quoting Douglas Coupland (Lindsay and McQuaid, 2004: 298). They articulate that retail work, especially in fast-food sector, is favorable to younger sales workers, unlike the old, who favors stable careers and better salaries. In the field work, seventeen people were younger than thirty, while most of them were between twenty and twenty-six. Ten sales workers were between thirty and thirty-five, whereas only one was older than forty. Generally, a significant portion of retail workers is young people with insufficient skills and high turn-over

³⁵ Tarcan, A. ‘21 bin kişiye yeni iş umudu.’ *Akşam*: January 31, 2006.

rates, although developing *skills* and long term career chances have been emphasized:

High school graduates apply for here, when they seek jobs. They look for friends, social medium [in fact]. (...) They don't expect any [gains] from this job. (Gürol, Beğendik)

Personnel move in and out frequently, because they fall into a groove. They work hard and they [only] get paid a small amount. (Mustafa, Optimum)

This is not a job for life. I moved up from being a store assistant to the store manager, but I don't wish to let it go at that. When young, it is bearable, but your health will decline after a while. I'd like a 9 to 5 work, too. This is critical. You would have time for your own. Some work here for no cause, some work for employment at least. But many of them'd like a job in the public sector, whereas for many, it's out of reach for ever. Yet, few people'd like to continue like this for the rest of their lives. (Zeynep, Ankamall)

Many of those who are employed in retail work desire to change workplaces and occupation. The new culture of retail work suits those who do not judge people they serve. Some say they cannot tolerate the unpredictable and demanding state of the job. Others think, being higher educated, they are qualified to work in else sectors. Eight among twenty-eight interviewees were out of their current workplace after the field study, most probably to circulate within the same sector, i.e. "migrating from job to job" as Sennett (2006: 4) states.

Movement out of retailing sector is unlikely for those who fear the consequences of economic deprivation. For example, Gürol went bankrupt after the Second Gulf War and started to work as a salesman, whereas he once used to own a textile export business. He returned to his first workplace, having retired as a salesman. Another example, whose father continued as a street vendor after retiring as a blue-collar worker, indicates:

I am glad above all that I have a job. I maintain myself. I like my job and I am not sure of [studying for] university because I don't know if I can attend both [work and school]. I have a job; *that* is important. (Nazlı, Arcadium)

Finally, the attempts to attract younger labor force together with the emphasis on the feminization of retail work and training programs by retailers can point to the local precariousness of retail labor that combine young, female and less educated individuals in the society. Beyond the scope of the sample for this study, it has been observed that the considerable amount of sales workers is young; furthermore, they are female; while salesmen of older age are able to persist in this job in later years. Many times, saleswomen pointed to the unbearable, sometimes mentally and psychologically rather than physically, conditions of the job and stated that they were

on the lookout for jobs with better status, i.e. jobs that are more comfortable and perhaps less interactive with crowds. Burcu's desire to be employed in a computer-related job, sitting "before a computer, touch-typing", illustrates this well. In the interviews, the oldest saleswoman encountered was about thirty, while many shop floors are filled by younger girls around twenty years old. A few female interviewees at their late-twenties, such as Zeynep, who suggested that this job will tire her out in a few years and she should be thinking of less tiring and financially improved solutions, and Ayfer, who tries to improve her career and financial status by university education, indicated the future alternatives for female retail workers. A small number among them will be able to get recruited in mid-managerial positions in the retail sector or similar sales jobs. Since the increasing female employment in the sector is as new as the developing sector itself, a wide perspective on the subject will be available only after a few generations of recruitment. However, the question that where much of the female labor in the retail sector is and will be channeled to remains even in these circumstances.

Throughout the interviews, several salesgirls expressed their disdain over the relations between the opposite sexes; for them, the workplace is where many salesgirls and salesmen get to know each other and marry in a short period. Aysun from Beğendik had stated that in previous years, some salesgirls had chosen to marry men among customers and left the job. Aysun speaks of such examples with a subtle expression that this was a clever thing what they did, considering that a career at the pay-desk is not a long-lasting one. Other salesgirls, who observed a significant tendency to marry people from the workplace and from the same rank, stated a certain level of dislike towards such decisions, because they thought such friendships with colleagues were inappropriate, at least, unpleasant.

It was remarkable that such conversations were absent in the interviews with salesmen, with one exception. Ali told that his previous relationship with a girl he considered marriage simply faded away because the status difference between him and his significant other, who worked as a public employee at a government office, became an obstacle. As a man, who also studied in a different field but ended up in the retail sector, he wanted to have a different career path that would not be an obstacle to his private life.

5.2.1. *Consuming the Mall:*

Work combines with consumption in the mall. Urry suggested the emergence of a “hybrid” worker, with less definite barriers between production and consumption as the “nature” and “relations” of work change (du Gay, 1996: 4). Services are blurring with consumption activity in the mall, and this section demonstrates instances of how salespeople’s personal relation to mall materializes. To work in the mall is to use mall space intensively, as they present, initiate and witness consumption for extended periods. The specific ‘culture’ of the mall, where impersonal relations even between sales workers prevail and space is laden with continuously changing images, effect salespeople differently than customers. Salespeople identify with these images, too; yet, with minimum wages along with bonuses from sales, they can both consume in style and remind themselves to be thrifty. They share space and activities with fellow retail workers. Salespeople who differentiate themselves from the class of many retail workers do not refrain from shopping in the mall, but from involving socially in the mall. Salespeople in the study group into two, regarding their shopping and consumption habits.

On one hand, the culture of the mall gives way to brand-conscious salespeople who identify themselves to be dependent on the mall for their eating and buying habits. Those most acquainted with this culture form a group that is usually young, single and female:

I have no time to spend for my own. I can’t even arrange time to see my family. I don’t have time for shopping for myself. After 8 pm you are out, but stores outside the mall are then closing down... So, you might be buying your every need from the mall. (Zeynep, Ankamall)

I take vitamins sold in the store myself, too. We are not on a well-balanced diet and don’t eat fruit and vegetables during the day; we are dependent on fast-food. (...) We are potentially [regular] customers here, too. I buy nutrition products for my family, my sister, my mother... I take some product to my grandmother and a friend of hers drops in to see what it was. (Gökçe, Arcadium).

Some are brand-conscious, and critical of purchasing false products or dressing from what they consider to be ordinary brand stores:

My budget is limited, but I buy [most of] what I can [and pay in installments]. Rather than buying 3 pairs of jeans I don’t like, I would pay 100 YTL for one pair of Levi’s, which are my favorite. I *know* that those are better quality. (Ebru, Ankamall)

I don’t like wearing false [manufacture]. Those Converse shoes on the young people, for instance. They buy false ones when they can’t afford the original. But I wouldn’t like that. (Ayça, Ankamall)

On the other hand, a significant group of salespeople seem thrifty and remain at a distance from malls, to make both ends meet. They relate consumption to buying for needs. Statements below are by those who live on the minimum and maintain a family or a modest living, live in large families as a recent migrant to the city, and are relatively old. Those are also the cases in which making a living requires careful calculations about money and the kind:

I don't usually go to malls. I've been to Ankamall a few times, to see around. But I prefer to shop for my needs in Kızılay. I find [there] the best [prices]. (Duygu, Beğendik).

I shop [only] when I have needs to buy. (Halil, Arcadium)

Working here may lead you to buy things you don't need, but I have learnt to purchase right for my needs. I buy quality products, not necessarily branded. As for my children, I have satisfied their needs; they know they can buy expensive items [but they shop wisely]. There is however, brand-mania in my relatives, too. I think this is about income. (Gürol, Beğendik).

As for leisure, salespeople seek a spatial divergence from their concentrated workplaces which prove out to be boring. They either retreat to their personal spaces at home or green spaces and parks in the city, which are more silent.

I don't like malls. I consider the time spent here as a waste. I prefer picnics and a peace of mind [in my spare time]. (Halil, Arcadium)

I shop at malls, but that lasts only one day, at the start of new season. I long for open spaces on my free-day; we are already inside the closed space. I think others who work here would think and feel the same, expect those dummies –mostly young-who spend time outside work still in the mall. (Özge, Arcadium).

I don't like crowds. Your social life here is stuck between back corridor, main entrance and food court. This is like village in a sense. I don't like relationships here; they are almost full of gossiping. I don't prefer to chill out here. (...) I try to beat the routine with sport and hobbies. (Zeynep, Ankamall)

The last example above highlights a salesperson who tries to differentiate herself from the crowd of the mall. Zeynep has a different educational past; having studied engineering, she probably used to expect a diverse work environment before taking on this job. On the contrary, shopping mall carries positive meaning for Nazlı. She considers the mall to be a lively work environment, not a boring office, although she has different ways to spend her leisure time:

I like crowds; I may be monotonous in my personal life, but I like to see movement around me. (...) But I won't choose a mall to meet my friends. I would only come here to meet someone I'm not so acquainted with. (Nazlı, Arcadium)

In the mall, retailing is redefined by multinational influences towards higher standardization of space, intensification and rationalization about work. These may

lay discontinuity with traditionally meaningful references. For one thing, change is interpreted as the modernization of sales, personal development, skilling as well as deskilling, and a more prestigious notion of the work. For another, workers' lives are regulated more, and the change brings precarity, intense work-conditions and less autonomy, suggesting a compliance with global patterns at a greater level. So, the transformative power of globalization on working lives may be both promising and girding, as flexible organizations are observed to "eliminate as well as promote individuality" (Sennett, 2006: 130); insomuch that new individualities rise above old patterns. This is visible in the lowered image of shop clerk and the emphasis on sales assistantship, which is about learning to assist shoppers. Communication on the shopfloor is no more understood in traditional terms, as weak personal contact and aestheticized relations between buyer and seller exist. Yet, such concerns are of secondary importance for a population that used to be less qualified, as malls become predominantly the doors of "social mobility, as well as access to cash, for young lower-class saleswomen, by diffusing an image of the 'modern', presentable and fashionable salesperson" in Egypt as Abaza (2004) indicates, and similarly in Turkey.

CHAPTER 6

COMMODITY

*“The food court is the big act. Forget for a moment the quality of the food itself and focus on how it assembles dishes from every corner of the planet. Is there another place where the quasi-foodstuffs of Mexico, China, Italy, Thailand, Greece, Japan and South Philadelphia come together like this?”
Paco Underhill (2005: 104)*

Novelty and *variety* of commodities as well as the way they are displayed in shopping malls in Ankara are distinctive features that make the mall look like an exhibition floor that is of an advanced organization unlike a traditional marketplace. First, new and diverse merchandise is made available to a greater population through the mall, while the vast amount of commodities are shelved under the warranty of global brand stores or large, organized retailers. The factual evidence from the field study suggests that, especially with regard to food and supermarkets, the hygiene, technical details (e.g. highly standardized and automated packaging or inventory-making), precision over details in service and presentation (e.g. retailer’s sensitivity about expiry dates) are considered important in order to convince consumers about the *refined* quality of the commodity. In this picture, it is hardly possible to separate commodity from the settings it is being sold. Subsequently, these technical, controllable details seem to matter more than the product itself.

Secondly, *brand* is another demonstration of the global in the shopping mall. In the interviews, brand-shopping has generally been portrayed as an inevitable aspect of consumption in a shopping mall and the youth has been identified as the regular consumers of brands, more specifically, foreign brands. As new malls open in Ankara, one witnesses the opening of several foreign brand stores that were unheard of before. Regarding consumer culture, globalization has been noted for its

“promotion or invention of difference and variety” (Robertson and Khondker, 1998; cited in Abaza, 2001: 114), and foreign brands provide much of this diversity in the case of shopping malls in Ankara. However, the emphasis on foreign goods is not limited to names and examples of globally renowned brands such as McDonald’s, Burger King, Starbucks, Adidas, Diesel, the Body Shop or Benetton. These primarily indicate the presence of transnational or global chain stores in the country; yet there are other stores that indicate a combination of the domestic with the foreign. For instance, the name of the brand -or the store- can be in Italian; yet, it might have been manufactured in Turkey. Alternatively, the name can be in Turkish, but that does not mean that the merchandise has been manufactured or assembled in Turkey.

Part of the literature on globalization and consumer culture in the non-Western world focuses on the mixed meanings of commodities at the local level and points that the meaning of a global brand or commodity is *adjusted* by the local before it becomes a part of local consumption practices. According to Peter Jackson, “even the most ‘global’ brands, such as McDonald’s or Coca Cola, have different cultural connotations and are consumed quite differently in different places.” (Jackson, 2004: 166). Therefore, we should be more cautious in arguing that the global influences do not change much when they encounter the peculiar practices of different locales. Similarly, Anthony King views globalization as a process which emphasize “a number of partially interlocking global networks which have been (...) historically, geographically, politically, and culturally constructed” (King, 2000: 3). In that, King refuses a uniform perception of globalization and tends to view the issue from a post-colonial perspective. In his view, the local is “reconfigured” while it becomes globalized; therefore he widens the conceptualization of the local, as it is at times a site of “accommodation” instead of “resistance” (ibid.: 1). In the latter, it was possible to comprehend the local mainly *under* the influence of global currents; however, with these expanding definitions, discussion shifts to a new term, which is called glocalization. In Ritzer’s conceptualization, glocalization refers to the “interpenetration of the global and the local, resulting in unique outcomes in different geographic areas” (Ritzer, 2003: 193). Seeing globalization from the perspective of glocal developments seems in disagreement with the West-oriented development premises of modernization theory, according to George Ritzer:

This view emphasizes global heterogeneity and tends to reject the idea that forces emanating from the West in general and the United States in particular (Featherstone 1995: 8-9) are leading to economic, political, institutional, and –most importantly– cultural homogeneity. (Ritzer, 2003: 193-194).

It is understood that glocalization becomes a key word in understanding how global forms take on local shapes in the eyes of local people. Mona Abaza reflects on this process of differentiation of meaning between Western and non-Western locations, and maintains that this process actually depends on the hybridization of the image of one culture in the commodities of another culture (Abaza, 2001: 114). She focuses on the Egyptian as well as the Southeast-Asian cases: When global products find a market share in a specific country, they customize their products to that country. This is actually the existence of “an imagined representation of an American culture [in] invented Egyptian artefacts”, according to Abaza (*ibid.*). Moreover, she notes that “Egyptian cultural symbols” may be adjusted to globalized tastes before they take their place in the local markets, too. This refers to the “hybridization of tastes” according to her, and she illustrates this in the Western names given to Egyptian commodities.

In the case of shopping malls in Ankara, there are stores that carry English names while they sell both domestic and non-domestic merchandise, in a similar way to Abaza’s example. In a number of global brand stores and brand commodities, it is observed that people are able to interpret the commodity with referring to its locally and traditionally prevalent form. However, the commodity sold in the shopping mall is usually portrayed as a much refined form of what is produced or marketed locally. In the study, examples constitute of food, furniture, wine, nutritional products or shoes. Here, the quality is highlighted, yet not always remarkable. These products are desirable beyond their use value; while they may be obtained because they symbolize a globally meaningful taste. The issue of ‘refined’ commodities reminds of Abaza’s argument on hybridity, which she relates to the rising emphasis on “purity” and “everyday habits of the rising middle classes” (*ibid.*: 115). Following that, she cites Beng Huat and Rajah, who suggested that there is a strong connection between the hybrid form of commodities and their declaration as pure instances of a certain culture, too.

Thirdly, the changing display of commodities in the mall demonstrates globalization in the sense that it signifies discontinuity with the previous, traditional

design of the marketplace. Corrigan wrote that different goods in the department store had been placed next to each other and arranged in “incongruity” in order to arouse feeling of surprise in visitors (1997: 57). In the shopping mall, the factual evidence suggests that goods may be arranged in a similar way; however, they form a *combination* and stand as a group of matching needs. Cheap goods continue to take place near expensive ones; however, they may complete each other and form a unique set. In the department stores in this study, there are tea cups near blankets and expensive jewelry; home accessories are located between furniture and kitchen appliances; whereas the passage from jeans to household goods is easy, too. In stores, people should come across underwear next to jeans or see fine accessories next to suits. In this way, sales are likely to increase and it becomes possible to sell less desired items along with the actual needs. Moreover, the grouping of commodities –although they may not fit each other directly- conveys a meaning, in other words, a combination that stresses a specific taste for the customer. Most commodities in a shopping mall are marketed in a *menu*; when one buys food from the food court, the additional items such as drink and salad come with the main item. When you go into a store to look at dresses, sales staff suggests you complete this outfit with a nice pair of shoes. One realizes that such a sales method is not a new invention; however, this becomes a means of developing tastes, considering the larger space of the mall as well as the department store together with the greater potential for advertising. Corrigan, too, accepts that taste is something that “brings together things and people that go together” (Bourdieu, 1984 [1979]: 241; cited in Corrigan, 1997: 32). In the mall, stores, brands and even the mall itself can manage to do this. People who are not aware of matching goods on the shopfloor are initiated by salespeople and begin to consider certain items in relation.

The local is welcomed in the shopping mall when it undergoes a standardization process and transformation in presentation and display, thus adopting a global outlook. This should be considered in line with hybridization process, which refers to “the ways in which forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices” (Rowe and Schelling, 1991: 231; cited in Nederveen Pieterse, 1995: 49). In other words, domestic products are able to take place in the malls in Ankara when they interpret the display and the presentation as core elements. If one sees domestic brands nearby world-famous brands, the

domestic brand stores must have managed this by transforming their images and services. Commodification is the “process of turning things, which have been produced, into saleable items” writes Thorns (2002: 123); in that case, domestic brands have to assure customers of their distinctiveness, style and quality in order to make their goods ‘saleable’ in the mall. Sometimes, it is observed that package is the way to turn food into a successful commodity. In terms of different types of commodities, it is seen that the food is one area where local tastes prevail to be strong. Clothing and accessories are much complicated to deal with, though, since there is no necessary parallelship between the place of manufacture and the place of marketing. Once again, the neighborhood and the type of the mall may determine the extent of tolerance to local products.

6.1. *The Global on the Shelf:*

This section illustrates the presence of the global in the studied shopping malls in Ankara. In these examples, the global has been discussed with reference to technical differentiation of commodity, the meaning of a global brand or commodity in the local settings, and a distinct display. Hygiene, design and brand are essential, because these highlight a *refined* taste in consuming a specific product or shopping a specific brand. Usually, these three aspects are observed together.

Commodities can take place in supermarkets or stores in the mall when they are marketed in a globalized understanding, that is, when they emphasize their novelty, variety as well as technical superiority over the local producer and distributor. Gül assumes that large supermarkets and malls are more reliable as they are able to assure the customer that they control the process of packaging, distribution as well as quality:

In malls and similar retail spaces, controls are much more frequent. You won't buy goods that have not been checked by the veterinarian or the food engineer for their production and expiry dates. In those shopping centers, there won't be cheats on customer easily. In small markets, it is different. For instance, in Eryaman, where I inhabit, there are many small markets and it is possible to buy bad food, while you are never sure if you can return it and make your complaint heard. (Gül, Beğendik)

The way she describes malls and other large, organized retail spaces reminds of the discussion on brands in the previous chapter; she stresses that it is *name* that attracts her, and *that* is not available in the local market:

Shopping in a brand market means safety to me, because I give it to my child, I eat it at home with my family. I need to believe in some way that it is healthy. In big

[national] retailers, I am able to feel this, but buying fresh products is not always possible in some other local supermarkets. (Gül, Beğendik)

I remind her that such local supermarkets may still be chain supermarkets that work for a limited area or the city rather than the entire nation. So, they are not the same as the local '*bakkal*' around the corner. However, she reflects the value of feeling in charge of what one consumes in the big city:

When we say small, I recall '*büfe*' and local supermarket of a smaller scale in Eryaman. There, we don't know where the products are coming; we don't know how they are coming into the store. When the news of the flu epidemic was scaring people, I saw in places such as Beğendik that there are ... that ensured people that eggs are safe, but I didn't realize such a board or note in small markets. It is very crucial to convince customers [of safety and so on]. (Gül, Beğendik)

According to Corrigan, when we buy commodities we actually buy "meanings", and this has been termed as the "culturalization of merchandise" by Laermans, relating to the emergence of modern consumer who consumes symbols more than the goods themselves (Laermans, 1993; cited in Corrigan, 1997: 58). This argument can have a peculiar meaning for the case above. In case of food, it is easier to observe the tension between the global and the local, while regulations and standards come to the fore more easily. For Gül, standards seem to be more meaningful than taste or prices and she represents a customer who values health, safety and control more. For her, these symbolize the development and divergence from the uncertainties she heavily links with the local, at least in the case of fresh and daily produces.

In international brand stores, symbolic meanings of commodities are different in the sense that those brands underline quality besides a specific relation between the consumer and the cultural references the product holds. Orum and Chen (2003: 114) point that "individual consumers not only are attracted to a product's specific attributes, but also appreciate the culturally based meanings that are embodied in the product and consumption act." Similarly, Zeynep explains that, for their customers, the commodities in their store imply differentiation, because they buy furniture of a foreign style:

We try to bring more models but in fewer units, because we want our customers to see the models that are on display in the United States. This is fine for customers, too; because they don't want to see the goods they bought in someone else's house: 'Just for me.' Some people wouldn't even tell you that, but they think so. (Zeynep, Ankamall)

The name, merchandise and the style of a global brand refer to a different meaning in the location it comes to. The commodities in the store refer to a differentiation even between Istanbul and Ankara, revealing the local differences in purchasing the same brand. Products of the same global brand indicate the differentiated culture between the two cities:

Things that we [in Ankara] don't think will be popular are ordered by our branch store in Istanbul. We rarely order the same items. Poufs sell more in Istanbul, while office furniture, lighting, coffee-tables and armchairs are bought in Ankara. In the most beautiful and the most affluent district of Istanbul, in Nişantaşı, people love to see frippery. In Ankara, people enjoy plain, elegant and classical types. (Zeynep, Ankamall)

However, the foreign style is actually a mixed style, in which a few 'local's have been involved in before it became a 'global' brand. The store mentioned above carries a name that reminds of its colonial style, yet the goods are designed in the United States; whereas the brand promotes an English lifestyle in the guest room or the office room in its catalog, thus many people may mistake the brand to belong to an English retailer. Consequently, what is observed to be a part of the global in the shopping mall is actually known for its assemblage of many different locales, if we recall Underhill's statement at the start of this chapter. Besides, the machinery used in refining the details of the product is compared with hand-made production; whereas non-hand-made details are harder to imitate, suggests Zeynep, because it costs more than it is expected to afford the required technicality. In its home country, the brand store is a place where everyone can shop, adds Zeynep. However, when such brands export products to other parts of the world, the prices go up, and the store seems to receive a distinctive status such that only an affluent segment of the society can shop there.

The cultural meaning of consuming imported nutritional supplements is another example to the refinement of taste through adopting a new lifestyle. Özge works in a brand store where herbal supplementary products are imported from the United States to other parts of the world. She states that the brand prefers to open stores in shopping malls, and that enhances the image of the brand in the eyes of consumers. Most of what is sold in the store is not totally new for many visitors, though. Özge states the difference between their style and the local style:

They see the store as a modernized herb-dealer's shop. These are not medication, but they can be consumed upon a doctor's suggestion. It is different than buying the same herbs from an herb-dealer in Kızılay. The essence of those herbs is bottled,

their dosage has been set beforehand –there is the chance to know the right dosage in usage-, as it is marketed in the form of pills and granulated herb essence. (Özge, Arcadium)

In this example, one sees the particular meaning a standardized and technical product gains. The traditional herb-dealer shops (*aktar*) remain in most cases to be less purified places, where things themselves are more important than their presentation and display. Özge stress that they even depend on their global headquarters in order to change the design of the store.

A similar shop that sells again nutritional and natural self-care products in Ankamall suggests a different pattern, one which is closer to Abaza’s previous discussion on the hybridity of merchandise and the store. The store’s name has been deformed in the way that it sounds Turkish but is written in English. Items in the store are carefully packaged and ordered; unlike it would be expected in the open-air market or a local shop (see photos 1 and 2 below). It seems as if the storekeepers want to isolate the product from the effect of open-air and prevent people from touching the dried foods. This would be considered normal in a street shop due to the air pollution or the endless flow of people. Yet, here in the mall the extra packaging of dried products refers to a display of being intact.



Photo 12: Dried bell peppers and gumbos in the mall Photo 13: Health-care products in Ankamall
(Photos by Laçın Tutalar)

Brand can stand out as the indicator of quality, technical complexity or warranty; while it also refers to identification with a certain culture. In the case of jeans, its cultural meaning, possibly a mark of globalized dressing style, differentiates the place it is sold and marks a shift in the consumer profile, as well. İbrahim illustrates how a global brand rules out other locally manufactured jeans brands. He works in the sportswear section in Beğendik, and in our first interview, he told me about the brands of denim in the department; they used to provide a fairly large scale of mostly domestic brands. He suggested that people who shop there cared for their budget and decided on the model after they consider the price. In my second visit to the store after a few weeks, I asked him about the changes in the store. He exclaimed and pointed to their Levi's shelves:

We've brought *it!* It has boosted the sales. We sell them like hot cakes to young people and students. The customer who purchases Levi's is someone who follows the brand and knows every detail about the model, style, color, and the price. In another store, the same pair of jeans might be much more expensive. They know it and seek where they can purchase it at a cheaper price. (İbrahim, Beğendik)

Having stated that, he recalled the previous decades of state protectionism, when the black market provided scarce and desirable foreign goods:

Before, Levi's were sold in the black market. You would find them in places such as *Tahtakale*, and you would wish to buy an original pair of jeans in those bazaars. (İbrahim, Beğendik)

His account reveals that the history of foreign –and in most cases American brands– brand consumption is older than the emergence of such goods in the malls. It can be stated again that the mall signifies their widespread display to a greater population.

Brand consumption also suggests that young people are the most easily associated group with brand meanings; they can buy certain commodities for the name. In those cases, commodity seems to be deprived of its use-value and have transformed into a sign of differentiation, especially the statement of difference for younger population. Erdem describes this with an additional emphasis on gender.

It is young girls who are the most attracted to Converse shoes. They are ordinary, canvas shoes if you look at their actual material, but they are a hundred times more expensive than they would be expected to be. It is weird to pay that money for those shoes, but teenage girls see them on a friend, see them on the commercials and want to have the same. They come with their parents, who try to change the girl's mind until the last minute, saying that simple canvas will get them cold etc., but it is the girl who manages to get her parents to buy the shoes at the end. (Erdem, Optimum)

Erdem points that teenage boys are attracted to sport shoes, too, yet not to Converse as much as the girls are. He states that boys are able to depict every detail in the model they want, and their focus is on the football shoes when they are in the store.

Ankamall, among other malls, is an outstanding case to realize brand commodities and their contribution to differentiation from the local. The name itself is a combination of Ankara and mall, and it has been mentioned³⁶ that the name has caused some reactions from the media, indicating its incongruence with Turkish names. However, the mall administration interpreted those reactions as a sign that the mall's image is quite attractive and will be remembered easily, even though it creates disputes domestically. Having said that, the perception of global brands is supposedly confusing in the same way the mall's name is. In an interview with Ayça, the issue of brands came up, as I asked her about the range of products sold in the store. She works in a department store, where commodities on shelves and on shop windows are arranged neatly; the strolling area in the store is spacious; clothes, other apparels, accessories as well as luxury merchandise and hobby items are displayed elegantly. Compared to several other stores, her workplace generates a complete sense of identity for its regular customers. In response to the question on the range and origin of commodities, the following conversation developed between me, her and her colleague, who dropped in the talk:

- Customers look for brands.
- (Her colleague) For instance, a brand called *Renee* is *in* the store and customers know that brand well. It is a French name, and I have never heard about it before.
- I live in Demetevler and people there don't know about it, either. (Ayça, Ankamall)

The shopping mall is also peculiar for its grouping of different goods in the same place and presenting it as a *menu* to customers, while such combinations settle as a group and start to be perceived as inseparable by consumers. This tendency can be observed in food, apparels as well as accessories. Nazlı and Erdinç suggest that it is easier, and sometimes more economical, to buy menu in the food court, while choosing items that are not originally displayed together is an option most of the times and do not contradict the fact that a group of items are always better than single choices. Gül tells about convincing consumers about buying ornaments that will make a group together, in that way it will be a better design at home. Serkan

³⁶ Interview with Ankamall Administration, in March 2007.

describes that once a female customer comes into store and buys a pair of clothes, they combine it with accessories; he states that they even give a pair of clothes for her daughter or friend. Mehmet indicates that lifestyle is revealed in the commodity:

[What you consume] is always linked to other things you buy. Just like a lifestyle, just like the relationship between music, wine and book. There are many people who prefer to listen the jazz or blues among [our customers], for instance. In our other branch store, you would see cheese [that goes well with wine], too. We call them gourmet products, and it is quite a treat for people who dwell around there. (Mehmet, Arcadium)

Shopping for combination and lifestyle has long been a habit for those who were already familiar with non-local commodity; however, there are many more instances in the mall that inform a greater number of people about the association of lifestyle with certain goods among others. The combination is readily presented in the mall.

Eda mentions how people learn about this association in the mall:

You combine the clothes, and they buy, especially when they don't know what to have. They familiarize with what you first showed to them, because looking does not mean seeing. (Eda, Optimum)

6.2. *The Local on the Shelf*

The local character of the commodity has been argued to take place in the mall only when it transforms itself into another form, that is, adopts a global outlook and at times becomes hybridized. A truly local commodity (or production) would be considered as an indigenous part of the neighborhood or the region. In his discussion and comparison of the global and the local food systems, Feagan (2007: 23) writes that the local can emphasize “tradition”, “community”, “place” together with “good food”, “quality” and “natural”, thus the benefits of the planet; however, he is aware that such distinctive quality of the local is constructed. He also points that

[T]raditional ideas of place and people and community were (...) seen (...) irrational, traditional and acculturated. In contrast, the nation state was perceived as utilitarian, rational (...), in a word, “progressive”. (Cornell, 2003; cited in Feagan, 2007: 30)

Considering the specific case of Turkish nation state, a comparison with the above statement can be made with the help of further resources. Regarding national entrepreneurships such as *Sümerbank* to produce local commodities, or events such as “*yerli malı haftası*” in order to stress the national character of the products, the significance of the local product can be assessed. However, the influence of globalization of commodity requires a reconsideration of the local. In the factual evidence for this study, the picture of the local seems to be complicated. On the one

hand, the local is simply considered inferior to the global by salespeople, who are directly involved in preparing food in the supermarket and the food courts or presenting the material on the shopfloor, if not in the manufacturing process:

I think the workmanship [of clothes] in Turkey can be as bad as we may call abysmal. The fabric has good quality, but its workmanship is bad. Many items are being manufactured in China and India; they are similar merchandise, yet, brand as well as the value of the craft, especially handicraft, increases the price. (Ayça, Ankamall)

There is furniture anywhere, with finest quality and models being present in Sitelер in Ankara, too. However, it is the polishing that completes the furniture. We receive guests from Sitelер, who sees and can easily imitate the product. (...) They made a copy, a similar model of this bed in Sitelер, for instance. Yet, they couldn't imitate its wood-carvings. Nobody dared to deal with its cost, because it requires fabrication. (Zeynep, Ankamall)

Moreover, Zeynep suggests that everything is manufactured by machinery; therefore the difference between handmade and fabricated details is not a major concern for people. A similar perception of the local was salient previously in Gül's statement on technology, too. On the other hand, the local is visible when it is able to maintain the mall's standards, and products of local producers take place in a shopping mall, depending on the mall's propinquity to the neighborhood.

In Optimum, it is possible to observe this in the case of supermarket and the food court. Onur mentions that they have to maintain a quality standard in order not to receive any complaints from customers. With regard to food, they can reserve some space for local brands that are not well-known, though. For example, there are a few packaged, UHT milk brands shelved in the supermarket together with well-known, national brands. According to Onur, they give a chance to less-famous, growing producers besides brands that already have a sufficient market share, while the significance of co-presence of less known brands with nationwide known names can be economical. Optimum as an outlet mall highlights thrifty shopping that will be attractive to lower-income population, too. Customers who come to shopping in Optimum may also have less prejudice about items that *look* and *sound* quite local.

In Optimum' food court, names that represented global brands and commodities were not common before the mall's enlargement. There were not Burger King or McDonalds stores, while pizza and baked potatoes were sold together with stores such as *İskender* and *Tantuni* Kebab, which seem to be locally familiar forms. However, their servicing and pricing has accommodated to the mall's specific status, too. Erdinç provides that taste is of secondary importance here:

When people eat out here, they care about being thrifty than pleasing their taste. A man of this neighborhood would not easily give 8 YTL to buy from Burger King; he will instead buy *döner-ayran* for only 3 YTL. He eats a nice big meal and doesn't pay much for it. (Erdoğan, Optimum)

After Optimum's enlargement, new food and brand stores such as Starbucks started to take their places in the mall.

In the supermarket in Optimum, alcohol and tobacco are not sold, which is not the case in Arcadium or Ankamall. In each studied malls, supermarkets belongs to national retailers; however, the one in Optimum (and in Beğendik) is an Anatolian-originated foundation. Onur states that the lack of alcohol and tobacco is of moral importance to them, while this implementation does not draw reactions from customers:

This is the company's decision not to sell these items in the supermarket, moreover, we benefit from doing so. We don't want to hurt our name before our customers; they know us well, and they trust us; therefore, it would be to go against our established image. Customers are glad, too, that there are no cigarettes sold. They are not uncomfortable with the lack of these here. (Onur, Optimum)

He continues to tell that the difference is neighborhood based, because in a different neighborhood in Ankara, it would perhaps be awkward to adopt their own policies:

Outside this neighborhood, for instance in Real (Bilkent), it would be necessary to sell alcohol and cigarettes, of course. It would be weird not to sell them there. (Onur, Optimum)

It should be added that, although the supermarket adopts a more conservative, much local, approach to certain products that is easily considered in opposition to religious norms, alcohol and cigarettes are still sold in the mall. Moreover, the alcohol shop is located in the same floor and is facing the supermarket.

Emel similarly points to the issue of alcohol in a supermarket and how it affects the buying behavior of religiously more conservative people. Speaking of Arcadium, she suggests that:

There are people who refrain from buying from certain retailer firms, thinking that they sell alcohol in the store. They think those items are wrong or religiously forbidden, and consider their share in the supermarket's profit at the end of the day. You see, they think the market makes profit from the alcohol, too, and its share is involved in the entire profit. (Emel, Arcadium)

In Arcadium, taste becomes more important than thriftiness, unlike in Optimum. In the food court, Nazlı differentiated between the customers of different food sections:

Kids want to eat something different than plain fare. They want to eat hamburgers and French fries, pizza and other types of fast food. Parents comply with what the kid desires in the end, too. (Nazlı, Arcadium)

She works in the food court, yet her workplace does not sell fast food. Their frequenters prefer non-fast food, familiar tastes:

This place is attractive for students who are away from their families, for instance. They find it here if they look for meals that remind of home-cooking. In the food court, there is not a McDonald's store; there is KFC, but you will see students from Başkent University eat from there, especially male students. In our place, those who look for more traditional, and more familiar tastes come. (Nazlı, Arcadium)

Arcadium maintains a relatively different character in the sense that there are both global brand stores and a number of boutique stores. Mehmet argues that Arcadium tries to attract a greater number of brand stores, and states that the mall declares that empty shop area will be hired to brands, wishing to see national or globally famous names on the corridors. On the contrary, Gökçe sees that adjacent stores in Arcadium may as well represent a lifestyle, even though they are not composed of brand stores.

Shopping already constitutes a style for our customers who buy alcohol and tobacco from the shop on our left, nutritional items and cosmetics from us, and, organically produced items from the shop next to us, and leaves. They complete each other in a very peculiar way. (Gökçe, Arcadium)

In Beğendik, we turn to the previous discussion on local brands that are not well-known and preferred by customers. Ali indicates that customer's attitude fails to recognize that the relation between less-famous (local level) and more famous (nationwide) brands is a matter of market share.

There is a widely-accepted norm that the cheap is lacking quality. (...) I always guide the customer correctly if a cheaper item is not worse in quality and taste than its more expensive counterparts. I say that they don't need to pay 13 YTL for an item while there is a cheaper option with the same quality. Yet, the customer usually prefers to buy the expensive one. (Ali, Beğendik)

He suggests that the customer is unable to differentiate between different commodities unless they look at prices; however, prices reflect that a national brand's market share is greater, therefore its prices go up, while a small producer with a modest market share tends to market its products at a cheaper price. In this account, the previous contradiction between the local and the national, which have been marked by Feagan, becomes visible, as well.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

In Ankara, shopping malls are at the first glance perceived as imported urban spatial forms and homogeneously-portrayed consumption and leisure places; however, there are complicated meanings that each mall in the city implies, as they associate with the local population, consumer habits and urban space in general differently. On the one hand, it is easy to trace economic and cultural globalization in the availability of credit cards, global media, increased financial capital at a general level, global brands, and, standardization in new urban architectural forms, design and an advanced organization of retailing. On the other hand, the local is realized in the differentiation in social practices about consumption in the mall, and, its peculiar meanings for people living in different neighborhoods, or, consuming public space in the privacy of small groups, families, couples and even in individual solitude. The mall leads to a site of observation of how tensions between urban and rural or public and private are revealed. It is also embedded in the transformation of the nature of social encounters between customers and shop workers, while both the former and the latter groups are diversified among each other, too. The peculiar meanings that the resident population gives to global actors in their lives are observable at the level of neighborhood, gender, age as well as occupational differences.

Much of the discussion, particularly in the Western world, on mall development center on homogeneous, secluded consumption practices in malls and their negative effect on communal life, whereas shopping malls in Ankara seem to have been located in niches in the urban space and public life in the city. Compared to traditional marketplaces in the city, malls highlight sharp differences in design, organization and practices with conventional shopping places. Shopping and quality are articulated to be the primary reasons that many people visit and prefer malls. Nevertheless, malls in the city have rather emphasized the use of malls' constructed

public space for socializing and going outside the home, instead of shopping being the actual motive behind increased circulation in these centers. These are referred as 'life-centers' by the developer- entrepreneurs. The factual evidence in the study provided that people *prefer* malls to other, conventional publicly used places in the city; while in fact there is not much alternative to malls that it is doubtful whether this can be called a real preference. Spending time in the old city centers is not a popular thing to do in the city, especially at weekends, when the experience of urban space is described by trips to certain spots in the city with family or friends. In few interviews, the use of old city centers of Ulus and Kızılay have been mentioned, while urban exteriors are rather depicted by disorder, unwanted heterogeneity, disturbing crowds of young people. Compared to the newly built and designed urban places, old city centers are not popular for high-status income-earners, women and youth, particularly university youth, who look for quality time and leisure activity. It is noteworthy that urban exteriors used for recreational purposes are not anymore considered an option for any group or strata that try to differentiate themselves from the general crowd. Urban space in the city is now overwhelmingly defined by enclosed spaces of shopping malls.

The space in the mall is decorated, ornamented, luxurious and comfortable. Beğendik seems to be a fine-kept part of the downtown. In Arcadium, interior space is perceived to be the everyday normal for residents; whereas in Optimum, elements of design make this place 'decent' in comparison to other places the residents have known. In Ankamall, one can get lost in the vast interiors, while the luxury of a guest room or a classy café coexists with the crowd and noise of the food court.

The overstressed *compactness* of malls stated by the interviewees is striking when considered from the perspective that the city lacked such well-kept recreational and social places. The mall provides much of the shopping items, a marketplace with variety and diversity of products, quality and appearance; dining areas, restaurants, cafés and food courts, restrooms, small repair shops, promenading areas, baby-diapering rooms for mothers with babies, well-organized car parks as well as place for entertainment facilities –from movie-theatres to atriums where shows and exhibitions can be displayed. On the other hand, the overload of activities through malls takes place in a city where daily life and social practices were predominantly restricted to home for most of the population. In malls, we see a blend of 'home'

with the public space, while a dozen of activities, social gatherings and encounters take place. Therefore, privacy in the publicly used places of malls turns out to be unmatched for the considerable part of population that range from upper to middle and lower-middle class status. It should be added that the poorest segment of society has disappeared from this picture, while the lower-middle end of society can still assume cheaper weekend-trips for the children and the family in the mall.

It is observed that empty spaces in suburbia and outside the downtown districts are chosen for mall constructions. Nevertheless, malls do not stand out as isolated places from the districts they are located near. Beğendik, as a department store that was built in the downtown Kızılay after the emergence of malls in well-off neighborhoods of the city, was already a part of the downtown and remains as a place to stop by for strollers in the streets of Kızılay. Seclusion and differentiation are not the dominant themes, while the store is rather characterized by modesty and people who do their weekly market shopping from close neighborhoods at the upper skirts of Kızılay and Kocatepe. Beğendik also depicts the changing social composition in the publicly used spaces, since it was characterized before by especially the wives of the affluent, middle class population that worked as top-rank public officers, while less affluent segments of society are seen to spend more time in the place today. The recent economic crises coincided with the upsurge of malls in newer and socially elevated parts of the city and the moving away of well-off customers from places such as Beğendik towards those newly built, elegant malls. Now, Beğendik is visited by the population that lives near the district, while visitors that spend more time in here are the retired and housewives. For them, the place functions as a place to socialize individually, chattering with saleswomen and comparing prices. Public officers who work in the downtown government buildings frequent the downtown marketplaces; salespeople may also identify Beğendik with those public sector employees, who do not aim to invest much money on lifestyle and leisure but maintenance of home and family.

Ankamall is located at the intersection of roads that lead to intercity highways in the northern part of the city, and do not associate spatially with any specific neighborhood; however, the mall is still *inside* the city and widely reachable by young people from several social strata through public transportation. It is worth to recall Onur's comparison between Ankamall and Optimum; he had suggested a

woman from rural background and lower class would not feel comfortable in Ankamall and would rather prefer Optimum, where she feels more familiar with the people and close to neighborhood. Yet, the children of this woman might desire to spend time and be able to see Ankamall as part of city sightseeing. The conspicuous design, luxury, global brands, security, privacy and safety first remind of the values of upper middle and middle strata that will be the actual users of Ankamall; however, a great number of visitors reach the mall through subway, too, while they do not belong to the addressed segment of society financially and culturally. Young couples, friend groups, young professionals, women and young mothers with children are noticeable in the corridors of the mall. In weekdays, unemployed or student population share the mall with housewives who have either taken their daughters or friends with them. At weekends, couples, friends and families frequent here. The mall is a place to entertain children, while the lower-middle class profile of many young, unemployed visitors catch the eye, as they spend time in the food court. The dominating activity is looking, watching the crowd, and eating. If the food court would be considered a concentrated public space in the mall, it would denote that people do not communicate with each other directly; yet compare and associate themselves with others, e. g. comparing one's own outfit with others, flirting or simply watching others at a far table.

Anonymity and privacy in close groups can explain this variety of frequenters in malls. The expanded space in Ankamall increases this heterogeneity, while people get lost in the crowd and enjoy their own spare time. In Beğendik, it would not make sense to argue that people enjoy less privacy of their social spaces; while a similar heterogeneity depends on the connection of the store with the downtown, although the store is smaller than Ankamall in scale. One does not see poorer segments of population in these enclosed shopping centers much; whereas in the downtown, their presence is more likely. Such undesirable population, as Backes (1997) would call it, constitutes a great source of disturbance for customers, according to the staff.

Thus, the extremes in social status are highlighted in Ankamall while the space is highly differentiated from many other malls and differentiates the visitor from the rest of the population in that sense, too. Those with greater financial capital, higher occupational status or a refined taste towards global brands are drawn to Ankamall, while families with lower social and economic status are likely to stroll in

the corridors of the mall for a weekend trip outside the home. Until a few decades ago, it was possible to consider open spaces, parks, farms and picnic-grounds as pretty much frequented public places; however, these places were not free from restrictions for certain groups such as females. Malls seemingly provide a highly privatized space regardless of social background and hierarchical positions; therefore, individuals, groups or families with lower financial and social status are able to be present here.

This heterogeneity is also due to the nature of shopping mall, wherein looking rather than spending is the major activity. Frequenters to Ankamall, similar to the other studied cases, are 'visitors' more than customers. This is not to argue that malls are not expensive places; however, it is possible to promenade in a mall without spending much cash, even though spending little is hypothetically possible. The procrastination of payment by credit cards is effective in such a practice, too. Cash payments are not common, while credit card installment enable the less affluent to indulge for the family or themselves. In this sense, the credit card hides the real purchasing power and the identity associated with that.

In Arcadium and Optimum, the function of public transportation has been maintained by shuttles between mall and certain neighborhoods around. These shuttles mostly carry housewives and the elderly, who do not have wide access to the private means of transportation often. In Arcadium, the rate of private car ownership is higher among the suburban residents; therefore, the dependence on shuttles is not always that significant. In Optimum, however, shuttles carry people from near districts of Eryaman, Sincan, Etimesgut, while many people living in these almost secluded neighborhoods from the city do not have increased physical mobility through private transport. Even public transportation to the city centers is a problem for them. A housewife can drive to Arcadium with her private car, leaving her child to the daily-care center on the way and doing her market shopping in the mall, and meeting a few friends over lunch or tea afterwards. However, the picture in Optimum is more complicated. In Eryaman and Etimesgut, male and female working population and university students are dominant; during the day, these people are far from the neighborhood, populating downtown centers. Housewives and the retired population are significant at these times. In Sincan and Fatih, a more traditional segment of society with rural bonds mixes with the above-mentioned groups in

Optimum. Especially at weekdays, the mall is described with relative homogeneity such that visitors are mostly from the near neighborhoods; for instance, a housewife with children from Fatih or a retired man from Eryaman will be able to come to Optimum by taking the shuttle.

Both in Optimum and Arcadium, old, retired men are among the regular visitors to mall, whereas in Beğendik and Ankamall, they do not catch the eye among overall customers. In suburban Ankara, where Arcadium and Optimum have been built, the mall seems to function as if a coffeehouse for such elderly men in the old, traditional sense. Coffeehouses were male-populated places; nevertheless, the heterogeneity in gender and age in the mall is not necessarily an obstacle for those retired men to spend time in the mall. The discussions over the feminization of public space concentrated on the diverse social composition of malls as well as department stores, according to Bodnar (2002). In this study, it has been noted that the elderly tend to use the mall in a similar way. Most of them take their daily newspapers with them; they sit in the food court for hours, drinking tea and having snacks or lunch with a friend. In the neighborhoods where these malls are located, there are not many social centers for specified groups, anyway. They may involve in a few practices that can be attributed to the male-dominated coffeehouse; however, the social air of the mall allows only individuated activities in private or with family. The suburban mall is not a place for playing card games, while playing lotto games or following horse races from the newspapers can be observed. They are not shoppers, yet, among the primary users of the mall. They appreciate safety, order, cleanness, while they can also finish their daily market shopping during their visit to the mall. However, such daily practices in the mall are peculiar to suburban malls, where the elderly feels more comfortable in the relatively calm place, lessened crowd, and increased social homogeneity during the weekdays.

Shopping malls, likewise department stores, have enabled female presence in the public space without male companionship or the male gaze that had been dominant in the conventional urban public places. Malls have been considered as feminine public spaces, where housewives as well as young female professionals stroll, shop and spend time for leisure. Nevertheless, the feminization of public space brought with it a differentiation process for females, especially for those who are primarily used to define themselves with home. In this differentiation process, female

customers' relations with the sales staff is reflected from the salesperson's own perception of the customer's status and his/her own status with regard to appearances and consuming practices. In that, the subjective reflections of the sales staff prevail, while this provides us with information about how a lower status group views the social strata in the society, which differ in their degrees of proximity to global as well as local culture. It is certainly a different positioning than the middle class shopper defining herself in the mall. This is how the members of a lower status profession sees similarities and contradictions with the ones they serve in the mall, as they also try to define their own social status through social distance with customers.

In Arcadium, salespeople view most customers with distinct manners such that some of them may state that those people do not share much familiarity with the stereotype of Turkish people in general. In that, the salesperson tries to imply that customers in Arcadium are more in synch with the global culture of consumption, while Arcadium becomes a constructed social and community center for them. The mall is inclusive for the less mobile (either physically or financially) population in the district, too. Many customers in Arcadium have already been differentiated by their social, occupational and financial status from others, and salesperson's relation with the customer implies an unsurpassed social distance between the visitors and workers of the mall. Some of the most affluent ones 'patronize' salespeople in a way that the staff is glad to receive individual attention from the polite customer, while the relations between the two group are still formal and simulated.

In Arcadium, female stroller is portrayed as a powerful woman. If old, she either decides for her husband; if young, couples do not interact with each other's decisions. Speaking of older customers, visitors to Arcadium seem friendly and sympathetic to salesperson's work and status, while not expressing the status difference starkly. They are the patronizers of certain stores and staff in the sense that they are able to offer career and personal help to salespeople. Working or retired people are influential due to their occupations, while housewives are depicted to lose themselves in time and space, and use the food court as a new place for the act of tea parties or house-gatherings with other women.

In Optimum, spending time in family is still emphasized, while many housewives use the space for meeting friends and tea-parties. There are those who primarily spend for family and children. The outlet mall becomes a place where

people can seek cheaper stuff, wandering on their own without direct help from the staff; this turns out to seem weird for some salespeople, who think that the social distance between the shopper and the seller should be maintained, because this partly gives the seller a social arena for displaying his/her own authority, too. It is emphasized that people here do not always tend to keep the required social distance among shoppers and between the shopper and the seller. They either do not wait for the staff to show them the merchandise, or they call the seller in traditional names such as '*yeğenim*' that indicate less formal manners. In Arcadium, addressing a salesperson or a customer is more formally done. On the other hand, there are female shoppers who expect to be directed by the salesperson during shopping, as well, while this appears to be nonsense for the staff who perceives himself/herself as the simple shop-worker rather than a special assistant to customer. There are not sharp signs of status differentiation between customers and sellers, considering that many sales workers dwell in the district of the mall.

In Beğendik, the place seems to be a neighborhood community center as well as an integral part of downtown, where meeting with acquaintances and going for shopping rather than attending specified activities for children are meaningful. Movie theaters, cafés, restaurant and bars are located on the streets, whereas Beğendik has already been defined by the Kocatepe Mosque. The department store is not a high-profiled place, while it becomes a temporary change for the elderly population. It has been realized that the place has had a heterogeneous social composition, and the social distance between customers and sales staff here has not been clearly defined. The nature of relationships between consumers and sales staff varies according to the degree of urbanized identity of customer and his/her cultural capital. For Gürol, the sudden change in social status for a government member, who moved from an Anatolian city to the capital city, is noticeable as his rural background encounters the newly-assumed urban identity. In such circumstances, Gürol feels an authority over this man, as he is the one who is acknowledged about how to dress a man of status in the urban place.

In Beğendik, salespeople pay attention that women are more liberated by the facilities and advantages of the store such as a playground for kids. Older women chat about design and order as issues that differentiate them from others and may *teach* the staff about the *right* order; however, these are not often the issue for

today's much thriftier shoppers that frequent the store. In shopping decisions, women do not tend to act basically upon their own intentions and pleasures; males hold an authority in decision-making over monetary issues.

In Ankamall, there is a complicated social composition in the mall, where poorer and wealthier segments of society encounter, yet do not realize each other much. In cases in which salespeople involve in tidying, carrying, cleaning, ordering items and directing the customer to the pay-desk, they remain unseen for the customers, whose main concern is to stroll around and look at the merchandise.

In here, when there are females who shop with their husbands, women can try to put a distance between saleswomen and their husbands at times, becoming jealous of the attention salesgirl or saleswoman shows to their husband. They are comparing themselves with the salesgirl, according to the staff. Saleswomen show disinterest and pretentiously respond to such instances, implying that there is a great distance between them and the customer, therefore, it is nonsense and a pity for those female shoppers to do such comparisons. When sales staff encounters people from less well-off segments of society, this time they develop a pitiful approach, stating that they worry about the conditions of this poor customer. The mall has a differentiating character for the young urban professionals, especially after the new part with more global brands and secluded cafés and restaurants opened; however, the food court in the old section and movies continue to attract the lower end of the society, particularly the youth. A few salespeople, who served to upper-status shoppers, start to differentiate themselves from the general crowd, too. In that, they depict the man on the street and the woman in the non-affluent, rural community neighborhood with less pleasant characteristics, while their customers are distinct people with culture, money and manners towards strangers as well as sales staff.

The male gaze still persists in the studied malls, suggesting that the interplay between opposite genders is transformed into a different meaning in the social spaces of malls. In Ankamall, high-ranked women professionals, young women with their children and groups of middle class housewives are visible together with considerable male visitors, who do not come to mall in the company of women they are familiar with, yet looking for receiving the attention of other women. Some salesmen call this practice simply disturbing. Male gaze in the food court of Ankamall continues to exist at times, as males in small groups may spend time

watching the crowd in general and watching other young women for perhaps a chance of conversation in specific. Those encounters usually happen in the weekdays, while young males tend to sit with friends, having tea and cigarette for most of the time. Therefore, it makes the one think that those young men are from the unemployed and non-affluent segments of society, who have nothing better to do but to spend time with peers in the mall.

In Beğendik, the male gaze makes itself visible at the pay-desks and in the details of sales process between a salesman and a female customer shopping with her husband. Staff at the pay-desk is predominantly female, while a young-aged, male customer may find the comment on the salesgirls' attractiveness. Such comments usually take the form of harmless flirtation; salesgirls tend to respond to such indirect comments on their sexuality in silence or with a vague smile. At the counter, when a salesman is trying to help a female customer who shops for jeans, he suggests he knows how female sexuality *can* be portrayed publicly for a married woman in the society. He starts to direct the female customer towards more 'modest' models, because he thinks that her husband will not approve that if the woman wants to try and buy stretch jeans. In the end, he succeeds to sell the female customer the '*right*' model without saying anything to customers about his own attitude openly.

In Arcadium, the distance between opposite genders and the specific portrayal of female sexuality either through appearance or clothing (both by salesmen and male customers) are not articulated. Salesmen may think more conservatively about the expressions of female sexuality; however, the district is characterized by people who lead a much modernized and individualized lifestyle; therefore, the sales staff's ideas are not applicable when the customer knows about what she will buy.

In Optimum, traditional, migrant, rural and more conservative segments of the city population frequent the mall, too, and find this place a safely liberating area for women. Young females are able to spend time in the food court without being disturbed by male visitors, while they are accompanied by a group of friends. The mall apparently does not violate conservative sensitivities of them or their parents. Speaking of females, for not much conservative young frequenters, dating or meeting with friends is easier here, because the mall provides them an entertainment place without going to downtown. The private space of mall is comfortable as much as it is secluded from the rest of the near neighborhoods and the city.

Besides, Optimum is enabling for the larger amount of conservative residents with its social facilities; those who were not accustomed to spend a day out in the city as couple or family start to do that by means of the mall. Particularly the lower middle classes start to spend time, eat out and take children to entertainment complexes in the mall as other visitors do, too, because the mall involves cheaper and thriftier options for both shopping and leisure. As Onur had stated, going to Armada or Ankamall may not be relaxing for this population, while in Optimum, they feel closer to home. This is what a suburban mall is made for, too, recalling Goss on the suburban malls.

Speaking of the changes in retailing as a growing sector by international investments, the accounts of salespeople, as the source of data for this study, prove to be helpful since they are worker-consumers in the mall. Sales employees are classified as part of the service sector, while they may also be called retail workers, because their labor is used for maintaining the conspicuous order and design in malls. The sector becomes a considerable source of employment. Regarding the social status of their job, salespeople are assumed to have an improved status by means of in-job trainings and the altered title of their work as “assistants” to consumption rather than “clerks” to the shopkeeper and buyer. However, they are still –retail- workers and they live on minimum wages unlike the supposed shopper in the mall. Their view of consumption differs from that of consumers significantly; asking sales employees about shopping in the mall and consumers returns subjectively framed responses. Most salespeople suggest that they try to avoid the mall in their spare time, resting at home or going to downtown with friends; whereas their shopping preferences are increasingly dependent on the merchandise in the mall. If young, salespeople become more aware of branded consumption as part of their image. This does not differ much in terms of gender.

The mall highlights that females feel more comfortable in working in the mall rather than in a street shop due to less molestation and personal insecurity. It marks the change in the gender composition of sales work, in which the presence of females were less likely before, since the work requires communicating with and serving to strangers. In large stores in the crowded city centers, such work was not usually a very comfortable position for women. Retail work now indicates that females take on similar work hours and conditions with men, whereas, the workplace can be

portrayed as a *village-like* place by some workers, regardless of the magnitude of the mall and the gender of the employee. In such portrayal, the privacy of the sales employee is disturbed, as relationships between the workers involve gossiping and the kind, as well. This is described in Ankamall, Arcadium and Optimum. The number of sales employees is greater than Beğendik in these places. Finally, retail work is observed to be a comfortable position in the work life of a female; however, the job is perceived to be over-tiring, therefore the staff looks for chances to work in different sectors, where the service job becomes less tiring –at least physically. Most females in the sector are also younger than thirty, and their turnover may take place through finding jobs elsewhere or marriages.

Regarding the merchandise sold in the mall, non-local elements rather than local elements are highly visible. Salespeople mention that malls make difference in the sense that ‘best quality brands of the world are coming to the city’. The way consumers are presented the goods is also changing towards a more complex organization. The mall advertises goods in a row, rather than single items for purchases. The crowded shelves of supermarkets, the close-by sections or departments in stores as well as the food bought in menus in the restaurants or food courts reflect this tendency to buy goods in combination of each other. Consumption is likely to increase in this way, whereas malls, supermarkets or stores may reflect local merchandise or varied local habits of consumption in this variety, too. The local producers may market their goods through changing names and packaging them more neatly than they would do in natural settings in a bazaar, for instance. In Ankamall, the presence of global brands is more visible together with local and national retailers attempting to transform their image into something new between the global and the local. In Optimum, familiar and thriftier tastes regarding food and national brands in clothing are remarkable. It is possible to buy non-local brands at cheaper prices in the outlet center, too. In Beğendik, thriftiness overrules distinction in merchandise most of the times, stressing the times of crises, in which the delivered and marketed items started to change towards the less expensive ones. In Arcadium, the mall is depicted as a boutique-mall, where there are brand stores, however, they are small and few in number, and the aim is to increase the frequency of classy, transnational brands in order to attract the shopper.

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APPENDIX

THE QUESTION FORM (in English)

1. What attracts customers to the shopping mall?
2. Are there any differences between shopping in a local shop/bazaar and shopping/strolling in the mall?
3. Which leads consumption in the shopping mall, needs or pleasures? Does people come to the mall for shopping/purchasing only? How are needs and pleasures are balanced?
4. Can we say that our shopping patterns and behavior have changed compared to the past?
5. How do you think the design in the store/shelf affect the sales? How does the design effect the customer?
6. Which product do you offer to whom? How do you define the customer's need?
7. What lifestyle do the goods in the store convey?
8. Why do you think people are interested in new items? Who are the most interested ones in new goods?
9. What does differentiate one good from another?
10. What do customers pay attention to as soon as they enter the store?
11. What do you think the influence of touching etc. is to make purchases?
12. How can we group customers according to their appearances, manners, purchasing habits etc. ?
13. Do you ever have awkward or challenging situations when serving to customers?
14. Do you think you are far more knowledgeable than customers about a commodity?
15. Who tend to shop/purchase more?
16. Who tend to be the hardest ones to please?
17. Who are the ones you easily/hardly convince?
18. Are there differences between women and men when they are out to shopping?
19. Does the gender of salesperson make a difference on the shopfloor?
20. How should the ones who attend to customer appear, talk, etc.?
21. How do discount periods/shelves and promotions/advertisements affect consumption and sales?
22. Are there differences and similarities between your lifestyle and the customer's lifestyle? Do you think this job has changed your lifestyle and consumption patterns?

23. What do you expect from salespeople in terms of service, when you go for shopping?

THE QUESTION FORM (in Turkish)

1. Müşteriyi AVM'ye çeken nedir?
2. AVM ile küçük bir çarşı/tek bir mağazadan alışveriş yapmak/gezmek arasında fark var mıdır?
3. AVM'de ihtiyaçlar mı zevkler mi ön plana çıkar? Sadece satın almaya mı gelinir? İhtiyaçlarla zevkler arasında nasıl bir denge kurulur?
4. Alışveriş tarzımızın ve alışkanlıklarımızın geçmişe göre değiştiğini söyleyebilir miyiz?
5. Reyonda/mağazada eşyaların düzeni/dizaynı sizce satışı nasıl etkiler? Dizaynınız müşteriyi nasıl etkiliyor?
6. Kimin için hangi malı öne sürersiniz? Müşterinin ihtiyacını nasıl belirliyorsunuz?
7. Satılan eşyalar nasıl bir yaşam tarzını yansıtır?
8. Yeni gelen ürünlere gösterilen ilginin sizce sebebi nedir? daha çok ilgi gösterenler kimlerdir?
9. Satılan ürünü benzerlerinden ayıran nedir?
10. Müşteri mağazaya geldiğinde öncelikle nelere dikkat eder?
11. Bir ürüne dokunmak vs.nin sizce satın almaya etkisi nedir?
12. Müşterileri giyim, konuşma, satın alma davranışlarına göre nasıl gruplandırabiliriz?
13. Müşterilerle yaşadığımız olumsuzluklar oluyor mu?
14. Bir ürün hakkında müşteriden daha bilgili olduğunuzu düşünür müsünüz?
15. Daha çok alışveriş yapma eğiliminde olan kimlerdir?
16. Daha zor beğenenler kimlerdir?
17. Daha kolay/zor ikna ettikleriniz kimlerdir?
18. Alışverişte kadın-erkek farkı var mıdır?
19. Satış elemanının cinsiyeti fark eder mi?
20. Müşteriyle ilgilenenlerin nasıl görünmeli, konuşmalı?
21. Ucuzluk zamanları/ucuz ürün reyonları/ promosyon/reklamlar satış ve tüketimi nasıl etkiler?
22. Müşterilerle kendi yaşam tarzınızı karşılaştırınca benzerlikler ve farklılıklar var mıdır? Yaptığınız işin yaşam tarzınızı ve tüketim alışkanlıklarınızı değiştirdiğini düşünüyor musunuz?
23. Alışverişe çıktığınızda siz satış elemanlarından ne beklersiniz?