

**FROM THE PLACE OF THE “DANGEROUS CLASSES” TO THE  
PLACE OF DANGER: EMERGENCE OF NEW YOUTH  
SUBJECTIVITIES IN ZEYTINBURNU**

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## ABSTRACT

From the Place of the “Dangerous Classes” to the Place of Danger: Emergence of New  
Youth Subjectivities in Zeytinburnu

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This thesis examines the emergence of new subjectivities among the youth of Zeytinburnu as “imitators” of the middle classes, petty criminals, drug dealers, drug addicts and clubbers under the sway of neoliberal “consumer society.” I focused upon their detachment from the former working class culture informed by a notion of modesty (*kanaatkarlık*) and their desire to enter the world historical stage called modernity. I discussed how lives of the Zeytinburnu youth, who are excluded from the wage and work processes and the so-called “city culture”, turned into “wasted lives” and argued that there is a congruity between the production of “waste” in the tendencies of the neoliberal “consumer society” and the desires of the Zeytinburnu youth to be in the “privileged places” and this congruity turned the lives of the young people of Zeytinburnu (especially young men) into “wasted lives”.

## KISA ÖZET

“Tehlikeli Sınıfların” Mekanından Tehlike Mekanına: Zeytinburnu’nda Yeni Gençlik  
Öznelliklerinin Ortaya Çıkışı

Deniz Yonucu

Bu tezde neo-liberal “tüketim toplumunun” etkisi altında Zeytinburnu gençliğinde, orta sınıfın “taklitçiliği”, “suçluluk”, uyuşturucu satıcılığı ve “clubber”lık olarak ortaya çıkan yeni öznellik biçimlerini inceledim. Zeytinburnulu gençlerin, kanaatkarlık etrafında biçimlenen eski işçi sınıfı kültüründen kopmaları ve modernite olarak adlandırabileceğimiz tarihsel sahneye girme arzuları üzerinde durdum. Hem çalışma ve maaş süreçlerinden hem de “şehir kültüründen” dışlanan Zeytinburnu gençliğinin hayatlarının nasıl “artık ve/veya harcanmış hayatlara” dönüştüğünü tartıştım. Neo-liberal “tüketim toplumunun” “artık ve /veya harcanmışlık” üretimi ile Zeytinburnu gençliğinin “ayrıcalıklı yerlerde” olma arzusu arasındaki örtüşmenin Zeytinburnulu gençlerin (özellikle erkeklerin) hayatlarını “artık ve/veya harcanmış hayatlara” dönüştürdüğünü savundum.

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## Key Words

Zeytinburnu, Gecekondu, Varoř, Youth, Violence

## ***PROLOGUE: tracing the stories of Pinar and Murat***

*Pinar and Murat<sup>1</sup> are sister and brother who are born and living in Zeytinburnu. Pinar is 18 and she is about to graduate from high school. Murat is 27; he is unemployed but not searching for a job. Their grandmother and grandfather are among the first comers to Zeytinburnu and both of them are retired from a factory in Zeytinburnu. Their grandfather was a socialist and he was among the ones who established the Zeytinburnu section of the Marxist-Leninist “Vatan Partisi” (The Land Party). Because of this, he had to stay in prison for years.*

*Pinar and Murat are presently living with their mother (their father is dead as a result of an accident) in a rented house; yet since they cannot afford to pay the rent, the owner of the house pressures them to leave the house nowadays... Their only income is the retirement pensions of their father. They also have a significant amount of debt on their two different credit cards. Their mother cannot find a job, and Pinar and Murat are even not searching for a job...*

*Murat started to work when he was 13 in a slipper workshop in Beyazıt. He worked there for ten years without any social security and or the safety of a formal contract. And he was fired from there 5 years ago, without any compensation or explanation... Then he found a job as a guard in a private high school with a very limited salary. Because the subcontractor firm that found for him the job was claiming 30% of his salary each month. After he worked there for 6 months, because of the disagreement with the subcontractor firm and the high school, he was fired once again... He got very angry towards this unjust situation and he wanted to take revenge... He stole three computers from the high school but, since there were surveillance cameras around, he was arrested and put into jail... He spent three months in jail. After he turned back, he did not search for a job, but started to go thievery with his friends at nights... He was also involved in drug dealing for some time, but it did not last much... He hates drugs now-even though he used them for*

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout the thesis the names of the people of Zeytinburnu are pseudonyms.

*some time. Last year (2004), together with his best friend, he sent a number of e-mails to Istanbul governorship, indicating that Zeytinburnu police took a share from the drug trade in Zeytinburnu. The result was that: the police raided the internet café where they sent these e-mails from and looked for the ones who sent that e-mails, but they could not find them.*

*Last year, he met a fortune teller. The fortune teller told him that he was a good and trustable guy in fact but he should give up thievery and whatever “illegal” things he used to do. The fortune teller also told him that he was a very lucky man and if he did the right things, he would earn lots of money, and be richer than anyone in Zeytinburnu. He believed in the fortune teller. The fortune teller offered him to work together. He thought this would be a new term in his life and accepted to work with him. When my grandmother learned that he started to work, she got very happy and in order to encourage him for work told him that he deserved at least 500 Million Turkish Liras. He replied: “I am not thinking of salary; I am thinking of partnership, 500 Million is nothing, I will earn at least 2 billion liras”. It has been a year and he still has not received any money from the fortune teller. The fortune teller gave him just lunch and bus tickets.*

*At first, Murat spent most of his time to find an office for the fortune teller. He also visited several districts of Istanbul and put the advertisement brochures of the fortune teller in apartments and did some other things which I do not know ... He found an office in Nişantaşı, which is a famous district of Istanbul where urban middle classes live, three months ago (April 2005). He worked for the settlement of the office, and one day, while he was carrying a piece of furniture, the people around thought that he was a worker. He got angry, stopped carrying the furniture, and, in an angry manner, said to them “you mistake me for somebody else, I am not the one you think I am” and told them to bring a cup of tea to his room. He was working in an office in Nişantaşı, he had a room, but he had no money... In Zeytinburnu it is an extreme case to have an office and, more importantly, an office in Nişantaşı... He had... It was such a great “incident” that he did not care about the money for a long time although he needed money... The fortune teller did not “like” using credit cards, so they used Murat’s cards for some time... Now, Murat is not going to “his” office*

*in Nişantaşı and he is not seeing the fortune teller anymore...What remained from this story is 1 billion 800 million TL credit card debt of the fortune teller on Murat's credit card...*

*And Pınar...She will graduate from high school this year and she wants to continue to university- one that lasts 2 years. She wants so because her school friends want the same too. She does not have any plans for future because she thinks that one should live the day. For her image is more important than everything. Thus, she always wears branded clothes even if her family does not have enough money to afford these clothes. Her school friends who live in different districts are wearing branded clothes and she thinks that if she does not do so she will be looked down upon. She also looks down upon people who do not wear branded clothes and she does not want to be seen together with her relatives and acquaintances who do not dress "properly" according to her understanding of "properness" in the public spaces. She buys herself clothes by credit card with installment sale application. And, as I have said above, they have significant amount of debt on their credit card.*

*These two siblings' mother is a very close friend of my grandmother and mother and I know them for 15 years. Of course, everyone has different stories, but I believe that their story is a part of Zeytinburnu story and this thesis is an attempt to understand their stories as well as the other youth stories in Zeytinburnu which correspond to one another in crucial ways...*

## INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, I want to examine the recent transformations in Zeytinburnu, Istanbul, under the sway of neo-liberalism. Zeytinburnu is a place that was known as a working class district until the early 1990s. I will briefly discuss the “re-designation” of the landscape<sup>2</sup> of Zeytinburnu and the recent invisibility of processes of production and labor, the rising visibility of consumption and how Zeytinburnu is re-marked with consumption under this new “design”. Accordingly I will focus upon the emerging agency of youth situated in the matrix of drug trade, violence and thievery; their disattachment from the former working class culture formed around a notion of modesty (*kanaatkarlık*), their desire to enter the world historical stage called modernity, as the “imitators” of the middle classes, and their claim to dignity. However, in this thesis, I do not treat violence, drug delirium or resistance to exclusion as problems having existence of their own, but conceptualize them as symptoms situated in the particular historicity of Zeytinburnu owing to the district’s relationality with the processes of neo-liberalism.

In order to situate my arguments in an historical context, in the first chapter I will try to discuss the emergence of Zeytinburnu as a *gecekondu* neighborhood in the 1940s. During the post World War II era developmentalist policies became globally dominant and they continued to dominate the economic and social policies of Turkey until the 1980s. (Keyder: 1996, Gülalp: 1997) According to the national developmentalist policies, these years were the industrialization years in Turkey and

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<sup>2</sup> I use the term landscape *ala* Zukin. For Zukin, landscape “is not only a physical surrounding but also an ensemble of material and social practices and their symbolic representation.” (Zukin:1991)

due to the migrations from the villages many *gecekondus* districts emerged around the industrial factories in the big cities. Thus, in the first chapter I will try to focus upon the establishment of Zeytinburnu in the context of the national developmentalist policies. Moreover, I argue that the developmentalist policies should not be taken independent from the developmentalism and/or modernization discourses that produce a certain kind of “truth” and knowledge on the *gecekondus*. Accordingly, in the same chapter I will try to discuss the definition and categorization processes of the *gecekondus* in the *gecekondus* studies of the period between the 1950s and the 1980s by the renowned social scientists who are the subjects of the developmentalism and/or modernization discourses. I believe that this definition and categorization process is not independent from the power relations and as Bourdieu points out “the act of naming” and definition processes at the end creates a symbolic violence. (Bourdieu: 1991) Accordingly, I will try to discuss how these processes turned into violence against the people of Zeytinburnu and how their experiences that remained out of the developmentalist “story” were silenced in the *gecekondus* studies that try to define and categorize the *gecekondus*.

In the *gecekondus* studies, the *gecekondus* were regarded as the places that are in-between the rural (that symbolizes “backwardness”) and the urban (that symbolizes modernity) and what was expected from the *gecekondus* people was their assimilation to the urban culture. While almost the only “goal” of the social scientists and the politicians was to find ways to “integrate” the *gecekondus* people to the “city”, the *gecekondus* people were seen as the passive subjects, who were waiting at the *gecekondus* “station” in order to fulfill the prerequisite of “modernization” to be “modern urbanites”. Their rural background and their experiences as the *gecekondus*

people were devalued and disregarded, since they were seen as an obstacle for the modernization and/or developmentalization project.

Accordingly, in Chapter 2, first of all I want to focus upon the experiences of the people of Zeytinburnu in the city as the *gecekondu* people who are not respected and valued. I will try to discuss their confrontation with the modernizationist and/or developmentalist gaze that translated into violence towards the *gecekondu* people and how they experienced this violence. Moreover, the people of Zeytinburnu were not only *gecekondu* people but they also became workers in Zeytinburnu factories. I will argue that while in the initial years the people of Zeytinburnu were devalued, looked down upon and excluded as the *gecekondu* people, later they gained respect as workers both as the ones who contributed to the industrialization process of the country and as the workers of the period of the rise of the Left in Turkey. I argue that they invested in the subject position of worker and rather than imitate the middle class urbanites and assimilate the middle class norms of style, looks and behavior (which was expected from them), they created their own “appropriateness” that is based on the notion of modesty (*kanaatkarlık*).

The late 1970s was the era of generalized economic crisis (Cox: 1996) and during the post-1980 period welfare state policies began to be replaced with neo-liberal policies. (Keyder: 1996) While the national developmentalist policies ended in the post-colonial countries in this period, the crisis affected the “advanced” capitalist societies too. (Cox: 1996, Mittelman: 1996) The Fordist mode of production which had been “based on well paid labor force able to buy its own products and protected by institutionalized collective bargaining and by redistributive state policies acting as an economic stabilizer came under attack.” (Cox: 1996:22) Weakening of the trade

union power, cutting state budgets, deregulation, and privatization began to be the crucial parts of the new economic policies. This new process was reflected in the economic policies of Turkey too. During the post-1980 period the national developmentalist policies (although developmentalism still has a discursive power) were replaced with economic liberalization in Turkey.

While it was through the worker identity that the people of Zeytinburnu like the other workers around the world gained respect and value (See Hoggart: 1970), after the 1980s with the rise of neo-liberalism, labor power, was separated from “its human context” and the society was replaced with the market. (Comaroff and Comaroff: 2000:305) Deindustrialization rose as the new landscape formation of the neo-liberal era and production spaces turned into spaces of consumption in the inner cities. (Zukin: 1991:269) Accordingly in the same process factories and shops moved to places “where labor is cheaper, less assertive, less taxed, more feminized, less protected by the states and unions” or replaced “at the hands of nonhuman or ‘nonstandard’ means of manufacture”. (Comaroff and Comaroff: 2000:295) In this new process, work place and labor lost its power for creation of “value or identity” (Sennett: 1998) and consumption rather than production became the major basis for the self-recognition. (Comaroff and Comaroff: 2000, Bauman: 1997 and 1998) Furthermore, the city became more responsive to the organization of consumption rather than production and public culture linked to the commercial culture. (Zukin: 1991 and 1997) Thanks to the rising importance and visibility of consumption in the neo-liberal society that we live in, norms are re-formed according to ones ability and willingness to participate in consumption relations and the new duty of the people

came to become “successful” consumers in order to be respectful citizens. (Bauman: 1998)

While “the culture of neo-liberalism [...] re-visions persons not as producers from a particular community but, as consumers in a planetary marketplace” (Comaroff and Comaroff: 2000:304), the ones who do not have enough to consume begin to be regarded as “redundant”, “useless” and “disposable”. (cf. Bauman: 1997 and 2004) To put it differently, as the basis of self recognition and respect is one’s ability to be a “successful” consumer now and as everyone re-marked according to her “success” in consumption, poverty is related to “redundancy” and “uselessness” and it is getting more and more criminalized. For Bauman, “criminalization seems to be emerging as the consumer society’s prime substitute for the fast disappearing welfare state provisions. The welfare state, that response to the poverty problem at a time when poor were the ‘reserve army of labor’ and were expected to be groomed back into the productive processes, is under these changed conditions no longer ‘economically justifiable’, and is increasingly seen as a ‘luxury we cannot afford’. (Bauman: 1997:59, 60)

In the light of these in Chapters 3 and 4, I will focus upon the Zeytinburnu of the 2000s and try to discuss how Zeytinburnu is re-marked with consumption and the people of Zeytinburnu as the producers turned into consumers as well as “criminals” and how this new process lead to the emergence of new subjectivities among the Zeytinburnu youth. In these two chapters I will focus upon the experiences of the Zeytinburnu youth as the latest generation people of Zeytinburnu. I believe that the new process that I am going to discuss influenced the young people of Zeytinburnu more than their mothers and fathers who already got jobs since Zeytinburnu was an

industrial district when they were young. Moreover as Comaroff and Comaroff argue generation started to occupy a central place in order to understand neo-liberalism and global capitalism. As they put it “generation, in fact, seems to be an especially fertile site into which class anxieties are displaced.” (Comaroff and Comaroff: 2000:306)

In Chapter 3, I will first of all briefly discuss the changes in the landscape of Zeytinburnu since I believe that the most striking aspect that renders the changes that neo-liberalism brought about more visible is the reorganization of space in Zeytinburnu. As Harvey argues, “[c]apitalism perpetually strives [...] to create a social and physical landscape in its own image and requisite to its own needs at a particular point of time, only just as certainly to undermine, disrupt and even destroy that landscape at a later point in time. The inner contradictions of capitalism are expressed through the restless formation and re-formation of geographical landscapes.” (Harvey: 2001:35) I will argue that due to the move of the large scale factories out of Zeytinburnu as an integral part of a more general trend of the escape of sites of production from the “center” and the inner city to peripheral areas, and the opening of a shopping mall, *Olivium*, the landscape of Zeytinburnu is re-marked with consumption rather than production. Moreover I will discuss that in the same process thanks to the move of the large-scale factories and the economic liberalization policies that became widespread in Turkey in the post-1980 period, the people of Zeytinburnu, especially the young who are the new potential participants in the labor market, were excluded from the work and wage process. While finding a stable and secure job became nearly impossible for the young people of Zeytinburnu, they were also excluded from the so-called city culture since in the same process Zeytinburnu was labeled as “*varoş*” that is a term which has strong pejorative and exclusivist

connotations. Bauman argues that “the old Big Brother was preoccupied with inclusion-integration, getting people in line and keeping them there, new Big Brother’s concern is exclusion-spotting the people who ‘do not fit’, banishing them and placing them ‘where they belong’ or better still never allowing them come to anywhere near in the first place.” (Bauman: 2004:132) Accordingly, I will try to discuss that while the “issue” was how to integrate and/or include the people of Zeytinburnu (of course, as I will discuss in Chapters 1 and 2 process of integration turns into violence against the people of Zeytinburnu) and get them in line through assimilationist concerns before the 1980s, now, in the 2000s, it is the term of exclusion and the last generation people of Zeytinburnu who are under a double exclusion lost their “chance” to come near to “the first places”. After discussing how the people of Zeytinburnu are caught up in this double exclusion, I will focus upon the relation of the young people of Zeytinburnu with the new shopping mall, *Olivium*, and examine how *Olivium* led to the emergence of new subjectivities among the youth of Zeytinburnu under these conditions.

I will take *Olivium* as a symbol of “modernity” and “development” in a place that is regarded as “not yet developed” and argue that, “visiting” *Olivium* opens a liminal space<sup>3</sup> in the everyday lives of young people of Zeytinburnu. Zukin asserts that shopping centers are liminal spaces and she adds that while they are used for collective rites of modern hunting and gathering, they are also places that produce personal desire. (Zukin: 1991) Accordingly, I will argue that *Olivium* produces the

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<sup>3</sup> Throughout this thesis I use liminal space, *ala* Turner. Turner argues that, the concept of liminality refers “to any condition outside, or on the peripheries of, everyday life” (Turner: 1974). For him, within liminal spaces, the usual social norms are suspended, for the group has given up one position, while not adopting another position. And as Zukin reminds us “these transitions are not completely fluid situations” (Zukin:1991)

desire to be similar with the “modern” and wealthy urbanites for the young people of Zeytinburnu. In this liminal space, with regard to this desire, the young people of Zeytinburnu perform “modern” middle-class norms (i.e. imitation of middle class styles, looks, etc.), and experience the fantasy<sup>4</sup> of being similar to the middle class “urbanites” who are in the “first places” (Bauman: 2004). I will argue that going to *Olivium*, shopping there and dressing like the ones who have money to wear branded and expensive clothes make the young people of Zeytinburnu feel themselves near to the “first places” that they were excluded from. To put it differently, while *Olivium* produces desire for being “modern” and “wealthy” for young people of Zeytinburnu, these desires tie them to middle-class norms.

While discussing young people of Zeytinburnu’s desire to be near the “first places” I will use the idea of performativity which is associated with gender studies generally. According to Butler, “I” or “we” emerged only through reiteration of regulatory norms, or say, within the matrix of gender relations. In other words, there is no (gendered) subject independent from those regulatory norms. In the same manner, the idea of performativity seems to me very fruitful in order to understand the emergence of new subjectivities among the youth of Zeytinburnu. I argue that by performing middle class norms informed by fantasies of being like modern middle class urbanite, the young people of Zeytinburnu’s desire to be near the “first places” and the norms these place presupposes, are materialized in their bodies.

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<sup>4</sup> In this thesis I borrow the concept fantasy from Žižek. Žižek argues that fantasy “constitutes our desire, provides its co-ordinates; that is, it literally ‘teaches us how to desire’.” It mediates the formal symbolic structure and the positivity of the objects in the reality. (Žižek:1997)

I argue that, while Zeytinburnu is re-signified with consumption, the subject position that neo-liberal discourse opens up for Zeytinburnu youth is being “consumers” rather than producers. However, while the young people of Zeytinburnu experience the fantasy of being like middle class modern urbanites, they lack the economic resources that will make them middle class. Accordingly in Chapter 4, I will argue that as well as imitation of the middle classes, petty crime and drug dealing which became widespread in Zeytinburnu during the past three years is highly related with the exclusion of the young people of Zeytinburnu from the “first places” and also with their desire to be in the “first places.” So, I will focus upon petty crime, drug dealing and drug addiction in Zeytinburnu and discuss them in relation to the exclusion of young Zeytinburnu’s<sup>5</sup> from work and wage processes and also from the so-called “city culture”. I believe that while the youth of Zeytinburnu desire to be in the “first places” and want to be like them they also bear considerable anger towards the people of the “first places”. Thus, I argue that petty crime, drug dealing and drug addiction are situated in this ambiguous desire and anger relation with the “first places”. Accordingly, in the fourth chapter, first of all, I will argue that in Zeytinburnu “petty crime” and drug dealing take revengeful forms towards the middle classes and the system that excludes the young people of Zeytinburnu. Moreover I will also discuss how the young men of Zeytinburnu through these practices find the material possibility to imitate the “modern” middle class urbanites. Accordingly I will argue that thievery –although on one hand is a means of taking revenge as well as being generating income- is very much related to “stealing” life-styles of the “modern” middle class urbanites. Moreover, I will also focus upon the

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<sup>5</sup> It needs to be added that, in this chapter I will mainly focus upon the experiences of the young men because young women in Zeytinburnu cannot spend much time out of their houses unless they are working or going to school due to the honor codes that imprison women in the domestic sphere.

engagement of the young men of Zeytinburnu in the club culture both as drug dealers and drug addicts after the availability of the drug trade in general, and ecstasy in particular within the borders of Zeytinburnu. I will argue that clubs, like *Olivium*, are the liminal spaces for the young men of Zeytinburnu where they experience the fantasy of being like the middle class youth.

Finally, at the end of the “story”, I will try to discuss how the strength of the desire and anger relation with the “first places” turned the lives of the “Zeytinburnu boys” into “wasted lives”. I will argue that although “Zeytinburnu boys” have the possibility of accumulating money through drug dealing and thievery thanks to the strength of their desire to be like the middle class urbanites or say, the people of the “first places”, they do not accumulate money but spend it immediately by going to expensive clubs, buying drugs and branded clothes which will make them feel near the “first places”. I will claim that since they do not invest in their futures (i.e. they “consume” their bodies with drugs, they do not have any future plans, they do not accumulate money, etc.) and do not tolerate any delays in the satisfactions of their desire, the lives of the “Zeytinburnu boys” have turned into “wasted lives”. Put differently, I argue that there is a peculiar congruity between the production of “waste” in the tendencies of the neoliberal “consumer society” – which are formed according to the norms of the neoliberal “consumerism”- and the desires of the Zeytinburnu youth to be in the “first places” and this congruity turned the young people of Zeytinburnu’s (especially boys’) lives into “wasted lives”.

***On the edge of insider/outsider: Being a Researcher from Zeytinburnu in Zeytinburnu***

*The moment the insider steps out from the inside she's no longer a mere insider. She necessarily looks in from the outside while also looking out from the inside. Not quite the same, not quite the other, she stands in that undetermined threshold place where she constantly drifts in and out. Undercutting the inside/outside opposition, her intervention is necessarily that of both not quite an insider and not quite an outsider. She is, in other words, this inappropriate other or same who moves about with always at least two gestures: that of affirming 'I am like you' while persisting in her difference and that of reminding 'I am different' while unsettling every definition of otherness arrived at.*

*(Minh-ha: 1988)*

First of all, I have to say that this “research” does not have an exact schedule. I was born and raised in Zeytinburnu and thus as well as the “formal” interviews that I conducted, this thesis draws on my own experiences as a person from Zeytinburnu and all of my relatives’, friends’ and neighbors’ “stories”. The main arguments and questions of this thesis are formed according to my own experiences as a person from Zeytinburnu that intersect with the “stories” of the other people from Zeytinburnu.

However, for the thesis project I carried out in-depth interviews with 19 young people. 5 of the interviews were conducted in the spring of 2003 for my *Directed Readings* course, 13 of them in the summer of 2004. While I was working on my thesis I felt the need to have a chapter on the first generation immigrants and in January 2004 I interviewed 8 first generation people from Zeytinburnu. Among the interviews with the younger generation, there are also two focus group interviews. While in the first one there were three young men, in the second one there were five

young men. All of the interviews were recorded and nobody hesitated to speak to a recorder, even while they were telling about their or others “criminal activities”.

I have to add that, as a person from Zeytinburnu to conduct a field work in Zeytinburnu had both advantages and disadvantages. First of all, my own experiences as a person from Zeytinburnu turned into an advantage during the research processes. Because I knew the historical context of Zeytinburnu and I could easily follow its transformation. Moreover, I had an idea of the experiences of the young people of Zeytinburnu, thus we could discuss being a young person from Zeytinburnu in depth and since I was not an outsider or one of the middle class urbanites with whom they have an ambiguous relation, they did not hesitate to talk to me. It might not be so easy for a researcher who is not from Zeytinburnu to ask questions on the violence of the modernizationist and /or developmentalist gazes that look down upon the young people of Zeytinburnu since the questions on this “issue” have the potential to exert violence towards the people of Zeytinburnu. However, it was one of the most important issues in my mind while I was thinking about this thesis and also I believe that it is important to “understand” how people of Zeytinburnu “feel” under the hegemony of the developmentalist and/or modernizationist discourses. In order not to put a distance and in order to refrain from “exerting” violence towards my interviewees, I also shared with them my own experiences and “stories” of confronting those gazes.

However, being a person from Zeytinburnu also turned into a difficulty. While it was easy for me to interview with the young women, it was not so easy interview the young men. Although I was conducting a research there, I was not only a researcher for them but also I was a person from Zeytinburnu and most importantly a woman

from Zeytinburnu. The Zeytinburnu women who chat with men (especially with those who spend their time in the street corners and regarded as vagrants) are regarded as dishonorable. So, it was not easy for me to ask them for an interview. Of course, these interviews opened liminality in our relations. For instance, during the interview, I was a researcher and they were speaking with me as if we had just met. However, since I go to Zeytinburnu regularly (my parents still live in Zeytinburnu) I continue to see them in the streets and neither they nor I speak to one another again. In fact when I tried to talk to them, but this time not as a researcher, they turned their faces away. Because, they think that I am a woman of Zeytinburnu and they were the young men of Zeytinburnu for whom it is dishonorable to talk to a woman. I believe that this research may have been better if I had to chance to talk with them more.

Moreover, in the interviews I was uncomfortable while I was asking questions on their criminal “activities” and drug addiction. If I were an outsider researcher it would be easier to ask questions on these issues since I would not see them (at least confront with them) often the research project ended. However, in this case I did not want gather too detailed information about their illegal “activities” because we have a number of common acquaintances and I thought if I knew too much, this could cause anxiety for both parties. Since I go to Zeytinburnu regularly, I could easily turn into a suspect if a rumor were heard about them. Furthermore, I think that it is hard in general to interview people on their criminal “activities” since they would be nervous if the researcher would use the information against them. So, during the interviews I always tried to convince them I would never use the interviews against them and in such cases I tried to put a distance and ask questions from a researcher position not as a person from Zeytinburnu.

I could also further my research by going to the clubs, which the young men of Zeytinburnu frequent, and observe them there. However, I was sure that there, I would not be a researcher but I am a woman from Zeytinburnu and it is not “appropriate” for a woman of Zeytinburnu to go to such places. If I went there, they would question me and think that I was a “dishonorable” woman. Thus, I had to make a choice, between furthering my research in the clubs or remaining as an “honorable” woman and since my parents still live in Zeytinburnu, I chose the latter.

## CHAPTER 1: THE DISCURSIVE AND SPATIAL CONSTRUCTION OF ZEYTINBURNU

In this chapter, I will begin by briefly discussing the establishment of Zeytinburnu as a *gecekondu* district in relation to the developmentalist policies that were on the agenda during the post World War II period in Turkey. I argue that, the discussion of the developmentalist policies should be embedded in an analysis of the discourses of developmentalism and/or modernization that produce specific knowledge and “truth” on the *gecekondus* which are translated into different forms of violence against the *gecekondu* people. In order to examine the knowledge production process on *gecekondu* neighborhoods and *gecekondu* people, I will focus upon the representations of the *gecekondus* in the academic studies of the period between the 1950s and the 1980s conducted under the influence of the developmentalism and/or modernization discourses. Finally, I will try to discuss how the *gecekondu* representations in the *gecekondu* studies silenced the *gecekondu* people and shadowed their experiences that remained out of the “developmentalist story”.

### *1.1 The Establishment of Zeytinburnu as a Gecekondu District*

Zeytinburnu is one the earliest *gecekondu*<sup>6</sup> districts in Turkey and according to some sources the first *gecekondus* of Turkey started to be constructed in Zeytinburnu in 1945<sup>7</sup>. (Gökçen: 2003, Tekeli: 1994) The major reason that attracted the rural

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<sup>6</sup> Gecekondu was translated to English as “landed overnight”, “built overnight”, “settled at night” and “perched on at night”.

<sup>7</sup> I have to add that, for some resources it is not clear where the first *gecekondus* built. (i.e. Şenyapılı: 1981, Karpat: 1976) However, everyone who studies the *gecekondu* settlements argue that the first shantytown was Zeytinburnu.

migrants to Zeytinburnu was the labor needs of the large industrial factories in the vicinity of Zeytinburnu. While there were leather workshops that were built in the late Ottoman period on the coastal side of Zeytinburnu, according to the national development policies numerous new factories were established during the late 1940s and the early 1970s in Zeytinburnu. (Yelmen: 2003) In 1947 the Municipality Public Works Directory (*Belediye İmar Müdürlüğü*) published a decree and asserted that the organized industry regions of Istanbul would be out of the city walls and they would be settled around Eyüp, Edirne-Rami Road, Davut Paşa Road, Kazlıçeşme<sup>8</sup>, Maltepe, Bakırköy's coastal areas, vicinity of Yeşilköy, Küçükçekmece and Zeytinburnu, the region between Kartal and Maltepe, the regions around Pendik and Kadıköy. (Şenyapılı: 1981) With the establishment of the factories following the decree of the Municipality Public Works Directory, Istanbul and particularly Zeytinburnu began to pull the rural migrants who came to Istanbul in search of jobs. Along with the 1947 regulations of the Municipality of Public Works Directory, the Advisors' Committee (*Müşavirler Heyeti*) which was responsible for the development and construction of public facilities and city planning of Istanbul, drew attention to the region between Zeytinburnu and Florya as a potential industrial area. Consequently between the years 1955 and 1973 325 new factories and workshops were built in Zeytinburnu. (Akbulut: 2003) In this period the number of *gecekondu*s increased rapidly. While there were 3218 *gecekondu*s in Zeytinburnu in 1949, in 1957 this number rose to 26.000 houses, the majority of which were *gecekondu*. (Akbulut: 2003) As well as the increase of the *gecekondu* houses, the sharp increase

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<sup>8</sup> Kazlıçeşme is the coastal part of Zeytinburnu.

in the population in the initial years shows the rapidity of the settlement process.<sup>9</sup>

(See Table 1)

| <b>YEAR</b> | <b>POPULATION</b> |
|-------------|-------------------|
| 1948        | 8 970             |
| 1949        | 13 000            |
| 1950        | 17 000            |
| 1955        | 42 500            |
| 1957        | 50 000            |

Table 1 (Kaya: 2005)

The new immigrants soon became workers in these factories<sup>10</sup>. This workerization process was so rapid that, some of the people became workers before they could even settle properly. For instance, a first generation immigrant's account of the period is as follows:

“My mother-in-law came when the first gecekondü houses were built, back then they were looking for workers in Fuat Bey, she started working immediately. Everyday in the morning they used to go to work, returning from work in the evening they saw their houses demolished. At last, when they realized that it wouldn't work like that, that they had to rebuild it again and again, they moved to their relatives' neighborhood.

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<sup>9</sup> In the initial years most of the the population of Zeytinburnu consisted of migrants from Thrace, the Karadeniz region, and other parts of Anatolia and the Muslims who migrated from the foreign countries (Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Albania) (Hart: 1969)

<sup>10</sup> According to the 1965 census, 80% of Zeytinburnu inhabitants were wagedworkers. And among these workers, 50 % were industrial workers. (Akçay:1974)

Among them-I mean the relatives- there were some who didn't work to keep an eye on the houses, for them not to be demolished".<sup>11</sup>

We can deduce the organic and central role of the factories during those initial years from the striking fact that the rural migrants built their houses with the remnants of the factory constructions. Moreover, during the settlement process, factory owners gave advance payments to workers who wanted to build *gecekondu*. (Kurucu: 1964) In these years the houses had one or two rooms with a yard and a common toilet in the yards. Later, as the *gecekondu* people started to earn money, the *gecekondu* houses started to be re-built or renovated, using construction materials such as briquette and cement and additional rooms were built. There was no water or electricity nor infrastructure of these houses. At this very early stage the inhabitants used to carry water from the limited number of wells. After the mid-1960s, street fountains were constructed in every street and these lasted until the early 1970s. Infrastructure "arrived" in the mid 1970s.

During these initial years *gecekondu* demolishing was widespread in Zeytinburnu. When *gecekondus* had begun to be built the gendarme forces would destroy the *gecekondus*. However after they went, the *gecekondu* dwellers would rebuild their houses. As a woman who was a witness describes the process, "*First, the gendarme came nearly everyday to destroy our houses and, then, leave. At those times, they were harsher to us; yet, when they were about to leave, the soldiers were saying*

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<sup>11</sup> "Kayınvalidem konduların ilk konmaya başladığı zamanlarda gelmiş, Fuat Bey'de de işçi aranıyormuş o zamanlar, hemen işe başlamış. Sabah işe gidiyorlarmış, akşam dönüşte bir bakıyorlar evleri yıkılmış. En sonunda bakmışlar olucak gibi değil, her seferinde yeniden yapmak zorunda kalıyorlar, yukarı akrabalarının yanlarına taşınmışlar. Onlardan – akrabalarından-çalışmayanlar varmış evleri bekliyorlarmış, yıkılmasın diye." Interview on 10.01.2004 with Ayşe ( female, 67)

“now we have scrapped the buildings, we had to; but do build them again”. Later, and gradually, they stopped coming.”<sup>12</sup> In 1948, the government decided to end the policy of demolishing the *gecekondus*. The story of this decision is told as follows in a book on Zeytinburnu published by the Zeytinburnu Municipality, and containing various articles on the past and present of Zeytinburnu:

“[t]he first *gecekondus* were in Zeytinburnu and they were near the roads.

At first gendarme watched this process in awe, however their numbers increased daily and therefore the gendarme had to intervene in the process and they called the governor. The governor wanted to demolish the houses but the politicians intervened and therefore the government could not do anything. [...] The winter and spring of 1947 passed with the quarrels of the *gecekondus* people and the gendarmes. In May 1947 it was announced that the *gecekondus* were to be demolished. The *gecekondus* people found themselves in a state of panic. By this time, a newspaper’s administrative board advised them to visit the head of the Turkish National Assembly. One of the *gecekondus* people visited the head of the Turkish National Assembly and convinced him to visit Zeytinburnu. [...] Soon after, he came to visit Zeytinburnu but his car could not enter the *gecekondus* neighborhood because of the mud. And there he promised the *gecekondus* people that he would not let the *gecekondus* to be demolished. He keeps his word and the *gecekondus*

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<sup>12</sup> “İlk başlarda jandarmalar nerdeyse her gün geliyorlardı, evlerimizi yıkıp gidiyorlardı, o ilk zamanlar daha sertlerdi ama giderken de biz şimdi yıkıyoruz, yıkmak zorundayız ama siz tekrar yapın diyorlardı, sonra sonra kesildi.” Interview on 05.01.2004 with Bahriye (Female, 65)

were not demolished anymore in Zeytinburnu.” (Gökçen: 2003:182, *translation mine*)<sup>13</sup>

While the story above describes this process as a benevolent attitude of a statesman, it overlooks the need for labor power for the industrial factories in the vicinity that the *gecekondu* people provided and also ignores the role attributed to the migrants in the development project of Turkey. The *gecekondu* people of Zeytinburnu were allowed to settle here, because, they became the workers of the factories or workshops around and met the labor deficit. Furthermore, they were ready to work under conditions that the city dwellers would possibly reject. For instance, Hart who conducted an anthropological study in Zeytinburnu in the 1960s writes that, “[t]he writer of these lines once said to a municipal official that the people of Zeytinburnu provided the need for 9000 workers in Istanbul. If you remove these people from their squatter houses and destroy their houses, the factories around will completely loose their workers.”<sup>14</sup> (Hart: 1969:6, *translation mine*) In support of this argument we also see that the factory owners played an important role in preventing the demolition of the *gecekondus*. For instance, the *gecekondu* people’s first meeting with the governor when they discussed the demands of the *gecekondu* people was

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<sup>13</sup> “ Zeytinburnun’da yapılan ilk gecekondu yok kenarına kurulmuştur. İlk önce jandarma bu işi hayretle karşılamış fakat gün geçtikçe bunların sayılarının artması jandarmayı müdahaleye mecbur etmiş, evvela kaymakam sonra da valiye haber verilmişti. Vali bunları yıktırmak üzere teşebbüse geçmiş ise de işe politika karıştırıldığından yıkım yaptırılammıştı. 1948 yılının Mayıs ayında [ ... ] gecekonduların tümüyle yıkılacağı anons edildi. Halk paniğe kapıldı. Bir gazete idarehanesinden Büyük Millet Meclisi Reisi’ne gitmeleri tavsiye olundu. [...] Meclis Reisi, Zeytinburnu’na gelir ama arabası esasen pek fazla içeriye giremez. Çünkü o tarihte Zeytinburnu diz boyu çamurdu. Meclis Reisi orda halkın evlenirinin yıkılmayacağına söz verir. Meclis başkanı sözünü tutar ve o tarihten sonra Zeytinburnu’nda gecekondu yıkılmaz.”

<sup>14</sup> “Bu satırların yazarı belediyede çalışan bir şahsa, Zeytinburnu’nda oturan insanların 9000 kişilik bir işgücü sağladığını söylemiştir. ‘Eğer bu insanları gecekondularından çıkarır ve evlerini yıkarsanız, civar fabrikalar işçilerini tamamen kaybedecektir’ demiştir.”

held in a leather factory. (Gökçen: 2003, Şenyapılı: 1981) Factory owners did not want the migrants to leave Zeytinburnu because, as Hart asserts, they would lose their workers who were ready and eager to work for low wages and who did not need extra money for transportation. Their support for the settlement of the *gecekondu*s shows in the narratives of the first generation immigrants. The factory owners were narrated as the “benevolent” people who supported the *gecekondu* people during hard times in the initial years. The first generation immigrants saw the factory owners as people who made their faces smile. As a first generation immigrant describe that period:

“These leather factories and this Fuat Bey factory, made a lot of people’s faces smile, enabled many to retire with pensions, provided many with the chance to earn their daily bread. For instance, the employees were provided with storable food there. My mother used to come home, for example on a day preceding the Bairam, with a number of sacks filled with provisions. Thanks to the tanneries and Fuat Bey’s factory everyone could make a living during that period.”<sup>15</sup>

The story that tells the end of the *gecekondu* demolition policies in Zeytinburnu gives us clues about the dispute between the governor and the politicians. As we shall see in the following part, when the *gecekondu*s began to be constructed, the CHP (Republican People’s Party) was in power, however in the next elections, the DP

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<sup>15</sup> “Bu deri fabrikaları, bu Fuat Bey Zeytinburnu’nda çok insanın yüzünü güldürdü. Çok kişiyi emekli yaptı, çok kişiye ekmek verdi. Mesela, erzak veriyorlardı orda çalışanlara, annem bir gelirdi eve, bayram üstü falan mesela, torbalar dolusu erzakla. Tabakhaneler, bir de Fuat Bey fabrikası sayesinde herkesin karnı doymuş o zaman.” Interview on 10.01.2004 with Ayşe. (Female, 67)

(Democrat Party) won the elections and, the DP's policy towards the *gecekondus* was different than that of the CHP and the state élites, who in fact had an organic relation with the CHP<sup>16</sup>. In a nutshell, I argue that the permission that is given to migrants to settle in Zeytinburnu is not independent from the development policies of the Turkish Republic and the construction of the *gecekondus* districts in Turkey as a whole. However, I have to note that, by arguing so, I do not claim that the “story” of Zeytinburnu is not different than that of the other *gecekondus* districts. Of course, Zeytinburnu has a distinct and specific history, which distinguishes it from the other *gecekondus* districts. Yet, in order to contextualize the specific history of Zeytinburnu, I believe that we should discuss the emergence of the *gecekondus* districts in Turkey in relation to the developmentalist policies that were on the agenda in those years.

### ***1.2 The Establishment of the Gecekondus in Turkey***

The second half of the 1940s, but more specifically, the 1950s, witnessed the beginning of large-scale migration from the rural areas to the big cities. According to the social scientists who study the rural-urban migration and the emergence of *gecekondus* neighborhoods the main reasons for rural migration were the radical structural changes in the rural areas and the emergence of the new industrial factories in big cities. In line with the developmental policies, and with the support of Marshall Aid, thousands of new tractors, fertilizers and new agricultural products

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<sup>16</sup> 1950 elections of Turkey are widely accepted as a turning point in Turkey's political life. (Keyder: 1987, Zührer:1993, Mardin:2001) As Keyder puts it, “the elections of 1950 constitute a watershed in Turkish history. Until then politics had been the business of the elite, with power being transferred within the bureaucracy, or shared with a bourgeoisie who were few enough to permit face-to-face negotiation. Politics had not been differentiated as a profession within the bureaucratic polity” (Keyder:1987)

were introduced in the villages of Turkey and these technological innovations decreased the need for agricultural labor. Thousands lost their jobs with the mechanization of the agriculture. (Kıray: 1970, Karpat: 1976, Şenyapılı: 1981, Keyder: 1987, İçduygu: 1998) Şenyapılı argues that during the late 1940s and the 1950s, the changes in agriculture were forcing the rural people to migrate to the cities. However, since the facilities in the city were not developed migration to the city was not an alternative for the villager families in the early 1940s. Thus, in these years only the heads of the families came to city to work. However, she adds that a new process began in the period between, the 1950s and the 1960s. These years were the years of rapid industrialization in Turkey, and while in this period the village was still pushing, this time the urban areas were also pulling. (Şenyapılı: 1981).

As Keyder puts it, the level of entrepreneurial activity experienced a totally new dimension during the 1950s. He adds that “of the present ‘captains of industry’ in Turkey, most started their business or achieved their significant accumulation during the 1950s. There are very few important manufacturing concerns which trace their history back to the pre-1950 period.” (Keyder: 1987:137) As a result of the rapid industrialization, the newly industrializing cities started to attract villagers<sup>17</sup>, and in a short time the urban populations increased drastically. According to the information that Şenyapılı gives, in this period, the population of the cities of Turkey rose 80.2%. (Şenyapılı: 1981) Or, as Keyder writes, between 1950 and 1960 the population of the four big cities rose by 75% and during this period one of every 10 villagers had migrated to the big cities. (Keyder: 1987)

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<sup>17</sup> During the second half of 1950s the number of workers who worked in the factories which employed more than ten people rose from 163.000 to 324.000. (Keyder:1987:136)

The rural population that had migrated to cities, both as a result of the scarcity of housing in the city and their limited economic recourses, constructed *gecekondu* houses. Law 775, of July 20, 1966<sup>18</sup>, defines the *gecekondus* as “the dwellings erected, on the land and lots which do not belong to the builder, without the consent of the owner, and without observing the laws and regulations concerning construction and building.” (Karpat: 1976:16) They were constructed mostly on the outskirts of the cities and in the vicinity of industrial centers.<sup>19</sup> As Karpat argues, during the 1950s “[i]t has not been unusual to see empty hills covered over a single night with a great number of shacks in which tens of thousands of people moved with their belongings in a matter of hours.” (Karpat: 1976:15) According to the early studies conducted for the Ministry of Reconstruction and Settlement, in the first half of the 1960s 59% of the population in Ankara, 45% in Istanbul and 33% in Izmir were living in *gecekondu* settlements<sup>20</sup>. (Buğra: 1998:307)

The *gecekondu* people were not welcomed in the first years by the urban middle classes and the government. For instance, in 1940s, in a speech given at the Turkish National Assembly the *gecekondus* were regarded as a disaster for the “city”. (Şenyapılı: 2004) As İçduygu argues, Westernization was defined as the main political dimension of “Turkish” modernity and “one aspect of its sociological grounding was created through a top-down vision of urbanism that was viewed as

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<sup>18</sup> This law is the first law of Turkey that recognizes the *gecekondu*. (Erman:2001)

<sup>19</sup> In 1947 the Municipality Public Works Directory (Belediye İmar Müdürlüğü) published regulations (talimatname) which asserted that the organized industry regions will be out of the city walls. (Şenyapılı:1981)

<sup>20</sup> The number of the *gecekondus* according to the years: 1940: 10.000; 1948:30.000; 1953: 80.000; 1960: 240.000; 1966:450.000; 1970: 600.000, 1978: 850.000. (Uysal:1985:12, Keleş:1984:357)

necessary for the making of Turkey as a civilized and modern nation.” (İçduygu: 2004) Since modern architecture and urbanism were seen as the key elements of the will to modernity in the Turkish Republic there was no place for *gecekondus* that contain stark elements of rural life. In this new urbanization and accordingly modernization and Westernization project, whatever belonged to the rural was considered backward and regarded as an obstacle on the way to modernization. As Erman puts it, “[w]hen people started migrating from villages to the cities in the late 1940s and began to build their *gecekondus*, their presence in the city and their makeshift houses were perceived as highly alarming both by the state and by the urban élites. The élitist view was to regard the *gecekondus* people as a serious obstacle to the modernization of the cities and the promotion of the modern (Western) way of life in them.” (Erman: 2001:985) Karpat, too, underlines the same point: “The influx of rural migrants naturally causes profound reaction. The old city inhabitant -that is, the established families with old middle class values- regarded the migration as a villager invasion. Complaining about the disappearance of city manners and of privacy and accepting at face value the rumors of rising crimes in squatter settlements, they hoped to prevent this migration by every possible means.” (Karpat: 1976:62)

However, during the post World War II era, developmentalist policies became globally dominant and continued to dominate the economic and social policies of Turkey until the 1980s. (Keyder: 1987, Güllalp: 1997) According to the developmentalist policies, these years were the years of industrialization in Turkey and *gecekondus* people were beginning to be considered more sympathetically since they met the labor deficit with their cheap labor that was necessary for

industrialization and national development. Since the *gecekondus* were considered as part of the industrialization process, which was also considered to be a requirement of urbanization and modernization, they began to be tolerated by the government and the private sector. Also, the Democrat Party (DP)<sup>21</sup>, and its follower the AP (Justice Party), saw rural migrants as potential voters and supported the *gecekondus* according to their populist policies. (Keyder: 1999, Erman: 2001) For instance, as Buğra points out, “[I]n 1965 November, in a much publicized conference held by the Ministry of Reconstruction and Settlement, the then Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel clearly stated that the demolition of the *gecekondus* without providing alternative shelter for squatters was totally out of the question. The prime minister’s speech was immediately followed by uncontrollable wave of land invasions in Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, involving cases of the most rapid *gecekondus* construction, some of which were completed in less than 24 hours!” (Buğra: 1998:307)

To sum up, the *gecekondus* of Turkey began to be constructed in the late 1940s and became widespread in the 1950s and 1960s. While in the initial years they were not welcomed by the urban middle classes and the “state”, they were welcomed as workers as a result of the developmentalist and populist policies of the DP that led to the mechanization of the rural areas, and rapid industrialization, which raised the

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<sup>21</sup> As I have argued before, the 1950 elections that the DP won, was regarded as a turning point in Turkey’s political life. The CHP was led by the military and bureaucratic élites whose major goal was the modernization of the society, by taking the West as a model. It had a top-down, élitist social engineering project. (Erman:2004:984) In contrast, the DP’s staff was younger, they had entrenched relations with the election regions and most importantly there were almost no deputy of the DP who had a bureaucratic or military formation. (Zührer:1993) The DP was known for its liberal economic policies. It gave major importance to industrialization, based on imports of expensive foreign technology and capital. While the DP was in power, Turkey strengthened its economic and political ties with the USA, the hegemonic power in the world economy.

need for industrial labor. Hence, the *gecekondu* people found themselves places in the big cities as workers (both skilled and unskilled). While developmentalism became the major policy in the post-War II period dominating the economy and policies, I argue that we should also take it as a discourse, which produced a certain kind of “truth” and knowledge on the *gecekondus* that affected the experiences of the *gecekondu* people in the “city”.

In the following part, in order to evaluate the production of “truth” and “knowledge” processes of the developmentalist discourse on the *gecekondus* and its effects on the experiences of the *gecekondu* people, I will discuss the idea of developmentalism.

### ***1.3 The Idea of Developmentalism***

As I have argued in the previous part, developmentalist policies became globally dominant in the post World War II era. The idea of developmentalism that went hand in hand with modernization theory was mainly proposed as a recipe for post-colonial countries in order to catch-up with “Western” countries which were regarded as already “developed”. The origins of modernization theory can be traced back to the response of the American political élites and intellectuals to the political setting of the post World War II era. (Tipps: 1973:200)

During the post World War II period as a result of the world-wide hegemony of the developmentalist discourse, the world was divided into two groups: those who are “modern” and “developed” and those who are not (Lerner: 1958, Black: 1966 Eisenstadt: 1966, Huntington: 1968) “Traditional” and “modern” became the most important dichotomy, and while traditional was considered as backward and

something that should be thrown away, “modern” was considered as the final stage that all societies should reach. (See Huntington: 1971) It was assumed that colonialism was ending and that the “underdeveloped” world had only to follow the example of the “modern” world. (See Rostow: 1960) Hence, “*modern* became the standard against which other societies were judged.” (Mc Micheal: 1996)

While the world was divided into dichotomous formations in the developmentalist era, the idea of progress whose roots also goes back earlier became one of the most fundamental ideas for the discourses of modernity and/or developmentalism. (Wallerstein: 1991) Change and progress were regarded as natural, directional, immanent, continuous, necessary, and proceeding from uniform causes (See Nisbet: 1969, Chapter 5). Social evolution was regarded as unilinear, and its direction was considered as same for the societies all over the world. (See Fabian: 1983) By following the linear direction of the “progress line”, the aim was catching-up with the Western countries, which were regarded as “developed” and modern. In this catching up process, industrialization was perceived as the most important stage in order to come closer to the “developed” countries. Thus national industrialization was considered as the vehicle of development and accordingly, development involved the displacement of the agrarian civilization by urban-industrial society and the urban was privileged over the rural. (See Lerner: 1958 and Rustow: 1967)

As I have argued above, developmentalism mainly emerged as a recipe for the former colonial countries and was supposedly to contribute to their national development and independence. It also became the dominant policy in Turkey at the same period with the post-colonial countries, although Turkey was not formally colonized. I argue that, this is closely related to Turkey’s historical relation to the

West and the process of “modernity”. The idea of “Turkish” modernization goes back to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There is a huge literature on “Turkish” modernity that discusses the ambiguous “desire and fear” relation with the West.<sup>22</sup> While modernization was considered to be synonymous with Westernization in Turkey (Keyder: 1997), the “imagined” Western gaze (Ahiska: 2003) and Western norms became important criteria in the Turkish Modernization process. For instance, Ahiska argues that, “members of the national elite constituted their identity through a projection of the West in affirming their construction of a modern society. They organized the desire to be modern around the marker of “the West”. (Ahiska: 2003) I think that, the “desire” of the national élites- although this desire is never independent from the fear- for modernization, thus Westernization, and the privileging of the modern and the West makes its history intersect with the post-colonial countries in the cases of modernization and development. Hall argues that, “the term ‘post-colonial’ refers to a social and political context in which social relationships and the cultural concepts through which they are understood and interpreted are saturated with comparisons to societies and cultures deemed to be more developed” (Hall: 1996, quoted in Sirman: 2004) Sirman, with reference to Hall’s definition of the post-colonial, asserts that although Turkey has never been formally colonized, it can be argued that she is a post-colonial state in the frame of the social practices that “were rendered and assessed meaningful only in relation to those in the developed West”. (Sirman: 2004) Yıldız, too, from a different angle, points out Turkey’s “post-coloniality” with regard to the position of the Kemalist élites. He argues that, Turkey is a post-colonial country although she was never a colony of a Western country. For him, although there were no Western colonizers in

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<sup>22</sup> See; Kasaba :1997, Keyder :1997, Belge:2002, Kahraman:2002, Ahiska :2003, Sirman :2004 , Ahiska:2005

Turkey, the Kemalist élites played the role of the Western colonial élites in “modernizing” the country. (Yıldız: 2001) Agreeing with Sirman and Yıldız, I argue that the crucial place the developmentalist policies and the developmentalist discourse occupy in Turkey’s history emerges from the historical relation with the “West” and the “desire” for modernity.

As I have tried to underline above, the developmentalist policies were never independent from the discourse of developmentalism that went hand in hand with modernization theory whose roots goes back to Enlightenment thought. As I have shortly asserted above, it is an influential discourse for the Turkish Republic, which is supported by the historical “desire and fear” relation with the modernization process that has its roots in the late Ottoman period. I argue that developmentalism, as a Eurocentric discourse, produced a certain kind of knowledge and “truth”, which is translated into violence for the non-Western “elements”. *Gecekondus*, as the non-Western “element” of the “modernizing” and “developing” Turkey had their share from this violence. I argue that, academic studies on the *gecekondus* as the producers of the knowledge and “truth” on the *gecekondus* are the main contributors to this process. In the following part, I want to discuss the representations of the *gecekondus* people in the academic studies in order to examine how this knowledge and “truth” were turned into an experience of violence and exclusion for the *gecekondus* people.

#### ***1.4 Gecekondus in the Academic Studies of the Developmentalist Era***

I strongly agree with Erman, who underlines the necessity of investigating the representation of the *gecekondus* in academic studies through the relationship between the production of knowledge and power. (Erman: 2001:983) As Bourdieu points out, “the act of naming” and definition processes work through the unequal struggle over classification that is also a struggle for knowledge and power which, at the end, creates a symbolic violence. (Bourdieu: 1991) I argue that, while the developmentalist discourse produced a certain kind of “truth” on *gecekondus* that is highly related to power relations, as Escobar argues, “we must examine not only the effects of this politics of truth, but also how it ignores the people’s conditions and oppression, and what other possibilities might exist.” (Escobar: 1992) Thus, I find it crucial to elaborate the knowledge production and/or definition processes on the *gecekondu* settlements and the *gecekondu* people under the hegemony of the developmentalist and/or modernist discourses, in order to discuss how it ignores the *gecekondu* people’s experiences and also how the dynamics and mechanisms of definition, exclusion and violence towards the *gecekondu* people operate.

When we look at the *gecekondu* studies of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s in Turkey we can easily argue that it was under the influence of the global hegemony of the developmentalist and/or modernist discourses. The social scientists of this period, who saw themselves as already modernized and felt the responsibility for the development and/or modernization of Turkey, investigate the *gecekondu* “issue” from a modernist and/or developmentalist perspective. To put it differently, they were the subjects of the modernist and/or developmentalist discourses and speaking

from that subject position. As a result of their internalization of the developmentalist discourse – which represents a form of “violence against the Third World” (Escobar: 1992) – as “Third World” intellectuals, they saw the society dichotomously (i.e. traditional/modern, rural/urban, advanced/backward) and situated the *gecekondu* in-between these dichotomies. In this literature the *gecekondu* is regarded as a stage, on the way towards the “modern, advanced, civilized” nation. The *gecekondu* people were regarded as the ones who contributed to the “catching-up” process, since they left the “traditional” and “backward” villages and became workers in the modern industrial factories and their every single disattachement from their rural past became a source of hope for the modernist social scientists, who, like the founders of the Republic, carried missionary excitement for the modernization of the country.

In the following part, I will try to analyze the categorization and definition processes of the *gecekondu* as the place between the rural and the urban and a stage for development and modernization, and I will also focus upon the modernist hope and, thus, the desire of the social scientist regarding the disappearance of the *gecekondu*.

#### ***1.4.1 Between the Rural and Urban: The Gecekondu as a Stage for Modernization and Development***

While the rural and the urban were considered as binary oppositions in the *gecekondu* literature, as Erman argues, the social scientists, between the 1950s and 1970s, saw the *gecekondu* neighborhoods as transitional places, which were in-between the rural and urban. For example Yasa, one of the influential figures in the early *gecekondu* studies, asserts that “[t]he *gecekondu* family, having one end in the village and other end in the city, displays the characteristics of a transitional family.”

He also adds that, “the *gecekondu* person, while on the one hand tries to grow vegetables and trees in his garden like villager, on the other hand hopes to become a worker in a factory of the city.” (Yasa: 1970:10, 15)

In the categorization process of the rural and urban, while urban signified the “developed”, the rural was the “backward”. “Modern” urbanites and “backward” rural migrants occupied opposite poles and as Erman puts it, “they [the social scientists] had in mind an ideal image of the city and city residents based on the Western model.”<sup>23</sup> (Erman: 2001:989) For example, Karpas, another influential figure in the *gecekondu* literature who wrote a comparative study on the *gecekondus* in Turkey and similar squatter settlements of “Third World” countries, sees the city as a place of civilization in the Western sense. He considers the *gecekondu* as a place which is in-between the rural and urban. For Karpas, the *gecekondu* people were liminal people who must become completely alienated from their villages before they achieve full identification with the city. (Karpas: 1976:113) Very similar to the Western centered developmentalist discourses proposing recipes for “Third World” countries for their modernization and/or development, Karpas, as a social scientist avows that he knows the path that the *gecekondu* people *must* follow and proposes a recipe in order for the *gecekondu* people to become “modern” urbanites. Since “progress” is regarded as inevitable and necessary for the development of the nation, and the only way for “progress” is following its unilinear direction as the West

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<sup>23</sup> While in the period between the 1950s and 1980s there were a number of studies on the *gecekondus* and the *gecekondu* culture, there was no study on urban culture. (Erman:2001) Thus, we cannot learn what sort of culture that the rural migrants were expected to be assimilated to. Öncü, too emphasizes that there were no definitions of the urbanite in general and Istanbulite in particular. She argues that to be an Istanbulite was a myth and a series of privileges that were understood without telling. (Öncü: 1999:46)

already did, Karpat finds no problem in suggesting to the *gecekondus* people to “become completely alienated” from their background.

Kıray, one of the most prominent social scientists in the field of urban studies in Turkey, too, considers the *gecekondus* in-between the rural and the urban and finds it problematic that the *gecekondus* people although living in the city think and behave like the villagers. (Kıray: 1998) For Kıray, too, the solution lies in forgetting the rural past and becoming an urbanite by working in the large industrial factories.

While, the *gecekondus* were considered as places that were in-between the rural and the urban , since they were also regarded as constituting an “inevitable stage” of the modernization, and therefore occupying a necessary transitory position. Karpat considers the *gecekondus* as a stage for processes of urbanization and modernization and argues that “rural migration and urbanization and their by-product- the migrant, or squatter settlements-are inextricably part of a more general process of structural change usually referred to as modernization” (Karpat: 1976:7) He also adds that “certainly squatter settlements are not an inevitable step of urbanization and modernization; they could have been avoided if housing skills and financial resources were available. But in the “Third World” squatter settlements had become an almost natural step for modernization in general and urbanization in particular.” (Karpat: 1976:8) By arguing so, Karpat not only essentializes the “Third World” and the *gecekondus* but also as a social scientist from the “Third World” contributes to the construction of the discourse of the “underdeveloped Third World.”<sup>24</sup> Karpat, by

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<sup>24</sup> By arguing that the “underdeveloped third world” is constructed by the developmentalist discourse of the West, I do not claim that there is no reality behind underdevelopment but as Escobar underlines, “there certainly exist socioeconomic and material conditions in the Third World which are extremely difficult for most people, and object of concern for many; but

naturalizing the *gecekondus* as a step for modernization, sees the *gecekondus* people as the passive subjects who would follow the line that was already drawn for them.

#### ***1.4.2 Modernization and Development: Hope of the Social Scientists as the Subjects of Modernization and Development Discourses***

Since the *gecekondus* were considered as transitory, they were not respected and accepted as such. The acceptance offered them was conditional. They would be accepted completely only if they became assimilated to the norms of the modern urban classes. Nevertheless, there was a hope among the social scientists that the *gecekondus* people would “succeed” in getting urbanized as they discarded their rural ways of life and values, changed their ways of dressing and the like. (Erman: 2001)

For example, Şenyapılı argues that the *gecekondus* people positively evaluated the urban culture and they yearned to “succeed” in getting urbanized and their only problem was not being urbanized yet. (Şenyapılı: 1981) Hart, too as the social scientist who conducted an anthropological fieldwork in Zeytinburnu, believed and hoped that integration would actually take place. In his study, he asserts that,

“I believe that, in time more women will start to work in factories, offices and department stores. Today, a young girl<sup>25</sup> who lives in Zeytinburnu is a city-dweller. She is a city-dweller with her behaviors and tastes and with her short skirts and high-heeled shoes. If she finishes secondary

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rather that what is important to understand is how these conditions have been constructed as underdevelopment, and what have been the consequences by doing so.” (Escobar:1992)

<sup>25</sup> He is talking about the second-generation immigrant women.

school or high school she will find a job in a bank or in an office in the city, or she will work as a shop assistant in a store in Beyoğlu or Aksaray. If she fails to finish high school, she will try to find a ‘good and regular’ job in a ‘good and regular’ factory. [...] Her grandmother worked in the fields, perhaps her mother worked as a domestic worker in the houses of the rich people in Istanbul but she herself, as a married woman, will work in a factory or have a semi-skilled job. This is the women front of Turkey’s modernization and industrialization and I think that it is a vigorous and nice front.”<sup>26</sup> (Hart: 1969:80, *translation mine*)

There was hope among the social scientists that the *gecekondus* would be assimilated into the urban culture and modernization and development would actually take place. However, I argue that their “desire” for modernization and/or development is intertwined with state policies. Some social scientists who studied the *gecekondus* neighborhoods, were conducting projects for the state or, at least, they were proposing their ideas on the *gecekondus* neighborhoods in order to affect urban policies. For instance, Hardt wrote a letter to the Turkish National Assembly in 1966

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<sup>26</sup> “ Zamanla daha fazla kadın çalışmaya başlayacak ve çalışan kadınlardan zamanla daha fazla fabrikalarda, bürolarda ve mağazalarda çalışma oranı artacaktır. Bugün Zeytinburnu’nda yaşayan bir genç kız şehirlidir. Davranışlarıyla, zevkleriyle şehirli olup yüksek ökçe ve kısa etek giyer. Eğer ortaokulu ve liseyi bitirse bir bankada yahut şehirdeki bir büroda çalışacaktır; veyahut Aksaray’da yada Beyoğlu’ndaki bir büroda mağaza satıcısı olarak çalışacaktır. Eğer liseyi bitirmezse iyi ve düzenli bir fabrikada iyi ve düzenli bir iş arayacaktır.[...]Büyük anası tarlada çalışmış, belki kendi anası İstanbul’da ev işerinde çalışmıştı fakat kendisi, evli bir kadın olarak, bir fabrikada yada yarı kalifiye bir işte çalışacaktır. Kadın yönünden Türkiye’nin endüstrileşmesinin ve modernleşmesinin bir cephesidir ve kanımızca sıhhatli ve hoş bir cephesidir.”

There is a huge literature that discusses the relation between gender and modernization and the distinctive role that was attributed to women in the modernization of the nation (See; Yuval-Davis and Anthias: 1992, Yuval-Davis: 1997, Sirman: 2002) In the nationalist and modernist discourses women who were regarded as the “standard bearers” of the nation were also considered as the “bearers” of modernization. So, it is not an accident that Hart talks about the “women front of Turkey’s modernization”.

with regard to the *Gecekondu* Law and there he argued how *gecekondu*s were necessary for modernization of Turkey and criticized the proposal of the new *gecekondu* law and asserted that neighborhoods like Zeytinburnu, Taşlıtarla and Çağlayan where the workers lived should not be demolished or moved elsewhere. So, both the social scientists and the politicians mutually constructed the discourse on the *gecekondu*s and also shaped the policies towards the *gecekondu* neighborhoods. For instance, a Republican deputy's statement on the *gecekondu*s was very similar to those of the social scientists:

“[T]he birth of the *gecekondu* is actually a race for civilization. The peasant wants to become civilized, but unable to find the means to achieve civilization in the village he comes to the city. It is a question of the availability of civilization.” (quoted in Karpat: 1976:89)

Or, an official view on the *gecekondu* expressed in response to the request for assistance to rehabilitate the dwellings and addressed by the Turkish government to the United Nations shows the similarity too:

“Urbanization and its accompanying ‘*gecekondu*s’ are not considered as undesirable phenomenon in Turkey. Instead, the rapid growth of the cities and the existence of the *gecekondu* areas-planned or unplanned- are considered positive factors in national development, for, from them are to come the workers for the proposed massive industrialization programme of the decade of the 1970s. In Turkey, urbanization, even as a singularly

demographic phenomenon, becomes a ‘vehicle of economic and social development’. The approach is realistic in the sense that under the present economic and social conditions of Turkey, there is probably no other alternative to this proposal of allowing massive migrations to urban areas; for agricultural land appears to be at, or near, its maximum utilization, and ‘urbanization precedes industrialization’ according to the Development Plan. At the same time, and as balancing economic-social force, extra efforts are being made by the Government to improve agriculture production, to modernize village life, and to distribute ‘inevitable’ urbanization as equitably as possible-and feasible-over the entire Nation.” (quoted in Karpat: 1976:93)

We regularly come across similar statements in the *gecekondu* literature too. Consequently, it can be argued that the knowledge production on the *gecekondus* is part of the developmentalist project of the state.

The central thing that the researchers were offering in the *gecekondu* studies was the evidence for the *gecekondu* people’s assimilation and integration to the “city” and there was an important distance between the “modern” and “urbanite” researchers and the *gecekondu* people. I argue that these interpretations that focus almost only on the integration “issue” and the distance between them and the *gecekondu* people are mostly biased. For instance, again Hart in his study on the Zeytinburnu *gecekondus* says that, some of the *gecekondu* people in Zeytinburnu (mostly the ones who live in their own houses and have a relatively satisfactory income) did not let their young daughters work. Hart interprets this as a basic characteristic of the middle class bourgeoisie and celebrates this situation as a sign of the *gecekondu* people becoming

part of the middle class bourgeoisie. However, in my interviews I saw that, mostly the elder women in the family used to work because the younger women's work was regarded as something shameful with reference to the village's gaze. For instance, a woman who was a first generation immigrant of Zeytinburnu told me that:

“I came here as a bride from the village. As a result of poverty I had to work for three years in the *Fuat Bey* Factory. However, I felt embarrassed about this: if my villagers learnt and began to talk about it... My mother-in-law was working too, but that was different. Older people's work was not regarded as something shameful. I was always crying when I went to work. At the end of the third year, I had a child and I left my job and never went back.”<sup>27</sup>

As I have argued above, Hart's interpretations about the young women who were not working, indicates the distance between the *gecekondu* people and the researchers. First of all, I believe that the researchers' desires to see the “integration” potential of the *gecekondu* people influenced their interpretations. Secondly since the *gecekondu* people's cultural codes and the researchers' were very different, this discrepancy carried the potential for significant misunderstandings. Of course, these misunderstandings could have been solved according to researches methods. As Erman points out, however, all of the *gecekondu* researchers of the 1960s and the 1970s used closed-ended survey questions that were used extensively in an attempt

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<sup>27</sup> “Buraya köyden gelin geldim. Üç sene çalışmak zorunda kaldım yokluktan, Fuat Bey fabrikasında. Ama çok utanıyordum, ya bir köylüm görürse, ya konuşulursa bu diye. Kaynanam da çalışıyordu ama o başka tabii, onlarınki ayıp karşılanmıyordu. Hep ağlayarak gidiyordum işe, üçüncü senenin sonunda çocuğum oldu da bıraktım işi, bir daha da gitmedim.” Interview on 13.01.2004 with Kadriye (Female, 75)

to quantify the data and generalize the findings and “there was no attempt to focus on the experiences of rural migrants or to present migrants as individuals who were entitled to their own ways of thinking and living” (Erman: 2001:993) Because of the close ended questions that only focused on the *gecekondü* people’s integration to the “city”, *gecekondü* people’s voices were silenced and their experiences that remained outside the integration “issue” were shadowed. For instance, we can only hear the voices of the *gecekondü* people in the *gecekondü* studies when they were answering questions such as: “How often do you visit your village? Will you stay in the city or return to the village? Do you have friends from the city? What kind of future do you plan for your children? Do you read newspaper? etc.”

To sum up rural migrants were welcomed only as workers who would contribute to the industrialization and modernization process of Turkey. It was expected that they would be transformed into modern urbanites in the huge factories and be assimilated in the urban culture in time. As Erman argues, the *gecekondü* people were the Other of the social scientists and “the only way opened to the *gecekondü* people to stop being the Other was to discard their rurality, and this meant becoming the same as the urbanites.” Corresponding to their modernist hopes towards development and modernization, they were optimistic about the integration of the *gecekondü* people in the urban life and they celebrated every symbol of disattachment of the *gecekondü* people from their villages and “assimilation” into urban life was seen as the only “option” for “progress”. To put it differently, the social scientists who were the subjects of the modernist and/or developmentalist discourses and who felt the missionary responsibility to modernize the country, internalized the “the historicist narrative of ‘first in Europe then elsewhere’ structure of [the] global time.”

(Chakrabarty: 2000) Moreover, as Chakrabarty points out for the non- Western nationalist elites' production of local versions of the same narrative, they considered rural and urban as dichotomies and the rural culture was regarded as inferior, while urban was regarded as the superior culture since it seemed closer to the Western culture. Thus, in order to “develop” and modernize the rural migrants' assimilation into the urban culture was regarded as inevitable and necessary. In the linear direction of development any other option was out of consideration. For instance, the rural migrants' resistance to assimilation or their creation of a new culture was not ideally entertained. Politicians and social scientists did not recognize the *gecekondu* culture as a distinct culture different both from that of the “city” and the village cultures. Moreover, the *gecekondu* people were seen as the passive subjects who were walking on the modernization “path” which was already designed, and waiting at the *gecekondu* “station” in order to fulfill the prerequisite of the modernization to be a “modern urbanite”.

There was a gap between the *gecekondus* of the *gecekondu* literature and the experiences of the *gecekondu* people. In the *gecekondu* studies, the *gecekondu* people's experiences of the settlement process, their feelings on their first confrontation with the “city” and most importantly their experiences in the “city” as people who were not urbanites but as rural migrants, under the hegemonic modernist view, which privileges the urban and debases the rural, remained silent. The whole *gecekondu* literature is constituted on the gap between the *gecekondu* people's experiences and their representations. I argue that the silencing of the *gecekondu* people's experiences that remains outside the “modernization” story turns into violence for the *gecekondu* people. Put differently, *gecekondu* people's experiences,

which remained outside the developmentalist discourse, are the “constitutive outside”<sup>28</sup> of the “*gecekondu* story” of the modernist social scientists and the politicians. Hence the *gecekondu* people became the “abject”<sup>29</sup> of the modernization dream with their experiences that were not – and also did not prefer to be – represented in the “modernization story”. Accordingly, in the following chapter I want to focus upon the experiences, which were not taken into the “modernization story”, of the *gecekondu* people of Zeytinburnu in Istanbul, which was an “unusual” place for them, in order to discuss the violence of the developmentalist and/or modernist discourses towards the people of Zeytinburnu.

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<sup>28</sup> In here, I use the concept of “constitutive outside” *a la* Butler. Butler defines it as “for there is an ‘outside’ to what is constructed by discourse, but this is not an absolute ‘outside’, an ontological thereness that exceeds or counters the boundaries of discourse; as a constitutive ‘outside’, it is that which can only be thought –when it can– in relation to that discourse, at and as its most tenuous borders.” (Butler:1993:8)

<sup>29</sup> Butler, uses the “abject” for “the ‘unlivable’ and ‘uninhabitable’ zones of social life which are nevertheless densely populated by those who do not enjoy the status of the subject, but whose living under the sign of the ‘unlivable’ is required to circumscribe the domain of the subject.” (Butler:1993:3)

## CHAPTER 2: ZEYTINBURNU AS A WORKING CLASS DISTRICT: IN NEGOTIATION WITH THE VIOLENT “GAZE OF THE CITY”

When we look at the old *gecekondu* districts today, we see that the “modernization dream” did not come about. The linear progressiveness of the modernist perspective did not work, and the *gecekondus*, or, better, the *gecekondu* neighborhoods, did not disappear and/or got assimilated into the urban culture. The government still has “problems” with the *gecekondu* people and the *gecekondu* neighborhoods.<sup>30</sup> What the modernist social scientist did not want to accept was that the *gecekondus* were a new component of the city and the city would be transformed thanks to the *gecekondus*. In their expectations the “city” would sustain itself as it was and “protect” its own culture; and the *gecekondus* would be transformed. Of course, the *gecekondu* neighborhoods have changed tremendously in time, but while they were transforming, as an integral part of the “city” they transformed the “city” too.

As I have discussed in Chapter 1, in the *gecekondu* literature of the period between the 1950s and the 1980s, the *gecekondu* people were regarded as the passive subjects who would follow the path that was drawn for them. According to the prescriptions of the social scientists, the *gecekondu* people should renounce their rural background and transform into “modern” urbanites. However, there was a more complex and dynamic process than modernist view envisioned. For instance, while their rural background and recent lives were degraded by modernizationist and/or developmentalist discourses, it was not so easy for a rural migrant or a *gecekondu* dweller to “feel at home” in the “city” and imagine to be an urbanite. There had

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<sup>30</sup> As is known, *gecekondu* demolishing and displacement of the *gecekondu* neighborhoods as a state policy is again on the agenda nowadays.

always been boundaries between the *gecekondu* people and the urbanites and these boundaries made the *gecekondu* people feel that they were different and they were not quite urbanites. In this chapter, first of all, I want to focus upon the boundaries between the Istanbulites and the people of Zeytinburnu and how the “gaze of the city”<sup>31</sup> that highlights these boundaries turns into violence against the *gecekondu* people. Next, I will try to discuss, how the *gecekondu* people rather than desiring to transform into the modern urbanites, created their own boundaries around the notion of modesty (*kanaatkarlık*). To put differently, I will argue that, the people of Zeytinburnu rather than imitating the middle classes, created their own “appropriateness” based on the notion of modesty (*kanaatkarlık*) thanks to being a worker in a “developing” country where labor was respectful.

### ***2.1 Boundaries between the Istanbulites and the people of Zeytinburnu***

My grandfather had a marking memory regarding the time when he first came to Istanbul from his village in the early 1950s. He was 15 when he arrived in Istanbul with his father in search of work. They took the train from Çerkezköy to Istanbul and my grandfather sat at the side opposite to the train’s motion. When his father saw that, he slapped my grandfather’s face claiming that he sat on the wrong side. There, my grandfather learned that Istanbul in particular and the “city” in general is a place where one should sit properly. It is a place that has its own norms that are different

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<sup>31</sup> The phrase “gaze of the city” refers to the people of Zeytinburnu’s lived experience of urban life as out-of-place subjects interminably “inappropriate” as regards their conduct, language or indeed, their very being in the eye of the middle classes assumed to be the “true” urban actors. This gaze was internalized so that the relevant lived experience takes place without there being a need for an actual confrontation with a middle class “eye”. It cannot be ignored in the sense that, the gaze of the “proper urbanite” (whether actual or imagined) forces the people of Zeytinburnu to respond.

than those of the village and one should obey these norms in order not to be punished. Most importantly, there he learned that if one sits opposite to the motion of the train that is a metonym for progress and modernity, he deserves punishment. My grandfather's and most of the *gecekond*u people's experiences in the "city" were variations of the same story. The *gecekond*u people were degraded in the "city" because of their rural background, which was considered as something opposed to the way of the "modernity train." Only if they found a job in a modern factory and left their rural past behind would they settle in the "right" part of the train that follows the line of progress. And in this way only would they be exempt from being "punished" and "degraded", or in other words, from the violence of the "city".

As I have argued in Chapter 1, in the public discourse and the academic field we lack any accurate information on the rural migrant's first confrontation with the "city" and their settlement processes. In the *gecekond*u literature, the *gecekond*u people were regarded as the ones who were always already there, in the *gecekond*u districts. This essentialist view towards *gecekond*u people assumes that *gecekond*u life was something familiar for the *gecekond*u people and thus ignores the difficulties of the *gecekond*u life, settlement and migration processes. However, some of the first generation people of Zeytinburnu's sentiments in their first confrontation with the "city" show us that the *gecekond*us were not only new for the "city" but they were also new for the rural migrants. For instance a first generation immigrant tells her disappointment when they first came to the Zeytinburnu:

"I thought it (Zeytinburnu) was different but... It was like a village ... It was muddier also... that mud..! You couldn't get your foot out of it. We used to line up the stones to pass over; it was still muddy and sticky. We

suffered from that mud, so many years..! You can't get your foot out of it. There was no canal, we were digging pits.... There was no water, but later fountains came... We were taking the water from the well at nights, and leaving the water until it become clear, then we were be able to drink from the surface. We used that method for a long time. But the village wasn't like this, there wasn't all this mud... There was water also, the houses were more proper".<sup>32</sup>

As expressed in the quotation above, for the migrants, the *gecekondus* were less comfortable and less "developed" than their homes in the village. And the life in the *gecekondu* neighborhoods was a new experience for them. Considering the *gecekondu* people as always already there not only prevents us from seeing these difficulties, but also prevents us from seeing beyond the rural-urban dichotomy. This view also assumes, in a covert manner, that *gecekondu* people were accustomed to the difficulties of *gecekondu* life, and perhaps even "deserved" these hardships, since they used to live in villages that were less "developed" than the "city".

The modernist literature makes a rural-urban dichotomy, situates the *gecekondus* as somewhere in-between the rural and urban and consider the *gecekondu* neighborhoods as places more "developed" than the villages. Thus the *gecekondu* people were considered as the ones who were one step closer to modern life than

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<sup>32</sup> "Değişik bekliyordum (Zeytinburnu'nu) ama... Köy gibiydi aynı, daha da yolları çamurdu buranın, çamur nasıl çamur ayağını kaçır geri alamazsın. Taş diziyorduk böyle, vıcık vıcık çamur. Çamuru kaç sene çektik. Ayağını geri alamıyordun. Kanal yoktu kuyu kazıyorduk, su yoktu sokak çeşmeleri vardı ama baştan o da yoktu. Kuyudan çekiyorduk suyu gece bırakıyorduk dinlensin su, sonra üstünden içiyorduk. Bayağı zaman onu kullandık.Ama köyde öyle değildi, Böyle çamur yoktu,, su da vardı, evler daha düzgündü." Interview on 13.01.2004 with Kadriye (Female, 75)

villagers. However some of the narratives of the first generation immigrants challenge this hierarchical order:

“When I came here (Zeytinburnu), I was confused; I didn’t like here that much, our village was more developed. The village was more beautiful, somewhat more developed. Many families had to live together here. But you don’t have to do so in the village. There were many different people here. Also, our neighborhood was so backward. So, we had to keep in step with them but actually we couldn’t do...”<sup>33</sup>

While the *gecekondu* people, too, internalized the modernist categories such as “advanced”/ “backward”, “developed” / “underdeveloped”, still their narratives challenge the rural-urban dichotomy. We can see that the rural migrants’ *gecekondu* was not in-between the rural and urban. In some aspects it was “backward” in comparison to the village. However as another first generation immigrant recounts, they had an image of Istanbul in their mind that was more “developed” than the villages:

“When I came, I didn’t know, not a word about Zeytinburnu. I just knew Istanbul. Also we thought that Istanbul is such a beautiful and developed place, but... of course when we arrived I was so surprised. Istanbul is a very beautiful place... But here it is squatter hood (*gecekonduluk*). Streets

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<sup>33</sup> “İlk geldim buraya (Zeytinburnu’na) bir tersim döndü fazla bir beğenmedim, bizim köyümüz buraya göre daha ilerdeydi. Köy daha güzeldi bizim köy, daha biraz ileriye. Burda kaç hane bir arada oturmak zorunda kalıyorsun, ama köyde öyle değildi ki. Çeşit çeşit insan burda. Bir de bizim bu muhit çok geriydi. Mecburen ayak uydurmaya çalıştık onlara, ama uyduramadık da...” Interview on 10. 01.2004 with Ayşe (Female, 67)

are muddy, no water, we carry water from the fountains. The houses are jerry –built...”<sup>34</sup>

As we saw in the narratives of the three first generation immigrants, the rural migrants were taken by surprise and disappointed when they first came to Zeytinburnu. While they were thinking that they came to Istanbul, to the most “advanced” and well-known city of Turkey, they saw another place which was entirely different than the Istanbul image in their minds. Thus, the people of Zeytinburnu as soon as they came, understood that they came to Zeytinburnu not to Istanbul. It was a place which was both different than the village and Istanbul. The people of Zeytinburnu soon learned that they were not Istanbulites. Accordingly, they were calling the neighborhoods that were established well before Zeytinburnu as, the “inner Istanbul” (*İstanbul içi*) or, simply, Istanbul. For instance, when they were going to Eminönü, the historic part of Istanbul, for shopping, they were saying that “We are going to Istanbul for shopping”. A first generation immigrant explains this ambiguity as:

“When our Hayriye came here [to Zeytinburnu] as a bride, she thought she came to Istanbul. One day, her neighbor comes and tells her: “Hayriye, will you stay about here today? We’re going to Istanbul and will be back about the evening. Keep an eye on our homes.” Hearing that, she says to herself “oh, but Istanbul is where I was supposed to

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<sup>34</sup> “Ben Zeytinburnu falan bilmiyordum gelirken, İstanbul diye biliyordum. İstanbul’u da ne bileyim çok güzel, gelişmiş bir yer olarak biliyoduk. Tabii, gelince öyle bir kaldım ben, şaşırdım. İstanbul çok güzel bir yer burası gecekonduluk... Sokaklar çamur, su yok, çeşmelerden su taşıyoruz. Evler, derme çatma...” Interview on 16. 01. 2004 with Mubeccel (Female, 72)

come ! What is this place then?” So, can you believe this? She takes her children and goes back to the village! In the village, she came to me and said: “You know what happened, Aunt Serife, I went there thinking that it was Istanbul, but that place was not Istanbul.”<sup>35</sup>

While Zeytinburnu was not considered a part of Istanbul, there were boundaries between the people of Zeytinburnu and the Istanbulite that the people of Zeytinburnu came face to face with in their everyday lives. These boundaries were telling them that they were not Istanbulites. For the people of Zeytinburnu, their makeshift *gecekondu*s, the muddy streets, water scarcity, lack of any simple infrastructure were some of the important boundary markers between the Istanbulites and the people of Zeytinburnu. Accordingly, when I asked the first generation immigrants if they were thinking that they were Istanbulites, their answers were negative. And all of them started to compare and contrast their houses and streets with those of Istanbulites in order to tell me why they could not see themselves as Istanbulites:

“We could not see ourselves as an Istanbulite. Conditions of living... Our homes, our belongings, our roads... First of all, we had no roads to use. For example, a fountain was built and we had to wait in the queue for a

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<sup>35</sup> “ Bizim Hayriye buraya gelin geldiğinde sanıyor ki İstanbul’a geldim. Birgün kapı komşusu geliyor diyor ‘Hayriye sen buralarda mısın? Biz İstanbul’a gidiyoruz, akşama doğru geliriz, bizim evlere göz kulak oluver..’ ‘ Aaa’ demiş kendi kendine, ‘ ben İstanbul’a geldim, neresi peki burası?’ Sen, topla kızanları dön köye geri. Geldi bana, ‘Abe Şerife Yenge, ben İstanbul diye gittim orası İstanbul değilmiş’.”Interview on 13.01.2004 with Kadriye (Female, 75)

number of hours to get water. You renounce your sleep and carry water. Everyday, you fill up 12 barrels and carry them to the gardens.”<sup>36</sup>

“They (İstabilites) were different than us, could we be like them? Our room that we were living in was plywood. In fact, our house was one roomed. We did not have a stove... We were using brazier to warm up, there was no water at all...The streets were all in mud... There was no market place...”<sup>37</sup>

The people of Zeytinburnu were marked by the “lack of” the better houses, streets and infrastructure that the Istanbulite had. As the quotations above point out, this “lack” and difference lead them to think that moving to Istanbul was not enough to be an Istanbulite. The people of Zeytinburnu could not see themselves as Istanbulites, not only because of the “lack of” good houses, paved streets and infrastructure, but also because their relatives and friends who were not familiar to Zeytinburnu “reminded” them that they were not Istanbulites:

“Initially, visitors coming from the village became confused, saying “what sort of Istanbul is this place? That is not Istanbul.”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>“Pek göremiyorduk kendimizi İstanbullu gibi. Yaşam şartları... Ne evimiz, ne eşyamız, ne yolumuz... En başta yolumuz yoktu. Mesela bir çeşme yapıldı kaç saat kuyruklarda bekliyorduk. Gece uykunu feda edersin su taşırınsın. Hergün 12 varil doldurursun, taşırınsın bahçelere.” Interview on 10.01.2004 with Ayşe (Female, 67)

<sup>37</sup> “Onlar (İstabilular) farklı bizlerden, biz öyle miyiz? Kontrplaktı oturduğum oda.Zaten tek odaydı ev. Soba yoktu, mangalla ısıniyorduk, su hiç yoktu. Yollar çok çamurdu. Pazar yok...” Interview on 07.02.2004 with Nuriye (Female, 68)

<sup>38</sup> “İlk zamanlar köyden gelen misafirler hayrette kalıyorlardı ‘Aaa nasıl İstanbul burası?’ diye. Aaa burası İstanbul değil’ diye”. Interview on 02.12.2003 with Fikriye (Female, 71)

“They were looking down upon Zeytinburnu. For example, we were saying that we came from Istanbul. When they asked where we were living in, we were answering as Zeytinburnu, and they were saying “Ohh is there Istanbul?”<sup>39</sup>

Under the hegemony of the modernization and/or developmentalist discourses, the people of Zeytinburnu “learned” that their houses and neighborhoods were not respected but rather devalued. The modernist and/or developmentalist gaze was on the people of Zeytinburnu and watching and evaluating them. I argue that this exerts violence against the people of Zeytinburnu. The people of Zeytinburnu knew that at any moment they could come face to face with a degrading gaze that made them feel “embarrassed” and made them feel the necessity to conceal where they were living in order not to be looked down upon. Accordingly, they sometimes had to have a “secret” when they met the people from “Istanbul”.<sup>40</sup> Three women, who were teenagers in the early 1970s, told me how they kept the location of their homes from the “Istanbulites” as a secret:

“Everyone was saying that ‘every trouble is in Zeytinburnu’, ‘every kind of people come up from Zeytinburnu.’ When we met with young people, we were intentionally, saying that we were from Yedikule. We were

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<sup>39</sup> “Zeytinburnu’nu küçümsüyorlardı. Mesela İstanbul’dan geldik diyorduk, ‘Nerede oturuyorsun?’ deyince Zeytinburnu dediğimiz zaman, ‘aman İstanbul mu orası?’ deniliyordu.” Interview on 10.01. 2004 with Ayşe (Female, 67)

<sup>40</sup> I have to add that, the ones who met with the people from “Istanbul” were mostly the younger generation, who went out of Zeytinburnu in their leisure times or went to a school outside of Zeytinburnu.

afraid of being judged...we were upset...we were humiliated... Actually we wanted to praise Zeytinburnu, but...”<sup>41</sup>

“Imagine that, we were born and raised in Zeytinburnu, one day I and one of my friends decided to go shopping in Beyoğlu. It wasn’t a regular thing that we do frequently, we just went to work and then came back home. We didn’t know where we should get off from the bus when we were going there. We decided to pretend as we were guests coming from outside the city, visiting our relatives. We were really feeling upset of not knowing Istanbul well. My friend said loudly ‘It has been changed a lot in five years...’ A man realized that we were in trouble and asked ‘where are you going?’ we said ‘we came here to see our relatives, they live in Bakırköy’ we didn’t say Zeytinburnu. ‘We’ll shop in Beyoğlu.’ He offered help. He looked wealthy; carrying a leather suitcase, fancy bearded... not a man to be feared. He said ‘This is the final stop, I’ll show you the way.’ We got off together. He came to all the stores with us. He got on bus with us when we returned, we had to go to Bakırköy that because we made up the story that we stay there. Of course we neither knew which bus went to Bakırköy. He showed us the buses and we together got on the bus. He got off at Çapa and told us to get off at the last stop. We did as he said. We were looking around, two boys appeared. They said, “may we meet you?” we didn’t say anything. They asked, “where do you live?” we said Bakırköy. We couldn’t say the fact that we

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<sup>41</sup> “Her şey Zeytinburnu’nda oluyor derlerdi, herkes oradan çıkıyor. Hatta gençlerle tanıştığımız zaman özellikle Yedikule dediğimiz olmuştur Birşey derler diye korkuyorduk, üzülüyorduk, eziliyorduk Zeytinburnu’nu yüceltmek istiyorduk aslında ama...” Interview on 02.01.2004 with Ilknur (Female, 47)

lived in Zeytinburnu. We were ashamed, scared to say the truth to the people that we met for the first time. Because they would tease us. What is wrong in saying ‘we live in Zeytinburnu but we don’t go outside of it.’? Why should we be ashamed of saying that we don’t know Beyoğlu? But we were ashamed.”<sup>42</sup>

The quotations above tell us how being a person from Zeytinburnu turns into an “issue”, when they confront with the Istanbulites. While on the one hand as people of Zeytinburnu they did not know the city well and were ashamed of it since it shows that they do not belong to the city which was considered “superior” to the villages and the *gecekondu* neighborhoods, on the other hand to be a person from Zeytinburnu turns into a source of a “shame” under the “gaze of the city”. As the above quotation underlines, they were afraid to say that they were from Zeytinburnu since they did not want to hear the responses of the Istanbulites. Their replies would consist of the words that would make them feel “embarrassed”, make them try to explain that they were not “inferior” and they were not the people who the Istanbulite assumed them to be. Thus it was sometimes very hard to say that one was living in

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<sup>42</sup> “Düşün Zeytinburnu’nda doğup büyümüşüz, arkadaşla bir gün Beyoğlu’na alışverişe gitçez, gitmiyoz da öyle sık, ancak evden işe işten eve. Beyoğlu’nun neresinde ince bilmiyoz. Orda mı burda mı ince dedik numara yapalım, bilmiyoruz incecğimiz yeri. İstanbul’u tanımamaktan üzüyoruz.. Numara yapıyoruz, arkadaş ‘çok değişmiş 5 sene önce böyle değildi’ diyor. Adamın biri bizi anladı, sordu ‘siz nereye gitçeksiz?’ biz de dedik ki ‘biz buraya misafirlğe geldik, Bakırköy’e geldik’, Zeytinburnu demiyoruz. Alışveriş etçez. ‘Yardım edeyim’ dedi ama adam kelli fellli, elinde bond çanta, top sakallı, korkulacak bir adam değil. ‘Burası son durak siz yardımcı olayım’ dedi, indik, bizle her mağazaya girdi. Gerisin geriye bizimle otobüse bindi, biz Bakırköye gideceiz şimdi, mecburen. Nasıl Bakırköy’e gitçez bilmiyoz. Adamlar bindik... Adam Çapa’da indi, bize de ‘son durakta inin’ dedi... Bakırköy’de indik, öyle etrafa bakınırken, bizim yanımda 2 tane çocuk belirdi. ‘Sizinle arkadaş olabilir miyiz?’ dediler. Biz bir şey diyemedik, çocuklar soruyor ‘nerde oturuyorsunuz?’ diye,, biz Bakırköy dedik, Zeytinburnu diyemedik. Utanıyorduk, korkuyorduk biz yeni tanıştığımız insanlara Zeytinburnu demeye. Çünkü dalga geçecekler. Biz Zeytinburnu’nda oturuyoz ama pek Zeytinburnu dışına çıkmadık, o yüzden Beyoğlu’nu bilmiyoruz demek ne ayıp var? Ama diyemiyorduk işte.” Interview on 16.01.2004 with Hanife (Female, 45)

Zeytinburnu. As the quotations below would show too, it was not only “hard” to say that they were living in Zeytinburnu but also that they were living in a *gecekondu*:

“I was working in Bakırköy, for example... All of my friends were living in apartments (flats), I couldn’t tell any of them that I lived in a *gecekondu*, I couldn’t say ‘come to my house or you’re welcome to my place’ to them. I also couldn’t go to their houses. For example... I never ever mentioned my house to my friends, neither did I say I lived in an apartment... I didn’t even open the subject. I always met with them outside. Because, all of them were living in Bakırköy. I always felt the ambiguity... I mean...the lack ...that I couldn’t invite anybody (to my house), I feel like bruised...”<sup>43</sup>

The people of Zeytinburnu had to have “secrets” in order not to be degraded, devalued, and looked down upon. As we saw in the *gecekondu* literature, while the modernist perspective celebrates all the attempts towards “modernization”, every single characteristic of the *gecekondu* neighborhoods would be regarded as a source of “shame”, thus the people of Zeytinburnu had to conceal the place they belonged to. It was the modernist and/or developmentalist gaze that exerts the violence against the people of Zeytinburnu. A first generation immigrant’s sentences testify to the power of this gaze: “*may be they were not looking down upon us, but we were*

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<sup>43</sup> “Bakırköy’de çalışıyordum ben. Mesela benim tüm arkadaşlarım apartmanlarda oturuyordu, onların hiçbirine ben gecekonduya oturuyorum diyemedim, bize buyurun gelin diyemedim, ben de onlara oturmaya gidemiyordum. Mesela, hiç kesinlikle evden de bahsetmiyordum, ne ben apartmanda oturuyorum diyordum ne gecekondu, konuyu açmıyordum. Herkesle dışarda görüşüyordum. Çünkü onlar hep Bakırköy’de oturuyorlar. Ve hep eksikliğini hissetmişimdir yani kimseyi davet edememin, örselenmekmişim gibi hissediyordum...” Interview on 09.01.2004 with Nuray (Female, 40)

*feeling as if...we were afraid that they would look down upon us.*”<sup>44</sup> Her statement shows us how much they were impressed by the modernist and/or developmentalist gaze so that they did not need to confront with the degrading words or looks of any particular person in order to feel “mortified”.

While, the makeshift *gecekondus*, the muddy streets, water scarcity, lack of any simple infrastructure were the boundaries between the Istanbulites and the people of Zeytinburnu, dress was another boundary marker.<sup>45</sup> I have mentioned above my grandfather’s first confrontation with Istanbul. Even before he arrived, on the train, he learned that Istanbul is an unfamiliar place for him where he would have to change his habits. But the story does not end there. Soon after he came to the city he learned another “facet” of the “city”. People should not only sit in an “appropriate” manner but also they have to dress in an “appropriate” manner, otherwise they would be excluded. Soon after his arrival he found a job as an apprentice in the Municipality of Istanbul’s Bus firm (IETT) where some of his relatives had already been working. He used to tag along with his relatives on the way to work. But, they would not walk together. My grandfather would follow them. Since they came to Istanbul before him, their clothes were “better” and they were embarrassed by my grandfather’s clothes that were in fact his father’s clothes which were old and big for him. Therefore they were walking several meters ahead of him. That was the second thing that my grandfather learned in the “city”: if you do not wear “appropriate” clothes people will make you feel embarrassed in the “city”. Thus, in order to escape

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<sup>44</sup> “Belki onlar bizi o kadar da küçük görmüyordu, ama biz öyle hissediyorduk, küçümseyecekler diye korkuyorduk.” Interview on 10.01.2004 with Ayşe (Female, 67)

<sup>45</sup> I have to note that, dress as a boundary marker, was an issue mostly for the people who were going outside of Zeytinburnu and thus confront with the gaze of the “urbanites” more.

from the degrading gaze of the people, he preferred to be invisible when he won a prize in a cinema hall, and did not/could not go on to the stage to take his prize because of his big rubber shoes.

As we saw, the people of Zeytinburnu had to learn the boundaries between themselves and the Istanbulite in a very short time. Since this process includes violence against the people of Zeytinburnu, it was not easy for a one from Zeytinburnu to imagine passing to the other side of the boundary. The boundaries were highlighted in every single confrontation with the modernist discourse and every modernist gaze that exerted violence strengthened these boundaries. Thus, it was not the imaginary of a person from Zeytinburnu to be an Istanbulite. For instance a first generation woman from Zeytinburnu describes the level of the boundaries between the two cultures and the distance of them very well:

“We envied the ones who looked through their apartment’s windows. Especially, when we went to the center of Istanbul, I said to myself ‘How could that old lady climb up there? How can she live there? How did she buy it?’ You cannot imagine how it is possible. We saw old ladies at their windows looking down at the street, the curly, permed women. ‘Look at those’ I used to say; they were looking at us from above, from upstairs; also I was astonished about them. ‘Who are they? How did they buy those houses?’”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> “Camdan bakanlara böyle gıpta ediyorduk. Hele İstanbul içine gittiğimiz zaman diyordum, ‘bu yaşlı kadın nasıl çıkmış oraya? Nasıl bu apartmanda oturabilir? Nasıl almış burayı? Tahmin edemiyorsun, nasıl? Yaşlı yaşlı kadınlar, camlardan bakardı, kıvrıcık ondüle saçlı... ‘Şunlara bakın’ diyordum ben, böyle yukardan bakıyorlardı, üst kattan, hayretlen

As the quotation above shows, the boundaries between the Istanbulites and the people of Zeytinburnu were so “rigid” and their lives were so far away from one another that it was not easy for a person from Zeytinburnu to “understand” how such a kind of life could be possible. So, the transformation from villager to urbanite was not part of the Zeytinburnu imaginary, but it was the imaginary of the social scientists and the politicians as the subjects of the modernization and/or developmentalism discourses.

As Keyder argues, *gecekond* communities shared a position that differentiated them from the older owners of the city, and since they gained this position in spite of the “urban élites” (Keyder: 1987), they did not feel the need to imitate them. I argue that, they were celebrating modesty (*kanaatkarlık*) by being very well aware of their own place that was different than the villagers as well as the Istanbulites and by not trying to “transgress” these boundaries. To put differently, people of Zeytinburnu rather than desiring to transgress the boundaries and transform into middle class urbanites, preserved the differences between them and the urban middle class. The rural migrants became workers at a time when their labor was valuable and respected in contrast to the contemporary period, as we will see later. While, as I have tried to discuss in this section, they were not respected, but looked down upon, as the *gecekond* people in the initial years, they gained respect as workers both as the ones who contributed to the industrializing process of the country and as the workers of a period of the rise of the Left in Turkey. Accordingly in the following section I will try to discuss how being a worker opened a “valuable” and “respectful” position for

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bakıyordum ben de, ‘kim bunlar? Nasıl bu evleri almışlar?’ diye.” Interview on 13.01.2004 with Kadriye (female, 75)

the people of Zeytinburnu, and how this contributed to the formation of a working class culture of their own around the notion of modesty (*kanaatkarlık*).

## **2.2 Zeytinburnu Workers**

As I have argued in Chapter 1, there were large industrial factories in the vicinity of Zeytinburnu. The most important industrial sectors in Zeytinburnu were the leather and textile sectors<sup>47</sup>. The textile workers were working in large factories where more than a thousand people were employed. There was also a rubber factory, *Derby*, in which nearly five thousand people were working. Apart from these large scale factories of the textile and rubber sector, in the leather sector there were mainly small workshops in which, at most 20 or 30 people were employed. In the largest of these workshops there were only 100-120 workers and the total number of these workshops was 95. (Akçay: 1974:307) In spite of the smallness of the workshops, as a result of the leather sector's concentration in the same area and the collective bargains that included all of the workshop workers, each workshop was like a part of the same large factory. The Kazlıçeşme neighborhood where the leather workshops were concentrated, was like a camp with its 3500 workers, leather workshops, number of rooms for single workers, coffee houses, bakery, public bath (*hamam*), mosque and police station. (Kaya: 2005)

As is widely argued in the Marxian tradition the concentration of workers within the factory and neighborhoods raises a sense of solidarity and common culture, beliefs and interests among the workers (Engels: 1993, Harvey: 1985, Katznelson: 1990,

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<sup>47</sup> 75% of the leather factories of the country were in Kazlıçeşme. (Akçay: 1974:305)

Wright: 1989) Castells also underlines the importance of the closeness of the work place and residential place for the strength of the working class culture. (Castells: 1977) Besides the proximity of home and the work place,<sup>48</sup> the political mobilization and the rise of the left between the years 1960-1980 have been important factors that rendered Zeytinburnu a working class district and made working class culture flourish among the workers.<sup>49</sup> Hence, Baydar argues that, between the years 1965-1980, during the period of political mobilization and the rise of the left, working class districts, which created their own history, life style and way of thinking that was based on their class identity, emerged in Istanbul for the first time and Zeytinburnu was one of those districts. (Baydar: 1999:211)

Trade union movement started to occupy a crucial place in the political life by the late 1960s and the 1970s in Turkey. As Duben argues, “the mass strikes that took place in Derby rubber factory in 1968 and the Alpagut mines in 1969 and the mass strikes and demonstrations on 14-16 June of 1979 which took place with the participation of thousands of workers are the obvious signs of the development of the political consciousness of, at least some of the, workers in Turkey.” (Duben: 2002:36-37, *translation mine*)<sup>50</sup> Accordingly, between the 1960s and the 1980s the workers of Zeytinburnu (both the first generation immigrants and their children) took

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<sup>48</sup> 97 per cent Zeytinburnu workers were living in walking distance to their work places in those years. (Hart: 1969:64)

<sup>49</sup> Here the concepts working class identity and culture are employed *a la* Thompson (1963). That is class is taken to be a historical phenomenon that is forged and created by people; it is not a thing but a set of social relations and experiences and it is not an entity or “permanence” but as Harvey (1999) asserts, it is fundamentally a process.

<sup>50</sup> “1968’de Derby lastik firmasında, 1969’da Alpagut kömür madenlerinde yapılan büyük grevler ve 14-16 Haziran 1970’te binlerce kişinin katıldığı grevler ve kitlesel gösteriler, bu yıllarda, Türkiye’deki işçilerin en azından bir kısmındaki siyasi bilincin gelişmesinin açık göstergeleridir.”

an active role in the ongoing political struggles. In these years strikes and demonstrations, as forms of resistance were widespread in Zeytinburnu, and as Baydar puts it, resistances and demonstrations were not only limited within the factories and among the workers, but they also spread to the neighborhoods. (Baydar: 1999: 209) While the leather workers were mainly organized under the trade union *Deri-İş* which is still among the strongest trade unions in Turkey, the textile workers were organized under two big trade unions: *TEKSİF* (Federation of the Textile Workers) that is a fraction of *Türk-İş* and *Tekstil-İş* (Trade Union of the Textile Workers) that is a fraction of *DISK*. *DISK* was an influential leftist trade union confederation in those years, which played an active role in organizing the workers movement of Turkey. Moreover, although *Türk-İş* was not a leftist trade union, the leftists were organized under the *TEKSİF* and *Deri-İş* fractions of *Türk-İş*. (Kaya: 2005: 153) There were also hundreds of other Zeytinburnu residents who were members of numerous legal or illegal leftist organizations and political parties. (see Kaya: 2005) According to a Zeytinburnu worker, a retired leather worker, the local offices of the trade unions were important places where, especially, the male workers came together and discussed their problems. There were also various leftist political groups<sup>51</sup> in the trade unions that were getting organized there. As well as the trade union offices where workers came together in their spare time, there were also different associations in Zeytinburnu that were established by various leftist groups in order to organize the people of Zeytinburnu. For instance, *Pahalılık ve İşsizlikle Mücadele Derneği* (Association for Struggle against the Expensiveness and Unemployment), *İşçi Birliği Derneği* (Association for the Workers Union), *Halk*

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<sup>51</sup> The most important leftist parties and organizations that had members in Zeytinburnu were; *TSİP* (Turkish Socialist Worker Party), *Vatan Partisi* (Land Party), *TKP* (Turkish Communist Party), *TKP/ML* (Turkish Communist Party/ Marxist Leninist), *Devrimci Kurtuluş* (Revolutionary Liberation). (Kaya: 2005)

*Evleri* (People Houses) and a number of regional associations were established between the 1960s and 1970s and aimed to unite the people of Zeytinburnu under the leftist organizations in order to ensure their active participation in the ongoing political struggle in Turkey. (Kaya: 2005) Kaya, also, underlines the importance of the coffee houses in Zeytinburnu as places where the men of Zeytinburnu gathered and discussed political issues and also as places where the leftist militants tried to organize the male workers by discussing the issues of both domestic politics and world politics.<sup>52</sup> However, it needs to be noted even if in passing, that these three public spaces, trade unions, associations and the coffee houses were, mainly, for the male workers. This gives us clues about the gender-biased politics of the leftist organizations of Turkey; the militant worker in their imaginary was the male worker.

As I have argued in Chapter 1, during the establishment of the *gecekondu* neighborhoods in the big cities, the party which was in charge was the Republican People's Party (CHP). The CHP as a party consisting of the bureaucrats and the urban middle classes did not support the establishment of the *gecekondus*. It was the Democrat Party (DP), which was a right wing party that supported the *gecekondus*. Thus, *gecekondu* neighborhoods were regarded as the "vote stores" of the DP and the Justice Party (AP), which was the follower of DP, until the 1973 elections. However, by the second half of the 1960s, the CHP went under a transformation process, defined as the "left of the middle" and began to advocate the rights of the workers and the poor. (Zührer: 1993) For instance, during the same period the CHP supported the strikes of the Zeytinburnu workers. Moreover, Ecevit, the leader of the CHP, started the election campaign in Istanbul from Zeytinburnu in 1973. (Kaya: 2005)

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<sup>52</sup> In 1972 there were 339 coffee houses in Zeytinburnu. ( Akçay:1974:129)

DISK declared that it would support the CHP in the 1973 elections and advised its members to vote for the CHP. As well as DISK, other leftist organizations that were organized in Zeytinburnu, too, supported CHP. (Kaya: 2005) Hence, in Zeytinburnu, for the first time the CHP got most of the votes<sup>53</sup>. I believe that, as being a worker started to occupy a central place in the lives of the people of Zeytinburnu, the leftist parties and organizations started to gain supporters in Zeytinburnu. While the leftist organizations regarded the gecekondü neighborhoods as the centers of struggle and resistance in the 1970s (Aslan: 2004), in the same period “anti-communist” organizations became established in Zeytinburnu as well as in the other gecekondü districts. For instance, by the second half of the 1970s, the nationalist movement that was organized under the MHP (Nationalist People’s Party) started to attack the leftists and the leftist associations in Zeytinburnu. In this process, some coffee houses were bombed and some of the leftist people were killed by the MHP militants. Consequently the leftist youth of Zeytinburnu who were the children of the first generation workers, started to get organized under the underground Marxist-Leninist organizations that were advocating armed struggle. In these years armed clashes became widespread among the youth of Zeytinburnu and lots of young people of Zeytinburnu died. Accordingly, Zeytinburnu was divided into two parts. The area where the Turkoman immigrants were living was known as the fascist/nationalist region and the rest of Zeytinburnu was considered as a “ghetto” of the leftists. This division was so rigid that the people who lived in one half could not pass to the other half. This situation continued until the coup d’état of 1980.

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<sup>53</sup> While nine parties participated to the elections in 1973 elections, CHP got 48 % of the votes in Zeytinburnu. (DİE:1998)

In brief, we can argue that Zeytinburnu was a place where most of the inhabitants were workers who were employed in factories and workshops around. While the people of Zeytinburnu were villagers when they first migrated to Zeytinburnu, they soon turned into workers, who participated in the trade union movement in order to improve their conditions. People of Zeytinburnu had friends and relatives living in the same neighborhood and working under the same conditions. They were working in the same factories, going to the same coffee houses, shopping from the same places, wearing similar clothes. As a first generation woman from Zeytinburnu argues,

“More or less, we all were the same. No one would envy another nor was there any jealousy as is today. If I had a sofa, both my neighbor next door and the neighbor opposite had identical ones too. All of us were eating the same food.”<sup>54</sup>

I argue that this commonality, as well as the promotion of working class identity by leftist politics that was influential in that period, led to the flourishing of the working class culture that was based on modesty (*kanaatkarlık*) among the people of Zeytinburnu. Of course, I do not claim that class was the only or the most important cultural identity in Zeytinburnu. As Duben points out in his study on the relation of the kinship and factory organization in Turkey, ethnic, regional and religious origin occupy a central place in the structure of work in Turkey. (Duben: 2002) He tells us how the workers of Çağlayan, who worked in the relatively small-scale workshops,

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<sup>54</sup> “Hepimiz aşağı yukarı birbirinin aynıydık, öyle kimsenin kimseye özenmesi ya da şimdiki gibi çekememezlik yoktu. Bende nasıl divan varsa, karşımdaki komşumda da aynısı vardı, yandakinde de. Biz ne yiyorsak, onlar da aynısını yiyordu” Interview on 16.01.2004 with Mubeccel (female, 72)

did not participate in the trade union movement thanks to their familial and regional ties with their bosses. We can argue that there was a regional division of labor in Zeytinburnu too. For instance, while in the leather sector there were mostly workers from Erzincan, Çankırı, Tunceli, Bingöl, Samsun and Ordu, there were mostly workers from Kastamonu, Tokat, Giresun, Kars and Sinop in the textile sector. Moreover, this structure was reflected in the trade unions too. In the administration board of *Deri-İş*, there were representatives from each region where the leather workers came from. (Kaya: 2005) However, I argue that despite the importance of the regional and familial ties among the Zeytinburnu workers, these did not prevent them from feeling that they belonged <sup>55</sup> to the working class.

I argue that, whether participating in the political struggle or not, Zeytinburnu workers invested in the subject position of worker and celebrated modesty (*kanaatkarlık*), as I will discuss below.<sup>56</sup> To put differently, as the living presence of the working class culture in the area nurtured a particular *habitus* (Bourdieu: 1977), the working class people of Zeytinburnu overlooked the need to “imitate another culture” as was expected from them. Rather than imitating the ones who *already* got modernized, the first generation people of Zeytinburnu created a specific culture that was different from the villagers’ and the urbanites’. Above, I told my grandfather’s dress “story” when he first came to Istanbul. There he was degraded because of his

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<sup>55</sup> I borrowed the term “belonging” from Hoggart, who is the writer of “The Uses of Literacy” in which he discussed the changes in the working class culture of Britain, as a person who came from a British working class family. In his book, he shows the difficulties of making a clear cut definition of the working class and criticizes the “desire” to arrive at such a definition. For him, to be the member of the working class is a “sense of being in a group of their own, [ ...] they feel rather that they are ‘working class’ in the things they admire and dislike, in ‘belonging’.” (Hoggart:1970:20)

<sup>56</sup> Hoggart, too underlines the importance of the modesty among the British working class and tells how they did not want to have more (i.e more furnitures, better clothes, etc.) (Hoggart:1970:67)

clothes that were not regarded as “appropriate” in Istanbul. Another story of my grandfather tells us how people of Zeytinburnu after the 1960s created their own norms and/or codes in relation to their worker identity. My grandfather in winter always wore a neat but third quality overcoat, even though he had a newer and better one - but of course his better coat was still not top quality. Leading a pretty secluded life after his retirement, his first and last outing to a public place happened to be his visit to the hospital, one that workers with social security used. For this visit, despite the insistence of my grandmother to put on the new overcoat, he refused by saying: “I am a worker and all the people that go to that hospital are workers too. Wearing such clothes before them would not be appropriate.” My grandfather was a worker but he was not a member of a trade union and he was not a leftist either. However, as we can read in his sentences, rather than imitating the Istanbulites in order not to be degraded, he chose to dress according to his class identity which he thought was the most proper dress for him.

Another first generation immigrant, too, tells how she was dressing differently not only the villagers, but also from the Istanbulite:

“When we came here, we started to dress differently, different than the way we dressed in the village. We were wearing *şalvar*<sup>57</sup> in the village. We adapted to the environment after we came. But, of course, we were not like them [*the Istanbulites*]. We were seeing the ladies when we went to Aksaray, the ladies were different and we were different...They were wearing skirts on their knees. Sure, we were dressing according to

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<sup>57</sup> Traditional baggy trousers that were usually worn in the villages in Turkey.

ourselves; we were wearing skirt, short sleeves, dresses, etc. Yet we were not like them, we were dressing normally...”<sup>58</sup>

Her sentences show us how modesty (*kanaatkarlık*) is one of the crucial figures that shape their identities. While as in my grandfather’s case, she asserts that they were dressing differently from both the villagers and the Istanbulites, she underlines the borders between one another by arguing that they were dressing “normal” which signifies modesty (*kanaatkarlık*), in contrast to the “ladies”. While the women from Zeytinburnu were “only” women, the female Istanbulites were “ladies”. By calling them “ladies”, she draws a boundary between the women of Istanbul and the women of Zeytinburnu, which cannot be closed since being a “lady” connotes the nobility that is handed over through family lineage.

Another first generation woman, who also draws a boundary between them and the Istanbulite tells her limitations in “imitating” the Istanbulites:

“After we came here, sure, we started to dress differently. We dressed in a normal manner. That doesn’t mean that we were dressing freely, I mean normal. But, I didn’t speak like “*geliyorum gidiyorum*” [she imitates the Istanbul Turkish]. I can’t be like that... Why should I be an arrogant! I don’t want to change my accent...I have already been fucked up from working the whole day, while I was working in the field when I was in

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<sup>58</sup> “Buraya gelince tabii, köydekenden farklı giyinmeye başladık. Köyde şalvar falan giyiyoorduk. Ee, biz de uyum sağladık çevreye. Ama tabii, öyle onlar gibi (İstanbulular) değildik, Aksaray’a falan gidince görüyorduk hanımları., hanımlar daha başka biz daha başka.. Onlar dizde giyerlerdi. şimdi tabii o zaman sen de kendine göre etek giyiyorsun, elbise giyiyorsun. Kısa kollu giyiyoorduk, dar etek giyiyoorduk ama gene de onlar gibi değildik daha normal giyiniyoorduk.” Interview on 07.02.2004 with Nuriye (female, 68)

the village. Why should I been an arrogant after that? We didn't go all over that way like Nebahat Hanım<sup>59</sup> did... I mean “*geliyorum gidiyorum*”... things like that...”<sup>60</sup>

She considers that trying to be similar to Istanbulites and/or to imitate their language is arrogant. She points out that she did not forget her rural past, especially her onerous work in the fields, and she owns up her past and labor, things that make her different from Istanbulites. For her there is no need to “imitate” the Istanbulite and forget her rural past. She knows where she came from and she knows the boundaries between her and the Istanbulite. Thus for her, “imitating” the Istanbulite would be a sign of arrogance, which also means representing oneself as somebody else.

Moreover, another first generation woman's memory testifies how the dressing codes were challenged according to the worker identity:

“Me and uncle Nahit, went to the Sümerbank<sup>61</sup>, in Sirkeci. As soon as we entered the store, one of the customers said ‘oh! It has begun to stink’.

At that moment Uncle Nahit started to laugh quietly. We said nothing.

They were looking around, ‘where this smell comes from? where?’ After

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<sup>59</sup> *Nebahat Hanım* is her daughter's mother-in-law. They were from the same village, and they both immigrated to the city. However, *Nebahat Hanım* lives in Bakırköy, which is a middle class district, and she tries to speak Istanbul Turkish, but since its not her native accent, she over emphasizes some words.

<sup>60</sup> “Buraya gelince daha başka giyinmeye başladık tabii. Giyindik yani hep normal, Öyle açık saçık da giyinmedik tabii, normal yani. Yalnız ben bir ‘geliyorum gidiyorum’u yapmadım. Kendi şeyimi bozamam. Ne büyüklencem? Niye büyükeneyim yani? Benim kırdan anam koşalanmış çalışırken, ne büyükeneyim? Öyle Nebahat Hanım gibi yapmadık yani geliyorum gidiyorum.” Interview on 13.01.2004 with Kadriye (female, 75)

<sup>61</sup> Sümerbank was a state-owned popular department store in the 1970s, where mostly workers and low- income people were shopping.

all, we laughed and told them ‘someone here works at tannery!’ and they said that ‘Ohh! We’ve already got that this smell comes from a person who works at tannery.’ There was nothing to be ashamed of. And they didn’t looked down upon us, they did not imply that they were disturbed...They just said ‘oh! There something smells, a smell of someone who works at a tannery. We just wondered and looked around to find out who is that person?’ Besides, it was something to be proud of. Everyone wanted to find a job like that; good job, good money, social insurance, did not kick you out even when there was a strike.”<sup>62</sup>

While this “bad” smell would be related to their “backwardness” since cleanliness is one of the most important symbols of modern life, and the former is regarded as something that deserves to be degraded, this “bad” smell turned into something respectful, as his job was respectful in these years. To put it differently, as his job was satisfactory and thus “valuable” his skin that smelled “bad” thanks to his job was not regarded as an “issue” but rather turned into something that one should be proud of.

To sum up, in this Chapter I tried to discuss how the modernist and/or developmentalist gaze exerted violence against the people of Zeytinburnu by devaluing both their rural background and the *gecekondu* life. Accordingly, while the

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<sup>62</sup> “Sirkeci’de Sümerbank’a gittik Nahit Dayı’nla. Biz içeri girer girmez, bir tanesi ‘ay bir şey kokmaya başladı’ dedi. O zaman Nahit Dayın gülmeye başladı ama, ses çıkarmıyoruz. ‘Nerden geliyor koku? Nerden geliyor?’ biz sonra güldük söyledik, ‘tabakhanede çalışan var’ diye. Onlar da ‘anladık zaten tabakhanede çalışan birinden geldiğini’ dediler...Öyle hiç utanılacak gibi değildi, etraftakiler de küçümseyerek ‘öf möf’ diye şey etmedi. ‘Aa bir koku var, tabakhanede çalışanın bir kokusu var. Acaba kim diye bakındık’ dediler. Gurur duyulacak birşeydi zaten. Herkes öyle bir iş bulmak istiyordu. İyi bir iş ,iyi para, sigortası var, çıkarmıyor, grev falan oldu gene çıkarmadı.” Interview on 05.01.2004 with Bahriye (female, 65)

*gecekond*u people were expected to be assimilated to the urban middle classes, there had always been boundaries between the people of Zeytinburnu and the Istanbulites. I argue that these boundaries were in fact framed according to the modernization and/or developmentalism discourses and every confrontation with the gaze that is formed by these discourses highlighted the boundaries between them. I believe that due to the visibility and the strength of these boundaries, crossing over to the other side did not even become the “dream” of the people of Zeytinburnu. Moreover, while the people of Zeytinburnu were devalued as *gecekond*u people, they gained respect as workers. I argue that they found the means of negotiating this gaze by adopting the worker identity, i.e. as a, modern subject position as equivalent to the discriminating gaze and in a “legitimate” (i.e. modern) struggle against the eye of that gaze. Accordingly, rather than imitating the urban middle classes, the people of Zeytinburnu created their own culture and norms (i.e dressing) as workers, in time, which were based on the notion of modesty (*kanaatkarlık*) . To put it differently, the people of Zeytinburnu, as a community who were living almost in the same conditions, did not need to and /or want to cross over to the other side, due to the respectful and valuable position that was opened to them as workers.

### CHAPTER 3: OWNING THE “GAZE OF THE CITY”: ZEYTINBURNU FROM SPACE OF PRODUCTION TO SPACE OF CONSUMPTION

By the mid 1980s, Zeytinburnu had become the playground of the changes that global capitalism brought about. The most striking aspect that renders these changes more visible is the reorganization of space in Zeytinburnu. As the space itself is produced, it produces social, cultural and economic practices writes Lefebvre (1991). Zukin (1991) and Sassen (1996) add that it becomes a major structuring medium that reshapes culture as well as the landscape. The transfer of the leather factories in the early 1990s to Tuzla and Çorlu is the forerunner of the changes in Zeytinburnu.<sup>63</sup> This move is an integral part of a more general trend of the escape of sites of production from the “center” and the inner city to the peripheral areas<sup>64</sup>. The transfer of the leather workshops was the precursor of a new period for Zeytinburnu, since the leather workshops were not only the largest but also the most organized leather production site in this district as well as in Istanbul. On the heels of the leather industry, many workers as well as the trade union, *Deri-İş*, left Zeytinburnu for Tuzla and Çorlu. During the same period most of the large and small factories were closed and many small-scale textile and leather workshops,<sup>65</sup> which were the integral part of

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<sup>63</sup> Tuzla is a district located on the very outskirts of Istanbul and Çorlu is a small district of Tekirdağ, a city near Istanbul.

<sup>64</sup> While Zeytinburnu was an empty land that was away from the center of the city, it began to occupy a more central position as the city grew.

<sup>65</sup> As I have argued before, the leather workshops of Kazlıçeşme were located in the same area and each workshop was like a section of a huge leather factory. However, these newly emerging workshops are dispersed and also part of the informal economy. Moreover, due to the decline of the leather trade, by the second half of the 1990s, the leather sector is active only for two seasons (fall and winter), now. Accordingly, most of the leather workshops, in contrast to the past, are active for only two seasons now, not only in Zeytinburnu but also in Tuzla and Çorlu.

the informal economy<sup>66</sup>, were opened in the “basements” of Zeytinburnu. These workshops are, generally, in the basements of the apartments in Zeytinburnu. Some of them have very small windows and some of them, do not even, have windows and most importantly none of them can easily be seen from outside. For instance, it is nearly impossible for one to see the workshops when she is walking in the street, if she does not bend down.

While production is becoming hidden in the basements, consumption spaces become visible in Zeytinburnu. As I will discuss in this chapter, the opening of a glamorous shopping mall, *Olivium*, in 2000 significantly marked the transformation of this area. It is important to note that, formerly there was a factory where *Olivium* stands now and the company<sup>67</sup> that was the owner of the yarn factory is among the shareholders of *Olivium*. In a short time it became the meeting place in Zeytinburnu. Strolling and shopping in *Olivium* has become a new leisure time activity for the people of Zeytinburnu, especially for the women and the young people. *Olivium* brought vivacity to the street on which it is located and to its surrounding area. Many new shops, nearly all of them clothing shops, opened on the street where *Olivium* is located. In other words, the street of *Olivium* became one of the major shopping streets of Zeytinburnu. Other than this street, there is also another shopping street in

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<sup>66</sup> An informal economy can broadly be defined as “the realm in which economic transactions goes unregulated by the state” (Fortuna and Prates: 1989) After the 1980s the informal labor started to occupy an important space in the labor market of Turkey. (see Kepenek:1996, Yavan: 1998, Öncü and Köse: 2000, Yeldan:2001) For Öncü and Köse, the reasons of the rise of the informal labor in Turkey are, the changes in the trade union law in the post-1980 period that brought strict restrictions for the workers to organize under a trade union, the restrictions on the strikes and collective bargaining, lack of state control over the informal sector, and the suspension of social security rights, as well as the more general trend of informalization/marginalization in the world economy. (Öncü and Köse:2000)

<sup>67</sup> The name of this company is İleri Mensucat Tic. Aş. and the name of the yarn factory was Mensucat Santral Yarn Factory (Mensucat Santral İplik Fabrikası).

Zeytinburnu, namely *Bulvar* Street. *Bulvar* Street was Zeytinburnu's only shopping street, where there were mainly shops of consumer durables, house equipment, furniture and restaurants. However, after *Olivium*, in order to compete with it and the new shopping street, *Bulvar* Street was also renovated. In *Bulvar* Street nowadays there are many colorful shops, mostly selling textile products.<sup>68</sup> The street was closed to traffic two years ago and many fast food restaurants and cafeterias were opened. Accordingly, although there are still less prestigious shops in *Bulvar* Street, it resembles middle class shopping streets that can be found in other parts of Istanbul thanks to the new environmental design and the number of the shops and restaurants.

While Zeytinburnu was famous for its factories in the past, now it is famous for its shopping mall, *Olivium*. On the brink of the twenty-first century, it is predominantly a residential district whose inhabitants consist of the workers who are employed in the “basements” under insecure conditions, unemployed people who seek jobs, or permanently unemployed who have lost their hope of finding jobs. More and more, the last group of people is moving towards the darker side of the “informal economy” as petty criminals and drug dealers. Put differently, the organized labor force of Zeytinburnu which was visible in the large-scale factories of the pre-1990 period went “underground” either as flexible workers in small scale workshops in the basements or as “criminals” involved in drug traffic or pick-pocketing and house or car theft.

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<sup>68</sup> In the same period with the transfer of the leather workshops, a number of leather clothing shops were opened in the coastal side of Zeytinburnu. The goods in these shops are, mostly, for the Russian customers who are engaged in the leather trade.

As I have tried to discuss in the previous chapter, while the first generation immigrants were excluded from the “city” because they were regarded as “backward” and “non-modern” people, they were still included as workers. However, in this latest process, the people of Zeytinburnu are excluded from the work and wage processes as well. Moreover, Zeytinburnu was re-marked as a “*varoş*”, an expression that carries strong negative connotations against the places where the *gecekond*u people and the “urban poor” live. In this new neo-liberal process, the Zeytinburnu people are under a double exclusion: they are excluded from the wage and work processes and from the “city” and the so-called city culture. Accordingly, in this chapter, first of all, I want to discuss these processes of exclusion and later I want to focus upon the responses of the youth of Zeytinburnu (as the third generation people of Zeytinburnu) to this new process and the emergence of new subjectivities among the Zeytinburnu youth due to the transformation of Zeytinburnu. I chose to focus upon the experiences of the “last” generation of Zeytinburnu because, first of all, I think that this will enable us to have a more comparative perspective on the processes before the 1980s and after since there are important discontinuities between them. Besides focusing upon the “last” generation will not only provide us with a detailed analysis of today’s Zeytinburnu, it will also give us some clues about the future. Moreover as Comaroff and Comaroff argue focusing upon the younger generation is crucial in order to understand contemporary capitalism since it seems to be an especially fertile site into which class anxieties are displaced in “millennial capitalism” (Comaroff and Comaroff: 2000)

### ***3.1 Exclusion of the young people of Zeytinburnu from the work and wage processes***

As I have argued above, while Zeytinburnu was famous for its factories and workers, during the post-1980 period most of the factories in Zeytinburnu were closed or moved out of Zeytinburnu. Furthermore, in the same process hundreds of informal workshops were opened in the basements of the apartments. Generally, these workshops employ less than twenty workers and the majority of the workers lack social security and social rights.<sup>69</sup> Besides they cannot organize under a trade union as they are “informal” and/or “illegal” workers. The wages of these workers are very low. A worker cannot provide her living expenses if s/he lives alone in a rental house. Another important aspect of the workshops of Zeytinburnu is that the owners predominantly hire workers who are their relatives or their fellow townsmen (*hemşehri*).<sup>70</sup> In other words people generally work in family workshops and a totally different “social security” mechanism operates in these workshops.<sup>71</sup> Under temporal working conditions, low wages and the absence of any social security and

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<sup>69</sup> Yeldan argues that although there are studies on the informal sector in Turkey, there are no statistical records on informal labor thus the analysis of the informal labor remains hypothetical. However, he adds that, the *Household Labor Force Surveys* indicates that more than half of the workers in Turkey are working without any social security, recently. (Yeldan:2000:94, 95) Accordingly, I could not find any record on the workshops in Zeytinburnu, neither the municipality office nor the trade union (Tekstil-İş) have any record on the Zeytinburnu workshops. I can only claim the statement above (“these workshops employ less than twenty workers and the majority of the workers lack social security and social rights”) according to my observations, the interviews and what I heard from my acquaintances who work in the Zeytinburnu workshops and, regularly search for job for years thanks to the temporal working conditions.

<sup>70</sup> For instance, many Zeytinburnu workers told me how they were not hired because of having a different ethnic or regional background than the owner of the workshops.

<sup>71</sup> For the relationally of the familial and regional ties (*hemşehrilik*) and work in Turkey see; Dubetsky (1976), Türkün-Erendil (2000), in Mexico see; Beneria, L. (1989), in India see; Cathorne, P.M (1995) and in Uruguay see; Fortuna, J.C and Prates, S (1989).

organization, being a worker in Zeytinburnu cannot be as satisfying as it was in the past.

Unemployment is an important issue in Zeytinburnu. I could not get hold of statistics on the unemployment rates of the young people of Zeytinburnu; however, all of the people that I spoke to in Zeytinburnu argue that, the young people of Zeytinburnu (especially the young men) are not working. For instance an administrator of the *Çırpıcı*<sup>72</sup> *Neighborhood Association* (Çırpıcı Mahallesi Derneği) told me that the young men of Zeytinburnu have the “illness of not-working” (*çalışmama hastalığı*). Or in the meeting of the Istanbul Social Ecology Platform (*Istanbul Toplumsal Ekoloji Platformu*)<sup>73</sup>, where the problems of Zeytinburnu were discussed, the most important problems of the Zeytinburnu youth were pointed out as unemployment and drug addiction. Furthermore, the high proportion of unemployment makes the working conditions more insecure. For instance, due to the unemployed population who is looking for a job, workers can easily be dismissed without any explanation and excuse. The owners of the workshops are sure that if one worker goes, another one will come soon. Accordingly, there is always a high labor turn over in the workshops.

Consequently, today, the workers of Zeytinburnu do not feel that they are needed. As Sennett puts it, in contemporary capitalism “the work place and labor, especially work-and-place securely rooted in a stable local context, are no longer prime sites for the creation of value or identity.” (Sennett: 1998) As well as not feeling that one is

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<sup>72</sup> Çırpıcı is one of the biggest neighbourhoods of Zeytinburnu.

<sup>73</sup> The meeting was held on July 18, 2004. There were 58 people in the meeting and 43 of them were from Zeytinburnu.

needed, they are also not respected and thus investment in the subject position of worker and “creation of value or identity” in relation to their work becomes nearly impossible. As Korten argues, “the [new global] system treats people as a source of inefficiency” (Korten: 1996:13 quoted in Comaroff and Comaroff: 2000:301) and Comaroff and Comaroff add that, the workers became “ever more disposable”. Accordingly, many Zeytinburnu workers complain about the negative and arbitrary attitudes of their bosses towards the workers. For instance a young woman, while explaining the unemployment in Zeytinburnu, argued that:

“People don’t want to work in workshops because there, they don’t treat people humanly. They may pay 100 million, one can accept that salary if they treated the workers humanly. But no, they always humiliate the workers... Moreover they give you work only if there is need for labor at that particular time... If there is not enough work to do, they say ‘why should we pay extra money’ and they show you the way. Of course, no explanation.”<sup>74</sup>

As the quotation shows, workshops, rather than being places where the workers “create value and identity”, are places where the workers are degraded / devalued. Contrast to the past, the workers of Zeytinburnu cannot gain respect in their work places now. As I have discussed in Chapter 2, working class politics was powerful between 1960 and 1980 in Turkey. While the trade union movement that privileged

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<sup>74</sup> “İnsanlar gidip bir atölyede çalışmak istemiyor çünkü oralarda çalışanlara insan gibi davranmıyorlar, isterse 100 milyon versin insan ona bile razı oluyor ama insan gibi davransın, yok ama, aşağılıyorlar hep. Bir de şu var, işine geldiği kadar çalıştırmak, işine gelmiyor, mesela bakıyır az iş var, ‘niye boşuna para vereyim?’ diyor adam, seni kapının önüne koyuveriyor, hiç bir açıklama da yok tabii.” Interview on 08.04.2004 with Nazan (female, 18)

working class identity was powerful in these years, Zeytinburnu workers organized under trade unions and supported leftist politics. Moreover beyond the fact Zeytinburnu workers supported leftist politics that privileges working class identity or not, they invested in the subject position of worker through which they gained respect. However, today, under the global hegemony of neo-liberalism, the working class lost its political power that enabled the construction of a collective identity. To quote from Comaroff and Comaroff, again, “neo-liberal conditions render ever more obscure the rooting of inequality in structures of production, as work gives way to the mechanical solidarities of ‘identity’ in constructing selfhood and social being, class comes to be understood, in both popular and scholarly discourse, as yet another personal trait or life choice.” (Comaroff and Comaroff: 2000:306)

In brief, in relation to the new “designation” of Zeytinburnu that is parallel to the neo-liberal policies, the young people of Zeytinburnu cannot, at least entirely, participate in the work and wage processes as their grandmothers and grandfathers did when they do, such participation is contrast to the past only possible under insecure and degraded conditions. Furthermore, different than the organized workers of the past they are “alone” now. As Bauman puts it, “jobs *for life* are no more. As a matter of fact jobs *as such*, as we understood them, are no more. [...] No more collective insurance against the risks, the task for coping with the collectively produced risks has been *privatized*.” (Bauman: 1997: 36, 37) Moreover, the young people of Zeytinburnu are not only excluded from work and labor processes, but, as the low-income *gecekond* people –or as the “urban poor”- they are also excluded from the “city” and the so-called “city culture”. Accordingly, in the following part I will

discuss how Zeytinburnu and similar districts<sup>75</sup> are re-marked as places of “danger” and “threat” in the early 1990s and how this remarking leads to, the cultural exclusion of the *gecekondu* people and the “urban poor”.

### **3.2 Exclusion From the “city”: From *Gecekondu* to “*varoş*”**

In Turkish, the term that was used for squatter settlements was *gecekondu* and it can be translated to English as, “landed overnight”, “built overnight”, “settled at night” or “perched on at night”. The term was found by the squatters themselves and was exported to the “center” and defines the way in which they were naming, describing, and hence owning their new settlement experiences. Moreover, *gecekondu* is a descriptive word. By the 1990s, the term *gecekondu* began to be replaced by “*varoş*”. The term “*varoş*” is Hungarian in origin and it was first used to denote the neighborhoods outside the city walls. It was later employed to refer to any outer neighborhood in a city or town. (Erman: 2001) In Turkey, the concept of “*varoş*” was first used and largely shaped by the mass media and later owned up by some academicians (i.e Ayata: 1996, Baydar: 1997) and it has strong pejorative connotations. (Aksoy: 2001, Erman: 2001) As Erman argues, “*varoş*” people are regarded as follows:

“The *varoşlu*<sup>76</sup> are the economically deprived (the deprivation may be relative or absolute) and impoverished lower classes who tend to engage in criminal activities and radical political actions directed against the state. They are the [ones] who

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<sup>75</sup> Old *gecekondu* districts and the districts where low-incomed people live.

<sup>76</sup> People who live in *varoşes*.

challenge the political authority of the state and disturb the social order of society. They are also the unemployed, the street gangs, the mafia, the *tinerci* (those addicted to the easily available chemical substance used to dilute paints) who are mostly street children and, in a nutshell, the underclass.” (Erman: 2001:996)

While in the past there was a modernist hope that believed in the assimilation and integration of the *gecekondu* districts to the “city culture”, now, the *gecekondu* people and the “urban poor” became completely the Other of the “city” who certainly will not get “urbanized” and “modernized”. For instance, a famous journalist, Yalçın Doğan, writes his impressions on the “*varoş*” when he first had to visit a “*varoş*” in order to write a story on the Gazi ordeal<sup>77</sup>: “Varoş is a different world, when I came here I realized that this place is a different world. Is it Istanbul here? Is this the place that will be integrated with Europe? Is this place part of Istanbul?”<sup>78</sup> (Doğan: 1995) While Doğan asks these questions in an angry manner, his answers to all these questions are negative. For him “*varoşes*” are not the part of Istanbul and while their integration to Europe seems impossible for him they are also the obstacles in front of Turkey that would hinder Turkey’s integration to the European Union. Kıray, too, who carried a modernist hope on the transformation of the *gecekondu* neighborhoods into “modern” neighborhoods, underlines the importance of the dominance of the

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<sup>77</sup> There had been clashes between the police and Alevi demonstrators in the Gazi neighborhood of Istanbul, where mostly low-incomed Alevi people live, in March 1995. In the evening of March 12, unknown gunmen riddled five coffee houses which the Alevis frequent, with bullets, killing one and wounding numerous people. The next day, young people of Gazi neighborhood took to the streets in protest, and they were soon reinforced by different groups that came to support the people of Gazi. Throughout the neighborhood police and demonstrators clashed; shops and workshops owned by alleged “fascists” were attacked and destroyed. That night the police shot one demonstrator. The rioting continued the following days and the police, who went completely out of control, shot into the crowds and killed another 15 persons. (See Dural:1995)

<sup>78</sup> “Varoşlar ayrı dünyalar, buraya geldiğimde anladımki buralar ayrı dünyalar. Burası İstanbul mu? Avrupa ile burası mı bütünleşecek? Burası İstanbul’un içinde mi?”

“local” cultures in the “*varoşes*” and asserts that their integration to the “globalizing world culture” is impossible. (Kıray: 1995) Given that “*varoşes*” are regarded as entirely different than the so-called city, with the shift from the discourse of *gecekondu* to the discourse of “*varoş*”, the borders between the “city” and the *gecekondu* neighborhoods sharpened.

As Pınarcıoğlu and Işık put it, the term *varoş*, rather than being a descriptive term, reflects the fear and the anxiety of the urban elite. (Pınarcıoğlu and Işık: 2001:196) Bauman argues that, there is a tendency to identify crime with poverty in the “consumer society” and adds that the urban ghettos and the places where the “urban poor” live are regarded as the “no-go areas”, the places of crime and criminality. (Bauman: 1998) We can say that “*varoş*” are the “no-go areas” of Turkey. Accordingly, the people of the “*varoş*” are widely represented as a threat for the “city” in the mass media and they are regarded as the *cancer* of the “city”. (Aksoy: 2001) Besides its representations in the media, in academic studies, too, “*varoş*” is not considered as a part of the “city”, but regarded as places that are against “city culture” and as the places that degenerate the “city”. For instance Baydar, who is a sociologist and celebrated the *gecekondu* neighborhoods of the 1960s and the 1970s the working class districts, defines the “*varoş*” as: “Varoş as the buzzword of the recent years.... has come to denote the residential areas that are established in the city or at its periphery but that are at the same time, with their rural identity, separated from the city by psychological, social and cultural boundaries.”<sup>79</sup> Moreover, she

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<sup>79</sup> “Son yıllarda sık sık tekrarlanan varoşlar sözcüğü...kentin çevresinde ve içinde kurulmuş olup da kentten psikolojik, toplumsal, kültürel sınırlarla ayrılan kırsal kimlikli yerleşimlerin adı haline geldi.” (Baydar: 1997:78)

argues that the main contradiction is not in terms of class but culture in Turkey in the 1990s. (Baydar: 1997)

Accordingly, the people of the old *gecekondu* districts, who have always been out of the “city” and the so-called “city culture”, with the widespread usage of the term “*varoş*”, are re-marked as the Other of the “city”. But different than the past this new Other is a “threatening” Other. (Erman: 2001) While in the *gecekondu* discourses they were regarded as economically and socially deprived people who should be supported, now they are depicted as, culpable, undeserving and somewhat dangerous individuals. As Etöz puts it, “in this construction of the *varoş* as the residential quarters that exist ‘outside the city walls’ where poverty rules, illegal activities dominate and crime and violence grow the *varoş* emerges as *contra* the city.” (Etöz: 2000)

While the old *gecekondu* neighborhoods are re-marked as “*contra* the city” (Etöz: 2000), the “city” is described as a powerless and non-protected place in contrast to the “violent” and “offensive” “*varoş*”. For instance, Baydar, again, in her article on the “*varoş*”, titled “Ötekine Yenik Düşen İstanbul” (*The Istanbul that is defeated by the Other*), argues that “as we approach the year 2000, what is bewildering, scary and new is that the urban cultural identity is almost erased by the ‘Other’ Istanbul, and that for the first time, rather than coming up with a new synthesis, two alien structures, having completely closed the doors and sealed themselves off from one another, are trying to exist by destroying each other.”<sup>80</sup> (Baydar: 1997, 79) While

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<sup>80</sup> 2000 yılına doğru giderken şaşırtıcı, ürkütücü ve yeni olan kentin kültürel kimliğinin ‘Öteki’ İstanbul tarafından neredeyse silinmesi; ve ilk kez yeni bir sentezin değil, birbirine kapı ve sınırlarını sınıksız kapamış iki yabancı yapının birbirlerini tahrip ederek varolmaya çalışmalarıdır.”

Baydar, as a sociologist, contributes to the Othering process of the *gecekondu* neighborhood (by arguing that Istanbul or the “city” is powerless thanks to the power of the cultural identity of the “Other Istanbul”), not only defines the *gecekondu* neighborhoods as sources of threat for the “city” but also, implies the emergence of the exclusivist policies by underlining the boundaries between the so-called “city” and the “*varoş*” and claiming that the “*varoş*” is more powerful than the “city”. Since they are regarded as the “dangerous” “Other Istanbul”, there is no ground left for mutual intelligibility, no bridge of understanding or “real” communication between the people of “city” and the people of the “*varoş*”.

With this new turn that re-marks the *gecekondu* peoples as failures of the urbanization and modernization processes (Aksoy: 2001:45) and as “a population that is attacking the city, its values, its political institutions and the very core of its ideology and its social order” (Erman: 2001:997), the grounds for their exclusion from the “city” becomes available. Thus, as we saw in Baydar’s statement their “threatening power” is overemphasized. For instance, in the media they are defined as the dangerous “bombs” that will explode and damage the whole “city”. News of the “*varoş*” include headlines such as: “Ümraniye exploded”, “Pendik may explode”, “*Varoş*: Bombs that are ready to explode”, “*Varoş* said I will explode”<sup>81</sup>. (see Aksoy:2001:46)

I argue that to designate the “*varoş*” as “threatening”, “dangerous”, “bomb”, “cancer of city” and to designate the “city” as “powerless and non-protected” implies fantasies of “city”, with the “city” as, a “non-antagonistic” unity. As Žižek says “

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<sup>81</sup> “Ümraniye patladı”, “Pendik Patlayabilir”, “Varoşlar: Patlamaya Hazır Bomba”, “Varoş patlıyorum dedi”

fantasy constructs the scene in which the jouissance we are deprived of is concentrated in the Other who stole it from us” (Zizek: 1997: 32) and I believe that through the exclusivist policies that are informed by these fantasies of the “city”, it is aimed that the jouissance or say, enjoyment, (supposed) to be attained in the (impossible) “non-antagonistic” “city” will be taken back from the others (the people of the “*varoşes*”) of the “city” who are attributed almost supra-natural power by these fantasies (as implied in the following phrases: “Istanbul that is defeated by the Other”, “*Varoş* said I will explode” etc.).

In brief, as we saw in Chapter 2, the *gecekondu* people have always felt uncomfortable in the “city” due to the degrading “gaze of the city”, and accordingly they could not feel at home in the “city”. However, there was a need for the *gecekondu* people in the “city” as industrial workers in the pre-80s and thus they had to be welcomed and created their own space in the “city” as workers. Unlike the past, the people of Zeytinburnu as well as the inhabitants of similar districts (such as Alibeyköy, Gazi Mahallesi, Kağıthane) are not working in modern factories any more and their temporary jobs which are usually in the “basements” are not considered as important as the ones in the factories. Just as they have no record in the state’s social security institutions, they are not seen as part of the production economy but only as “troublemakers” within the “city”. As Bauman argues for global capitalism,

“The poor of today are no longer the ‘exploited people’ producing the surplus product later to be transformed into capital; nor are they the ‘reserve army labor’ expected to be integrated in to the capital-producing process at the next economic upturn. Economically speaking [...] they

are fully and truly redundant, useless, disposable and there is no ‘*rational*’ reason for their continuing presence. [...] The sole *rational* response to the presence is the systematic effort to exclude them from ‘normal’ society.” (Bauman: 1997)

I argue that the “dangerous classes” of capitalist society, despite the potential threat they posed, were still open to negotiation and containment. However, today the “danger” emanates not from the position that the “dangerous class” occupied in the society but from the space that these people belong to. (cf. Bauman: 1997) The places where the “dangerous class” (namely the working class) lived in the past turned into *places of danger* (Bauman: 1997). Accordingly, the Zeytinburnu of today is not renowned as a place where the “dangerous class” lives but as a *place of danger*. The people of Zeytinburnu, as “*varoş*” people, are regarded as culturally inferior, socially backward and dangerous. They are not part of the “normal society” that is the consumer society; they are the “flawed consumers”<sup>82</sup> who cannot play the “consumerism game” and thus the “undesired others” of the “city” who need to be excluded. Bauman argues that the places where the so-called “under class” lives turned into a “huge and growing warehouse where the failures and rejects of consumer society are stored.” (Bauman: 1997: 43) We can argue that Zeytinburnu, more and more, is turning into the “warehouse” that Bauman defines.

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<sup>82</sup> Bauman defines the “flawed consumers” as the “people unable to respond to the enticements of the consumer market because they lack the required resources, people unable to be ‘free individuals’ according to the sense of ‘freedom’ as defined in terms of consumer choice.” For Bauman, “flawed consumers” are also the “unfulfilled consumers, those whose means do not measure up to the desires, and those refused the chance of winning while playing the game by its official rules.” (Bauman:1997:14, 42)

To sum up, as I have tried to discuss above, the young people of Zeytinburnu are caught up in a process of double exclusion. On the one hand they are excluded from the economic processes and on the other hand they are excluded from the so-called city culture by being labeled as “*varoş*” youth, which implies that they are the troublemakers, and undesired others of the “city”. In the following section, I want to focus upon *Olivium*, the newly opened shopping mall, as a liminal space in Zeytinburnu, “where the failures and rejects of consumer society are stored”, and its relation with the emergence of new youth subjectivities among the Zeytinburnu youth as the “flawed consumers” of the “consumer society”.

### ***3.3 Olivium as a symbol of modernity and development in a place “not yet developed”.***

*Olivium* opened in April 2000 and as I mentioned above Zeytinburnu is famous for it now. The construction of *Olivium* began in 1998 on the lot that became available after the demolition of the yarn factory in the early 1990s. The mall covers 28.900 square meters; there are 106 stores, 16 fast food restaurants and 6 cinema halls in it. Nearly 25.000 people frequent *Olivium* on the weekdays and about 40.000 visit it on the weekends (*Radikal*, 23 October 2003).

According to the information that is given in *Olivium*’s web site, in 1998, initially, a leather trade center construction started in *Olivium*’s place. However, “because of the crisis in the leather sector and the need for a shopping center”, the construction was transformed into a shopping mall.<sup>83</sup> According to the guards who work at *Olivium*,

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<sup>83</sup> [www.olivium.org](http://www.olivium.org)

the people who shop there are mostly people from outside of Zeytinburnu. My observations and interviews, too, validate this. Since Zeytinburnu is a low-income community that severely suffers from deindustrialization, the shopping mall would be the last thing that the neighborhood needed. Then, who needed a shopping mall in Zeytinburnu? I would like to argue that rather than a need for shopping mall in Zeytinburnu there was a need for the creation of consumption. Bauman argues that, while the “older type of modern society” was the “producer’s society” and its members were the producers and soldiers, the society of today is a “consumer society”. And he adds that, the norms are reshaped in this new society according to the “ability and willingness” to play the “consumerism game”. For him, the duty of people today is to play their roles as consumers. (Bauman: 1998:80) Accordingly, I argue that *Olivium*, as a site of consumption, stands at the crossroads in the history of Zeytinburnu. It introduced the low-income people of Zeytinburnu to the “consumerism game” and henceforth, the “duty” of the people of the Zeytinburnu is to play their roles as consumers in a “consumer society.” It does not matter whether they are consumers *par excellence*, or “flawed consumers”. In the initial stage, the most important thing for this “consumer society” is to make everyone participate in this new “consumerism game” and be identified according to their relations with consumption.

As is widely argued, young people all around the world engage more rapidly in consumption processes. (See Hebdige: 1979, Thornton: 1995, Comaroff and Comaroff: 2000, Lietchy: 2003) Similarly, *Olivium* attracted the young people of Zeytinburnu more than the other age groups. In order to facilitate the people of Zeytinburnu’s participation in the “consumerism game”, *Olivium* was opened as an

outlet center in which second quality or flawed products are sold. Moreover, there are significant discounts periodically. All this makes access to famous brands much easier. The widespread use of credit cards and installment sales for the credit card owners make shopping in *Olivium* even easier.<sup>84</sup> Nevertheless, shopping in *Olivium* is still not easy for the low-income residents of Zeytinburnu. Thus, the imitations of the branded clothes, exchanging the branded clothes among a group of friends and thievery, as I will discuss in the next chapter, emerge as a solution for participating in this new “consumerism game”.

*Olivium*, with its well-designed and well-planned architecture is a place, which is not familiar to Zeytinburnu that is a district which developed completely in the absence of any urban planning. Moreover, as a consumption space, in which branded and expensive clothes are sold, it is an unusual place for Zeytinburnu which was a district famous as a production center where mostly, low-income workers lived. Thus, *Olivium* does not have anything in common with the history and space of Zeytinburnu. It is entirely a stranger to Zeytinburnu. This became visible in my interviewees’ comments who made a chronological break in their narratives marking the before and after of *Olivium*. In their narratives *Olivium* emerged as the significant marker that led to the transformation of Zeytinburnu. Most importantly they considered it as a place that will “modernize” and “develop” Zeytinburnu, and the people of Zeytinburnu. For instance two interviewees argue that;

“*Olivium* brought here modernity. Artists and the like come here...

Autograph days take place there. I mean, they changed Zeytinburnu

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<sup>84</sup> It needs to be added that owning a credit card has become very easy in Turkey in the recent years.

mentally, visually... Nowadays, people try to be modern, try to be charismatic.”<sup>85</sup>

“I think they opened Olivium to develop Zeytinburnu. In other words, to include Zeytinburnu to the society. Also I don’t know why they wanted to develop Zeytinburnu. Whether it is to urbanize Zeytinburnu or people in high places try to influence others. I don’t know. It is not really urbanization, I think. Much more they are trying to make Zeytinburnu fashionable, classy... Actually, gradually they succeed in this. Zeytinburnu is no longer rural. I mean, today Zeytinburnu is not like what it was four years ago.”<sup>86</sup>

According to the interviewees, the Zeytinburnu of the 2000s is still “not yet developed” and “not yet modernized”. It can be argued that although the developmentalist policies ended, developmentalist and/or modernizationist discourses are still powerful. Zeytinburnu continues to be articulated as “not yet developed” even by the people of Zeytinburnu. *Olivium* is taken as a symbol of modernity and development and not only stands in contradiction to Zeytinburnu’s “underdeveloped” status, but, more importantly, highlights it. Zukin asserts that, “ideologies or as Foucault puts it, discursive practices are created in specific places. These spaces then

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<sup>85</sup> “Olivium buraya çağdaşlık getirdi, Sanatçı geliyor, şu bu geliyor, imza günleri oluyor. Yani Zeytinburnu’nu beyin olarak, göz olarak değiştirdiler. İnsanlar artık çağdaş olmaya çalışıyorlar, karizma yapmaya çalışıyorlar.” Interview on 13.04.2003 with Salih (Male, 19)

<sup>86</sup> “Bence Zeytinburnu’nu geliştirmek için Olivium’u buraya açtılar. Yani Zeytinburnu’nun topluma kazandırılması için diyeyim. Geliştirmek istemelerinin nedenini de bilmiyorum, köylülükten şehirleşmeye geçmesi için mi, yada üst seviyedeki insanlar topluma bu düşüncüyü mi aşılamaaya çalışıyorlar? Bilmiyorum. Şehirleşme de değil aslında, medyatik, sosyetik yada ne bileyim o tarz şeylere çekilmeye çalışılıyor Zeytinburnu, giderek de bunu başarıyorlar zaten. Köylüleşmekten çıkıyor. Yani bir dört sene öncesinin Zeytinburnu’yla şimdiki aynı değil. ” Interview on 12.04.2004 with Selin (female,17)

provide the picture in our minds, when we conceive our identities.” (Zukin1997) Hence I argue that *Olivium* is a matrix in which discursive practices and accordingly desires are produced and which contributes to the creation of new subjectivities among the youth of Zeytinburnu and their participation to the “consumerism game” as consumers.

### ***3.4 Emergence of New Subjectivities after Olivium***

As is widely argued, consumption is highly related to the construction of identities. Comaroff and Comaroff write that “in millennial capitalism consumption, rather than production, emerged as a privileged site for the fabrication of self and society, of culture and identity and became the moving spirit of the late twentieth century.” (Comaroff and Comaroff: 2000) Accordingly, I argue that the vital effect of *Olivium* is not the increase in consumption among the youth of the Zeytinburnu but its contribution to the creation of new subjectivities.

Although the people of Zeytinburnu cannot afford to shop in *Olivium*, after its opening, they became familiar with the famous and expensive brands and more aware of what they could not consume and what the others consume. Moreover, while they were encountering the people wearing expensive and branded clothes only when they went to middle-class districts<sup>87</sup>, after the opening of *Olivium* the “well-dressed” people started to come to Zeytinburnu. As I have tried to discuss in the previous chapter, there had always been the degrading “gaze of the city” on the people of

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<sup>87</sup> The young people of Zeytinburnu see the well-dressed people, especially in Bakırköy that is a middle-class class neighborhood near Zeytinburnu and famous with its shopping streets where some of the young people of Zeytinburnu (especially the young men) spend their times in the weekends.

Zeytinburnu. After the opening of *Olivium*, as the people from the middle class districts began to pour into Zeytinburnu, the “gaze of the city” for the first time directly entered Zeytinburnu.

As Bourdieu argues in *Distinction*, class-determined *habitus* distinguishes itself in the cultural market place by identifying itself with a clearly defined set of products, activities and life styles. He adds that social identity is defined and affirmed in difference. (Bourdieu: 1997:191) Accordingly, as I have argued before, dress was already an important boundary marker between the people of Zeytinburnu and Istanbulites and in the initial years the people of Zeytinburnu were degraded because of their dresses which were different than those of the urbanites. However, during the negotiation with the degrading “gaze of the city”, the first generation people, rather than imitating the urbanites, created their own appropriate dressing style which denoted their class identity through which they gained respect. As the living presence of the working class culture in the area nurtured a particular *habitus* (Bourdieu: 1977), the working class people of Zeytinburnu did not ‘imitate another culture’. However, now, young people of Zeytinburnu rather than creating their own distinct style imitate the dressing style of the “modern” and wealthy urbanites.

After the opening of *Olivium*, the ways in which young people dress visibly changed and dressing became an important issue among the youth of Zeytinburnu. All of the young people whom I interviewed see a direct relation between the change in their dresses and the opening of *Olivium*. The most important change is the increase in the amount of expensive and branded clothes they own. While young people of Zeytinburnu were feeling uncomfortable because of their unbrand or outmoded clothes when they went to middle-class districts, after the opening of *Olivium*, they

began to feel uncomfortable in Zeytinburnu too. Since now the “well-dressed” middle class urbanites are coming to Zeytinburnu, they are not at ease even in Zeytinburnu anymore. Hence, in order to avoid this gaze, they feel the need to wear similar clothes with the ones whose gaze degrade them. They began to dress for the Other. (cf. Friedman: 1991) For instance a young man argues that,

“Those who come to Olivium are not just from Zeytinburnu, they also come from Bakırköy, Ataköy and Yeşilköy<sup>88</sup>. Their arrival has changed the people around [*she means those inhabiting Zeytinburnu*], I mean they also have an impact on the change. When the Zeytinburnu youth see those with money, they pay more attention to their clothes and shoes, in order to catch-up with them. They are affected, they say ‘these people hang around like that, so let’s do the same’.”<sup>89</sup>

Or a 16-year-old young woman says:

“Can you believe that, now people from Bakırköy, Yeşilköy come to Zeytinburnu to do their shopping. Well, for them not to look down upon us, we have to dress up better when we go there [*to Olivium*]. For

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<sup>88</sup> Bakırköy, Yeşilköy and Ataköy are the near by middle class districts.

<sup>89</sup> “Olivium’a gelenler sırf Zeytinburnu’ndan insanlar değil, Ataköy’den de geliyorlar, Bakırköy’den de geliyorlar, Yeşilköy’den de geliyorlar. Onların gelmesi dışarıdaki [*Zeytinburnu’nda oturanları kastediyor*] insanları değiştirdi, onların etkisi var yani. Paralı kesimi gören Zeytinburnu gençliği onlara ayak uydurmak için daha özen gösteriyor giysisine, ayakkabısına. Özenti oluyor yani, diyor bu adamlar böyle geliyor, biz de böyle takılalım.” Interview on 16.04.2003 with Tayfun (male, 21)

example, it wouldn't be appropriate to go there in sportswear worn out, on the knees.”<sup>90</sup>

So, the people of Zeytinburnu are no longer “alone” in Zeytinburnu. *Olivium* brought the “city” and its gaze.<sup>91</sup> Now the “gaze of the city” is on the people of Zeytinburnu more than ever. A seventeen-year-old young woman talks about the power of this gaze in the following way:

“If I have to go outside with unbranded clothes I always look at the floor while walking. Because, if people see me in these clothes they will ridicule me...to be honest, if I see someone in unbranded clothes I will look down upon her/him too. For example, I never go to *Olivium* with unbranded clothes; people should know what kind of clothes should be worn in such kind of places.”<sup>92</sup>

While she suffers from the degrading “gaze of the city” and has the potential of being degraded since all of her clothes are not brand, she experiences the fantasy of being

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<sup>90</sup> “İnanabiliyor musun, artık Bakırköy’den, Yeşilköy’den insanlar Zeytinburnu’na alışveriş yapmaya geliyorlar. Ee, bize küçümseyerek bakmasınlar diye bizim de oraya (*Olivium*’a) daha düzgün kıyafetlerle girmemiz gerek. Mesela öyle dizleri çıkmış eski püskü bir eşofmanla gitmek doğru olmaz.” Interview on 13.04.2004 with Arzu (female, 16)

<sup>91</sup> By arguing so I do not mean that everyone who, especially, came from a middle class district looks down upon the people of Zeytinburnu. However, as I have discussed in the previous chapter, this gaze is so powerful that it was internalized by the people of Zeytinburnu thus, there is no need for an actual subject to look down upon them but the very existence of an urbanite is enough. In Foucault’s terms it is a “faceless gaze that transformed the whole social body into a field of perception.” (Foucault:1977:214)

<sup>92</sup> “Markasız kıyafetlerle dışarı çıkmak zorunda kaldığımda, hep yere bakarak yürüyorum. Çünkü, insanlar beni o kıyafetlerle görürlerse dalga geçerler... Dürüst olmak gerekirse, ben de markasız kıyafetlerle gezenleri gördüğüm zaman, ben de onlara küçümseyerek bakıyorum. Mesela *Olivium*’a hiç markasız kıyafetle gitmem, insanlar öyle yerlerde nasıl giyinmeleri gerektiğini bilmeliler” Interview on 16.04.2004 with Derya (female, 17)

similar to the ones who degrade her by looking down upon the ones who wear unbranded clothes and do not know “how to dress” when they go to *Olivium*. A young leather worker<sup>93</sup> tells, with great enthusiasm, how he began to look like the people from Bakırköy after he “learned how to dress” like them:

“Before Olivium was opened, we used to go to Galleria, Carousel<sup>94</sup> and what not during the weekends. I used to dress a bit like, how do you say it...I used to put on cloth pants<sup>95</sup>, I mean I wasn’t like *entel*<sup>96</sup> guys, I wasn’t like brand addicts, but now it is different. I looked at them [*the ones in Galleria and Carousel*], I wondered how it would be if I dressed that way. I mean the mentality is changing. You see the guy with Puma, and nice sweater, you like it and you say I should have the same. I mean you see, you look at the guy, he is well dressed up, slowly you start dressing up like that. But as you said, there you feel it from peoples’ look. Once, I remember, a boy came, then my dressing wasn’t that good, I had just started the brands. The boy had first class brands on. As he was passing by he did something like that [raised his hand, made a gesture of pointing] I didn’t do anything. I was so ashamed, but I also felt like beating him. After all, I am way backwards compared to them [*those in*

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<sup>93</sup> While I made the interview with him on summer 2003, he was working in a leather workshop. However, later due to the rising of the general “trend” of drug dealing in Zeytinburnu he left his job and became a drug dealer.

<sup>94</sup> Galleria is the first shopping mall Istanbul and it is in Bakırköy and Carousel is another shopping mall in Bakırköy.

<sup>95</sup> In Turkey, while the jeans have Western connotations, wearing cloth pants is regarded as being “rural” that implies being traditional and “backward” among the young people who do not work and have to wear suit.

<sup>96</sup> Although *entel* has different connotations (i.e both intellectual and pseudo-intellectual) in Turkish, he implies the ones who wear branded clothes and who care for their looks.

*Galleria*], I feel like a stranger there. But it is not like that in Olivium. There everybody looks at me like ‘Ohh, such a sweet boy, nicely dressed up’. When I go to Olivium, they [*those from Bakırköy*] can’t figure out that I am from Zeytinburnu. Like I said, it wasn’t like this back then. But now I learned how to dress up. Now they don’t understand whether I am from Zeytinburnu or Bakırköy.”<sup>97</sup>

As we have seen in the example above, the young worker is proud of the fact that his being a person from Zeytinburnu cannot be discerned from his clothes, and tells this as a success story. Barthes argues that, “commercial interests in capitalist society simultaneously promote the pursuit of two dreams: “the dream of identity” in other words, “to be oneself and to have this self recognized by others” and the “dream of otherness” to be transformed, by the same act of consumption into a desired other” (Barthes:1983) Accordingly, Liechty , in his study the process of formation of a middle-class in Katmandu tells how modernity is an object of desire for, especially, Katmandu youth and how they tried to transform themselves into modern “desired others” by consumption in general and clothing in particular. (Liechty:2003) In the

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<sup>97</sup> Olivium açılmadan önce hafta sonları Galleria’ya, Couresel’e falan gidiyorduk. Ben eskiden biraz şey giyerdim, yani ne derler... Kumaş giyerdim yani böyle entel takılmazdım, yani marka falan takılmazdım, ama şimdi değişti. Ordakilere [*Galleria ve Carousel*’dekiler] baktım, ben de giysem nasıl olur diye düşündüm. Değişiyor yani kafa. Bakıyorsun, adamın puması var, kazağı güzel, hoşuna gidiyor, bende de olsa diyorsun..Yani görüyorsun, bakıyorsun adam güzel giyinmiş, sen de başlıyorsun öyle giyinmeye yavaş yavaş. Ama tabii dediğiniz gibi, orda bunu hissediyorsunuz insanların bakışlarından. Bir gün mesela bir çocuk geldi, benim o zaman giyimim iyi değildi, o zaman yeni başlıyorum markalara, çocuğun üzerinde birinci sınıf markalar, geçerken şöyle yaptı [*elini kaldırıp, şuna bak anlamında sallıyor*]. Ben de bir şey demedim... Utandım çok, ama dövesim de geldi... Sonuçta, ben onlardan [*Galleria*’dakilerden] çok geriyim, orda kendimi yabancı hissediyorum. Ama Olivium’da öyle değil. Olivium’da herkes, ‘aa, ne hoş çocuk, ne güzel giyinmiş’ diye bakıyor. Şimdi ben Olivium’a gittiğimde, onlar [*Bakırköylüler*] benim Zeytinburnulu olduğumu anlamıyorlar. Dediğim gibi eskiden böyle değildi. Ama şimdi giyinmeyi öğrendim. Artık Zeytinburnulu muyum Bakırköylü müyüm anlamıyorlar.” Interview on 02.06.2003 with Ayhan (male, 20)

case of Zeytinburnu youth too, we can argue that by dressing like the ones who degrade them, the Zeytinburnu youth try to transform themselves into a “desired other” that is the “modern” and middle class urbanites. However, in spite of his every attempt to be like those modern and middle class people, as we have seen in the above quotation, he still does not feel comfortable in *Galleria*, which is located in a middle class district and which mostly the middle class people frequent, but in *Olivium*. However, it is different in Olivium because:

“There are many differences between Galleria and Olivium, millions of differences... In Galleria everyone looks for fun, in here [he means *Olivium*] everyone’s mind is in treachery. There are well-educated people in Bakırköy [*the district where Galleria is in*], different people, they are qualified...I can call there [*Bakırköy*] as high-society but people in here [*Zeytinburnu*] are from here.”<sup>98</sup>

Ironically, he attributes positive characteristics to *Galleria* where he does not feel comfortable and negative characteristics to *Olivium* where he feels comfortable. While he is the Other in *Galleria* since well-educated people and the upper classes go there, he has the possibility of finding Others in *Olivium*. By saying that “the people in here are from here” he looks down upon the people of the district he belongs to, distances himself from them and thus locates himself next to the people who go to *Galleria*. Consequently, I argue that *Olivium* -unlike the more “prestigious” shopping malls that are located in the middle or upper class districts- is a place that allows the

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<sup>98</sup> “Olivum’la Galleria arasında çok fark var, milyonlarca...Orda [*Galleria’da*] herkes eğlenmeye bakıyor, burada herkesin aklı fesatta. Bakırköy’de çok eğitilmiş insanlar var tabii, farklı insanlar, yetişmişler, sosyete diyebilirim oraya tabii ama burdaki insanlar burdan” Interview on 02.06.2003 with Ayhan (male, 20)

young people of Zeytinburnu to experience the fantasy of being “modern” and “developed” in a district which is not “modern enough”. Accordingly, *Olivium* is a liminal space for them since in *Olivium*, they can perform middle class norms and, accordingly, become “modern”<sup>99</sup>, something they cannot perform in a more prestigious shopping mall. This performance is possible in *Olivium* precisely because, there, they have the “chance” to confront the less “modern”<sup>100</sup> and “developed” Others. For them these “less modern” people are the Kurds who migrated to Zeytinburnu in the early 1990s and are not part of Zeytinburnu’s history.<sup>101</sup>

During the early 1990s, many Kurds from the Kurdish region had migrated to Zeytinburnu due to the war between the Turkish army and the Kurdish guerillas. The first generation immigrants and their children see Kurds as the people that are less “developed” and “modern” than they are. For instance, when I asked my young interviewees who they did not want to come across with in *Olivium*, nearly all of them named the Kurdish people. For instance an 18-year-old man argues that:

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<sup>99</sup> I do not claim that, there is a “true” definition of modernity, and I will not try to examine if the practices of these young people are suitable to the “modern” practices or not. As Mitchell argues that, “modern is always staged as representation... and representation is the key, first of all, to how to imagine the construction of modern selfhood.” (Mitchell:2000)

<sup>100</sup> They may not argue that they, themselves, are “modern”, but we can understand this from their constitution of the other. If they represent their Other as “underdeveloped” as opposed to modern, as in the following case than they represent themselves as modern. As Butler argues, “The subject is constituted through the force of exclusion and abjection, one which produces a constitutive outside to the subject, an abjected outside.” (Butler:1993: 3)

<sup>101</sup> It is beyond the scope of this thesis but I want to add that the Kurdish population that migrated to Zeytinburnu in the 1990s does not feel that they belong to Zeytinburnu. For instance a Kurdish man, who lives in Zeytinburnu for 10 years, argues that, “I am not dying for here. We have never been from Zeytinburnu. We were forced to migrate here, my village was burned down, my house was burned down...I want to reconstruct my village, return there and live there.” (“ Benim zaman burada gözüm yok. Biz hiç bir zaman buralı olmadık. Biz buraya göç etmek zorunda bırakıldık, benim köyüm yakılmış, benim evim yakılmış, ben köyümü tekrar yapıp orada yaşamak istiyorum.” ) Interview on 16.06.2004 with Ziya (male, 24)

“You can find every kind of people in Olivium, very modern people, bumpkins [*kıro*]<sup>102</sup> and peasant looking people, they all come. Well, one should know the right dressing for the right place.. Fine, before we didn’t dress that well either, I mean we didn’t know that much about brands. But after all we looked around, and by looking we learned it. They [*Kurds*] don’t change themselves at all; they wonder around in Olivium like bumpkins [*kıro*]. Cloth [*kumas*] trousers, white socks, red shirt, they come like *amele*.<sup>103</sup> One shouldn’t come like that; I swear to God, I don’t want to see them like that around there.”<sup>104</sup>

Another young woman lines following the fashion with being developed:

“You know that they are [*Kurds*] miserable. They are backward. They still follow the old fashion, I mean they are outdated. They still wear high-waist pants, shirts and also they put their shirts in their pants.... Disgusting!”<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> The term *kıro* is used for the Kurdish people.

<sup>103</sup> Construction worker.

<sup>104</sup> “Olivium’a her çeşit insan geliyor, çok modern insanlar da geliyor, kıro, köylü kılıklı insanlar da geliyor. Yani, insan nerde ne giyineceğini bilmeli. Tamam, biz de önceden o kadar iyi giyinmiyorduk, yani böyle marka falan bilmiyorduk o kadar. Ama sonuçta biz de bir çevreye baktık, göre göre öğrendik. Olivium’a gidiyorsan ona göre giyineceksin. Bunlar [*Kürtler*], hiç kendilerini değiştirmiyorlar ki, kıro kıro dolanıyorlar Olivium’da. Kumaş pantolon, beyaz çorap, kırmızı gömlek, *amele* gibi geliyorlar yani. Öyle de gelmez ki, valla ben görmek istemiyorum onları öyle orda” Interview on 10.05.2003 with Tolga (male, 19)

<sup>105</sup> “Onlar (*Kürtler*), ezik biliyor musun? Geri kalmış onlar. Hala eski modayı takip ediyorlar, gerideler yani. Hala yüksek belli pantolon giyiyorlar, gömlek giyiyorlar, bir de onu pantolonlarının içine sokuyorlar... Tiksinç!” Interview on 14.07. 2004 with Canan (female, 17)

In brief, the youth of Zeytinburnu feel closer to the features such as “modern” and “developed” that *Olivium* evokes by Othering the Kurds whom they consider less “modern” and less “developed”. While they imitate the middle classes in *Olivium* and experience the fantasy like them, their imitation of the “modern” and “developed” people and their distancing themselves both from the Kurds and the people of Zeytinburnu (as we have seen in the young leather worker’s case) do not make them “modern” and/or middle class. In other words, they may come closer to the modern urbanites by imitating them; however they still cannot be one of them and cannot escape their degrading gaze. Because they are from Zeytinburnu and being from Zeytinburnu is inscribed on their body with all its history and space. As I have argued above, Zeytinburnu is perceived as a place that is “not yet modernized” and thus to be a person from Zeytinburnu itself puts a distance between them and the modern urbanites and also it is enough to be degraded. For instance, the same people (i.e who imitate the middle classes and look down upon the Kurdish people because of their clothes), told me how they are looked down upon when they tell someone out of Zeytinburnu that they live in Zeytinburnu. For instance a sixteen-year-old young woman tells me with anger how she has been looked down upon when she told that she was living in Zeytinburnu:

“To judge people according to the place where they live, to say ‘s/he is from Zeytinburnu, that place is *varoş* seems ridiculous to me. Zeytinburnu is just the place we live in, it is our neighborhood. How would you know our cultural level, the places where we frequent, the places that I stroll? To judge according to this (according to the place that

they live in) is so ridiculous, but that is what happens usually. ‘Where do you live in?’ Zeytinburnu. ‘Ooo Zeytinburnu?’ they humiliate us...”<sup>106</sup>

Her anger is about the difficulty of escaping from the degrading gaze. Although in some cases she experiences the fantasy of being like the ones who degrade her, it is not so easy to be one of them. Imitating their dressing style is not enough. The place where she belongs is an obstacle in front of her every attempt to cross the boundaries. Accordingly, even if sometimes they behave as if there were no boundaries between those “modern” and “developed” people and them, they are very well aware of these boundaries since their every confrontation with the “gaze of the city” and the “desired others” remind them where they belong. Besides, they are also aware that those branded and expensive dresses and that “modern” / “modernist” gaze do not in fact belong to them. Accordingly, while they were explaining to me the changes in their dresses almost everyone used the same word: Affectation (*Özenti*)<sup>107</sup>. Nearly everyone calls the other people, who wear branded clothes, as a person who is affected by the wealthy and “modern” urbanite, even if the enunciator herself wears similar clothes too. By calling the others affected people, they argue that such branded and expensive clothes in fact do not belong to Zeytinburnu and they, also,

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<sup>106</sup> “İnsanları oturduğu yere göre yargılamak, O Zeytinburnulu işte o varoş demek çok saçma geliyor bana, ama öyle bir şey var. Zeytinburnu, sadece bizim oturduğumuz yer semtimiz. Sen bizim kültür seviyemizi nerden bileceksin, nerelere takıldığımı, gezdiğim mekanı. Buna göre yargılamak çok saçma ama çoğu zaman böyle oluyor. ‘Nerde oturuyorsun?’ Zeytinburnu. ‘Aaa, Zeytinburnu mu?’ Böyle bir küçümseme oluyor.” Interview on 12.07. 2004 with Canan (female, 17)

<sup>107</sup> Although “affectation” can be a ready English correspondent for the Turkish word “özentî”, the latter can also be used as an adjective without any modification, and it can refer not only to certain patterns of behavior but to the very “essence” of the person it is directed at. As different from “yapmacık” (‘affected’, ‘artificial’, also ‘affectuated’), “özentî” is widely used in the struggles for symbolic capital associated with being truly Western/modern.

distance themselves from the others, arguing in this way that they are not pretending to be someone else, and placing themselves near modern urbanites.

Rottenberg, in her article on “passing” from blackness to whiteness argues that, “black identified subjects in order to sustain non-marginalized existence, are compelled and encouraged to privilege and thus ‘desire-to-be white’ that is live up to attributes associated with whiteness” (Rottenberg: 2003:444) She adds that, “in order to access privilege, it seems, subject interpellated into the symbolic order as black must constantly endeavor to embody attributes associated with whiteness.” (Rottenberg: 2003:446) Fanon, too, in his groundbreaking study, *Black Skin White Masks*, tells us how Black wants to be White in this white privileged society. (Fanon: 1967) And Hall with reference to Fanon’s point on the Blacks’ desire to be White asserts that, “Black could gain entry to the main-stream-but only at the cost of assimilating white norms of style, looks and behavior.” (Hall: 1997) Consequently as I have tried to argue above, in this neo-liberal consumer society, the privileged norms are the norms of the consumers who are able to play the “consumerism game” and those who do not have the means to play this game are regarded as “redundant”, “useless” and “wastes” that are “better” removed from the picture. (cf. Bauman: 2004) Accordingly, the young people of Zeytinburnu, who are under a double exclusion, imitate the middle classes, by dressing like with the middle class members, who are the successful players of the “consumerism game”, in order to access privilege since there is no place for them as people from with Zeytinburnu’s history and geography embedded in their bodies, in the “normal society”. (Bauman: 1997)

In conclusion, it is obvious that the subject position neo-liberal discourse opens up for Zeytinburnu youth as “consumers” rather than producers does not have the capacity to incorporate the history of Zeytinburnu as a working class district with its older meanings. The personal and familial stories as well as the current experiences of double exclusion are redefined as obstacles one has to escape in the new game of consumerism. When these people try to fill this subject position with the history inscribed on their bodies, when they try to bring their life experiences into the new subjectivity that consumerism promises, their experiences become excesses of the dominant representations of the “consumer society” ( cf. de Lauretis:1987). A significant lack emerges in their performance of middle class norms that translates into violence in their lives and the history and stories of Zeytinburnu turn into a worthless excess, disrupting the subject position promised. The impossibility of fulfilling this subject position “properly” turns these lives into “wasted lives” in the context of Zeytinburnu. In the following chapter I will try to explain how the discourse of neo-liberal consumerism can be possible only by turning these people into criminals and druggies. As Bauman argues, “criminal is not an obstacle on the road to the fully fledged and all-embracing consumerist society, on the contrary, it is its natural accompaniment and prerequisite.” (Bauman: 1997:41) We can, thus argue that crime is the “constitutive outside” (Butler: 1993) of the neo-liberal “consumer society”.

## CHAPTER 4: “NOBODY KNOWS MY YOUTH”: “WASTED LIVES” IN ZEYTINBURNU

*“Nobody knows my youth  
from my beards gush out childhood odour,  
moonlight, since I hanged my jacket  
up on the rains,  
I read dangerous poems,  
I tease the world.”<sup>108</sup>*

While in the 1970s the youth of Zeytinburnu was known for their active participation in the leftist organizations (mostly Marxist-Leninist ones) now, they are famous as “criminals” and as “druggies”. I will argue that, the latter is both related to their marginalization from the work and wage processes and their marginalization from the “city” and the so-called “city culture”. While the involvement of the young men of Zeytinburnu in petty crime and drug dealing can be seen as a consequence of their marginalization in the labor market, these practices should also be interpreted within the context of their ambivalent relation with the “city”, an ambivalence ridden with both desire and anger. In this chapter, first of all, I will try to discuss how “petty crime” and drug dealing take revengeful forms towards the “city” and the system that exclude them on the one hand and how these activities on the other create the material possibility to imitate the lives of the modern middle class urbanites. I will also focus upon the engagement of the young men of Zeytinburnu with the club culture after the availability of drug trade within the borders of Zeytinburnu. I will try to argue that clubs, like *Olivium*, are the liminal spaces for the young men of Zeytinburnu where they experience the fantasy of being like the middle class youth.

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<sup>108</sup> Lines from a song of Ahmet Kaya and written on a wall in Zeytinburnu. “*Gençliğimi kimse bilmez/ sakallarımdan çocuk kokusu/ ayışığı fışkırır benim/ ceketimi yağmurlara astığımdan beri/ tehlikeli şiir okur dünyaya sataşırım*”.

I have to add that, in this chapter I will focus upon the experiences of the young men of Zeytinburnu, not the young women's. As Sirman argues in her article where she discusses the relationship between, the state and peasants in Turkey, "through codes of behavior, women are rendered invisible in certain areas of the village, areas which can be designated as 'public'" (Sirman: 1990) Women are rendered invisible in the public spaces in Zeytinburnu,<sup>109</sup> through honor codes. Streets are for the men both during days and nights. Moreover, young women can only spend a limited time outside of their homes due to the codes of behavior.<sup>110</sup> So, clubbing and petty crime is not the case for the young women of Zeytinburnu. Honor codes and accordingly familial ties retain the young women of Zeytinburnu in the domestic sphere. While among my interviewees there were 28 years old young men the oldest young woman was 18. Because, although 28 years old men were young (single, unemployed, spending their times in the street corners, etc.) in Zeytinburnu, women of the same age are probably married with children. For instance, all of my childhood friends from Zeytinburnu are married now, some have children and some are even divorced.

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<sup>109</sup> While the young women are not seen in Zeytinburnu streets, the older women gather in front of their houses and chat in summer nights. However, this was more common before the 1990s when there were fewer apartment buildings and more *gecekondu*s and the streets were less crowded.

<sup>110</sup> It needs to be added that, it is an important issue for the young women of Zeytinburnu to spend their times outside, some young women argued that (and also I knew it thanks to the personal relations), families do not see any problem in "letting" their daughters go to *Olivium* since they see it as a secure place. For instance, while families did not let their daughters go to cinema (there were no cinemas in Zeytinburnu except the one where pornographic films are shown) they let them go to the cinema in *Olivium*, alone. It is beyond the scope of this thesis but it should be noted that *Olivium* became a public space for the young women of Zeytinburnu who are rendered invisible in the other public spaces.

#### ***4.1 Zeytinburnu Youth as petty criminals***

As I have argued in Chapter 3, unemployment is an important issue in Zeytinburnu. While some of the young men of Zeytinburnu are not working, they earn money thanks to drug dealing and thievery. As I have argued earlier, to be a worker is not satisfying in Zeytinburnu due to the informal and temporal working conditions. For instance, all the young men of Zeytinburnu whom I have interviewed or talked to pointed out the drawbacks of the working conditions and the impossibility of finding a proper job as a reason of not working. A young man describes how it is almost impossible for people of Zeytinburnu to find a job and earn enough money as follows,

“Lives of these people living in Zeytinburnu are getting worse everyday. You can’t find a job and work in Zeytinburnu, because there are no factories here. If you get employed in a textile workshop, the salary is too low, for sure you can’t manage a family of even two with that money. The closest factory is in places like Halkalı, and if you work there, when you subtract the transportation expenses it equals the textile workshop salaries.”<sup>111</sup>

My brother lives in Zeytinburnu too. He is seventeen years old and he was going to high school but he decided to leave the school this year and continue in the next year. He started to work in a workshop in Zeytinburnu two months ago (April 2005). He

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<sup>111</sup> “Zeytinburnu’nda yaşayan insanların hayatı her gün daha da kötüye gidiyor. Zeytinburnu’nda işe girip çalışamazsın çünkü fabrika türü bir şey yok burada. Konfeksiyon atölyesine girsen alacağın maaş belli, kesinlikle ordan alacağın maaşla iki kişilik bir aile olsan bile geçinemezsin. En yakın fabrika buraya Halkalı gibi yerlerde, orda da çalışsan yol parasını çıkardığında burdan konfeksiyondan aldığın paraya denk.” Interview on 18.05. 2004 with Ahmet (male, 25)

had to work 10 hours weekdays (and sometimes he had to work overtime without any extra payment) and 6 hours on Saturdays. Three weeks after he started work, he learned how much he would earn.<sup>112</sup> His first response to this low wage was that, “I understand now, why the people are stealing. You can do nothing with the money you earn.”<sup>113</sup> So, my brother as a young person from Zeytinburnu became sympathetic to the “thieves” when he started to work. Accordingly a young “criminal” explains his as follows;

“What can I do, is there any work to do? Those in power pocket everything else, nobody says anything to them, if this is how the system works, if you get no shit when you work, then I get into the system and profit from it”<sup>114</sup>

For another young man, the reason for the young people of Zeytinburnu’s engagement in petty crime is the low wages and insecure working conditions:

“They give us very little money, no insurance; why work then, for what?

Day and night, the noise of the workshop, the *arabesk* music...”<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> 200 YTL.

<sup>113</sup> İnsanların niye hırsızlık yaptığını şimdi anlıyorum. Çalışıp da kazandığın parayla hiçbir şey yapamazsın.”

<sup>114</sup> “Napayım iş mi var çalışacak? Yukardakiler malı götürüyor, onlarınkine bir şey yok, madem çarklar böyle dönüyor, madem çalışınca bir bok olmuyor, ben de girerim bu çarkın içine ben de yararlanırım” Interview on 21.05.2004 with Osman (male, 23)

<sup>115</sup>“Çok az para veriyorlar, sigorta yok, çalışıcan da ne olacak? Sabah akşam vın vın vın konfeksiyon sesi, arabesk...” Interview on 21.05.2004 with Haydar (male, 25)

Despite being a person from Zeytinburnu, it was not very easy even for me, to talk with the young men from Zeytinburnu, on their “criminal” activities. However, petty crime and drug dealing were so common in Zeytinburnu that I found an acquaintance “thief” and carried out two focus group interviews<sup>116</sup> with him and his friends. The most remarkable aspect of these interviews that needs to be mentioned at the very beginning is the way in which my informants talked about their criminal practices. They talked with great enthusiasm and were decidedly proud about their engagement in illegal activities. For instance a 25-year-old thief recounts in the following manner the “success” of the “Zeytinburnu boy”<sup>117</sup>:

“Zeytinburnu, Karagümrük, Gaziosmanpaşa, Kocamustafapaşa, these four are in the blacklist of the police. Those are the places with the highest number of police. Here it is full of plain clothes policemen [*sivil*]. For example, he goes and sits in a coffee house for a year, nobody knows him, he watches the entire neighborhood, one coffee house would be enough to inform against 1000 people, he listens to everyone, then immediately he comes and takes the man away in the evening. These are the places with the highest rates of murder. Youngsters learn this from the older boys. Nonetheless a Zeytinburnu young man would not create too much work for the police. I mean a man of Zeytinburnu is

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<sup>116</sup> While in the first one there were three young men, in the second one there were five young men and all of them were “unemployed”.

<sup>117</sup> Zeytinburnu boy, literally the child of Zeytinburnu (Zeytinburnu çocuğu), is a common appellation used in Zeytinburnu for a long time and it has masculine connotations such as brave, strong, quarrelsome, etc. Studies of Jenkins(1983) and Callaghan (1992) underline the importance of localism for understanding working-class people’s identification with local places. Accordingly, it is possible to argue that the term “Zeytinburnu boy”, shows us how the young men of Zeytinburnu identify themselves according to the place where they live in.

trustworthy. He is known everywhere. Pick pocketing, stealing cars, house burglary...In Bakırköy, Ataköy... well, the people of Zeytinburnu frequent every district of Istanbul; he sneaks through the windows, I mean, through any hole he finds available. People even go from here to Tekirdağ for thievery; you know, there are service cars used for this purpose, to go thieving. ”<sup>118</sup>

Since it was not very easy to carry out an interview on those “issues”, I tried to spend some time and chat with the young men, who are engaged in “petty crime” and drug dealing and more importantly, listened to their own conversations with one another. However I have to add that, it was difficult for me as a young woman from Zeytinburnu to chat with them, because, as I have tried to discuss in the Introduction, according to the “honor” codes of Zeytinburnu the young woman who chats with the men is regarded as “dishonorable”. However, a friend of mine, who is also from Zeytinburnu, had a shop in Zeytinburnu. She had two younger brothers and her brothers and their friends were gathering and chatting in this shop, which was never busy. When I was there to visit her, I had the chance to chat with the young men (since I was their elder sister’s friend they were regarding me as their elder sister too). In initially,<sup>119</sup> they were very careful about what they said. Later they started to

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<sup>118</sup> “Zeytinburnu, Karagömrük, Gaziosmanpaşa, Kocamustafapaşa bu dördü, emniyetin kara listesindedir. En çok polis olan yerler buralardır. Burada adım başında sivil polis vardır. Mesela gider bir yıl boyunca oturur bir kahvede, kimse tanımaz, bütün mahalleyi inceler, zaten bir kahve 1000 kişiyi ele verir, dinler herkesi, hemen gelir akşam alır götürür adamı. En çok cinayet işlenen yerlerde buralar. Küçükler de büyüklerinden böyle öğrenir. Ama buna rağmen Zeytinburnulu genç, kolay kolay iş vermez emniyete. Zeytinburnu’ndan sağlam adam çıkar yani. Her yerde de tanınır. Kapkaç, oto, ev... Bakırköy’de, Ataköy’de, ya İstanbul’un her semtine dadanır Zeytinburnu çocuğu, camdan girer gece, bulduğu her yerden girer yani. Tekirdağ’a bile buradan hırsızlık yapmaya gidilir. Servisler, arabalar var ya özel hırsızlığa gitmek için.” Interview on 21.05.2003 with Osman (male, 23)

<sup>119</sup> I went to this shop regularly (one or twice a week) on summer 2004.

compete with one another when they were telling me how they were transgressing the law. For instance, once one of them started to tell me his memories about the period he spent in prison in a proud manner,<sup>120</sup> as soon as his friend heard this, he started to tell his prison memoirs too. Then, they started to compete with one another on how many times they were taken into prison and how long these periods lasted. And finally, the second one told us, that once he spent three months in a prison in Hungary,<sup>121</sup> this was so prestigious -since he was put into prison in another country- that the “competition” ended.

Sennett claims that the question: “who needs me?” is under attack in modern capitalism and he adds that, people are confused with regard to the question “who needs me in this society?” and that unemployment and underemployment create feelings of uselessness; it makes one feel that she can simply disappear from the picture. (Sennett: 1998) Under the conditions that make the youth of Zeytinburnu feel “useless” and “inefficient”, I believe that petty crime rises as a solution to the problem of finding a source of income and a way of gaining recognition. For instance a young “criminal” telling me that he is pleased with his own life, argued that while some people do not leave a trace behind them when they died, some people are recognized after they died and added that he will be recognized since he is always in the streets, even at night, when everyone is sleeping. He and his friends also told me that, while there are youth groups according to the neighborhoods in Zeytinburnu, every young man tries to create his own “*ecole*”. They added that in order to be a part

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<sup>120</sup> In order not to be seen as a “detective” and disturb them I did not choose to ask them specifically what they did.

<sup>121</sup> He said that, he was trying to get to Germany in illegal ways and he was caught in Hungary.

of these groups and be recognized, one has to “prove”<sup>122</sup> himself, otherwise he would be “obliterated”.

Accordingly, “criminal” actions of the young men, who feel that that they do not have any “value” as a result of being doubly excluded, are their means of acquiring recognition in the world; it is a way of leaving a trace behind them. Hence their pride when they tell me how many months they spent in prison. Cohen, in his study on “delinquency” argues that “delinquency” is a way of gaining status for working class boys in the capitalist society where the middle class norms are valued. He tells that by stealing, the working class boys “satisfy the universal desire for status” and they gain status within their group. (Cohen: 1955:27) Accordingly, I argue that in this neo-liberal “consumer society”, “Zeytinburnu boys”, as the “flawed consumers”, gain status among their own groups by their “success” in “criminality”.

Along with their double exclusion from the work and wage processes and the so-called city culture, the opening of *Olivium* too plays an important role in the rising thievery in Zeytinburnu. For instance, the majority of my informants told me that the young people from Zeytinburnu are thieving in order to buy the clothes that are sold in *Olivium*. A young woman explains the reasons of rising thievery in Zeytinburnu with reference to the “wealthy” people who shop in *Olivium*, as well as insufficient incomes:

“Pickpocketing is common in Zeytinburnu. The fact that they can’t afford is a crucial factor though. When I talk to young people, they tell me: we

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<sup>122</sup> He has to be brave and “prove” himself with his success in “criminality”.

find a job with a salary of 300 million, 200 million goes to the family; shall we buy cigarettes or clothes with the remaining 100 million? A pair of trousers costs 50-60 million. Those who work from time to time, I mean us, we say among each other, we say we can't afford it even when we work, what to do? Yet, the guy comes to Olivium and gets 5-6 pairs that cost around 100 million each. The young man goes like: Me, I cannot afford even the one for 20 million, he gets trousers for 100 million, and this encourages him. Some work hard like a donkey, yet some others spend so easily, how come these spend so easily? Whose money is this? Whose system is this? Nobody knew about brands in Zeytinburnu before Olivium. You are young, and you envy even if you do not want to. If he has it, why not me? He thinks like that. You see friends talking about who got what, for what price, which brand. I know a number of friends who steal to put on brands. Recently a friend came, showing me his coat he goes like 'you like it? I just stole it'.”<sup>123</sup>

As I have argued earlier following the visibility of consumption within Zeytinburnu, especially after the opening of *Olivium*, the young people of Zeytinburnu became

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<sup>123</sup> “Kapkaççılık, hırsızlık çok yaygın Zeytinburnu’nda. Bir de şu da çok etken, alamama. Ben gençlerle konuştuğum zaman diyorlar ki biz bir yere girdik çalıştık 300 milyon maaş aldık, bunun 200 milyonunu kesinlikle bizim ailemiz alacak, geri kalanla kendimize sigara mı alıcaz, kıyafet mi? Bir pantolon 50-60 milyon. Dönem dönem çalışanlar bile biz aramızda şey diyoruz, çalıştığımız halde alamıyoruz, nasıl olacak bu iş? Şimdi, Olivium’a geliyor adam 5-6 tane 100 milyonluk pantolon alıyor. Genç diyor ki ya ben, 20 milyona pantolon alamıyorum. 100 milyonluk pantolon alıyor, bu ister istemez onu teşvik ediyor. Birileri eşek gibi çalışıyor ama birileri bu kadar rahat harcıyor, birileri nasıl bu kadar rahat harcayabiliyor? Bu para kimin parası? Bu çark kimin çarkı? Marka Olivium’dan önce kimse bilmiyordu Zeytinburnu’nda. İster istemez gençsin yani, özeniliyor. Onda varsa bende niye yok? Bunu düşünüyor? Bakıyorsun arkadaşlar arasında hep kim ne almış, kaç, hangi marka? Ben kaç tane arkadaşımı biliyorum, markalı kıyafet giymek için hırsızlık yapıyor. Geçen daha bir arkadaşım geldi, montunu gösteriyor ‘bak beğendin mi? Yeni çaldım.’ diye.” Interview on 19.05.2004 with Aysun (female, 18)

more aware of both what they could not consume and what the others consumed. In light of this we can argue that there is an overt relation between the opening of *Olivium* and the rise of thievery. Since the opening of *Olivium* as a place that produces desires for commodities and accordingly specific life styles, thievery rises as a way to fulfill these desires. Moreover, to come face to face with the ones who have “better” lives and to confront their degrading gaze within the borders of Zeytinburnu underlines the opposition between them and the people of Zeytinburnu. For instance, a young man argues that the people of Bakırköy, Ataköy, etc., come to *Olivium* to shop and they look down upon the people of Zeytinburnu. However, with animated anger towards the people of Bakırköy and Ataköy, he argues that;

“Of course they look down upon us, since we are a poor district, yet we see them the same way. Because they are bourgeois youth. A Zeytinburnu boy can survive struggling with 50 monsters, a Bakırköy boy would drown in a glass of water. Nothing would scare a Zeytinburnu boy, yet a Bakırköy boy screams ‘aa mom’ even when the power goes off. Sun or moon, it doesn’t make any difference for us. Take Ataköy, you can’t see anybody around when it is 8-9 p.m, whereas I can walk around in Ataköy at 3 am. To cut it short, a Zeytinburnu boy is rebellious, crabby, and *delikanli*. Imagine a guy in Bakırköy; imagine that he is the most dangerous guy in the world, for me he is nothing. He is from Bakırköy, and that’s it, he is isolated, excluded, brought up in a bourgeois district, and has a bourgeois mentality. Kasımpaşa, Kulaksız, Beyoğlu, Tarlabası, Dolapdere, Sarıgöl, Gaziosmanpaşa are the districts

that are close to us. Surely it has to be smeared by illegality, because it has the same mentality.”<sup>124</sup>

As we can see, this young young man puts the people of Bakırköy and Ataköy in opposition to the people of Zeytinburnu and this is very much related to their class positions. He borrows this discourse from the Marxist terminology (i.e he calls them bourgeois), and translates it into a street slang unlike that of the people of Zeytinburnu of the 1970s. Moreover, he uses a masculine street slang and accordingly degrades the people of Bakırköy and Ataköy by underlining the “masculine characters” of the youth of Zeytinburnu (i.e , rebellious, crabby, *delikanlı*<sup>125</sup>, etc.) and feminizing the others.<sup>126</sup> The people of Bakırköy and Ataköy have money and spend in *Olivium*, in Zeytinburnu, and the people of Zeytinburnu cannot do so, but at the same time, he argues that the Bakırköy and Ataköy youth cannot walk in their own streets at night while the young man of Zeytinburnu can freely stroll in the streets of Bakırköy or Ataköy. He implies that the presence of the young men of Zeytinburnu in their streets is a “threat” for the middle classes. While their lives are not safe in relation to the global hegemony of neo-liberalism, they also

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<sup>124</sup>“Aşağılayarak bakıyorlar tabii bize, fakir bir semt olduğumuz için, ama biz de onlara gençlik olarak öyle bakıyoruz. Çünkü onlar burjuva gençliği. Zeytinburnu çocuğunu atarsın 50 tane canavarın arasına ordan çıkar, Bakırköy çocuğunu bir bardak suya at boğulur orda. Zeytinburnu çocuğu bir şeyden çekinmez ama Bakırköy çocuğu ceryan kesilse ‘aa anne!’ diye bağırır. Bizim için ne güneş ne ay, en basiti Ataköy, Saat 8- 9 dedin mi bir allahın kulunu göremezsın gece sokakta halbuki ben gece 3’te Ataköy’de geziyorum. Anlıcan, Zeytinburnu çocuğu asidir, hırçındır, delikanlıdır. Bakırköy’de bir adam olsun, dünyanın en tehlikeli adamı olsun benim için boş bir adamdır. Bakırköylü ya bitti soyutlanmış, dışlanmış, burjuva bir semtte yetişmiş, zihniyeti burjuva. Bize yakın semtler Kasımpaşa, Kulaksız, Beyoğlu, Tarlabası, Dolapdere, Sarıgöl, Gaziosmanpaşa. İllaki gayrı meşru bulaştırmış semt olacak, zihniyet aynı çünkü.” Interview on 21.05.2004 with Rıza (male, 26)

<sup>125</sup> *Delikanlı* is a word that is used to describe the young man in Turkish and it has strong masculine connotations. It means brave, fearless, strong, etc.

<sup>126</sup> See Connell (1995) for the relation between class anger and masculinities.

make the ones who have “secure” lives feel uncomfortable in the “city”. As I have discussed above, the people of the old *gecekond* districts and new “*varoş*” is regarded as a threat for the “city”. In this case, we see that the young people Zeytinburnu appropriated this label and he is very much proud of this. I have to add that, this young man told this in a focus group interview and his friends in the group supported his arguments. All of them were very proud of their “capacity” of being a threat for middle class urbanites. Against the power of the “city” and the center that excludes them, this seems to be the only position that they will feel powerful. To repeat once again, criminality is a way of acquiring recognition and “value” in the world for the young man of Zeytinburnu who feels that he does not have any “value” due to his exclusion from the work and wage processes, the so-called “city culture” and the “normal society”.

The anger of “Zeytinburnu boys” towards the middle class people is also seen in the way “Zeytinburnu boys” feel about *Olivium*. In Chapter 3, I tried to discuss how the young people of Zeytinburnu experience the fantasy of being similar to the “modern” and middle class urbanites in *Olivium* by dressing like them. However, while for a certain period after its opening everyone could enter *Olivium* easily; *Olivium*’s administration board began to be more “selective”. “Zeytinburnu boys” began to be regarded as a “threat” in *Olivium* and now the ones who are seen as “dangerous” can not enter *Olivium* because of the security policy of *Olivium*. Thus, everyone does not have equal opportunity anymore, in Zeytinburnu to enter *Olivium* and experience the fantasy that I have discussed in Chapter 3.<sup>127</sup> Accordingly, the quarrels between the “Zeytinburnu boys” and the guards who do not let them in are very common. There

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<sup>127</sup> It needs to be added that, when I began to make interviews the opposition between the “Zeytinburnu boys” and “*Olivium*” did not began. Later it became more visible.

are many stories on the “Zeytinburnu boys” attacking the mall guards. For instance, a group of young men attacked a guard who did not let them in *Olivium* while their girl friends were with them, and they cut off his arm when they cornered him on the way home at night. Moreover, the young men who told me this story told it as a “revenge story” in an enthusiastic manner. They verbalize their rage against “*Olivium*” as follows,

“One day there will be a big fight in here, I mean surely there’ll be. But still they are [*the administration of Olivium*] doing this. For example, when I and a friend of mine sit for five minutes in Olivium, security comes at the sixth minute and tells us to stand up. They say “you cannot sit here more than five minutes”. But when somebody comes from Bakırköy they say “welcome gentleman”. But they’ll see what will happen if it goes like this. The time will come.”<sup>128</sup>

However, while on the one hand they are angry towards *Olivium*, on the other hand entering *Olivium* is still very important for them. Among the young men, who argued that they “hate” *Olivium* and do not go to *Olivium*, some of them spend most of their time on the corner<sup>129</sup> very near *Olivium* while they were not gathering there before<sup>130</sup>.

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<sup>128</sup> “ Bugün burda büyük bir kavga çıkacak yani çıkmayacak değil. Ama bunlar (*Olivium* yönetimi) bunu yapıyorlar hala. Mesela bir arkadaşım 5 dakika otursak içerde 6. dakika güvenlik geliyor kalkın diyor, burda 5 dakadan fazla oturulmaz. Ama Bakırköy’den gelene buyurun beyfendi, hoşgeldiniz. Görecekler ama günlerini, onun da zamanı var.” Interview on 12.06.2004 with Selim (male, 19)

<sup>129</sup> In Zeytinburnu street corners are very important public places where the young men gather and spend their leisure time. It is possible to see many youth groups dispersed on different street corners. Each group has its own corner. These groups are determined according to the streets they live in. The young men from the same street gather on the same corner.

<sup>130</sup> I have to note that, these young men also are engaged in petty crime and drug dealing.

Moreover, one of the young men from this “corner group” “protested” against the guards of *Olivium*, who did not let him in, with his own method. He took ecstasy and went to the entrance of *Olivium*. As usual the guards did not let him in. Then he first ran back and then forward to the glass door of *Olivium* and he struck the door with all his power. After he tried this once or twice again, the glass finally broke down into pieces and he entered *Olivium* with pieces of glass on his body and blood all over him. This is an extreme and symbolic example that testifies to the strength of these young men’s desire to enter *Olivium*, which is the place that symbolizes “modernity” and “development” in Zeytinburnu and also the place for the “modern” and “wealthy” urbanites. Of course this severe act does not only contain his desire but at the same time represents a “rebellious” act towards the whole system that does not let him in.

While “Zeytinburnu boys” are regarded as “dangerous” people and pose a “threat” to the “city” as the “*varoş*” youth, I argue that they, also, invest in being a threat to the “city”. Now, the “Zeytinburnu boys” are not proud of being workers as their grandmothers and grandfathers were, but they are proud of being a threat to those who do not let them in –the “city culture”, wage and work processes and therefore *Olivium*. I argue that, the criminal activity of the Zeytinburnu youth in one sense is a protest against the system that does not let them in. As Bourgois argues, the sole motive of the criminal actions of the youth cannot be explained with economic reasons; it is “a culture of resistance or at -least of opposition- to economic exploitation and cultural denigration. Concretely, this takes the form of refusing low wages and poor working conditions, and of celebrating marginalization as a badge of pride even when it is ultimately self destructive.” (Bourgois: 1999: 57) Since the young people of Zeytinburnu cannot live under the same conditions with the people

from Bakirköy or Ataköy, who come to *Olivium* and shop there easily in contrast to the people of Zeytinburnu, they do not hesitate to rob their houses and cars. As Bauman argues, for the ones who are excluded from the “normal society”, there is no reason to “respect the rules of the political democracy if those of the world of labor are blatantly ignored.” (Bauman: 2004: 16)

In a nutshell, the young men of Zeytinburnu are regarded as “useless” and “redundant” who should be excluded from “normal society”. They are the “constitutive others” and the nightmares of the secure and ordered middle class lives. They are the “dirt” of the “postmodern purity.” (cf. Bauman: 1997) Bauman argues that, the “flawed consumers” of the “consumer society” are “left outside as a problem, as ‘dirt’, which needs to be ‘disposed of’.” (Bauman: 1997:14) Accordingly, the “Zeytinburnu boys”, who are not let in, are regarded as a problem and dirt that should be, and in fact, are, left outside. The only position that is open to them is being a “troublemaker” and they are the “troublemakers”. While the new “Big Brother” exclude the “flawed consumers” and “never allow them to come anywhere near in the first place, (Bauman: 2004:132), they are the “specters” of the first places: they are in the middle class districts at nights, they are in the houses and the cars of the “wealthy” people, their hands are in the pockets of those middle class people who degrade them. They are the “specters” of the “city” that haunt it secretly. And as it is written on the wall, “*I read a dangerous poem and tease the world*”, they are the ones who tease the world.

#### 4.2 “Zeytinburnu boys”: ecstasy users, drug dealers and clubbers

In addition to rising thievery, drug dealing and addiction became widespread in Zeytinburnu during the last three years. Unlike heroin and hashish that were used by a few in the previous period, the new and widespread drug is ecstasy today. While, hashish use is also very common, it is now used as a supplementary drug. As a drug addict puts it, “ hashish is like bread, both for the ones who use heroin or ex.<sup>131</sup>, surely take hashish after them. Hashish is like bread when one is eating.”<sup>132</sup> In the street corners of Zeytinburnu, especially at nights, one can easily see groups of young people who are smoking hashish.

While in the past, drugs were not available in Zeytinburnu,<sup>133</sup> now Zeytinburnu has become one of the centers of the drug trade.<sup>134</sup> It is mostly sold in street corners at night and in internet cafes. While ecstasy mostly comes from Holland, there are also counterfeit ecstasies that are produced illegally in Zeytinburnu. Needless to say, these latter could be even more dangerous and may seriously damage the brain<sup>135</sup>. According to my interviews, in order to use and hence afford ecstasy, the young men

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<sup>131</sup> Ex. refers to ecstasy.

<sup>132</sup> “eroın için de, ex atan da mutlaka sonrasında esrar atar. Yemek yerken ki ekmek gibidir esrar.” Interview on 12.06.2004 with Can (male, 26)

<sup>133</sup> For instance, some drug addicts argued that they were buying drugs from Kasımpaşa and Dolapdere, places famous for such illegal activities.

<sup>134</sup> I have to note that, in the same period, some of the other old gecekondı districts, which were renowned with their leftist/ “revolutionary” past, such as *Gazi Mahallesi*, *Armutlu*, *Bir Mayıs Mahallesi*, too, became the new centers of the drug trade.

<sup>135</sup> According to the scientific evidences, ecstasy in high doses “will alter neurons in the brain in the short term and, potentially, for life. In some test heavy users demonstrated a reduced ability to solve complex problems on intelligence tests and showed signs of short term memory loss.” Moreover scientists also suspect that, “ ecstasy messes with the serotonergic nerve network to the extent that it might permanently lower serotonin levels, thus harming a person’s ability to feel happiness.” (Klam:2001:41)

of Zeytinburnu became drug dealers. For instance a young man explains how people began to sell ecstasy in Zeytinburnu:

“There are some rules in this business, if you’re a user, one day you have to be a dealer. You become a user, you give and take, then you think ‘if I become a dealer, I’ll sell three and one will be mine’. So you say to yourself ‘if I become a dealer I can benefit from this business’. This way it spreads. Now, one of every five users is a dealer here, to provide for his own need.”<sup>136</sup>

While the users have to become drug dealers in order to meet their “need” for ecstasy, they are only “petty” dealers. There are also chief dealers, who portioned different parts of Zeytinburnu and sometimes there are armed clashes among these dealers. While the chief dealers provide ecstasy in the district, both they and other young people sell them in the clubs in the city centers (i.e Bakırköy and Taksim).

The most important characteristic of ecstasy is that, it is a drug that comes with its own culture. First of all, ecstasy users go to certain kinds of places like clubs because music and dance are necessary in creating the “ecstasy high”. They need to listen to a specific kind of music, “underground”, in order to reach ecstasy high. It, also, introduces specific styles of clothing. They wear branded baggy trousers and branded loose-fitting shirts (in order to dance comfortably), Puma shoes<sup>137</sup> and sun-glasses

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<sup>136</sup> “Bu işin bir kaidesi var içiciysen bir gün satıcı olmak zorundasın. İçici olursun, verirsin alırsın, sonra düşünürsün satıcı olursam üç tane satarsam, bir tane kendime kalır, demek ki dersin satıcı olursam karı var bu işin. İşte böyle bir yayıldı burada, beş kişiden biri satıcı burada, kendini kurtarmak için, kendi ihtiyacını temin etmek için.” Interview on 21.05.2004 with Osman (male, 19)

<sup>137</sup> Puma has special models of shoes for the clubbers.

(because the light disturb the eyes after ecstasy is taken). For instance, my interviewees argued that, as well as *Olivium*, club culture, too, lead the youth of Zeytinburnu to wear branded and expensive clothes. As a young man argues,

“Before this underground music and club business, nobody put on Puma shoes, nobody knew it. Look around now, everybody has Puma on their feet, shoes that cost 150 million...”<sup>138</sup>

Similar to what we saw in the case of *Olivium*, the widespread entrance of ecstasy represents a chronological break in Zeytinburnu. With the availability of “ecstasy trade”, the young men of Zeytinburnu began to “enjoy” being high and going to expensive clubs like the people who have money. When I asked the young men where they spend their free time, they named the clubs in Taksim and Bakırköy and among them, were famous and expensive clubs of Istanbul, such as *Maslak Venue* and *Solar Beach*.<sup>139</sup> They go to these clubs both as drug dealers and drug addicts. While dealing ecstasy procures an income, I argue that using it leads to the imitation of the “Western” culture that is associated with the “modern”. For instance, a drug dealer from Zeytinburnu says the following:

“When he uses ecstasy he considers himself in the category of ‘*kopkopçu*’.<sup>140</sup> I mean he thinks he is European. They dance, they go to

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<sup>138</sup> “Bu underground müzik, klüp olayları falan çıkmadan önce burda Puma ayakkabı kimse giymezdi, kimse bilmezdi. Ama bir bak şimdi milletin ayağına, herkesin ayağında Puma, 150 milyonluk ayakkabı...” Interview on 12.06.2004 with Selim (male, 19)

<sup>139</sup> I heard that, the middle class youth stopped going to *Maslak Venue* this year (2005) since there are a lot of people there from the “*varoş*” in general and Zeytinburnu in particular.

<sup>140</sup> The term “*kopkopçu*” is used for the ones who break loose with the ecstasy.

clubs... Now there are also videocassettes with images from clubs in Holland, they dance in clubs and they envy them, they try to dress like them. Why do you think the number of those dying their hair blond rose recently? Because of what they see in clubs. When they take ecstasy they feel the same thing (as in there). He thinks he is like them, he thinks he dances the same way, whereas actually he stupidly moves his arms and legs, nothing else. There he lives in a dream-world.”<sup>141</sup>

Another young man thinks that there is a relation between the ecstasy culture and the desire for modernity:

“Before ecstasy people were listening to *arabesk* music<sup>142</sup> but now they are listening to underground music. They do not understand anything from that kind of music but they think they have become modern by listening to that kind of music and dancing in the clubs. Look at those clothes<sup>143</sup>; ask him if he actually knows how to dress? No, but when

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<sup>141</sup> “Ecstasy kullanınca kendini kopkopçuların sınıfına sokuyor adam. Avrupai bir şekilde zannediyor kendini yani. Dans mans ediyorlar, kulüplere gidiyorlar...Şimdi video kasetleri falan da var mesela, Hollanda’dan gelen klüp görüntüleri, dans ediyorlar klüplerde falan onlara özeniyorlar, onlar gibi giyinmeye çalışıyorlar, neden böyle saçını sarıya boyayan falan arttı son zamanlarda? Hep o klüplerde gördüklerinden. O da bunu [ecstasy’i] attığı zaman burada, ordaki şeylerin aynısını kendinde hissediyor. Onlar gibi olduğunu sanıyor, oradaki dansları yaptığını sanıyor, halbuki kulübün ortasına çıkıyor, salak salak kolunu bacağını sallıyor, başka bir şey yok. Orda bir hayal dünyasında yaşıyor.” Interview on 12.06.2004 with Aykut (male, 22)

<sup>142</sup> *Arabesk* is a kind of music, which has its roots in the Arab popular music, which is widely listened by the squatters of the large cities, especially in the West of Turkey. As Stokes argues, “ as well as musical forms, *arabesk* is an entire anti- culture,... It describes a decaying city in which poverty-stricken migrant workers are exploited and abused, and calls on its listeners to pour another glass of raki, light another cigarette, and curse fate and the world” ( Stokes:1992:1)

<sup>143</sup> He points towards his friend who uses ecstasy.

people see him in these clothes they will say ‘wow, look at the boy, how modern he is’.”<sup>144</sup>

As we can see from the quotations above, along with *Olivium*, it is the engagement of the young people of Zeytinburnu in ecstasy culture that permits them to perform being like those “modern” and wealthy “desired others” against whom they, also, carry great anger. As well as their performance of being like the middle classes, they also feel themselves different with the ecstasy high.

Pini, who is a “clubber” and wrote a book on the emergence of new subjectivities among the women clubbers in England in relation to clubbing, considers clubbing as “play”, an “acting out of becoming another”. She asserts that, the dance floor and the ecstasy opens a space to play with various definitions and constructions of self and she sees the clubs as a space for the performance of these identities. (Pini: 2001) For instance a young man from Zeytinburnu explains how people become someone else as a result of the ecstasy high:

“When you take it you become someone else. It gives you a fake feeling of happiness. Whoever uses it, his eyes pop out, the brain pumps too much blood to every part of the body, and you think you are very fast, but that is not the case. Your hand moves here and there (he moves his hand slowly), you think you became matrix, and shook the earth and the sky. It also gives you confidence. When you take it you can even stop

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<sup>144</sup> Interview on 12.06.2004 with Sinan (male, 17)

someone you don't know and ask for his telephone number. You can do things that you wouldn't normally do.”<sup>145</sup>

The widespread entrance of ecstasy brought about major changes in the cultural practices of Zeytinburnu's youth. They began to spend more time in the “central” districts (i.e Bakıköy and Taksim) in which there are many clubs. While dancing had more Western, thus unfamiliar, connotations in the past, now they are dancing in the clubs and “breaking loose”<sup>146</sup> with ecstasy. Moreover, while dancing was not regarded as suitable for the “*delikanlı*” “Zeytinburnu boys”, since it was seen as a feminine act, now dancing is one of the most important “leisure time” activities for them. For instance, they all argued that, while they were playing football, at least once a week in the past, they are not playing football anymore. Now, “clubbing” occupies the place of football. As well as dancing, hair coloring was not regarded suitable for the *delikanlı* “Zeytinburnu boys” in the past since it was also seen as a feminine practice. But, now one can easily come across bleached haired young men on the streets of Zeytinburnu.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> “Onu içtiğin zaman başka bir insan oluyorsun yani. Sana sahte bir mutluluk veriyor. Gözleri fal taşı gibi fırlıyor kullananın, vücuda hız veriyor, beyin devamlı vücudun her yanına kan pompalıyor aşırı, zannediyorsun ki çok hızlıyım ben, alakası yok. Elin yine böyle oynuyor ama (elini yavaşça oynatıyor) sen zannediyorsun matrix oldum ben, yerleri gökleri birbirine karıştırdım. Kendine güven geliyor sonra, yolda tanımadığın adamı bile durdurup telefon numarasını istersin onu atınca, normalde hiç yapmayacağın şeyleri yaparsın. ” Interview on 21.05.2004 with Hayrettin (male, 28)

<sup>146</sup> *Kopmak*, breaking loose, is the way ecstasy high is described in Turkish.

<sup>147</sup> It is beyond the scope of this thesis however, it needs to be noted even if in passing that while “Zeytinburnu boys” use a masculine street slang and underline characters of one the forms of hegemonic masculinity in Turkey, such as being rebellious, crabby, *delikanlı* etc. I believe that clubbing that opens a liminal space in their lives leads to a breach of the gender norms that value these characters and devalues dancing, hair color etc., as feminine.

Now, “Zeytinburnu boys” “learn” what to wear and how to “adorn” their bodies both by watching the VCDs<sup>148</sup> that come from Holland along with ecstasy, and also in the clubs that are in the “central” districts. When they “break loose” with the ecstasy high and loose themselves, they “forget” their social condition. Ecstasy makes the youth of Zeytinburnu, feel happy<sup>149</sup> and as they “loose” themselves, they detach their identities from the history and geography of Zeytinburnu, they perform being modern, with their dancing bodies in the branded clothes.

While it is their desire to be similar to the middle class people, ecstasy and accordingly clubbing are among the most suitable ways that open up a space for them to perform this fantasy. Pini, borrowing from Turner’s model of social drama<sup>150</sup>, argues that, clubbing creates a breach in people’s lives. For her, clubbing is a time in which participants remove themselves from the “real world” and behave in a different way. She argues that pleasure in clubbing is that “the pleasures of looking and being looked at appear to suggest a kind of almost mirror engagement- a process whereby the self is reflected back to the self, with the intense gaze from another acting as a mirror confirming and intensifying one’s own ‘high’”. The pleasure thus appears to be about being ‘seen’, and being able to ‘see’ oneself, in a particular kind of light.” (Pini: 2001:124) What can be more pleasurable for the young men of Zeytinburnu, whose youth is not recognized as it is written on the wall in Zeytinburnu (from the

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<sup>148</sup> In these VCDs there are mass party images in the clubs of Holland.

<sup>149</sup> Ecstasy is widely called as the pill of happiness in Zeytinburnu.

<sup>150</sup> Turner’s social drama is a three-stage process: there is a breach, then a crisis, and then a redressive action of sorts. The result is “restoration of peace and ‘normalcy’ among the participants or social recognition of irremediable breach or schism” (Turner:1986)

lines of the song of Ahmet Kaya, “nobody knows my youth”<sup>151</sup>), and who in fact want to be recognized, taken in and being seen similar with the middle class youth, who has always been inside- in the “first place”-, while dancing on the same floor with them, experiencing the same “high” and being confirmed in the same “mirror”?

Bourgois, in his study on the drug dealers of Harlem argues that drug dealing provides the possibility of an upward mobility and asserts that the primary goal of the fathers and mothers of the druggies is to save enough money to move to a working class neighborhood. (Bourgois: 1999) However, I think that we cannot talk of such a possibility for the drug dealers of Zeytinburnu. Because, as I have tried to underline above, they are both drug dealers and drug addicts. Thus, as one of the quotations above very well explained, they use the money that they make from drug dealing to provide for their own need for drugs. Secondly, since the common drug is ecstasy that has its own culture and is consumed in the clubs, the young people of Zeytinburnu spend their money in these clubs. I believe that this is highly related to their desire to transform into a “desired other”. While they could sell ecstasy to accumulate money for their future, they do not do so. They rather spend their money in the expensive clubs, which they frequent both as drug dealers and clubbers. I argue that we should consider this as an attempt to “remove” the borders between themselves and the middle class youth who come there for “enjoyment”. Or at least, in this way, they behave as if there are no borders between themselves and those people and this is very much related to their desire for the disappearance of the borders.

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<sup>151</sup> “Gençliğimi kimse bilmez”

As is widely argued, today's youth "take the waiting out of wanting". (Comaroff and Comaroff: 2000, Bauman: 2004) As Bauman puts it, "waiting is a shame, and the shame of waiting rebounds the one who waits. Waiting is something to be ashamed of because it may be noted and taken as evidence of indolence and low status, seen as a symptom of rejection and a signal to exclusion." (Bauman: 2004:109) "Zeytinburnu boys", rather than accumulating money and investing in their future, want to be transformed into the "desired others" immediately, without any delays. Yet, there are no stories about people who became rich by drug dealing in Zeytinburnu. For example, on March 2005, police quashed the house of two brothers who are among the chief drug dealers of some parts of Zeytinburnu, and imprisoned them. While, they are among the most important people who distribute drugs in Zeytinburnu, their family could not even find the money to hire a lawyer for them. Their friends told me that these young men were spending significant amounts of money in any single night when they went out to the clubs and they were going out regularly.

We can also see thievery, as part of "taking the waiting out of wanting." For instance, as I have argued above, the young people were both making money from thievery and taking revenge from the whole system that does not let them in. I have known one of the thieves for a long time, and I had the chance to see and follow what he stole thanks to personal relations. He had a group and they were going thieving together at nights. It was very astonishing for me to see what they were stealing. They were pick-pocketing and robbing houses and cars stealing TVs, VCD players, tapes, money, mobile phones, car tapes etc. But besides these items that have significant second hand market value, what was incredible was that they were also stealing used branded clothes and shoes from the houses and coffee, expensive foods

(i.e, meat), chocolates and, etc. from markets. In other words, they were stealing commodities that the middle classes consume. I argue that this is also very closely related to their desire to transform into the “desired others”. For instance, in one of the discussions at the Turkish National Assembly on the issue of the “*varoş*”, it was argued that “the *varoş* youth who are living in Zeytinburnu, emulate the ones who are living in high standards in Bakırköy, which is a district near to Zeytinburnu, and pick pockets in order to live like them.”<sup>152</sup>

While they are drinking coffees, eating meat and chocolates that are stolen from the big markets where they could not shop, they perform being middle class, once again. I believe that, what they want to steal is the life style of the “modern” and “wealthy” urbanites who are the successful players of the “consumerism game” in this “consumer society”. Thus, although at first sight it does not seem “rational” to steal such things which will not convert into money, it becomes intelligible when we think of all this in relation to their desire to be like “modern” middle class “urbanites”. Bauman, in *Globalization and Human Consequences*, divides the society into two groups: society of *tourists* (consumers) and society of *vagabonds* (flawed consumers). There, he argues that *vagabonds* are “useless” and “unwanted” since it is the consumer’s and/or “tourists” society that we live in and adds that “being unwanted they are natural objects of scapegoating. But their crime is nothing other than to wish to be like the tourists-while lacking the means to act on their wishes the way the tourists do.” (Bauman: 1998:96) Accordingly, we can argue the criminal

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<sup>152</sup> “İstanbul’un Zeytinburnu İlçesi’nde bulunan varoş gençleri yakın ilçe olan Bakırköy’deki yüksek standarttaki yaşamlara özenmekte ve kapkaç yaparak, onlar gibi yaşamaya çalışmaktadır.” December 9, 2003.

“activities” of “Zeytinburnu boys” at least thievery and drug dealing can be read in relation to their wish to be a “tourist”.

#### ***4.3 The “Cactuses in the Desert”<sup>153</sup>***

As I have tried to discuss above and in Chapter 3, young people of Zeytinburnu, imitate the “modern” and middle class “urbanites” and perform the fantasy of being one of them by dressing like them, owning their degrading gaze towards the others, enjoying and dancing in the same places with them and eating the same “chocolates”. While they are regarded as the “undesirable others” under the supremacy of the neo-liberal “consumer society”, they desire to be one of those middle class people who are privileged.

For the young people of Zeytinburnu, the imitation of the modern middle class urbanites leads to feelings of the “removal” of the boundaries, what they try to imitate is the class position that is highly related to economic resources. As Liechty correctly points out, “class is always work-in-progress, a perpetual social construction that is as fundamentally bound to the ‘concrete’ of economic resources as it is to the cultural practices of people who jointly negotiate their social identities.” (Liechty: 2003:4) The youth of Zeytinburnu lack the material resources that will make them middle class. Although they gain money, in illegal ways, they do not save and accumulate money but spend it immediately. Moreover, they do not have the chance to accumulate money by working in temporary, informal and low wage jobs.

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<sup>153</sup> A Zeytinburnu boy defined himself and his friends as the cactuses in a desert: alone, hopeless and futureless...

Under these circumstances upward mobility becomes virtually impossible. So, boundaries only “blur” under some limited conditions (i.e in dancing, clothing, etc.).

While the young people of Zeytinburnu imitate middle classes and experience the fantasy of being similar to them, they are, in fact, very well aware of these boundaries that do not let them cross over to the other side. As I have tried to discuss in Chapter 3, they were calling people who imitate the dressing style of the middle class (although they, themselves imitate too) “affected” people. I also argued that the widespread use of “affected” people tells us that the young people of Zeytinburnu do not in fact feel that these styles belong to them. Moreover, in the case of clubbing, too, we can see a similar situation. For instance, while they were telling me how the “Zeytinburnu boys” engaged in the club culture and changed their dressing style, they explained the reason of these changes again as “affectation”<sup>154</sup>. Moreover, when they were telling me how clubbing began to occupy a central place in the lives of the “Zeytinburnu boys”, no one told me their own stories as “clubbers” They always put themselves in the position of an observer, who only “watches” this new process and find the “Zeytinburnu boys” engagement in the club culture as something ridiculous. Ironically, these young men, who told me about the clubbing experiences of the “Zeytinburnu boys” by ridiculing them, were also “clubbers”. Although, they were dancing in the same style, wearing the same clothes, coloring their hairs in the same colors and experiencing the ecstasy high with the same music, when telling me this whole process they put a distance between these acts and themselves. Moreover, in a focus group interview, while we were talking about ecstasy and clubbing, everyone

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<sup>154</sup> One boy defined the meaning of “affectation” (*özentî*) as, “*özentî* means to say, ‘I am already way beyond you; I am different from you all, I am like the ones I watched in those CDs.’” (*Özentî demek, ben sizi aşmışım artık, sizden farklıyım, o cd’lerde seyrettiklerim gibiyim demek.*) Interview on 21.05.2004 with Ahmet (male, 25)

pointed to one another as the one who is engaged in the club culture and nearly all of them ridiculed one another.

As I have argued in Chapter 3, *Olivium* is a symbol of modernity in a place that is regarded as “not yet modernized” and thus it stands in contrast to Zeytinburnu. I argue that ecstasy and the “modern” practices and the norms that come along with ecstasy stand in contrast to Zeytinburnu as a “place not yet modernized.” Above, I wrote that the young men of Zeytinburnu call themselves “Zeytinburnu boys” and I argued that this shows us how the young men of Zeytinburnu identify themselves according to the place they live in. The young men of Zeytinburnu see a relation between themselves and Zeytinburnu’s specific space and history, by calling themselves as “Zeytinburnu boys”. I think that the ironic distance that they put between themselves and their performance of modern and middle class norms in relation to their engagement in the ecstasy/club culture comes from the gap between the “not yet modernized” state of Zeytinburnu as they see it and those “modern” norms and practices. While they are very well aware of this gap as well as the “impossibility” of passing to the other side, in spite of the ironic distance they put between these norms and practices, they still engage in the ecstasy/club culture. I think that this shows us the strength of their fantasy of being similar with the modern, middle class urbanites.

As I have argued above, they are very well aware of the boundaries and the difficulty of passing the boundaries and, accordingly, they do not invest in their futures. On the one hand they desire to transform into modern middle class urbanites, on the other hand they do not make any long term plans in order to become middle class. While they “take the waiting out of wanting” and try to be like the middle class

immediately, they also take the future out of their lives. Accordingly, neither the young women nor the young men did not /could not tell me anything on their future plans. While the young women will, probably, find a man and marry and continue their lives in the domestic sphere due to the strength of the familial ties in Zeytinburnu that locate the women in the domestic sphere, the young men's lives are, more and more, turning into a "waste" as they were coded. As I have argued earlier labor is feminized in the contemporary capitalism. Thus, it is easier for a woman from Zeytinburnu to find a job in Zeytinburnu. Moreover, since they were not regarded as the "breadwinners" but as their income is seen as a subsidiary income, low wages are more or less acceptable to the women of Zeytinburnu. I believe that both this and the strength of the familial ties prevents the lives of the women of Zeytinburnu to turn into "wasted lives" as is the case for the "Zeytinburnu boys". However, it is still hard for both young women and men of Zeytinburnu to invest in a future. For instance when I asked them (both the young men and the young women), "how/where do you see themselves in ten or fifteen years?" the answers were as follows:

"To be honest, I do not see myself anywhere, I have no idea, I am not thinking of it now"<sup>155</sup>

"I do not think of my future, I am living my life now. I just look at, what I do right now and I think one should think of now, not the future."<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> "Valla, kendimi hiç bir yerde göremiyorum, hiç fikrim yok, şimdi onu düşünmüyorum." Interview on 12.07. 2004 with Canan (female, student, 17)

<sup>156</sup> "Geleceği düşünmüyorum, hayatımı yaşıyorum şimdi. Şimdi ne yaptığıma bakarım ben, bence insane geleceği değil şimdikiyi düşünmeli." 13. 04. 2004 with Arzu (female, student, 16)

“To be honest, my future is like a lottery. If the numbers fits, it will be.

There is no money, no education, no occupation...I reached 28.”<sup>157</sup>

“We cannot ever dream of it, in the past we could but now, we cannot.”<sup>158</sup>

However, when I asked how they saw the future of the Zeytinburnu youth, all of them argued that, half of them will be in prison and the other will be in the graveyards because of drug addiction. While the young people of Zeytinburnu do not carry any hope for “passing” to that desired “first place”, some of the young men, also, do not have any hope for furthering their lives. For instance, when I started to talk with people and told them I was conducting field work on the Zeytinburnu youth, the replies that came from nearly all of the young men whom I have interviewed or talked were as follows: “On Zeytinburnu youth? There is no youth of Zeytinburnu, the youth of Zeytinburnu is finished.” For them, the state finished the Zeytinburnu youth by introducing the drug trade in Zeytinburnu. “Zeytinburnu boys” see themselves as the people who can be “wasted” and “finished” in the state’s mirror<sup>159</sup>. A young man, 25 years old, unemployed, engaged in petty crime and drug dealing saw the future of the teenager boys of Zeytinburnu as follows;

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<sup>157</sup> Valla geleceğim sayısal loto gibi benim. Numaralar birbirine denk gelirse olacak. Yani para yok, okul yok, meslek yok, yaş olmuş 28...” Interview on 21.05.2004 with Hayrettin (male, “unemployed”, 28)

<sup>158</sup> “Düşünemiyoruz bile, eskiden düşünürdük ama şimdi düşünemiyoruz.” Interview on 21.05.2004 with Ahmet (male, “unemployed”, 25)

<sup>159</sup> But, they did not / could not explain why the state wants to finish the Zeytinburnu youth.

“Everybody in Zeytinburnu is psycho..., Zeytinburnu has such an effect; I don’t know why, maybe because of the environment, the air and water in the district? Here young people don’t do anything. Look at both the 14 year olds and then the 24 year olds those who are grown up and have become men, they are all the same, there are thousands here that have the same brain capacity as a 14 year old kid. To adapt to the environment a 14, 15-year-old guy does the same thing as a 20-25 year old one. What does he do? I smoke pot, I drink, then he does the same. What happens after that? He meets different people, gets into different circles. Then you shouldn’t expect anything from a guy, he is finished. Who ever gets into this thing is finished, definitely he can’t have a family, he can’t work regularly... Until 20, alcohol and hashish, then he goes to do his military service, there is hashish there as well. Back from the military he will join the same circles. He will get in and out of jail. They get in jail when they are 14 anyway, when they get out they stab someone, back to jail again, after all it is about 3-5 months jail term. These are the psychos. He expects nothing from life, has lost everything he got... How could he not be a psycho, it wouldn’t be normal if he were normal.”<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> “Zeytinburnu’ndaki herkes psikopattır... Zeytinburnu’nun böyle bir etkisi var, havasından mıdır suyundan mıdır? Burdakiler şu anda hiçbir şey yapamayan bir gençlik yani 14 yaşına da bak 24 yaşına gelmiş adam olmuş gençliğe de bak aynı yani, 14 yaşındaki çocukla aynı beyin kapasitesine sahip binlerce kişi var burda. 14, 15 yaşındaki adam da uyum sağlamak için 20-25 yaşındakinin yaptığını yapıyor, zaten. Napıyor? Ben esrar içiyorum, içki içiyorum mesela o adam da içiyor. Ne oluyor sonra? Daha değişik insanlarla tanışıyor, daha değişik çevrelere giriyor. Ondan sonra o adamdan hiçbir şey beklemicen, bitiyor. Bu şeyin içine giren biter, kesinlikle bir aile ortamı kuramaz, adam gibi çalışmaz. 20’ye kadar alkole esrara devam, sonra askere gidicek orda da var esrar. Askerden geldikten sonra gene aynı çevreye gircek. Hapse gircek çıkacak... Zaten 14 yaşında cezaevine giriyorlar, çıkınca ya gider birine bıçak takar, çatal takar, sonra bir daha cezaevi, 3 ay 5 ay ceza var nasılsa... Psikopat takımı bunlar oluyor yani. Hayattan hiçbir beklentisi yok, her şeyini kaybetmiş adam... Nasıl

Sennett argues that, the slogan: “No Long Term” is the most striking sign of the recent transformation of capitalism. (Sennett: 1998) There is no place for long-time planning in Zeytinburnu any more. While in the past, there were slogans which advocated the “liberation” of the workers and the poor and prospects of a better future were written on the walls of Zeytinburnu, now the most repeated sentence/slogan on the walls of Zeytinburnu is “If it is my destiny I will endure it.” (*Kaderimse Çerkerim*) For instance a young man who compares his mother’s and father’s generation and his own, shows how he does not carry any hope for his and also for the “Zeytinburnu boys” future. For him the most important difference is the way they die:

“Back then people were killed on street corners because of left-right business, now on street corners they sell drugs. Now they kill slowly, then they killed with a single bullet.”<sup>161</sup>

Bauman argues that, “vagabonds have no other images of the good life –no alternative utopia, no political agenda of their own. The sole thing they want is to be allowed to be tourists-like the rest of us... In a restless world, tourism is the only acceptable, human form of restlessness...” (Bauman: 1998:94) Throughout this chapter and also in Chapter 3, I discussed the young people of Zeytinburnu’s desire to be a “tourist” and/or “consumer” and I considered *Olivium* and the clubs as the liminal spaces where this desire is performed. However, as we saw in this chapter

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psikopat olmasın, normal olması zaten anormal olur.” Interview on 12.06.2004 with Can (male, 26)

<sup>161</sup> “Eskiden sağ sol olayları yüzünden köşe başlarında adamlar vuruluyordu şimdi köşe başlarında uyuşturucu satılıyor. Şimdi yavaş yavaş öldürüyorlar o zaman bir kurşunla öldürüyorlardı.” Interview on 12.06.2004 with Can (male, 26)

they do not carry any hope towards the future and do not have any utopia or political agenda as their (grand) mothers and (grand) fathers had. In Chapter 3, I discussed how Zeytinburnu was re-marked with consumption with the opening of *Olivium* and how the people of Zeytinburnu, especially the young people of Zeytinburnu, were pulled into the “consumerism game”, albeit as “flawed consumers”. As I have argued earlier, with reference to Bauman (1997), crime is the “constitutive outside” of the “consumer society” and in this chapter I discussed how the young “Zeytinburnu boys”, who desire to be “modern” middle class urbanites, are the “constitutive outside” of the middle classes as “criminals” and “drug dealers”. I also argued that as well as their double exclusion it is also the strength of this desire that does not tolerate any delays in its satisfaction which turned the lives of the “Zeytinburnu boys” into “wasted lives”. In brief, in this chapter what I tried to do is to discuss how the lives of the “Zeytinburnu boys” are “wasted”.

## CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I tried to examine the emergence of new subjectivities among the youth of Zeytinburnu as “imitators” of the middle classes, petty criminals, drug dealers, drug addicts and clubbers under the sway of neoliberal “consumer society.” I focused upon their detachment from the former working class culture informed by a notion of modesty (*kanaatkarlık*), their desire to enter the world historical stage called modernity and a claim to dignity. I tried to discuss how the young people of Zeytinburnu’s (especially young men’s) lives turned into “wasted lives” and argued that there is a peculiar congruity in the production of “waste” in the tendencies of the neoliberal “consumer society” – which are formed according to the norms of the neoliberal “consumerism”- and young people of Zeytinburnu’s desires to be in the “first places” and this congruity turned the lives of the young people of Zeytinburnu (especially young men) into “wasted lives”.

In order to situate my arguments into an historical context, I discussed first of all, the emergence of Zeytinburnu as a *gecekondu* neighborhood in the 1940s. I argued that Zeytinburnu’s establishment as a *gecekondu* district in the late 1940s was very much related to the developmentalist policies that took place in the post World War II era, in Turkey. While there had been a significant structural transformation both in the big cities and villages of Turkey thanks to developmentalist policies, due to the mass migration from the villages, *gecekondu* neighborhoods emerged in the vicinity of the industrial areas in the big cities during the 1940s. This period was the rapid industrialization period of Turkey and the rural migrants were welcomed as the workers who would meet the labor deficit. Under the hegemony of the developmentalist and/or modernist discourses that consider urbanization as a part of

the modernization project, the rural migrants were regarded as culturally “inferior” given their rural background. The *gecekondus* were regarded as the places in-between the rural and the urban and what was expected from the *gecekondu* people was their assimilation to the urban culture. In a nutshell, from the beginning the people of Zeytinburnu as is the case for the ones who live in other *gecekondu* neighborhoods were not considered as urbanites but rather seen as the “marginal” people who had to be assimilated into the norms of the urban middle classes and the *gecekondu* neighborhoods were regarded as places of the margin/al.

I argued that while this modernist perspective exerted violence towards the people of Zeytinburnu, they could gain respect as workers. Although they were the “marginal” of the city of the developmentalist and/or modernist discourses, they were also the workers of a newly industrializing country, and also the workers of the period of the rise of the Left in Turkey. Hence, they invested in the worker subject position through which they gained respect, and instead of being assimilated into the middle class norms which were regarded as the only “appropriate” norms within the developmentalist and/or modernist discourses or imitating the middle class urbanites, they created their own norms and celebrated modesty (*kanaatkarlık*).

However, by the mid 1980s Zeytinburnu had become the playground of the changes that global capitalism brought about. In this process, the large scale factories of Zeytinburnu moved to the peripheral areas on the city and hundreds of small scale informal workshops mushroomed in the basements of the apartments within Zeytinburnu. While production is now hidden in the basements, with the opening of the shopping mall, *Olivium*, Zeytinburnu is re-marked with consumption rather than production now. As well as the move of the large-scale factories, with the economic

liberalization policies which advocate the weakening of the trade union power, cutting state budgets, deregulation, privatization and the “nonhuman or ‘nonstandard’ means of manufacture” (Comaroff and Comaroff: 2000:295), the people of Zeytinburnu, especially the youth were excluded from the work and wage processes. Moreover, in the same process, the *gecekondu* neighborhoods and the districts where the urban poor live were re-marked as “*varoş*” –a term which has strong pejorative and exclusivist connotations. While the *gecekondu* people were regarded as the “marginal” people who had to be assimilated to the urban middle classes, the term “*varoş*” implies that the “*varoş*” people or the “urban poor” are still “marginal” people, but this time there is no expectations about, nor a paternalist hope for, their assimilation. According to “*varoş*” discourse Zeytinburnu is a place, where the “dangerous” people live and allegedly these people do not carry any potential to urban. In a nutshell, I argued that the Zeytinburnu youth of the 2000s is under a double exclusion: they are both excluded from the work and wage processes and the so-called “city culture” that is defined according to the norms of the urban middle classes.

While in this process, it is getting nearly impossible for a person from Zeytinburnu to get transformed into a “proper” member of the urban middle classes, I argued that *Olivium*, as a shopping mall where the urban middle classes come to shop, produces the desire for the young people Zeytinburnu to transform into urban middle classes who are the successful players of the “consumerism game” and who “own” the city. *Olivium* is a liminal space where the young people of Zeytinburnu who are the “flawed consumers” where they experience the fantasy of being like the middle class “urbanites”, or consumers, *par excellence*. As *Olivium* produces the desire to be

“modern” and “wealthy” for young people of Zeytinburnu, these desires attach them to middle class norms.

It was the desire to be similar with the “modern” middle class urbanites that attach the young people of Zeytinburnu to middle class norms, but at the same time this desire is closely related to the rise of criminality in Zeytinburnu within the past decades. While the youth of Zeytinburnu, desire to be like the “modern” middle class urbanites, they carry a remarkable anger towards the latter and the system that privileges the urban middle classes but exclude the young people of Zeytinburnu. While Zeytinburnu is re-marked with consumption and the people of Zeytinburnu have started to be identified as consumers, their experiences as the “flawed consumers” and the “*varoş*” youth become excesses of the dominant representations of the “consumer society”. (cf. de Lauretis: 1987) I examined the petty crime, drug dealing and drug addiction as a part of this “excess” story and argued that in Zeytinburnu “petty crime” and drug dealing take revengeful forms towards the middle classes and the system that excludes the young people of Zeytinburnu. Moreover I also discussed that through these practices “Zeytinburnu boys” acquire the financial means, however precarious and temporary, to imitate the “modern” middle class urbanites. Nevertheless, I focused upon the engagement of the young men of Zeytinburnu in the club culture both as drug dealers and drug addicts and argued that clubs, like *Olivium*, are the liminal spaces where the young men of Zeytinburnu experience the fantasy of being similar with the middle class youth.

Finally, I argued that while the young people of Zeytinburnu desire to be like the urban middle classes and experience the fantasy of being like them through imitation, they do not have any material possibility to become one of them. They do not invest

to their futures (i.e they “consume” their bodies with drugs, they do not have any future plans, they do not accumulate money, etc.) and do not tolerate any delays in the satisfactions of their desire to be similar to the middle class urbanites. Thanks to this desire and its peculiar congruity with the neoliberal “consumer society”, the lives of the “Zeytinburnu boys” turned into “wasted lives”.

While the people of Zeytinburnu (especially the young people) are under a double exclusion and the lives of the “Zeytinburnu boys” turned into “wasted lives”, according to the “urban renewal” project of the Istanbul Municipality, which is on the agenda nowadays, the people of Zeytinburnu are to be expelled from Zeytinburnu and Istanbul. This project is not publicized yet hence there is limited information on it; however according to the information given by the Chamber of Architecture, the people of Zeytinburnu will be moved out of the city (namely to Çatalca), their houses will be demolished and Zeytinburnu will be reconstructed as a district for “wealthy” urbanites. (Yapıcı: 2005) Hence, in some parts of Zeytinburnu the municipality officers have begun to visit the houses and suggested to the dwellers to evacuate their houses. In the frame of this project, there is a construction of a marina on the coast of Zeytinburnu, and also nearby the port there is a huge five -star hotel construction started. Moreover according to the one of the administrators of the *Çırpıcı Neighborhood Association*, which is established in order to gather people of Zeytinburnu against this project, on the Bakirköy-Zeytinburnu border the construction of Turkey’s biggest shopping mall will begin soon.

In this thesis I tried to discuss how the people of Zeytinburnu, who contributed to the industrialization of the country, became “redundant”, “useless”, and “disposable” under the sway of neoliberalism. Now, the people of Zeytinburnu, as the “marginal

people” are regarded as the ones who should be excluded from all the layers of the “normal society”. As I have discussed, they are excluded from the wage and work processes, from the “city culture” and at the end they will be excluded from the city itself.

The people of Zeytinburnu had always been “marginal.” They had never been truly accepted, but only conditionally... They were needed until the 2000s as the “exploited people” so their “marginality” was “condoned”, but now there is no need for them, even as sources of labor-power to be exploited...

Zeytinburnu has never been regarded as a part of Istanbul... The people of Zeytinburnu were looked down upon as the people who lived in “such” a neighborhood. The young people of Zeytinburnu, who do not want to be looked down upon, want to be like those people who degrade them. They want to be Istanbulites and they want to live in the “better” neighborhoods. Thanks to the “urban renewal project”, Zeytinburnu will be a “part” of Istanbul in 10 or 15 years at most. Zeytinburnu’s streets will not be muddy anymore; it will be a place like the middle or upper class neighborhoods in the dreams of the young people of Zeytinburnu. However, there is a precondition for this; Zeytinburnu will turn into a place where young people of Zeytinburnu would desire to live in only if the people of Zeytinburnu are expelled from there...Only if the “wastes” are sent where they belong: the rubbish heap.

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