

THE CITY AS A REFLECTING MIRROR:
BEING AN URBANITE IN THE 19th CENTURY OTTOMAN EMPIRE

A Ph. D. Dissertation

by

NAHİDE İŞİK DEMİRAKIN

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
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in

THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

İHSAN DOĞRAMACI BİLKENT UNIVERSITY

ANKARA

May 2015

To
My Family
and
In Loving Memory of
Ayşegül Keskin Çolak

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Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
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I certify that I have read this thesis and found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History.

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ABSTRACT

THE CITY AS A REFLECTING MIRROR: BEING AN URBANITE IN THE 19th CENTURY OTTOMAN EMPIRE

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The physical and social transformations taking place in İstanbul, İzmir and Salonica throughout the 19th century Ottoman Empire had been the subject of many studies, however, the degree to which urban population identified themselves with the novelties of the era's urban living still remains in shadow. This dissertation aims to interpret the 19th century Ottoman Empire by focusing on the urban population of the Empire's three largest cities and the contemporary narratives written by people from different segments of the society. Their descriptions and interpretations of the milieu they live in reveal how they perceived the modernising processes of the Empire reflected through the city and the varying degrees of identification with not only being an urbanite but also with the changing relationship between the state and the population, transforming from one of subjecthood to citizenship. In addition to traditional distinctions between Muslims and non-Muslims as well as private and public designated along gender within the urban space, it appears that the 19th century brought about new points of convergence and divergence into the scene

redefining the boundaries of private and public and offering a possibility for a new identity that transcended communal, religious and ethnic differences, thereby complicating the urban network of relationships. In this sense, new modes of communication within the city that were now spread through the educational reforms and the burgeoning press became major influences, and contested the view of state imposed reforms by offering their versions of modernity and encouraging urbanites to take part in the process.

Keywords: Urban history, Ottoman Empire, Urbanite, İstanbul, İzmir, Salonica

ÖZET

BİR AYNA OLARAK ŞEHİR:

19. YÜZYILDA OSMANLI İMPARATORLUĞU'NDA ŞEHİRLİ OLMAK

Demirakın, Nahide Işık.

Doktora, Tarih Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Oktay Özel

Mayıs 2015

19. yüzyıl Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda İstanbul, İzmir ve Selanik'te meydana gelen fiziksel ve toplumsal dönüşümler pek çok çalışmada ele alınsa da bu şehirlerin nüfuslarının dönemin değişen şehir yaşamıyla kendilerini ne derecede özdeşleştirdiği henüz yeterince araştırılmamıştır. Bu tez, imparatorluğun en büyük üç şehrine odaklanarak ve toplumun farklı katmanlarından kişilerin anlatılarına dayanarak 19. yüzyıl Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nu şehirli nüfusun gözünden yorumlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Yaşadıkları ortamı anlama ve anlatma biçimleri, bu kişilerin modernleşme sürecinin şehirdeki yansımalarını nasıl algıladıklarını ve yalnızca şehirli kimliğini ile değil tebaalıktan vatandaşlığa geçerken devletle kurdukları ilişkiyi nasıl farklı biçimlerde gördüklerini ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Müslim ve gayri Müslim ile cinsiyet üzerinden belirlenen özel ve kamusal alan gibi şehir alanını bölen geleneksel ilişki biçimlerinin yanı sıra 19. yüzyıl sahneye yeni yaklaşma ve uzaklaşma noktaları çıkarmış, özel ve kamusal alanları yeniden tanımlamış ve varolan ayrımları aşan bir şehirli kimliğinin ortaya çıkma olasılığını

doğurmuştur. Bu dönemde eğitim reformları ve gelişmekte olan basının yaygınlaştırdığı yeni iletişim biçimleri etkili olmuş, kendi modernlik anlayışlarını ortaya koyarak ve şehirlileri süreçte rol alma konusunda teşvik ederek reformların yalnızca devlet tarafından dayatıldığı görüşünü tartışmaya açmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Şehir tarihi, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Şehirli, İstanbul, İzmir, Selanik.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The idea of a monolithic, uniform and static Islamic city as put forward by Max Weber has been challenged at many levels by the scholars of both the Islamic and the Ottoman urban history, by pointing out to the unique social, economic and political conditions that created the composition of each city. The “social” aspect of these studies catches glimpses of the urban inhabitants and their relations to the cities in question. However, the extent to which the inhabitants identified themselves with their cities, how they related to urban life and other inhabitants and how they perceived being an urban dweller in general remains very much in shadows.

The importance of understanding this perception lies in the fact that the city signifies more than a mere physical space. Being an organic entity, cities are shaped by the interactions of the centre and the subjects and the perceptions of the inhabitants form their opinions on the state, other groups that they share the city with and in general the system. Especially in times of rapid change and transformation, such as 19th century Ottoman Empire, cities serve as both the agent

and object of change, whereby the aspirations of modernisation and attempts of justifying “the new order” by the centre are communicated through architectural and administrative innovations. Yet, reactions to these interventions are not always predictable and it is often ignored how much they are absorbed by the inhabitants and to what extent they altered the lives of the receivers. Furthermore, as the word “interaction” suggests, it is not always the inhabitants who are on the receiving end. More often than not, they were able to influence, even steer the direction of urban transformations.

In this respect I will try to put into perspective how the Ottomans perceived the cities they lived in and how they related to the changes taking place in the urban scenery of 19th century Ottoman Empire both in terms of physical and social transformations. This would mean taking into account not only the changes in physical urban patterns but also the shifts in the balances of inter-communal, economic and state – subject relations within the context of modernisation. At a time when new identities, such as citizenship, new ideas, such as nationalism and new ways of living through modernisation process were imposed, cities represent a microcosm for demonstrating how people placed themselves in relation to these more general concepts. Hence, the thesis will try to offer a reading of Ottoman 19th century through the perceptions of urban dwellers from different social backgrounds and although the main focus is on cities, it hopes to contribute not only in urban history but also in social and intellectual history of the 19th century of the Ottoman Empire by taking a mental picture of those who were an often ignored part of these changes.

The 19th century Ottoman modernisation encompassed both rural and urban spheres in terms of administrative changes, however, cities, where these efforts originated from and concentrated on, act as a mirror in reflecting not only these efforts but the reactions to them. Since state used cities as a way of communicating changes, any criticism, approval or idea on the side of the inhabitants concerning the city have to do with their perception of the Empire. Also, being susceptible to outside influence from a multitude of channels, instead of just one led by the state, cities allowed their inhabitants develop their own versions of modernity, separate from and at times opposing the Empire's aspirations. Therefore, the inhabitants also acted as guides in the shaping of Ottoman 19th century. Hence, it is hoped that interpreting these new perceptions and relations to and within urban sphere will offer a multidimensional reading of the era by pointing out to the existence of more than one actor influencing the process.

While the studies on Ottoman urban history helped dispel the discourse of stagnancy and uniformity, the issue of collective identity that forms as a result of living in the city still remains unresolved. For Weber, this urban identity did not exist in Islamic cities since they comprise a population of competing groups instead of a group of urban dwellers that act in solidarity to further common interests.¹ The literature that developed as an answer to Weber's claims concentrated mainly on Arab lands of the Ottoman Empire and was able to reveal the existence of identities associated with living in an urban space.² Yet, Anatolian and Balkan portions of

¹ Max Weber. *Şehir: Modern Kentin Oluşumu*, Don Martindale & Gertrud Neuwirth (Eds) (İstanbul: Bakış Yay., 2000), 91.

² Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman, Bruce Masters (eds.), *Doğu ile Batı Arasında Osmanlı Kenti: Halep, İzmir ve İstanbul* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yay., 2000), 5.

these studies are still not enough to provide a clearer picture of the relationship between the city and its dweller. Also, although a considerable number of works have been produced, the literature on 19th century Ottoman cities takes into account mainly the intervention of the state as the driving force. Among the major works concerning the urban and architectural works, Zeynep Çelik's *Remaking of Ottoman Istanbul* stands out as a comprehensive account of 19th century conceptions of urban planning in the Empire.. Although the book allows us to trace the developments in the urban area, as the author points out, the focus of the book is not on the social aspects/outcomes of the said transformations. Similar works, such as Maurice Cerasi's *Istanbul Divanyolu*, also deal with change in the use and meaning of urban spaces and while they touch upon the relationship between these spaces and the reasons behind change, the influence they have on the perceptions of the inhabitants mostly goes unnoticed. As far as the administrative side is concerned, İlber Ortaylı's *Tanzimat Devrinde Osmanlı Mahalli İdareleri* and Musa Çadırcı's *Tanzimat Döneminde Anadolu Kentlerinin Sosyal ve EkonomikYapıları* can be considered as guides for following the general framework of the changes in the governmental organisation. However, although Çadırcı's work offers a broader perspective on the social and economic developments of the time, they do not reflect viewpoints of city dwellers that had to adjust to the new order.

One particular example of Ottoman urban history that takes into account individual and society in the process of urban transformation during Tanzimat is Meropi Anastassiadou's *Salonique 1830 -1912*. The author regards the evolution of Salonica as a result of an interaction between the modernising interventions of the

centre, changes in the economy and the role of communities and traces the transformation of mentalities in this light. Mark Mazower's book on the same city also deals with inter communal relations and transformation of society, however, since the book covers a vast span of time, 1430 – 1950, the assessment of Tanzimat era falls short of giving a satisfactory picture of changing perceptions. Specifically focusing on the influence of Tanzimat is an edited book, *Modernleşme Sürecinde Osmanlı Şehirleri*,³ which again mainly concentrates on the physical and administrative aspects and takes a centre oriented approach, examining the changes in the perception of state rather than individuals. Sibel Zandi-Sayek's⁴ study of Izmir takes into account the involvement of non-state parties in the development of the city between 1840 and 1880 and emphasises the influence of “urban citizenship” and “being a Smyrniot” in their dealings with everyday life.

Exceptions aside, the narrative that regards state as the sole agent in the 19th century processes of the Empire seems to dominate the bulk of literature on 19th century Ottoman cities. Although the fact that the Empire implemented a certain plan for incorporating the cities into the modernisation agenda is well emphasised, the involvement of ordinary people in the process and the view from below is often disregarded. A look from the opposite angle, however, may help reconsider the idea of a modernisation from above and reveal the extent to which people were active participants in determining the course of developments. The examination of changes in perceptions of urban life would allow us to see how pervasive the

³ Mark Mazower. *Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims and Jews* (London: Harper Collins, 2004).

⁴ Sibel Zandi-Sayek. *Ottoman Izmir: The Rise of a Cosmopolitan Port, 1840-1880* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

transformations in question were. Moreover, the existence of, or lack thereof, differences in level and form of identification with the city, again often neglected in the literature, could reveal the different interpretations of 19th century Ottoman Empire.

In this respect, the first chapter seeks to offer a theoretical framework and set the urban scenery with its main actors in order to give background information necessary to put the 19th century accounts, which will be examined, into context. In doing this, I seek to produce an outline that would facilitate the analysis of the attitudes and actions of both the state and different groups of city-dwellers. The second chapter concentrates on *sefaretnames* and *seyahatnames* as a point of departure whereby the Ottoman population started comparing themselves to the outside world and becoming aware of their circumstances, prompting them to look for solutions. It also takes into account the discrepancies between the capital and the rest of the Empire as witnessed by Ottoman travellers, who this time compared the image of the Empire as formed in their minds by what they saw in the Capital to the scenery of remote corners of Ottoman lands. The third chapter takes a closer look at these 19th century accounts to examine the common themes encountered in contemporary narratives and discuss the degree to which these themes can be used as categories to peruse Ottoman urban history. It also aims to understand and analyse the ways in which these themes shaped urban perceptions and sense of belonging in a city. Chapter four delves into production and dissemination of knowledge within the city, arguing that these processes were perpetually shaping the urban identities, while the city reciprocated by offering different and novel

forms of outlets for expression of different approaches to forming of these identities. The chapter also focuses on what makes an urbanite in the 19th century, and the type of new actions and tools deemed as integral to this identity through this flow of information and knowledge. The last chapter, Chapter 5, takes a closer look at the relations between the city dwellers at the street level by comparing and contrasting similar social spaces and gathering places in Istanbul, Izmir and Salonica. By figuring out the parallels and opposites between these cities, I will try to demonstrate the multi-layered nature of 19th century identities, dispersed among confessional, ethnic, occupational as well as local, urban and imperial levels.

CHAPTER II

FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

These ambiguities, redundances, and deficiencies recall those attributed by Dr. Franz Kuhn to a certain Chinese encyclopedia entitled Celestial Emporium of Benevolent Knowledge. On those remote pages it is written that animals are divided into (a) those that belong to the Emperor, (b) embalmed ones, (c) those that are trained, (d) suckling pigs, (e) mermaids, (f) fabulous ones, (g) stray dogs, (h) those that are included in this classification, (i) those that tremble as if they were mad, (j) innumerable ones, (k) those drawn with a very fine camel's hair brush, (l) others, (m) those that have just broken a flower vase, (n) those that resemble flies from a distance.

Jorge Luis Borges "The Analytical Language of John Wilkins"

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Borges' list of animals draws attention to the arbitrary nature of categorizations, which are bound by the position of whoever makes them. The same can be said of describing and analysing an everchanging and organic entity such as city since any attempt to make sense of physical and social aspects of urban life will have to use categorisations/classifications that could be constructed from a completely different point of view. In his work on 19th century Paris, David Harvey argues that

“We have abundant theories as to what happens *in* the city but a singular lack *of* theory of the city; and those theories of the city that we do have often appear to be one dimensional and so

wooden as to eviscerate the richness and complexity of what the urban experience is about. One cannot easily approach the city and the urban experience, therefore, in a one dimensional way.”⁵

While avoiding this one dimensionality arises as a necessity, it is often difficult to keep from sliding into pitfalls of simple explanations and generalisations. Still, it is possible to contribute to or even challenge state centric approaches that bring to limelight the top-down nature of developments taking place in Ottoman 19th century and urban history in particular by presenting the perspectives of the individuals who contribute to the milieu of urban space, even if just by being there. As Harvey asserts, especially when 19th century is concerned, “the issue of how to see the city and how to represent it during phases of intense change is a daunting challenge... few (of the studies) are enlightening about the human condition.” In his work on Paris, a city which went through tremendous changes in its urban planning during the period in question, he seeks to illuminate this human condition through the use of contemporary writings and newspaper articles of urbanites. Harvey’s inspiration for his work was a study concentrating on Vienna of the same era by Carl E. Schorske. *Fin-de-Siecle Vienna* is a collection of essays that can be read individually as perspectives of the city from different stand points, experiences and reactions of people living in the city but together form “some sense of the totality of what the city was about.”⁶ As a matter of fact, the structure of the work alludes to Schorske’s assertion that “European high culture entered a whirl of infinite innovation, with each field proclaiming its independence of the whole” in

⁵ David Harvey. *Paris, The Capital of Modernity* (London: Routledge, 2003), 18.

⁶ Harvey, 18.

the 19th century and as a consequence fragmentation became inevitable, affecting both the producers and the critics of the culture.⁷

While the Ottoman projects of urban development did not follow such radical policies as in Paris and Vienna, it is important to see that urban developments in these cities were almost simultaneously happening in the Ottoman Empire, albeit smaller in scale. Tanzimat was a push towards secularisation of state as evidenced by new laws and administrative developments. The mind-set of the reform era was projected on the physical setting of the cities through new planning principles and architectural styles, as well. Aside from its practical purposes such as easier access to fires, healthcare through cleaner streets and facilitation of transport, these changes had underlying political motives.

In this regard the city was used as a medium to convey messages of modernisation and the changes were targeted at reconstructing the state subject relationship in accordance with the newly emerging structures. As Hobsbawm's "invention of tradition" suggests, the idea was to replace the idle traditions that no longer served the purposes of the state by "establishing or legitimising institutions, status or relations of authority."⁸ Regarding the city, Zeynep Çelik claims that the Ottomans borrowed three main "invented traditions" from Europe: laws and regulations related to the urban planning, principles of urban planning aiming at creating a uniform urban fabric and the adoption of new architectural styles.⁹ Aside from materialising the modernisation process and announcing the strength of the

⁷ Carl E. Schorske, *Fin de Siecle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1992), xix.

⁸ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 9.

⁹ Zeynep Çelik, *19. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Başkenti: Değişen İstanbul*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998), 3.

transforming Empire through large squares, wide streets and pompous palaces, the changes in the urban pattern also signified the departure from Islamic principles and the weakening of private realm at the expense of public

However, 19th century forced both the Empire and its subjects to reconsider their positions vis-à-vis each other and in themselves. The results of this reconsideration process were revealed on a spectrum of total rejection and full acceptance, with degrees of adaptation dotting the line in between. These series of changes in the course of modernisation brought with it a “reshuffling of the self,” forcing the individuals to “search for a new identity” and the social groups to “revise or revisit defunct belief systems.”¹⁰

In order to gain an insight into the perceptions of urbanites, this study uses mainly memoirs, autobiographies and newspapers of the era. These sources posit some problem areas as far as representative capacities they offer are concerned. First of all, as they are mostly written by a privileged small portion of the population, who received at least some degree of education, assuming that their views represent the attitudes of the whole urban population would offer a skewed picture of urban society. Second, since these accounts offer personal views and hence come with their individual biases, they can hinder the process of reaching generalised assumptions on the dynamics and/or definition of being an urbanite. Also, as the authors either come from or concentrate on three big cities of the Empire – Istanbul, Izmir and Salonica- their analysis does not necessarily reflect attitudes and feelings of people of a geographically vast Empire. However, as

¹⁰ Schorske, *Vienna*, xix.

Schorske asserts, especially when historical texts of this era are concerned, the historian must refrain from setting “an abstract categorical common denominator – what Hegel called the *Zeitgeist*, and Mill ‘the characteristics of the age.’”¹¹ Instead, “we must now be willing to undertake the empirical pursuit of pluralities to find unitary patterns in culture. (...) These...can bring us to the shared concerns, the shared ways of confronting experience that bind men together as culture makers in a common social and temporal space.” While Ottoman archive offers a substantial amount of documents for understanding the nature of relationship between the state and the inhabitants of the cities, especially in *Şura-yı Devlet* collections, they were not taken into the scope of this dissertation. Further study on these documents would serve to multiply the perspectives to present a fuller picture of the topic at hand.

Hence, this dissertation does not seek to generalise and assume a certain way of thinking that prevailed all over the Ottoman Empire but instead offers a picture of multitudes that make up a portion of 19th century mental processes. I aim to understand what it meant to be living in a large 19th century Ottoman city, what it entailed, how it affected personal and communal relationships. By analysing these, I hope to decipher not only being an urbanite meant but also changing perceptions of the state since “there is an entire series of utopias or projects that developed on the premise that a state is like a large city.”

¹¹ Schorske, Vienna, xxii.

2.2 Actors in Urban Space

In order to gain an understanding of relationships within the city, it is necessary to identify the parties active in the shaping and formation of day to day urban life. To this end, instead of drawing a distinction between state and society, the categorisation will take into account those who left their written impressions of urban life and those who remained anonymous in their dealings with the city. By regarding the state, bureaucrats, intellectuals and the bourgeois as a multi-faceted single category, I aim to avoid looking for arbitrary differences among these intermingled groups. This necessity arises from the lack of clear-cut distinctions between these groups as far as 19th century Ottoman history is concerned. While sometimes one individual was able to assume all these identities at once, there were times when they denoted completely adversary urban actors. This not only facilitates delving into this dynamic relationship by investigating their agreements and disagreements but also allows a closer scrutiny of individual perceptions of urban identity and how they are formed. It is also necessary to understand the motives behind their actions and what they wanted to turn the city into so that their actions can be put into perspective.

The second group, defined here as “the rest” because of their anonymity acts as the public opinion which shapes and is shaped by the urban milieu. While regarding the larger portion of society as “the rest” blurs the many differences individuals had, penetrating into the lives of “ordinary people” poses a great challenge for it is difficult to find accounts penned by these individuals themselves. They glimpse at us through either the writings of others, official documents or

newspaper articles. In the rare instances they left their own accounts, as Kafadar asserts, they stop being “ordinary”¹² since they become an object of study and discerned from the crowd as individuals. Yet, even when they are indiscernible, they reveal predominant feelings and mentalities of an era or place through collective actions and tendencies, thus allowing us to follow what became a matter of concern in the city life. The interaction between their demands and what they were offered is what constructs a basis for the development of an urban identity, which would be interpreted and formed by the individuals themselves.

2.2.1 Band of Four

Within the turmoil of the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire sought to navigate the tides by a series of edicts and regulations that sought to reorganize administrative and legal domains as well as the dynamics of state subject relationship. While keeping the discourse of an Islamic state as an identifying quality, the Empire moved towards secularisation of institutions and laws, which resulted in re-evaluation and reorganization of societal ties as well. The idea of equal treatment for all subjects in Tanzimat Edict of 1839 was reinforced by Islahat Edict of 1856, which identified equal rights for individuals regardless of their religious affiliation more clearly.

The reflection of these steps in the Ottoman cities took the form of administrative and physical interventions into the urban space almost

¹² Cemal Kafadar, *Kim Var İmiş Biz Burada Yoğ İken* (İstanbul: Metis Yay., 2009), 17.

simultaneously. As a matter of fact, a communique proposing an urban renewal plan dated 17 May 1839 preceded the Tanzimat edict by nearly 6 months.¹³ The proposal included construction of new roads, widening of existing streets, providing larger spacing between buildings and preventing the blind alleys, as well as ban on certain construction materials that facilitated the spread of fires. Although the plan was to start with areas demolished by fire, which was more convenient because it cut costs, it was not until 1848 that further steps were taken with a Regulation on Buildings and Streets and amended later in 1863.¹⁴ These ambitious regulations set forth guidelines for primarily to prevent fires. 1856 Regulation of Expropriation for the Benefit of the Public allowed the state to expropriate private property without the consent of the owner, thereby providing a larger room to manoeuvre for reorganizing the urban space. Another such attempt at secularising the urban administration was the introduction of *muhtarlıks* in 1829. Before this date, the *mahalle* structure rested on the leadership of the *imam*, who acted as an intermediary between the members of the neighbourhood and the administration. Although Cem Behar describes this transition of neighbourhood authority from *imam* to *muhtar* in his example as a peaceful one¹⁵, we do not know to what extent this exclusion of a religious authority affected the inhabitants. However, we may conclude that removal of *imams* as intermediaries would mean the penetration of state power more deeply into the lives of people since they would now directly face a state official. In a period of centralising state power, this change seems quite

¹³ Osman Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i Umur-i Belediye*, Cilt 3 (İstanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür İşleri Daire Başkanlığı Yayınları, 1995), 1240-1243.

¹⁴ Ergin, C.3, 1255.

¹⁵ Cem Behar, *A Neighborhood in Ottoman Istanbul: Fruit Vendors and Civil Servants in the Kasap İlyas Mahalle* (State University of New York Press, 2003).

convenient. Another step taken in the modernisation of the urban administration was the establishment of a new municipal system. Starting in Beyoğlu, the practice began to spread along the port cities such as İzmir and Salonica.

These developments, however, contradicted the Islamic rules that used to govern the city. According to Stefanos Yerasimos, this was played out in the city at two levels:¹⁶ Legally, Islamic laws favoured the private property rights and sought to protect the individual and community, which allowed the residents to claim streets as part of their property on the basis of mutual agreement between neighbours, not an agreement with the state. Hence, codification of traditional laws with additional new rules and regulations threatened to eradicate certain rights that Islamic laws granted to the inhabitants. Politically, reorganization of urban space was needed to re-establish state subject relationship, which meant accommodating the centralising tendencies of the 19th century Ottoman Empire. By asserting its power through laws and claiming public good and protection to be the motives, state sought to not only regain control of the urban space but to extend its authority further as well.

The three principles that dominated European discourse of urban renewal were hygiene in the city, security of its inhabitants and beautification of urban scenery, basically aimed at providing a healthier and safer environment that also fulfilled aesthetic aspirations of the urbanites. Yet, as with all state policies, these projects based on these seemingly beneficial principles undertaken in the name of public good had also been motivated by policies pursued to further the centre's

¹⁶ Stefanos Yerasimos, "Tanzimat'ın Kent Reformları Üzerine," Paul Dumont ve François Georgeon (Eds) *Modernleşme Sürecinde Osmanlı Kentleri* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999), 8-16.

interests by facilitating suppression of riots, communicating messages from the centre and displaying the power of the state. It was not long before the Ottoman Empire took similar steps and used these three principles as justification for its decisions.

Bureaucrats sent to the provinces as governors served another function as a part of state's display of power and an example of reformed modern citizens of the Empire. This role must have been internalised by the bureaucrats and their families, as well. After spending quite a long time looking for a proper house in Salonica, for instance, Naciye Neyyal as the wife of province's governor seemed to be frustrated not only for the conditions her family had to endure but also for the sake of the state as she said: "because of government officials living like nomads in their places of assignment, the state is losing its dignity."¹⁷ Being urban was thus a basic trait of the state, personified in the bureaucrat and his family with their civilised manners. That they were usually accompanied by their families is important since they facilitated integration into the urban life and provided extra channels through which they were able to come closer to private lives of inhabitants. As a matter of fact, it would not be wrong to say that the wives also served as civil officials, establishing the missing connections with half the population of the cities they lived in.

State as the decision maker was usually quick to formulate laws and regulations when needed but implementation of these rested heavily on the shoulders of Ottoman bureaucrats. As the representatives of the centre, it is easy to disregard the independent role of civil officials but the impact they had on the cities

¹⁷ Naciye Neyyal, *Ressam Naciye Neyyal'in Mutlakiyet Meşrutiyet ve Cumhuriyet Hatıraları*, (haz.) Fatma Rezan Hürmen (İstanbul: Pınar Yay., 2000), 94.

that they were assigned to depended very much on their individual vision and efforts just as in Mustafa Reşid Pasha's Danube and Ahmed Vefik's Pasha's Bursa. However, performing in the interest of state and society did not always mean success for them. As they stood between the state and ordinary citizens, they were always in a precarious spot that at times necessitated shifting their positions in accordance with the circumstances. As they risked confronting the state and/or society at the cost of tainting their reputation and losing their livelihood, the question should be what motivated them. According to Carter Findley, "it is not too much to argue that the prominence of civil officialdom as a segment of late Ottoman approximated that of the bourgeoisie in Western Europe."¹⁸ It is indeed possible to regard them as a new social class formation that had a world view of their own distinct from their former counterparts.

Commercial bourgeois of the Empire, on the other hand, was able to steer state policies in accordance with their priorities and the state was all too happy to test new urban developments with their support. The decision to start the first experimental municipality of the empire was based partially on the reliance on the wealth of the area's residents for municipal expenses. The municipalities of Izmir and Salonica also followed suit, by allowing more members of commercial bourgeoisie the representatives of the state in the workings of the municipal structures. State's non-involvement, however, brought with it the problem of lack of enforcement mechanisms that would help in collecting taxes and the experiments failed. After the municipal law of 1877, the municipal organization became a matter of state as the municipal councils were now to be comprised of Ottoman officials.

¹⁸ Carter Findley, *Ottoman Civil Officialdom* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 13.

The contribution of the commercial bourgeoisie was not solely the funding of new structures and construction works. Early press in the Ottoman Empire comprised the newspaper printed by this group of entrepreneurs and quite often worked to formulate new ways of urban living both in spatial and social spheres. However, they were not alone in using the press to represent their versions of modernity.

At this point we should consider the influence of intellectuals in shaping the perceptions of urban living. Intellectuals were another channel of modernisation, at times alternative to state-imposed values and adjustments and therefore they acted both agents and critics of the process. Still, it should be noted that a change in the urban patterns was considered an integral part of the modernisation attempts just as the state did, and the suggestions and criticisms rested on a comparison with European examples. Ebuzziya Tevfik, for instance, pointed out that the most important element of a modernised city was spacious public squares as seen in European cities and that Istanbul's urban structure was better off during the Byzantine era since rebuilding of the city after the conquest left behind no such open spaces. Tevfik also argued that demolition of religious or historic buildings for the sake of wider streets should be tolerated and for him, it was the allowance of building owners to transgress the streets and to treat the space as their own property that resulted in these narrow streets.¹⁹ Whether Tevfik was conscious of the role that Islamic principles played in this structure we do not know but it is certain that in his mind European principles of planning had long become the norm for a decent city.

¹⁹ Özgür Türesay, "Modernleşme, Medeniyet ve Şehircilik Üzerine: Ebuzziya Tevfik'in Şehircilik Yazıları" *Kebikeç* 15 (2003), 5-19, 13.

The emphasis on the cities equipped with modern means as an outright sign of civilisation is evident in the writings of Namık Kemal as well. Still, this did not mean that such level of civilisation was unattainable and all it needed was hard work and dedication. Kemal's words probably did not imply laziness and could be interpreted as an expression of encouragement and a belief in a better future but Abdülhak Hamid clearly accused people of sloth, and argued that "if it was not for the laziness of our people, Paris would have fallen far behind Istanbul" since the city was already blessed with a gracious scenery.²⁰ Yet, it is evident that scenery did not suffice since for Ahmed Midhat thought of the capital Istanbul as a huge village rather than a city.²¹ Just two centuries ago, however, Evliya Çelebi in his *Seyahatname* had described Istanbul as a well-kept, prosperous and unique beauty, like of which was never seen. These almost contradictory views of the same city seem to imply more than just a change in the perception of physical space.

When the enthusiasm journalists and writers show for the modernisation of the urban scenery are considered, one would assume that the steps taken by the state to this end would be cheered, however, both they had been a constant object of criticism. The dominance of foreign nationals and non-Muslims in the newly organised urban administration, for instance, was not quite welcome by the larger public. Şinasi argued against changing of street names within the boundaries of 6th Municipal District of Galata and Pera into foreign names and suggested that "these improper names should be changed with names of those known persons from among people of the Ottoman Empire, who are the rulers and owners of this land.

²⁰ Baki Asiltürk, *Osmanlı Seyyahlarının Gözüyle Avrupa* (İstanbul: Kaknüs Yayınları, 2000), 72.

²¹ Üss-i İnkılap in Orhan Okay, 64.

Only this way could the European style changes ever be fully applied.” Şinasi’s emphasis of the Ottoman people as the sole sovereign of the Empire might be regarded as a reaction to increasing European domination.

The fact that he points to inclusion of Ottoman aspects into the changes, on the other hand, might be his opinion of not only urban transformations but also of Tanzimat reforms and modernisation process in general. Discontent with the overpowering influence of foreigners within the Empire also bothered Ziya Pasha as he bemoaned financing of construction works by “the wealth of Europeans instead of Ahmed Efendi and Hasan Ağa” and expressed his fear of an Istanbul inhabited entirely by a European population.²² Although Ziya Pasha’s concern was evidently exaggerated, the fact that the attempts at urban modernisation by the state remained mostly exclusive to certain areas with dominantly foreign and non-Muslim populations and certain groups, bureaucrats and business owners who represent a particular life style or earn substantial incomes, while a large portion of the population was neglected was often criticised. In Istanbul, for instance, preventive health measures such as quarantine was more or less exclusive to Galata and Pera during the initial years of the municipality despite the calls for the extension of this practice over the entire city. The serious concerns aside, this favouritism within the city was often ridiculed. Ahmet Rasim says: “Just as there are all kinds of peoples in various parts of the capital, the bread baked in Galata and Beyoğlu is always well

²² *Hürriyet* (16 November 1868) in Rosenthal, *Politics*, 173-174.

cooked and delicious. It was not only the bread; even the best tobacco is sold there. No one knows why.”²³

According to David Harvey, contemporary French authors writing on Paris sought to make the city “their own and in remaking it, remake themselves if not the social order.” After the revolution of 1848 and the establishment of the Second French Republic, however, “it was Hausmann and the developers, the speculators, and the financiers and the forces of the market that possessed the city and reshaped it to their own specific interests and ends leaving the mass of the population with a sense of loss and dispossession.”²⁴ The constant change in the nature of balance and relationship within the city was evident in the Ottoman Empire as well. Hence, the four identifiable but not so separable actors in the urban space comprised the state, the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, commercial bourgeoisie and the intellectuals. The written testimonies of contemporary elements of urban society comprise the bulk of resources this dissertation focuses on. However, while bureaucrats, commercial bourgeoisie and intellectuals of the era are identifiable and can be put into perspective of their backgrounds and positions within the society, the *state* remains as an abstract notion, which cannot be reduced solely to the sultan himself. In this respect, state is regarded as the set of new laws and administrative practices aimed at preserving the integrity of Ottoman social and political structure, while at the same time improving it. Hence, state arises as the organiser, bureaucrats as implementer, the bourgeoisie as financier and the intellectuals as shapers of public opinion. However, whether bifurcated or many different versions existed

²³ Ahmet Rasim. *Şehir Mektupları* (İstanbul: Say Yay., 2006), 199.

²⁴ Harvey, 85.

simultaneously, it is safe to say that identifying the boundaries and limits of an Ottoman bourgeoisie is a hard task. While being an urbanite is a precondition of becoming a part of this social group, where they position themselves within urban dynamics is key to understanding their motivations and therefore should be sought in their interpretations of cities they lived in and the associations they made with it (as a concept and in real life). Since the patterns of cooperation and disagreement shifted among these groups, so did their corresponding roles and alliances. Still, that this grouping of four urban elements including the state exist and take part in the transformation of urban sphere shows that an explanation taking state as the main actor in changing the 19th century Ottoman city as well as transition from subjecthood to citizenship presents an incomplete picture and point to the increasing involvement of non-state actors as well.

2.2.2 The Rest

In return for their “burden” of assuming some of what we would call today state’s duties, the residents in these quarters were able to carve themselves larger territories of privacy: they were able to resolve small disagreements without having to involve a judicial representative of the state (which was also encouraged by the state itself) while enjoying the protection of their private property rights as mentioned above.

When in 19th century state’s interference in the physical space and closer regulation of new kinds of relationships arising from these changes aggrandized, the city-dwellers lost a portion of their claim over their private space. While it may

seem as an encroachment of their existing rights, it served also as a liberating process whereby city-dwellers were able to relinquish their part of responsibilities and demand the state to provide the three principles of hygiene, beauty and security, which had become an indispensable rhetoric in justifying such interferences. While a sense of community was not completely dissolved, as Islamic rules began to lose their primacy in defining new legal and social boundaries, the former ties that held communities together within urban space became loose. This development coincided with the emerging 19th century expressions of individualism, which involved abandoning prescribed ways of forming communities in favour of ones that individuals themselves formed.

Being relatively free from state intervention meant that they had to assume more responsibilities: cleaning, security, responsibility for monitoring crime within their quarters. Thus, acting as a single unit bound by responsibilities and shared interest, the allegiance to the locality/neighbourhood was stronger than to the city in general. They acted as a community as they shared certain liabilities, which made identifying with people from same neighbourhoods easier. Moreover, what they see and experience were limited by their distance from the city centre or the longest distance they can travel from home to any place in the city and back. Yet, the ties between them were more than what their geographical proximity enforced upon them; often religious or occupational commonalities brought additional solidarity among the residents of a certain quarter.

CHAPTER III

THE IDEAL CITY OR THE IDEA OF A CITY

The urban character of accounts and their authors taken into consideration here is a common denominator, regardless of their social, economic and educational backgrounds. In effect, the way these cities are described compares and contrasts them to a certain set of standards or “ideals” that defines what a “proper” city should be. These standards are not concrete and sometimes change from account to account since they are inevitably rooted in the personal experiences and expectations of each individual. However, it is this very character that makes them worth examining as their similarities and differences reveal the changing nature of urban identity across time, space and social strata.

The most common objects of these comparisons, when made explicitly, are either a generic, usually a vague conception of “European cities” or Istanbul as the capital and an example to look up to. Therefore, an analysis of how they fare against each other, as well as the rest of the cities in the Empire in the accounts of the era will be the focus of this part.

3.1 Ottoman Cities v. European Cities

In searching for the origins of a changing urban setting, the problem of defining a starting point for this process arises as a necessity. Although it is not possible to pinpoint a certain time or event, for the purposes of this thesis, Ottoman ambassadors and their *sefaretnames* were chosen as the first step towards an interpretation. The reason behind this choice lies in the fact that these accounts bear witness to initial close contacts between the Ottoman Empire and Europe, giving way to the possibility of comparing and contrasting the state of affairs to an outside counterpart -or rival- whereas before the only yardstick that the Ottomans tested the circumstances against was the glorious days of the Empire itself.

The mission of Ottoman ambassadors were not limited to diplomatic affairs; they were also responsible for observing the states they were assigned to and report what they thought would be beneficial to the Empire. Hence, they may be considered among the primary channels through which ideas of modernisation were transferred to the Empire. Moreover, despite being state officials, their first time encounter with certain concepts and practices were also personal experiences, determining what they chose to tell and pointing out to the ways they thought the Empire and Europe were different. Although mostly subtle in the beginning stages, the comparison between Europe and the Ottoman Empire in these texts must have resulted in an awareness and questioning of what it is to be an Ottoman, or an Ottoman identity, both at personal and a more general level. The fact that these *sefaretnames* were received by a wider audience than just government officials and

served as an inspiration for the *seyahatnames* of later Ottoman travellers shows that they were an important step in opening the Empire to scrutiny of its subjects on a new level.

So what would these mean within the context of this thesis' topic? Considering that these ambassadors were well educated and spent at least a part of their lives in Istanbul means that being an urbanite was an integral part of this identity. Hence, the idea behind using *sefaretnames* was that any change in this self-identity would have reflected on individual's relation with the city as well. The fact that some of these ambassadors like Seyyid Ali Efendi made an effort to learn about the customs and practices of the countries they would visit beforehand surely indicates their awareness of distinctions between the cultures. Yet, this awareness was not necessarily one that forced or lead the individuals to feel the need to reconstruct or transform their identity. What they experienced during their missions, on the other hand, could have forced them to. Therefore, the main assumption here is that *sefaretnames* could give us some indications as to the beginnings of this process, thereby providing us with a historical background.

The general mood that these accounts convey is actually an avoidance from making clear comparisons and is far from portraying an Empire inferior to their European counterparts: almost all *sefaretnames* speak of how the power and splendour of the Empire was displayed. However, as Tanpınar asserts, starting with as early as Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed's account dated 1721, there is an implicit comparison and a sense of falling behind.²⁵ If this had not been the case, the

²⁵ A.H. Tanpınar, *19. Asır Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, (İstanbul: YKY, 2009), 54.

ambassadors would not have been entrusted with the task of examining “the manner of administration, system of state and situation of the military forces”²⁶ in the countries they were assigned to.

The administrative and political systems must have aroused quite an interest: for instance, in France, there were “numerous viziers called ministers each assigned a different task and were not allowed to interfere in one another’s affairs,”²⁷ while in Britain, there were three sources of power comprising House of Commons, House of Lords and the King.²⁸ Similar detailed observations are also present in other *sefaretnames* and although reactions are mixed, as in criticisms of how two councils slow down the decision making process, a strong state with the power shared between several actors, where the power of the King is limited despite his position as the sovereign, is often emphasised. The relatively secular nature of laws and state politics is also a point of interest. Related to this the rights and equality of people, who “all look the same and use similar ordinary horse carriages” and nobody can question how and why one bought one.²⁹ Mahmud Raif Efendi’s account, on the other hand, points out to “the freedom to criticise people of high status without mentioning their names, as well as people’s right to talk and write as they wished to.” According to him, even the king gets his share of criticisms as “he is defenceless against cartoons making insolent comments about him”.³⁰

²⁶ Cevdet Pasha in Tanpınar, 62.

²⁷ Beynun Akyavaş (haz.). *Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmet Efendi'nin Fransa Sefaretnamesi*, (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yayınları, 1993), 24.

²⁸ Gilles Veinstein, “Mahmud Raif Efendi: Bir Osmanlı Gözlemcinin İngiliz Siyasal Sistemine Bakışı,” (çev.) Çağpar Fıkrıkoca, *Tarih ve Toplum*, Sayı 10 (Ekim 1984), 281.

²⁹ Cahit Bilim, “Ebu Bekir Ratib Efendi, Nemçe Seyahatnamesi,” *Bellekten* 54 (1990), 261-296, 275.

³⁰ Veinstein, 283.

The observations on military force and technology were evidently of great importance. Watching the French Army in Paris, Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi described how he was amazed at the discipline of soldiers. The same motif appears in the accounts of Seyyid Ali Efendi,³¹ Amedi Galib Efendi,³² Ahmed Resmi Efendi³³ and Ebu Bekir Ratib Efendi as well, all pointing to the orderly,³⁴ disciplined army. Hospitals for the injured, medals encouraging the bravery and uniforms contributing to the order, all of which would be adapted in the years to come, are often praised.

So, how would these observations translate into the developments in the Ottoman urban sphere and what were explicit and implicit references to the city?

Architecture and urban planning are without a doubt the first things that drew the attention of these ambassadors in terms of urbanscape. Although the comparisons are mostly in favour of Istanbul, they did not try to hide their admiration. Yirmisekiz Çelebi says “Barring Istanbul, Paris is unique,”³⁵ yet we do know that he came back to the capital with urban and garden plans. While his infatuation with gardens is not surprising as he was an official of the Tulip Era, his successors also quite often praised European cities for their cleanliness and beauty and splendour. The emphasis on these along with related health issues would eventually become quite often pronounced during urban regulations and constructions of the Tanzimat Era and after. As a matter of fact the accounts of massive palaces as well as official and military buildings were adapted in the

³¹ “talim meydanında askerleri seyir”, 735

³² “..’parade’ denilen asker talimi.”, Amedi Galib, 921.

³³ Akyavaş, 71-73.

³⁴ “duvar gibi birbirine yanaşık düzende yürüyen...”, Ahmed Resmi Efendi, 73.

³⁵ Akyavaş, 28, 44.

Ottoman lands as early as Selim III's reign, who ordered the construction of Selimiye Barracks and the palace of Hatice Sultan. This move from building mosques as a sign of ruler's strength to military buildings equalling in size may be indicating a search for other means of justifying sultan's power as well as a shift towards a more secular state system and urban landscape.

The act of observation was inevitably mutual. The ambassadors and their companions were constantly under watchful eyes of population. Some were apparently annoyed by staring eyes while the others related this to having never seen an Ottoman or Muslim and acknowledged their curiosity to a certain degree. In the instance of Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed, the interest of 11 year old King of France in the dresses and manners of the Ottoman convoy were often satisfied by "chance" encounters arranged by the King's ward and Çelebi Mehmed together. Yet, later in his account, it becomes clear that he was not the only one observed as he was surprised to find that people could watch the King eat and even dress-up. This reaction was quite normal, considering the "invisible" sultan of the Empire, hiding in his palace away from the eyes of the public. This issue is also brought up in the *sefaretnâme* of Amedi Galib Efendi, in the form of Napoleon Bonaparte's suggestions. Bonaparte was well informed of the Empire and subtly criticised the sultan for leaving the palace for only Friday prayers, for not involving directly in the problems and not leading the army in the battle ground. It is probable that the picture described by Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed seemed odd to the Ottomans of the era. However, Napoleon's advice and the observations of the ambassadors might be behind the steps taken by Mahmud II towards a more visible sultan who made his

presence felt. Translated into urban scene, this visibility was accentuated by above mentioned constructions, along with such practices as hanging of the sultan's portrait in government offices and military drills in public spaces.

While describing the military, the ambassadors often referred to public squares these parades were performed. Apparently, these spectacles did not only demonstrate the power of the army, it also presented a new perspective of how the city could function as a means to convey messages of strength. The above mentioned aspects of beautification of cities and healthier environments were accompanied by the need to use new means of communicating the changes/reforms and the urban space provided exactly what was needed.

Observations on urbanscape were of course not limited to architectural and planning spheres. Although the authors of these *sefaretnames* did not necessarily establish a direct link with “city,” there are constant pointers to the perception of a different kind of “urban life.” The repeated reference to existence of women in all spheres of life, for instance, must have been because for the Ottoman ambassadors, they were an unusual addition to the urban scenery. In Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed’s words, “France is a paradise for women”³⁶ because even the women from lowest echelons of the society were held in high esteem by the nobles and hence, they “do whatever they will, go wherever they want.” These women not only share the urban space but also interact with men and take part in some casual meetings as wives of government officials. Although Amedi Galib Efendi (1802) finds this odd, as he was very careful in conforming to the rules of his environment, he “meets the wife

³⁶ Akyavaş, 8.

of his host first since this was the custom according to European etiquette.”³⁷ Ebubekir Ratib Efendi (1792) also states that “women have an important place in family and society” and that they face no restraint, have no fear and do not cover themselves. He, however, sees this as a failure of men to control women rather than a custom.³⁸ Nevertheless, whatever their take on the subject is, it must surely have forced them to compare and contemplate on it. As Tanpınar quotes from Melling, an architect who worked under Selim III, the sultan wanted to spread modernity in Istanbul through women³⁹ and had Melling design a garden for his sister Hatice Sultan. How he was to accomplish it, or what he had planned is not clear, but it seems that women integrating into urban life must have become a more familiar sight later in the 19th century as Mustafa Sami (1838) does not seem surprised to see women on streets since he does not make similar comments. Moreover, it appears that he longs for more involvement of women as he talks about working women and mentions that the whole European population, both men and women, can read and write. Mustafa Sami’s ideas probably stem from his belief that with hard work the Empire could catch up to Europe, rather than him being a supporter of women’s emancipation. But clearly and contrary to his predecessors, his idea of a city had evolved from being a dominantly male space to one that included both sexes.

The observations on urban life also include opera, theatre and dances/entertainments. These spectacles were unusual and interesting for the ambassadors since, for many, these were first time experiences. The accounts quite

³⁷ Belkıs Altunış-Gürsoy, “Amedi Galib Efendi Sefaretnamesi”, *Erdem*, 9/27 (Ocak 1997).

³⁸ Ebubekir Ratib (1792), 279.

³⁹ Tanpınar, 67.

often included a summary of plays they had seen, especially when they related to Muslims. Ottoman reactions varied but the ambassadors often referred to these as an integral part of urban life where, as Ahmed Resmi writes, people from all ranks including the king and queen came together. In this respect, theatre served as an urban gathering spot that reinforced a certain feeling of equality, served the implied feeling of proximity with the ruler and at times acted as an outlet for public criticism. As Ebu Bekir Ratib Efendi reported, “If the king, general or dignitaries did something wrong, the actors would warn them with their small jokes that they tell during the intermissions.”

Risale-i Garibe,⁴⁰ an anonymous manuscript written circa the end of 17th or the beginning of the 18th century, describes different types of people you could encounter in the daily life of Istanbul at the time. Develi likens the manuscript to a guidebook of manners, which listed the negative behaviours⁴¹ instead of directly giving advice on the right kind of way one should follow in their everyday actions. Indeed, the manuscript seems to be written in a fit of anger, cursing all elements, behaviours and actors present in the city that the author personally deemed inappropriate. His criticism is directed at people from different walks of life, ranging from government officials who abuse their power to artisans and merchants who deceive their clients, but also focuses on socially unacceptable manners pertaining to everyday life from eating etiquette to improper salutation of acquaintances. He also presents a topography of Istanbul, citing different districts of

⁴⁰ Hayati Develi (haz.), *Risale-i Garibe* (İstanbul: Kitabevi Yay, 1998)

⁴¹ Develi, *Risale*, 12.

the city together with the worthless people one could come across in each one.⁴² People who came to this great city without knowing why and who did not learn Turkish although they spent 50-60 years here as well as people who speak to foreigners in their language instead of Turkish also took the brunt of his hatred.⁴³ Despite his anger towards people who did not speak Turkish, however, noone was immune from his harsh words. For him, becoming a city boy meant having no shame but a lot of arrogance.⁴⁴

While such an example of self-criticism was existent, 19th century was bringing with it new kinds of information to compare oneself against. An anonymous bureaucrat, who traveled to London to visit the 1851 exposition, emphasises the generosity of Sultan Abdulmejid in both delivering justice to his subjects and sending him to London and says that he penned the travelogue “in order to summarise what I saw and examined London and to take pride in the reign of the honourable Sultan.”⁴⁵ When describing how fat the British are, he says that “the fat grocer near Galata, opposite the çeşme in Karaköy resembles a child in comparison.”⁴⁶ His humorous reference to the grocer as a figure everyone knows may indicate that the target audience for the book is mainly the people living in the Galata and Beyoğlu area. This unknown bureaucrat goes to the theater and watches Robert Le Diable, a play which he says he saw one year earlier in Istanbul.⁴⁷ “Each place is different in terms of the characteristics and speed of its education and

⁴² Develi, *Risale*, 22-25.

⁴³ Develi, *Risale*, 22, 33.

⁴⁴ Develi, *Risale*, 32.

⁴⁵ Fikret Turan (haz.), *Seyahatname-i Londra: Tanzimat Bürokratının Modern Sanayi Toplumuna Bakışı* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yay., 2009), 35.

⁴⁶ Turan, 43.

⁴⁷ Turan, 54.

science. For instance, centre for noble sciences such as Islamic studies is İstanbul, the capital of our just Sultan. Whereas European continent is the center where astonishing new industries and new style of education develop.”⁴⁸ His approach to women he sees in London seems to be influenced by the idea of loose women that often dominated narratives of Europe; mistaking their interest and willingness to talk with strangers as a sign of being a prostitute, he was embarrassed to find that they were respectable ladies.⁴⁹ As a result of his observations, he reaches the conclusion that the British society comprised three classes: nobles, merchants and shopkeepers, workers and craftsmen. While the nobles are rich and courteous, merchants, the middle class, are snobbish types who aspire to be like the nobles and look down on the ordinary people. They eventually spend more than they can afford and leave the country to take their chances in cheaper places. The workers and craftsmen, on the other hand, are not like those in Istanbul, who dress-up nicely on Fridays or holidays and entertain with good food and music. Instead, they are dressed poorly all the time, in clothes unbecoming a human being. Nevertheless, their love for the country cannot be compared to anyone else.⁵⁰

The accounts mentioned here reveal the Ottoman curiosity for and openness to what was going on around them as well as their willingness to transform. The ambassadors and those who travelled with them sometimes became directly involved in the adaptation or implementation of what was told in these *sefaretnames*, just as in the case of Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed’s son Said Mehmed Efendi’s collaboration with İbrahim Müteferrika in the establishment of first

⁴⁸ Turan, 60.

⁴⁹ Turan, 62.

⁵⁰ Turan, 67-68.

Ottoman printing press and Mahmud Raif Efendi's *layiha* proposing changes in the Ottoman military. Even when they did not, they laid the ground work for reinterpretation of certain concepts and their adaptation into the Ottoman context. As one can see, most of the practices mentioned in these texts were later implemented with varying degrees of success. The same goes for creation of new relationships between the state and "the city"; in the use of urban space as a tool for communicating the modernisation attempts, as well as enforcing a new urban identity that would accompany and facilitate the transformation from subject to citizen along the lines of Tanzimat.

Yet, if we leave aside interpretation of subtle clues in these accounts, we do not find any explicit comparisons between Ottoman and European cities in a way that would indicate how these ambassadors perceived their relationship with the city and where they placed themselves within the urban framework. Accounts of European travellers might fill this void to a certain extent. The dominant feature in many of these accounts one of a distant and almost non-existent relationship, which is limited to completion of daily tasks. D'Ohsson, for instance, portrays an urban crowd that is detached from the city, isolated from its surroundings and unaware of what goes on around them. Interestingly, he draws parallels between the inhabitants of Istanbul and the character of the Ottoman Empire emphasising the ignorance of Turks on subjects concerning foreign countries and the Empire's indifference.⁵¹ This isolation is further emphasised in the case of women, who were most of the time invisible within the city. Although female travellers often mentioned that women of

⁵¹ M. D'Ohsson, *18. Yüzyıl Türkiyesinde Örf ve Adetler*, (çev.) Zerhan Yüksel , (İstanbul: Tercüman 1001 Temel Eser, 1986) .

the Ottoman Empire enjoyed more freedom compared to their European sisters,⁵² this was, they claimed, either due to their husbands not being able to recognise them under their *ferace* or because they were mostly uneducated. That is, their freedom implied an absence from urban scene rather than inclusion in it as Montagu observes that “they have no public places but the bagnios.”⁵³ The physical aspects of the cities, on the other hand, were often criticised for the state the streets were in did not match the first impressions of grandeur that these travellers got. Yet, Pardoe's much later account of Istanbul, during the reign of Mahmud II portrays a more positive picture, where a vivid urban life was described. In this setting, the inhabitants had a closer relationship with the city, enough to form their own unique habits/routines. Also, although Pardoe claims that “Turks have groundless beliefs that prevent them from progressing”, her account often mentions European examples adopted by such families.

So, when coupled with the fact that we only encounter a feeling of being an urbanite as opposed to being simply an urban dweller in a 19th century account by a foreign traveller, how do we make sense of this lack of reference to a clear-cut definition of an Ottoman urban identity in *sefaretnames*? Does this mean that the Ottomans did not make such an association with the urban life? It is hard to make a clear definition of how the individuals related to cities in the Ottoman Empire during the 18th and earlier part of the 19th centuries based on these sources. However, it is worth taking into account that the foreign travellers and the Ottoman ambassadors pointed out to similar issues in their writings. The fact that urban life

⁵² Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Turkish Embassy Letters* (London: Virago Press, 1995), 71; Julia Pardoe, *Sultanlar Şehri İstanbul* (İstanbul: İş Bankası Yayınları, 2010), 85.

⁵³ Montagu, 134.

operated on different, namely Islamic, principles does not exclude the existence of an urban identity. The fact of the matter is, that the bulk of the 19th century Ottoman literature and press dwelt on what urban life should entail both administratively and socially should prove the moving away from an already existing urban identity, not forming one from scratch.

Another important point is that the influence of *sefaretnames* did not remain limited to administrative circles. As a matter of fact, Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed's *sefaretname* was among the first books to be published by Müteferrika. According to Emine Foat, Mehmed Ali Pasha of Egypt “studied the books of enlightened travellers, such as Ebu Bekir Ratib Efendi” in order to learn about “Western progress” and based his educational and military reforms lessons he drew from these accounts.⁵⁴ Judging by the references made to it even in travelogues of “civilian” Ottoman travellers dating back to the second half of the 19th century, Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed’s and other ambassadors’ accounts must have been influential in the reconstruction of urban perspectives.

The references to European cities, especially Paris, must have become so ubiquitous that even the act itself had become a point of criticism (and a stereotype). In an article published in *Asir*; an old journalist advises a young enthusiast that as far as knowledge needed to become a journalist was concerned at the time, all he had to do was “look at a panoramic picture of Paris before going to bed, dream about visiting the city in his sleep and memorise some book titles from

⁵⁴ Emine Foat Tugay. *Three Centuries: Family Chronicles of Turkey and Egypt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 74.

M. Vic's (*sic*) bookshop."⁵⁵ Mr. Wick's bookshop in Pera was established in 1840s and was renowned for selling Parisian novelties, including Eugene Sue's much sought after *Les Mysteres de Paris*.⁵⁶ Whether Çaylak Tevfik's imagined satirical dialogue was alluding to Ahmet Midhat Efendi's novel *Paris'te Bir Türk* is not certain, but considering that Ahmet Midhat had never been outside the Empire when he wrote it and used many guide books and maps for his descriptions, he might as well have been the target.

There were also times when guidebooks were used in accordance with their purpose. Before Ahmet İhsan embarked on his three month journey throughout Europe in 1891, he carefully studied the Baedeker's Guide and was thus "more knowledgeable than an ordinary tourist."⁵⁷ Yet, this was not the only source of his information on Europe in general and Paris in particular. As Alain Servainte asserts, his perception of the journey was formed, in addition to Baedeker's guide, by the Cook travel agency and his French influenced education, as well as his Turkish upbringing and manners.⁵⁸ Being the avid reader he was since his youth, it should be safe to assume that *seyahatnames* and even Ahmed Midhat's *Paris'te Bir Türk* had been as part of this upbringing. As a matter of fact, Ahmed İhsan bears a striking resemblance to the novel's protagonist Nasuh in the ways he tries to correct the "misconceptions" Europeans seemed to have developed against the Ottoman Empire.

⁵⁵ *Asır*, 40 (22 Temmuz 1870).

⁵⁶ Johann Strauss, "Who Read What in the Ottoman Empire," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 6/1 (2003), 39-76, 46-47.

⁵⁷ Ahmed İhsan Tokgöz. *Avrupa'da Ne Gördüm* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 2007), 128.

⁵⁸ A. İhsan, *Avrupa'da...*, xl.

Nonetheless, as he himself stated, the real question was whether he found Paris as he imagined it to be: “I am hesitant, too. When I compare them in certain aspects, I find [Paris] to be superior, but in others, it is not what I hoped it would be.”⁵⁹ Ahmed İhsan had envisioned that the population would be more educated and opinions would be stronger while they proved the contrary. On the topic of morals, however, he discovered that all he heard about Parisians, especially the loose women, were ungrounded. What exactly matched his imagination of Paris had to do with urban administration and planning, which were already being adapted -at least in writing or under consideration- in the Empire.

What can be gathered from these accounts is manifold. First, as mentioned above, since they allowed for the comparison of the Empire with its counterparts, they helped place the state into a larger perspective that revealed both its shortcomings as well as shaped the strategy that would be pursued. Furthermore, although the earlier accounts did not venture outside offering suggestions, they still opened the way for criticism of state policies. As this practice trickled down to the society at large, and when coupled with the whirlwind of administrative changes in the 19th century Ottoman Empire, it must have been influential in the redefinition of state and subject relations, at least for a portion of the population primarily living in the cities.

Another dimension that these narratives brought about was the reshaping of expectations from urban living. Descriptions of beautiful, clean and orderly urban sceneries fueled the imaginations of readers of this kind of literature, changing their

⁵⁹ A. İhsan, *Avrupa'da...*, 128.

perceptions of what and who should be a part of the city, what it should look like and how they should position themselves within this relationship. Pictures of cities printed in earlier newspapers were borrowed from Armenian printers, who received them from Protestant Americans, hence, even the images of urban life belonged to foreign lands. As a matter of fact, during his first visit to Europe in 1891, Ahmed İhsan made arrangements with an Austrian company, which would prepare the line engravings of Istanbul sceneries that Ahmed İhsan would send to them.⁶⁰ It should be noted, however, that the way European cities were described in these accounts also changed in form and content through time and from author to author. At times, “European city” or “Paris” became almost “non-entities” which would only be used as practical tools to get the message of the author across.

When the comparison with Europe involved Istanbul, however, the authors were often more reserved in extending their comments. The mid-19th century official documents emphasised the natural beauty of the city and assured that small touch ups here and there would suffice to restore the former glory of the city. This reservation was in part due to the status of Istanbul as representative of the state, which also served as a showcase for reforms that would later be extended to the rest of the Empire.

⁶⁰ Ahmed İhsan, *Matbuat Hatıralarım (1888-1914)* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2012), 77.

3.2 Istanbul v. the Rest of the Empire

The idea that urban living is synonymous to being civilised and progressive had been explicitly stated as early as Ibn Khaldun's treatise on cities. While the premises of this statement did not change much over the centuries, the definitions of what is considered civilised as well as the criteria that set forth urbanity had been evolving. As these concepts were in the process of redefinition in the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire also had to redefine its character and role in order to be able to impose new standards and justify its measures and actions. Being an urbanite was still synonymous to being civilised but this time most, if not all, mode of behaviour befitting an urbanite, the method of administration and urban planning were arguably dictated from the central administration.

Ussama Makdisi's term "Ottoman Orientalism"⁶¹ is one of many explanations used to better understand this redefinition process. According to Makdisi, the 19th century transformation of the Ottoman Empire had been fuelled by an acceptance of the West as a model for progress and the East as a representation of backwardness. Yet, since an explicit recognition of this backwardness would put the Empire itself in the ranks of the uncivilised, the Ottoman centre had to identify itself as a civilising agent by creating its own orient. Thus, the Empire sought to present itself "as a modern, bureaucratic and tolerant state"⁶² that would guide the less civilised populations within its boundaries into modernity. Installing a sense of equal citizenship was a crucial part of this plan, yet

⁶¹ Ussama Makdisi, "Ottoman Orientalism," *The American Historical Review*, 107/3 (June 2002), 768-798.

⁶² Makdisi, 770.

at the same time, as pointed out by Makdisi, the Ottoman Turkish character of this modernising agent was often emphasised. Within this scheme, Istanbul arose as the modern political centre and temporally the highest point.⁶³

In a similar vein, Selim Deringil draws attention to this “civilising mission” of the Empire and uses the term “borrowed colonialism” to describe the mind-set of the 19th century Ottoman ruling elite.⁶⁴ In this context, “borrowed” implies that the Ottomans used it as a “survival tactic” rather than a tool to exploit the sources of the territories in question. In the Ottoman case, the population targeted to be civilised was of the same religion and the attitude of the state amalgamated the pre-modern and the modern, that is, the Islamic essence and the Tanzimat ideals. Within this mind-set, the justification rested on the premise of the Ottoman centre’s moral superiority from the populations in the Arab periphery of the Empire and the resulting “moral distance” helped define “them and us.”⁶⁵

That Melek Hanım described policies pursued by the Ottoman centre starting with Mahmud II as a “civilising movement” is too relevant to be considered as a coincidence.⁶⁶ In line with this civilising mission, Deringil says that Osman Nuri Pasha, who served as governor in Hejaz and Yemen during Abdulhamid II’s reign, proposed six priorities for the survival and the flourishing of any state that comprised establishment of administrative, political and legal structures, construction of military and government buildings that would reflect the glory of

⁶³ Makdisi, 771.

⁶⁴ Selim Deringil, “They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery: The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 45/2 (April 2003), 311-342.

⁶⁵ Deringil, “Nomadism and Savagery,” 338.

⁶⁶ Melek Hanım, *Thirty Years in the Harem or, the Autobiography of Melek Hanım, Wife of H.H. Kibrizli Mehemet Pasha* (Berlin: Elibron Classics, 2005), 46.

state, spread of education, increasing revenues and building of roads.⁶⁷ A very vivid example of this approach can be seen in Tevfik Biren's memoirs, when he was given the orders to rebuild Beersheba in line with the state policies. Beersheba was chosen for this project for the fertile lands surrounding the town, as well as the tribes living in the area who had "become more civilised and developed certain familiarity with urban life,⁶⁸" in the hope that they would settle there and send their children to school. Some 30 years ago, in 1865, Ahmed Muhtar Pasha was sent to Kozan in Adana province to suppress the insurrection of semi-nomadic tribes who resisted the forced settlement policies of the state. For Emine Foat "the trouble lay in these people's dislike of living permanently in fixed places,"⁶⁹ not in their objection to changing their ways of living drastically, being subdued by the state for maintaining the order of the area and being forced to pay taxes.

Prior to the start of construction works, Tevfik Bey relayed his vision for the town to his wife, likening the Bedouin tents to the mansions in Kızıltoprak, Göztepe and Erenköy.⁷⁰ One year later, Naciye Neyyal was impressed by the transformation of the town into a modern one, complete with its Government Office building in the centre. The plans seemed to have worked since, according to her, the Bedouin population also asked for a school and a mosque to be built near the Government Building. Apparently, Tevfik Bey regarded Istanbul and modernity as synonyms. In this respect, Istanbul and other Ottoman port cities in the West that went through

⁶⁷ Deringil, "Nomadism and Savagery," 327.

⁶⁸ Fatma Rezan Hürmen (haz.), *Bürokrat Tevfik Biren'in II. Abdülhamid, Meşrutiyet ve Mütareke Hatıraları* (İstanbul: Pınar Yayınları 2006), 170.

⁶⁹ Tugay, 9.

⁷⁰ Naciye Neyyal, 79.

similar transformations both in terms of urban culture and setting stood as the epitome of modernity, through which rest of the Empire could be “civilised”. It is therefore no wonder that Neyyal Hanım regarded Salonica a European city and felt more comfortable.⁷¹

The “Ottoman orientalism” seems to exist in not just the state policies but also the attitudes of Ottoman urbanites; particularly how they position themselves within the ranks of “civilisation.” Such an attitude is present in an earlier account, again by the wife of a member of bureaucratic elite. Upon arriving in Acre, where Kıbrıslı Mehmed Pasha was appointed as governor, his wife Melek Hanım’s first impression of the town “built entirely of mud” was nothing but utter disappointment. The Arabs populating the city, who she addressed as “creatures,” was in her view “naturally thieves and cheats, carried habits of uncleanness to the most extreme degree.”⁷² In Jerusalem, again dominated by an Arab population, Melek Hanım pointed out to the difficulty in managing them and, because they fail to pay their taxes, that the Turks “regard them as miscreants,”⁷³ and a source of problem. Her experience in Egypt presented a comparable picture, where a heavy stench and filth dominated the unpaved and narrow streets.⁷⁴ The only part of the town that she felt comfortable was a neighbourhood called “Course” with its European style buildings and a square which resembled “that of a town in the south

⁷¹ Naciye Neyyal, 85.

⁷² Melek Hanım, 68.

⁷³ Melek Hanım, 76.

⁷⁴ Melek Hanım, 137-138.

of France.”⁷⁵ Although Melek Hanım does not consider herself Oriental, it is interesting to see her counterparts acting almost the same years later.

This point becomes more obvious as Naciye Neyyal Hanım puts a clear distinction between “us” and “them”: “Although the Bedouin are well adapted to their surroundings, this life is very troublesome for us. Just as it is hard to settle them in a more civilised manner, it is hard for us to get accustomed to such way of living.”⁷⁶ When she arrived in Jaffa, Naciye Neyyal had hard time accepting what she saw, complaining that she could not have imagined “there were such primitive places in the Empire.”⁷⁷ Since this was the first time she had ever left Istanbul, it could be expected that she would compare the two cities. Yet, the scenery of Jaffa also forced her to reconsider the image of Ottoman Empire in her mind, which apparently had no association with “primitivity.” This foreign world she entered in entailed replacing her Istanbul style clothes with more modest ones⁷⁸ and getting used to manners and customs that she could not make sense of. This parallels the assertion of this dissertation that the city represented not simply an urban area but also the Empire. Whether this altered her opinion of the Empire for worse is not clear from her account, yet it must have at least made her question the validity of it, maybe even rethink her mother's words in which she echoed the view of the glory past telling Neyyal she “should have seen (the beauty of) Istanbul during Abdulmecid's reign.”⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Melek Hanım, 139.

⁷⁶ Naciye Neyyal, 79.

⁷⁷ Naciye Neyyal, 46.

⁷⁸ Naciye Neyyal, 46.

⁷⁹ Naciye Neyyal, 16.

Their encounters with diseases they thought no longer affected the Ottoman population was also common in the accounts. Ophthalmia that seems to have riddled all the Arab provinces of the Empire was mentioned by Naciye Neyyal, Melek Hanum, Tevfik Biren and many others as a sign of filthiness and backwardness of the area as well as lack of education that prevented these people from applying basic principles of hygiene. While big cities as well as the capital still fought cholera, the precautions to mitigate the damage they would cause were made public by the state regulations, newspapers and community leaders, giving people the impression that they were safer within city boundaries. Even the newspapers were claiming that this disease would not enter Istanbul, probably to dispell the atmosphere of panic and fear and making sure that they underline Europe was also badly affected by the same disease. The reports of deaths in the papers, however, were revealing the severity of the situation: during the cholera epidemic of 1865, 5073 people died and 5438 were diagnosed with the disease in the area comprising Beyoğlu, Galata, Tatavla and Yenişehir within only two months.⁸⁰ Despite such a disrupting effect on the population, however, the Istanbulites were immediately called to return to their normal lives “in accordance with their religion” and women were warned to dress in accordance with their circumstances. While cholera claimed many lives in urban and rural areas alike, the urbanites were battling another ailment by the name of “melancholia.” This sophisticated kind of disease seems to have affected first the rulers and then the high classes of the cities. *Tasvir-i Efkar* reported in its several issues that Russian Emperor as well as the prominent

⁸⁰ *Tasvir-i Efkar*, Nr. 328, 16 Rebiülevvel 1282 (8 September 1865)

members of the society were stricken with melancholia and went away from the city to be cured in thermal springs.

The fact that the lack of certain standards implied primitivism in the eyes of these urban dwellers surely shows that they assigned a certain degree of a civilised status not only to the cities they lived in but also to themselves. Hence, the way the accounts describe backwardness is also a definition of the authors' urban identity. It should be noted here that the narratives do not just concentrate on the peripheries of the Empire. Even within Istanbul and the other "civilised" parts of the Ottoman Empire, there existed segments of society unbecoming a proper urban life. The fact that the intellectuals of Tanzimat era and after, most notably Ahmed Midhat, assumed a teacher's role in communicating what they considered to be the best manner of becoming civilised makes the issue of Ottoman Orientalism more complicated, bringing in the elements of social segmentation based on wealth and education.

Despite the constant mentions of primitivism and civilisation in these accounts, however, arguing that the Ottoman Empire followed a strictly colonial policy would be to disregard the nature of the Empire's position vis-à-vis these populations. According to Edip Gölbaşı, the Ottoman centre formed a more organic relationship with the provinces, where differences between the centre and the local populations were temporary, contrary to colonial mode of thought that put a distance that could never be covered.⁸¹ What can be assumed without a doubt is that these accounts were based on a comparison of urban and rural and a realisation of

⁸¹ Edip Gölbaşı, "19. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Emperyal Siyaseti ve Osmanlı Tarih Yazımında Kolonyal Perspektifler," *Tarih ve Toplum*, 13 (Güz 2011), 199-222.

the Empire's circumstances that was not conceived within the boundaries of the Ottoman capital. Goffmann suggests that the influence of Istanbul on the self-perception of Ottomans was much stronger than the influence of the Ottomans on the city.⁸² Hence, encountering this uncivilised side of the Empire must have contradicted the identities and values attached to these individuals.

Whether we call it Ottoman orientalism or not, it can be claimed that a notion of modernity as opposed to backwardness of certain peoples and regions of the Empire or ways of living associated with the past, even if "past" meant a few decades or even years ago, had pervaded into the lives of urban dwellers. It seems that although the Ottoman center tried to break the European perception of the Empire, similar sentiments had started to manifest itself, albeit unconsciously. The orientalist depictions of Ottoman women and dervishes in world fairs of 19th century were a main concern for the Empire,⁸³ however, this did not stop the mevlevihane of Galata from becoming a tourist attraction not only for foreigners but also for the inhabitants of Istanbul.⁸⁴ As Naciye Neyyal calls it, "this intriguing spectacle" marks breaking of certain codes for especially urban areas when the influence of Islam was fading, if not disappearing. The same can be said of daily rules of conduct based on religion as the transformation of urban space and life meant that new practices and social settings would be developed and therefore new rules of conduct had to be devised. Hence, *adab-ı muaşeret* emerged as a way of keeping the inhabitants' lives in pace with urban developments.

⁸² Goffmann, 91.

⁸³ Deringil, 166-167.

⁸⁴ Naciye Neyyal, 30.

CHAPTER IV

IN DISGUISE: THE “DICHOTOMIES” OF URBAN SPACE

Overcome by curiosity on a Ramadan day, Melek Hanum and her friend, who she claims to be the adopted daughter of Sultan Mahmud II's sister, dressed up as men and went to St. Sophia to watch the festivities, where they would not be allowed as women.⁸⁵ The two ladies were “dazzled” by the sights and sounds of the mosque which they experienced for the first time and returned their homes after barely escaping the threat of revealing their identities. The next time she was in disguise was in Alexandria when she was taken to see the town dressed as a merchant's wife.⁸⁶ Although Melek Hanum does not elaborate, the reason for this costume must have been blending in with the crowd and providing a degree of security for the two ladies who would otherwise surely draw attention among the poor inhabitants of the city with their elegant attires. While Melek Hanum's accounts should be taken with a grain of salt because of her “bitter” life experiences in the Empire, the use of “disguise” in one way or the other arises as a common theme in many contemporary narratives. Upon arriving in Jerusalem, for instance, Naciye Neyyal Hanım felt the

⁸⁵ Melek Hanum, 26.

⁸⁶ Melek Hanum, 137.

need to purchase new *çarşafs* since the ones they already had “stood out with their Istanbul fashion.”⁸⁷

A change of appearances was certainly not limited to women. Aside from many complaints that criticise non-Muslims wearing Muslim attire in the early part of the 19th century, adoption of European style clothing was necessary if one wanted to be a part of burgeoning new actors of the city. Although such practices were met with a certain degree of disdain, especially by intellectuals of the time, there were also times when disguises were eventually assumed as real identities. On his visit to Vienna, for instance, Tevfik Biren and his friend were mocked by a group of children for their *fezes*.⁸⁸ Thankfully, they were prepared and brought with them European style hats they had bought in Istanbul. When he arrived back in Istanbul and put on his fez again, he could not help laughing at his image in the mirror.⁸⁹

On the surface, therefore, “the disguise” is a practical tool to provide security, to blend in and even at times to gain advantages. However, it also reveals certain lines of demarcation that exist within the city, which set apart feminine and masculine spaces, Muslims and non-Muslims, the rich from the poor and the modern from the traditional. The relationships urban dwellers establish with the city and others they share the space with are shaped by tangible legal and customary boundaries as well as these “implied” invisible lines that bind or separate the groups, individuals and the space. Defining these relationships simply along

⁸⁷ Naciye Neyyal, 48.

⁸⁸ Tevfik Biren, I, 245.

⁸⁹ Tevfik Biren, I, 250.

dichotomous categories of gender, religious affiliation or wealth for the sake of facilitating a closer examination may bear the risk of overlooking certain aspects since the nature of any kind of social relations gives way to more complex patterns that not only diverge population groups, their behaviour and manners but also lead them to converge, at times in unexpected ways. Yet, it is also this very complexity that necessitates the task of breaking these patterns into separate categories.

So, in what ways could these changes have affected perceptions of the inhabitants? Several issues come to the forefront. First, as the gender segregation that marked one of the defining characteristics of the cities began to dissolve, women started to establish their relations with the urban life from scratch. Tanzimat period marked a turning point in the visibility of Ottoman women by including them in the census and then the educational system and the work force. However, as the resistance to the inclusion of women as an integral part of everyday urban living was strong; cities eventually became a battling ground for inclusion into life.

The breaking of traditional patterns would point out to a transformation in the relations of the *millet*s to cities they lived in and with each other as well. The equality promised to non-Muslims by the Tanzimat decree meant that the visual signs that set them apart from Muslims such as dress codes would disappear, while the protégé status offered by foreign embassies and the new economic setting allowed more non-Muslims to gain further economic advantage. However, the old visual signs might have been replaced by new ones as, for instance, in Damascus “the splendid houses built by rich class of Christians excited jealousy... among

Mussulmans.’⁹⁰ Obviously, the feelings of resentment were rooted in the economic and social conditions rather than architecture, however, it seems safe to say that 19th century brought about a shift in the lives of Muslims and non-Muslims, altering their relations with the city and each other.

The categories presented in this chapter are based on most ubiquitous patterns of both the contemporary accounts and the majority of secondary literature that deals with Ottoman social history. In analysing these, I aim to find out not only the 19th century shifts and changes in these “dichotomies” but also to what degree they existed and influenced the urban relations in the first place. As regulators of manners and behaviours, whether and how these were translated into people’s everyday life is a key factor in defining the urban identity people constructed for themselves. Moreover, the interplay of these dichotomies bring forward other demarcation points within the city, which include, among others, association of urban spatial pattern with the moral order of urban dwellers, a sense of vulnerability and insecurity stemming from destruction of former boundaries as well as formation of new alliances that transcended the former ties of belonging.

4.1 Gendered Spaces

Naciye Neyyal Hanım was a bit dismayed when her husband Tevfik Biren told her that she need not bother to write down her memoirs since no one would be reading them. Thankfully, she was able to ignore his discouraging remarks and leave behind

⁹⁰ Moshe Maoz, “Communal Conflict in Ottoman Syria during the Reform Era,” *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire* (eds.) Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1982), 97.

a chronicle of her years travelling with her husband in his appointments to various parts of the Ottoman Empire as a government official, allowing a side by side comparison of feminine and masculine experiences of different cities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Tevfik Bey served as the governor of Jerusalem, Salonica, Konya, Yemen and Ankara within a time span of 12 years and his wife, sometimes with their children, accompanied him in all places but Yemen. There is no doubt that both he and Naciye Neyyal enjoyed a privileged status as representatives of state, unrestricted by the limitations applying to common folk, yet it is also clear from the accounts that there were certain boundaries they were not allowed to trespass either.

Janet Abu-Lughod asserts that gender segregation is a dominant characteristic of Islamic cities, which does not only shape the city to distinguish physical space but also to protect visual privacy.⁹¹ In this sense, a separation of private and public realms correlates directly to feminine and masculine domains and bring with it the division of functions and spaces. The fact that Naciye Neyyal's account concern primarily domestic visits and stories she heard from other people while her husband spends most of his time either inspecting nearby towns or dealing with the populace, most of the time directly witnessing or interacting with events shows that a similar separation was existent in their experiences as a couple. Even when they were together in one of Tevfik Bey's inspections, "there would always be some space between us since men and women could not be present next

⁹¹ Janet Abu-Lughod, "The Islamic City – Historic Myth, Islamic Essence, and Contemporary Relevance," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 19/2 (May 1987), 155-176, 167.

to each other.”⁹² Throughout the 19th century, as the gender segregation that marked one of the defining characteristics of the cities began to dissolve, if not eroded completely, women started to establish their relations with the urban life from scratch. Tanzimat period marked a gradual shift in the visibility of Ottoman women by including them in the census and then the educational system and the work force. However, as the resistance to the inclusion of women as an integral part of everyday urban living was strong, cities eventually became a battling ground for inclusion into life. Contemporary women’s magazines underlined the continuing practice of gender segregation in public spaces and services such as restaurants, theatres and transport by separating areas men and women were allowed in and criticised having to sit in sections designated for them while they were able to work side by side with men.⁹³ Still, even the existence of such complaints is proof that they began to perceive themselves as a part of the whole city, rather than of a house or a neighbourhood.

The accounts, especially the earlier ones, usually reinforce the common idea that the existence of women in the urban space was subdued. In Melek Hanım’s words quoted above, it is striking that the windows that you could see through and women and men walking around were among the first things she noticed in the city, an observation that does not often come up in the writings of male travellers. The house she lived in after marrying Kıbrıslı Mehmed Pasha had windows guarded by wooden gratings out of which they “could see without being seen.”⁹⁴ Her experiences date from the earlier part of the 19th century, when women's invisibility

⁹² Naciye Neyyal, 71.

⁹³ Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi* (İstanbul: Metis, 1996), 171.

⁹⁴ Melek Hanım, 36.

in public life was more strictly observed. Yet, the idea of openly being a part of urban life must have affected Melek Hanım, and awareness of this possibility may even be one of the reasons why she does not consider herself an “Oriental lady.”

Melek Hanım’s experiences date from the mid-19th century, roughly between 1840 and 1870, when women's invisibility in public life was more strictly observed. Despite the increasing number of women in the streets in the following years, however, the window gratings remained a part of the urban scenery as a marker of privacy. A document dated 1874 pointed out to the lack of gratings on the windows of the Secondary School for Girls in Sultanahmed and asked that they be covered “since most of the students had come of age.”⁹⁵

In this sense, it can be said that even when women were allowed to attend school and commute throughout the city, they carried the private sphere with them: existence of women in the urban public sphere meant a certain portion of that space became private, albeit momentarily. There were times this was turned into an advantage by women, especially when crowds became intolerable: Ahmed Rasim complained about women, who, whether they were “Muslim, Christian or Jewish, shout “I’m a woman” and push away the crowd of men, for instance in ferries, and therefore act in contrast to the courtesy they are supposed to possess.”⁹⁶ While making a space for themselves in the city, therefore, these women were wisely using existing boundaries in parallel with their desire become a part of it.

⁹⁵ Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), MF.MKT 22/118, 5 Za 1291 (July 20, 1874).

⁹⁶ Ahmed Rasim, *Eşkal-i Zaman*, 17-18.

Nevertheless, what Leyla Saz tells of promenades confirms the existence of women in the urban area was still frowned upon and when a problem arose, it was usually the women who had to forgo their enjoyment: “It was the molesters who should have been punished but the police would send the row boats of women back, not allowing them to pass.”⁹⁷ In a newspaper article women were warned that they would be “thrown out of places of amusement and their husbands or relatives would be informed of their behaviour should they dress in violation of the dress code.”⁹⁸ Women’s voices could not be heard on the streets,⁹⁹ moreover, they had to take back streets to avoid punishment since they were not allowed to walk by themselves at nights.¹⁰⁰ Still, the amount of warnings and criticisms is a clear demonstration of women becoming increasingly visible and a part of urban life.

As far as privacy of the women in the sultan’s harem was concerned, however, the palace was “an intimate place of withdrawal, a sanctuary of virtue and modesty which no one had the right to profane,”¹⁰¹ even the doctors. When girls of the palace were sick, they were sent to “the city” to receive proper treatment since “for the inhabitants of the Serail, everything that was not the Serail was the “City.” It was said that the girl had ‘gone out to the City,’ which was the same as saying she had temporarily left the Palace.”¹⁰² Enchanted by the beauty of the women in the Palace, Leyla Saz claimed that “the only thing which was banished from the serail was ugliness.”¹⁰³ Considering the mental distance put between the palace and

⁹⁷ Leyla Saz, 236.

⁹⁸ *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 197, 26 May 1864.

⁹⁹ Ahmet Rasim, *Fuḫṣ-i Atik*, 36.

¹⁰⁰ Ahmet Rasim, *Fuḫṣ-i Atik*, 30.

¹⁰¹ Leyla Saz, *The Imperial*, 155.

¹⁰² Leyla Saz, *The Imperial*, 157.

¹⁰³ Leyla Saz, *The Imperial*, 213.

Istanbul, however, it can be said that the corrupting influence of the city too was dismissed from this safe haven.

Without a doubt, this distance was not an obstacle as long as curiosity persisted, the news of changing city permeated even through the walls of sultan's harem. Emine Foat's two relatives by marriage to her uncles visited Yıldız Palace to be received by Abdulhamid II and told her of an old lady of the Harem, who asked them to describe the city that she had never been a part of:

“I entered the palace when I was a small child, and have never since been outside the garden walls. People often talk about a place called Beyoğlu [Pera]; where is it and what does it look like?’ The question was delicate, as the inmates of the palace were not encouraged to take an interest in the world outside. With great presence of mind, my step grandmother quickly thought how best to reply. ‘You are fortunate never to have been to such a vulgar, ugly place, Ustam. I am sure that being accustomed to the Palace you would not have liked it.’”¹⁰⁴

It is especially interesting to see that Emine Foat uses the word “inmate” for the old woman, but it should be appropriate considering she had never left the palace after being “admitted” within its walls. Still, that the word of Beyoğlu made it through even to the Harem of Yıldız Palace is also telling of vivid urban life that the area fostered and the answer probably sought to avoid raising temptations, regardless of how old the woman was. Some years later, in 1919, Sultan Murad V's daughter Fehime Sultan complained to Naciye Neyyal that Beyoğlu was now too tedious for her.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Tugay, 207.

¹⁰⁵ Naciye Neyyal, 327-328.

There are other accounts which show that the separation of space according to gender was more ambiguous than it is often considered, especially in the second half of the 19th century, and that there were also other factors at work. In one of his articles dating back to 1870s, Basiretçi Ali bitterly complained that “Ottoman women are not allowed in public gardens as if they are not part of the public. An Armenian *dudu* has the right to enjoy herself in *Garden Monsepal*, while our poor women can hardly peek through the door.”¹⁰⁶ Yet, his words should not be interpreted as a demand for more freedom for women as Basiretçi often criticises Muslim women for being out and about. Clara Erskine Waters, who travelled to Istanbul in 1890s, confirms Basiretçi’s worries saying that “the Turkish ladies go about with a freedom that ought to be sufficient for those of any nation. They shop in Pera and in the Mussulman quarters.”¹⁰⁷ Indeed, Muslim women too could not resist the appeal of Beyoğlu shops selling European fashions and thus added new directions to their moving about in the city. Basiretçi Ali pointed out to this change, saying women who preferred foreign goods and tried to look like their European counterparts used to frequent Kalpakçılarbaşı and Beyazıt but now they were even venturing into Beyoğlu “riding leisurely in their carts on Fridays from morning until evening, dressed in clothes unbecoming Islam in the middle of a strange crowd.”¹⁰⁸ Still, as per the relationship between men and women, Ahmed Midhat was critical of the lack of equal participation in the daily life: “In our society, women cannot accompany men in their time spent for entertainment outside of home. Women too attend theater plays but they are separated from men,” adding that this does not

¹⁰⁶ Basiretçi Ali Efendi, *İstanbul Mektupları* (haz.) Nuri Sağlam (İstanbul: Kitabevi Yay, 2001), 49.

¹⁰⁷ Clara Erskine Waters, *The City of the Sultans: Constantinople* (Boston: Estes and Lauriat, 1895), 249.

¹⁰⁸ Basiretçi Ali, 21.

make any sense since men and women already partake in activities that cannot be reconciled with Islamic values.¹⁰⁹

As the century progressed, women became more involved in the daily life and the different circumstances brought about by the different living conditions of women in cities and rural parts of the Empire became apparent. In her *Nisvan-ı İslam*, for instance, Fatma Aliye argued that women living in cities had a lot to quarrel with their husbands while rural women did not complain as long as their needs were met. As a matter of fact, if a husband decided to take a second wife, the first wife would be happy to lose some of her burden, instead of divorcing the man as the urban women do.¹¹⁰

While Fatma Aliye seemed to understand the different circumstances that urban life brought about for women, she also argued that they were not limited in their participation in the city. Her French guests were surprised at the small number of women they saw on the streets, who were all covered up and segregated in public transport, however, Fatma Aliye argued that Muslim women were free to go whenever and wherever they want.¹¹¹ Fatma Aliye's real concern was proving that Islam and modern life were in fact compatible and the foreigners were not able to see into the lives of Muslim women. Just as Ahmet Midhat Efendi tried to right the wrong perceptions Europeans have of Ottomans in his *Paris'te Bir Türk*, Fatma Aliye too felt obligated to her "true" version of Ottoman society, especially of

¹⁰⁹ Ekrem Işın, *İstanbul'da Gündelik Hayat* (İstanbul: YKY, 2006), 127-128.

¹¹⁰ Mübeccel Kızıltan, *Fatma Aliye Hanım: Yaşamı, Sanatı, Yapıtları ve Nisvan-ı İslam* (İstanbul: Mutlu Yay, 1993). Original published in 1891.

¹¹¹ Fatma Aliye, *Nisvan*, 53

Ottoman women who were harder to access and get to know¹¹² and therefore shrouded in mystery and obscured by legends. For her, although there were Ottoman women speaking a degree of French that would enable them to present a genuine insight into their daily lives, they would not be able to do so. Since these women adopted a European way of life, speaking to them “would be akin to speaking with foreign families living in Beyoğlu”¹¹³ and “people who don’t venture outside Beyoğlu misrepresent us.”¹¹⁴

In the earlier part of the 20th century, however, it seems that the difference between the lives of Muslim and non-Muslim women were becoming more recognised. Abdullah Cevdet, for instance, commended author Zabel Yeseyan for being “familiar with the pain and suffering of her non-Christian sisters who wither away and die behind cages.”¹¹⁵ Şahabettin Süleyman in his commentary added that “we can see through the soul of a woman who assumed a different character and temperament as she moved further apart from daily social life. A woman, too, is a human being after all.”¹¹⁶

All things considered, the discrepancy in these accounts points to the multiplicity of urban experiences and therefore the difficulty in coming up with a generalised idea. Yet, it is safe to say that the shift in balance of gendered presence in urban space in favour of women had apparently become a reality since it was a matter of concern in almost every account and influential in the construction of an urban identity.

¹¹² Fatma Aliye, *Nisvan*, 65.

¹¹³ Fatma Aliye, *Nisvan*, 65.

¹¹⁴ Fatma Aliye, *Nisvan*, 66.

¹¹⁵ Sarkis Srents, *Ermeni Edebiyatı Numuneleri* (İstanbul: Aras Yayıncılık, 2012), 30.

¹¹⁶ Srents, 49.

Women leaving the confines of their houses or protected domains to become a more visible part of urban life and share space with men meant that the public and private domains started to converge, seemingly at the expense of privacy. This convergence brought with it more than a changing of private property rights; it also meant that the state was now also a part of private relations within a city with the power to intervene when it deemed necessary, whereas before such an intervention necessitated demand of the people involved. Despite liberating aspects of this process especially for women, this new dynamic brought with it its own set of rules that would put other restrictions in the form of social obligations and proper manner. As Naciye Neyyal reminisced about Jerusalem, she placed a great deal of importance to her horse rides with the sheikh, which –although she says that women in Jerusalem often rode horses- would have been considered improper by the populace within the city. Where there was no distinction, however, there was no city.

4.2 Muslims and Non-Muslims

When in 1870, a fire started and turned Beyoğlu into ruins, burning more than 3000 houses, 600 shops and killing more than 600 residents of the area,¹¹⁷ the newspapers began to run public announcements calling Istanbul-dwellers to help the victims. The first to come to the aid were the wealthy non-Muslim inhabitants of the area, who contributed individually, as well as several companies and banks within the district, followed by foreign consulates and foreigners engaged in trade within

¹¹⁷ *Astır*, 3 (26 May 1870).

the Empire as well as newspapers printed in French.¹¹⁸ However, despite encouragement from Ottoman newspapers urging Muslims to donate to the cause as public spirit and mercy of Islam requires and trying to emphasise being *Osmanlı* as a way creating a sense of solidarity with the non-Muslim victims¹¹⁹ the contribution of Muslim urban-dwellers remained limited to a handful of individuals. This reaction to a common occurrence that burdened all the city dwellers at different times was both surprising and expected since the balance of intercommunal relationship had been overhauled by the developments of 19th century.

The promise of equal citizenship that was brought into scene after Tanzimat broke apart the existing hierarchy that benefited Muslims and it had considerable repercussions within the urban space. When coupled with the economic disadvantages created by the increasing trade activities of non-Muslims under protection of foreign embassies, the resentment of Muslims sometimes burst out in the form of conflicts with Christians. Although conflicts in Damascus (1860) and Aleppo (1850) were extreme cases, they represent the drastic dissolution of former urban social order. Complaints from Muslims quite often addressed non-Muslims settling in their neighbourhoods as invaders, and changing laws such as dress codes that granted them more “public visibility” was frowned upon¹²⁰ creating tension and rift between communities.

Cevdet Pasha, in his *Tezâkir*, reported that the Muslims considered Islahat Ferman offensive, emphasising the natural rights they used to enjoy that came with

¹¹⁸ *Asır*, 7 (1 June 1870).

¹¹⁹ *Asır*, 5 (28 May 1870). The paper reported only a few Muslim casualties and there were only six Muslim houses that were burnt down.

¹²⁰ Cengiz Kırılı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu: Osmanlı Modernleşme Sürecinde “Havadis Jurnalleri”* (İstanbul: İş Bankası Yayınları, 2009), 78-79.

the superiority of Islam: “We have lost our sacred national rights today. People of Islam, who were the rulers, are now deprived of this right. This is a day of mourning for the community of Islam.” Yet, again according to Cevdet Pasha, Muslims were not the only ones that felt uncomfortable with “equality.” The order intrinsic to the workings of communal relations within the city had assigned fixed positions to other communities as well. The hierarchy dictated that Rums came first, followed by Armenians and lastly the Jews and the changes had disturbed the Greek community: “The state made us equals with the Jews, We were pleased with the superiority of Islam.”¹²¹ Ahmed Refik, too, mentioned that non-Muslims living in Istanbul were placed in a hierarchical social order, where Jews came after Armenians, and Armenians came after *Rums*. Their positions were observed during the official welcoming ceremonies for the sultan, where any change in this setting was immediately challenged by the Greek Patriarchate.¹²² Still, none of the communities were as shaken as the Muslims: “May God protect Ottoman Empire, for within only five to ten years, the whole Istanbul changed. The city flourished but however renewed and beautified it is, the fact that Frank population started to own houses and shops in the capital is dangerous. I glanced at the mansions of Franks all the way from Galata to here (Beyoğlu).”¹²³

As far as the life on the streets was concerned, the effect was considerable. Misailidis wrote jokingly that during the school parades, it was customary to name one of the kids *efendi* of Istanbul, put him on a donkey and have him inspect grocery shops of Christians. If his weights and scale were not upto the standards, he

¹²¹ Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir*, 68.

¹²² Ahmed Refik, 101.

¹²³ Kırılı, 345.

would be shamed publicly. As a part of a novel, it is not certain whether this custom was fictional or real but Misailidis added a footnote at the end of the paragraph saying that “thankfully after the reading of Gulhane Rescript in 1839 and its implementation thereafter, civilisation has been improving and such barbaric and brutal practices began to be erased.”¹²⁴

The difference was evident in other non-Muslim accounts. K m rc yan, for instance, bitterly complained about people who mocked him for “describing what they already know” and, to our dismay, does not state why he wrote his account of Istanbul saying he “will not dignify them with an answer.”¹²⁵ Since the book was a gift for his friend Vardapet, who he addressed throughout his writing, it can be regarded as a short introduction of the capital with its inhabitants and topography. Almost 120 years later,  nciciyan¹²⁶ produced a similar account of  stanbul, focusing more on the architectural features of the city. Aside from such minor differences, both accounts included only brief information on populations of Turks, Rums and Jews while describing in detail the Armenian community of Istanbul. These narratives thus take the form of a history of Armenians in Istanbul, as if to mark their long presence in the city and reconfirm their position as part of Istanbul’s population.

Baronyan’s description of 19th century Istanbul, however, takes into account only the Armenian population of the city and draws boundaries of a moral

¹²⁴ Evangelinos Misailidis, *Seyreyle D nyayı: TemaŐa-i D nya ve Cefakar-u CefakeŐ* (haz.) Robert Anhegger ve Vedat G nyol ( stanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1986), 577.

¹²⁵ Eremya  elebi K m rc yan, * stanbul Tarihi: XVII. Asırda  stanbul* ( stanbul:  stanbul  niversitesi Yay., 1952), 1.

¹²⁶ P.Ő.  nciciyan, *XVIII. Asırda  stanbul* ( stanbul:  stanbul Enstit s , 1976).

geography based on Armenian communities of each neighbourhood he visits.¹²⁷ As a direct manifestation of 19th century processes, Baronyan drew attention to the flaws of the Armenian community that hindered their solidarity and unity and gave advice to become more *milliyetperver*. In this narrative, Istanbul served only as the background and does not really factor in as an actor, what had now come to the forefront was the Armenian identity.

While the uncomfortable repositioning of different communities continued, another identity began to rival the already disturbed communal relationships: The protégé status granted by the foreign consulates. In İstanbul, İzmir and Salonica, the number of non-Muslim that sought protection from other countries increased throughout the 19th century, despite having no legal basis for extension of such a privilege. As a matter of fact, “most of the Greeks (that went under the protection of Greece) were members of families who once migrated from Anatolia and let alone them, maybe even their ancestors had not seen Greece.”¹²⁸ *Tasvir-i Efkar* reported that 70 % of Christians living in and around İzmir were now under the protection of foreign states.¹²⁹ Along with religious or national zeal, the paper continued, the main reason for seeking this status was ensuring a smoother conduct of business.

Yet, assuming this identity –whether genuine or fake- had its advantages in the daily life of the urbanite as well. Back then, when people got in trouble, they put a hat on their heads and pretended to be Levantines, speaking in French. Some were

¹²⁷ Hagop Baronyan, *İstanbul Mahallelerinde Bir Gezinti* (çev.) P. Hilda Teller Babek (İstanbul: Can Yay., 2014).

¹²⁸ *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 228, 7 R 1864.

¹²⁹ *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 416, 28 R 1866.

even able to pass Venetian cigarette papers as passports.¹³⁰ When Stefanos and Favini started to take a beating while trying to break-up a fight, they shouted “Let us go, we have passports,” implying that they were under the protection of a foreign country and thus untouchable. The passport, alas, did not work on ordinary people from the street and the two would be beaten to a pulp if it was not for the police coming to their rescue.¹³¹

The pleas for help from the populace of Istanbul after the Beyoğlu fire of 1870 failed to bring together Muslim and non-Muslim elements of the society. Similarly, Cevdet Pasha, talking about a fire that took place in Laleli, said that fires in Istanbul were a familiar sight and since the people of Istanbul were not used to pitch in money for aid, only a small amount was collected for the victims. He, however, also added rather bitterly that if there was no attempt at collecting aid for Samatya fire, people would object saying “Christians are not cared for.”¹³²

While this brings to mind the questions of irreconcilable elements and primacy of local identities over an urban identity that pertained to the whole city, it also necessitates a closer look at the other factors regulating the intercommunal relationships since the changing hierarchies were now existent within the communities as well. Hence, while the balance seemed to tip in favour of non-Muslim communities, the actual repercussions of 19th century reforms differed on an individual basis as well.

¹³⁰ Misailidis, 116.

¹³¹ Misailidis, 579.

¹³² Cevdet Pasha, *Tezahir*, 53.

4.3 New Lines of Demarcation

Although there is no reason to deny that above dichotomies were very real and existent within the urban fabric of Ottoman cities, in practice, their workings involve many crossing paths and intricacies. As mentioned before, I assume a multitude of identities not only within the society but also within the individual as well. An urban dweller might identify with different elements of urban life to varying degrees and form a unique urban identity. Hence, looking at subtler patterns that permeate these accounts is a necessity to present a more unified picture and thorough analysis. As such, how and why the lifestyles and daily routines of some urbanites converged despite the above mentioned diverged spheres will be the main focus of this part.

The economic developments of the 19th century were not only marking a shift in the balance between the Muslims and non-Muslims but also pointing towards the creation of a commercial bourgeoisie, who challenged the workings of the state.¹³³ The fact that first attempts at a municipal system started in areas with high populations of non-Muslims, the core of commercial bourgeoisie, and foreigners is indicative that demands by these groups were a potent force in shaping of the urban fabric as well. In Istanbul, for instance, the role of Galata and its environs as the centre of commercial activity attracted the wealthier populations. For Muslim inhabitants, on the other hand, the choice to settle in this area signified a certain cultural expression, as well as their socioeconomic status, which opposed a traditionalist and conservatist approach represented by the old centre.¹³⁴ Even the

¹³³ Göçek, *Bourgeoisie*, 117.

¹³⁴ Eldem, *İmparatorluk Payitahtından*, 229.

sultan and his household were not immune to this shift in the centre of the city. As opposed to a divine sultan secluded in Topkapi, visibility and penetration into the lives of subjects had now come to the forefront. This movement away from the old centre had already begun in the 18th century, however, 19th century palaces built near Galata and Pera meant the reduction of the old centre to a mere symbolic ceremonial space. The bureaucratic bourgeoisie who followed the sultan also contributed to the widening of the gap between these two centres.

However, a large portion of the city was unable to keep up with the developments taking place in Galata-Pera region, and this meant the exclusion and denial from certain economic networks for the populace outside the area.¹³⁵ Whether this created a feeling of hostility on both sides and how it affected the perceptions of the inhabitants remains yet to be discovered. Contrary to Istanbul, however, other port cities that underwent similar changes seem to have reacted differently in terms of a socioeconomic division of urban space. In Salonica, for instance, despite movements in small scale, there does not seem to be a mass concentration of wealthy population in a specific area and a polarisation of socioeconomic status groups.¹³⁶ It could be expected that the capital experienced the transformation at an excessive rate since the sultan and bureaucracy acted as channels emanating the modern ways of living, which encouraged the division. Alongside a division within the cities, it should also be mentioned that, aside from the capital and some port cities, the rest of the empire could not keep up with the pace of transformations, as well.

¹³⁵ Eldem, *İmparatorluk Payitahtından*, 229.

¹³⁶ Meropi Anastassiadou, *Tanzimat Çağında Bir Osmanlı Şehri* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yay., 1998), 232.

The changes in the economic sphere were directly reflected on the urban life and eventually contemporary Ottoman literary works. The creation two types of protagonists that represented the stereotypical snobbish urban type, who ends up in a miserable conditions, and a more sensible and responsible counterpart who benefits from his down to earth attitude immediately paralleled the arrival of similar characters on the urban scene. In Ahmed Midhat's *Felatun Bey ve Rakım Efendi*,¹³⁷ we see Felatun Bey as an ignorant, and arrogant personality, who, while striving to imitate Europeans, falls into an spiral of moral decay and bankruptcy. Meanwhile, Rakım Efendi is an educated hardworking man, who was able to strike a fine balance between traditional values and practical modern habits. This cautionary tale written in 1875 was repeated throughout the century in such works as Recaizade Mahmud Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası* and Safveti Ziya's *Salon Köşelerinde*, both written in 1898.

With one foot in reality, such narratives were not solely penned by Muslim authors who wanted to strike a balance between the traditional values and novelties of the 19th century. As a matter of fact, *Akabi Hikayesi* written in 1851 by Vartan Pasha takes place within the Armenian community, thus preceding similar novels taking place within Muslim population.¹³⁸ Although the plot in *Akabi Hikayesi* takes a different turn from its successors by ending in favour of the pretentious young man, the similarity of lifestyles in these novels immediately brings to mind a new organisation of urban population, divided along the levels of income or social status and displayed by adoption of European customs. Though Tanzimat's promise

¹³⁷ Ahmed Midhat Efendi, *Felatun Bey ve Rakım Efendi* (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yay, 2000).

¹³⁸ Vartan Paşa, *Akabi Hikayesi* (haz.) Andreas Tietze (İstanbul: Eren Yay., 1991).

of equal citizenship did not completely erase divisions along religious affiliations, the evidence suggests that the lifestyles of those richer and higher standing urbanites seems to have converged. It should also be noted that while *Akabi Hikayesi* demonstrated common patterns of life for urbanites of different creeds, its main plot is centred on the rift in the Armenian community, between Orthodox and Catholics, which the author condemned.

For Şerif Mardin, this “fop” type that became so common in 19th century Ottoman literature was a subtle form of social control,¹³⁹ and therefore served as a guideline for behaviours to avoid. Stereotypes as they are, it is without a doubt that they were based on actual characters that lived within the city, just as Naciye Neyyal's uncle who stripped the family off of the inheritance of his father, only to live and drink in Beyoğlu with women.¹⁴⁰ As to be expected, the authors of these accounts, including a bureaucrat, his wife, wife of a pasha and a journalist, belonged to upper echelons of the Ottoman society mentioned above, who were able to receive some form of education, had higher incomes and certain standards of living. Therefore, it is no surprise that the descriptions of urban society in novels and these memoirs quite often match.

The tension between traditional and new as a cause of strife was so prevalent within all communities that it actually made the news. According to *Tasvir-i Efkar*, the increasing number of Jewish population who came from Europe and adopted European manners was causing discomfort among the Jewish community that had

¹³⁹ Mardin, “Super Westernisation in Urban Life in the Last Quarter of the Nineteenth Century” in *Turkey: Geographic and Social Perspectives* (eds.) Şerif Mardin, Peter Benedict, Erol Tümertekin, Fatma Masur (Leiden: Brill, 1974) , 414.

¹⁴⁰ Naciye Neyyal, 18.

been living in the Empire.¹⁴¹ Reportedly, these newly arrived Jews were not only straying away from traditional values but also corrupting the local community. When the disaccord between the two groups also influenced the newly organised Jewish council, the case was taken to the state through petitions. The resolution came when the seal of rabbinate was broken in half to be kept by the rabbis representing each side, giving them equal say in communal matters.¹⁴² When put in perspective, however, it is apparent that the state refrained from taking sides in this argument since both parties were indispensable to ensure the loyalty of the Jewish community. While the traditionalists represented a larger portion of the population, the supporters of the opposing side influential and wealthy urban personalities such as Avram Camondo. Hence, the state seemingly interfered but remained passive in actuality, leaving the community to sort the problem out on its own.

The clash of generations was thus not only a social issue but a political one as well and reared its head even in the daily interactions of families. When Mahmut Muhtar Pasha took his wife, who was “lightly” dressed and did not cover her face, for rides in the outskirts of Moda, his grandmother would say: “In my young days a husband who valued his wife would not have paraded her in public.”¹⁴³ Although it certainly seems to be a gender issue that worked to the disadvantage of women, it did not mean that men were not scrutinized. They too belonged in the private realm and this was not only when the matter concerned their families or female relatives.

¹⁴¹ *Tasvir-i Efkar*, Nr. 52, 4 B 1279/26 December 1862.

¹⁴² *Tasvir-i Efkar*, Nr. 60, 2 § 1279/23 January 1863.

¹⁴³ Tugay, 45.

Regarding public and private spheres of urban life as merely a matter of gender obscures many aspects of this relationship. As the boundaries of public and private fluctuated and shifted throughout the 19th century, so did their definition. In this respect, not only what constitutes them and where they start and end but also who defines them should be scrutinized more closely. As discussed above, the difference between private and public manifested itself in different areas of urban life and administration and at varying degrees. At a general level, these spheres were divided along the existence or absence of state intervention. When more closely looked at, we can see it at the level of property ownership as discussed in the first chapter or along gender segregation as discussed in the first part of this chapter. Both of these are related to the Islamic character of the Empire in governing the urban affairs, which established and consolidated state subject relations.

When Islamic laws and traditions were challenged by the tides of 19th century, the vacuum was filled by more secular interventions of state as well as the urbanites themselves. As mentioned above, although private realm is used almost synonymously with feminine domain, it also entails the inclusion of men, even if solely as the protector. Moreover, as the filter between these two domains became more porous, public space seemingly expanded at the expense of private. This stems from transition to what Harvey calls an “extrovert urban life,”¹⁴⁴ through the rise of different forms of urban gathering places and eventually different forms of socialisation. The state was now more interested in regulating the daily interactions, even when it involved the “sacred” private area of one’s domicile, as the new set of

¹⁴⁴ Harvey, 207.

rules and laws adopted by the state called for a reconstruction of social relations and necessitated a closer monitoring of its subjects to ensure the observation of these new codes. However, as both women and men of the Empire's cities started to become more involved in the daily life of the city and more visible to the eyes of other urbanites, their "private" started becoming publicised and therefore more open to threats. As a consequence, a feeling of insecurity became more prevalent and protecting these public spaces from external threats became a necessity. In a way, the public life of certain groups within the city became a matter of privacy that had to be defended against certain segments of the society.

This meant that the newly formed urban circles had to act on a silent agreement and identify with each other. Such alliances were easily noticeable by the onlooker, based on the carefully formed and maintained appearance. What this appearance blurred, however, was the existing lines of demarcation that had formed the basis of urban social relations. Almost as if a uniform, increasing dominance of European fashions was now replacing religious identities and social status with expressions of individual life styles. Basiretçi Ali, for instance, observed that when going to certain places like Kağıthane, one had to abide by certain rules: "one needs to wear either monocles or glasses; fezes should be this year's style. Shirt cuffs will be four fingers longer and silver cufflinks should be visible. The collars need to be high just like British philosophers', an elegant cane in one hand, trouser legs will go past feet, sweeping the streets. It is only those that can put together all of these that get to have fun!"¹⁴⁵ He describes similar characters throughout his letters, who share a lot with fop types of contemporary novels. In *Akabi Hikayesi*, for instance,

¹⁴⁵ Basiretçi Ali, 128. Şehir Mektubu no: 21, Basiret, nr. 887, 22 M 1290/8 Mart 1288.

two friends talk about how the streets were overflowing with “*sinyors* wearing fezes and carrying canes.”¹⁴⁶ Vartan Pasha explains the word *sinyor* in a footnote as “one who is inclined to adopt European styles, preferring Western manners, in this case, behaving in a silly manner.” Negative portrayal aside, the fact that new styles of clothing were actually encouraged and even imposed by the central authority starting with Mahmud II meant that the urban population in general was changing their attire and behaviour, thus forming new habits of consumption.

Haris Exertzoglou argues that novel consumption patterns arising in the 19th century in the urban areas of the Ottoman Empire were influential in the shaping of new identities and discourses. While this did not lead to the formation of a coherent middle class, since communal ties still mattered more, it nevertheless resulted in adoption of common cultural patterns.¹⁴⁷

That consumption of certain goods –as well as ideas- brought together otherwise separated communities becomes apparent in the disapprovals and complaints that appeared in printed materials and memoirs. An article that appeared in *Kara Sinan*, a satirical journal printed in İzmir, disgruntledly wrote that one could no longer tell the difference between the wife of a wage worker and the wife of a wealthy merchant while walking along *Kordon* of İzmir “because all dress-up in the same fashion” and squander away their money.¹⁴⁸ Greek intellectuals of the era often wrote on luxury and even regarded the change in manners as “deciding to become Frank” by adopting “the most harmful elements of European culture,”

¹⁴⁶ Vartan Paşa, 109.

¹⁴⁷ Haris Exertzoglou, “The Cultural Uses of Consumption: Negotiating Class, Gender, and Nation in the Ottoman Urban Centers in the 19th Century,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 35/1 (Feb. 2003), pp. 77-101, 78.

¹⁴⁸ *Kara Sinan*, Nr. 7 (11 C 1292/3 Temmuz 1291).

abandoning Christian traditions.¹⁴⁹ Cevdet Pasha, on the other hand, laid the blame on Khedive family and women:

The volume of shopping increased within Istanbul. The shopkeepers became rich. Many pashas, gentlemen and ladies from Mehmed Ali Pasha's family poured into Istanbul, bringing with them large amounts of cash and therefore leading the spendthrift of Istanbul by wrong example. They broke new grounds in the valley of wastefulness. In particular, Egyptian ladies' demand for clothing and luxury was imitated by women of Istanbul as well as women of the Palace. Many people from Egypt bought houses, *sahilhanes* and various properties at extravagant prices. Hence, the price of property in Istanbul increased drastically, giving the false impression of wealth. In reality, the exports and imports went off balance and a large amount of cash began to flow into Europe. (...) Especially during the days of summer, Bosphorus and other places of entertainment were filled to the brim. Dersaadet was really a piece of paradise and every corner was a place of pleasure and joy.¹⁵⁰ When Şirket-i Hayriyye ships started running in the Bosphorus, the amount of enjoyment increased and the value of *sahilhanes* skyrocketed.¹⁵¹

Putting the blame on women or an outside influence was neither new nor specific to Ottoman officials. According to a contemporary Greek intellectual, fashion disguised true self of women and deceived them about their true social position.¹⁵² This claim can be interpreted in two ways: first, by following European manners women forgot the duties assigned to them due to their femininity and ventured outside their domain to take a more active part in daily life. Second, the social position may refer to the wealth and thus can be generalised to include the male population as the newly emerging social patterns was now converging a different group of people instead of their so called true self bound by traditions. It is

¹⁴⁹ Exerzoglou, 83.

¹⁵⁰ Cevdet Pasha, *Tezâkir*, 1-12, 20.

¹⁵¹ Cevdet Pasha, *Tezâkir*, 1-12, 20-21.

¹⁵² Exertzoglou, 87.

therefore no surprise that the contemporary literature often portrayed ills of conspicuous consumption and how it led to descent into poverty for the characters. Luxury was a valid a vice as abandoning the traditional values. Such irresponsible attitudes were an outward expression of moral corruption that not only spoiled the individual but also worked to the disadvantage of the society at large.

It is no coincidence that new boutiques and shops were located within those quarters deemed notorious for their moral corruption. Speaking of a girl he met in Beyoğlu, Misailidi's protagonist Favini was telling that he was surprised by her purity, making her an rare example among women of cities who were led astray by amorality of the urban sphere.¹⁵³

Yet, that the shops selling European goods concentrated in certain areas of the city, meant that the flow of urban traffic –both pedestrian and carriage- to these areas not only increased but also gained a different meaning. The fact that urban projects undertaken in the 19th century either started in or at some point involved these quarters shows the overwhelming influence of wealthy inhabitants in shaping the urban fabric as well as the state's disposition to humour these demands as a part of modernising process, as long as they overlapped.

Throughout the 19th century, the existing ties that governed the cities n question became threatened by the shifting relationships between communities, redrawing of the line between private and public, and increasing presence of women in the urban life. Meanwhile changing economic balances were leading the way to the formation of new alliances between individuals based on their preference of

¹⁵³ Misailidis, 601.

associating with certain portions of the city's population. Hence, it can be assumed that 19th century urban social relations took shape on the basis of a network of relationships that gradually became more complex and entangled. The lines of convergence and divergence within the city continued to exist, but now older boundaries were challenged by the tidings of 19th century.

CHAPTER V

IN THE KNOW: PRODUCTION AND DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE CITY AND LEARNING TO BECOME AN URBANITE

Ahmet Midhat Efendi's *Dünyaya İkinci Geliş yahut İstanbul'da Neler Olmuş*¹⁵⁴ is set against the background of Selim III's Istanbul, when the city was rife with "janissary atrocities" and divided among two factions in conflict over whether military reorganisation and new reforms should be implemented or not. One of the main characters is a black eunuch, Mesut Ağa, who serves a wealthy man as a steward as well as an informant in order to guide his master through the turmoil of constantly shifting political balance of the era. In the meantime, he advances and protects his own interests through various tricks. His success in manipulating people and circumstances is based on his ability to disguise himself as a woman, thereby penetrating into otherwise separated feminine and masculine domains and gathering information from both sides. This rare feat enables him to act on the combined

¹⁵⁴ Ahmet Midhat Efendi, *Dünyaya İkinci Geliş yahut İstanbul'da Neler Olmuş* (Ankara: TDK Basımevi, 2000).

intelligence normally confined within each domain and gives him the upper hand in his dealings with the urban and political society of the capital.

Although told in a fictional setting, it is without a doubt that access to knowledge and information pertaining to everyday life both in private and public spheres of the city was a major determining factor in the acquirement and use of power within the urban context. During this period, the state started to actively seek knowledge of urban physical and social setting and its inhabitants through cadastral surveys and population censuses in order to develop urban renovation plans, to organise taxation and to gain control over the space. Taxation on the basis of individual rather than household reconfigured the position of individual vis-a-vis the state,¹⁵⁵ making payment of taxes a civic duty. Naming of the streets and numbering of the buildings, on the other hand, helped pinpoint the exact position of the individuals, giving an address to the private domain, thereby attempting to legally and strictly define the boundaries of private and public.¹⁵⁶ Yet, aside from state's newly adopted methods of gathering information from the population, the urban setting produced a constant flow of news that shaped the relationships between communities and individuals.

Gossip was the earliest method for the circulation of such information, which functioned as a social control mechanism whereby certain ways of behaviour were encouraged or discouraged, at times by putting at stake the reputation of those concerned. While mostly limited in its sphere of influence and concerned

¹⁵⁵ İlhan Tekeli ve Selim İlkin, *Cumhuriyetin Harcı: Modernitenin Altyapısı Oluşurken* (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yay.: İstanbul, 2010) 38.

¹⁵⁶ Tekeli & İlkin, 39.

individuals and families, when the circumstances allowed, rumours within the city could easily mobilise crowds and set communities against each other.

Throughout the 19th century, while gossip and word of mouth never went out of fashion, the ways in which knowledge and information were produced and circulated multiplied and became accessible to a greater audience. Newspapers were now printing not only the city's own daily matters and problems but also reporting from other cities in the Empire and around the world, making public the different ways of living. When coupled with a modernising educational system, they became sources of new kinds of knowledge that aimed to reform the society and new outlets for controlling and manipulating relations and manners, as well as giving voice to different opinions. Hence, production, dissemination and use of knowledge shifted and changed form in parallel with the urban fabric of the century, each transforming the other in the process. These changing dynamics of both the content and spread of information allowed the formation of unique relationships with the city as well as imposing certain boundaries and unifying experiences.

This chapter follows the process in question and tries to analyse how it transformed or maintained urban relationships as well as their role in creating a common urban identity.

5.1. Heard It Through the Grapevine: Gossip and Word of Mouth

Feeling sorry for Smyrniot women, Martha Nicol wrote in her diary: “The women, poor things, are idle and gossiping; but what can they do?”¹⁵⁷ Nicol worked as a nurse and helped set up İzmir’s British Hospital in 1855. As a professional woman with too much to do in her hands during her short visit, she was amazed at seeing women “stumbling about in the bazaars all day, or, taking some coffee with them, to go out in hordes to the burial-grounds, or a little distance beyond Smyrna, and sit there in the sun, chattering and drinking this favourite beverage.”

Similar observations of laziness and gossip among Ottoman women were commonplace in memoirs of foreign travellers. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu considered the bathhouses where women gathered weekly as “women’s coffeehouse where all the news of the town is told, scandal invented”¹⁵⁸ while Julia Pardoe called them “paradise for women” since there “they were able to discuss politics, social issues, scandals, marriages and everything under the sun.”¹⁵⁹ That the bathhouses were likened to coffeehouses points to the importance of both of these gathering places as social hubs of the city. Whereas when as far as women were concerned privacy still mattered and the talk stayed in relatively secluded areas, these places dominated by men were the public outlet for a similar mode of communication.¹⁶⁰ In a way, men were observing the street and disseminating the news of daily life while women were passing along knowledge of the interior

¹⁵⁷ Martha Nicol, *Ismeer or Smyrna and Its British Hospital by a Lady* (London: James Madden, 1856), 197.

¹⁵⁸ Montagu, 59.

¹⁵⁹ Pardoe, 100.

¹⁶⁰ The social function of coffeehouses in the Ottoman Empire has been the subject of many studies. See for example Helene-Desmet Gregoire ve François Georgeon (Haz.), *Doğu'da Kahve ve Kahvehaneler* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yay., 1999).

dynamics that changed shape in line with the 19th century. Hence, although the descriptions often carried an air of contempt, gossip was without a doubt a significant part of urban life. What seemed as lowly and idle chit chat to the outsider was actually a network of communication within the city, which drew boundaries of social acceptance and rejection. More often than not, these conversations went beyond idle chatter and were influential in political and marital arrangements.

As far as becoming part of an urban polity was concerned, no one was spared becoming the talk of the town, even the Ottoman officials and their families. Naciye Neyyal Hanım had experienced first hand the relationship between gossip and acceptance into an established urban network. In Bursa, for instance, the rumours that Naciye Neyyal was Tevfik Bey's mistress, not his wife and that she did not dress in European attire or wore a hat for just because Tevfik Bey asked her not to had started to spread before the couple set foot in the city. Others denied these claims, saying Neyyal was indeed his wife but she was a conceited woman who preferred the company of foreigners and hated Muslims. As she found out later, the besmearing gossips were distributed by the families close to the former governor and were motivated by personal interest. Whatever the word going around was, it resulted in the shunning of the couple, especially Naciye Neyyal, by the Muslim families of Bursa. In order to dispell the notorious news, some acquaintances from Istanbul sent letters to prominent Muslim families of the city, praising Tevfik Bey and Naciye Neyyal Hanım for their exemplary manners.¹⁶¹ In the end, these news too spread through word of mouth and improved their tarnished reputation to a

¹⁶¹ Naciye Neyyal, 132-133.

certain extent, thus enabling them to integrate into the Bursa's urban society. However, Naciye Neyyal did not want to associate herself with people who spoke behind her back and preferred another social group that she deemed suitable for her character and rank in society, comprised mostly of foreign families and women from harem who retired to the city. She encountered a similar reaction in Salonica, where she was met with disdain by the wives of Ottoman officials in the city. Much to their dismay, however, the Modiani family organised a ladies only ball in order to welcome Neyyal to the urban society and the European life style that dominated the city.¹⁶² In both cases, as a newcomer to the city, the family's inclusion into the existing urban relationships were impeded by gossips and had to be fixed by outside intervention. This, of course, did not mean that she did not engage in gossip with people she deemed her social equals. When Tevfik Bey was assigned to Konya as governor, she complained that the people were too conservative and she did not find anyone to befriend since "there weren't any diplomat families except for a Russian viscount, who was a drunken old man."¹⁶³ This time, the case was more of finding an urban society that she was willing to be accepted into since there was not any network of communication that she wanted to be a part of.

Naciye Neyyal was not always the subject of gossips. She was often approached by the wives of other officials, who sought to gain her favours so that she would arrange for the promotion of their husbands through Tevfik Bey. While Naciye Neyyal rejected acting as an intermediary, Melek Hanum, on the other hand, was not so dismissive. She too was often visited by wives of Jerusalem's dignitaries while her husband Kıbrıslı Mehmed Pasha was the city's governor. The

¹⁶² Naciye Neyyal, 87.

¹⁶³ Naciye Neyyal, 112.

women's conversations would eventually shift to their relatives, who longed for better positions within the ranks of government, and bad-mouthing of persons holding those posts. Being at least as cunning as Ahmed Midhat's fictional character Mesut Ağa, Melek Hanum had arranged for the reassignment of "more than fifteen important posts in favour of persons whom I had never even met in person"¹⁶⁴ and procured a considerable amount of wealth for herself in the process by accepting gifts in return for her favour. By using her position as governor's wife, she was also able to gather all kinds of intelligence and to manipulate the trade in the city, incurring great profits. If there had been any complaints, as Melek Hanum said, she could have easily evaded them saying she was only acting in good faith, "in order to assuage the misery of Jerusalem's inhabitants."¹⁶⁵

Despite Melek Hanum's aptitude in placing herself in the workings of urban affairs, the accounts in general assign a sort of passivity on the side of women in the process in the earlier part of the 19th century. They either sit in their homes, waiting for the news of the town or pass along the new information gathered during these house visits in private or semi private environments. Yet, as Naciye Neyyal's accounts reveal, the increasing visibility of women in the city was also reflected in reshaping of these networks by the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Seniye Hanım, an acquaintance of Neyyal introduced to her by Emine Semiye Hanım, for instance, was involved actively not only in the spread but also in the creation of gossip. A member of Committee of Union and Progress in its earlier stages, she made house calls to all around Istanbul, where she tried to gain sympathisers for the

¹⁶⁴ Melek Hanum, 91.

¹⁶⁵ Melek Hanum, 93.

party and bring together individuals sharing similar values, carrying documents and gossip in the meantime.¹⁶⁶

Gossip did not only concern individuals. The interaction between communities were often influenced by rumors spread by word of mouth throughout the city. In 1863, for instance, a strife between Greek and Jewish population of İzmir made the news in the papers. The matter concerned a Greek boy who harrassed the pupils of Armenian Protestant school and was consequently punished by their teacher. The screams of the boy were heard in the neighbourhood and the police found the boy outside the school gate with a bleeding finger. What instigated the attack was, however, the age old belief that the Jews kidnapped Christian children once a year to drink their blood and the revelation that the teacher was originally a Jewish man converted to Christianity. The rumour spread like wildfire and a mob of angry Greeks raided the Jewish shops in the area, wounding 30 and beating up 50 Jewish men, as well as damaging their property. The events lasted three hours and eventually the mob was dispersed by the army, ending in detention of a number of Greeks.¹⁶⁷ After numerous pleas from the Greeks, the chief rabbi of the Jewish community agreed to forgive the assailants and the men were released.¹⁶⁸ Similar scenarios concerning the Jewish population were played out before and after the 1863 attack, both in İzmir and in different cities.¹⁶⁹ As a matter of fact, Rolleston in his *Report on Smyrna* made it clear that “at seasons of religious

¹⁶⁶ Naciye Neyyal, 266-273.

¹⁶⁷ *Tasvir-i Efkar*, Nr. 77

¹⁶⁸ *Tasvir-i Efkar*, Nr. 94.

¹⁶⁹ The 1872 attack of Rums on Jews made the news in New York Times on May 31, 1872 and was indicated in the year book of Aydın Province dated 1887 as “the well known incident between Rums and Jews of İzmir.” For a similar incident taking place again in İzmir in 1901, see Esther Benbassa, “Kampana Çalanlar Davası: 1901’de İzmir’de Cereyan Etmiş Bir Kan İftirası Vakası,” *Tarih ve Toplum* 30 (June 1986).

excitement, such as the Greek Easter, it is unsafe for a Jew to be seen near the Greek quarter.”¹⁷⁰ Anastassiadou also mentions three similar cases in Salonica towards the end of 19th century, where, despite an overwhelming population of Jews in the city, Greeks did not refrain from attacking.¹⁷¹ What really matters here is that existing prejudices that communities have of each other which are normally ignored in day to day interactions could easily be revived by an unsubstantiated rumour circulating in the city.

As powerful as word of mouth was, both in terms of individual and communal relationships, the 19th century brought about new channels of information flow that challenged and rivaled the age old rumour mill.

5.2. Schooling in the City: Formal and Informal Education

Just as the military reforms of the Ottoman Empire were demonstrated in the urban space through drills conducted in public spaces for all urban population to see, another priority of the Empire, education, was communicated through the city, by building of schools. The process of building schools, however, was also a priority for the communities. Hence, the cities became dotted with edifices of these educational institutions, each marking a sphere of influence and attesting to the existence of a rivalry between state and the subjects. Yet, the “education” the city offered comprised more than these formal endeavours; the informal side of this learning process completed what the schools missed by providing the individual

¹⁷⁰ George Rolleston, *Report on Smyrna* (London: George E. Eyre, 1856), 43.

¹⁷¹ Anastassiadou, 359-360.

with necessary tools to live in a city. While certain channels allowed for the dissemination of proper manners to follow and a street etiquette that would organise the interpersonal relationships, others were teaching the street smarts. As such, their influence had not always been positive; the city taught the individuals in ways of trickery and amorality as well and protecting especially the young minds from such corruptive influences meant keeping a close eye on the relationships established with the urban sphere.

The formal side of this education process was a major contributor in the population movements of the cities in question. In the 19th century, the migrants that flocked to the cities included children and young people of all ages who left their towns to attend newly formed schools in Istanbul, Salonica and Izmir. Ali, for instance, a student from Benghazi had petitioned the state to be enrolled in *Aşiret Mektebi* in Istanbul. In his letter, he described himself as an Arab coming to the enlightened Ottoman lands from African deserts.¹⁷² Whether he genuinely believed this or he just used the state's argument for intervening in the said areas against the state itself to gain more foothold in his application is up for debate. However, given the circumstances, it is clear that Constantinople was now drawing in more students from the peripheral lands of the Empire. Apart from the schools that were established directly by the state, community schools too drew hordes of students into these cities. The influx of Bulgarians into Constantinople, for instance, had reached its zenith by the mid-1850s, making the city one of the most Bulgarian

¹⁷² Chris Gratien, "Osmanlı Talebelerinden Mektuplar ve Alternatif Eğitim Hikayeleri," *Kebikeç* 37 (2014), 7-18, 13.

populated cities of the Empire.¹⁷³ As a result, the city became a centre of newly forming contemporary Bulgarian culture, with its newspapers, printing presses and students arriving in the city for the schools. Thus, while drawing in more population with the promise of better educational opportunities and hoping to turn them into respectable citizens of the Empire, the composition of cities too were changing to accommodate the flourishing of new cultures and habits.

It was perhaps thanks to this reconfiguration of city's place in education that allowed and encouraged individual efforts at providing a basic level of education to the urban population in general. That city served as a tool for disseminating knowledge and education of the masses albeit through individual efforts can be seen in Emine Foat Tugay's memoirs. Upon noticing that "the majority of shop assistants were illiterate," her grandfather Ahmet Muhtar Pasha, his friends Yusuf Ziya and Vidinli Tevfik Pashas formed the Society for Islamic Studies (*Cemiyet-i Tedrisiye-i İslamiye*)¹⁷⁴ and rented "a room above a butcher's shop in a commercial part of the city, where they held classes in the evening"¹⁷⁵ that would help those shop assistants properly keep their accounts, paying the expenses out of their own pockets. The popularity of the classes soon grew and they moved to larger premises and this, Emine Foat says, was the "humble beginnings of Dar-u Şefaka."¹⁷⁶ After its establishment in 1873, the school admitted orphans and children of poor families,

¹⁷³ Hüseyin Mevsim (haz.), *Bulgar Gözüyle İstanbul* (Ankara: TTK, 2011), 6.

¹⁷⁴ H. Ayhan ve H. Maviş, "Dârüşşafaka", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, c. IX, İstanbul, 1994, s.7.

¹⁷⁵ Tugay, 7.

¹⁷⁶ Tugay, 7.

who were mostly taught by military officials, using books either prepared by them or translated from French.¹⁷⁷

Ahmet Muhtar Pasha and his friends' evening classes were not the only mass education attempts in the city. Advertisements placed in *Levant Herald* announced that the British Literary and Scientific Institution in Constantinople held regular meetings, where lectures on topics ranging from readings from various authors¹⁷⁸ to eclipses¹⁷⁹ took place. The diversity in the subjects reflected the atmosphere of the era, which caused the reinterpretation of all sorts of knowledge pertaining to such specialized topics as physics to the workings of everyday lives based on constantly flowing new information. While these lectures were aimed primarily at the foreign population in the capital and were undertaken by private societies meant that their influence on the urban population remained limited, the travelers from the Ottoman Empire to Europe often eagerly attended public lectures in their destinations, to quell their curiosity of particular subjects as well as of how and why these lessons were followed by the urban population. An anonymous Ottoman bureaucrat travelling to London in 1851, for instance, was surprised to see advertisements on the streets that announced lessons on various subjects from chemistry and geography to zoology and silk production. He attended the dissection lecture since he had been curious about the subject but he was disappointed to find that it was the insects, not human bodies that were dissected. Thus, he found the lectures useless and ridiculous but could not help saying that "If one wants to learn everything good or bad thoroughly, he should travel to London, spend a substantial

¹⁷⁷ Akşin Somel, *Osmanlı'da Eğitimin Modernleşmesi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yay., 2010), 79.

¹⁷⁸ *Levant Herald*, 3 January 1867.

¹⁷⁹ *Levant Herald*, 25 March 1867.

amount of money and stay there for two years.”¹⁸⁰ Ahmed İhsan who traveled to Europe for the first time exactly fifty years later, however, was able to sneak his way into medical school to see cadavers in Paris, and while he regretted his decision, he was impressed by the open and free lectures offered by the universities and attended several others in law and business schools.¹⁸¹

In the early stages of the establishment of *Darülfünun* the capital of the Empire witnessed a similar attempt. The professors also offered open lectures to the general public, first in Darülfünun building in Sultanahmed and then in Çemberlitaş. Although short lived and criticised for not catering to the varying educational levels of attendees, the classes appear to be part of both public display of reforms and extending them to a larger audience through the networks offered by the city. *Tasvir-i Efkar* reported that with the permission of the sultan, physics and chemistry classes open to public would be offered in Darülfünun by a Derviş Pasha¹⁸² which were to be held in Darülfünun building on Mondays and Thursdays.¹⁸³ After the success of the classes and necessitated by the nature of physics, it was seen fit to open a mathematics course¹⁸⁴ and as a result of overwhelming popularity of classes, natural history, astronomy and *hikmet-i ameliye* classes were planned. For those who could not attend in person, the newspapers also printed the lectures. Yet, the changes in the construction schemes of the school ended the lectures, as well. According to Cevdet Pasha, plans to construct a Darülfünun building were stopped since “a large school filled with

¹⁸⁰ *Seyahatname-i Londra*, 73.

¹⁸¹ Ahmet İhsan, *Avrupa'da*, 101.

¹⁸² *Tasvir-i Efkar*, Nr. 52 (12 Kanun-i Evvel 1279).

¹⁸³ *Tasvir-i Efkar*, Nr. 56 (26 Kanun-i Evvel 1279).

¹⁸⁴ *Tasvir-i Efkar*, Nr. 52 (12 Kanun-i Evvel 1279).

Muslim and non-Muslim students built across Ayasofya would not be appropriate.”¹⁸⁵ Hence, despite increasing secularization of institutions and space, there were certain boundaries that could not be crossed, even if solely for pleasing the general public. Keeping the sanctity of Ayasofya was a small compromise as far as keeping the public opinion favourable was concerned. The building was later completed to serve a different purpose. Failed as it was, this attempt attested to the increasing channels of education within the city as well as the increasing demand for new information. In a way, a certain portion of the urban population was now exposed to scientific knowledge that explained natural events and broke apart superstitions, thus contributing to the secularizing tendencies of the central state. While it can be argued that the influence of such endeavors would only be minimal, it certainly consolidated the position of cities as hubs of learning, thus increasing the distance between urban and rural.

The education of girls, while not as common as expected, was still going on at a steady pace. Naciye Neyyal and her sister begged their family to send them to the French school close to their residence. Unable to resist their persistence, the family caved in and agreed but took some precautions to stop their neighbours, relatives and friends from finding out that “two Turkish girls were being sent to a foreign school”¹⁸⁶ through word of mouth. Thus the mother chose aliases for her daughters, changing Naciye’s name to Neyyal. While the school adventure was short lived because of increasing gossip, Naciye took a liking to her new name assumed this disguise as her real identity. Yet, the education of girls did not stop,

¹⁸⁵ Cevdet Pasha, *Tezâkir 1-12*, 15-16.

¹⁸⁶ Naciye Neyyal, 37.

instead continued with private lessons. Along with language instruction, Neyyal received painting lessons from Salvatore Valeri,¹⁸⁷ who also taught at *Sanayi-i Nefise*. As a result of her training, Naciye Neyyal was requested by several Ottoman officials to paint their portrait. Yet, in the following years, her subjects also included famous personalities of the era such as Herbert Spencer, Charles Darwin, Franz Liszt.¹⁸⁸

Neyyal's familial ties had allowed her to study under a prominent painter but private lessons was not out of reach for people of relatively lower income and social standing. As a matter of fact, hiring private tutors for children was an increasingly common practice of the cities in 19th century Empire. Advertisements seeking employment or service as governesses were often placed in the columns of *Levant Herald* and other newspapers, increasing the opportunities especially for the education of girls. The lessons offered and sought were often "in English language and general branches of English education,"¹⁸⁹ or "in English and French language" as well as "music including piano and singing."¹⁹⁰ For wealthy families like Emine Foat's with government officials and khedive's relatives in the family, education at home proved to be even stricter than what one would expect of schools. She was only three when she began to learn English, by the age of four she was attending gymnastics classes taught by two English sisters in Moda and when she was five she started her lessons on how to read and write both in English and Ottoman

¹⁸⁷ Naciye Neyyal, 454.

¹⁸⁸ Naciye Neyyal, 487.

¹⁸⁹ *Levant Herald*, 3 January 1867.

¹⁹⁰ *Levant Herald*, 19 February 1867.

Turkish.¹⁹¹ In the following years, she received lessons in French, German, Arabic from native speakers and even took Turkish lessons from Mehmed Akif Bey for a short time, who she considered to be unfit as an instructor.¹⁹² Whether coming from a wealthy family or not, however, the availability of more than one channel for education meant that the urban population was now constructing its identity based on certain qualifications available to a wider public and at least a certain level of education was expected of the new urbanites. Vartan Pasha described Agop's love interest Akabi as a girl who "had no match in the Armenian community since she speaks Armenian and French very well, studied Ottoman Turkish, and is all over an intellectual who has liberal ideas contrary to her uncle who has no interest in these things."¹⁹³ Even Canan, harem of Rakım Efendi, is taught how to play the piano as well as to speak French and English and became worthy of becoming wife of Rakım only after learning an acceptable amount of skills. Thus, what was now considered standard in the urban environment became the yardstick of measuring the adequacy of individuals to be considered urban. Neyyal's reaction to the "backward populations" of the Empire must have been formed in part as a result of this learning process.

While training and education offered by these schools and private tutors molded the children's minds with new scientific methods, it was also the cities in question that taught them about life. The education they received was not confined only within the school walls; they had to watch and learn how to become part of the city despite warnings of their fellow townsmen against the dangers of urban life. A

¹⁹¹ Emine Foat, 223

¹⁹² Emine Foat, 285.

¹⁹³ Vartan Paşa, 81.

reordering of urban social relations also meant that this teaching and learning process had to be extended to the general public as well. As seen in the case of Misailidis' character Favini, who was educated to practice law, learning other skills that would help him become the trickster he is was of utmost importance. Hence, he started going to Beyoğlu at the age of twenty to learn European languages while also practicing dancing and courtship.¹⁹⁴ Becoming street smart was a way of ensuring a livelihood as well as surviving among the ebbs and flows of the 19th century Istanbul but there was a thin line between the corrupting and empowering ways of urban life.

This was why utmost care was spent on guarding impressionable young children, especially by the communities they belonged to. In all Bulgarian accounts, for instance, the emigrants were met first by the spectacular view of the city and then the Bulgarian community in Istanbul. The students were taken to Bulgarian eateries in Fener and Balat,¹⁹⁵ stayed in the school most of the time and rarely went around the city unattended, unless they were able to sneak past the doors unnoticed. In short, the Bulgarian adults did all that was in their power to protect the children from the negative influences of the city. Still, the students often gathered in front of the school's gate as it was customary in Bulgaria, to watch passers by and to chat and their view acquainted them to a diverse and crowded urban daily life: peddlers, carriages filled with women, *beyzades* riding horses, old men on mules, Bulgarians going to work in stables and gardens, Greek priests and even the patriarch, soldiers, young Turkish boys with their red fezes, wearing brocaded clothes and at least dogs

¹⁹⁴ Misailidis, 52.

¹⁹⁵ Hüseyin Mevsim, *Bulgar Gözüyle İstanbul* (Ankara: TTK, 2011), 38.

of Istanbul when there was not anything interesting to look at. Right across the gate were a *meyhane*, a coffeehouse and a restaurant where visitors to the Church on religious holidays sat in and talked about important issues such as the church, politics and education.¹⁹⁶

Trying to minimise the negative influence of the city on the students did not necessarily mean keeping them oblivious to the necessities of urban life. As a matter of fact, students were expected and encouraged to adopt proper manners that conformed to the social relations within urban circles. This was why Luka Moravenov, a member of Bulgarian church and school board, was teaching the students to act urbane, saying: “If you do not learn courtesy, you will remain peasants.”¹⁹⁷ He insisted that the students said “*siz*” instead of “*sen*,” addressed the priests respectfully and answered with a proper “*efendim*,” rather than sounding like a dog.

This, however, seems counterintuitive to the inner workings of communities, especially of those emigrated to the cities as workers and craftsmen. Mihail Macarov, for instance, comes to Istanbul twice. The first time he arrives the city as a fourteen year old, he works with his father as an apprentice in wool-cloth making. As soon as he set foot in Istanbul, he settled in a *han* where all *aba* makers stayed and worked at the same time. As temporary residents in the city, they often did not eat out or buy much grocery so that they could save some money. This also meant that the emigrant workers maintained minimum contact with the urban society, who they regarded solely as customers. However, this was not the only reason. Macarov

¹⁹⁶ Mevsim, 44.

¹⁹⁷ Mevsim, 45.

tells that people of his village spent only a few months in Istanbul, returning Avratalan as soon as they sold their merchandise. During the time they spent in the city, they stayed mostly closed in and berated people from their home town who started to stay in “quarters” instead of Çorapçı Han for doubling their expenses and going morally corrupt, as well as forgetting that they were from Avratalan.¹⁹⁸ Abandoning their original identity for becoming a part of the city was, on the least, treason for they severed their ties with the community and adapted to urban life. Marrying a girl from Istanbul meant that the boy was lost to the Bulgarian community, as well as himself.¹⁹⁹

Yet, the curiosity to at least observe urban life was apparent. When a Greek man who Macarov’s father conducted business with invited the boy and his family to a night of entertainment at their house, he was eager to see “the domestic life of Istanbulites.”²⁰⁰ However, the excitement left its place to a feeling of discomfort for the family, especially for the mother, caused by the novel codes of manners that were now common place among the urban society: Women were wearing revealing dresses, acted at ease around men, danced freely and the Macarov family had no common language with the invitees. Leaving the house “felt like relief from a heavy burden.”²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ Mevsim, 69.

¹⁹⁹ Mevsim, 76.

²⁰⁰ Mevsim, 94-95.

²⁰¹ Mevsim, 95.

A few years later, Macarov comes to the city to attend Robert College²⁰² and settles in a house close to Bulgarian church and quarter.²⁰³ This time, he was able to see the city from a different perspective, and “everything in Istanbul was new” to him, despite his previous stay in the city. He encountered for the first time the representatives of communities that he had never heard of and by his own admission, learned more about Bulgaria in Istanbul than he would have if he had travelled in Bulgarian lands for two months.²⁰⁴ In this respect, Macarov had not only taken a closer look at urban life but also was able to compare his life in Avratalan to the centre of the Empire, reflecting on his identity and relationship with his homeland. The difference between these interpretations must have been based on the primary purpose of the travels to the capital. While a peasant drifting into urban life meant loss of communal ties as well as manpower of the village, and thus made the city a notorious source of corruption, the same city when travelled to for the purposes of education could become an opportunity for not only self development but also the improvement of one’s local community.

As far as the urban population was concerned, therefore, the process of education was one of continuous exposure, that transformed the knowledge of everyday life. Now, acceptibility into the urban society also depended on adopting manners expected of an urbanite, standardised into a set of rules and spread through various formal and informal channels of education.

²⁰² For a detailed analysis of education at Robert College, see Orlin Sabev, *Spiritus Roberti: Shaping New Minds and Robert College in Late Ottoman Society* (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2014).

²⁰³ Mevsim, 74.

²⁰⁴ Mevsim, 76.

5.3. In Print

For Ahmet Mithad, reaction to Selim III's reforms stemmed from the effort of status groups trying to hold on to their privileges, who labeled these as "western inventions." Yet, this excuse was not the only reason for failure of implementing these reforms. Despite maturing public excitement, he says, there wasn't even "a single newspaper to form a coherent public opinion."²⁰⁵ Forming and directing the course of public opinion had been the primary target of the ever increasing number of newspapers in the Ottoman Empire after 1860s. While censorship and difficulty of obtaining licenses for printing papers curbed the ability to express their thoughts freely, the diversified political and social stances of each paper with new ones sprouting every month were able to influence the needs and wants of the population.

Almost all editorial articles of first issues in a newly printed paper pointed to the importance of education of masses and why it mattered to inform people of new ideas, innovations and where their best interest laid. Mehmet Tevfik, for instance, asserted in the first issue of *Asır* that what stood before progress as an obstacle was lack of a unified public opinion²⁰⁶ and that the efforts of journalists would open the eyes of Turkey's people.²⁰⁷ Such uniformity in public opinion would mean the creation of a common identity based on the knowledge of where the best interest for the population in general laid. Keeping up with new information, however, was now a harder task since "while a century once meant a hundred years, with the increasing speed and ease in the flow of social knowledge, it now equals almost a

²⁰⁵ Ahmed Midhat, *Dünyaya İkinci Geliş*, 20.

²⁰⁶ *Asır*, Nr. 12 (8 June 1870), 72.

²⁰⁷ *Asır*, 14, 87.

thousand years.”²⁰⁸ This meant that changing relationships enforced new duties upon individuals and entitled them to new rights, which brought about shifts in the formation of new identities. Now, as Çaylak Tevfik claimed, European newspapers made known the opinions and ideas of every class of European people²⁰⁹ and the newspapers in the Empire would do the same.

Whether true or not, it is apparent that the newspapers first attested the need for information for their existence and then announced that they bravely assumed this role as their holy duty. In an air of solidarity, the appearance of new newspapers were often mentioned in existing ones, with congratulatory remarks of delight regardless of their origin and language, for they would all contribute to the benefit of people.²¹⁰ Starting with their first few issues, the papers immediately embarked on their quest to extend knowledge to as many people as they could. Mehmed Tevfik in his *Asır*, for instance, thought it was necessary to write a glossary of political terms used frequently in papers. Without a surprise, the first word included in the list was “politik” and politics was defined as “elegant manners or behaviour peculiar to urbanity and civilisation,”²¹¹ drawing attention to Greek origin of the word.

While the pioneering role of French and English papers in the Empire cannot be ignored, that these papers had a limited audience even within the Capital itself obstructed the formation of public opinion. It was only after the 1860s with the increasing number of newspapers in different languages that the individual

²⁰⁸ *Asır*, 1 (23 May 1870), 2.

²⁰⁹ *Asır*, 1, 5.

²¹⁰ *Asır*, 13, 31.

²¹¹ *Asır*, 3 (26 May 1870), 14.

problems of daily urban life became problems of community at large. Thus, despite *Asır*'s claim that "If French and English newspapers of Beyoğlu were to stop their publication, our newspapers would not have any news to print,"²¹² the Ottoman papers too had assumed voicing their opinions on the city as a duty. Basiretçi Ali Efendi started his city letters with a declaration: "I will be sending weekly letters to *Basiret* under the name "*Şehir Mektubu*" in order to serve the country, writing about weekly happenings in the urban social life and necessary improvements in the city."²¹³ In their approach to the city, all papers voiced common concerns for a better experience of urban life yet they differed in the course to be followed. Thus, while the papers laid the foundations for the formation of a common urban identity by defining the necessities, the solutions offered and the priorities set differed.

While Constantinople had no shortage of different communities speaking various languages, this barrier was an even bigger issue in smaller yet equally diverse İzmir and Salonica. The paper *İzmir* complained that *La Reform*, a newspaper printed in French, published various articles written in Greek in a supplement. Since Press Regulation necessitated separate patent for each language and supplement, *İzmir* called the authorities to take proper measures and prohibit the printing in Greek.²¹⁴ In its next issue, *İzmir* reported that the author of the said paper Oskar defended himself saying the Greek newspapers in İzmir had been

²¹² *Asır*, 12 (8 June 1870).

²¹³ Basiretçi Ali, 2.

²¹⁴ *İzmir*, Nr. 24 (19 Rebiülahir 1294/21 Nisan 1293).

printing articles against the Ottoman State and he acted in order to counter the allegations put forward by these papers.²¹⁵

Creating a newspaper that allowed communicating with all the inhabitants of Salonica at once necessitated at least four languages, including Turkish, Greek, Ladino and Bulgarian. Thus, the first paper of the city, *Selanik*, was printed between 1869-1871 in these four languages and in Turkish, Greek and Ladino in the following years.²¹⁶ Shortly after its establishment, this provincial newspaper announced the arrival of new printing machines in the city and, emphasising the increasing importance of the press in educating the masses, published a job posting that sought “Muslim, Greek, Bulgarian and Jewish boys aged 13-18.”²¹⁷ The paper planned to hire two individuals from each community who knew how to read and write and offered to train them in lithography and typesetting. The paper’s main motivation was to inform as many people as it can of developments in the empire and the world by publishing its issues in four languages.²¹⁸ Providing the same articles in different languages to the community of Salonica was important since the uniformity of news would facilitate the formation of new ties between communities and individuals as parts of the city. As the most widely spoken languages of Salonica, papers printed in solely in each language soon followed suit: *Zaman* in Turkish (1873), *Hermès* in Greek (1875) and *La Epoca* (1875) in Ladino.²¹⁹ Among these, according to Yerolympos, *Hermès* tried to show the existence of an urban

²¹⁵ *İzmir*, Nr. 25 (21 Rebiülahir 1294/ 23 Nisan 1293).

²¹⁶ Alexandra Yerolympos, “XIX. Yüzyıl Sonunda Selanik’te Kentlilik Bilinci ve Belediyeye İlgi” *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Yaşamak*, François Georgeon and Paul Dumont (eds.) (İstanbul: İletişim, 2000), 149.

²¹⁷ *Selanik*, 10 (25 Nisan 1869/25 Muharrem 1286).

²¹⁸ *Selanik*, 11 (28 Nisan 1869/28 Muharrem 1286).

²¹⁹ Yerolympos, “Selanik’te Kentlilik Bilinci,” 149.

life that concerned each and every community by underlining the importance of joint initiatives and advising several methods that would enable the coexistence of different peoples as inhabitants of Salonica.²²⁰

When Mehmed Tevfik of *Asır* wrote “Our century is one of education and solidarity,”²²¹ he must have borne in mind this coexistence as well as the influence of education in commonalising the problems that burdened everyone equally. According to Işın, the articles on scientific and social developments printed in papers and journals assumed the character of a teacher, preaching the knowledge of everyday life and thus, “the Ottoman population of the 19th century had to spend his life as a student trying to learn his lessons by heart.”²²² This constant stress on keeping up to date with the ever increasing flow of news were apparent in the advertisements for hotels, cafes, and clubs which, as an attraction piece, guaranteed that their customers would have access to all foreign and local papers. Thus, the newspapers became an indispensable feature of urban personality, even shaping their preferences for partaking in the city.

As far as the city was concerned, however, this opinion forming process worked heavily in favour of reorganizing the urban sphere both physically and socially. The printing of travelogues acquainted their readers with an urban order that would enhance their experience of living in a city with its ordered, clean and well-lit streets, public gardens, large squares in a safe and healthy environment. Hence, the press sought to influence public opinion through educating their readers,

²²⁰ Yerolympos, “Selanik’te Kentlilik Bilinci,” 152.

²²¹ *Asır*, 1 (23 May 1870).

²²² Işın, 135.

raising their awareness of what living in a city entails, and repositioning the individuals vis a vis the state through constant reminders of their mutual duties and rights.

The Ottoman newspapers printed in French were the first to voice the need for a reorganisation of urban space. *Journal de Constantinople* and *Levant Herald* printed in Beyoğlu often voiced their concerns of how the appearance of the city clashed with the great strides the Ottoman state took in improving the country. The papers frequently wrote about what a city should look like, emphasising the order, hygiene and beauty discourse and insisted on the establishment of a modern municipal system. This administration would involve the inhabitants in the decision making process and provide the services that the capital so desperately needed in accordance with urbanites' wishes. As soon as the Sixth Municipal District started functioning in 1858, the newspapers in French printed in the area began to report daily the activities of the municipality, praising its good deeds and at times warning its council of its shortcomings. The municipality's impeccable determination in repairing, widening and illuminating the streets, for instance, were praised by *Journal de Constantinople*, saying that all the inhabitants sincerely supported the works.²²³ In 1859, the same paper reported that the municipality of Beyoğlu had placed a box for wishes and requests of the region's inhabitants so that the council could identify their priorities.²²⁴ This way, the region's inhabitants would become a part in the processes of local governance. While whether the box was properly used to provide a link of communication is not certain, it was apparent that the

²²³ Nur Akın, *19 Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında Galata ve Pera* (İstanbul: Literatür Yay., 2011), 99.

²²⁴ Akın, 100.

newspapers willingly assumed this role of suggestions and complaints box, thereby acting as an intermediary between the two parties.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, some of the publishers of these papers became a member of the municipal council of the Sixth District, who were selected on the basis of their familiarity with western cities and the amount of their wealth which would help fund the construction works. As a matter of fact, the central state was initially so wary of possible expenses that even the regulation of the municipality underlined the necessity of starting the experiment in the area, for the inhabitants, “a majority of whom have seen such practices in foreign cities, would be willing to pay their share of the cost for the works undertaken.”²²⁵ From its initiation, the municipal administration was under the careful watch of local papers, which reported daily their activities and at times their shortcomings.²²⁶ These constant checks on the workings of the administration not only informed the inhabitants of developments but also made them more aware of what to expect from such a body.

There is no doubt that a certain portion of the population, especially those living in Pera and its environs were well aware of how to use press as a tool. The first lines of a letter on the procedure of elections sent to *Levant Herald* by “an elector” read that “as publicity, even in Turkey, is a salutary check upon abuse, I crave the use of your columns for a short statement with reference to our Pera municipal election.”²²⁷ The elector was complaining about the lack of clarity as to who would vote and for whom since the requirements for involvement in the

²²⁵ Ergin, *Mecelle*, Cilt 3, 1308.

²²⁶ Akin, 103.

²²⁷ *Levant Herald* (5 March 1867).

process were now different from the previous year. While the drop in the amount of contribution to municipal budget in order to be able to vote from 2000 piastres to 1000 was welcomed, that the candidates' list was still not announced was the problem. Apparently, the requirement for donations to the municipality meant that only a certain portion of the inhabitants were able to vote, however, he was insistent that the subject concerned every householder, or even every individual resident in the district, which he called as "faubourg." Calling people's attention to this issue as one that directly affected every one was actually an attempt at strengthening the bonds between the inhabitants of the area, giving them a common sense of purpose in relation to their shared identity.

Complaints printed in the papers must have relied on this shared identity to gather more support from others. In 1867, a letter signed "a subscriber" appeared in *Levant Herald*, which reported the response of 6th Municipal District to his complaint published in an earlier issue.²²⁸ The complaint concerned the dust carts that disposed of garbage on the public highway. While "the grievance substantially stays the same," he added, the cart drivers "in obedience to their new orders, shifted the spot a few yards further on." Making such a complaint public, which may otherwise easily be overlooked, allowed even a single individual to enforce the municipal administration to take some action. While the problems could not be solved at once, as the subscriber says in his letter rather sarcastically, "one must do justice to the Municipality," for they had to look after their own interests as well. Such criticism and publicity did more than just muster support: it also helped identify the problem areas and encourage individuals to voice their demands loudly.

²²⁸ *Levant Herald*, (3 January 1867).

In a way, the complaints reinforced the knowledge of responsibilities assigned to the administration and the rights they guaranteed to the urbanites.

With the increase of similar news and articles, the role of press indeed expanded to become one of setting boundaries between state and individuals. This meant that the newspapers often reminded inhabitants of their rights and duties, encouraging them to get involved in the processes. However, these newly gained rights came at a cost: being able to exercise rights necessitated fulfilment of certain duties. Paying taxes was one such obligation and people were often urged for complying with the deadlines if they wanted to receive further services. Yet, since the earlier municipal administrations lacked proper instruments of law enforcement, they often failed to collect their dues, thus creating a deficit in their budget.

Obviously, taxes were not only a matter for the urban population, however, the unjust treatment of urban and rural populations in terms of receiving services were often criticised. Basiretçi Ali, for instance, complained that people of Istanbul lived comfortably yet neither paid their taxes nor lent conscripts to the army. Since they too were subjects of this state and equally enjoyed the benefits with the rest of the Empire, they should at least fulfil their responsibility of paying their taxes without having to be coerced by the state: “If they claim that they should be exempt from these responsibilities, they need to show another example of a capital city’s residents that enjoy the same privileges.”²²⁹ In an earlier issue, Basiretçi Ali Efendi had again underlined the unjust levy of taxes from rural parts of the Empire, which were used for providing better urban conditions for people of Beyoğlu and

²²⁹ Basiretçi Ali, 225. Şehir Mektubu no: 59, Basiret, nr. 1104 (22 L 1290/30 Teşrin-i Sâni 1289).

Istanbul.²³⁰ When viewed this way, it appears that Basiretçi regarded the population of capital as a burden on the rest of the Ottoman population, who squandered the money they paid so diligently for the benefit of the Empire.

Yet, the difference was not solely between Istanbul and Anatolia. After complaining about the still incomplete pavements in Fatih district, Basiretçi vehemently argued about “injustice” in the urban development of the city itself. For him, only a part of capital’s population was walking on wide and orderly streets while the rest still dealt with mud and filth and they should, too, benefit from “civilised” undertakings.²³¹ Complaining about the use of this money to enhance the Istanbulites’ pleasure was in a way an indirect criticism of the central state, which seemed to favour especially the non-Muslim and foreign population residing in Constantinople.

It was not just papers that drew attention to the different rates of development within the city. Midhat Pasha who acted as the governor of İzmir between 1880 and 1881 called attention to the increasing discrepancy between the shoreline and the inner city. He rightly pointed out that the Frank quarter and its environs were flourishing and drawing in the wealth and commerce while the dominantly Muslim and Jewish settlements on the hills of the city were left to rot.²³² Although the problems were identified and radical plans to transform the rest of the city were drawn out, Midhat Pasha’s short duration of governorship impeded their implementation. His successors tried to ameliorate the situation but things were

²³⁰ Basiretçi Ali, 102. Şehir Mektubu no: 10, Basiret, nr. 818 (3 Za 1289/22 Kanunuevvel 1289).

²³¹ Basiretçi Ali, 97. Şehir Mektubu No: 7, nr. 794 (5 L 1289/24 Teşrin-i Sani 1288).

²³² Raif Nezihî, *İzmir’in Tarihi*, Erol Üyepazarcı (ed.) (İzmir: İzmir Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür Yayını, 2001).

progressing slow. In 1890, *Hizmet* still wrote that İzmir could not keep up with its recent expansion and a close inspection of the city would reveal that “it is nothing but a ninety year old woman who appears falsely beautiful with a thick make up.”²³³ Thus, formation of a common urban identity was hindered by the unequal distribution of services to different parts of the city. The poorer parts of the cities were resenting the attention given to wealthier districts and preferred a more closed-in living, thereby assuming identities determined by spatial proximity and communal ties of belonging. Meanwhile, the inhabitants of districts that underwent urban renewal plans and were equipped with amenities of modern urban life were uncomfortable with the backwardsness of the rest of the city, which disagreed with their vision of an urban ideal. In effect, both sides regarded this tension within the city as a failure on the side of state, often blaming its representatives for the incompetency.

Yet, it was probably due this discontentedness that good practices undertaken by the state and its representatives were often praised publicly. Newspapers were used to encourage and enforce good behaviour on the side of the state and were instrumental in reinforcing the mutual rights and duties. In a declaration of appreciation printed in *Izmir*, an inhabitant of the city thanked Major Hasan Efendi for his just and fair conduct in dealing with a quarrel taking place between two men.²³⁴ The case involved the servant of the letter sender and a soldier, who, in a drunken stupor, insulted the said servant. When the master went to the barracks to complain about the case, Hasan Efendi took great interest and followed

²³³ *Hizmet*, Nr. 391, (2 Teşrin-i Evvel 1306/ 14 Teşrin-i Evvel 1890).

²³⁴ *İzmir*, Nr. 5 (20 Rebiülevvel 1294/23 Mart 1293).

proper procedure in finding and interrogating the complaine. Despite pleas of the soldier to be forgiven, the Major still penalised him in order to make an example of how such behaviour would not go unpunished. In return, the Smyrniot master found it proper to thank the Major as well as the state publicly rather than privately. As such, this article must have served multiple purposes. By having a congratulatory address printed, the Smyrniot not only underlined the duties of state but also positioned himself as an individual who actively defended his –or his servant’s for that matter- rights. Still, it seems that his social position was what allowed him to seek justice, and the printing of the letter made sure that his place as a respected member of the urban society was consolidated while praising the official and the state publicly could guarantee any backlash against his actions.

In less than a month, perhaps inspired by the first letter of appreciation, other similar articles began to be printed in the same paper. One of them not only showed gratitude to the state officials for their swift intervention to the fire but also advertised the insurance company: “If it had not been for the soldiers under the command of Hilmi Efendi, our town would be devastated. While an insurance company in İzmir called Royal helped people get back on their feet, it was thanks to the hard work of Hilmi Efendi and *tulumbacı*s that comforted the inhabitants.”²³⁵ The letter was signed by a number of people including the *muhtars* and inhabitants of Bornova, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. The letter, in a way, conveyed a sense of community that was brought about not only by geographical proximity but also by sharing a common problem and need of help.

²³⁵ *İzmir*, Nr. 22 (17 Rebiülahir 1294/ 19 Nisan 1293).

While the importance of papers in creating a sense of common identity and purpose cannot be denied, their influence in shaping public opinion was well recognised by the individuals as well. Protecting one's identity in the face of adversity or attacking others publicly was now a viable way of spreading or dispelling rumours. One's reputation in the city no longer hinged only on gossip: Redif Bey, a ticket seller in Beylerbeyi Pier had *Asır* print a plea in his name after *Diyojen* reported an altercation between him and a Turkish passenger. According to the text, Redif Bey denied the incident that was portrayed, claiming that it never took place in the first place: "If such a dispute or anything out of the ordinary had taken place, I would have remained silent. However, there is no truth to the claims and I reject this cold lie that has been imputed to my post."²³⁶ While the plea did not go into the specifics of the case, that Redif Bey used print as a way of refuting the claims that tarnished his reputation shows how quickly this new mode of communication was adopted, even by individuals themselves. When one was publicly disgraced, with repercussions of the event reaching a far wider audience of urban population, he was able to publicly deny it by using the same mechanisms.

Fixing an ill reputation was not dependent only on getting the newspapers to print articles in favour of the party concerned since press was not the only form of written expression. Printing houses also catered to the individual or community requests for pamphlets. The Jewish population of İzmir, for instance, had printed detailed booklets which described Jewish rituals and beliefs in order to put an end to blood libel rumours and handed them out to Greek inhabitants of the city.²³⁷ In

²³⁶ *Asır*, Nr. 7 (1 June 1870).

²³⁷ Benbassa, 47.

1901, with similar threats resurfacing, the Jewish community reprinted the booklets. While dispersing age old prejudices was hard as evidenced by recurring claims of blood libel, the Jewish community sought to at least alleviate negative perceptions of their community by means of public announcements that targeted the whole city in a more efficient way. Moreover, the Jewish papers printed in İzmir after the incident of 1901 had reported the case as a threat to the security and order of the whole city rather than just to their community and praised the sultan and the governor for their swift interference into the case before it escalated further.²³⁸ Likewise, right after the blood libel case in İzmir, the Greek church posted several announcements on the streets reading “Today’s incident about the boy is a case that will be examined by the government and heads of communities involved. Therefore, we advise that no one attack the Jewish population.”²³⁹ The announcements apparently aimed at calming down the public upheaval at once, but the subtext pointed to a new kind of legal and social organisation, whereby communities were encouraged to follow proper procedure instead of taking the matters into their own hands.

At times, attempts at tearing down such claims came from within the Greek community in form of printed material, as well. Evangelinos Misailidis in his novel told of an incident where a Greek boy disappeared and people responsible for it, also Greeks themselves, tried to put the blame on Jews again. However, their words were not taken seriously and they were scolded for putting forward such

²³⁸ Benbassa, 46.

²³⁹ *Tasvir-i Efkar*, Nr. 77.

unsubstantiated beliefs “that only the ignorant would believe in.”²⁴⁰ The fact that the novel was printed in Turkish with Greek letters makes this piece of writing more important since the primary audience was the Greek population. Misailidis had made clear at the beginning of his book that he did not intend to teach people a lesson. Instead he was trying to raise their awareness of good and bad habits and customs that they had been practising in their everyday lives,²⁴¹ hence he took it upon himself as a duty to act as a guide. Still, he must have been inspired to write on this issue by numerous reminders that emphasised the unfounded nature of prejudice against Jews. *Tasvir-i Efkar*, for instance, described Jewish blood libel allegations as “superstition” and indicated in a footnote that “the allegations concerning this well known superstition are also present in Europe.”²⁴² This way, the paper not only fulfilled its newly assumed duty of providing social cohesion and regulating intercommunal relationships but also saved face for the state, by pointing out that this was not a failure on its side, as a matter of fact, it was a practice common to all Europe.

While making affairs public could dispell the prejudices common among communities, and thus contribute to the social cohesion of the urban population, the same tactic was utilised to change the opinions in the urban circles in favour of one’s own interests. The divorce of Emine Semiye Hanım and Reşid Pasha was one such case. After their divorce, Emine Semiye Hanım sued her ex-husband to claim the money that she had lent him.²⁴³ Upon winning the case, she left Selanik to settle

²⁴⁰ Misailidis, 244.

²⁴¹ Misailidis, 24.

²⁴² *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 77.

²⁴³ Naciye Neyyal, 262-263.

in Istanbul with her son. However, taking advantage of her absence, Pasha had a leaflet printed and distributed it throughout the city for all to see, making false claims in order to prohibit her from seeing her son. Hearing this, Emine Semiye Hanım immediately went back to the city and prepared a leaflet in her defense and tried to clear her name in the eyes of prominent members of Salonica's urban society. It is not clear from Naciye Neyyal's account whether these leaflets changed the course of the argument between the two, but it appears that court case took a long time to settle. Still, drawing the attention of the society and trying to recruit sympathisers in the circles one belonged to seems to have been a major strategy and these leaflets were regarded as a viable way of tarnishing a reputation, just as having a complaint printed in a paper.

The networks of communication maintained, introduced or transformed in these 19th century cities in question reflect the complexity of the process. Each worked in its own way to reorganise social relationships, and they differed in their scope of influence. While age-old rumour mill worked just the same, the education and printing offered new channels for the circulation of opinions and thoughts. Initially, they informed the urban population of 19th century novelties, at times risking harsh criticism. However, as the century progressed, these novelties that concerned urban physical setting as well as attitudes and manners associated with urban life began to be regarded as standards against which compliance with urbanity measured. Thus, while expectations from the state to modernise and transform the urban sphere in line with the demands of the inhabitants came to be regarded as rights of an urbanite, the burdens that involvement in the processes

brought about began to be assumed as civic duties. The formation and steering of public opinion thus acclimated the populations to their new role as citizens, starting with the big cities of the Empire.

The pre-19th century urban practices of Ottoman cities rested on “collective responsibility” whereby liabilities such as maintaining the order, cleaning as well as collection of taxes rested on the inhabitants of each *mahalle*. In the period following Tanzimat, as the administrative system changed, *mahalle* system began dissolve and the state took over the responsibilities in question. In this sense, what is meant here by “urban responsibility” is an individual sense of obligation without any external intervention, for improving the urban sphere both physically and socially. This individual responsibility is closely connected with an urban identity, which signifies the relationship one establishes with the city.

Indeed, what we see in 19th century accounts reveals an increasing interest in matters involving urban life and a critical eye that assumes responsibility for the way things are handled as well as willingness to participate in urban affairs. This is especially evident in the writings of the era’s journalists, who constitute the overwhelming majority of contemporary intellectuals.

The century also witnessed the reintroduction of communities through these new means of communication to each other as a part of a larger urban society, which took root in the fact that cities were now considered as a common point of departure for identifying priorities and needs of their respective populations. While cities like Izmir and Salonica tried to come closer to an ideal conception of city, they not only

followed the example of the capital but also factored in their individual qualities in reaching an urban identity specific to their circumstances.

As far as individuals were concerned, these networks of communication allowed them to form ties of belonging outside the existing communal ones, based on the similarities of life styles and preferences. Inclusion in and exclusion from the urban society relied on approximating certain conditions now deemed indispensable for an urbanite. Regardless of gender, religion and ethnic backgrounds, they were now united by their distance from rural population, exemplified by their level of education, responsibilities and life styles.

CHAPTER VI

PLURALITY IN SIMILARITY: ELEMENTS OF NEW URBAN LIFE

David Harvey asserts that 19th century Paris evolved into “a more extroverted form of urbanism in which the public life of the boulevard became a highlight of what the city was about.”²⁴⁴ As the city became a continuous space that allowed the free circulation of its inhabitants instead of blocks of segregated quarters, which usually limited the individuals to their familiar localities of inhabitation and profession, the boundaries of public space expanded. While the degree to which a complete transformation into an uninterrupted –and an almost homogeneous- city system could ever be achieved remains contested, the Ottoman cities in question here were able to develop similar urban spaces and sets of urban relations in accordance with the changes of the 19th century that can be compared against each other.

²⁴⁴ Harvey, *Paris*, 108.

These similarities were expressed in the form of public spaces such as streets, gardens and public transport, as well as gathering places such as bookstores and clubs that served clusters of individuals who shared similar interests and social background. Their physical locations in relation to each other altered the traffic of the city while individuals who shared these spaces found new (or alternative) ways of communicating and establishing relationships, resulting in a changing of mentalities and perceptions. It is claimed that Mahmud II said “I only distinguish Muslims in mosque, Christians in church and Jews in synagogue, other than that; there are no differences among my subjects.”²⁴⁵ Since the identities associated with religious convictions were now forced to fit into a limited and small physical space in the city and the outward markers of existing identity patterns such as clothing were removed, distinguishing the passers-by in everyday life for what they are became a challenging task. Still, the choice to be present in certain parts of the city revealed a certain life-style, especially when these parts corresponded to more “modern” urban spaces.

This chapter tries to compare and contrast the new kinds of urban spaces that developed throughout the 19th century in Istanbul, Izmir and Salonica, and discuss whether commonalities in these urban settings translated into an encompassing urbanite identity that transcended local boundaries.

²⁴⁵ Reşat Kaynar, *Mustafa Reşit Paşa ve Tanzimat* (Ankara: TTK, 1985), 100.

6.1 Life on the Street

Felatun Bey and Rakım Efendi, who were as close to each other as they were apart, met for the first time in the house of a wealthy British family, who had settled in Beyoğlu. Felatun Efendi eventually had to stop seeing the family as a result of his debauchery, but the two still kept in touch, even if only by chance encounters on the streets. When they chanced upon each other, Felatun Bey would usually be sauntering about Beyoğlu's streets, trying to decide where he should spend the evening while Rakım Efendi would be in pursuit of some higher cause involving earning money, using the library of an acquaintance or learning new languages in the same area. Their dialogues, albeit brief, pointed to how their expectations from life and partaking in the city moved further apart with each conversation, leaving only the streets they walked on as their common point.

The changing patterns of consumption, habits and moving about the city indeed made certain parts of the cities more attractive to the crowds, allowing the encounters of people that would not have come together in any other setting. These encounters arose either pleasant or unwelcome feelings, depending on personal attitudes and preferred social identities. In Fatma Aliye's *Levayih-i Hayat*²⁴⁶ (Fragments of Life), for instance, one of her characters, Sabahat, expresses her discomfort at sharing a cabin in the boat with women who had overly made up faces, ruffled hair and extravagant attire, conversing in an incomprehensible French mixed with Greek and Turkish. For Sabahat, this was what boats, tramway and all public places were like: "A five *kuruş* ticket brought together people who would

²⁴⁶ Fatma Aliye, *Hayattan Sahneler (Levayih-i Hayat)*, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu (Ed. & Trans.) (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2002). Original published in 1897.

otherwise never come side by side.”²⁴⁷ In Fatma Aliye’s mind, the women symbolised an extreme and fake impersonation of what she sought to achieve: a balanced combination of Ottoman and European qualities. One cannot but help think that Sabahat’s discomfort would have been even more on the streets of Beyoğlu, where crowds people from diverse backgrounds came side by side without having to pay the ticket fee.

Grand Rue de Pera was the centre of attraction for Istanbul where such a crowd gathered. This almost three kilometer-long street extending from Taksim to Tepebaşı had been the center of foreign consuls and populations as well as housing a considerable number of Muslim and non-Muslim subjects. It is no surprise to find similar settings in Izmir and Salonica: both cities had a major artery passing through their respective Frank Quarters which housed consulates and businesses, with a dominantly foreign and non-Muslim population settled in and around the region. The aptly named Frank Street in Izmir was “a 2400 meter long street in the most prosperous quarter of the city”.²⁴⁸ From 1870s onward, the Muslim bourgeois was too drawn to the charm of the Frank quarter and started moving to this region, as well as to the newly developing settlements by the shore such as Karşıyaka, Güzelyalı and Karataş.²⁴⁹ In a way, the city extended along the shoreline, making room for similar urban settings for new groups of people, now having similar occupations, wealth levels and interests as well as the desire to adapt similar life

²⁴⁷ Fatma Aliye, *Hayattan*, 35.

²⁴⁸ *Aydın Vilayet Salnamesi R. 1307/H. 1308* (haz.) İbrahim Cavid, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2010), 496.

²⁴⁹ Christoph Neumann and Işık Tamdoğan, “Bilinmeyen Bir Cemaatin Portresi: Müslümanlar (Fikret Yılmaz’la Söyleşi)” *İzmir 1830-1930: Unutulmuş Bir Kent mi? Bir Osmanlı Limanından Hatıralar* Marie Carmen Smyrnelis (ed.) (İstanbul: İletişim Yay., 2008), 67.

styles. Hence, in Smyrna, the divided quarters of the first half of 19th century were replaced in the second half with mixed quarters, divided along economic and social lines.

Moreover, Izmir also expanded into the sea by filling the coastline and building a pier to keep up with the flourishing trade. The newly gained land offered easy access from the sea into the city and facilitated the traffic with its length of 3800 meters and width of 18 meters.²⁵⁰ Colloquially known as *Kordon*, this spacious addition to the city immediately drew the attention of its inhabitants and was filled with residential and commercial buildings as well as consulates within a short span of time. The cafes, hotels, shops and casinos soon followed suit. The street in its parallel, the second Kordon or Rue Parallel, also had the same setting. Practical uses aside, Kordon was offering a nice view of the sea and ships coming into the bay and became popular for such outings. Filling of the inner harbour of Izmir relieved the cramped up Frank Street and increased its distance from the shore while newly forming residential areas extended into the quarter. Thus, the Frank Street's importance as a centre for merchants was now replaced by its new function as the social centre of the city, allowing in people from different social classes²⁵¹ who frequented the street for its shops offering luxurious goods.

Selanik followed a similar course to Izmir in forming its main arteries. The street passing by the shore was enlarged thanks to the newly gained land by filling the sea and had become a center of socialisation, competing with the main artery in Frank Quarter. Vardar Street (Via Egnatia) that divided the city into two was also

²⁵⁰ *Aydın Vilayet Salnamesi*, 496.

²⁵¹ Zandi Sayek, 17.

renewed and enlarged in line with urban planning principles. In the second half of the 19th century, new main streets were crossing through the city such as 1500 meter long Sabri Pasha Street on the shore and Midhat Pasha Street, both named after the governors who opened them as well as Hamidiye Boulevard saluting Sultan Abdulhamid II.²⁵² Unlike Izmir, however, the settlement patterns of the city had remained relatively unchanged. According to Anastassiadou, poor population was distributed evenly throughout the city and no quarter became especially wealthy.²⁵³ Still, the concentration of shops that catered to the new habits of consumption made these streets a daily stop for the wealthier urbanites. The owners of these large shops in Salonica were either Jewish or Greek, who were also members of the prominent families of the city.²⁵⁴ Of these, Modianos were also dealing with banking and were the first to greet the new governor Tevfik Bey and his family and organize a friendly party for welcoming them to the city.

The most common feature on these streets were the shop windows displaying newest fashions and luxuries of European goods. As well as providing the inhabitants of the city with proper attire of an urbanite, they were an excuse to take long and slow strolls up and down these main streets spending all day window shopping and becoming a part of the spectacle itself. As a matter of fact, Grand Rue de Pera and its counterparts in Izmir and Salonica were more than a passage way for people and vehicles; the streets themselves served as a public display window, where individuals could express their preferred identities. The outward appearance of these identities was one of luxury and wealth, with jewellery stores adorning the

²⁵² Anastassiadou, 140.

²⁵³ Anastassiadou, 207, 232.

²⁵⁴ Anastassiadou, 320.

streets. When Demetra Vaka, who was born in Istanbul and emigrated to the United States came back to Istanbul in 1921 for a short visit, she could not help but feel surprised at the state she found the city in since “Istanbul I remember was an opulent city where luxury was on display without reservation.”²⁵⁵ Indeed, only some thirty years ago, the likes of Vartan Jewellery shop on Grand Rue de Pera were placing advertisements in *Annuaire Oriental* for their great variety of highly fashionable pieces of jewellery.²⁵⁶ The pieces could be made to order, thus allowing their clients to reflect their individuality.

Yet, the way one’s individuality was displayed did not solely rest on having unique jewellery designed for them. As a matter of fact, following certain routes and visiting certain shops in the city were often enough to express how one constructed his identity. Ubcini described the daily routine of a merchant working in Galata and living in Pera in the 1850s, after the day’s work was finished: “... they go up the narrow streets of Galata to Beyoğlu. Some of them stop by “Cafe Mimiç” belonging to an Armenian man: this place is Pera’s Tortoni and Petite Bourse. When they return home, they have their supper, rest for half an hour and the entertainment begins later.”²⁵⁷

In this respect, other than their role as a conveyor of messages, the papers were also essential in portraying the experience of being an urbanite, revealed in little details of the authors’ everyday lives. The journalists and the city were so inseparable that, as Ahmed Rasim stated, it was impossible to not encounter a

²⁵⁵ Demetra Vaka, *İstanbul’un Peçesiz Kadınları* (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2003), 12.

²⁵⁶ *Annuaire Oriental* (Ancient Indicateur Orientale) du Commerce de L’Industrie, de L’Administration et de la Magistrature, Créé Par Raphael C. Carveti et Publié Par Carveti Frères & C. (1895), 1286.

²⁵⁷ Ubcini, 143.

writer or reporter wherever one went.²⁵⁸ He himself being one of those journalists, Ahmed Rasim spent a considerable time walking around the city, observing and writing about the daily life of Istanbul. Yet, for him, Beyoğlu must have offered the most vivid scenes of urban life since the area or its parts were the subjects in majority of his letters. Even during ramadan, he left for Beyoğlu after breaking his fast and spent time loitering in front of theater gates, stopping by phonographs and hopping from one *kıraathane* to another until it was time to eat before the next fast.²⁵⁹ Thus, the streets offered enough entertainment on their own, at times leaving no need to find a company.

In the ordinary days, his route took him to the well known restaurants of the area such as *Komers*, although he found it to be very expensive.²⁶⁰ He spent most of his nights in Beyoğlu,²⁶¹ but often refrained from going to Tokatlıyan, which offered both “the Oriental and European cuisines,”²⁶² because of the way its waiters treated their customers who did not spend enough money. Still, it seems that he did not pass up on any chance of sitting by the window of Tokatlıyan’s restaurant to watch passers-by especially on Fridays and Sundays when there was any seat available, for enjoying the view of the streets and perhaps for finding the next subject for his letters. The area was also important for offering Istanbulites the chance to experience different modes of living in the city. Eating at Sponik, for instance, was a relatively cheap option for those who got tired of *alaturca* and eager to assume European habits without having to spend too much money. Once in the

²⁵⁸ Ahmet Rasim, 12.

²⁵⁹ Ahmet Rasim, 12.

²⁶⁰ Ahmet Rasim, 10.

²⁶¹ Ahmet Rasim, 19.

²⁶² *Annuaire Oriental* (1895), 574.

restaurant, “one could even be mistaken for a European man after removing his fez and displaying carefully combed hair.”²⁶³

Whether in fez or in a hat, wearing proper attire was a must. One could find all kinds of novelties in the department stores such as Louvre²⁶⁴ and Au Lion.²⁶⁵ Camelia and numerous others catered to the need of people going to ball dances,²⁶⁶ while Salomon Samuel and Samuel Cohen’s shop was offering elegant and sturdy ready made clothes for men, women and children at “moderate prices that have no competition.”²⁶⁷ P. Xenopoulo’s *Grands Magasin* allegedly known for “selling the best merchandise” was waiting for its customers on the Frank Street of İzmir at number 50.²⁶⁸ Just as it was the case in the differing price ranges of restaurants, the clothes and everyday items offered at costs suitable for different budgets allowed more people access to the European fashions.

Grand Rue de Pera also enabled the urbanites to take a closer look at the life of the Ottoman ruling family, and even offering the chance to purchase the same brands of merchandise that the sultan might be using. Now, the Istanbulite could wear clothes sewn by M. Palma, who was head tailor to the sultan himself, and his son by going to the shop on Grand Rue’s number 452.²⁶⁹ Manolaki Balabani, promoting himself as the “head tea merchant of the sultan”²⁷⁰ was announcing the

²⁶³ Ahmet Rasim, 20.

²⁶⁴ *Annuaire Oriental* (1895), Supplement, 1 (1105).

²⁶⁵ *Annuaire Oriental* (1895), Supplement, 3 (1107).

²⁶⁶ *Annuaire Oriental* (1895), Supplement, 11 (1114).

²⁶⁷ *Annuaire Oriental* (1895), 1373.

²⁶⁸ *Annuaire Oriental* (1895), 1228.

²⁶⁹ *Annuaire Oriental* (1895), 1140.

²⁷⁰ “Zat-ı hazret-i şehriyarinin çaycıbaşı”

arrival of all sorts of fine teas in Turkish, French, Greek and Armenian.²⁷¹ The sultan's piano supplier A. Comendiger had opened his shop on number 179.²⁷²

The availability of many shops catering to same needs meant many choices, which were now determined by the manners of shop assistants. Ahmed Rasim, for instance, preferred *Bazar Alman* over *Bonmarş*e since the latter lacked the good manners expected of a commercial establishment: "I admire the civility of *Bazar Alman*. Everything is as it is ought to be."²⁷³ Yet, Bortoli Brothers' Bon Marché was one of the most popular department stores in the area. With two branches in Istanbul, one on Grand Rue de Pera and the other on Rue Mezarlık as well as one branch in Izmir's Rue Franque, the shop offered a plethora of goods ranging from household items to clothing, food and drinks imported from all around Europe.²⁷⁴ Bazar Allemand offered relatively smaller number of items but included British and German goods in its collection.²⁷⁵

Most of the advertisements printed in *Annuaire Oriental* were in French but occasionally they were in multiple languages. While speaking French was a "must" for the urbanite of 19th century Empire, and readers of the *Annuaire* would have to speak and read the language any way, it is interesting to see that some shop owners opted to express themselves in all popular languages spoken in the Capital. *Au Lion* on Grand Rue de Pera, for instance, was announcing that they sold silk and wool fabrics of latest fashion and best quality in both Ottoman Turkish and French.²⁷⁶ H.

²⁷¹ *Annuaire Oriental* (1895), 1371.

²⁷² *Annuaire Oriental* (1895), 1122.

²⁷³ Ahmed Rasim, *Şehir Mektupları*, Cilt I-II, 155.

²⁷⁴ *Annuaire Oriental* (1895), Supplement, 4 (1108).

²⁷⁵ *Annuaire Oriental* (1895), Supplement, 12-13 (1115).

²⁷⁶ *Annuaire Oriental* (1895), 1100.

Décugis shop was selling household items for the changing interiors of the 19th century as well as articles for cafés and restaurants, which would enable the urban dweller to carry the comfort of latest fashions into their homes. In order to address a wider audience, the advertisement was printed in Armenian, Ottoman Turkish, French and Greek.²⁷⁷

Beyoğlu area seems to have turned into a mini city, where one could live out his days without having to leave the district, as long as his wealth permitted. As a matter of fact, despite exorbitant prices, Ahmed Midhat suggested that a single man could live in the area without having to worry about the what to eat and how to clean one's clothes by renting a room in a hotel. Indeed, the advertisements for the hotels in Beyoğlu often indicated the availability of monthly or daily rented out rooms for singles as well as families, who wanted to spend the winter in the area. Similar establishments were also present in İzmir: The first class establishment on the Kordon, Hotel de la Ville was placed in the business center and offered rooms for families and European style of service.²⁷⁸

Yet, the hotels also served in accordance with the changing neighbourly relations. The guests no longer appeared unannounced, instead, they let their host when they will arrive and leave their houses. While Ahmet Rasim considered this to be an erosion of past values, it seems to be a new practice related to the transforming conceptions of time and increasing mobility of urban population. The habit of staying at friend's houses after dinner continued especially during summer

²⁷⁷ *Annuaire Oriental* (1895), 1121.

²⁷⁸ *Annuaire Oriental*, (1895), 1231.

time but now, one could easily spend a night at a hotel if he could not return home at a late hour.²⁷⁹

The increasing similarity of especially Pera's streets to its European counterparts meant the area had become too western to meet Oriental dreams of European visitors but it was still eastern enough to cover one in mud from head to toe. Disillusioned by what he saw, Ubcini wrote in his travelogue: "I will not try to describe Pera, there is no sense in describing a town that is renewed by fires every 8-10 years. Besides the town has no character. If it was not for the few Turkish women windowshopping, one would think himself in a second or third rate Italian city... Despite being a part of Ottoman Istanbul, Pera is as foreign to the city as Beijing and Calcutta are."²⁸⁰

Ironically, the photography studios on Grand Rue was now offering the disenchanted Western traveller the chance to make up for the lack of sceneries that accompanied their idea of an Eastern capital. The Caracache Brothers were photographers offering all types of photography gears including photography papers, plates and flashes in their shop on number 675-677. Their facilities included a dark room and the studio services for taking all sorts of portraits of the neatly dressed urbanite and even babies. More importantly, they were proudly announcing that they had many different kinds of "oriental panoramas and costumes."²⁸¹ Such oriental sceneries were not only sought after by foreigners, the Istanbulites too enjoyed posing as an *effendi*. Osman Hamdi Bey for instance, painted his many

²⁷⁹ Ahmed Rasim, 21.

²⁸⁰ F.H.A Ubcini, *1855'de Türkiye*, Cilt II, (İstanbul: *Tercüman* 1001 Temel Eser, 1977), 139.

²⁸¹ *Annuaire Oriental* (1895), 1120.

portraits based on costumed photographs that he took of himself. Collecting oriental sceneries was an important occupation for Naciye Neyyal, who took many photographs during her stay in Jerusalem but lost them when a jealous friend exposed them to sun.²⁸²

Yet, while compensating the “easterness” of the city, the photography studios were also breaking the codes that separated feminine and masculine domains. In Ahmed Midhat’s *Vah*, Behçet takes a photo of Ferdane to the studio of Abdullah Frères and has them make copies to be sold in the shops.²⁸³ Considering that Abdullah Frères had “all sorts of portraits” including “the photographs of ministers and the colorful characters of Turkey,”²⁸⁴ this scenario does not seem too far fetched. For women, gazing out of the shop windows was thus as much a problem as looking into them, even as just a picture. This aversion for the distribution of women’s photographs were still looked down upon with a frown in the early years of the republic. According to Abdullah Cevdet, “A young girl would not have her photo taken by every minute and does not share them with random people.”²⁸⁵ The likeness of a woman passed from hand to hand was degrading to say the least.

The existence of women on the streets, especially Muslim women strolling around in Pera as seen in Chapter III was regarded improper by most. In the afternoon, as the people dispersed from the streets, so did the gossips. Some got a bad reputation for spending a lot of time on the streets and were called beauty of the

²⁸² Naciye Neyyal,

²⁸³ Ahmed Midhat, *Vah* (Ankara: TDK Yay.: 2000).

²⁸⁴ *Annuaire Oriental* (1895), Supplement 43 (1142).

²⁸⁵ Abdullah Cevdet in Işın, 130.

bazaar while others divorced their wives for going shopping without their permission.²⁸⁶ Ubcini tells of a scandalous story: two Ottoman women enter the shop of a Parisian coiffeur and under the pretext of shopping, they go into the back room. While the nature of what happened in the back is not revealed by Ubcini, that the military police was immediately notified points to the amorality of whatever took place. By the time they arrived the two women had escaped through the torn down wall between the shop and the neighbouring house.”²⁸⁷ The event resulted in a regulation that forbade muslim women from entering *Frenk* shops in Pera: now the women would stand outside and the goods would be brought out on the street.

It is apparent in Basiretçi’s letters that this regulation was becoming increasingly disregarded in the following years. Therefore, in order to prevent such indecency and draw in more Ottoman women as clients, some shops opted to hire female personnel who would attend their clients in a separate room.²⁸⁸ In 1895, for instance, Tring Shop opened a new branch in Galata for women’s garments as well as children’s clothes. This branch also served the latest fashions of Paris at moderate prices the only difference being that it employed female shop assistants as well as a tailoress.²⁸⁹ Still, it was not until 1920s that women in employment of such shops reached a considerable number. Vaka met the owner of one of these shops run by Turkish women, who had ventured to open the store not because she needed the money but because she wanted to offer job opportunities to women in

²⁸⁶ *Tercüman*, 103. Şehir Mektupları, ¾, 134.

²⁸⁷ Ubcini, 122.

²⁸⁸ Yavuz Köse, “Pera’dan İstanbul’a Modern Çağın Çarşıları ve Çalışanları,” *İstanbul: İmparatorluk Başkentinden Megakente*, Yavuz Köse (Ed.) (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2011), 401.

²⁸⁹ Mustafa Çiçekler and Fatih Andı, *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete (1895-1908) Seçki* (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 368.

need and employed 28 women. The shop assistants, on the other hand, were happy to find employment but preferred to stay home if they had the chance as, for them, having to work meant servitude rather than emancipation.²⁹⁰

The shops were obviously depending on the demand from their clients for their goods. However, they were at the same time dictating the must haves of an urban type that you could meet on the streets of Paris. The book binder Christodoulos in Galata was, for instance, offering his services at moderate prices.²⁹¹ He bound almost all printed materials including books for personal libraries, sheet music, holy books, daily newspapers and illustrated magazines, in turning them into luxury materials and objects of desire. They were even presented as prizes to students or gifted bound in silk or velvet. It is no wonder that Ahmed Midhat makes special mention of Felatun's bound books with his gilded initials that arrive regularly from a bookbinder in Beyoğlu.²⁹² When he received the package, Felatun looked carefully at the covers and then placed the books neatly on shelves, without even bothering to take a peek inside. Printing of pamphlets, on the other hand, was facilitated by a number of publishers, such as J. Palamari's printing shop on Grand Rue de Pera, which was offering quick prints at moderate prices, in all languages.²⁹³

J. Verdoux shop in number 482 for optical instruments was one of the most important shops selling telescopes for enjoying the views of the city as well as binoculars for use in theaters and operas.²⁹⁴ It also offered the ever present

²⁹⁰ Vaka, 31.

²⁹¹ *Annuaire Oriental* (1895), 1166.

²⁹² Ahmed Midhat, *Felatun*, 7.

²⁹³ *Annuaire Oriental* (1895), 1003.

²⁹⁴ *Annuaire Oriental* (1895), 1123.

monocles and eye glasses in descriptions of the costumes of urbanite men.²⁹⁵

Ahmed Rasim in his city letters also made a special mention of the shop:

The market for eyeglasses in our city is very diverse. For example, one would pay for glasses bought from *Verdu* (sic) 30 *kuruş* while the same eyeglasses cost 25 in Galata, 15 in Bahçekapısı and by the Bridge, and 10 *kuruş* if you bought them from a street peddler. Do you see the difference? Always a quarter. It appears that one has to observe the ranks while buying them. If you have a receipt from a doctor, the prices double. So one has to be very careful. Instead of shopping at *Verdu* (sic), therefore, it is better to take a seat at the casinos on the bridge and wait for a peddler walking around with his small glass case. If you can bargain insistently, you can buy them at prices as low as 8 *kuruş*.²⁹⁶

These shops existed in all three cities in differing numbers and presented a more uniform urban experience for the urban dwellers of these cities. People consumed similar foods, shopped in same shops, stayed in similar hotels. Individual dynamics of each city aside, the experience offered to the urban dwellers who preferred to associate themselves with these new features of the city were now indistinguishable from each other. In effect, with converging urban experiences, the types of people you would expect to see on the streets too were becoming uniform as evidenced by the descriptions in memoirs, literature and papers.

Kara Sinan, for instance, dwelt so much on the similarities of fops of Istanbul and Izmir that the paper often printed their fictional letters and telegrams to each other to draw attention to their rivalry. These correspondances usually involved suggestions on the latest fashions as well as tips on how to afford this life

²⁹⁵ Basiretçi, 128.

²⁹⁶ Ahmed Rasim, *Şehir Mektupları*, Nuri Akbayar (Haz.), İstanbul: Arba Yay., 1992), Cilt I-II, 25.

style since keeping up with expenses and fashion at the same time was a hard task. In an announcement from “the council of fops,” it was stated that walking on foot on holidays was forbidden and a carriage should be rented even at the cost of selling everything in their homes “to protect the pursuit of latest fashions.”²⁹⁷ Fops of İstanbul informed those of İzmir that “madamoiselles of *kafe dö şantans* (café chantants) now accept items like coats and watches as pawns. So you can act accordingly when you have no money.”²⁹⁸ The fops of Izmir replied to the Istanbulites saying that they did not subsist on monthly salary like their Istanbul counterparts did: “We deal in trade. You take care of yourselves, we are doing fine. We spend only 60 *paras* until the morning.”²⁹⁹ Thus, the only difference being the governmental posts held by the dandies of the Capital, this seeming rivalry between the fops of the two cities was actually implying the if you were to walk on Grand Rue de Pera, Rue Egnatia or Frank Street, you would have encountered the same scenes, similar people and would not be able to tell the difference between the cities. Indeed they were as similar as in their tastes as in their lack of manners: “There will come a time when people of Beyoğlu in Istanbul and Frank Quarter in Izmir will learn good manners... There will come a time when fops of Istanbul and dandies of İzmir will try to sell their shapeless wide leg trousers in the flea market and noone will pay a dime.”³⁰⁰

Yet, as much as they acted as a crowd gatherer and attraction, the very same reasons led some urbanites to refrain from spending time in these streets. A

²⁹⁷ *Kara Sinan*, Nr. 24, 23 Zilhicce 1292/8 Kanun-i Sani 1291.

²⁹⁸ *Kara Sinan*, Nr. 16, 19 Şevval 1292, 6 November 1291.

²⁹⁹ *Kara Sinan*, Nr. 18, 3 Z 1292, 20 November 1291.

³⁰⁰ *Kara Sinan*, Nr. 13, 25 Receb 1292/ 14 August 1291.

contemporary Greek intellectual Hourmouzis wrote that “luxurious outfits embarrassed him to such an extent that he consciously avoided visiting fashionable places such as the casino and the café where women exposed themselves in this way.”³⁰¹ Even when the criticism was not loudly and clearly stated, the preference of some authors to talk of the city’s less mentioned parts over these popular promenade routes indicates a covert disapproval of life on certain streets. Basiretçi Ali, for instance, usually wrote on the problems of the area around Fatih and his daily walks rarely took him across the bridge to Beyoğlu. As a matter of fact, he often spoke of the problems he encountered on the street between Fatih and Edirnekapı,³⁰² or Balat and Beyazıt, near where he lived and worked. His trips to Beyoğlu were narrated under a different heading, not mentioned as a part of his writings titled “Istanbul Streets,” and these narrations were either full of complaints about the decadent life of the area that deviated Muslim men and women from following a moral and virtuous life or pointing out to the good urban practices pertaining to infrastructure or order that he asked to be applied in other parts of Istanbul. His preference for staying on this side of Golden Horn in a way parallels his stance in the social and political life of the Empire: he was not too far away from new ideas and manners that flowed into the Capital primarily through the salons and streets of Beyoğlu but distant enough to not be carried away by them. By concentrating on the area he spent most time in he was able to talk about the narrowest streets and every pothole there was³⁰³ but this also meant that he too offered a limited view of the city since he often did not venture outside his usual

³⁰¹ Exertzoglou, 86.

³⁰² Basiretçi Ali, 88, 92, 117, 147, 365,

³⁰³ Basiretçi Ali, 404.

route. As a matter of fact, the farthest he travelled in the city was when Basiret was banned from publication for a few weeks and he was able to find time to stay at a friend's house in Çamlıca.³⁰⁴

However, whether motivated by avoidance or inclusion, the preferences for circulating in the city was now carrying deeper meanings, implying approval and/or disapproval on the side of individuals and thus, presented a different urban experience for all involved. Even when there was not actual shopping, the daily routine of stopping by certain bookshops to browse new publications or journals changed existing patterns of partaking in the city. Babiali Street, for instance, housed a great number of bookshops and publishers, mostly Armenian. The only Turkish shop on the street at the time was one Esad Efendi's kütüphane who was later sent to exile by Abdulhamid II. Sucu Kosti's coffeeshop on the same street was a major gathering spot for not only Ahmed İhsan and his friends like Ahmed Rasim and Mahmud Sadık but also the youngest of enthusiastic would-be authors, who were too shy to stop by these bookshops frequented by the seasoned and famous authors.³⁰⁵

Still, for some, the route taken did not necessarily suggest a social commentary. Hagop Mintzuri lived in Beşiktaş towards the end of the 19th century and in his spare time from school, he worked in his father's bakery delivering bread to the clients' homes³⁰⁶ therefore for him, walking around the city was not a matter of choice, it was a necessity. Delivery was a hard task involving carrying and

³⁰⁴ Basiretçi Ali, 302.

³⁰⁵ Ahmet İhsan Tokgöz, *Matbuat*, 38-41.

³⁰⁶ Mintzuri, 21.

handing out 1500 breads throughout the city. His usual route took him from Beşiktaş to Yıldız, Nişantaşı, Maçka and finally Akaretler and along the way he was stopping by various dwellings of Muslims and non-Muslims, as well as the wealthy and the poor. Peeking into homes where he would not be allowed otherwise, young Mintzuri was observing their differences from his life. He was in a way in a privileged position when compared to others from his neighbourhood because “Back then there were many people who did not know his way around Istanbul.³⁰⁷”

His impressions of the city outside of his neighbourhood was thus one of an outsider visiting Istanbul when compared to other narratives, although he knew some parts of the city such as Ortaköy by heart. When he described his route, the map was dotted by either landmarks such as mosques, churches, synagogues and Yıldız Palace, or the houses of people from Armenian community and higher ranking government officials: “I knew the village (Ortaköy) like the back of my hand, like a local man: Taşmerdiven, then up from there the walled streets where Şnork Amiryan and the breadmaker of the palace Agopik Efendi Noragunkyan lived, the Armenian school, (...) the gates of young princesses’ palaces (...) the kiosks of Ministers of the Interior and Justice Memduh and Abdullah Pashas, the seaside mansion of the director of Museum Hamdi Bey...”³⁰⁸

As a result of this compulsory route, Mintzuri’s experience was completely different from the majority of accounts of the era. What was a common scenery for someone walking around Beyoğlu or Kordon was a rare sight for him. He tells that European attire was not widespread within the Empire, as a matter of fact, “only

³⁰⁷ Mintzuri, 20.

³⁰⁸ Mintzuri, 49.

one quarter of the city population dressed in that manner.”³⁰⁹ The rest were usually dressed in their traditional attire, sometimes even preferred the local clothes of the region they emigrated from. Mintzuri family lived close to other people who also came to the city from Armudalan in Erzincan and some of them were still wearing blue garments they brought from the village. Although other people from Armudalan used to wear ordinary looking trousers, vests and jackets, according to Mintzuri, “one could still tell where we were from”³¹⁰ due to the materials used and the way they were sewn. Keeping their clothes on seems to have been one way keeping their distance from Istanbul and thus retain their identity, not allowing their true sense of belonging dissolve in the hectic life of the city: “It was as if we were not in Istanbul ... but in the village, going to the mountains to collect herbs.”³¹¹

When he started school, his route changed to include Galata since in *Yüksekkaldırım* he could find used books at small prices. His main interests, just like Ahmed İhsan, were French novels written by Zola and Flaubert and inspired by what he read he likened this place to Rive Gauche in Paris, where second hand books were sold. As he never abandoned his identity of belonging to Armudalan, he was able to adapt back to farming while at the same time teaching in the village’s school. When he had to go back to Istanbul in 1914, he identified himself with a Gorki character, unable to fit into the crowd: “...I was a barefoot (va-nu-pieds). Not

³⁰⁹ Mintzuri, 28.

³¹⁰ Mintzuri, 30.

³¹¹ Mintzuri, 30.

on the never ending roads but in the never ending chaos. Because I was a villager, an autodidact, someone who improved oneself.”³¹²

These differing views of cities essentially present us with degrees of identification with the urban society and space.

6.2 Gathering Places: Privately Public

While streets provided a public space for daily encounters and were open to all manifestations of different kinds of life choices, the desire to keep the privacy of this open life still existed. Living a more extroverted life also meant exposing oneself to threats, making security a bigger concern than encountering people who did not meet the criteria for being a proper urbanite. Hence, the unwanted of the city were exposing the urbanites to varying degrees to danger, from having to stand the loud voice of unbecoming people to being mugged and even killed in the dark streets. While the demand for illumination of streets and security forces were often voiced, it was not possible to entirely protect oneself from dangers when enjoying the public space. The new urbanites thus sought to carve a bit of privacy for themselves in the middle of the city, safe from the prying eyes of irrelevant crowd, open only to those that they deemed equals, who were worthy of displaying their newest dresses.

Creation of such public spaces quite often came after the inhabitants already claimed and repurposed existing urban plots not intended for use as places of

³¹² Mintzuri, 153.

recreation or their insistent petitions to the Porte for the transformation of a particular area to suit public use. Hence, as revealed in the narratives of the era, socialisation within the city took shape as both the state and the inhabitants interacted and actively participated in the process. While in their previous form as cemeteries, Grands Champs des Morts and Petits Champs des Morts had already been used as a place of entertainment for all inhabitants of the city as well as “becoming the great promenade of the Franks who assemble every evening to enjoy the air.”³¹³ Even though they offered less pleasurable views in their current state, they were a meeting point for people living in the area regardless of their social background. When Misailidis’ Favini declared his love for two sisters, for instance, the girls invited him to Petit Champs des Morts, the small graveyard in Beyoğlu’s Tepebaşı.³¹⁴

As the demands for public green spaces began to be frequently voiced in the Ottoman papers printed in French, often accompanied by articles emphasizing the health threats posed by burials near populated areas,³¹⁵ the state had to take action to transform these plots. When Taksim Garden opened in 1869 with Tepebaşı Garden following shortly after, the papers celebrated the occasion with high praise for they provided the public with a beautiful public space. However, both gardens situated on the opposing sides of the quarter charged entrance fees in order to keep away undesirables,³¹⁶ and annual profit from Taksim Garden was estimated to be

³¹³ Mark Wilson, ed., *Thomas Allom’s Constantinople and the Scenery of the Seven Churches of Asia Minor* (New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2006), p. 52.

³¹⁴ Misailidis, 64.

³¹⁵ Akm, 151.

³¹⁶ Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet, eds., *A Social History of Ottoman Istanbul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 246.

50000 to 60000 *kuruş*. Thus, despite the term “public,” the gardens were apparently intended for people of a certain income and social status³¹⁷ and making profit was as valid a reason as providing pleasurable surroundings. This practice seems to have drawn some criticism as well as failing to produce the desired outcome. In 1871, *Diyojen* reported that the Taksim Garden was incurring deficit in its budget as “income from the public garden ‘with entrance fee’ did not compensate the expenses.”³¹⁸ Thus, for some, opening up to the city and becoming a part of modern urban life meant getting to decide who would be included and excluded to the scenery since their private lives were now a part of the life on the street.

While it was relatively easier to avoid the crowd on the street the availability of similar products for a larger population of different means made it harder to differentiate their provenance. The increasing number of exclusive city clubs throughout the 19th century thus offered more secluded gathering places for alike minded people, who shared similar social circumstances, limiting undesired encounters to a minimum. In a way, these places were “privately public,” where urbanites converging in their ways of life and manners could come together, safe from the unwanted crowd of the city.

Such social spaces were also instrumental in creating new ties of belonging and forging new identities. When speaking of Pera, Ubcini was bluntly critical: “There is not a great variety of entertainment: in the winter, theater three times a week, occasionally a dinner or a ballroom party... There aren’t any casinos, literary associations, concerts, society balls or even a simple reading room like the ones in

³¹⁷ BOA, I.DH 607/42291 (12 Za 1286/13 February 1870).

³¹⁸ *Diyojen*, Nr. 12, 11 Mart 1287.

İzmir.”³¹⁹ For him, the veneer of European appearance lacked substance in terms of social relationships, and thus, the quarter was “the most anti-social place he had ever been to.”³²⁰ Thus, providing more opportunities for socialisation and the existence of exclusive gathering places were seen as instrumental for giving character to the urban crowd.

While his observations present a opposing picture of Beyoğlu to many other accounts, it was evidently true that İzmir was much further ahead when it came to providing new kinds of social gathering spaces for its inhabitants. The earliest clubs and casinos of the Empire were opened in the city as early as 1778. European Casino was established by a few foreign merchants living in the city but was not open to the Ottoman population of İzmir.³²¹

By 1838, Frank and Greek Casinos in İzmir were fully active, engaging the urbanites in new kinds of social activities. These casinos served their clients on the basis of membership and allowed in a large crowd of both prominent personalities of İzmir’s urban life as well as the consulate employees and their families. The members of the Frank Casino – Casin de Smyrne – were also allowed to sponsor foreigners visiting the city, who would then be regarded as “honorary” members, permitted to attend four carnival balls and use the reading or card rooms of the casino for three months. The scenery during these balls hence often included the officers of visiting foreign ships in their full uniforms. Such a crowd necessitated a rich collection of reading material and the reading rooms offered newspapers from

³¹⁹ Ubicini, 143.

³²⁰ Ubicini, 144.

³²¹ Marie Carmen Smyrnelis, “İzmir’de Avrupalı Koloniler,” 216.

all over Europe as well as local ones.³²² The Greek Club, too, was on the Frank Street with a ballroom twice the size of Frank Casino's, allowing in a large orchestra and could host three hundred people at once. As the popularity of these gathering places grew, their numbers in the city increased considerably: 1891 yearbook of Aydın Province proudly listed three clubs and 24 casinos in İzmir.³²³

The most distinguished clubs in Istanbul were Cercle D'Orient on Grand Rue de Pera and Club de Constantinople on Kabristan Street. As one British diplomat put forward, Cercle was "the preserve of diplomats, financiers and uppermost levels of societies," while "merchants and men of the second rank including consuls patronised Club de Constantinople."³²⁴ Indeed, in 1895, Münir Pasha was the vice-president of the Cercle while council general of England Sir Henry Fawcett presided over the Club de Constantinople.³²⁵

Salonica was not short of similar associations: European Club, as *Hermès* reported, was the main gathering place for the local elites.³²⁶ Established by the British consul Mr. Blunt, the club was situated in the European quarter of the city and was host to meeting of many local associations deemed worthy of praise while it also provided books and journals in many languages that the students in the city needed. Similarly, Kegel Club in Salonica was established in 1873 and was described as a "very pleasant gathering place for the society of the city as well as foreigners." In order to gain access, however, the foreigners had to be sponsored by

³²² William Knight, *Oriental Outlines or A Rambler's Recollections of a Tour in Turkey, Greece and Tuscany in 1838* (London, 1839), 271.

³²³ *Aydın Vilayeti Salnamesi*, 496.

³²⁴ B.J.C Mc Kercher and D.J. Moss, *Shadow and Substance in British Foreign Policy* (Alberta: University of Alberta Press, 1984), 33-34.

³²⁵ *Annuaire Oriental* (1895), 487.

³²⁶ Yerolympos, "Selanik'te Kentlilik Bilinci," 161.

a member and were allowed fifteen days of free admission. After this time period, should they extend their visit and wish to continue going to the club, they had to pay a certain amount of monthly fee to get a member card. The club members had designated the governor of the vilayet, then Mehmed Zihni Pasha, as the honorary president of the club's committee.³²⁷

Appointing government officials as honorary presidents seems to be a policy that these clubs pursued in order to legalise their status vis a vis the state as well as to include any and all prominent members of the urban society, thereby forming a coherent group that had stronger alliances within the city. Cercle de Salonique, for instance, was headed by Galip Pasha in 1885, then governor of Salonica. The Cercle was established in the same year as Kegel Club and had immediately become a gathering place for the urban elite. While students, the underaged and foreigners were not allowed to hold memberships, the military commander, governor, consuls and various government officials were encouraged to apply by making the process as easy as writing a letter. The statute of the club had made it clear that political or religious discussions had no place within the Cercle. Instead the members would converse on daily life, literature and trade while playing cards or billiards, without turning them into a gambling game. While the membership of women was not specifically mentioned, the families of members were welcomed as long as boys were under the age of 21.³²⁸

³²⁷ *Annuaire Oriental* (Ancient Indicateur Orientale) du Commerce de L'Industrie, de L'Administration et de la Magistrature, Créé Par Raphael C. Carveti et Publié Par Carveti Frères & C. (1895), 859.

³²⁸ Anastassiadou, 327.

Other kinds of associations in Salonica were more exclusive, usually open to members of a religious or ethnic community. Being more oriented towards education or charity, these clubs were mainly involved in the improvement of living conditions of their own communities. Evangelismos and Omilos Filomuson in Salonica, for instance, catered to moral, intellectual and physical development of their members composed of Orthodox Greeks.³²⁹ A Jewish association, Cercle des Intimes, on the other hand, was working towards the integration of the Jewish population into the Ottoman millet and was in support of İttihad and Terakki Association.³³⁰ Towards the end of the century, the sports clubs started to emerge as an alternative gathering spot in the city. Sporting Club in Salonica was soon followed by Salonica Lawn Tennis Club and Croquet Club, both of which allowed women as members too.³³¹ These sports associations were careful to underline that discussions on politics and religion were not allowed in order to avoid drawing the attention the state.

Aside from their rich reading rooms, which all these clubs boasted about, the balls they organised were their main attraction for the urbanites. Such occasions were opportunities to mingle with foreign families, forming business connections and even finding spouses. While the masked balls in the casino gathered together foreigners and non-Muslim population of the city, Muslims, too, occasionally joined in the crowd, albeit as spectators rather than dancers.³³² For Ekrem Işın, this

³²⁹ Anastassiadou, 328.

³³⁰ Anastassiadou, 329.

³³¹ Anasrassiadou, 331.

³³² Knight, 274.

hesitation to become a participant in the entertainment was a sign of Ottoman passivity, where he was the audience rather than the entertainer.³³³

Still, during the carnival week in Istanbul, hordes of people flowed into the ballrooms, associations and theaters of Beyoğlu and the preparations started days before. Misailidis found these to be a pest that slowly crawled into Ottoman society in cities such as Istanbul, Izmir and Alexandria, saying that during the week, squandering, amorality and unruly behaviour reached such extremes that are never seen any other time of the year. He insisted that these should be banned but added somewhat disgruntledly: “They say it is the necessity of civilisation. What a civilisation!”³³⁴

In Ahmed Midhat’s *Karnaval*, the scenery was not much different. Yet, for him, there were several kinds of balls; some gathered together the vilest of women and men while others were held in embassies to entertain the members of the upper classes.³³⁵ The main difference between them was that the former were open to general public while the latter were exclusive to members of high society, who were moderate in their manners and did not deviate to extravagancy. In *Karnaval*, Bahtiyar Pasha’s family attends such a dance party held for helping poor Greek families, which was announced in the papers as the most brilliant ball held to that date.³³⁶

The papers were indeed announcing charitable balls held in the city for the benefit of public. Advertisements placed in Levant Herald announced two balls for

³³³ Ekrem Işın, 168.

³³⁴ Misailidis, 147.

³³⁵ Ahmed Midhat, *Karnaval*, 4.

³³⁶ Ahmed Midhat, *Karnaval*, 170.

charity, one being the masonic ball and the other being sponsored by Fazıl Pasha. The entrance fee to Fazıl Pasha's ball was at a relatively low price of 10 cents as Pasha funded most of the evenings entertainments.³³⁷ In an other issue, *Société de Bienfaisance de Tatabla* publicly thanked all those contributed to the success of their annual ball held under the patronage of Mme Ignatieff.³³⁸ *La Turquie* dated 19 February 1870, on the other hand, had reported that the ball held for the benefit of the 6th Municipal District's Hospital was succesful in raising enough funds for the cause with the attendance of 3000 invitees.³³⁹ Thus, through these entertainments, the wealthier urbanites were justifying their consumption and life styles by actively taking part in aiding the needy and the disadvantaged of the city. Turning these balls into charitable responsibilities was in turn helping them gain the moral high ground when confronted with allegations of indulgence in luxury.

This seems to be a common sentiment for most as Misailidis also put a distinction between carnival balls and polite balls organised for charity.³⁴⁰ Even when they were for charity, however, these balls could end up in the ruin of young Muslim attendees. Safveti Ziya's novel *Salon Köşelerinde* opens with the sad news of Şekip's death and the beginnings of this tragedy take root in a charity ball organised in Pera Palas. As the first exquisite event of the winter season, it attracts all the well known and elegant families of the city. While Şekip is at first hesitant, he decides to go, dressing carefully to represent Turks with his politeness, attitude,

³³⁷ *Levant Herald* 27 January 1868.

³³⁸ *Levant Herald*, 12 March 1867.

³³⁹ Akın, 55.

³⁴⁰ Misailidis, 149.

manners and politeness. In his words, he wanted onlookers to say “when they see a man in fez and a beautiful woman dancing ‘how fine this young Turk waltzes.’”³⁴¹

Despite such warnings of dangers they harboured, it seems that frequenting the clubs, attending ballroom dances and participating in other activities organised by them had become a must for the new urban elite. Becoming a part of these urban circles necessitated staying upto date with gossips and building strong relationships within the community. In a way, they had become a part of new rules for acception inclusion into the urban society.

³⁴¹ Safveti Ziya, *Salon Köşelerinde*, 2.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

In his *Türkleşmek, İslamlaşmak, Muasırlaşmak* dated 1918, Ziya Gökalp bitterly explained the origins of the term “urbanite”:

Long ago, a cosmopolitan class was formed in the Byzantine Empire, the mecca of state officials aiming high, belonging to different peoples. This bunch sought a title for themselves and eventually settled on the term “*urbanite*.” The *urbanite* did not have a nation... The urbanite was neither Turk, Kurd, Arab nor Albanian: a group hostile to all nations. This group of people did not care for the Arab, made light of the Kurd, mocked the Laz and belittled the Turk.³⁴²

While his resentment can be attested to the era he wrote his treatise, the position he assumed against the city had its roots in the way the relationship between the cities and urban dwellers of the Ottoman Empire evolved throughout the 19th century. The process had been a long albeit rapid one, which took shape during the turmoil of Ottoman reforms with a multiplicity of actors constantly redrawing their boundaries in their struggle to either stand their grounds or carve new foothold for themselves. Thus, from its inception, the urban physical and social transformation in the Ottoman Empire had been a joint effort of clashing interest groups. While the

³⁴² Hilmi Ziya Ülken, *Ziya Gökalp* (Türkiye İşbankası Kültür Yayınları: İstanbul, 2007), 20.

initial ideals of a safe, beautiful and healthy city held true for all parties concerned, motivations for and means of attaining this goal differed.

For the state, urban policies went hand in hand with the centralising tendencies of the 19th century. Censuses and cadastral surveys helped systematise taxation and reposition the different communities of the Empire as citizens – at least as far as the urban population was concerned. Meanwhile, urban renovation plans, although limited in scope, allowed the physical representations of the reform era to be placed right in the middle of every day urban life. The state thus constantly sought to extend its control over the urban space, at times even breaching the former boundaries of private and public to keep a closer eye on the inhabitants.

Yet, the physical and administrative developments ushered in by the state were not solely responsible for the changing dynamics of the 19th century Ottoman cities. The urban elite, itself also in the process of forming and consolidating its position throughout the 19th century, had been a considerable factor both in the determination of state policies and cultivation of a changing urban social life. Demands for municipal administrations and modern amenities such as lighting up of streets were actively voiced by this portion of the urban population. While the state was all too happy to share the financial burden of costly urban development plans with the demanding - and wealthy- urbanites, that the urban elite wanted to get more involved in the processes of governance in return was not a welcome outcome. Therefore, interplay between the central state and the urban elite was a strained one, defined by constant testing of each other's limits and shifts from alliance to rivalry.

It was perhaps partly due to this tension that most of the projects started with good intentions failed or only partly succeeded. However, the reflection of the century's atmosphere on the daily lives of urbanites continued uninterrupted, who were now confronted with new patterns of consumption, new spaces of sociability and new life standards to be met. The new urban character now had to at least have a certain level of education, be dressed in the proper attire and assume the appropriate manners. The epitome of this urbanite character entered the Ottoman print in the form of "fop," who abandoned his traditional and moral values for the sake of partaking in the high urban society. As exaggerated as the character was, however, it is safe to assume that he portrayed the "real" urbanite who forsook all former ties of association that rested on communal ties to assume an identity formed on the basis of relationships he chose for himself. While being blamed for abandoning his real identity, the fop was actually able to create one from scratch, adapting fully to the novelties of the 19th century and placing himself within the higher ranks of urban society.

As an imagined personality with one foot in reality, the fop presented one extreme of the spectrum, which extended to the rural as the personification of backwardness and ignorance on the other, at least for the larger part of the 19th century. The two extremes were also present in the non-fictional narratives of the era, as exemplified by Neyyal's uncle who squandered the family fortune and the scenery she met when she traveled to Jerusalem. Moderation was therefore a necessary quality in striking a balance between tradition and modernity. The warnings of dangers lurking in the urban life were coupled with the advices of what

to adopt from “civilised” life. In such a setting, the resulting exemplary character was the one that was able to take advantage of what the city offered without severing ties with the old values, which, as a matter of fact, presented an ideal even more unrealistic than the exaggerated fop.

Creation of an urban identity did not rest solely on the pursuit of new fashions. As a matter of fact, the press in 19th century Ottoman Empire was constantly teaching and repeating the rights and duties that come with living in a city. Making urban problems public, mobilising support for solutions, raising awareness of what to expect from urban life and reminding urbanites of their own responsibilities were among the priorities of newspapers and journals. The pre-19th century urban practices of Ottoman cities that rested on “collective responsibility” of a quarter’s inhabitants were now being replaced by an individual sense of obligation for improving the urban sphere both physically and socially. This also meant that active participation in the public life had become possible outside existent formal channels, at times by overriding the former intermediaries in such processes.

Nevertheless, the emphasis on individual did not necessarily mean that existing communal ties were completely eradicated. It was rather that the individual was now relatively more independent at forming alliances outside the traditional relationships. The city now offered more channels and opportunities of forming bonds by bringing people from different backgrounds together in the same social settings. The outward expressions of such alliances were also being displayed through the urban sphere by making conscious or unconscious choice of being

present in different parts of the city through frequenting certain shops or cafes, becoming a member of a social club or just strolling up and down a street.

Yet, the new dynamics brought with them new sets of rules that regulated these novel forms of building relationships. The moral codes of being a good member of the community were dependent on acting within the confines of certain boundaries imposed by the formal and informal education that the city provided, the guidelines offered by the intellectuals and the constant talk in the city now made available to a wider audience. While one part of the city was constantly dictating the new ways of getting involved in its social life, the other was cautioning against them. In effect, the urbanites sought to justify their choices of partaking in the city by donating for victims of disasters, organising charity balls for the needy and making these into social conventions that the moral codes of the city necessitated. Still, these novel initiatives aimed at mitigating the unjust distribution of services, wealth and opportunities in the city remained limited and the gap widened as the century progressed. While certain standards were now considered indispensable for an urban personality, the attempts of intellectuals to reconcile the modes of urban living could not produce an all-encompassing identity. By the early 20th century, the city was regarded as the source of corruption and an embodiment of failures on the side of the state and society and was called to end its miserable existence by Tevfik Fikret.³⁴³

The stories told here barely scratch the surface of this complex network of changing relationships. The identity formation processes of the 19th century were

³⁴³ Tevfik Fikret, "Sis," *Hayatı ve Toplu Şiirleri* (İstanbul: Kırmızı Yay., 2007).

played out on many levels, at times competing and contesting each other. Being an urbanite was one such layer that the inhabitants of the cities constantly redefined throughout the century, with varying interpretations and degrees of adaptation. Digging deeper into the perceptions of individuals can therefore offer more insights into not only urban life in the 19th century but also the process of reforms and transformation that extended well into the republican era, making further study in the area indispensable for building a fuller understanding of the 19th century Ottoman Empire.

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