

SOCIABILITY IN STARBUCKS COFFEE HOUSES OF ISTANBUL
THE CONTEMPORARY PUBLIC SPACE AND ITS USES

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ABSTRACT

By Aylin Akyar

Sociability in Starbucks Coffee Houses of Istanbul: The Contemporary Public Space and Its Uses

This thesis presents an analytical overview of the economic, social and cultural effects of globalization on Istanbul's urban social scene, including women's mobility in the public accelerated with the emergence of new, 'global', 'modern' public spaces, from the perspective of the Starbucks cafe public in a variety of central districts in Istanbul. Primarily, the thesis builds a historical analysis of the Ottoman coffee houses and their significant place in the Ottoman Istanbul's public life; and it studies the coffee house as a highly popular public space, from the Habermasian and Sennettian perspectives regarding its functions and desirable functions in the society. Habermas' public sphere model of the eighteenth century, essentially its exclusion of women, and the quintessentially male character of the urban flaneur of the nineteenth century are discussed and linked to the contemporary public condition in Istanbul. The research is concerned with finding how in the contemporary Istanbul, the Starbucks cafe patrons use the place, in the ways in which Certeau (1984) argues, as producing their own meanings. The uses of the cafe by the informants, especially as a refuge from the huddle outside, as a comfortable & safe space, as a peaceful space or as a public space necessarily different from the other public spaces; reveal the social, economic and cultural segmentations and polarizations in Istanbul: disparities between the educational, cultural, financial levels of the residents and disparate conditions of living. The thesis ultimately argues that Starbucks cafes in Istanbul today are not merely consumed but used in diverse ways, varying from bonding with strangers in the Sennettian (1986) sense to identifying with the cafe crowd in the sense of finding cultural/intellectual/socio – economic similarities with others in the cafe, to urban flanerite of both male and female patrons – socialising alone and to making it a refuge from the huddle of the city life.

CONTENT OF THE THESIS CHAPTERS

The globalization section of the **introductory chapter** will present relevant dimensions of economic, cultural and social globalization such as time / space compression; spatial segregation in order to build an argument on contemporary Istanbul that the effects of globalization have turned the city into a more segregated space (the widening of the gaps between the centre and the periphery). The polarizations (the divide between neighbourhoods caused by the gentrification processes and urban transformations / renewals) which create groupings within the city, will be revealed by the uses and meanings of the Starbucks patrons.

The **second chapter** will closely look into the coffee house as a quintessential public space of the Ottoman social life, review a detailed history of the Ottoman coffee houses from their outset to the 19th Century, and the links between the British and Ottoman coffee house sociability. This will provide an historical background for Starbucks café in today's Istanbul. The **third chapter** of the thesis will refer to public space theories the transformations that coffee houses have faced; drawing on to modern and late modern life social life.

The **fourth chapter** will be essentially concerned with the gendered dimension of the public space; by bringing on the foreground the limitations of the Habermasian public sphere, using a historical analysis to be able to connect the contemporary situation to its Ottoman roots. The quintessentially masculine character of the urban flaneur will be analysed.

The **fifth chapter** presents the ethnographic research conducted in April, 2012 in the Starbucks cafés in a variety of districts in Istanbul. Upon putting forth specific characteristics of the highly significant districts, the chapter lists the observations of the researcher in the Starbucks cafés situated on these districts. The ethnographic inquiries focused on the cafe flaneur & flaneuse and their uses of the café space; Istanbul city as confusion; differentiations and polarizations reflected in the uses of the café patrons and the café as an alternative space.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Globalization and its social reflections: Istanbul as an urban space

It takes only the merest acquaintance with the facts of the modern world to note that it is now an interactive system in a sense which is strikingly new¹

Arjun Appadurai

'Globalization is on everybody's lips; a fad word fast turning into a shibboleth, a magic incantation, a pass-key meant to unlock the gates to all present and future mysteries. For everybody, 'globalization' is the intractable fate of the world, an irreversible process; a process which affects us all²...

Zygmunt Bauman

We live in a world of transformations, affecting almost every aspect of what we do. For better or worse, we are being propelled into a global order that no one fully understands, but which is making its effects felt upon all of us³...

Anthony Giddens

The general framework & theoretical debates

The thesis draws upon the socio - economic polarizations that have occurred in Istanbul after the mid – 1980's as direct effects of globalization. It presents an overview of the economic, social and cultural effects of globalization on Istanbul's urban social scene, from the perspective of the Starbucks cafe public in a variety of central districts in Istanbul.

¹ Appadurai, 1994: 324

² Bauman, 1998: 1

³ Giddens, 1999: 1

Primarily, the thesis presents a historical analysis of the Ottoman coffee houses and their significance in Istanbul's public life; and it views the *coffee house* as a highly popular public space, from Habermasian and Sennettian perspectives (regarding its uses and functions in the society). Habermas' public sphere model of the eighteenth century, essentially its exclusion of women, and the quintessentially male character of urban flaneur of the nineteenth century are discussed and linked to the contemporary public condition in Istanbul.

The thesis research is concerned with finding how in the contemporary Istanbul, Starbucks cafe patrons use the place, producing their own meanings as Certeau (1984) argues. To understand how Starbucks patrons *use* this cafe other than merely consumption purposes, we will make use of Certeau's theory. We will connect our discussion of the coffee house as a public space through Habermas' and Sennett's theories with the ethnographic findings.

Overall, this thesis builds upon the globalization theories of late – modern scholars who challenge the idea that people are getting carried away with the global flows, such as the mass media and consumption practices and becoming a more and more homogenous crowd. Instead, I argue, new meanings are produced. I also will be referring to Habermas and Sennett to better understand the modern (Starbucks) cafe in Istanbul's public life. Lastly, the place identity and place attachment theories will be guiding me in understanding how the coffee house sociability transformed into a new community attachment, in the sense that the patrons of the cafe feel belong to the café and its crowd.

The polarizations⁴ do exist and while the informants differentiate themselves from the others (generally, from those *outside* Starbucks), their answers reflect and reveal these polarizations such as Western / Traditional; Elite Neighbourhood / Outer Suburbs; and it should be noted that some informants from the peripheral neighbourhoods (for instance;

⁴ the socio – economic divide between neighbourhoods are caused by the gentrification processes and urban transformations / renewals – as effects of globalization in Istanbul

Fatih) are also using the café space and making it meaningful in their own ways. These dimensions; differentiations and polarizations are reflected in the coffee house sociability.

The thesis will argue that, Starbucks cannot be regarded as a mere consumption space, but it carries diverse meanings and uses of its patrons. These uses and meanings encompass socio – economic polarizations and differentiations. These are around the levels of education, the location of neighbourhoods of residence, the levels of cultural and intellectual accumulation, and sometimes the Western underpinnings of people’s coffee house sociability, or openness to the global advancements⁵. Essentially; there is a challenge in the use of the Starbucks café, the urban flaneurs are not exclusively masculine but we see the urban flaneuse, too. These polarizations and challenges become visible in the ethnographic study that this thesis conveys, showing how they are reflected in the café sociability.

Contributions

Academic explorations over the coffee house culture and public so far have focused geographically on Europe and the wider European world; historically on the outset of the Enlightenment Period. While a majority historians and sociologists investigated coffee house culture in Europe, especially London; other researchers turned to the time which marked the opening of the first coffeehouses in mid-sixteenth-century Istanbul; or dealt with the coffee houses in the early modern Ottoman public life.

Concerning the larger arguments around the coffee houses, scholars frequently viewed the coffee house as one of the most significant examples of the bourgeois public sphere; building their arguments on Habermas’ *public sphere* theory. Others in the communication and marketing fields; viewed the coffee house from the perspective of ‘the modern consumer

⁵ These are, European/Western vs. Traditional/Anatolian divide; Modern vs. Conservative/Traditional; Middle/Upper Middle Class/Elites vs. Residents of Outer Suburbs; High cultured vs. Frivolous/Superficial/Idler; Enlightened vs. Not Enlightened; Elite Neighbourhoods vs. Non – Elite Neighbourhoods; and etc...

& consumption' patterns, or 'new forms of public communication'. Overall, the coffee house as a quintessentially public field with a myriad of social meanings and as a modern trend, has attracted research interests particularly since the late 1990's. While the early modern period: the eighteenth century, considered as the most popular era of the coffee house culture and sociability was privileged in research agendas, some researchers have chosen to study transformations around the coffee house culture, from the nineteenth to the 21st centuries.

Concerning the field of anthropology; even though we encounter recent researches carried out on specialty cafes in the modern public scene; none of these have studied Starbucks cafés in a specific locality from the perspective of new forms of public communication and the place identity / attachment theories. As noted, Starbucks cafes have also been studied from the perspective of modern consumption. These studies have been limited to the globalization debates, or social class debates.

One of the most crucial contributions of this thesis to academia will be that it links the contemporary urban life in Istanbul with its Ottoman roots; and does this through studying a quintessentially public space: the coffee house on the historical and anthropological level. This thesis, apart from building a link between the contemporary sociability with that of the past, adds an anthropological dimension into the coffee house literature. The thesis paves the way for the use of Certeau (1984) in explaining contemporary uses of coffee houses, alternatively to viewing them as merely belonging to the fields of consumption. My research brings a new understanding of the Starbucks café sociability; by firstly demonstrating that Starbucks is not merely a manipulative consumption space; but it is a socially meaningful space, not only consumed but also used by the Turkish Istanbulites to create meanings in and through it. Starbucks' sole function is not to attract yuppie crowds with its fancy consumption space; but it is where a diversity of social, economic and cultural polarizations are played out, as a public space where people from different socio – economic backgrounds feel attached to.

Additionally, the concept of the urban flaneur is investigated in the contemporary Istanbul city life, which could open the way for further empirical inquiries. We have demonstrated that in the modern cafe of Istanbul the urban flaneuse is socializing, as alone as the flaneur. This challenges the prior ways of viewing the urban flaneur, and this theme calls for further investigation.

Limitations

The research of this thesis, on the effects of globalization on Istanbul in terms of urban public life via special focus on Starbucks cafés, seeks to reveal the consequent polarizations only in terms of spatial differentiations (central neighbourhoods and the peripheries/outer suburbs) and educational, cultural, and intellectual underpinnings; setting aside the deeper tensions within Turkish society, namely secularism and conservative tendencies. This is largely because this dimension surpasses the scope of this thesis. We should note that the research based its conclusions largely on the ethnographic data acquired from a variety of informants in Starbucks cafes; thus the research is limited to their perceptions on the urban life in Istanbul, sociability, and the male characteristic of the urban flaneur and its challenges. An observable pattern concerning the secular/conservative & Islamic tensions have not appeared in the course of the structured interviews, other than basically an obscure Enlightened / Non-Enlightened divide. Most of the informants have had high education levels; among the 19 interviewees only two of them have been high school graduates / drop outs. They are either professionals and university graduates or university students. This characteristic of the informants placed the findings in a certain perspective – the perspective of the high education levels. This group does not allow us to learn about the perspective of those residing in the outer suburbs of Istanbul, those with relatively less chances to socialize in Starbucks for financial reasons or because Starbucks cafés are away from their localities.

Method / Methodology

Research Method & Historical Analysis

In order to build a hypothesis on the reflection of socio – economic polarizations and changing sociability patterns including gender as effects of the globalization in Istanbul; we have selected ‘Starbucks Cafés’ as our case, which will encompass these dimensions. The thesis combines historical analysis and contemporary case study. Historical analysis is used for exploring the public space dimension; in order to link the contemporary Starbucks cafés with their historical roots in Istanbul. The historical approach consists of building upon the phenomenal data of the coffee houses from a wide variety of sources, in order to better analyse the coffee houses as public spaces (Karababa, 2012: 14-15).

Ethnographic Fieldwork

The case research of this thesis is the Starbucks café sociability in contemporary Istanbul. We have chosen the ethnographic method in order to be able to extract an in – depth analysis of the ways in which the Starbucks patrons use the café and the meanings they produce. The one-to-one interviews made it possible to carry out detailed conversations and observe the ways in which the informants socialize in the café space, bringing out more details about the issues at stake. This fieldwork consists of participant observations and structured interviews, carried out in April, 2012 in various Starbucks cafes in Istanbul. The data set consists of 19 interviews (Thompson & Arsel, 2010: 6) which constituted approximately 90 minutes of recorded dialogue. All interviews have been conducted by the first author. All first names and other identifying information have remained, upon the permission obtained from the informants. Field observations preceded the interviews.

Examinations of the informants' meanings of being an Istanbulite, and afterward their uses of the Starbucks cafes and perceptions of those who frequent this café have been conducted. A comparison naturally has emerged among the informants, in which they expressed their self-definitions of being an Istanbulite and experiences within the social urban life of Istanbul. This led the research to explore the uses of the Starbucks patrons and uncover their relevance to the urban tensions and polarizations. In keeping with the conventions of ethnographic research, we have made use of all of the 19 interviews and further have interpreted these in reference to the established meanings of the informants as well as the meanings in progress in relation to the Starbucks cafe as a public space of sociability (Thompson & Arsel: 2010, 7).

Globalization in the research context

In order to build the framework for the major arguments, this chapter will bring together related dimensions of the globalization debate side by side, namely, globalization with reference to time/space compression (Harvey, 1990; Bauman, 1998) and spatial segregation (Bauman, 1998). The latter dimension emerges as the economic and “communicational” gap between the upwardly mobile elites and the rest of the society (ibid). This, I will mention, corresponds with the ‘polarization’ Bauman notes (1998). Another significant dimension will mention is the loss of community feeling; which will link globalization debate to public space debate. As Sennett (1986) noted, the more spatially polarized the city becomes, the less the chances are for building community.

Following this, the cultural effects of globalization, heterogeneity, and social differentiations/polarizations as effects of this process will be explained in-depth. In studying the *coffee house and the café*, I share the same path with Lortoglu (2003), in arguing that heterogenization is produced through gentrification projects in the city (of Istanbul):

heterogenization corresponds to the differentiations between the residents of Istanbul. Notice that Istanbul is rapidly being renewed, new business areas and recreation & residential areas have given rise to gentrification process. This geographical dimension of globalization in the cosmopolitan city is worth mentioning. Further this chapter will turn to Istanbul – as a striving global city, the effects of globalization have turned the city into a more segregated space (the widening of the gaps between the centre and the periphery). The polarizations (the divide between neighbourhoods caused by the gentrification processes and urban transformations / renewals) thus create groupings within the city, such as Western / Traditional; Elite Neighbourhood / Outer Suburbs; Real Intellectuals / Fake Intellectuals.

Globalization as a phenomenon

Globalization is a multi – dimensional trend, “taking place simultaneously within the spheres of the economy, of politics, of the environment, of technologies and of culture” (Tomlison, 2007: 150). It is also analytical tool / concept, which has been crucial in understanding social phenomena and cultural change taking place around the world. Scholars such as Harvey (1990) and Giddens (2000) have endeavoured to capture the wave of globalization as a concept, its causes and effects (Held and McGrew, 2007: 5).

This chapter will basically explore globalization as a concept with multiple vectors and as a recurrent theme in cosmopolitanism and modernity literature, with reference to a number of prominent scholars.⁶

Social effects of globalization

Anthony Giddens notes in his first lecture of *BBC Reith Lectures*⁷, the topic of which is globalization (1999):

⁶ Appadurai, 1996; Bauman, 1998; Giddens, 2000; Blum, 2003; Tomlison, 2007

The level of world trade today is much higher than it ever was before, and involves a much wider range of goods and services. But the biggest difference is in the level of finance and capital flows. Geared as it is to electronic money - money that exists only as digits in computers - the current world economy has no parallels in earlier times

The first question should be; how is the changing pace and multiplying direction of flows of goods, of money and of information has been impacting upon the social scene?

Zygmunt Bauman, in his book *Globalization: the Human Consequences*, sets out on a journey make a sense of globalization (1998). Bauman first refers to time-space compression, resonating Harvey's famous discussion on his book *The Condition of Post-modernity* (1990). Time and space compression, which could mean the possibility of putting together sceneries or products such as food, etc. from disparate locales simultaneously next to each other, or, quicker process of production, consumption and flow of goods / information; is an inevitable effect of globalization. It is, in other words, the reordering or reorganization of all spheres of social life. Bauman puts it, "(...) the freedom to move, perpetually a scarce and unequally distributed commodity, fast becomes the main stratifying factor of our late modern times" (1998: 2). This dimension of globalization he mentions is the "spatial segregation, separation and exclusion" (p. 3). What is at stake in this argument is that the more 'global' and upwardly mobile the elites of the society become, the more socio – economic and "communicational" gap between them and the "localized" rest widen (ibid). Significantly, even if there is a seemingly global discourse being formed in the public arena; this is not reflected in the real practices, in the urban social life. Bauman explains the spatial segregation by the dichotomy of centre and periphery; with the "freedom of mobility" at the centre: the space of the elites. This is the "present-day polarization" which he is willing to explicate in his book (ibid).

⁷ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00gw9s1> : "He was Professor of Sociology at the University of Cambridge from 1986-96 and took up the post as Director of the London School of Economics in 1997. In his first lecture, delivered from London, Giddens examines the concept of globalisation and how it has affected our lives".

On his first chapter Bauman further notes: “(...) rather than homogenizing the human condition, the technological annulment of temporal / spatial distances tends to polarize it” (1998: 18). In my view, the most striking illustration Bauman refers to is the book from Steven Flusty titled ‘Building Paranoia’ (as cited in Bauman, 1998: 20). Metropolitan cities in this book, as Bauman shows us, appear to be “intercept(ing) or repel(ling) or filter(ing) would-be users” (ibid). Several urban spaces (ex. suburban sites), which precisely reveal the spatial segregation taking place in the metropolitan city, come together to form an “equivalent of the moats and turrets that once guarded medieval castles” (ibid). Even if Bauman mostly refers to physically unreachable spaces in this context, we could as well extend this to include consumption spaces located in the most bustling parts of the city. Bauman observes that public spaces, where people from all parts of the city came together to “engage in casual encounters, accost or challenge one another, argue or agree...” are losing, or rather have already lost, their earlier significance and scale (1998: 21).

In my view, this is a rather idealised look; nostalgia for the public space. Richard Sennett’s *The Fall of Public Man* (1986), also stresses the crucial nature of the public spaces for trust building and community belonging⁸. We should note at this juncture that, such idealizations of ‘traditional’ public spaces lack in closer look into the actual not-so-egalitarian dynamics of this space, as certain classes and women were almost always being excluded.

Further on this dimension, Bauman argues above about the loss of a “local community” feeling in the city (1998: 24). The more spatially polarized the city becomes (as the ‘mobile’ middle class crowds have pushed the rest deeper into the peripheries) the less the chances of forming a local community. Bauman presents Sennett as the first scholar to deal with the present-day urban life in such a way to illustrate how all the advancements & renovations

⁸ This dimension, side by side with Habermas’ *Structure of the Transformation of Public Sphere* (1989) will be dealt with in further detail in the third chapter

came with the cost of jeopardising the very existence of the “public” (p. 45) community “man” (ibid). Upon referring to Sennett (ibid), Bauman analyzes this transformation the city has faced (p. 46):

(...) the attempts to ‘homogenize’ the city space, to render it ‘functional’ or ‘legible’ rebounded in the disintegration of protective nets woven of human bonds, in the physically devastating experience of abandonment and loneliness – coupled with that of an inner void, horror of challenges which life may bring (...)

Sennett problematizes the spatial segregation in the cities - in response to this, people are in search of a new sense of community (1986: 309). However, this community attachment does not correspond to public spaces where all can mingle, but rather to consumption spaces, widening the above gap further. Forces of globalization are continually at play in the transforming the urban scene.

Cultural Effects of Globalization

Homogenization vs. Heterogenization

Ever since its outset, the trend ‘globalization’ has been predicated on cross cultural travels and exchanges (Holton, 2000: 151) with a “diffusionist” (ibid) character. Lortoglu presents this dimension, stating that (2003: 13):

(...) in social anthropology and media and cultural studies, the attention had fallen on the implications of global consumerism, media communication and international mobility and *cultural mixture* for individual and social identities and lifestyles in different local settings

Appadurai notes on this as follows: “...there has been a technological explosion, largely in the domain of transportation and information (...) we have entered into an altogether new condition of neighbourliness, even with those most distant from ourselves” (1994: 325). Then what are the outcomes that such “mixture”, “explosion” or “new condition” might raise? There is a somehow paradoxical situation which emerges, as voiced by Holton (2000: 151):

We are faced with the paradox that while global economic, technological and political change exhibits high levels of convergence around market – driven capitalism, electronic technology, (...) culture is characterized by high levels of divergence

Building on the above arguments, the thesis argument is grounded on the formation of societal differentiations in terms of socio-economic polarizations observable in Istanbul, through the lens of social globalization. These are; the different levels of education, the location of neighbourhoods in which people reside, the levels of cultural accumulation, and sometimes the Western underpinnings of people's coffee house sociability, or openness to the global advancements challenging the traditional norms. (European/Western vs. Traditional/Anatolian divide; Modern vs. Conservative/Traditional; Middle/Upper Middle Class/Elites vs. Residents of Outer Suburbs/Apacis; High – cultured vs. Frivolous/Superficial/Idler; Enlightened vs. Not – Enlightened; Elite Neighbourhoods vs. Non – Elite Neighbourhoods; Real Istanbulites vs. Anatolian Immigrants, etc...)

The locations where this thesis seeks to find the reflections of these polarizations are the Starbucks cafés, which is an emblem of specialty coffee in Istanbul and takes its meanings in a context in which the *coffee house* in general, as a traditional public space, lies.

Geographical dimension of globalization: space, place and the city

The 'global city', cosmopolitanism and polarization

In order to better comprehend the connection between the cosmopolitan city and globalization, a closer look into the function of space is needed. Marcuse & Kempen build a hypothesis on “the spatial order of cities” (2000: 3). According to them, in the 1970's a new spatial order emerged, in line with global economic flows, causing polarization in the cities (ibid):

They (cities) include a spatial concentration within, of a new urban poverty on the one hand, and of specialized “high – level” internationally connected business activities on the other, with increasing spatial divisions not only between each of them but also among segments of the “middle class” in between.

Marcuse and Kempen (2000) demonstrate two levels of differentiations in the city; one between poor urban neighbourhoods and the business class milieu; and another in between the middle class segments. Then; *how does the space have an impact on these polarizations?* Spatial divisions typical of contemporary urban design such as the ongoing gentrification processes have added up to differentiations among the residents (see Lortoglu, 2003: 23, 24).

New public spaces, new sociabilities

We have hitherto noted; globalization engenders social differentiations within the cosmopolitan city’s public space. Here I will refer to Appadurai’s (1996) discussion on the cultural complexities of globalization; as well as a variety of theories on public space and place attachment, to understand Starbucks as one of Istanbul’s specific social scenes. This is in line with my argument that in Starbucks café, socio-economic polarizations are revealed. My argument follows that the traditional coffee house sociability has been transformed due to globalization. Notice Giddens stresses that social practices perpetually change in character by the flow of information about these very practices (1990: 4):

The modes of life brought into being by modernity have swept us away from all traditional types of social order in quite unprecedented fashion. (...) in intensional terms they have come to alter some of the most intimate and personal features of our day-to-day existence.

Istanbul as the global city

Reflecting upon this ‘sweeping’ condition of late modernity, we can state that globalization brings new tensions. One of these tensions is what this thesis argues: globalization creates differentiations, as the post - 1980’s Turkish metropolis Istanbul reflects.

These multitudes of differentiations reach their peak in ‘globalized’ Istanbul. Public spaces which reveal the colours of Istanbul have changed face along with a new social scene: new coffee houses – Starbucks in particular. This signals subtler polarizations within.

My discussion on Starbucks in Istanbul, as a specific consumption space and as a coffee house in the sense of a public space stands in line with the argument that, “local meaning making processes” (see Thompson and Haytko, 1997; Thompson and Arsel, 2004) are always in effect in the face of global flows. For the Starbucks consumer in Istanbul, it is almost never an immediate necessity to drink the particular beverage; but s/he considers the space a good combination of comfort and quality coffee. Some of the consumers explain this in terms of feeling comfortable, being given the time and space to do their activities there for as long as they want. For some, the design of the place, or comfortable chairs become highly significant, while for others the location of the café is convenient. The “comfortable” atmosphere, by some, has been referred to as the place being crowded by “elite” people. This brings on the foreground the polarization or urban tension which is played out in Starbucks.

Economic globalization in Istanbul

Even though Istanbul during the Ottoman rule became an important political, economic and cultural center (see Eldem et al., 1999: 135 - 206), the climax “in terms of its globalization” was the early 1980’s “when a new project of economic liberalization (...) was launched (...) by Turgut Özal” (Ardıç, 2009: 31). He put special emphasis on Istanbul, as Ardıç notes, “in his liberal policies” (p. 32) which sought to turn Istanbul into a “ ‘global city’ in order to attract foreign capital” (ibid). During this era, “due to the impact of globalization, economic policies at the national level witnessed a major shift from import-substitution growth strategy to a liberal, market-oriented approach” (ibid). Ardıç continues that, “in the 1980’s towards the 1990’s” Turkey opened its gates to “foreign capital and foreign consumer

goods” (ibid). As he notes, a great deal of foreign capital began to flow to “the service industry and luxury consumption”, “the 1990’s witnessed a sharp and rapid increase in the number of deluxe hotels, shopping centers and boutiques, department stores, fast-food chains, cafés, ethnic and world cuisine restaurants” (ibid). He also mentions that entertainment sector has become popular: “Istanbulites” enjoying different kinds of entertainment such as “international festivals, classical music, jazz, opera, and theater”, etc... (ibid).

Dener’s article *The products of popular culture in urban space: Do they enrich or spoil?* demonstrates the changing face of Istanbul in terms of popular culture, after the 1980’s. Turkey has welcomed world economy and “has liberated the flows of international funds” (2006: 76). Istanbul has “empowered” its international image, continuing to “parallel to the other mega capitals over the world. (...) has become an agent of capital growth” (ibid). This project of making a cosmopolitan city of Istanbul – is through the merge with the global market.

Cultural globalization in Istanbul

Istanbul's urban landscape conveys a multiplicity of meanings. For some of its dwellers, what it means to be Istanbulite is to be embracing a variety of cultural elements. For others, Europeaness, intellectuality or high – culture marks their identities (Mills: 2005).

i. The newly – emerging class / Yuppie culture

Istanbul witnessed changes and transformations in the socability patterns, Ardic mentions, which occurred in sync “with the rise of a new middle class” (2009: 33). This new class, as Ardic calls them the “yuppies, usually well-paid and well- educated professionals”, have become to be “associated with shopping and entertainment, high-tech devices, expensive cars, restaurants, (...) air travel” (ibid). Members of this group of young professionals “follow

the latest fashions, meet each other in cafés”, especially in Starbucks and its equivalents (ibid). Öncü points out that the yuppie image became linked with “such accessories as sunglasses, suits, expensive perfumes, (...)” (as cited in Ardic, 2009: 33). Even though some of the hot beverages in Starbucks cafés in Istanbul are reasonably priced, there is the ongoing perception that it is an expensive place of ‘high culture’.

ii. Globalization and alienation

One of the characteristics of the social scene in Istanbul, as in other cosmopolitan cities, is a pervasive feeling of alienation and disillusionment with modernity. Overall, I will demonstrate how identification / attachment is formed in Starbucks cafés by the café’s patrons; since they profess, as the ethnographic research will show, a great many characteristics which bond them with the rest of this specific café crowd. Those have been, to name a few; being high cultured, intellectual, elite, comfortable, educated; almost always in connection with the neighbourhood that the café is situated in. Choosing a specific “place to be”, which is Starbucks in our case research, make them feel comfortable and safe; and hence they differentiate themselves from the outsiders who are sometimes associated with the confusion and huddle of the city.

Another function may be, as Giroux⁹ notes, we look for new meanings to make sense of our connection with our surroundings. To further understand the connection between identification, globalization and the café; we need to take into consideration our ethnographic accounts. We should note here that identification is built with the Starbucks café crowd, as only people who are high – cultured, or high – educated, or comfortable are expected to be seen in Starbucks; as the informants have professed. The feeling of being high – cultured; as for instance one of the informants stress that he listens to jazz music; might be this “new

⁹ <http://www.alexandragiroux.net/hello-world/>

meaning” that Giroux¹⁰ thinks we are looking for. In – depth interviews demonstrated these dimensions; as the informants, even if not having been directed such a question as “How do you think you fit in / you are attached here?”, they nevertheless revealed these dimensions.

Consumption in Istanbul: case of Starbucks

Starbucks as a global café

As Lyons states, “by the mid-1980s the term ‘gourmet’ coffee”, became more pronounced than the earlier term “speciality” connoting a more sophisticated experience (2005: 22) and Starbucks is a key player in this change. Starbucks coffee culture forms a “distinct” social field (see Lyons, 2005: 23, 24). It is distinct because people use Starbucks not only to drink coffee but assert themselves through their identification with the place; by feeling comfortable, hip, or high cultured, intellectual, and so on.

Starbucks sociability

“In the 1990s, as a result of the liberalization, Turkish consumers found themselves bombarded with foreign brand products that they had not heard of before ...” (Sandıkcı and Ger, 2005: 3). One of the biggest of these trends has been the opening of Starbucks coffee houses. Istanbul houses 143 Starbucks coffee houses, by far the most popular in this category. This brand popularity has two intersecting dimensions: Istanbul is a fancy global market today, welcoming foreign investment world-wide; and Turkish consumers have cultural identifications with the coffee culture, which are now being expressed through Starbucks. Starbucks helps actively construct individual meanings and life-styles on the “symbolic” level (Thompson and Arsel, 2004: 631 - 632). This kind of identity formation refers to the place attachment / place identity theories, to explain the *uses* of Starbucks Istanbul to find out how

¹⁰ <http://www.alexandragiroux.net/hello-world/>

socio – economic polarizations are reflected through every day practices in the café mentioned¹¹.

Finally, concerning the sociability, the gender dimension of Starbucks café becomes crucial. The unease that the city life brought, was embodied in the urban flaneur who strolls on the streets, watches the city as a spectacle and sits in the café. The café was rather an escape: it was the Deus ex machine functioning as a spectacle and refuge. The urban flaneur had been a quintessentially male figure, from its outset in Parisian novels. Thus, we stress the limitation of Habermas' public sphere which excludes women and show that in the Starbucks café the flaneuse exists. Hence, this chapter underlined Istanbul's globalizing face presenting the argument that globalization has not caused homogeneity in the urban life; rather great differentiations between social segments and polarizations among the city's residents.

Chapter II

The early modern Ottoman coffee houses in Istanbul: *kahve hane* to café

Introduction

In this section we embark on a journey, starting from the lands on which the first coffee bean was grown, to Ottoman Empire where first coffee houses were established. The coffee house is not a significant venue of the sociability from the 16th Century to this day; it shaped and was shaped by the public. Making its first journey from Ottoman Istanbul to London, it re-defined what Ottomans understood of 'sociability', it was one of the first public spaces for sociability away from religious authorities and the rulers, and in parallel ways to the British, it was regarded as the egalitarian public space. Historical documents¹² as well as diaries of

¹¹ See Sandıkcı & Ger's analysis of contemporary Turkish "consumptionscape" (2005: 1-2)

¹² Hattox, Ralph. (1985). *Coffee and coffeehouses: the origins of a social beverage in the Medieval Near East*, Seattle: University of Washington Press

Ottoman travellers ('seyyah') and other travel writings about show how coffee houses were at the heart of the 'public' life. An egalitarian sociability is associated with coffee houses¹³, since it is agreed that the coffee houses welcomed all social ranks: social distinctions were of little concern.

This chapter will juxtapose Ottoman and British coffee house sociability on the grounds that this parallel between their coffee houses is hard to ignore. The coffee houses at their outset in England, took on the Ottoman coffee house model.¹⁴ The uses of the coffee houses in the Ottoman Istanbul, the diverse sociability patterns and activities performed here are necessary to capture the contemporary coffee house sociability and the links between the two. The Ottoman coffee house has shaped the current meanings of coffee houses, as it was not merely for coffee – drinking but it encompassed alternative sociability dimensions, such as the mingling of people from different social statuses and the kind of face-to-face community attachment which is both continuing on some levels (some Starbucks patrons meet strangers in the café often) and has been transformed on some¹⁵. The mingling of people in a specially designated public space, other than the private lodgings, was quite extraordinary and novel in the Ottoman public, people could express their ideas more freely and entertain through music or board games or read and listen to poetry. This dimension was very significant in public life, because people could use the public place in all the mentioned ways and it became an alternative space this way (see Certeau, 1984). In order to best cast a mirror on this sociability dimension and transformations 'coffee house' has been facing (as well as the other elements of the civil life as an inevitable outcome of the modernization and urbanization); we will

¹³See: Cowan, B. (2005). *The social life of Coffee: The Emergence of the British Coffeehouse*. Yale University; Kömecoglu, U. (2005). The Publicness and Sociabilities in the Ottoman Coffeehouse. *The Public*.12, 2 pp. 5 - 22

¹⁴ Even if the introduction of Turkish coffee was met with suspicion and discontent in British circles, since the beverage was dark and Oriental, soon by the help of merchants it became highly popular.

¹⁵ The community attachment is regarded also in the sense of finding similarities between you and the rest of the coffee crowd and even if not meeting them face to face; there is a communication of meanings such as 'I'm high cultured; they are, too... they are comfortable so this place is comfortable'

present the Ottoman coffee houses¹⁶ with their different dimensions (egalitarian, alternative) to exemplify as stated how significant a place they held in the Ottoman public life. Sociability in Ottoman coffee houses will be drawn in vivid detail, which covers patterns such as mingling with the coffee house community: I will also build on the existing literature to demonstrate the so- called egalitarian atmosphere in these coffee houses (as women were excluded).

The roots of coffee

It goes back only 350 years in Northern Europe, and only another century or so in Ottoman Istanbul. Before this time, coffee was unknown: neither the residents of ancient Rome nor of London in Shakespeare's time had ever tasted the drink. The associations that we have of coffee and conversation are then distinctively modern

(Ellis, 2008: 157)

The coffee can be explored through Hattox¹⁷'s accounts, in an attempt to capture its roots (as cited in Kücükkömürler & Özgen, 2009: 1693). The name 'coffee' is supposedly derived from the Ethiopian town called "Kaffa", in parallel with the first land of its growth (p. 1693). Another speculation over the roots of this word is presented by Kücükkömürler and Özgen as 'kuvvah' which is the equivalent of "kuvvet" in Turkish, meaning 'power' (ibid). Yasar comments on the appropriation of the Arabian name given to coffee 'qahwah' of Turkish 'kahve' and dates the history of coffee back to the twelfth century (2003: 5).

Coffee's Introduction to Istanbul

Before reflecting on the Turkish coffee house, this section will introduce the findings on how coffee, and coffee house concept was brought to and became popular in the Ottoman land.

¹⁶ from the end of 16th to the end of the 19th

¹⁷ See Hattox, R. (1985).

In Özcolak's study, we are informed that it was 1543 (see also Kömeçoğlu, 2005: 7) when coffee for the first time landed on the ports of Istanbul (2007: 966). Various sources provide information about the merchants from Aleppo (Halep) and Damascus (Sam), who established the first coffeehouse, in 1555 (Özcolak, 2007; Yaşar, 2003; Ellis, 2008)¹⁸. Kömecoglu notes that "there were about six hundred coffee houses in Istanbul" in the 16th Century (2005: 8). He further notes that, coffee, following its introduction to the Ottoman social life, finally became associated with the "secular sphere" (ibid). He stresses the fact that coffee became a secular pastime, because coffee was previously drunk for religious rituals.

And coffee houses started to expand rapidly: "By 1595 coffeehouses in Istanbul numbered over 600 and were located in nearly every neighbourhood" (Yasar, 2003: 6). The first coffee houses were situated in "Tahtakale" district, as it was the most important market of the city (ibid). Yasar contends that, the Tahtakale region was more a business and trade area than a residential one. Additionally, this was the part of the city where people frequented for pleasure purposes (2003: 21). For instance, "shows, tales from storytellers, acrobats' shows, presenters of archery demonstrations" demonstrated how carnival – like atmosphere this region possessed (ibid). This place was "cosmopolitan" in that it attracted visitors regardless of social status – its potential to attract people explains quite plainly why the merchants might have decided to establish the first coffee houses in this region (ibid). A parallel explanation we have is Özkocak's, who draws topography of the Tahtakale district (2007: 967 – 968). Tahtakale is mentioned to be the district "where the first coffeehouses were opened", and it was not a coincidence that this district was the "trade centre" of the city, both "international and local" (p. 967). Özkocak provides two "trader-registers" from the 18th Century, to trace back direct evidence on the frequency of the coffee houses in the city and demonstrate how an important place the coffee houses held in the "marketplace" (p. 968).

¹⁸ Kömecoglu dates it back to 1550 (see 2005: 7) and Yasar to 1551 (see 2003: 18)

One of these registers “lists traders in Eyüb, in the area surrounding the Defterdar Pier, with their shops and residences. Of the 287 listed in this register, thirty-six were coffeehouses and sixteen were barbershops”. It is important to note the correlation between the “masculine” feature of these commercial areas and the emergence of the coffee houses around them (p. 970). The traders were all-male and they dominated the public space through their trade activities and sociability.

Types of Ottoman coffee houses

The coffee house began its social life with the ‘neighbourhood coffee houses’ which were situated in the districts and served as a way to be involved in the local community. From the 17th Century onwards; new coffee houses began to emerge – the Janissary coffee houses¹⁹, exclusive coffee houses for engaging in poetry: ‘Aşık kahveleri’, and those in which the shadow theatres ‘Karagöz and Hacivat’ took place. Aşık Kahvesi, Oral states, would have a story teller who would tell old legends, folk stories and who would have a crowd listening to him (1997: 9, 11). Book reading was an important feature as well (ibid). Janissary coffee houses in the 18th Century Istanbul, were where heated political discussions were held, they have strategic importance in the state matters (Oral: 1997, 9). Towards the second half of the 19th Century, a spark was lit by the Ottomans via the Tanzimat Reform (ex. abolishment of the ‘millet’ system – a huge leap towards Non – Muslim rights), which would grow into a flame of modernization and Westernization. From this time on, the sociability function of the Ottoman coffee houses began to transform, as new cafés began to emerge.

The Publicness of the coffee houses

¹⁹ Janissary Force ‘Yeniçeri Ocağı’ is the name given to the Ottoman armed force comprised of ‘devşirme’: kids taken from the non – Muslim minorities under the Ottoman rule to be trained.

So far we have mentioned the introduction of the coffee to Ottoman public. Coffee houses brought a brand new source of socialization and they became the only places apart from the mosques, neighbourhood quarters or barber shops, to meet and spend time. As Özkocak notes, the basic quarters for socializing “were the mosque, public bath, local market with one or two grocery and baker’s shops, and the street” (2007: 970, 971). The socialising habits of the people of the neighbourhood were either meeting during the prayers performed five times a day in the mosque; or visiting each others’ homes. Kömecoglu contends that, for patrons who were stuck between the house; the “tekke” (dervish lodge) or the “residential quarter” (‘mahalle’) the coffee houses proved to be the most suitable places to relax (2005: 8). He focuses on the ‘public’ness of the coffee houses, which started to “transform the urban life” (ibid), or redefine its borders; bring a most important public space for the uses of public.

To explicate, the crowds could not be contained any more in the hierarchical structure of the religious or official establishments, but there emerged a place which the Ottoman society could use to produce their own meanings, thus creating the coffee house space through their individual and group actions in it. Even if look as if they were open to all, it was not this way because for instance, women were excluded from these places. However they still challenged the existing social order through the mingling of a diversity of social status and social bonding / community attachment in the coffee house, apart from private homes. When compared with the coffee house sociability today, we realize that, far from being egalitarian, the contemporary coffee house reflects and reveals the social, economic and cultural polarizations within the society, as noted in the introductory chapter. These included the similarities formed with the rest of the Starbucks crowd such as ‘high cultured’ or ‘educated’ and thus differentiating themselves from those, in their perceptions, do not visit Starbucks.

Sociability in the Ottoman coffee houses and their clientele

First of all, the artistic dimension of the Ottoman coffee house demands exclusive attention: a haven for the artists. As Hattox defines, “(...) the coffee house became something of a literary forum, poets and writers would submit their latest compositions for the assessment of a critical public. In the corners of the coffee house, there might be heated discussions on art, the sciences or literature” (as cited in Kömecoglu, 2005: 8). Another comprehensive literature written down by Caksu lists a range of “activities that took place, such as entertainment, political discussions, literary exchanges and concerts” (2007: 117).

Douglas depicts the clientele of these places; which ranged from “young people near the end of their publick Studies”; to “Cadhis out of Place, who were at Constantinople making Interest to be restor’d”, or “the Muderis, or Professors of Law, and other Sciences, and in fine, persons of all ranks...”, stating the diversity in these places (as cited in Ellis, 2008: 158). Kömecoglu also notes, one of the most distinctive features of the coffee house was its “ability to embrace different segments of society” (2005: 8). All of these sources suggest that the coffee house encompassed “people from all walks of life” (ibid), for as long as they were men. This marks the exclusionary feature of the coffee houses.

To conclude, what made the coffee house so extraordinary and novel was its introduction of a new way of socialization, which is the intermingling of strangers and building a face-to-face community attachment, and building their own meanings of the place through their uses of the place; around the dimensions of civility, exchange of ideas, making politics, pleasure and entertainment. Secondly, the coffee house was not as egalitarian as it is professed to be; as we also see in the Habermasian public space, women were excluded from this kind of sociability; the art, entertainment, civility and other functions of this ‘new’

sociability were masculine. This marks the insistently bounded dimension of the sociability in the coffee houses. What happens by the late 19th Century in the Ottoman Empire was that the Western style café in the Nouveau Art style began to be opened in Pera district and only then women began to be involved in them.

Ottoman coffee houses as alternative places

The spectrum of the activities characterizing the coffee houses, covering many forms of art, literature, musical and theatrical entertainment, communication, home comfort (the visitors interiors had to leave their shoes at the veranda), business, politics, etc. are so wide and colourful. Notice that the coffee houses' imply "multiple meanings" for those who frequent them (Kömecoglu, 2005: 15). The Ottoman coffee houses posed an 'alternative' to the desirable social order, as it is somewhere to socialize, away from religious authorities. However, let us keep in mind that we they also reinforced some of the existing distinctions in the public, most significantly, the gendered exclusions from the public space.) The coffee house was a place for gambling and musical performances, which was a direct challenge to (Islamic) piety (Kömecoglu: 2005, 16). Another 'alternative' they brought was the co – existence of people from different ranks and socio – economic statuses within the place: this was another direct challenge to the social ranking system of the empire in order to maintain the social order. Yet another alternative element was the shadow theatre which was boldly satirical about the state politics and corruption in society. Thus, the coffee houses were "places of transgression" (ibid). The incongruous character of all of these practices, such as religious mysticism (some coffee houses were owned by dervishes and were associated with religion) and "political, religious, literary, seditious, subversive, artful, theatrical, and so on", make coffee houses alternative places (ibid).

Juxtapositions of the Ottoman and British coffee houses

Reflecting on the community and sociability functions of the Ottoman coffee house; it becomes crucial to discover how the Ottoman coffee travelled to England, by consulting sources such as the Penny Magazine published in Great Britain. This section will help us juxtapose the two social territories, the Ottoman and the English, and see their commonalities.

The success story of coffee in the English circles could be partially attributed to its being a ‘sober’ and stimulating drink, different from the ale, so it was considered more suitable for engaging in business matters or political debates in the coffee house. Ellis insightfully notes: “... these early coffee-houses were associated with a certain kind of social interaction—what sociologists might call a sociability ...” (2008: 157). Besides, coffee was very easy to afford ‘a penny’, and the coffee houses offered a warm atmosphere to the visitors, who could belong to any social rank, from a clergyman to an idler. This drink brought new dimension to the British social life. As Cowan insightfully argues (2005: 20):

(...) the knowledge about them (coffee) was simply to provide plentiful opportunities for the virtuoso gentleman to show off the breadth of his learning, and indeed the genuineness of his curiosity, to his peers, we should not ignore the professions of the virtuosi themselves of their commitment to an ultimately utilitarian project for the advancement of learning and the national interest.

Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter has been largely concerned with the history and topography of the coffee houses in the Ottoman Istanbul, their functions in the Ottoman public, social and cultural life. We further developed the chapter to depict in detail the Ottoman coffee house sociability, which became both an alternative and patriarchal pastime for the Ottoman public. The coffee houses brought a new dimension to the Ottoman Istanbul public space and milieu,

since before then, the only possible ways of socializing were the religious places such as the mosques and tekkes (dervish lodges).

We have placed the British reception of the coffee houses in the 17th Century side by side the Ottoman uses and receptions, to cast a mirror on how both of the coffee houses were regarded as egalitarian public places, encompassing all ranks and statuses. We demonstrated, alternatively, the limitedness of this place; as it only allowed male sociability. In connection with this dimension, we have acknowledged the ‘alternative’ dimensions of the Ottoman coffee house; since it was where people merged with strangers, were away from religious authorities; they could socialize by musical entertainment. This historical exploration will help us further build on the public space dimension of the Ottoman coffee houses and accordingly link the contemporary Starbucks café, its sociability and public & community in Istanbul to its historical roots.

Chapter III

The coffee house as a quintessentially public space of the 18th Century, and its reflections on the Starbucks café today

Introduction

Ellis, juxtaposing on his study the London and Istanbul coffee houses, stresses the fact that the coffee houses in London paved the way into a field of “open public debate” (2008, 156). Borrowing the background content from the analysis of the Ottoman and British coffee houses in the previous chapter; this chapter will put forward how social meanings produced through the coffee house (sociability) especially in the eighteenth century cultivated it into the quintessential ‘public space’; the venue of radical – critical debate; public consensus building;

emotional bonding and recently, the community attachment which results from identification with the crowd.

The theoretical analysis of this chapter will investigate the ‘public space’ characteristic of the coffee house, by drawing on Habermas’ public sphere theory (1989) and Sennett’s sociability theory (1986) supported by community / consensus building and place attachment theories. These perspectives will help us grab the multiple meanings attributed to coffee houses: spaces for critical discussions in the eighteenth century or as spaces to meet strangers, or identification with the coffee crowd in the late modern times.

As noted earlier, one of the global effects on urban life, in our case of Istanbul, is the gentrification and urban renewal; and this dimension adds up to the already existing socio – economic differentiations in the larger public. In the ethnographic research, it will be possible to map out these differentiations: socio – economic and cultural polarizations in Istanbul; such as, the location of neighbourhoods in which people reside, the levels of cultural accumulation, and sometimes the Western or Non – Western underpinnings of people’s coffee house sociability, or openness to the global advancements by challenging the traditions. All of these dimensions are revealed in the use of the coffee house as a public space.

The coffee house as a public space with multiple meanings

The ‘coffee house’ as a public space is a cornerstone in the history of social and public life both in the Ottoman Empire and Europe. Since its outset, it has held an important role in the formation and transformation of the modern public sphere and has been the topic of a great number of scholarly discussions²⁰. It is considered to be one of the key spaces in

²⁰ See Hattox, R. (1985). *Coffee and coffeehouses: the origins of a social beverage in the Medieval Near East*, Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press | Pincus, S. (1995). Coffee Politicians Does Create: Coffeehouses and Restoration Political Culture,’ *Journal of Modern History* 6 (7), 807–34 | Smith, S. D. (1996). Accounting for Taste: British Coffee Consumption in Historical Perspective, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 27 (2), 183-

Habermas' famous account on *the public sphere* (1989); and a useful tool in understanding the urban flaneur as the 19th Century spectator and critique of modern life in Benjamin (1969) and Baudelaire (1995). For a better understanding of the significance of the coffee house as a public space; we will refer to Richard Sennett (1986). His views on the public sphere from the perspective of sociability will help us better engage with the coffee house public at large.

The transformations of the coffee house

The transformation of the traditional *coffee house* in the past three decades followed the changing urban landscape (ex. construction of boulevards) and gentrification (Laurier and Philo, 2004) in accordance with economic liberalization, transportation and cultural flows in Istanbul. By the 19th Century, new cafés had emerged in Beyoglu, Pera district (known as the most European district of Istanbul) in an attempt to copy the Art Nouveau style French cafés. One century later Istanbul met the specialty cafés, the most popular of which is the Starbucks.

This chapter will finalize the argument, stating that the transformations that coffee houses have faced (female clientele, specialty cafés, etc.) especially since the 1990's by the emergence of specialty cafés, opened up the way to establish new forms of communication in the cosmopolitan city, one of which was the sociability through the modern café. The modern café is not 'modern' anymore in the sense of hosting "radical-critical debate" (Habermas, 1989) but the "emotional bond" (Sennett, 1986) proves present in the Starbucks cafés. Besides, there are socio - economic polarizations in the way the crowd feels 'attached' or 'belong' to the coffee house crowd. These are, to remember, polarizations around the location

214 | Melton, J. V H. (2001). *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe*, Cambridge | Ellis, M. (2004). *The Coffee-House: A Cultural History*. London | Cowan, B. (2005). *The Social Life of Coffee: The Emergence of the British Coffeehouse*, Yale Univ. Press | Ellis, M. (2006). *Eighteenth-Century Coffeehouse Culture*. 4 vols., London | Özkocak, S. A. (2007). Coffeehouses: Rethinking the Public and Private in Early Modern Istanbul, *Journal of Urban History* 33 (6), 965-986 | Sajdi, D. (2008). *Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee: Leisure and Lifestyle in the Eighteenth Century*, London

of neighbourhoods in which people reside, the levels of cultural accumulation, and sometimes the Western underpinnings of people's coffee house sociability, or openness to global advancements.

The significance of the coffee house in urban public life

The coffee house appears as the venue for lengthy conversations, pleasurable activities are taking place inside them, and in today's Starbucks café it is being also used for work purposes and sometimes holding meetings here.

How significant is the coffee house as a public space? This section will briefly explain the most significant theories, related to the 'public space'. What comes first into mind, once we contemplate about the term 'public space', is the civil, communal body where people can meet directly and exchange thoughts, share ideas, etc. The public space is where total strangers meet; build direct contact with one another. The public space is also a realm in continuous transformation. In the light of this reflection, this section will refer to Certeau (1984) and Habermas (1989); to explore the significance of the coffee house in the urban life.

Uses of the public space

Rather than regarding the public space as a static formulation, as if we can only become involved or incorporated in it; I support Certeau's argument²¹ which follows as such: Human beings are social actors who can make 'spaces' by producing meanings in and through the place – so the use of the place is not mere consumption but production, too (1984). This view helps us see the coffee house not as a static entity, but as a space in the sense that Certeau demands. We can decide what this place means for us, what kind of a meaning we can get from this place, thus turning into a space. As different kinds of sociabilities in the coffee

²¹ see Certeau, M. (1984). *The Practice of Everyday Life*, (Rendall, S. F. Trans.). Berkeley: University of California Press

houses (the practices demand a certain level of agency, exemplified as satirical art forms, musical entertainments, etc) in the previous chapter have shown, they did not have a pre – designed formula, a prescription for how the coffee house would be used. It was the public, themselves, who attached to the place through their meanings.

Habermas' public sphere

The second theory we are referring to, in order to understand the significance of the coffee houses in the public; is Habermas' conceptualization of the 'public sphere' (1989). This is important for us to see the functions of the coffee house as a public space, as well as the limitations of its scope of public places.

Public sphere, for Habermas, is both a non – physical realm, a common pool, where the ideas can be shared, discussion can be led, and consequently, a certain 'openness' can be achieved; and also physical social sites, such as the coffee house. As Ellis notes, "the public, in Habermas, are either a discursive concept expressing a normative ideal, or as an actually existing social reality" (2008: 162). The public sphere in Habermas' thought is a place away from the state restrictions, in which ideas are shared freely. Habermas stressed the transformation of the public sphere from the aristocratic, elite space in which people of only certain ranks could play a role – into the egalitarian public sphere of the 18th Century.

The limitations of Habermas' public sphere

This conception of Habermas, in my view, has certain limitations. These can be listed as; the reduction of the public space to concerns of "radical – critical" engagement; that is, the lack in focus on the other socializing entertainment sites which actually also cause community engagement and patriarchal model of society. His concept disregards other significant dimensions public space, such as entertainment. Secondly, notice that women in the period

coinciding with the opening of first coffee houses in Istanbul (1554 - 55) and then in London were not welcome to these places other than in the Ottoman case as gypsy dancers and sometimes as female prostitutes in the case of England ²². Thus, Habermas' idealised public sphere disregards the effect of women on the public thought, on politics, on art and so on. This view proves very useful in exploring the so – called egalitarian structure of the coffee houses; as, they were not welcoming women. We will deal precisely with this issue at length in the following chapter, where I will investigate the exclusive publicness of adult men, both in England and the Ottoman Istanbul, and question where women are situated in a city abundant with coffee houses; how they socialize when they want to.

The limitations of Habermas' public sphere as mentioned above call for a broader conceptualization. Considering the dual function of the public sphere as political engagement and diverse sociability; another theory I will refer comes from Richard Sennett (1986).

Sennet's view of the public space

Sennett sees the public space as a realm of “sociability”. Besides, Sennett contributes with a new dimension to the understanding of public space, by arguing that public space is not communal anymore, as Orum and Neal note, but rather “private” (2009). Since our argument lies in the physical use of the public space via coffee house sociability and sense of community; we engage in Sennett's (1986) concept of sociability in *Fall of the Public Man*. As he shows; in our times the concept of community has lost its true meaning, the “stranger” has become a figure to be afraid of, and the ways in which we experience the urban life, “especially street life” is through solitude, “silence and observation”²³. A re-consideration of the Habermasian view of the public sphere as a site of political / critical engagement, debates

²² There were young male prostitutes in the case of Ottoman Istanbul

²³ <http://www.richardsennett.com/site/SENN/Templates/General.aspx?pageid=40>

and discourse formation, is needed (Kömecoglu, 2005: 6). As Hetherington demonstrates in his book, these two theories on the relationship between public space and modernity converge (2003: 13):

(...) We find in this public sphere not only the mobilization of reason in the name of a ‘just cause’ (...), but also the mobilization of emotion and desire, of the more expressive aspects of social life that have to do with personal freedom, from the clandestinely sexual to the overtly political.

In response to Habermas’ theory, according to Sennett, the public space provided a common ground, an open place for strangers to meet, leading to an emotional connection, trust and understanding between them (as cited in Hetherington: 2003, 83). Even though the ambivalence of the public opinion towards the intent behind such interactions remain intact, “in reading the outward bodily signs as signs of good intent and character, Sennett argues, a means of overcoming anxieties about the untrustworthiness of character and its intent could be achieved” (ibid).

Reflection of Habermas’ and Sennett’s theories on the Ottoman coffee houses

If we juxtapose the arguments made over *the public space* by Habermas and Senneett,. the crucial question at this juncture is, if the Ottoman subject in our context would be considered as a “bourgeois subject” through his *publicness* at a time when the coffee houses were one of the few means of sociability in the public (Karababa, 2012: 20). Karababa contends that, even if the Ottoman frequenter of the coffee house cannot be considered as such, the “critical discussion” as parallel to Habermas’ mention of the “radical – critical” nature of the public, was a feature of the coffee houses (ibid). The alternative elements of the coffee house sociability as we have mentioned elsewhere, such as the shadow theatre, formed

such discussions “because they often contained satires of everyday life and socio-political and economic conditions” (ibid).

In parallel to this argument, Özkocak refers to the Habermasian “radical-critical” view of the public in the 17th and 18th Century setting, viewing coffee houses of the Ottoman Istanbul as the preliminary places of the cultivation of “a critical public within the current regime” (2007: 975). The literary character of the *Aşık Kahvesi* (the coffee house which hosted poets and other literary figures), cultural character of the theatre and storytelling ‘meddah’ and the general political character prepared such cultivation towards a “critical public” (ibid). In the context of the Ottoman public, coffee houses fostered the formation of “new cultural communities”, which means the kind of communities as alternative to the existing religious or official communities, as an informal form of social communication and integration. Another is the egalitarian structure – the way the coffee houses were open to people from all walks of life, “even though they sat in different places” especially as it is obvious in the design of the Ottoman coffee house (ibid). The exclusion of women in this space will be dealt with further.

Coffee houses as the 17th and 18th Century Public Space (Enlightenment)

In this section we will briefly explain what stood for the “public space” in the 17th and 18th Century (Enlightenment period), so as to better appreciate the importance of the coffee houses in the public life, and to be able to link them better to late modern cafés. Orum and Neal’s (2009) mention of the public spaces help us understand how they have transformed.

To briefly summarize the significance of the coffee houses as the major public spaces of the 17th and 18th Centuries both in England and in the Ottoman Istanbul; we will start by reminding that, the coffee house, for the first time in the Ottoman society, provided a proper, enclosed public place other than the mosque, tekke (sufi lodge) or barber shop, for all ranks of

the society to meet, discuss issues ranging from gossiping to criticizing the state affairs. Apart from its apparent conversational dimension, the coffee house was also the place where the members of the trade guilds met and talked about business, and also it was the address for enjoying light entertainment and arts until late hours. The coffee house became the environment where the poets wrote their literary pieces, and exchanged ideas. The coffee house held much political significance, as it fostered freedom of expression.

In England, Orum and Neal's depiction includes the coffee houses role as places where "business transactions" were made, some which later turned into public and private institutions. For instance, they note that the act of determining - updating the "commodity prices" in "Jonathan's Coffee House" prepared the ground for the London Stock Exchange (2009).

Above we have observed that the coffee houses since their outset, were used for multiple purposes, ranging from art to updating commodity prices. We will build on our knowledge of these features of the coffee houses in order to investigate their transformation.

The transformation of the coffee house sociability- from traditional coffee house to *Starbucks café*

The Bourgeois Public Man (18th Century)

The Habermasian (1989) and Sennettian (1986) public man was dealing in "radical-critical" debates; or visiting the public spaces such as the theatre – forming an emotional bond with one another, creating a mutual trust and consensus. As Laurier (2008) notes, the coffee houses were the meeting point of the "society of letters", and sources show that some of the coffee houses in London contained post boxes so that the public opinion, conversations of the frequenters to the coffee house, as well as "letters to the editor", could be posted to these

newspapers. The Spectator was one of those newspapers, which had columns under the name of these coffee houses. This, as Laurier suggests, brought the print media of the time in close connection with “the architecture of sociability of public spaces and face to face publics” (Laurier, 2008: 166).

The Urban Flaneur (19th Century, onwards)

In the 19th Century, due to the new advancements in urban planning, opening of boulevards and hence creation of the ‘modern city’, the public space became *the street*.

Urban flaneur was the exemplary *public* figure of the time, of the streets of Paris. He was never an idler but an artist: “the painter of the modern life” (Baudelaire, 1995: 9). It would be a limited perspective, to think of the urban flaneur only as wandering on the streets, contemplating the city. The urban flaneur can also be seen in the coffee house.

What was changing in the 19th Century except for the urban scene was how the *public person* related to the project of ‘modernity’. The ideal version of ‘modern life’ was criticised by the urban flaneur, as mentioned in Baudelaire (1995). The disillusionment with the modern urban life was caused by changing working rhythms, the industrial developments and diminishing community relations. This public person of the 19th Century became alienated from this modern life. The urban flaneur challenges modern life by just walking on the streets or sitting in cafés, contemplating the city and the crowd from afar, in his solitude. The moods marking the urban flaneur’s experience of modern life was, ‘solitude’ and ‘alienation’ which started to define the Western everyday life.

Late modernity – café crowds

Late modernity became the name given to the emergence of new – age technologies, and “time and space compression” as a result as we had mentioned at length in the first

chapter of this thesis (Harvey, 1990). The new technologies and flows of goods reached a *global* dimension. What Sennett²⁴ envisioned (1986) was the retreat of the public to the private home, (due to alienation: the lack of belonging to, identification or attachment with any community) which would jeopardise the formation of a critical public & community. The coffee house, indeed, as it re-emerged in the shape of a green siren, became a lifestyle choice if anything. A new ‘gourmet café’ (Lyons, 2005: 21) trend initiated by brands such as Starbucks, made its mark in the 1990’s, with a global mobility.

As regards to this new global trend, Laurier and Philo are interested in the “coffee crowds” of the present day, which they call the “cappuccino crowds” (2004: 5). In this context Laurier and Philo refer to Blum, whose analysis concerns the modern café, cosmopolitan city and globalization. Blum sees the modern café as a “place of transport” – namely, a place which has similar characteristics with transport venues, at which you do not linger, rather wait to get served (as cited in Laurier and Philo, 2004: 5). This is a frequently used concept in the globalization debate, states Blum, exemplifying it with ““yuppies” in cafés sipping Italian coffee pretentiously” (ibid). In other words, rather than a venue for radical discussion or trust building; the modern café becomes the ‘sole’ meaning by itself for those such as the yuppies who are caught in its mechanisms. Thus Blum argues, the “traditional coffee house”, even if it is not fancy or does not offer a rich selection of specialty coffees, could be a better option for building emotional connections with the crowd (as cited in Laurier and Philo, 2004: 6).

Another contemporary writer, Iain Borden discusses over the newly emerging gourmet cafés such as Starbucks; that such cafés evolve together with the gentrification process in the cities, adding up to the formation of a middle class with a single culture (as cited Laurier and

²⁴See Boyd Tonkin’s review: <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/together-the-rituals-pleasures-and-politics-of-cooperation-by-richard-sennett-6295212.html>

Philo, 2004: 8). This perpetual motion and mobility creates a feeling of alienation, which is a condition of late modernity. Hence, there emerges a need for “belonging and attachment”, as a response to this emotional state (Laurier and Philo, 2004: 8).

It is important to note that, an attachment can be built with the late modern café (in the case of Starbucks). As our ethnographic research in Istanbul has shown, it became a refuge from the chaotic mess on the street. This person who finds the refuge he has been looking for in a Starbucks coffee house located on one of the busiest boulevards in the city, is not just ‘any’ person, ‘anyone’ from the “undifferentiated crowd” but as Laurier and Philo’s research show, he has “develop (ed) a commitment to it”, resulting from the café’s “having a particular crowd that (he) can feel he has a relationship with” (ibid). This identification with the crowd is not without its political dimensions, even if the coffee house itself is not anymore a venue for “radical – critical” debate, in the Habermasian sense (1989). This is the political dualism and the socio-economic segregation perpetuated by the ‘global’, ‘neo – liberal’ city.

Space and society interactions: coffee houses and their *uses*

At the core of my argument lie two dimensions: First of all, having inherited a centuries old tradition of coffee houses; Turkish crowd continues with some of the traditional ways of socialising in the coffee house – no matter if it is named ‘Starbucks’. Secondly, those who frequently visit Starbucks cafés definitely have a sense of identification with its crowd, whether or not they are not committed to the place. Such identification, as explained in the first chapter, makes Starbucks a less global, cosmopolitan or *open* place and more national, and traditional space. As this chapter has shown, the coffee house space might be made meaningful by heated political discussions but made so by ‘identifications’ with the place and the crowd, which in turn reveals the differentiations among the consumer segment and socio – economic polarizations in the urban city.

At this point, Dener's (2006) study tries to capture the interconnections between the urban space, Turkish consumers, and popular culture items. A detailed analysis of daily lives reveal the political and economic tensions being played out in the urban space, as he notes (2006: 73). Hence, in an attempt to understand the role of space in everyday life, he refers Michel de Certeau. Places are not fixed but they are turned into 'spaces' through people's actions in and interactions with them. This is a dynamic process: we shape and transform the place, thus turning it into a 'space'. According to Certeau, we as researchers should seek the dialectical connection between space and society through observing the daily life on the street (as cited in Dener, 2006: 73). Certeau's method, basically placing "minutiae of everyday life" and their underpinnings for a wider understanding, side by side: it is only through the *uses* of people of space, their *practices* that we can understand the economic and political underpinnings (as cited in Ward, 2000: 98).

Sense of place and place & community attachment

Interaction with *the place* invokes a set of related concepts, studied largely in the field of sociology and urban anthropology. These are categorised under "sense of place" or "place attachment". In order to understand the ways in which Turkish café patrons "made" coffee houses meaningful; a closer look at this literature will be useful.

Sense of Place, or place identity

Kyle and Chick on their article *The Social Construction of a Sense of Place*, reflect on the relationship between place and people (2007: 211). The *sense of place* encompasses "rootedness, insidedness, place identity ..." (ibid) as these concepts themselves, cover narrower attachments such as the 'identification' with a space through personal associations.

This creation of a "sense" of place, which is, rendering the place meaningful, is studied from a variety of perspectives. As Scannel and Gifford's article shows, the sense of place can

be conceptualized through the term “place identity” (2010: 3). The relationship / attachment / interaction with a place help us build understandings of our selves, put simply, of who we are. Scannell and Gifford contend that, such a “self – definition” takes place once the person finds something in this place which has a connection with her / his self such as “thoughts, values, preferences” (ibid). The distinctive features of a place (for example, “a cultural community”) can coincide with the features of the self. They call this “place-related distinctiveness” (ibid).

Another dimension in parallel to the place – self interaction is the formation of “social identity” through capturing certain commonalities within the community or through seeking a certain “distinctiveness” from the outside community (ibid). They contend that the place itself is also a denominator of “one’s distinctiveness or similarity”, which is the very cause of the sense of belonging to the place (ibid).

If we apply this theory of ‘sense of place’ to the Starbucks cafe in the present day, an affiliation with the other “intellectuals”s in the café or the middle class personae; can be explained this way. In Starbucks cafes in Istanbul; this will provide a proper analytical tool, in revealing the social and economic polarizations in the general public as we have explicated elsewhere, (for instance the recurrent differentiations in the educational levels or the locations of neighbourhoods in which they reside in, a Western / Non-Western life – styles, etc. among others) . These polarizations are embedded in the ways in which the Starbucks patrons profess their attachments to the cafe, by building similarities to the crowd (such as being as high – cultured/intellectual as them, comfortable as them, etc...) or distinctions from the outside crowd (those who do not go to Starbucks cafe).

Community attachment, or Sense of Community

Scannell and Gifford show that, sometimes the research on the interaction between the place and society was drawn into the direction of “sense of community” (2010: 4). They refer to the “community of place”, which “is more relevant (...) because it describes social ties

rooted in place, such as neighborhoods, coffee shops, or other spaces that support social interaction” (ibid). What is most important to note is, the feeling of belonging to a place in turn is reflects our belonging to the social community which inhabits it. As Scannell and Gifford put it; “part of social place bonding involves attachment to the others with whom individuals interact in their place, and part of it involves attachment to the social group that the place represents” (2010: 5). Thus, our ethnographic inquiry is going to demonstrate that, the patrons of the Starbucks cafes tend to find both the coffee house and its patrons comfortable; and explain this feeling as their reason to feel attached to here.

Conclusion

This chapter has drawn on the 17th and 18th Century coffee houses and their transformations in the 19th Century to link to the 21st Century café. The case analysis of this thesis: Starbucks cafes in today’s Istanbul, will reveal that the kind of community feeling in Habermasian or Sennettian sense might have changed face; once the conditions of globalization are considered (Giddens, 1999; 2000). We have noted that there are Starbucks patrons in our research who still use it for meeting the strangers; and feel safe among them.

However, another dimension of the Starbucks cafe sociability is that the patrons build a community attachment even if it does not cover meeting face to face. The cafe also becomes a refuge in the sense of an urban flaneur experiences, we argue, as their answers correspond with the sense of alienation resulted by Istanbul’s huddle. These functions connect to Blum’s argument that, in response to the sense rootlessness that the cosmopolitan city life casts upon us, we build an attachment with the crowd of the coffee house, which in turn provides us with a sense of belonging and enhances the identity, too.

Chapter IV

Coffee houses as gendered spaces, British and Ottoman perceptions

Introduction

Ever since their introduction to the public life in Ottoman Empire (16th Century) and in England (17th Century), coffee houses hosted male crowds and this is a strikingly taken – for – granted attribute of these places. Even though many sources signalize the egalitarian way of sociability in coffee houses, the same sources tag along their males-only attribute.

Taking account of this male – dominated structure, this chapter will be devoted to analysing this side of coffee house sociability, by further focusing on Ottoman public. The public and private domains in the Ottoman context and their implications on the coffee house sociability will be briefly explained. Following this, I will draw on the modernization in Turkey which accelerated at the end of the 19th Century, since these advancements brought new café sociability. And I will briefly mention the remaining traditional neighbourhood coffee houses ‘kıraathane’s in Istanbul, as well as all parts of Turkey, and how they maintain the all – male sociability in response to globalising trends.

Habermas’ public sphere and the gender dimension: a European perspective

Ellis (2008) presents Istanbul and London coffee houses side by side in order to explain that coffee houses since their outset, have shaped and been shaped by public life. The coffee house is not solely a way of sociability or lifestyle as it is often considered to be. It is ‘meaningful’ in many other dimensions and implicative of the structure of the society at large. It is meaningful because, as thoroughly demonstrated on the previous chapter in the Ottoman

context, it is an alternative space. Subversive elements, such as a clientele representative of various social ranks and statuses countering the existing social order; musical entertainments posing challenge to (Islamic) piety; politically bold and obscene shadow theatre representing the voice of the public at its core, the coffee house was an alternative meeting point in the Ottoman Istanbul. On the other hand, its function of male sociability expose the public life in Ottoman society and the gender roles embedded in the understanding of public life.

One of the limitations of Habermas' (1989) conceptualization of the public sphere, as noted earlier, is the inevitable exclusion of certain groups in the society from the “radical-critical” debate. In England, these include those who lack education or property with which to contribute to the discussions, and women, except for those belonging to distinctive upper classes (Ellis, 2008: 162). Women, even if they were among the audience of the theatre, or constituting the major reading public of journals, periodicals and novels published by Addison and Steele in the 18th Century (Ellis, 2008), they were not encouraged into public places such as taverns or coffee houses. This put them in a disadvantageous position, acknowledging that the venues for *radical-critical* debates in Habermasian sense (1989), *mutual trust building and emotional bonding* encounters in Sennettian sense (1986) or *face – to – face* public interaction in any sense in the 17th and largely 18th Century were often *the coffee houses*.

Exclusionary practices within the public space, and women's petition

Ellis stresses this radical critical dimension of Habermas' public sphere in order to point out “Exclusionary Practices” featuring the coffee houses (2008: 162). As far as the public role that Habermas attributes to the coffee house is concerned, the coffee house is “a kind of social intercourse that, far from presupposing equality of status, disregarded status altogether” (as cited in Ellis, 2008: 162). However; Melton's mention of the pseudo- democracy of the so – called “liberal” British state in the 17th Century reveals the ‘sexual’ dimension of the coffee

house scene: “Although visitors often commented on its social openness, there were limits to its inclusiveness. One was sexual. ... While it was not unknown for a woman to enter a London coffeehouse, the clientele seems to have been largely male.” (2004: 248). Notice Melton’s below reflection on the announcement published under the name of ‘Women’s Petition against Coffee’²⁵ by anonymous Londoner wives, bringing the perils of this male – centred social scene under the spotlight (ibid):

... The ribald, purportedly a petition by the women of London to close the city’s coffeehouses, implied as much in complaining that they kept husbands away from home. Among its other claims, the pamphlet also declared that coffee made husbands impotent and warned that men who frequented coffeehouses “run the hazard of being cuckolded by dildos.

The perception above was by no means limited to the milieu of highly concerned Londoner women. The initial responses that the coffee houses received in England and the oriental tone that these responses entailed call for close attention, since they reveal how the coffee was gendered (see Cowan, 2005: 131). In order to build our argument on the exclusionary dimension above, we will first discover this dimension.

Oriental perceptions of the coffee house and its male clientele

Cowan describes how the English virtuosi²⁶ of the 17th Century had an intellectual curiosity for science as well as exotic cultures, leading to the popularity of the Turkish coffee and more than 30 coffee houses being named as ‘Turk’s Head’ and ‘Sultan’s Head’ in London and in Oxford (2005: pp. 113 – 140). The ‘oriental’ culture of the coffee house raised concerns at its outset, as much as exotic curiosity. The “Turkish aura”, deliberately created by

²⁵ In Bakır’s article, the date is given as 1674 (2008: 146). *The Petition against Coffee*: The Rodale Press, 1954.

²⁶ An intellectual social circle within the 18th Century English society “... known as Virtuosi. In the liberal atmosphere of the coffee houses they discussed the fundamental principles of philosophy, government and religion. The discussions (...) together with literary wits and fashions enlarged the scope of 18th century mind and spirit. The Virtuosi would go the round of coffee-houses, and share with their fellows the curiosities” (Bakır, 2008: 152).

the coffee house owners themselves, was seen as the anti-thesis of “English mores”, and threatening due to “the popularity of such a luxurious, debauched, and effeminate oriental custom” (Cowan, 2005: 131).

Bearing in mind the recurrent theme of ‘effeminacy and libidinousness of Asian men’ in colonial imagination²⁷, the public was quick enough to link these oriental characterizations with ‘Turkish’ coffee house sociability: “(...) the introduction of Asian habits of luxurious consumption often signalled the beginning of the end for a hitherto vigorous and masculine polity”. (Cowan, 2005: 131). Cowan associates the luxurious consumption evoked by the coffee house sociability with the rising concerns for the “effeminizing consequences of coffeehouse culture” around the British circles²⁸ (ibid). Eventually, the ‘patriarchal’ character of the British men, who spent long hours in the Turk’s Heads was upset, since they “could be viewed as neglectful of their domestic duties as heads of households who instead spent their time gossiping like women, and a taste for novel, foreign, and exotic drinks could be likened to the common trope of a feminine appetite for the latest fashion” (ibid).

The above associations made between the Orient & luxurious consumption, luxury & effeminacy, effeminacy & coffee house sociability (men), were altogether the early attempts to forestall the popularity and expansion of the coffee houses in England.

Exclusion of women sociability from the coffee house sociability

²⁷ See Said, E. W. (1979). *Orientalism* Vintage Books | Pratt, M. L. (1992). *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London: Routledge | Stoler, A. L. (1992). Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers: European Identities and the Cultural Politics of Exclusion in Colonial Southeast Asia. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34:3, 514-551. | Stoler, A. L. 1995. *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault’s History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* Duke University Press | Proschan, F. (2002). *Eunuch Mandarins, Soldats Mamzelles, Effeminate Boys and Graceless Women: French Colonial Constructions of Vietnamese Genders. GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 8 (4)

²⁸ “Readers of Livy and other Roman Historians” (Cowan, 2005: 131)

Even if it is not possible to say that they were formally excluded from these places, women were discouraged from joining in the coffee crowd: “the regime of the coffee-house made their presence uncomfortable or untenable” (Ellis, 2008: 162). Ellis notes that, due to the general public view, a middle class woman would not choose to socialize in a coffee house if she “wished to be thought well of” (ibid). Ellis in another work stresses the masculine nature of the coffee house: “coffeehouses were almost more than anywhere else male-orientated, gendered, almost exclusively masculine” (as cited in Laurier & Philo, 2007: 272).

The interiors of the coffee house were designed in such a way that the serving boys would interact with the clientele while women who prepared the coffee were situated behind a stall by the side (Ellis, 2008: 163). Thus, while on the one hand the social status of the clientele was “disregarded”, on the other hand “status is codified in new and unperceivable forms” (ibid). “Even a space that considered itself radical precisely because it was egalitarian, nonetheless established a space which surreptitiously re-encoded forms of hierarchy (...)” (ibid). Additionally, Melton stresses that in the 18th Century coffee and tea drinking activity for women belonged to the private homes: “Women’s teas became common in English bourgeois households during this period” (2004: 248). In parallel, a closer look into the Ottoman social scene will reveal how the same masculine patterns prevailed in public spaces.

Gender and public space: Ottoman coffee houses

Public sociability made its mark on the late 16th Century Istanbul. Due to the accelerating pace of the flow of immigrants and increasing trade relations, local and international commerce spiced up the social & ethnic diversity and the “metropolitan life” of Istanbul (Özkocak, 2007: 976). However, first it should be acknowledged that many limitations impelled the public from fully participating in and enjoying the ‘metropolitan life’ and more precisely, the coffee houses. These can be listed as “property, income, literacy, and cultural background” (p. 980).

Whereas the coffee houses were highly popular institutions and welcomed a diverse clientele throughout the 17th and 18th Centuries with the introduction of ‘modern’ public institutions such as the Art Nouveau style cafés from the 19th Century onwards, a divide between “cultural communities” widened (ibid). However, this also marked the beginnings of women’s sociability in the café, in the cultural communities of the Ottoman society. We should first mention how the divide between men and women, specific to the Ottoman society and Islamic piety, was reflected in the coffee house domain.

Özkocak’s study on the public and private life in this period stresses that the socialising patterns in private quarters reveal the common gender divide in the Ottoman society (2007: 977 - 978). The design of the typical Ottoman house involved a reception room reserved exclusively for male guests, which was called the ‘selamlık’ (p. 978). Whenever there were male guests to be hosted in the Ottoman dwelling, they were hosted in this separate space. The coffee house can be considered as an extension of this gendered dimension of sociability. Because, the coffee houses became the private extension of the same masculine sociability in the public. The coffee house, having this association with the masculine selamlık, would not include women just the same way as the selamlık did not.

The 17th and 18th Century discussion of coffee houses as the public spaces and women’s exclusion from them compels us to pay close attention to the streets of the 19th Century, where the urban flaneur was born. The 19th Century public space; *the street* in its most immediate sense could be viewed from within the perspective of coffee house patron contemplating the café and the street from the interiors of the café. In this perspective, both the street and the café are public spaces to connect with, but in a brand new sense. Considering that the urban flaneur would be seen in the cafés as well as wandering on the streets of the metropolis; thus using both of the quintessential public spaces for artistic experience of the city; we will expose the overtly masculine attribute of this concept.

Nineteenth Century Public Space (the urban flâneur)

The urban flâneur as a concept has its roots in the 19th Century France (Baudelaire, 1995 & Benjamin, 1969). The term 'flâneur' is a recurrent theme in Baudelaire's 'The Painter of Modern Life' (1995: 9). The flâneur is 'the spectator and depicter of modern life' (Hartmann, 2004: 106). Thompson and Arsel view the urban flâneur as reflecting on the relationship between "people, metropolis and the coffee shop" (2004: 634). Sitting in the coffee house, yet being alone and 'alienated' from the modern life... criticizing the modern life, yet being a "player", a representative and enjoyer of its marvels... the urban flâneur by its paradoxical disposition, tells the story of the 19th Century modern 'man'.

The urban flâneur, 'the cultural figure of modernity' encompasses two interconnected experiences (Hartmann, 2004: 103). The first one is the seeking of pleasure, through the urban landscape. This marks the playfulness of the practice: according to Bauman, life for the flâneur, "the travelling player", is comparable to a "bagful of episodes, none of which is unequivocal; life as play" (as cited in Hartmann, 2004: 142). In this sense, the urban flâneur appears to be highly individualistic. He is the 'modern man' who contemplates the city in an artistic manner, alone. He is hardly in direct contact with others – this is in stark contrast with "man as actor" in Sennett's (1986) sociability and conviviality concept in public spaces, which would facilitate public consensus. Alternatively, the urban flâneur was experiencing alienation from the very modernity that marked the 18th Century coffee house as where the literary conversations and political debates would be held.

The urban flâneur with this alienated disposition represents the fundamental transformations that the modern city has been facing. As noted earlier, industrial & technological advancements, urban planning, gentrification as well as new working rhythms resulted in a more individualistic urban existence. Notice that technological advances,

introduction of urban planning such as boulevards, have made the street an appealing public space. In their words; “Along with the pedestrian-friendly boulevards, the development of iron-and-glass arcades facilitated the rise of a new kind of social activity in public spaces: *flanerie*” (Orum and Neal, 2009: 9). Weakening community attachment (resulted by the nuclear family and consumption – oriented domesticity & sociability) prepared the foundations of such alienation. The urban flaneur would stroll along the streets to experience the city, but from afar. Observing and interpreting the modern city, the flaneur is also the critic of modern life. Urban *flanerie*, in short, is a practice motivated by alienation, loneliness and the search for pleasure. This is basically why space is important as the ‘place identity’ theory has well demonstrated (Scannel & Gifford, 2010).

Hybridity in contemporary Istanbul in *modern coffee houses*

Bringing this discussion to the late modernity and contemporary times; if the traditional coffee house has transformed into more of a consumption space for less contact with strangers or less political discussions, it also became open to the female gender, with but one important dimension in the example of Istanbul: The Ottoman style coffee houses, (most of them) continue to host male clientele.

The difference between the neighbourhood coffee houses and the modern cafés are so immense now that they project the greater socio – economic polarization in the city of Istanbul. However, there are new projects emerging, which bring together the Ottoman coffee house concept with contemporary modernity. As put forward by Cızakca (n.d), the modern coffee house in Kuzguncuk neighbourhood is an example for this. It is a traditional coffeehouse in the sense of a *kahve hane*, yet it is ‘modern’ in the sense of being in line with the changing face of society. Cızakca (n.d) links this to a project designed by The Confederation of Istanbulite Artists and Guilds, named “Modern Coffeehouses”, in 2007 (n.d,

p. 6). Cızakca mentions that these coffeehouses are constructed as “exact replicas” of the Ottoman coffeehouses (ibid). Even if she coins the term ‘modern’ in order to signalize this new social condition; I would rather associate it with the modernization project of the 1920’s, and more integrally with globalization, which brought new cultural paradigms into the social life. The hybridity of the *modern coffeehouses* is summarized with the words below.

Starbucks Cafes and the women clientele

The last section of this thesis will mention the presence of women in the modern coffee house. As we have shown that the modernization project in the 1920’s brought a new cultural condition as the increasing inclusion of women in the public space as a whole; we should as well note that after the 1980’s with the social and economic globalization in the city, and thus with the opening of new consumption places such as the specialty cafes, women began to use the coffee houses as comfortably as men; and as a challenge to the masculine character of the Ottoman coffee houses and the quintessentially masculine urban flaneur; our ethnographic research points to the fact that; we can observe female patrons experiencing both the city and the cafe as a public space in their own ways.

We will move on to the last chapter, which involves the ethnographic inquiries, to further reflect this dimension. The uses and meanings of Starbucks cafe by its patrons not only reflects and reveals the polarizations and differentiations within the Istanbul public but also challenges to the male character of the urban flaneur.

CHAPTER V

An Ethnography of Istanbul’s Starbucks coffee houses:

Beyoglu: Taksim & Pera, Besiktas, Bebek and Kultur University Campus

Introduction

That is how the city concept functions, (...) the object of interventions, but also a subject continually being enriched with new attributes: simultaneously the plant and the hero of modernity

Michel de Certeau²⁹

In reference to Certeau (1984) this chapter ultimately seeks to demonstrate the link between spatiality and contemporary society; the dynamics of place identity/place attachment; the societal differentiations & socio – economic polarizations in Istanbul's social scene, and how globalization is reflected in the coffee house sociability patterns in the city.

The case study of this thesis, which is the *Starbucks coffee houses in Istanbul*, will spotlight the dimensions above. This thesis has carried out observations and 19 structured interviews, focusing on Starbucks coffee houses located in Beyoglu – Taksim Square; Beyoglu – Pera (or the Tunel area); Barbaros Boulevard in Besiktas, Bebek and Kultur University Campus Starbucks. A selection of in-depth ethnographic interviews will be presented and analysed to demonstrate the dimensions at hand.

This chapter will be concerned with the urban social scene of Istanbul and sociability in the contemporary city life; Starbucks coffee houses in specific (different kinds of *sociability* that emerge). The focus will be on the social and economic differentiations within Turkish Istanbulites. Interconnected to this is another dimension of the research, which reflects the *uses* of Starbucks, which is, diverse ways of using Starbucks coffee house by its patrons; the meanings that they attain to it, and that they produce through their practices. Notice Certeau (1984) argues that every day practices cover "the use" of groups or individuals of the place. Stressing *production* rather than mere consumption of a place, Certeau argues that a diversity of alternative meanings are produced through our every day actions, in turn undermining or

²⁹ Ward, G. (Ed.). (2000). *The Certeau Reader*. Blackwell, p. 104

challenging the supposedly ‘fixed’ nature of the place. Place, we mean, is any concrete venue as a café or a street; however space is what it becomes once people act on it.

Drawing on the ethnographic data, this chapter will ultimately present significant social dimensions & patterns that have emerged out of the practices of Turkish Istanbulites in Starbucks cafés, as social and public scenes. The research argues that, Starbucks café is used by the patrons as a public space both for the purposes of meeting strangers; socializing, or in the sense of the urban flaneur as a way of criticizing the modern life and as a refuge from it. This public space is an alternative way of sociability, as it is manifest in the informants’ answers that it is a comfortable and free place, different from other venues. The Starbucks café is where the cultural, neighbourhood and financial differentiations are professed from others and it is where the place attachment – similarities with other Starbucks patrons is achieved. In order to locate our data in the urban fabric of Istanbul, we will present information on the major Starbucks coffee houses that this research has taken place.

Situating Starbucks coffee houses in Istanbul urban scene

Starbucks in Beyoglu, Pera/Tunel Area (European Side)

This Starbucks café is located on the Istiklal Avenue, on a spot close to the ‘Tunel’ quarter; the surroundings of the Galata Tower overlooking the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus. (This Starbucks café has a smaller space than the Starbucks close to the Square.)

Pera has been the *most European* quarter³⁰ in Istanbul, since it was the main trading port of Constantinople where Genoese, Venetian, French, English, etc... merchants dealt with trade³¹ and where embassies were located. Bartu, in her article “Who Owns the Old

³⁰ See Figure 5, the picture of the stairway to the residential area of Pera (1999: 146)

³¹ See Eldem et al., (1999): 135 – 206.

Quarters?” addresses the “contestations (...) over the preservation and revitalization of the first ‘Europeanized’ quarter of the city, Pera / Beyoglu” (1999: 32). Referring to its Ottoman perception, Pera was the embodiment of the “Frankish” Istanbul and “by the 19th Century, it had become the financial and entertainment centre of the city” (p. 33). She views Pera from the perspective of the Ottoman endeavours to Westernize Istanbul in the 19th Century. Being the “experimental area for urban reform”, Pera “became the most Europeanized quarter of the city, dominated by symbols of modern living such as theatres, hotels, department stores and multi-storey apartment buildings” (ibid). Bartu further mentions the popular wave of nostalgia for Beyoglu, as the *Grande rue de Pera* of the 19th Century (1999: 37). An old inhabitant of Pera perfectly reflects this nostalgia (as cited in Bartu, 1999: 37):

[T]hese were places like the cafés in Paris, where people would sit and talk with friends, hold meetings, and make appointments. These new cafés in Beyoglu are trying to recreate this era, but they are just not the same, the spirit is lacking. I would like to live back in the golden days of Pera...

Overall, Pera has been explored from the perspective of a 17th Century correspondence which characterized it as quintessentially European; and of the 19th Century Ottoman endeavours to make it an emblem of the *Western* Istanbul. This nostalgia prevailed in such a way that, renewals & gentrification in this area in the 1990’s turned it into the most popular and touristic spectacle of Istanbul. While some are nostalgic for Pera’s “golden” days (as cited in Bartu, 1999: 37); our ethnographic research has shown that the patrons of the Starbucks

Eldem et al. presents a day of Dominique Fonetty, the second interpreter of the French Embassy in Constantinople, responsible for translating for merchants in the Levant Company. This memoir is a compilation of two correspondences made in 1693, retracted from the “Archives de la Chambre de Commerce de Marseille” (1999:142). Pera is depicted in this memoir, as follows (p. 144):

... Fonetty couldn’t help but wonder at the diversity of peoples gravitating to the commercial heart of Galata. (...) adventurers didn’t have any real interest in that part of the city ... maybe because it looked so much like any other port of the Mediterranean- Venice, Genova. The only thing they marvelled at in Galata was the fact that with its churches, its processions, and its population of foreign merchants and sailors, it looked like a haven for Christians: in a sense, it was too familiar to be true and too cosmopolitan to be oriental...

café here view this area today as the most intellectual part of Istanbul. Starbucks Pera's clientele have a strong identification with this café, global yet highly symbolic of the area.

Consumer Practices

In the duration my observation, a number of customers are seen sitting alone, either reading a magazine, running through an Istanbul city guide, spending time on their laptops, or high – tech mobile phones, cameras, i-pods, etc. or studying, while sometimes sipping their coffee. (I count 8 customers sitting alone) It is very rare for anyone to take a coffee and immediately leave the place. During this observation, there happened to be only two people coming for a coffee-to-go. People seem to be enjoying the place in their own ways. There are three men right by the window in the entrance, and they seem to be café flaneurs; they are occupied with watching the street as a spectacle.

Consumer Profile

There are people, especially men in business suits at the entrance, which most probably means, they work somewhere nearby and have come here right after work. There are only a few high – school students, and apart from them the age is over 20 among the customers- the age average is 30. The place is highly diverse in terms of gender (I count 14 females and 22 males) and nationality – foreigners and tourists are seen frequently, either alone or in groups.

Starbucks in Beyoglu, Taksim Square (European Side)

Taksim Boulevard area, at the centre of which lies the famous Taksim Square, is the local transportation centre of Istanbul, the point of intersection of the subway connecting Tunel (Galata) area to northern districts, bus / minibus lines of European and Asian sides, the tramline connecting the Square to the Tunel area, the funicular line connecting the Square to Kabatas Port. This part of the Istiklal Avenue is more bustling than the Pera (Tunel) area. This

space is occupied with people from diverse socio – economic statuses, visiting here for the purposes of strolling on the Istiklal Avenue (urban flanerier), entertaining, eating out or local transportation. For the reasons above, this Starbucks café has one of the biggest consumption spaces among others in Istanbul. It has two floors and a mezzanine floor. There are a lot of comfortable couches by the windows overseeing the street.

Consumer Practices

People in this Starbucks café seem to be more in groups and conversation is the underlining activity. However, I observe that on the mezzanine floor, there are 7 people sitting alone, as well as 5 others on the 2nd floor. Most of them are observed studying or spending time on lap tops. It is rare if any, when someone comes for a coffee-to-go. The café is designed in a way to observe the street crowd, making this café a perfect place for spectacle. Those sitting in the entrance tend to watch the street.

Consumer Profile

The place is very crowded, the age average is 25. There are a few foreigners here; the majority of the customers are Turkish. There is however a greater diversity, both in the practices, uses and etiquette of the customers. We can observe the ‘hips’, or the seemingly café flaneurs, student groups, and business people.

Starbucks on the Barbarossa Boulevard, Besiktas (European Side)

This Starbucks café is situated on the boulevard which leads to the Barbarossa Hayrettin Pasha Port (and the Besiktas Port). It is located in one of the busiest boulevards in Istanbul: the Barbarossa Boulevard. This boulevard connects Levent & Gayrettepe with Besiktas Coast: the former are the business districts of Istanbul adjacent to one another, with skyscrapers housing the headquarters of the major banks such as Yapı Kredi, Garanti Bank, Is Bank,

among other big corporations. In the whereabouts there are universities such as Yıldız Technical; Istanbul Technical University and Mimar Sinan Faculty of Fine Arts as public universities and Bahcesehir as a private university. This is the district where the middle class professionals, especially on the media and advertising sector as well as university students, and older residents / landlords live side by side. Besiktas is widely known as one of the most enlightened ‘aydın’ districts of Istanbul³², a perception which is connected with artistic and intellectual activities and a strong identification with Atatürk modernity.

On the poster on one side of the walls inside of this Starbucks café is written in Turkish: “The only place for you to think, to create, to study, to work and to have fun... welcome to Starbucks”. There are sixteen small drawings on the walls and many comfortable couches by the wall opposite the service area as well as the large window at the entrance, both interiors and exteriors. Around 7 tables at the entrance have couches. It has two floors, and on the second floor there is the balcony and in the interiors is one big study table designed for lap top users.

Consumer Practices

Customers here, just as the ones in Beyoglu: Taksim and Pera, seem to be sitting for a while and I observe no one takes coffee and leaves. On the second floor the big table is crowded with people studying on laptops and those other than the group of friends seem not to be interacting with each other. The practices are mainly; spending time on lap top, studying, chatting, reading books/newspapers, accompanied by drinking coffee and eating cakes.

³² Notice the exhibition of Ataturk pictures over the city walls all along the coastal road, from the Dolmabahce Palace to the Ciragan Palace (all the way from Tophane to the Besiktas Port, reaching up further to the north – Ortakoy area)

Consumer Profile

In this Starbucks on the 1st floor, are seen 4 of those who sit alone, three of them male and the second floor there are 9 of those alone; all of whom are male. There some seemingly university students. In terms of the socio – economic structure, most of the clientele are either middle class professionals who have visited this place after work; or the type of café flâneurs those of whom have come here for intellectual activities such as reading. Sometimes English & IT teachers from the adjacent language courses are observed to spend time here.

Empirical Inquiries

a) Sociability in the urban public scene of Istanbul and its ‘Starbucksian’

underpinnings

b) Similarities between the Starbucks patrons; differentiations from the outsiders

In this section, a set of questions have been directed to the informants in the Starbucks cafés in Beyoglu Pera / Taksim; Besiktas, Bebek, Kultur University and Capacity Shopping Mall/Bakırkoy in Istanbul. The research goal is to observe; a) how the café patrons identify with the city and experience social life; b) how global effects in the city (which the thesis argues: see Chapter 1) have altered the traditional (Ottoman) coffee house sociability & function of the coffee house as a public space. Answers provided by the informants to the last two questions will reveal how they *use* Starbucks, and how they view the link between the Starbucks sociability and the part of the society who go there.

- 1) *a. How do you view the everyday social life / urban scene in Istanbul? / b. How do you view socializing in Istanbul (Starbucks)?*
- 2) *What does it mean for you to be a Turkish Istanbulite?*
- 3) *How would you define those who go to Starbucks?*
- 4) *How would you define those who do not go to Starbucks?*

The urban café flaneur – “sociability via being alone” & “the café as a refuge”

A selection of informants in the interviews in Pera, Taksim, Barbarossa, Campus, Bebek and Bakirkoy has professed that *Starbucks* coffee house is some kind of a ‘refuge’ for them, during the course of time they spend in this place. They prefer to come here alone because according to them, the atmosphere of this café helps concentrate better to their inner thoughts; or to their books. They should be also viewed as using the Starbucks café as a public space, as this becomes a way of sociability and interacting with others even if not in the sense of direct conversation/bonding. The underlying meanings attributed to the coffee house space: *Comfort, safety, refuge, peace and quiet, homeliness, positive energy, different psychology...*

Venue a. Starbucks Beyoglu, Pera

Mehmet (1) – male, 23, Studying Bachelors in Law, Residence: Bahcelievler (18th April, 2012)

(Once a week): He goes to Starbucks to think; to solve an issue. He feels *safe and comfortable* because of the “perfect” atmosphere.

Venue b. Starbucks Beyoglu, Taksim Square

Orhan (3) – male, 31, High school graduate; works as a sports coach, Residence: Fatih (18th April, 2012)

(At least 4 days a week) Starbucks is a *comfortable and safe place* (because) people who choose Starbucks behave according to a certain code of conduct – *nobody interferes with others. It is a homely atmosphere ...* (it is a good venue to study)

Ugur (4) – 32, male, High school drop-out, works as a jeweller / runs a dance club; Residence: Fatih (18th April, 2012)

(5 days a week) Ugur is in love with Istanbul. He sometimes just finds himself in Starbucks... He feels *comfortable* here because of the *peace and quiet* (he reads his books here).

Venue c. Starbucks on the Barbarossa Boulevard, Besiktas

Mehmet (5) – 28, male, High School Graduate, Works as a hairdresser, Residence: Avcılar (19th April, 2012) Observation Note: He is wearing a T-shirt on which reads: “Take me to the Strippers”

(*At least once a week*) Mehmet views Starbucks *just like home*; and the couches *comfortable*. He always comes to Starbucks *alone*, and this is for him the place to *hide from the hullabaloo* outside.

“I like the metropolitan life. I like crowded places. I am not looking for a reason, I like seeing those people around...”

A – Why do you like crowded places?

“I can concentrate better when I ‘m outside. You get bored at home after a while, yet here you can focus. I come here alone. Starbucks could be a refuge for me. I prefer sitting on some corner. (He shows where he has placed his coffee cup, explaining) The reason why my cup is by the side of my couch is because I don’t want anybody interfering with me. (Meaning; the baristas coming to his table) This is my corner, I have identified with this place...”

A – Then, do you find socializing here ‘pleasurable’?

“It depends on the kind of mood you want to be in. (repeats) I like loneliness here. I want to be just by myself”.

We could conclude that Mehmet is a café flaneur: he is bored with the dullness of modern life in a sense, and seeks the coffee house sociability, escaping from the confusion outside.

Remi (6) – 23, male, Studying Business Administration Bachelors, Works as a Stock Analyst / Specialist; Residence: Besiktas (19th April, 2012)

(*Every weekday*) “(Istanbul) is to feel the sea breeze and the heat of the sun, while you are getting off the boat...” “Starbucks could be a refuge. Those who come here feel/act *comfortably*. Here no one interferes with others...”

Remi comes to Starbucks alone to work, but socializes, he says, even if he hasn’t intended to. “For me ‘socializing’ is not being with people, but we socialize thanks to books”

He likes observing people for as long as he is spending time here. He says;

“Even if I do not mingle with people, they mingle with me”. He adds: “We all are “I” but pieces of us are in others; we just don’t want to understand each other”

Sarp (7) – 25, male, Studying Bachelors in Information Technologies; Residence: Ulus, Etiler (19th April, 2012)

(*Once a week*) He thinks that Starbucks has a positive energy/ambiance.

“(Socializing in Starbucks) reflects a quite different way of life than that which you experience somewhere else when you go outside”.

He refers to the ‘alienation with the modern urban life’ by making this point; views the Starbucksian socializing as an alternative to the city life with a transformative function.

“(Starbucks) moves you away from the psychology that you have had while you were walking from the port up to here. It is fascinating... This place is something else”.

Tugrul (8) – 24, male, Studying Bachelors in Information Technologies; Residence: Bakırkoy (19th April, 2012)

(at least 6 days a week) comes to Starbucks mostly alone, to be in peace and quiet, (to read his book). “This is an exception”, he notes: this time he is sitting with his friend. “I am comfortable with the crowd ‘Kalabalık gözüme batmaz’. I do not come here to interact with people, but to be all by myself...”

Cansu (19) – 23, female, Studying Bachelors in Public Administration, Works at Customs Agency; Residence: Acıbadem (23rd April, 2012)

(Once a week / used to go three days a week) “Everybody is comfortable here. I can observe their free environment, and this is reflected on their attitudes. They are not comfortable because of the venue; they are in this venue because they are comfortable”.

Venue d. Kultur University Campus Starbucks

Fuat (11) – 25, male, Studying Bachelors in Civil Engineering, Residence: Beykoz & Atakoy (20th April, 2012)

“I observe the feeling of being lost, prevailing among the young segment.” (He refers to the rootlessness, the lack of community attachment, brought about by the modern city life and young segment has been the first to be affected by the forces of globalization.)

Venue e. Starbucks at Bebek Coast, Etiler District

Vedat (13) - 31, Graduate of Business Administration, Experienced software development expert;

Residence: Goztepe (22nd April, 2012)

“I could linger in Starbucks, say, if I have free time, for 2 – 3 hours. Starbucks cafés in Istanbul do whatever it takes for you to spend time here.”

Venue f. Starbucks at Capacity Shopping Mall, Bakırkoy

Tugce (16) – 26, female, Studying Bachelors in Architecture, Residence: Bakırkoy (23rd April, 2012)

a) The lack of public spaces as in the earlier times... an outcome of urban modernity

(Rarely) “You cannot find many public spaces (in Istanbul). Or nowadays these have become the shopping malls - the symbols of capitalism. The other public spaces are unsafe ‘tekinsiz’. But not everybody can benefit from them (public spaces). There is a circumscription and surveillance. What people understand from sociability is becoming the shopping malls.”

b) Individualism in the society, as a result of diminishing community structure – resonates with the nostalgia for a time, as Sennett (1986) notes, where community and consensus was built through coffee house sociability, which was crucial for relieving the distrust in society:

Nowadays there is *individualism*. In the past the community was important but now as a result of the distrust, people socialize in small groups / circles. The feeling of community has been minimized by the urban life. The social memory adapts to the new circumstances and thus exposed to erosion”. ... The nuclear family; deteriorating neighbour relations... We are now in the age of speed. People have become more and more withdrawn, confined to their private lodgings. Also the idea of sustaining yourself...

Analysis

The selection of the ethnographic research above concretizes what has been discussed in the third chapter in relation to the coffee house as a public space. While especially in the 18th Century, coffee houses assumed such a role as inviting and encouraging radical – critical debate, sociability through bonding with strangers and consensus building; the 19th Century developments brought in the use of the street as a public space – the whole city as a spectacle; as the reflection of urban modernity. This urban modernity also created the feeling of

alienation (from this modern life: as a result of, for instance, the changing work rhythms and other swift changes in social life such as the nuclear family, changing neighbour relations).

These two dimensions of the 19th Century public space are embodied in the urban flaneur, (as a concept/actor and as a social practice: *flanerie*). The urban flaneur, while wandering on the boulevards and sitting in the café, experiences the urban modern life. The café maintains its public space dimension; however, this time the sociability is watching the city (from the windows of the café) as a spectacle and people in the coffee house from afar; without getting involved; and always alone. Informants especially mentioned that “nobody interferes with others”, or comfortable people visit frequent the café, this is why they feel so comfortable and safe.

On a broader level, use of the modern café as a public space, in ways similar to and different from the Ottoman coffee house³³, and in a way different from the global consumption place which Starbucks café generally is supposed to be in today’s Istanbul, we demonstrate that there are necessarily local and/or individual meanings attributed to Starbucks cafés. This is how globalization has heterogenizing dimension.

Urban flaneurs’ view of the urban life – ‘Istanbul as a mixture, confusion...’

“I am comfortable with the crowd. ‘Kalabalık gozume batmaz’” (Tugrul, Int. 8)

“Let it stay the way it is” (Cansu, Int. 19)

A selection of the answers provided below to the question; “*How do you view the everyday social life / urban scene in Istanbul? / How do you view socializing in Istanbul?*” have demonstrated that patrons of Starbucks café view the urban life in Istanbul as *confusion, toughness, or mixture, diversity, cosmopolitan or hybrid, in-between, a passageway...*

³³ See Chapter III, Transformation of the coffee house

This research contends that these reflect the urban life in Istanbul from within the informants' perspectives and their very perceptions have an impact on their sociability. Could it be that they are trying to find a meaning in the coffee house, or find themselves, all among this confusion? Could we assert for this very reason, that globalization through immigrations and other socio – economic transformations; is making the city even more confusing rather than homogenizing it? The city could be viewed as *confusing* because the luxurious life – styles, the mobile actors in the late modern city as Bauman (1998) notes, and those in the outer suburbs with little opportunity for mobilizing or *globalizing*, create confusion on the street as the informants have addressed. The huddle that Mehmet mentions is exactly this: the view of 'Apacis' (a sub-culture of the immigrant youth in Istanbul) and the elite professionals side by side. One of the recurrent themes in the answers is *the transformations* the urban scene has been exposed to. Even if these are not explored by the informants, as the first chapter of this thesis has demonstrated, it is directly linked with the economic globalization.

Starbucks Beyoglu, Pera

“(It is) *cosmopolitan, on the extremes*. I cannot make sense of the things I see in Beyoglu”.,

A – How come?

“Huddle, confusion... people of all sorts, different cultures... Istanbul is about adaptation, (but also) about being somewhere in between”. (Mehmet, Interviewee 1)

Starbucks Barbarossa Boulevard

“I think Istanbul is a mixture, (huddle) and no one has patience for one another. ... Some time ago I walked through Nisantasi in the morning. Such peace and tranquillity... everyone is elite. I could say, it is like a cage – fixed. “It” (stresses the luxurious ‘Other’) is outside our frame. To balance this differentiation might cause some negative outcomes, societal conflicts. Let it stay the way it is” (Cansu, Int. 19).

While addressing everyday life in Istanbul and its underpinning, Suha (Int.2) points to the changing life – styles as a result of the urban social scene, or more broadly, globalization:

“Confusion, reaching out for adaptation, transformation / growing different ‘başkalaşmak’, alienation, losing yourself... You either get lost in the city, or find your own way through.

Starbucks Beyoglu, Taksim Square

Orhan (Int. 3) notes, in a similar consciousness as Suha’s about the changing urban social scene of Istanbul, that the ‘city life’ should not *transform* someone’s identity and also stresses the distrust, which Sennett (1986) envisioned, would grow along with modern life:

“He should not estrange himself ‘özbenligi degismemeli’” “Istanbul is a tough city, full of difficulties, people are disrespectful, and distrustful towards each other... (However) Istanbul is freedom. ... Starbucks is neither Istanbul, nor Europe. It is a unique venue. You cannot find this character in any other café...”

Tugce’s (Int. 16) reflects the link between the economic globalization and cultural change:

The culture that we look up to is the US or European culture; this transformation is what I am experiencing. I see my identity in a process of formation...

Informants such as Nafiz and Fuat address to the above issue: confusion / cosmopolitanism of the city of Istanbul (and the global forces), by somehow building a dichotomy between the modern vs. not so modern or the lost local culture vs. hybridity / cultural degeneration. The reason why it mattered to them – those who appreciate Van Gogh or those who truly listen to Jazz music – could be linked to the same reasons for which they preferred Starbucks café, not somewhere else, which is the emblem of the modern and global coffee house.

Venue c. Starbucks on Barbarossa Boulevard, Besiktas

Even though Nafiz (Int. 14) makes it clear during the interview that he does not think he is modern, immediately adds that this is connected with the environment he has been raised in, and by refusing to reconcile Istanbul’s geography with modernity; he actually sees the coffee house as an antithesis to the conditions outside:

“Istanbul is very rich in terms of culture and arts. Van Gogh (referring to the Van Gogh Exhibition taking place in Istanbul at that moment) means a lot to me, but not to some others. In order to be ‘modern’ you need to have a modern geography”

In a quite similar fashion, Remi builds a dichotomy between the Enlightened vs. not Enlightened, or the Turkish identity vs. the European identity, trying to be achieved through Starbucks sociability:

“(Our people) are somewhere in between – haven’t fulfilled the Enlightenment fully – maybe because s/he feels European here, can’t find anywhere else to make her/him feel this way... S/he experiences an ego satisfaction: Enlightened vs. not Enlightened. This mini space is a summary of the Istanbul middle class community”. (Remi, Int. 6)

Kultur University Starbucks

“If we put aside the architectural features, I don’t think that by any means Istanbul reflects itself culturally. Istanbul is heading to a direction of lack of culture, a hybridity ... We have a role in the cultural degeneration”.

“I think someone who would say “Anything suits me” is a cliché. If s/he listens both to jazz and arabesk, this means s/he is not really familiar with either one of them.” (Fuat, Int. 11)

“To Westernize, for me, is to live in a civilized ‘uygar’ way. The ‘West’ means to respect a diversity of ideas” (with reference to the Starbucks sociability)” (Ismail, Int. 9 – 24, male, Studying bachelors in Civil Engineering, Residence: Atakoy; 20th April, 2012)

Orkun (Int.18) mentions that he visits the traditional coffee houses instead:

“Coffee houses are patriarchal places. Men talk, a little bit of politics, etc... It is an alternative place to be discharged. You are more *comfortable* there, maybe that’s why. I drop by the *kahve hane* every day, I know that culture”. (25, male, Studying Bachelors in Public Administration, Residence: Bahcelievler; 23rd April, 2012)

The answers below have the *global city* or *cosmopolitan city* as their leitmotif, *diversity*, *complexity*, and for this very reason Istanbul becomes a heterogeneous landscape:

Starbucks at Capacity Shopping Mall, Bakırköy

“Istanbul is a global city, encompasses cultural diversities. It represents all the extremes...”
(Ezgi, Int. 15 – 21, female, Studying Bachelors in Law, Residence: Ataköy; 23rd April, 2012)

“Istanbul is striving for becoming global, and takes great pains to be able to achieve this. Istanbul a bigger mosaic... is a very complex city... a metropolis ... (then changes her mind)
“Istanbul is not a metropolis, it is a mess” (Tugce, Int. 16).

“Only those points, for example, Eminönü, Cihangir, etc... are ‘Istanbul’. It bridges two continents, it is a passageway. You can find all the segments of the society...” (Fatih, Int. 10).

“We cannot regard Istanbul as a homogenous landscape; it is not a monotype ‘tek tip’”
(Orkun, Int. 18)

A – If it not a homogenous landscape, of what sort is it?

“Monotypes can cause disparities; (but) for instance it is good for those who come from different geographies to understand each other; to intermingle (refers to different regions)”

Starbucks at Bebek Coast, Etiler District

“Istanbul is very complex because there are many people from the outer regions.” (Sahika, Int. 12 – 26, female, Graduate of ELT, Works as an English Instructor, Residence: Goztepe; 22nd April, 2012)

“Istanbul is a very chaotic city, very cosmopolitan. The urban culture – everybody can find the culture they are looking for. Istanbul is a global, at the same time a bridge city. (Vedat, Int. 13)

Starbucks on Barbarossa Boulevard

“(In Istanbul there are) cultural conflicts – (and for this reason) segmentations ‘gruplasmalar’:
such a mixture ...” (Nafiz, Int. 14)

Analysis

The above section of the ethnographic research has demonstrated that a selection of Starbucks patrons *use* the café for socialising ‘alone’: they feel a connection with their surroundings; sometimes watch other people in the café, or just read books, and definitely feel

comfortable among them. The café at the same time becomes a refuge for them, from the huddle of the city life, the confusion, the mess, etc... Some of the informants mention the transformation that the city has faced, and its outcomes as narrowing the scope of the public spaces; people becoming more and more individualistic, confined to shopping malls or home.

Hence we could build a hypothesis that, as actors of this modern social life, the patrons of the Starbucks cafés find comfortable sociability in the coffee house as they experience alienation from the chaotic urban scene (they call it a “huddle” or “a complex city”, “a tough city”, “a confusing city”, “a chaotic city”). This is played out in the dichotomies they have created such as the social conflicts, as well as cultural, between the Nisantasi/Etiler crowd (the most luxurious district in Istanbul) and the *others* or the way Istanbul is viewed, even if global, a city *in between*. This mentioning resonates with two dimensions: first of all, as the analysis above demonstrates; it is a city of disparate life-styles, with a huge gap between the middle classes and those in the peripheries of the city; socially and spatially (neighbourhood). Secondly, this in between condition refers to the European vs. Anatolian dictotomy, as the informants contend that Istanbul is in a kind of an identity crisis; as Tugce has noted, Istanbul is taking great pains to achieve globalization. Finally, informants seek to build identification with the Starbucks coffee house its milieu, in order to feel part of this modernity.

Place attachment / Place identity: Social similarities and similar sociabilities

This study has clearly captured that most interviewees’ *use* the coffee house as a public space and specifically in our case; of Starbucks café, is in some cases possibly emotional bonding, trust building or meeting / bonding with strangers (as exemplified in the 18th Century coffee house as a public space, Sennett, 1986) but more often as attachment to /

identification with³⁴ the coffee house crowd of the cosmopolitan city, without really bonding with them in the sense of a community. While the former community building can be seen as a continuation of the Ottoman coffee house sociability; as some of the informants have nostalgically referred to this period; the latter brings the discussion into the global city of today, showing clearly how new attachments have been formed with the consumption space. This is the seeking of identity formation, through the similarities of the patron with the rest of the coffee house crowd, for instance, ‘high culture’.

Upon reading a selection of the informants’ perceptions and observations in response to the question: *How do you view those who frequently go to Starbucks?* a specific pattern emerges: they see Starbucks patrons either as “intellectuals”, “university students”, “professionals”, “middle and upper middle class”, “high – cultured people” “elites” or “those who understand Starbucks”, and so on; and the community feeling differs from really meeting strangers, to feeling attached to the café crowd through imagined similarities as above.

Starbucks in Beyoglu, Pera

Mehmet (Int. 1) feels “privileged” while he is out in Starbucks: “There is the feeling of attachment (community) – among frequenters of Starbucks – it is seen that way from the outside. It is a high quality place; just anybody can’t come here...”

Süha (Int. 2) uses Starbucks as “a third space”, he says, just as those in the US who use Starbucks space for business purposes. He views this place as an “elite place”.

³⁴ See: Scannell L. & Gifford, R. (2010). Defining place attachment: A tripartite organizing framework. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*. 30, 1–10

Starbucks in Beyoglu, Taksim Square

Orhan (Int. 3) has conversations with tourists in Starbucks whenever there is chance and views Starbucks café just as the 18th Century coffee house; the “community feeling”. Ugur too believes that people are trustworthy here:

“There is a community feeling – people help each other – no one is arrogant. One should adapt to what the social scene requires”.

“There is a certain freedom here (Starbucks) in parenthesis. I trust in people here. You build better communication with others” (Ugur, Int. 4) “”.

Starbucks on Barbaros Boulevard, Besiktas

““Because it is hip, whoever comes here asserts: ‘I am more intellectual than you are’. They come for the etiquette – try to act out by coming to Starbucks. (Or) they have already convinced themselves (that they are Western, hip) In Tunel (Pera) they are more intellectual, as well as Besiktas but in Beyoglu they try to be more ‘hip’ and to socialize.. (Mehmet, Int. 5)

Mehmet clearly asserts himself as someone who understands Starbucks and adds: “We could say I am ‘cosmopolitan: “Even if *others* come, this is not to acknowledge or to understand here”

“People can identify with Starbucks. (‘Starbucks benliği’ – Starbucks identity, as he calls it) similar ways of sitting, manners, drinking the coffee... There is an admiration for comfort... It is to be somewhere in between”.

Regarding the meanings Remi attributes to Starbucks; this place identity apparently corresponds to similarities between the Starbucks customers and according to him:

“This is Starbucks University – a second university for some... Those who are trying to create a sense of ‘self’: those who have lost themselves trying to be someone”.

“70 percent is the high school and university students. They desire to imitate this life style. Apart from this, people come to read books, who have understood Starbucks. Patrons here are high – cultured. You cannot see frivolous / idle people here. Those with a certain world view, broad horizons and who know how to behave in public, would come here (Sarp, Int. 7).

“People here are high – cultured (who frequent Starbucks), they are not of the type who will intimidate you. The customer segment of Starbucks makes you feel comfortable” (Tugrul, Int. 8).

Cansu builds on the emotional bonding feature of Starbucks:

“I think the friendliness of Starbucks has made it so popular. Patrons here are open to chatting with others (she refers to coffee house sociability, in the sense of meeting strangers) and to novelties. We can communicate easily – we don’t expect being spoken sharply”.

Kultur University Starbucks

Fuat (Int. 11) mentions his cultural awareness and identity; in connection with the Starbucks café: “To know the music you are listening to... the coffee you are drinking... I am a fan of Cuba – I admire ethnic sounds, jazz, 80’s; French, Italian, English jazz albums”.

His further answer corresponds to place identity theory:

“The place where you hang out reveals your identity. Starbucks is the favourite spot of the new generation. A place identity has been formed. It is the spot of those who can culturally afford it”.

Starbucks on Barbarossa Boulevard, Besiktas

According to Nafiz (Int. 14), some people have an obsession with hanging out in Starbucks. He refers to this modern phenomenon: “If only people had hobbies, not obsessions!”. He is highly critical about the Starbucks myth – as he calls it. Because there are no other alternatives for better tasting coffee, he says he prefers here. He thinks that socializing in Starbucks café is a *futile way of being a part of public space*. “We form our identities by “othering” process.” He says he has never had such hung-up about belonging to the West.

“Some people try to group round the Starbucks coffee culture. Those who come to Starbucks in Besiktas – from the universities around – are self – assertive; they’re after a life they don’t have, they try to pose. It is unique to here (Besiktas): it’s filled with idle people.”

“I think Starbucks has combined the kind of beverages that the middle & upper class – high cultured, social – people prefer” (Cansu, Int. 19).

Starbucks at Capacity Shopping Mall, Bakırköy

“People are detached from politics, social and cultural life. They have neither a political viewpoint, nor a life style. Topics raised in Starbucks cafés – it’s only showing off of fake intellectuals ‘entel gorunumlu’; who try to imitate the intellectuals: to assert themselves; saying “I’m just like you”. These people don’t have a standing, they try to find who they are by imitating others; they are not aware of anything. In my view they are shallow.” (Ezgi, Int.15).

“The high income segment... (Focusing on the similarities between the middle classes) I think the “tiki” perception (the local term used for describing the ‘hip’ or ‘yuppie’ trend) remains. It is so pervasive in the society. It is hard now to categorize these people. (But) Starbucks has a certain prestige.” (Tugce, Int. 16).

“People who have no purposes... etiquette... I do not think going to Starbucks would bring in something new, culturally – “Idlers – who have nothing else to do but wander around... those who think of nothing else... who try to imitate others, in the mood of “let’s experience this atmosphere, too!” Our society tries to show off – we have a swagger. Holding that cup in her / his hands boosts the self – esteem – her/his posture changes abruptly.” (Kerem, Int. 17).

Starbucks at Bebek Coast, Etiler District

“I am not a Starbucks person, and I don’t think I will be” (Sahika, Int. 12).

Sahika beautifully demonstrates the place identity dimension, by building a category as “Starbucks person” and she explains this further:

“In the school I observe – when s/he comes with that cup or the thermos (refers to the Starbucks cup) it is like it brings her/him prestige... It is, first of all, fashionable ...”

Above observations of the *use* of the Starbucks café, which is not solely limited to drinking Café Latte or eating muffins, hitherto has shown that they also identify themselves with its crowd. Informants have built similarities with other patrons here, such as being ‘high – cultured’ or ‘really understanding Starbucks’, “me and them”: we can call it. Hence, through certain practices and identifications; we realize that a place identity is being formed as well as place attachment.

This opens up the space for another significant character of the coffee house: the so – called egalitarian sociability. We had noted that, even if people from a diversity of social statuses frequented the coffee houses in Ottoman Istanbul or London; those who could not afford it, who had lacked the educational background to join the political debates, or women, were almost always excluded. These kinds of exclusions were meant to maintain the social order especially in terms of social status / classes. The exclusion of women necessarily was an attempt to confine them to the private lodgings, not to be a part of the radical – critical debates or literary conversations taking place in the coffee house. In today’s Istanbul, in the modern coffee houses the female flaneuse is quintessentially part of the coffee house milieu, however, this chapter has witnessed that Starbucks café is home to a specific group of people. The majority of the informants, for instance, are either university graduates or students; or professionals; and even the ones who are high school graduates are financially sustaining themselves. There is an ‘intellectual’ milieu, in the modern café today in Istanbul, even if not necessarily only welcoming middle / upper middle classes, as their filter coffee is affordable.

Social differentiations / polarizations versus the ‘egalitarian’ coffee house

This ethnographic research, not surprisingly shows, once asked “*How do you view those who do not go to Starbucks?*” a great majority answer either as “lower – educated” people, “those from the outer suburbs”, the “Apacis”, or “those who do not have enough money”, and so on.

Starbucks Beyoglu, Pera

“People in Starbucks think about themselves as intellectual people. The outsiders do not feel comfortable among them. It might sound bourgeois but... in my university there are those conservatives. They despise those in Starbucks; and don’t like Nisantasi. This is a mutual othering going on between those who come from Anatolia, and those who are the residents of Istanbul...

Mehmet exemplifies the hybridity, by referring to the name given to a contemporary cultural category, a sub - culture in contemporary Istanbul):

“ ‘Apaci’s “(it means) the cultural evolution of those who come to Istanbul from somewhere else. (It is) the mixture of Ankara folk music ‘Ankara havası’ with techno. (He calls them) “Apachis of the Pedestrian Crossing” ‘Üstgeçit Apaçileri’. They feel they are different from the other Istanbulites”. (Mehmet, Int. 1)

“‘ayak takımı’ idlers (in the negative sense) do not come here” (Süha, Int. 2).

Starbucks Beyoglu, Taksim Square

“The Apaci circle: a certain age group. He doesn’t have any money on him – can’t come here as he will have to spend money... To ask for a drink in Starbucks requires courage – the foreign names can be intimidating. There are people who cannot pronounce “Café Latte”” (Orhan, Int. 3)

Starbucks on Barbarossa Boulevard, Besiktas

“More than 50 percent is well – educated. People from central districts... because Starbucks creates this differentiation – a marketing strategy” (Mehmet, Int. 5)

He refers to the polarization; spatiality and society interaction: Starbucks can be seen in only central districts.

“The patrons of Bakirkoy cafés – cannot be elite. The more these people come to Starbucks, the less the venue remains selective. Being elite in Turkey is about the socio – economic condition. There is the bourgeoisie here (in Turkey, he means). They are the bourgeoisie; Starbucks patrons.” “There has been a café trend but because there is an influx of people from out there (he means; the poorer neighbourhoods) I think the lustre has faded” (Remi, Int. 6).

Remi refers to the “3rd District”, which corresponds to the poorer districts in Istanbul: He names those the 1st, the 2nd, the 3rd, etc. according to the socio – economic level of its residents:

“The 3rd district does not read books and they are ostentatious”

Reflecting on the answer obtained from Remi, the spatial segregation and polarization within the urban space is revealed; resulting in an ‘othering’ process, stereotyped perceptions of people and the spaces they occupy.

“Foreigners (in Istanbul) and the residents of Etiler: I think these people are much more high – cultured, and financially well off. Cultural accumulation; good social circle; financial affordability... On the one hand there are true Istanbulites– Those who are in the luxurious districts, with good level of education, good finances. On the other hand, low level of education (group), ordinariness, those who could not cultivate. These segments do not have tolerance towards each other. Each one of them excludes the other”. (Cansu, Int. 19).

Kultur University Campus Starbucks

“It might sound like a stereotyped statement, but, Istanbul is where the rich and the outer suburb / slums segment ‘varos’ live side by side” (Fuat, Int. 11)

“Those who come from Anatolia cannot integrate really. The European culture (in Istanbul) cannot absorb them... There is an ongoing in-betweenness ‘arada kalmışlık’. Two different segments (European Istanbul and the immigrants) cannot live in harmony. While on the one side there is the European culture, on the other side Arabesk culture.” (Ezgi, Int. 16).

Orkun’s (Int. 18) general view is that Starbucks coffee houses are one of the effects of globalization in Istanbul, which accelerated after the 2000’s.

““From the outside, it (Starbucks) looks an elitist place. The lower segment would say: “this place is above us”. “Istanbul is a cosmopolitan city, there are people of all sorts, of different cultures. I have a cosmopolitan attitude but among the young generation there is segmentation. The outer suburbs ‘varos’ are very different from the elite districts”.

Analysis

It is extremely important to note that, these answers have mirrored the socio – economic polarization in Istanbul due to gentrification process and the widening divide between the centre and the periphery. As noted earlier; economic globalization in Istanbul has caused ‘mobile actors’ in the city to be more in line with socio – economic developments and experience the polished face of the city; Starbucks cafés in a variety of neighbourhoods demonstrate that those in the peripheries have been drawn further into their localities.

The Coffee House as an alternative space and its Starbucksian underpinnings (the uses of Starbucks)

Starbucks Beyoglu, Taksim Square

Orhan (Int. 3) regards Starbucks as an alternative space – where everybody drops their masks and feels free to socialize with others.

Starbucks on Barbaros Boulevard, Besiktas

“This is a place for being involved in the public space for those who haven’t been before.”
(Mehmet, Int. 5)

“While I am sitting here, I have more comfortable conversations with the person next to me; I can get to know the person better. The positive atmosphere here changes the whole thing.”
(Sarp, Int. 7)

“This is a place where you can express yourself freely; reveal your hidden emotions more freely; comfortably...” (Sarp, Int. 7)

“Here is like an amusement park – everybody is doing something else. They write things on the walls... (Starbucks creates an alternative space) The pictures foster creativity of mind”
(Remi, Int. 6)

Common patterns in the uses of Starbucks

How would the meanings attributed to Starbucks café in turn reveal the productions of the patrons, rather than mere consumption of the place / drinks?

First of all, there is a meaningful *production*; as Ugur (Int. 4) has noted; “Sociabilizing in Starbucks is a meaningful act”. In parallel with the urban flaneur of the 19th Century³⁵, who *uses* the boulevard, as well as the café as a public space, views them as a spectacle and the café becomes also a refuge from the chaotic modernity – challenges the pace of life and lost artistic / romantic sensibilities. Patrons in our research do not just happen to be in Starbucks: they *use* the Starbucks café – as a *space* where they can experience urban modern life, boost their identities, to criticize modern life, and shelter from it.

Another way Starbucks café is made meaningful is; it is now “the” public space, as Mehmet (Int. 5) noted – ““This is a place for being involved in the public space for those who haven’t before” or as Sarp (Int. 7) noted, socializing in Starbucks “reflects a quite different way of life than that which you experience somewhere else outside”. This points to an experience quite similar to the 18th Century coffee house sociability; where it becomes the site of many kinds of sociability, which are not possibly performed somewhere else in the city.

The alternative dimension of the coffee house sociability and its Starbucksian underpinnings, thus have referred to this very dimension. In the 3rd Chapter of this thesis, the sociability in the Ottoman coffee house has been mentioned, by maintaining that it was an alternative public space, to socialize away from the religious authorities. Official ranks would

³⁵ See Baudelaire, C. (1995). *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, Phaidon Press

be of little importance at these places, and people of all social statuses would mingle freely. It was also alternative because practices such as hashish consuming or the satirical shadow theatre's politically bold and obscene script; however it was not common to see a woman there. Building upon this dimension; a number of ethnographic readings revealed the alternative ways in which the Starbucks cafés are being used; (maybe) their subversive characteristics. The presence of the café flaneuse, as the example of Cansu (Int. 19) has demonstrated, is the starkest example to the new, transformed, Starbucksian public space. Apart from that, in Starbucks on Barbarossa Boulevard and Starbucks Taksim, writings are recognized on the walls, or some informants especially stress the *freedom and comfort* unique to Starbucks.

Thirdly, as this thesis has argued, Starbucks café is the site where the socio – economic polarizations, as resulted by the economic effects of globalization, especially urban planning and gentrification processes, becomes visible. These polarizations include the high – culture vs. low culture dimension; referring to the level of education and the environment in which the residents of Istanbul had been raised. Nafiz, for instance, stating that in order to be modern you need to have a modern geography; asserts himself as a critique of the social milieu. Another of the polarizations concerns the class tensions; there is a very clear divide as our research has revealed, between the middle, upper middle and the lower classes. This in turn is reflected in the place attachment of the Starbucks patrons, who profess that they feel privileged in this place, as Mehmet (Int. 1) does; or who feel comfortable because of the elite coffee crowd, as Cansu (Int. 19) among others, made clear. Most important polarization is the spatial polarization: we have noted in the discussion of spatiality and society³⁶ that the gap between the mobile social actors and those in the poorer neighbourhoods is being widened.

³⁶ See Bauman, 1998

The most crucial of it all – is the gender dimension of the coffee house sociability and its Starbucksian underpinnings. We see, in a quite different fashion from the traditional coffee houses, women are always visible and they are perfect critiques of the modern life, like Tugce (Int. 17) or they feel the city, and come to Starbucks as a refuge from the huddle, like Cansu (Int. 19). The patriarchal structure of the traditional coffee house, however, still continues.

Conclusion

Upon presenting topography of Starbucks cafés in Istanbul this chapter has shared ethnography of the Starbucks cafés in Istanbul; social/urban life and self – perceptions; and later the *uses* of Starbucks, which have revealed socio – economic polarizations, respectively.

First and foremost, our ethnographic research brings onto surface how *spatiality and society in a dialectical interaction* – reflected in the way the informants ‘perceive’ of Starbucks café frequenters vs. the *others* outside. This demonstrates a community attachment being formed in the “modern” cafés, they sometimes meet strangers and other times feel safe here, stressing the comfort of the place as well as its milieu. In this respect, this research argues that alienation from the modern urban life of Istanbul – *the huddle & confusion & chaos & in-betweenness*, is reflected and being relieved, through the modern coffee house sociability: it helps its patrons feel “belong to” the place, through their specific *uses* of it. Remembering Blum’s³⁷ observation that the modern café in the cosmopolitan city is the microcosm of this cosmopolitan life; we have seen the reflections of cultural and socio – economic polarizations: high cultured vs. idler & frivolous & shallow people / well –

³⁷ See Blum, A. (2003). *The Imaginative Structure of the City*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

educated vs. not educated enough; middle / upper middle classes vs. outer suburbs, et... Starbucks sociability & perceptions of the informants framed this dimension.

Overall, a ‘global’ identity manifest in some of the Starbucks patrons seems to have escaped or challenged the social/urban/local boundaries; however, this remains rather a self – narrative, and in fact the polarizations are almost always visible in their answers.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

A Tale of Contemporary Istanbul, its Coffee Houses from the Past until Today,
Starbucks and its Uses by the Istanbulite Public

The findings on the way of the journey which we have embarked on, from the coffee houses ‘*kahve hanes*’ in Istanbul of Ottoman times to the modern café: Starbucks, in the 21st Century Istanbul where the ethnographic fieldwork takes place; have been instrumental in understanding the dynamics of this new coffee house trend in a number of ways.

Effects of globalization on urban life

On the first chapter, this thesis explored globalization as an analytical tool/concept and recent and multidimensional trend; listed down a selection of the social and cultural economic underpinnings of globalization, drawing on Harvey (1990), Appadurai (1996), Bauman (1998), Giddens (2000) Blum (2003), Tomlison (2007) among others. This section focused on Harvey’s (1990) time / space compression, and following this “spatial segregation, separation and exclusion” (Bauman, 1998: 3) which emerges as the economic and “communicational” gap between the upwardly mobile elites and the rest of the society widens (ibid). This, we mentioned, corresponds with the “present day polarization” as Bauman notes (1998). Another

significant dimension was the loss of the community feeling; which linked us to the public space debate, as Sennett (1986) noted that the more spatially polarized the city becomes, the less the chances are for building community.

The chapter showed how all of these link together, so as to picture its effects on contemporary urban life in Istanbul. Referring to Bauman (1998), we directed the attention to the social and economical polarizations which emerge as a result of the globalization efforts on the city – the gentrification and urban renewal projects, which accelerate the tensions between the ‘mobile’ actors in the society and those in the peripheries, with fewer opportunities. While on the one hand the city was becoming global, advancing its information and communication technologies, on the other hand another segment was further pushed to the margins. Istanbul’s globalization started in the 1980’s; neo liberal policies with an open market (see Ardic, 2009) was successful in attracting foreign investments. This was followed by the trend of rise in the service sector as well as tourism; a great number of business headquarters, five star hotels; cafés (ibid). The opening of Starbucks cafés correspond to this period, and this café has become highly popular among Istanbulites.

Hence, this chapter underlined Istanbul’s globalizing face presenting the argument that globalization has not caused homogeneity in the urban life; rather great differentiations between social segments and polarizations among the city’s residents. These are namely, the European/Western vs. Traditional/Anatolian divide; Modern vs. Conservative/Traditional; Middle/Upper Middle Class/Elites vs. Residents of Outer Suburbs/Apacias; High – cultured vs. Frivolous/Superficial/Idler; Enlightened vs. Not – Enlightened; Elite Neighbourhoods vs. Non – Elite Neighbourhoods; Real Istanbulites vs. Anatolian Immigrants; Real Intellectuals vs. Fake Intellectuals; comfortable/light-hearted life-styles vs. other life-styles; global vs. local; chaotic street vs. peaceful cafés, among others...

History of the coffee house as a public space

The second chapter is largely concerned with the history of coffee, its travel to Ottoman Istanbul, and the coffee houses in the city, their functions in the Ottoman social and cultural life, further developing the coffee house sociability, which became both an alternative and patriarchal pastime for the Ottoman public. Borrowing its background content from the chapter on the history of the Turkish coffee; the third chapter is an illustration of how social meanings attributed to the coffee house, especially in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, cultivated into the ‘public sphere’, in terms of radical – critical debate; public consensus building; emotional bonding and overall, developing into ‘civility’. The analysis of this chapter revealed the ‘public sphere’ characteristic of the coffee house, from a variety of perspectives. One of those perspectives was the egalitarian structure of the coffee house. Building upon this structure, which encompasses a) guests from diverse social statuses and ranks socialising side by side and challenging the social order of the Ottoman rule; and b) social activities performed in the coffee house, some of which are either subversive or alternative to the mainstream patterns; Habermas’ (1989) public sphere and Sennett’s (1986) sociability discussions have been developed. Habermas’ reading of the *public sphere*, which stands for both the field of *radical – critical* debate and for the social space of action, (the coffee house being one of “the” public spaces to socialize) has been criticized on the grounds that it disregards some of the other functions of sociability such as mere entertainment (see Sennett, 1986) and it has a rather patriarchal model of society; excluding women from the *radical critical* debate. Hence the chapter consequently argued that, while former hierarchies (the segregation in the public space in terms of social statuses and class) had been supposedly left behind, new hierarchies were welcomed by the emerging entrepreneurs of trade as well as the patriarchs of homes (women were not encouraged to join the coffee house crowd).

The gendered public space and the urban flaneuse

Further on, this chapter as well as the fourth chapter which deals with the gendered dimension of the coffee house maintained that this public sphere dimension of coffee houses was transformed in the 19th Century. What marks this change is the fast pace of industrialization, urban development, rise of the nuclear family, diminishing neighbour relations. This in turn caused increasing levels of isolation, as well as the lack of mutual trust. Urban modernity, and the ideal version of modern life, was criticized by Baudelaire's (1995) and Benjamin's (1969) concept of the urban flaneur. The underlying themes of this nouveau modernity were 'alienation' and 'solitude', the mood owing its presence to this new cosmopolitan city life (for instance, the increasing pressure of time over lives). While measuring time became significant, the urban flaneur challenged it by idly strolling on the boulevards of the city, in a romantic posture. The unease that it brought, was rather an escape, and the café was functioning as a spectacle and refuge. The urban flaneur had been a quintessentially male figure from its outset. Thus, apart from stressing the limitation of Habermas' public sphere which excludes women; the fourth chapter pictured the urban flaneur, its connection with modernity and reflection in the coffee house sociability.

Empirical Inquiries / Starbucks Istanbul

The fifth chapter marks the empirical dimension of this thesis; which reads the contemporary coffee house sociability in Istanbul and its Starbucksian underpinnings. This chapter, by building its argument on the globalization debate / coffee house as a public space; presents ethnography of a variety of Starbucks cafés in Istanbul. While doing this, the chapter tries to capture the urban flaneurs and flaneuses from among the Istanbulite patrons of these cafés, in order to reveal how they use the café as a public space and as a refuge from the everyday chaos and confusion of the urban life in Istanbul. The investigation of this chapter

made the flaneuse visible; who experiences the city and the café in parallel ways to the urban flaneur: she stands out as quintessentially female, modern, romantic and alone. The chapter additionally demonstrates how the place identity and place attachment was formed by the Starbucks café patrons; since they professed a great many dimensions and characteristics, which bonded them with the rest of the coffee house crowd. There were, to name a few, being high cultured, intellectual, elite, comfortable, educated; almost always in connection with the neighbourhood that the café is situated in. Thus the perceptions and differentiations from the others exposed the socio – economic and cultural polarizations in the city of Istanbul; as noted earlier; these cover the levels of education, the location of neighbourhoods in which people reside, the levels of cultural accumulation, and sometimes the Western underpinnings of people's coffee house sociability, or openness to the global advancements. The chapter overall argued that globalization brought further polarizations in public arena.

The grand narrative of our times is *globalization*. Modernity of the 20th Century was followed by 21st late modernity. If all these transformations brought anything unexpected or rather progressive, it is that, behind the common presumption of 'immobile' public being carried away by global cultural flows ranging from mass media to the modern café, lies the fact that they do not only consume: they *produce* meanings through their actions. The ways in which they socialize – their use the place – transforms it into social space (Certeau, 1984). All in all, this is the summary of the journey, during which we told a tale of the traditional coffee houses; Starbucks-the-modern-café; globalization as a differentiating force; and Istanbul.

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