

To Saturday Mothers

GENDERING URBAN SPACE:

“SATURDAY MOTHERS”

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By

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August, 2004

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ABSTRACT

GENDERING URBAN SPACE: “SATURDAY MOTHERS”

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The aim of this study is to analyze gendering in urban space by using an urban movement, i.e. “Saturday Mothers” as a case study within the framework of gender and space. Acknowledging that gender and space mutually effect each other, this thesis explains the manifestation of gender difference in the urban and domestic realms. Main terms such as gender, urban space, and domestic space are analyzed. The specific focus is on **how the Saturday Mothers broke the boundaries between the public and private realms**. The use of Istiklal Street by the mothers provides the spatial emphasis of the study. By looking at the Saturday Mothers phenomenon specific modes of domesticating an urban space is illuminated. The study emphasizes, how urban space effected the mothers subjectivity and how the mothers effected urban space.

Keywords: Gender, Space, Urban, Domestic, Boundary, Istiklal Street, Saturday Mothers

ÖZET

CİNSİYETLE ETKİLEŞMİŞ ŞEHİR MEKANI:

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Anahtar Kelimeler: Cinsiyet, Mekan, Şehir, Ev, Sınır, İstiklal Caddesi, Cumartesi Anneleri

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. GENDER AND URBAN SPACE	4
2.1. Theories of Gender	4
2.2. Articulations of Space and Gender.....	10
2.3. Oppositions of Domestic Space and Urban Space	13
2.4. The Ottoman/ Turkish Context.....	18
3. THE “SATURDAY MOTHERS” PHENOMENON	23
3.1. An Urban Movement: The “Saturday Mothers”.....	23
3.2. The Site: Istiklal Street	27
3.2.1. Cultural Diversity	30
3.2.2. Material Properties	34
4. DOMESTICATING AN URBAN SPACE	39
4.1. Mothers in Public Space	39
4.2. Strategies and Tactics	47
4.2.1. Impact of Space on Mothers’ Tactics	49
4.2.2. Restrictive Strategies	55
4.3. Silent Protest in Public Space.....	62
5. CONCLUSION	69
REFERENCES	72

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Nodes on İstiklal Street.....	28
Figure 2. Neighbouring areas of İstiklal Street	30
Figure 3. İstiklal Street between Tarlabası and Sıraselviler..	31
Figure 4. Significant landmarks around Galatasaray Square.....	35
Figure 5. Mothers Covering their faces with their son's photographs	44
Figure 6. Mothers routes to İstiklal Street.....	52
Figure 7. Front of the Galatasaray High School,.....	54
Figure 8. Police went to the area before the mothers.....	55
Figure 9. Front of Galatasaray High School before the sit-in.	56
Figure 10. Police surrounds the Mothers.	57
Figure 11. Police occupied the Mothers area	57
Figure 12. Article from a newspaper regarding police actions against the protesters	58
Figure 13. Police blocking mothers routes.	60
Figure 14. A mother who banded her lips.	65
Figure 15. Lale Mansur during the sit-ins.	67
Figure 16. International Communities during the sit-ins	68

1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about blurring the boundaries between urban and domestic space from the viewpoint of gender and space relationships. Main terms gender and space articulate each other within the framework of public and private realms. Throughout history, manifestations of gender difference in the environment are exemplified where women dominate the domestic and men dominate the urban realm. The study is concerned with this issue by researching a series of genuine occurred movement that is Saturday Mothers. Saturday Mothers phenomenon is the action owned by women who never went out from their private world before. The main aim of the thesis is to demonstrate **how the mothers blurred the boundaries between domestic and urban realms.**

The second chapter includes the theoretical framework of the thesis, which will illuminate the empirical inspection. Throughout this chapter, critical terms are clarified and related with each other. Domestic spaces and urban spaces are compared within the context of gender. Moreover, as the Turkish phenomenon is investigated, the gendered space context in the Ottoman/ Turkish case is discussed.

The third chapter explains the Saturday Mothers Phenomenon. How this action started, who are the mothers, from where they were coming are the questions

explored under this chapter. Furthermore, information about the physical and cultural aspects of Istiklal Street is given in detail.

The core of the thesis is the fourth part where the research material is evaluated within a theoretical framework. The main objective of this chapter is to analyse the chosen action with reference to operations of gender in domestic and urban realms. First of all, how the mothers used the physical properties of the street and, by this way, how they supported their sit-ins explained. Secondly, the strategies of violence used by governmental forces is analyzed in the context of their use of urban space. Thirdly, emergence of Mothers as speaking subjects is studied in relation to their use of language in public space. Moreover, this chapter explains how the mothers affected the urban space and how the concept of urban space was influenced, perhaps even changed forever by the mothers.

Throughout this work, I attempt to clarify the conceptualizing and use of domestic and urban space within the framework of the gender. This way of looking at the two realms took me to new areas such as cultural studies and social studies. I tried to establish a link between gender and space and show how the Saturday Mothers blurred the boundaries between private and public. The main purpose of the thesis is to search about gendered spaces deeply, domestic and urban space, and to show how the boundaries are broken between them during an important phenomenon.

As a conclusion, the thesis asserts that spaces are gendered. Urban spaces are associated with male and domestic spaces are associated with female qualifications.

The Saturday Mothers phenomenon is significant in blurring the boundaries of this binary opposition.

2. GENDER AND URBAN SPACE

2.1. Theories of Gender

In the late 1970s, the subject of “gender” began to develop into an area of research. Since then, it is generally conducted by women and from a political feminist angle. In the 1980s, the term used to explain belief in sexual equality and connotated an engagement to eradicate sexual domination for societal transformation. Jane Rendell mentions that “gender” first appeared among American feminists who insisted on the fundamentally social quality of distinctions based on sex (7-15).

Gender refers to the set of cultural representations of sexual difference and cultural practices. It can adopt different forms of expressions as a derivative of language, signs and symbols (Landa 14). Gender is “the socially and culturally constructed distinctions that accompany biological differences associated with a person’s sex” (Spain 3).

What is the difference between gender and sex? According to Carol Gould, gender is not biologically given but is the result of a process of socialization that defines social roles and characteristics (xvii). Rendell explains the distinction between sex and gender more explicitly. Sex, i.e. male and female, represents the

biological difference between bodies but gender, i.e. masculine and feminine, refers to the socially constituted set of differences between men and women (15).

Practices and representations of gender difference are directly related with the social and cultural conditions of a given society. Gender differences are socially, historically and culturally produced. They change over time and across cultures. Each culture has a variety of means to express the way men and women are expected to behave. Landa adds that gender roles are changeable and always central to a culture's interests (16).

It is important to understand the meaning of gender representations and roles: we do not stand in a primitive, spontaneous or natural relation to ourselves: "our own bodily experience is mediated through culture": maleness and femaleness are constructed through discourse and significant social practices (17).

Margaret Mead, who is an anthropologist, states that some societies assign different roles to the two sexes, surrounding them from birth with expectations of different behavior. She adds that:

In the division of labor, in dress, in manners, in social and religious functioning men and women are socially differentiated, and each sex, as sex, forced to conform to the role assigned to it. In some societies, these socially defined roles are mainly expressed in dress or occupation, with no insistence upon innate temperamental differences. Women wear long hair and men wear curls and women shave their heads; women wear skirts and men wear trousers (xii).

Throughout history, gender difference has been constructed in conspicuously parallel ways across cultures. In the majority of historical cases, the male is inscribed with positive attributes and the female with negative ones. For example, an Egyptian document ascribed 'the bones to the male principle and the flesh to the

female', bone marrow forming from semen, the fat in flesh coming from cool, female blood (Sennett 42).

Indeed, in ancient societies ranging from Greece to China, hierarchized gender representations were constructed with reference to male and female bodies. As sociologist, Richard Sennett states, ancient Greek understanding of gender difference is related with body heat that led to beliefs about shame and honour amongst human beings. According to them the female body was cold, passive and weak in contrast to the male body that was hot and strong (40-44).

Even in ancient Chinese philosophy the male Yang force was considered to be bright and powerful, while the female Ying force was seen as dark and passive (Landa 91). As these cases clearly indicate, the stated differences between male and female characteristics are by no means neutral. There is a definite hierarchy implied in the attributes that are ascribed to each sex in some societies.

As a cautionary note, overly generalizing gendered attributes could be wrong because they differ from culture to culture. Mead suggests that many so-called masculine and feminine characteristics are not based on fundamental sex differences, but reflect the cultural conditioning of different societies. In her book she introduces us to three primitive tribes in New Guinea to support her theory. She explains in one, both men and women act as we expect women to act, in the second, both act as we expect men to act and in the third the men act according to our stereotype for women. Moreover those societies way of looking to men or women was not hierarchically inscribed (Mead 310-322). For instance; one tribe insisted

that women's heads were stronger than men's. Mead contends that while every culture has in some way institutionalized the roles of men and women, it has not necessary been in terms of contrast between the prescribed personalities of the two sexes, nor in terms of dominance and submission (x-xi).

However there are many contemporary theories about gender difference, which are proposed by psychologists, anthropologists and sociologists and which emphasize the unequal nature of gender constructions.

Psychologist Sherry Ortner explains gender difference with reference to the biological structure of the two sexes. This difference begins with the body and its functions: women are universally identified with the reproductive process and men with the cultural process (17-19-20). Similarly, Landa proposes that women are generally seen as closer to nature, while men have always been bearers of culture (23).

Moreover, similar to Ortner, Erik Erikson who is also a psychologist explains the establishment of gender difference from an anthropological point of view. He provides examples from cultures that compare the anatomical structure of the male body to the female body to explain the division of gender roles (Seidenberg 55). Erikson explains the viewpoint that the male are superior as they are born with an extraordinary apparatus to show i.e. the penis, while the female has nothing visible. Even her breasts are not big enough to see. Hence, she returns inwards and always feels the fear of being left empty (Seidenberg 56-57).

Luce Irigaray points out the difference between the cultural constructions of masculine and feminine identities from a similar point of view. Men are culturally constructed as active, indicating “masculine” penis activity while women are seen as passive, indicating “feminine” vaginal passivity (Irigaray 61, Landa 39). As Stephen Frosh further explicates:

There is a liking for clear and simple dichotomies, which become affiliated to the equally simple polarity of masculine versus feminine. Hard–soft, tight-loose, rigid-pliable , dry-fluid, objective –subjective; these oppositions have become so “ real ” , so embedded in all our assumptions, that they can be found everywhere, in psychotherapy no less than in other engagements of people with one another (Frosh, 11).

Frosh mentions that these are constructed, not naturally given, oppositions. Masculinity is defined by something positive, that which believes itself to be whole, while the definition of femininity is based on lack (81).

From a sociological point of view, Daphne Spain adds that as long as societies value culture over nature, masculine attributes will be valued over feminine attributes and women’s status will be lower than men’s. A similar approach of associating women with nature, reproduction and the emotional realm exists in Parsons’ and Bales’s study which introduces a functionalist approach to gender stratification stating that men are the providers of wealth, while women are the caretakers of emotional needs within the home (qtd in Spain 22). Emotions and feelings that masculinity rejects are women’s business and they imply dependence. Emotions are dangerous not only because they imply dependence, but also because they are alien and representative of all that masculinity ignores. Emotions make us vulnerable and “womanly” (Frosh 2-3, Landa 22, Chodorow 35).

Robert Seidenberg provides different explanations from leading scholars who deal with sexual difference and gender roles. A variety of explanations exists for the persistence of gender stratification. In the explanation of most theories about gender difference biological difference seen in the physical appearance of both sexes play an important part (114-118).

Throughout history, the stronger physical appearance of a man makes him the hero but women appear in narratives as the object of the quest or the obstacle in the hero's path. They are represented as passive objects right from the first traditional tales children are told. The fact that men are physically stronger than women is linked to their domination of nature and physical existence through the domination of women. This biological difference is used to justify the universality of female subordination and resulted with the domination of men in society. The degree of subordination or domination of either sex varies according to different cultures and societies. As Julia Kristeva put it:

Sexual difference...is translated by and translates a difference in the relationship of subjects to the symbolic contract, which is the social contract: a difference, then, in the relationship to power, language and meaning. The social contract...is based on an essentially sacrificial relationship of separation and articulation of differences (qtd. in Frosh 119).

Paradoxically perhaps, in many cultures both men and women defend the traditional opposition between masculinity and femininity. This is only the consequence of the alienation and ideological control to which women are subjected under patriarchy. Radical feminists took issue with this situation and defined "patriarchy as a male hierarchical ordering of society, based on biological differences, which is manifested through men's control of women's labour and

sexuality” (specifically in regard to reproduction) (qtd in Spain 25).

It is important to take into account that much of the theoretical positions on gender difference might be considered to inscribed by biological determinism. At one level, gender difference is a historical rather than a biological construct. However, as Susan Bordo reminds us, masculine dominance emerges

out of forms of reverence that did have reference to biology, and these references themselves have analogues in the morphology and behaviour of other male animals (Bordo 94).

To sum up, throughout history women are predominantly constructed as a negative pole, while man as either neutral or positive pole. The female is determined and differentiated with respect to man, but the reverse is not the case. As a result of this, women become “other” to men while men become subjects (Landa 22- 25).

The essentially patriarchal organisation of culture, or properly speaking the phallic structuring of language, means that woman takes up her place as the Other, as something which stands outside Symbolic as its negative, giving it its presence through her exclusion (Frosh 118).

The structuring mechanisms of gender hierarchy articulate in specific ways with particular cultural constructions in different patriarchal contexts.

2.2. Articulations of Space and Gender

Like gender, space is a social construct as the spatial arrangement of our environment reflects the nature of gender, race and status differences in the society. Anthropology was one of the first disciplines to explain the relation between gender

and space. Urbanists, feminists, anthropologists and historians studied the kinship networks and social relations in the public and private realms. Shirley Ardener examines the differing spaces that men and women are culturally located, and the particular role space has in symbolising, maintaining and reinforcing gender relations (1-29). Moreover, she defines the relationship between gender and space through power by way of examples. One of her examples describes a house in Mongolia during 1877's that had an organization with two different doors. One door was for women that was narrow while the wide one was for men. The left side of the house was the females, children and servants part and the right part was the adult male section. According to her the arrangement of the house suggests that the family structure appears to be patrilocal, the house being occupied by a man, his sons, his grand sons and male servants and only two women. This and other similar examples considered by her demonstrate hierarchically ordered spatial zones (27).

Jane Rendell examines this issue from a different point of view. She asks whether gendered space is produced intentionally according to the sex of the architect, or whether it is produced through practice, that calls for a different interpretation of architectural criticism, history and theory. She argues that,

This is not space as it has traditionally been defined by architecture, the space of architect, designed buildings, but rather space as it is found as it is used, occupied and transformed through everyday activities (Rendell 101).

Both gender and space are productions of social, cultural and traditional values. Rendell adds that gendered space may be produced according to the biological "sex" of the occupants. For example, kitchens which are generally

occupied by women for everyday activities are gendered as feminine. Public toilets form another prominent case as men's and women's spaces are almost always separated.

Critical anthropologists have widely argued that space is both materially and culturally produced (Kirby 180). Thus, the man-made environment has a profound impact on one's physical existence. It is a cultural artifact and it is possible to shape it by human intention and intervention and the beliefs of the decision-makers in society. Therefore, it has the power to limit our vision or enhance and nurture human activities (Weisman 1- 2). The physical environment can define gender relations in society by creating conditions such as cultural attitudes, laws and informal practices. Alice Friedman contends that architecture creates an area and a frame for those who inhabit space. Architecture controls and limits physical movement and controls the power of sight as part of the physical experience (334).

Geographical distance and architectural design have supported gender and status differences between both sexes throughout history. In patriarchal societies, spatial segregation reinforces women's lower status relative to men's. As Spain explains gendered spaces separate women from knowledge used by men to produce and reproduce power and privilege (3). Moreover, the social construction of gender difference establishes some spaces as women's and others as men's (Frosh 11). The spatial arrangements between the two sexes are socially created and the "daily-life" of gendered spaces acts to convey inequality (Spain 4).

The relationship between gender and space attracts feminist theorists from a broad range of disciplines including philosophy, anthropology and sociology as much as architecture. Despite their individual differences they all maintain that space is produced by and productive of gender relations (102).

2.3. Oppositions of Domestic Space and Urban Space

The most basic manifestation of gendered space is seen in the difference between the public and private spheres. A dominant public male realm of production, the city, and a subordinate private female one of reproduction, the home, constitute a hierarchical spatial system based on gender. At this point it is important to state that such terms as public, urban, private and domestic are not always self-explanatory. These concepts are historically and socially constructed. Their meaning change from one culture to another and even within the same culture. In this study, I use the term public to mean “of, for or concerning people in general”, private as “not shared with everyone in general”, urban as “of a city” and domestic as “of the house, home or family” (Lipson 179-478-486-663).

The gendered hierarchy of the public and private realms is also historically constructed. For example, in the ancient Greek society, the Greeks enacted rules of domination and subordination by using the science of body heat. They believed that women had colder bodies than men and as a result of that they were usually confined to the interiors of the houses. “... As though the lightless interior more suited their physiology than did open spaces of the sun” (Sennett 33).

Patriarchal ideologies divide male from female, city from home and public from private. In patriarchy the positive terms of city, public, male and production are re-interpreted via their connections with the relatively inferior terms of home, private, female and reproduction (Rendell 104). The womb is often used as a metaphor to explain the protection property of the house that is associated with women.

Inside and outside are important concepts to understand the spatial differentiation between sexes. The fear of open space i.e. agoraphobia is often associated with women. Seidenberg states that,

Agoraphobia means; the feeling of anxiety when going out from home, protection place, to the streets (12).

He adds that “esteemed woman” in ancient Greek thought is a woman who is kept away from public places as women lack the internal self-control credited to men. The agora was never a place for women because it was not safe (11-12).

Activities that occur inside the houses are seen as women’s work, whereas outside activities constitute male identity. In the Renaissance too, the association of women with the domestic realm continued. The renowned architectural theorist Alberti stated that:

The gods made provision from the first by shaping, as it seems to me the women’s nature for indoor and the men’s are for outdoor occupations (qtd. in Wigley 334).

This phenomenon seems to prevail in a broad temporal and geographical spectrum. Author Joelle Bahloul who did research in Algeria between 1937 and

1962, explains a most prominent example. Her search is about the life of a Maghrebian Jewish community, in a town called Setif. She examines domestic life, especially female accounts of it, since women spent their time at home. She adds that the Arabic word ‘dar’ means, the house of the father that express the house owned by the male. She states that residents were known by the name of the house in which they lived. For example, Dar-Zmemra means the Zemmours’ house. On the other hand, in Maghrebian culture domesticity is described as enclosure of femininity. The courtyard Dar-Refail has symbolic status and is expressed as “womb of the mother-house”.

Robert Seidenberg explains the production, enclosure and domestic characteristics of the house from the same point of view as Bahloul (54-55). The street asserts itself as masculine and violent in contrast with the internal feminine harmony of the house. When men talk about the exterior, they describe it as their own territory, while the interior is referred as “women’s territory”.

The passage between these two words, inner and outer, is passage from one sexual world to another (Bahloul 44).

Bahloul states that in eastern Algeria the importance of the idea of enclosure was expressed by doors and windows being opened to the courtyard rather than the street. Doors and windows were metaphors for an open society and they showed the desire for social advancement. The domestic world was a place for enclosure and only internal mobility in women’s memories (32-35).

Pamela Shurmer-Smith and Kevin Hannam mention that many women do not feel comfortable anywhere except their homes. According to them, the association of women with the domestic sphere and the public realm with men is a widespread tendency (34-35). Where the divide between the public and the domestic are concerned, women are nearly always a vital ingredient of ideal domesticity.

Architectural theorist Mark Wigley too points to the historical association of exterior spaces with men and interiors with women. The reversal of this practice produces the reversal of gender, transforming the mental and physical character of those who occupy the “wrong place” (334). This does not just indicate the feminization of man. Wigley states that when women go outside to the street, they became more dangerously feminine rather than more masculine.

A woman’s interest, let alone active role in the outside calls into question her virtue. The woman on the outside is implicitly sexually mobile. Her sexuality is no longer controlled by the house (335).

In this scenario self-control requires the maintenance of secure boundaries. These boundaries define the interior of the person and the identity of the self. Since the female is unable to control herself, she must be controlled by being “bounded” (Wigley 336). This thought prevails in traditional Muslim societies as well. There, if women want to go anywhere in a public area, they have to go with a male from their family. Authority and control are on the masculine side.

Historically, home becomes the place of women who in turn identify with the domestic environment. Marriage provides self control. In these terms, the role of

architecture is clearly the control of sexuality, women's sexuality: the chastity of a girl, the fidelity of a wife.

The order of public life follows from and depends upon the domestic realm. The house is a surveillance mechanism monitoring its occupants. The wife merely maintains the very surveillance system she is placed in. The walls, windows and doors control the feminine body. The house is a place to protect women by isolating them from public life.

Some of non industrial and especially some of "non-Western" societies often separate women and men within the house. This is the result of the status differences between sexes, which afford men with higher status within or outside the house. Gender-status is played out within the home as well as outside of it (Spain 11).

Domestic space is designed as a space of social and cultural inscription structured by the collective and symbolic organization of its residents. Bahloul focuses on descriptions of domestic life with special emphasis on female accounts as women spent most of their time at home. Domesticity is described as an enclosure of femininity, a motherhouse symbolically associated with reproduction. As Wiesman explains:

The home, the place to which women have been intimately connected, is as revered an architectural icon as the skyscraper. From early childhood women have been taught to assume the role of homemaker, housekeeper and house wife. The home, long considered women's special domain, reinforces sex-role stereotypes and subtly perpetuates traditional views of family (2).

Status differences between men and women create certain types of gendered spaces. That institutionalized spatial segregation then reinforces prevailing male advantages. Gender and space are mutually inscribed identities.

2.4. The Ottoman/Turkish Context

The Ottoman society manifests a historical context whereby a patriarchal system is articulated with the Islamic religious code. This phenomenon prevailed at all levels of the society ranging from the family unit to the public realm. In fact, the use of public and private realms was different between men and women, which caused the most profound status differences.

The Turkish family of the Ottoman period had the characteristics of the patriarchal family system with man as its sole head. The extended family household consisted of grandparents, wife, children's spouses, grandchildren and some close relatives. All were required to accept the absolute authority of the head of the family. In matters of inheritance, women always received less than men did (Berktaş 153). Turkish sociologist Tezer Taşkıran explains men's assumed superior role in society and women's tendency to resign themselves to an inferior position (9).

Furthermore, women could not choose their husbands and they had to marry the man who was selected by their parents or an older member of her family. An unmarried woman had a very low status in the Ottoman Society. According to Islamic law, social life was divided into two, women's world and men's world. Various sources reveal that women in the Ottoman Empire lived in the same kinds of

worlds separate from men that are found mostly in Islamic societies; worlds with their own rules, rewards, social hierarchies, and systems of status organization (Dengler 230).

Related with gender, domestic spaces consisted of two sections in Ottoman society. *Haremlik* was the name of women's part and *Selamlık* was the name of men's part. The only men allowed into the *Harem* were the husband and very close relatives of the woman who, by the Islamic law, they could not marry, such as uncles and brothers (Berktaş, 99,100). Furthermore, *makarr-i nisvan* is a special term used for the names of the places occupied by women such as the kitchen and courtyard. Those places had to be closed in order not to be seen by other houses. As sociologist Nermin Abadan-Unat explains, even public buses were divided into two sections by curtain to separate man and woman passengers (248). The restrictions placed upon the physical movement of women in the Ottoman society decreased the contact between the two sexes.

Another important issue about gender segregation was that women had to wear the veil while going out from their homes and when male guests came to the house¹ (Taşkiran 19). In short, men had the mobility to cross freely between the public and private spheres. Women, on the other hand were predominantly constricted to the private realm.

¹ Mernissi and Doğramacı make a comparison between men and women about their physical appearances in Islamic societies. According to them, while men could remain the same in the public and private realm, women had to change as they had to cover their bodies in public (9, Doğramacı, 7).

At this point nuances between class differences and distinctions between urban and rural contexts need to be demarcated. As Emine İncirlioğlu states there were status differences between women in the Ottoman period. She explains that upper-class women who live in big cities were secluded and confined to the private realm where peasant women the part of the public. This was because of the fact that village women worked on land with men. Also, city women were tightly veiled but village women were not. They were just veiled in order to protect themselves from dust and wind. She also states that there is a gap between the “sophisticated” city women and the “backward” village women (200). The products of village womens’ labor belonged to the male head of the house who could be their father, brother, husband or son. She adds that:

“Strict division of labor by gender and women’s disproportionately heavy workload go hand-in-hand with their low status” (201).

The Ottoman woman was branded at birth because of her sex. If she got married and had a son, her status was elevated. An unmarried woman had a very low status both legally and socially² (Nuri 85, Coşar 124 and Dengler 231). In the Ottoman society the term “real woman” term was used for women who were married and had children (Seidenberg 33). Man as a cultural construction emerges through the control of the feminine.

² In the founding era of the Ottoman Empire between the 13th and 16th centuries, women had a high status and a great deal of freedom. The birth of a baby girl was not considered to be a dishonourable event. Besides, these women did not wear the veil, they just wore a scarf over their heads (Taşkıran, 17-18, Doğramacı, Atatürk, 12-13). On the other hand after the 16th century the status of women was significantly lowered.

Towards the end of the 19th century the status of Ottoman women began to improve. The “reorganisation” or “Westernisation” movement was initiated by Selim III as a result of which women who lived within the restricted boundaries of their houses were happy to adopt European fashion and customs (Doğramacı, Atatürk 17). Furthermore, the status of women was publicly discussed among both the elite and the rest of the population. According to Rona the pressure of the patriarchal system mobilized even the sons of the elite to side with women’s rights (249).

The second breaking point regarding the status of women came in the Republican era, with the Kemalist reforms in all walks of life. Publicly acknowledging the bravery, courage, and nationalism of Turkish women, and the immense role they performed in the history of the nation, Atatürk issued a series of reforms to restore women to the high status that their ancestors had once occupied (Doğramacı Atatürk 19, Sirman 8-9, Abadan-Unat 8). As Sociologist Yeşim Arat explains,

Although there were limitations to women’s autonomous public activism, the Kemalist discourse nevertheless provided legitimacy for women’s claim to equality with men in public realm (101).

To radically change the status of the Turkish women and transform them into responsible, self-confident citizens was one of the main aspirations of the founder the Turkish Republic, Kemal Atatürk. He cherished the ideals of equality between the sexes, equal opportunity for education, and family life not based upon a lifelong tie of one-sided bondage (Abadan-Unat 31).

However, as feminist Turkish scholars such as Arat, Baydar, and Kandiyoti argued the Turkish woman is still at a disadvantage relative to men because of the top-down nature of the Kemalist reforms. According to their argument, women gained status in the public realm so long as they conformed to the rules of the patriarchy. As Gülsüm Baydar explains, in the 1930s the modern image of Turkish women was promoted by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk but it was covered with the masculinist discourse of nationalism. She illustrates this by a quotation from Atatürks' speech in 1925:

Friends...*our* women, like *us* are intelligent and thoughtful people. Once we inject them with consecrated morality, explain them *our* national moral values and adorn their brains with enlightenment and purity, there is no need for selfishness. Let them show their faces to the world. And let them see the world with the careful attention of their own eyes. There is nothing to fear in this (237).

Baydar explicates that the use of the terms *them* and *us* clearly marginalized women in relation to men within a nationalist ideology. Women were allowed to expose their faces and had a public face only if they were re-formed by men. Women had to attribute due to the men's national and moral values.

In contemporary Turkey gender relations are interwoven in complex ways. At many levels, it is still a patriarchal society where feminine voices are largely unheard and women's agency remains a contested area.

3. THE “SATURDAY MOTHERS” PHENOMENON

3.1 An Urban Movement: “Saturday Mothers”

Within the largely patriarchal framework of contemporary Turkish society, one phenomenon stands out to challenge conservative notions of gender hierarchy: Saturday Mothers. From 27 May 1995 to 13 March 1999 a group of mothers whose children disappeared under police custody due to their political convictions gathered on Istiklal Street in Istanbul to protest. This was an unprecedented event in Turkey where women initiated and sustained a public protest movement. The spatial attributes of their act was as significant as its social importance. Throughout the Saturday Mothers phenomenon, the urban and domestic realms articulated with each other in unprecedented ways.

The beginning of the Saturday Mothers movement dates back to the military coup of 12 September 1980, which marked a blow on the political left in Turkey. After the event many leftist activists and intellectuals were interrogated, taken under police custody and jailed. As part of this operation certain politically suspected individuals started to disappear one by one³. Immediately after the 1980 military

³ The first one was Hayrettin Eren who was taken by the police in Istanbul on 21 November 1980 (Tanrikulu 276). Upon hearing the news, his family went to the Gayrettepe Police Station and asked about their son. The police claimed ignorance despite the fact that Evrens’ family had seen his car in front of the police station.

coup, 12 people were recorded as lost under custody in Ankara, Bingöl, Siirt, Kars, Siverek and Hakkari (Tanrıkulu 276). The numbers continued to increase until 1996⁴. Between 1991 and 1996 the families of lost people organized around associations. Most significantly, the Mothers played an active part in the foundation of the Human Rights Association⁵ based in Istanbul.

As disappearances continued, the Human Rights Association became actively involved in their publicization. Two specific cases marked the turning point in the course of their action: on 21 March 1995, Hasan Ocak was taken by the police and lost under custody. His family, H.R.A. and other organizations came together in the process of seeking Ocak. This was the first event heard by the public in detail. Ocak's dead body was found in the destitution cemetery 55 days after his loss. "Disappearances" were very effective in creating complicitous fear. Many kidnappings were conducted. The second well-publicized event was the loss of Rıdvan Karakoç whose dead body was found like Ocak's. These two events marked the last ones for the hitherto silent mothers of the lost people to continue their silence. After these, a group of mothers gathered around the Human Rights Association and decided to take action. They took "The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo" in Argentina as an example (Tanrıkulu 279). As Jo Fisher explains, the actions of "The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo" were organized because of their desperation similar to the "Saturday Mothers" (106).

⁴ In 1990's, the number of people under custody increased especially in the Region of Extraordinary State (*Olağanüstü Hal Bölgesi*). The recorded number of lost people were as follows based on the applications to the Human Rights Associations (HRA) : 1991-4 , 1992-8 , 1993-36 , 1994-229 , 1995-121 , 1996-68 , 1997-45 , 1998-9 (Tanrıkulu 276).

⁵ Human Rights Association (HRA) was founded in 17 July 1986 by 98 people who were defence counsels of human rights. As explained in their regulations the first aim of HRA was swearing all subjects human rights and freedom (Temelkuran 108).

On 27 May 1995, the mothers in Istanbul started to gather together every Saturday at noon on Istiklal Street, in front of the Galatasaray High School. Initially they were thirty in number. Named as, “Saturday Mothers” they invited others to join their action in order to stop the corrupt system and fight for their rights. Initially the mothers preferred to be called “Saturday People” in order to avoid the sentimental stereotype that comes with the word “mother”. However in time they adopted the name given to them by the media. Their act involved sitting for half an hour in front of the Galatasaray High school and giving occasional speeches concerning their lost children. Their protest, opposing the silence of the authorities, eventually had international resonance. More than a hundred people came together on Saturdays in the heart of Istanbul, holding black and white photos of sons, daughters, fathers and brothers last seen in the hands of the security forces. In the 169th week, on 30 May 1998, the grandmothers who came from Argentina sat with the Saturday Mothers (Tanrikulu 286).

From the beginning of the actions until the 170th week, on 15th of August 1998, police did not use violence against mothers. This changed later and they started to take some activists under custody. In the 171st week, 25 people were taken by the police and the following week this number increased to a hundred. The result of governments’ tenacity, which started with the mother’s bodies exposed to violence, eventually evolved into a powerful architecture of political resistance. Even dogs were used to attack the mothers. The 173rd week saw some publicly known figures ranging from party deputies to professional associations’ chairpersons who joined the

Saturday Mothers to support them⁶. Ill-treatments of the police continued for 30 weeks. In the 200th week of this action, on 13 March 1999 the mothers decided to take a break from the demonstrations because of bad treatments, beating and abuse.

Saturday Mothers came from diverse backgrounds. Most of them were born in the South-eastern villages of Turkey and they came from Turkish, Kurdish and Shiite origins. Because of their cultural status, they were married early in their teen years due to family pressure. Hence they became mothers at a young age and had many children. On the other hand, there were some mothers who were born in cities like Istanbul, Çanakkale, Ankara, etc. Most of them migrated to Istanbul for providing better education to their children and finding jobs. Their social and cultural backgrounds are important because some of those who came from rural environments broke significant social and cultural boundaries that defined their gender role. They participated in new spaces and attitudes, which they never experienced before.

⁶ Algan Hacaloğlu (Deputy of Republic Popular Party in Istanbul), Atilay Ayçin (General Chairman of Hava İş Trade Union), Atilla Aytemur (Deputy General Chairman of Solidarity and Freedom Party), Celal Beşiktepe (Second Chairman of the Turkish League of Chambers of the Architects and Engineers), Celal Yıldırım (Chairman of Turkish Dentists' Chamber), Cengiz Uzun (Member of the Executive Board of Confederation of Public Workers' Trade Unions), Ercan Kanar (Chairman of Turkish Human Rights Association Istanbul Branch), Ercan Karakaş (Deputy of Republic Popular Party in Istanbul), Ergin Cinmen (the Spokesman of the Initiative of the Citizens for Illumination), Erkan Önsel (The Chairman of the Chamber of Pharmacists), Ethem Cankurtaran (Chairman of Republic Popular Party in Istanbul), Ethem Kırca (The Chairman of the Chamber of Metallurgy Engineers), Fatma Hikmet İşmen (The Member of Party Council of the Freedom and Solidarity Party), Levent Tüzel (General Chairman of the Party of Labor), Mahmut Şakar (Chairman of Peoples' Democracy Party in İstanbul), Mehmet Kılıçarslan (Chairman of Party of Labor in İstanbul), Murat Çelik (General Chairman of Modern Jurists Association), Mustafa Kul (Deputy of Republic Popular Party in Istanbul), Muzaffer Demirci (Secretary General of the Turkish Chamber of the Dentists), Oktay Ekinci (Chairman of the Chamber of Architects), Osman Baydemir (Deputy General Chairman of the Human Rights Association), Osman Engin (Member of the Executive Board of Istanbul Bar Association), Osman Özçelik (Party Council Member of people's Democracy Party), Sabri Topçu (General Chairman of TUM-TİS), Seyit Ali Aydoğmuş (Representative of Popular Homes for First Region), Ufuk Uras (General Chairman of Freedom and Solidarity Party) attended to Saturday Mothers (Tanrıkulu 285).

Others however were exposed to political experiences. İncirliođlu mentions that village women are not entirely excluded from public life. She gives as an example of an encounter between an old woman and Minister of Internal Affairs. During the minister's pre-election visit to her village in 1992 she confronted him with some questions and demands regarding some important issues for her village like education (215). National and international media presented a different image of rural women based on quotations from a number of successful, professional Turkish women from big cities like Ankara and İstanbul. The latter claimed that "...when they are not educated, when they are under the pressure of men and Islam- they are not part of society" (201). İncirliođlu asserts that this image is produced and reproduced not only in journalism but also in social science literature.

Hence it would not be accurate to overly generalize the backward image of the Saturday Mothers who came from rural background. However their displacement from a familiar rural setting to exposed them to an unfamiliar public realm which renders their background important.

3.2. The Site: İstiklal Street

The social, cultural and economical life of İstiklal Street marks it as one of the most significant areas of İstanbul . İstiklal Street starts from the Tunnel Square and ends at Taksim Square in Beyođlu. Along the street there are four important foci. The first one is Taksim Square, which marks one end. The Ađa Mosque and its

surroundings mark the second. The last two are Galatasaray Square, and Tunnel Square (Özdik 266) (Figure 1).

The first known urban plan of the İstiklal Street was done in the second half of the 19th century. At that time the place started to develop as one of the most Westernized parts of the city. Authorities started to build new buildings such as Anzavur Passage and new European stores, cafes and leisure areas were opened. In addition to those, the number of the churches, theatres and schools were increased (Akın 152-249). In the 20th century, the area between Galatasaray and Taksim gained importance. This area became more popular because of the new contemporary buildings and new restaurants.

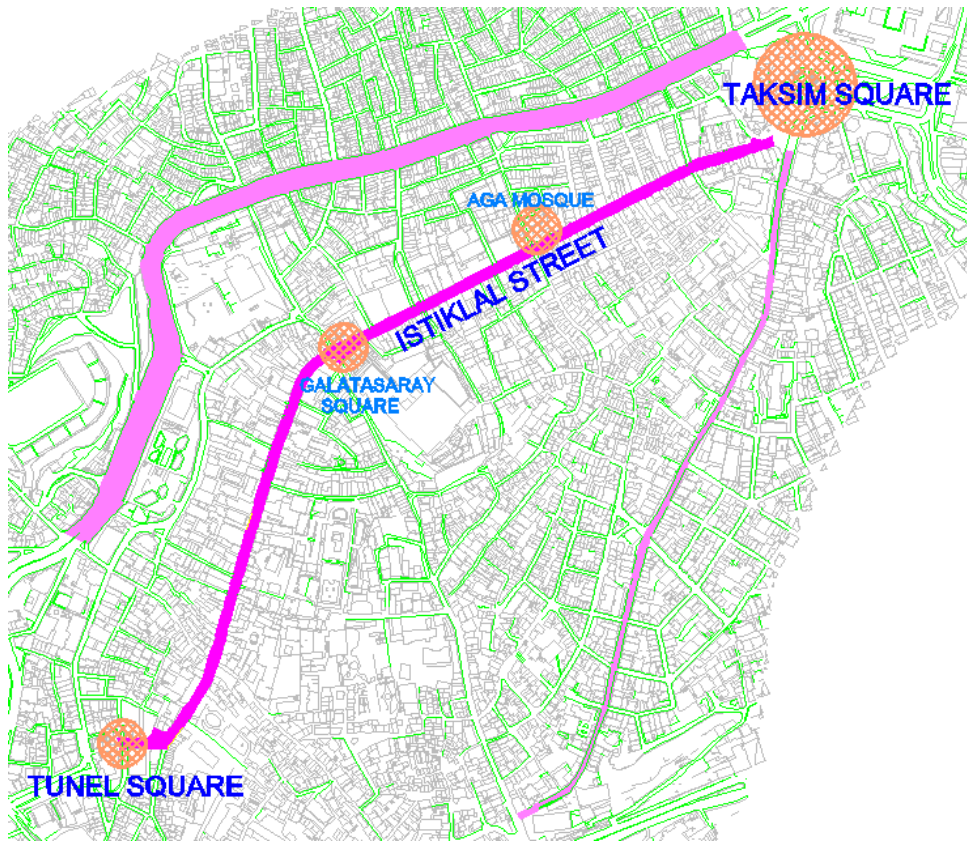


Figure 1. Nodes on İstiklal Street (University of Mimar Sinan, High School for Trades).

Moreover the area around the Istiklal Street became more important after the transfer of the court and government buildings to Beyoğlu in the 20th century. These encouraged private individuals to follow suit, and the palaces built along the Beyoğlu side of Bosphorus were by no means confined to Çırağan and Dolmabahçe. A whole series of palaces and pavilions were to follow, transforming this part of Beyoğlu into a complex of palaces. In addition to those Embassies were there also. This phenomenon adds further variety to the street (Cezar 348-349).

Throughout the 20th century the area developed as one of the most lively parts of Istanbul accommodating administrative, educational and commercial facilities alike. On 29 December 1990, Istiklal Street was closed to traffic and became a pedestrian district. During this period, the first electrical tramcar was built between Beyoğlu and Şişli and the Galatasaray-Taksim area became more central than Tünel-Galatasaray. This changed the importance of the axis and transformed the historical, commercial and touristic axis between Taksim, Kapalıçarşı, Eminönü and Sultanahmet (Figure 2).

After the street was pedestrianized, the existing commercial structure articulated with cultural elements in significant ways.

The bookshops, second hand booksellers, publishing houses, newspaper-magazine vendors, cinemas and all such places, which form a considerable part of the existing commercial buildings, are the ones where the cultural trade takes place. As may be seen, the street is between not only these opposite poles, but it also forms spaces suitable for them to have correlate in various manners (Kocabiçak 49).

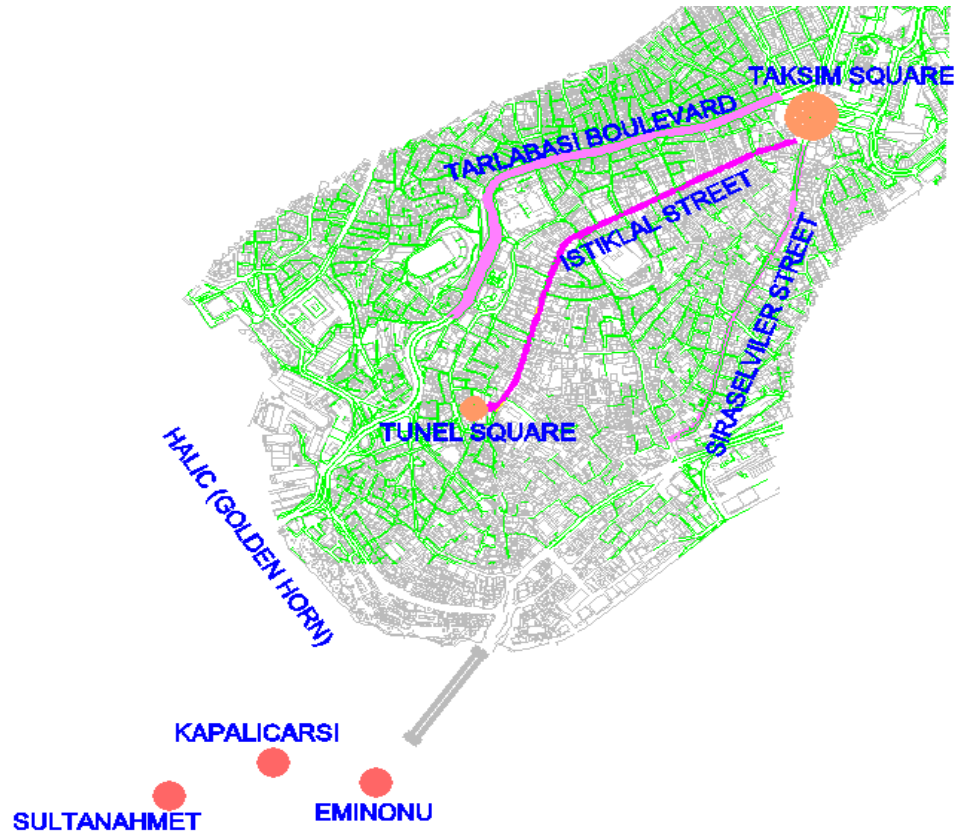


Figure 2. Neighbouring areas of İstiklal Street (University of Mimar Sinan, High School for Trades).

3.2.1. Cultural Diversity

There were different reasons for the mothers' choice of İstiklal Street. The amount of diversity that the location housed was one of its most unique properties. To find their lost children the mothers wanted to reach as many people as they could from not only the local population but also from other societies. The fact that there is diversity around İstiklal Street with the presence of churches, shops, governmental buildings, etc., made it a perfect locale for the kind of public attention they wanted to get.

As Alp Buğdaycı describes, İstiklal Street is a transitory area between Tarlabası and Cihangir. Tarlabası and Kasımpaşa are the area around Tarlabası Boulevard. Moreover, the area where the Sıraselviler Street is, called Cihangir. İstiklal Street is parallel by Tarlabası Boulevard on one side and Sıraselviler Street on the other. (Figure3).

The four-banded road coming from Taksim Square divides opposite worlds, life styles into two. Tarlabası and Kasımpaşa are defined as a crime centre. On the other hand, shops, hotels, cafes, and restaurants surround Cihangir, Sıraselviler Street. Moreover, this means that it is an important commercial area (22-34).

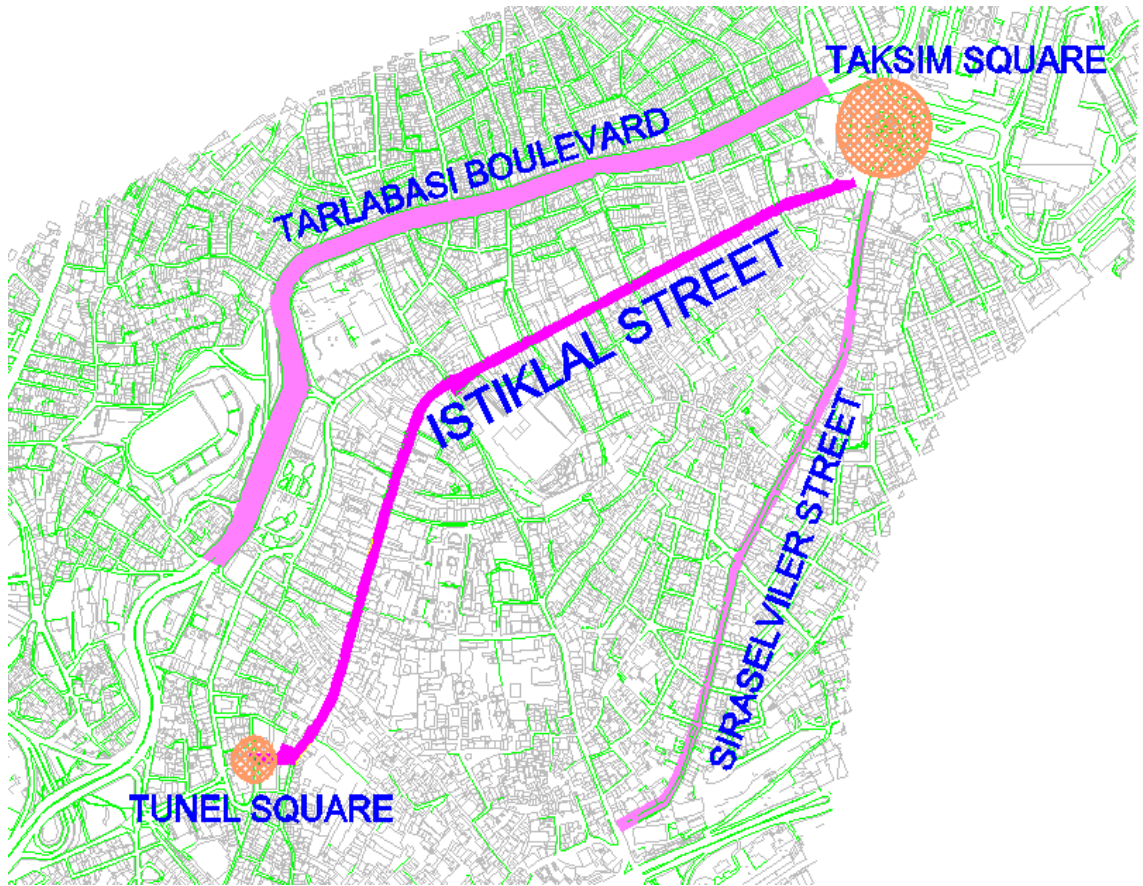


Figure 3. İstiklal Street between Tarlabası and Sıraselviler (University of Mimar Sinan, High School for Trade).

Cihangir is similar to Istiklal Street. Because both of them are commercial areas, the flow of people can be seen easily. The lanes around Istiklal Street, have different characteristics which also has an effect on Istiklal Street. While on one side they are lined with expensive shops, cafes and restaurants on the other side there are cheaper variations. Thus, two different poles occur along the street. As Oktay Uludağ explains, there are many passages like Tünel, Suriye, Şark, Atlas, Çiçek, Rumeli which create new spaces for a specific group of people who are customers of second hand goods. These passages also contain piercing and tattoo shops and music centers (76-88).

On Istiklal Street, public and private spheres are fused in significant ways. Physically and functionally public spaces periodically turn to private areas. For instance, the ATM stations, which are used by the public during the day are occupied by the homeless at nights. Moreover, as Kocabiçak mentions many private residences are converted to public places. Offices, cafes, and cultural areas are located in apartment buildings.

In such apartment buildings, with a completely heterogeneous user profile, the definition of private space becomes quite narrowed down and customary order of private, semi-private and public becomes invalid. The user finds him in a space that may be defined as very public with no need to go out on the street. In addition, to go on the street from the apartment building, from the street to the avenue will not cause in this. Istiklal Street, having no customary public-private differentiation, makes up an alternative marginal space in these two binary oppositions (Kocabiçak 44).

Özdemir Kaptan mentions that Istiklal Street is unique in producing its own characteristic synthesis and offers a chance for a variety of cultures to express themselves (121). Besides this, around the street, different lanes contain diverse life styles and a variety of themes are introduced to the street. For example, “Yeşilçam Street”, is associated with the local cinema industry, actors and actresses while “Abanoz” street is associated with brothels. Kaptan defines Istiklal Street by minority schools, art galleries, colleges, pubs, theatres, musician’s teahouses, the underground world and cinemas (55-85). Hence, it becomes a highly differentiated urban space, which is the source of the liveliness of the social environment there.

Moreover, the diversity of the images along the street gives its users a feeling of nostalgia. For instance, the tramcar is the most important feature that is used for this purpose. Same as Yeşilçam Street, Tosbağa Street also attracts attention by its cultural associations:

Tosbağa Street where the photography studio of the well-known photographer, Ara Güler is located is esteemed as the street of art by Beyoğlu Municipality. This street, mentioned in the improvement report, seems to have acquired the desired identity with the privatized spaces and their images relating to photograph, painting, cinema and literature (Kocabiçak 46).

Historically, the most striking feature of Beyoğlu’s social fabric was the number of different ethnic strands. Its inhabitants included both foreigners and Ottomans. Although the foreign community was distinguished by its ethnic variety, all its members were essentially representatives of Western culture. They were just like the Levantines whose families had lived in Turkey for several generations and who had picked up so many “oriental traits” that they sometimes felt some hesitation in deciding whether they were foreign or Ottoman, but were still essentially

European (Cezar 427). Those groups were free to continue their own traditions so the expression of different cultures proliferated. All those minority groups had their own language and this had some effect during the naming of the streets near İstiklal Street. As Akın explained, the streets would reflect all languages spoken in the country. Various ethnic groups celebrated their own carnivals in the streets (125- 45). Today İstiklal Street preserves its heritage of diversity and is an important entertainment district. Any kind of leisure activity can be found in there.

As a result, Beyoğlu differed from the other districts of İstanbul in the social and cultural composition of the occupiers of its houses, offices and business premises, and in its role as a representative of a modern, contemporary way of life. Hence, one can define Beyoğlu as an urban area that played host to a historical development that was to produce a unique cultural environment. All of these attributes make İstiklal Street as one of the most important urban spaces in the city. That is why Saturday Mothers chose this space as an area for their urban movement.

3.2.2. Material Properties

Saturday Mothers were firm in their decision to continue their actions until they achieved their goal. For that reason the choice of space for the action was important. This space needed to be defensible and easily accessible as they wanted to gather together every Saturday in spite of authorities and police. To achieve this purpose they needed to use different roads that would lead to İstiklal Street.

Saturday Mothers chose the area in front of Galatasaray High School for their sit-ins. This area is a junction of four roads and Galatasaray High School is in the middle of Istiklal Street. It is a very popular and central location that is used by a large variety of people every day, at any given time. This area is like a breaking point, as the street width is enlarged there. On the opposite side of the high school, where Meşrutiyet and Hammalbaşı meet, there is the British palace. Those kind of buildings could give a chance of foreign support to Saturday Mothers and by this way the street would gain strategic property. On the other side, next to the school is the Yeni Çarşı Street. Opposite to Galatasaray High School, there is the Post Office. There is also a monument made of 50 thick metal pipes that was built in memory of the fiftieth year of the republic (Figure 4).

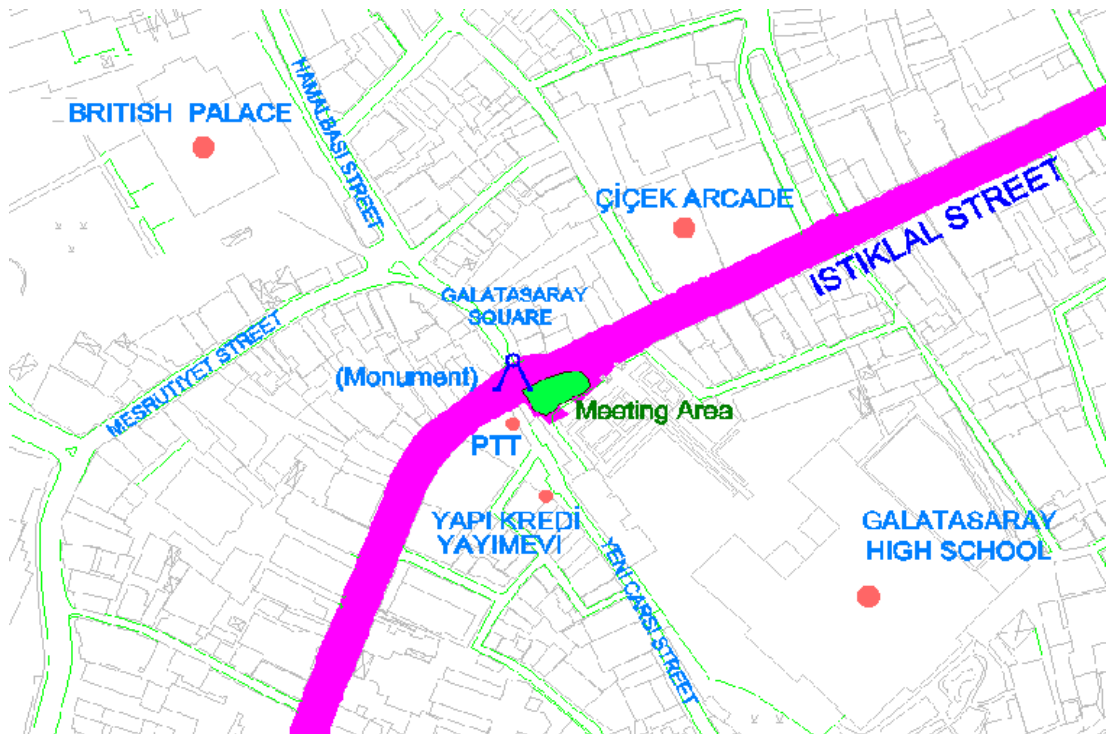


Figure 4. Significant areas around Galatasaray Square (University of Mimar Sinan, High School for Trades).

Ali Ocak, the representative of ICAD (International Committee Against Disappearances), stated that the choice of this place by the Saturday Mothers was in no way coincidental. Although, there were similar actions done in Kadıköy Altıyol and in the Square of Freedom in Bakırköy the only one that continued for a long time was the sit-ins in front of the high school.

One of the reasons is that the street houses a variety of cultures, commercial areas, activities, historical places, etc. so that a diverse range of people can be there and the diversity is reflected in the daily life of the street. The profile of users include residents, shoppers, those visiting the historical places, places for entertainment and cultural activities, and those visiting non-governmental organizations (Kocacıbağcı 54). Moreover a large number of people who are coming from and going to Taksim Square, the heart of Istanbul, pass from there. More importantly, many intellectuals pass from there because a significant publishing house, Yapı Kredi Yayınevi is located on this street. The route to close by tourist attractions like Çiçek Arcade with its famous seafood restaurants, and Galatasaray Tower areas are placed on this street. Hence, the sit-ins would receive considerable attention from all walks of life. Since the publicity is the main goal of such protests, İstiklal Street provides an excellent location.

Furthermore, the particular characteristics of the area helped the mothers in a way that police could not easily attack them. Armed forces cannot use violence against people public without any reason. Highly respected intellectuals of the country, along with the population there, were in full support of the mothers and their political and moral cause. These people would not allow the police to beat the

mothers. Therefore, it was a location, which allowed the mothers to reach all kinds of people and to do this efficiently. Ali Ocak who is Hasan Ocaks' father said that:

Now, first of all, it is a very busy street. Second, we thought we, Saturday Mothers and their relatives, would raise more sensitivity if we had our actions in a place where there were many intellectuals, organizations and where the society was more active. We thought it was the best place, where everybody could hear and see us (qtd. in Kocabiçak 78).

Finally, the physical properties of the street supported the sit-ins in specific ways. Although there is no vehicular traffic on İstiklal Street, transportation to that area is very convenient. Because it is central, everyone can use only one means of public transport from nearly every region in Istanbul. Moreover, the area of the actions is close to historical buildings that have a symbolic meaning, such as, Galatasaray High School and Galatasaray Post Office. The Mothers used the post office for mailing letters to appeal to the Prime Minister and the President. Ali Ocak stated that:

Throughout this period, when we performed the activities and press statements for Hasan, it was the most important point. There, many actions such as sending many wires, mails to the assembly, Prime Ministry and even Presidency took place. Then we thought about this and we started to have such activities with the support of the relatives of the lost people (qtd. in Kocabiçak 79).

In conclusion, analyzing all of those aspects shows the strategic properties of the İstiklal Street. Saturday Mothers saw the public space that they picked as a stage. The area that they chose is the heart and strategic space of the Istanbul. Different social actors are there and as diverse attractions can be found on İstiklal Street, everyone heard their voice. There were people from all over Turkey and the world

who came only to support the Saturday Mothers⁷ (Tanrıkulu 281-284-287). Hence, İstiklal Street was not only the centre of Istanbul, but it also became one of the central areas, where the mothers of the disappeared came together.

⁷ International sources started to produce programs about Saturday Mothers so that protesting individuals came to Galatasaray from diverse locations including Germany, France, etc. The international delegations that came to Turkey visited Galatasaray. On 8 June 1996, people who came for Habitat II from various countries visited the sit-ins. On the fourth year of the sit-ins the chairman of the Federation of the Disappeared Relatives (FEDEFAM) came from Colombia.

4. DOMESTICATING AN URBAN SPACE

4.1. Mothers in Public Space

From an architectural perspective, the Saturday Mothers phenomenon is a significant event because the boundaries of public and private realms were blurred by the full use of the characteristics of Istiklal Street.

A large number of mothers from a variety of economical and social status, geographical roots and religious and ethnic background came together for a single purpose. Like other examples from all over the world including Chile, Argentina, Peru and England, the Saturday Mothers continued their action for a long time i.e. three years and ten months. Initially their agenda was confined to their traditional social roles and identities. Coming from conventional family structures the majority of the Saturday Mothers thought that their traditional role was restricted to homemaking and mothering. Initially, these traditional identities of motherhood and housewifery took them to the streets to take action. A comparison with The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo is in order here.

The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, which included both mothers and grandmothers, had performed their action, between 1976 and 1983 in the square

called Plaza de Mayo and achieved considerable success in locating their lost ones. Saturday Mothers wanted to reach the other mothers who were in the same situation with them and wanted to take the attention of the public and find their disappeared sons and daughters. The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo in Argentina had common concerns and experiences. Like the Saturday Mothers, motherhood was their most prominent identification. In both cases most of the mothers participated in social and political life for the first time (Fisher 18). Nimet Tanrikulu explained their identity as follows:

Saturday Mothers came together with just the identities of traditional motherhood during the action. They did not allow other political groups to use their actions, for that reason men were not allowed to participate actively.

Motherhood was strategically used as a protective identity. As one of the Argentinean mothers explained:

We decided when we were organizing, that young people and men should not be allowed to protest for reasons of security. To be young and male in Argentina carries a presumption of guilt; they are, a priori, suspected of holding subversive ideas, of belonging to a revolutionary movement. We decided we would be the standard bearers, we women of mature age, mothers of families, with all that represents in the Argentine tradition (Schirmer 208).

Ece Temelkuran analyzed the mother identity of “Mothers of the Prisoners” who had similar causes as the “Saturday Mothers”¹. When the reason for their action

¹ “The Mothers of the Prisoners” who had their daughters and sons in prisons was a different group from the Saturday Mothers. They had some activities to protest the authorities. Generally the actions of The Mothers of the Prisoners took place in Ankara.

was asked, the only answer coming from them was; “I was there as a mother” (13). During an interview done by Evren Kocabiçak with Birsen Gülünay who was a “Saturday Mother” the latter said that:

My husband was a political person, I was an apolitical person. I kept on my life as a house wife. I never imagined that my husband would be made lost under custody. But I sometimes worried that he would be shot during a conflict or that he would be arrested. I mean, anything could happen at any time, but never imagined him being lost (89).

Like Birsen Gülünay, Gülşah Taaç explained that she did not know anything about politics before she started the sit-ins (Kocabiçak 90). The mothers left their homes in search of their children and went out into the streets, which up until that point had belonged to their men and their regime. As Susana Torre mentioned with reference to the Argentinean case women are marginalized in the public realm:

As a class, women share the problematic status of politically or culturally colonized populations (241).

As Temelkuran pointed out, the Saturday Mothers had ordinary lives restricted to contact with their neighbours, relatives and family. They expressed themselves through raising their children who symbolized their hopes, their dreams and their identities (69). Significantly, they never gave up their traditional identities as mothers during the actions.

Another common point between “Saturday Mothers” and Mothers in Argentina concerns socially constructed gender identities. In both cases during the first few weeks of the action, the police and the public ignored the Mothers. As older women

who did not project a sexual identity, their motherhood status demanded conventional respect. This was of strategic importance as motherhood is considered to hold a sacred status. The mothers were convinced that their roles in life were limited to being housewives and mothers for their children. This ignorance was because of the social and cultural gender- based preconceptions. According to the mothers their domestic realm consisted of their house works, their relatives and mostly their husbands and children. The public was not used to seeing women collectively acting in an urban space where male domination and power is taken for granted. The general conviction was that the mothers' resistance would be short lived.

In the period of the sit-ins, the Saturday Mothers carried aspects of their private domain into the public. In this way, they blurred the boundaries of these two commonly opposed spheres. The Saturday Mothers shared their domestic lives, attitudes, traditions, and motherhood experiences, with the public in an urban space. They did this by identifying themselves as mothers, by not raising their voices and by bringing objects, i.e. photos, and narratives of their daily life to Istiklal Street. During their action, mothers shared stories of their children's or husband's domestic lives, and their photographs with the public. Domestication of an urban space could be seen in The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo as well. Schirmer explains that:

The site of public masculinity power is demystified by older women, humbly circling the plaza wearing on their heads diapers first, and later white headscarves, embroidered with the names of their disappeared son or daughter or husband, together with worn photographs of their loved ones pinned to their breasts or placed on large placards at marches and demonstrations (203-204).

Breaking the boundaries between the private and public was pointed out by Sarah Radcliffe in her article on The Mothers in Argentina. She states that:

Of course, the Mothers' community of identity developed in opposition to the state's treatment of their children, and not in support of the state's rhetoric about the family. However, in the imagery, practices and assumptions about the content of and the boundaries between 'public' and 'private' certain continuities exist between the military's basic cell of the family and the Mothers' activism. Thus, the link between mothers and children was perceived to be a direct, unmediated one begun at birth (qtd. in Kocabıçak 95).

Torre too questioned the boundaries between the public and private spheres. She mentioned that the action of the Mothers, exemplified a kind of spatial and urban appropriation that originates in private acts that acquire public significance (244).

In the Turkish instance, the particular background of the majority of the mothers was of particular significance. These were born and raised in the most backward regions of the country, i.e. southeastern villages. As Kocabıçak mentions; some of the Mothers were not able to talk, not able to expose their faces when there were men around and not able to go out, without a male. Asiye Karakoç one of the mothers of the disappeared had expressed her feelings about being together with men during the actions as follows:

I always used to take photos with me. I made no sound. You know, I am not so bold. Rıdvan sometimes used to tell me, "Mom, why do you not defend yourself?" I do not; this is how I have been brought up by my parents. I mean, my mother was like this; our families were like this, this is the way we are used to things. I cannot say anything when there are men around. I am very embarrassed. This is my nature. I do not know how. I am embarrassed, very embarrassed. I mean, I cannot speak to every man. Only when I have to. For example, when I visit doctors, there I talk. I cannot talk to everybody.

I talk only if necessary. It is not my business to talk. My children talk when they are with me, I cannot (84).

Generally, in many parts of Turkey women live as Karakoç had explained. This is the result of socially imposed gender-based limitations. Karakoç added that she learned these limitations since she was born as a woman. Her husband never gave permission to her to participate in the actions. Such repressions were not just the result of external oppression, but highly internalized impositions. During the actions, Karakoç had uncovered her face only once when she spoke but in doing so she tried to hide herself. In her own words:

I used to hold up Rıdvan's photo so that I would not be seen. I was ashamed of myself. I wanted nobody to see me, if people saw the photo, it was enough for me. I was embarrassed. We went to Rıdvan's grave once. I took up a flag. I did not even see what the flag was. My face was not seen (Kocabiçak 85) (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Mothers Covering their faces with their son's photographs , Aclan Uraz, *Cumartesi Anneleri Fotoğrafları* (Istanbul: Çağ Yayıncılık,1997).

The public realm belongs to masculinity and nationhood. In her act, Karakoç used these identities i.e. her sons' photo and the flag, as her mask. This was the first experience for her to express herself to the public. Because of that, Karakoç was ashamed and she wanted to conceal and protect herself as she felt that she did not belong to the public realm. Approved signs of masculinity and nationality interfered with her agency at that critical moment.

Such acts as covering her face, not talking with men and not going out situated Karakoç and others in the private realm. In participating in the action of Saturday Mothers they had blurred the boundaries between private and public for the first time. Going out by themselves, showing their face not even seen by their neighbours and sharing their feelings with others were significant steps in stepping outside the boundary that had been defined for them. However, because of the traditional responsibilities that defined their motherhood identity, many Saturday Mothers had some difficulties in participating in the actions. Some explained that they had to work at home and look after their relatives. During the actions, they started to neglect their responsibilities at home. This was the reason for many to leave the actions.

Besides gender, ethnicity also played a critical role in the oppression of Saturday Mothers'. Kocabıçak mentioned that Asiye Karakoç was called "gavur" (a demeaning Turkish phrase, meaning non-Muslim folk) and she added that her disappeared son was totally innocent. Apparently, his Kurdish ethnicity was the only reason for his being held suspect (87).

During the actions, Saturday Mothers gained a new political identity. All participants expressed whatever they wanted as a mother and as a spouse. As Nimet Tanrikulu explained, mothers developed a very strong friendship with other relatives of the lost people and with each other. United around a shared issue the mothers felt and acted as a monolithic body. Moreover they started to see and share others problems. Birsen Gülünay explains that:

Then, after a long process, I started to be more sensitive about social problems. I mean, I started to comprehend the political situation in Turkey after I talked to people. In fact, it was a means. I mean, people can go out in the streets and can develop sensitivities when they are hurt. People do not become sensitive and do not act for anything unless something happens to them. I acted with other people. Because I understood their pains. Their pains were my pains as well. I mean, I started to be with the relatives of the other lost people with the idea that our pains were common (qtd. in Kocabıçak 94).

The Saturday Mothers phenomenon marked the politicization of a segment of the society that had hitherto been confined to silence on public affairs. In that sense, its significance surpassed the specific agenda that initiated the act.

Through the Saturday Mothers actions the participants gained political consciousness and they redefined the role of traditional motherhood. According to Fisher, the entrance of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo into the public domain also led them to change their perception of their social and familial roles (18). Torre too drew attention to this point:

This case illustrates the process that leads from the embodiment of traditional roles and assigned scripts as wives and mothers to emergence of the active, transformative subject, in spite of-or perhaps

because of- the threat or actuality of physical violence that acts of protest attract in autocratic societies (243).

Sarah Radcliffe and Temelkuran emphasize the importance of women's entrance into new urban locations like the street and main square and their participation in urban life (Kocabıçak 96). The Mothers, Saturday Mothers and the Mothers of the Prisoners, were not only out in the streets, which up till that point had belonged to their men and their family. Their presence in the public realm transformed both sides of the equation. As the public realm was permeated with maternal narratives, the subjectivity of the mothers changed as well (29-30). They learnt how to express themselves. They shared their lives with the public in the streets. In doing so, the mothers enabled an active dialogue between the private and the public realms.

4.2. Strategies and Tactics

The blurring of boundaries between the public and private realms emerged by the mothers' use of specific tactics against the strategies of authorities. Michel de Certeau explains these two terms within the framework of space. He uses the term "strategy" to mean "combination and management of power relationships", "tactic" as "a calculated movement". Strategy settles if a subject with power can be isolated, and tactics are determined by the deficiency of a proper place. For strategy, restricted and bounded a place is necessary while the space of a tactics is the space of the other and organized against the law of power. De Certeau emphasizes the distinction

between strategies and tactics in stating that the former is related to power and authority while the latter involves the acts of those who lack power and proper place:

Lacking its own place, lacking a view of the whole, limited by the blindness (which may lead to perspicacity) resulting from combat at close quarters, limited by the possibilities of the moment, a tactic is determined by the *absence of power* just as a strategy is organized by the postulation of power (de Certeau 38).

Hence tactics are mobile within enemy territory and operate in isolated actions whereas strategy is a static operation. Another distinction between tactics and strategy is the use of time. Strategy uses corrosion of time while tactics are based on clever utilization of time. They transform a given situation to a favourable one and change the organization of space. Saturday Mothers actions on İstiklal Street can be read in these terms. It is their tactics that introduced elements of the domestic realm into urban space.

Tactics suggest a temporal movement that produce a path through space. During the production of that path the movement leaves marks. According to de Certeau those marks, which a functionalist administration of space must make, render the movement effective. Such is the case with the Saturday Mothers who marked a particular spot, i.e. the front of Galatasaray High School on İstiklal Street. He also indicates that, as power grows, it becomes increasingly difficult to use tricks which is used by the weak. In other words as deploys strategic forces, the other one does not have a chance for feints because power is manifested by its very visibility. De Certeau uses the term “trickery” to mean “a sort of legerdemain relative to acts”. Saturday Mothers used tactics with different tricks in order to continue their sit-ins. This resulted in the blurring of the boundaries between urban and domestic realms.

4.2.1. Impact of Space on Mothers' Tactics

The specific characteristics of the urban space that was chosen by the Saturday Mothers played a significant role in the unique course of their actions. By the extraordinary properties and potentials of the Istiklal Street and Galatasaray High School, this action took place for 200 weeks. Not only did Saturday Mothers meet there every week but also local shopkeepers of the street, the daily users of the street, tourists, those visiting the mosques, cathedrals, and those walking between Sultanahmet and Taksim Square, those visiting the non-governmental organizations in the vicinity and media members participated in their protest. With the Saturday Mothers' action, different political groups and identities came together in front of the Galatasaray High School. This was the first time that the particular area was used by activists. However, other parts of Istiklal Street, especially Taksim Square witnessed protest movements before. Students, labour activists and hooligans had used Taksim square numerous times to voice their demands. Yet there was a difference between their use of space and Saturday Mothers. The Taksim square events were held once at a time, they colonized the entire space and usually ended in violence. They were contained events with little or no participations from outsiders. The Saturday Mothers displayed a totally different attitude. Their tactical use of urban space was more participatory than invasive. It can be characterized as fluid and always in the making rather than fixed and planned once and for all.

As Kocabıçak mentioned, the mothers specified the borders for their field of actions as the tramway road as they never wanted to interrupt the daily use of the street. Gülşah Taaç explains:

We used to sit alongside that metro path lengthwise. We did not cross the road. We used to open the road for tramcar. When the tramcar came, we used to open the road. Then the tramcar passed and went... We used to turn this side upwards. We moved upwards so that our people used to sit. The mothers, those holding photos, we used to sit in turns. This is how we used to do it. We did not barricade the street. Can we barricade the people, the tramcar? We can not (103).

Hüsniye Ocak also mentioned that the normal flow of the street continued on the other side of the tram rails and that they never obstructed the path of the daily users. She added that they never received negative reactions from the shopkeepers and ordinary users. On the contrary, the latter communicated with the mothers and supported the actions (Kocabiçak, 103). Although the police claimed that the shopkeepers were against the actions, Mothers mentioned that they helped them.

The majority of the Saturday Mothers had not been to İstiklal Street before. Because of its central location, importance and fluid property, people can reach İstiklal Street easily from all parts of Istanbul. After security forces occupied the street ends which was a way of restricting the action, Mothers tried some other ways.

Nimet Tanrıkulu explained:

Activists could not use the main street to reach the field of the activity. For a short period we met in IHD (Human Rights Association) because after a while the police came in front of the IHD's gate and they did not let us go on from there. The police was not only in control of the front of the Galatasaray High School, they controlled the whole street.

Another participant, Hanım Tosun also pointed out that, the security force did not let them get out of the apartment in which the Human Rights Association (Istanbul) was located. Even on the day, which they announced that they would end the actions the security force did not allow them out (qtd. in Kocabiçak 117).

Against the strategies of the police, the mothers used tactics to continue their action. As Certeau mentions the space of tactic belongs to the other and tactic is an art of the weak (37). Saturday Mothers organized different tactics as they did not hold the power to plan a general strategy and to view all aspects of their operation (such as what kind of sabotage they would witness) within a visible space. Hence they utilized the properties of tactics such as mobility and creation of surprise acts for the authorities.

For instance, Nimet Tanrıkulu mentions that the mothers sometimes met before the action and went to the meeting area in small groups but this tactic failed as the police tried to take all of them under custody. Hüsniye Ocak explicates this as follows:

Sometimes we used to meet. We used to bump into each other in İstiklal Street, for example, we used to bump into each other when we went there in groups. They used to barricade the road so that we would not enter the square; they used to take us under custody. When we asked why we were taken under custody, they told us we were taken custody because we were doubtful persons (qtd. in Kocabıçak 118).

After barricades were set up on İstiklal Street, the mothers decided to follow different roads to access the front of the Galatasaray High School each week. Tanrıkulu states that they met in a place far away from İstiklal Street and hired taxis to get as close as possible to the high school. Each week they used different lanes or streets (Figure 6). Mostly they used the Yeni Çarşı Street because it is open to traffic and they could easily come near the school by car. Tanrıkulu states that, they could avoid the police by walking around all the lanes and side streets.

It was impossible for us to walk around in a normal day because when they saw us they thought we would meet and engage in action. Another thing is that sometimes we met in cafes in the side streets but later on, this became difficult for us. Because they worried if we would plan an action.

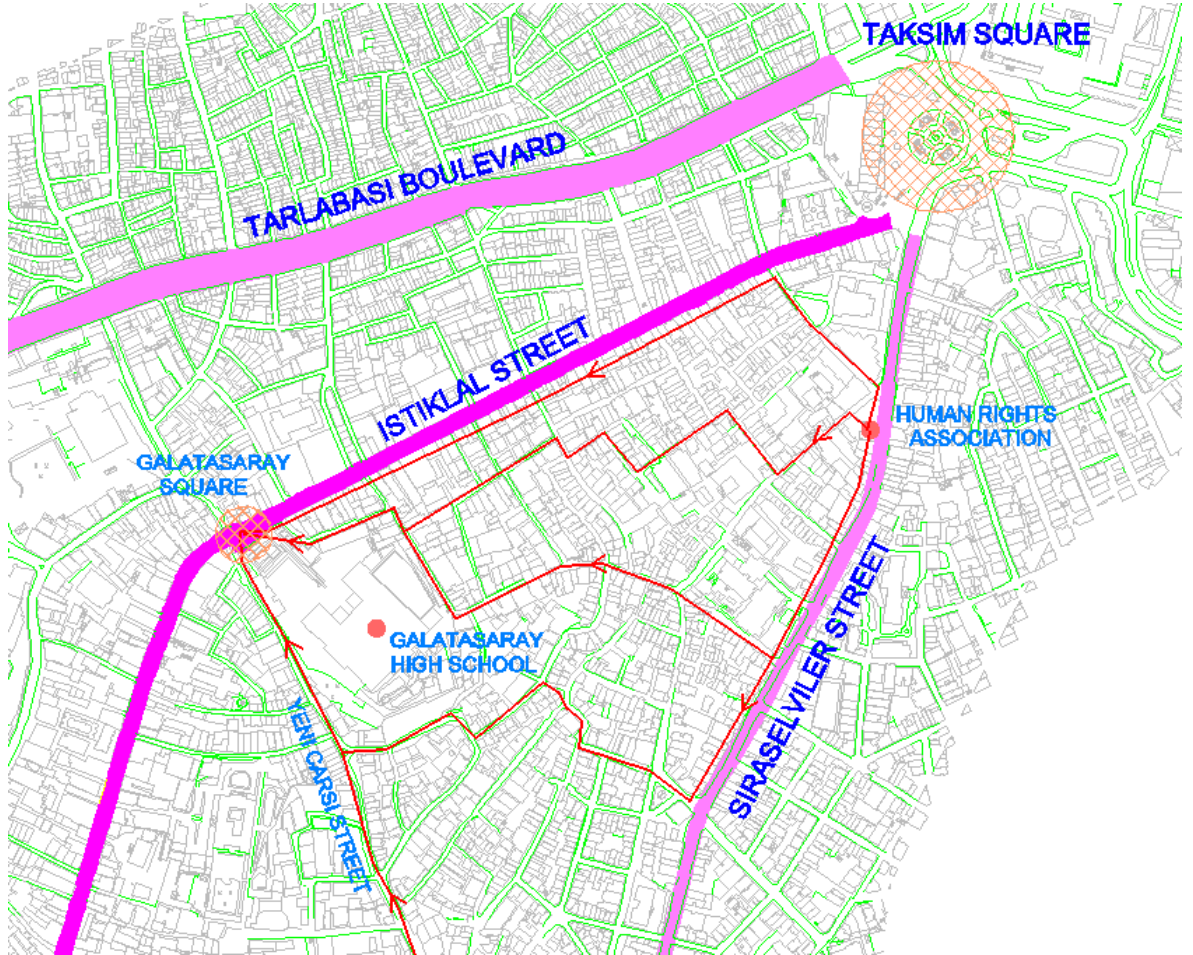


Figure 6. Mothers routes to Istiklal Street (University of Mimar Sinan, High School for Trade).

Gülşah Taaç describes those difficulties:

We were seeking for a point to enter. Where shall we enter Galatasaray? We used to pick up various streets. Just like in the movies. One day, there is the Hamam Lane near Galatasaray, we came there. We came from the banks and entered into that lane. There we found some space and left the flowers there. The police ran immediately, as if we had left bombs. They said, so you found there vacant (qtd. in Kocabıçak 121).

From some other interviews with mothers, it becomes clear that they used all possible routes around the Galatasaray High School to reach their area of action. Saturday Mothers decided to go there very early and wandered through many lanes or streets to arrive their destination. They used the side streets, made their route longer, and sometimes used taxis in groups of four or five. Hanım Tosun adds;

We did something. We used to get taxis down there, near Etfal. We used to come to the back of Galatasaray. They found us there, too. They followed us. They made us all get off the car and took us all under custody. Really, we had many weekends full of struggle in this manner (qtd. in Kocabiçak 121).

Another important point is that they never gave up using this area for their action. Nimet Tanrıkulu told that:

The sit-ins started at exactly 12.30 am and we were around this area but tried not to show ourselves to the police. At 12.30 am fifteen-twenty people gathered at once. When the area was crowded with police and cars, we did our action by standing nearer to a space in front of the high school.

When police occupied their sitting area, which was in front of the high school, the mothers did not hesitate to occupy a different spot near by such as the side of the high school or the front of the post office nearby (Figure 7). In doing so, they subverted the spatial target of the strategies of power. Hüsniye Ocak tells that:

I mean we wanted to sit at this point that week; the next week we went to the same place to see it occupied by the police. We used to sit towards the post office. Then, we used to sit in front of the post office. For example, if they closed that point, we used to sit in this corner. We used to sit in the side road. They used to barricade one place we would be sitting in every week (qtd. in Kocabiçak 122).

As these accounts clarify, the Saturday Mothers made full use of the physical characteristics of the urban space that they used. Their occupation displayed a fluid characteristic to avoid confrontation with the government agents. This is a result of tactical mobility. At the beginning of the sit-ins they met in front of the school. As the strategies of the authorities consolidated in that area they divided into groups and used different roads to reach the area. By using different tactics in different times they challenged the fixed organization of space.



Figure 7. Front of the Galatasaray High School, Istanbul. Aclan Uraz, *Cumartesi Anneleri Fotoğrafları* (Istanbul: Çağ Yayıncılık,1997).

As a conclusion, the mothers used the area around the Istiklal Street precisely because of its physical and cultural properties. This is precisely how they were able to maintain the continuity of the sit-ins.

4.2.2. Restrictive Strategies

From the beginning of the action, until the 170th meeting the police did not use violence against the Saturday Mothers. They would go to the Istiklal Street before the action started and wait until it finished without resorting to physical abuse (Figure 8-9). The protesters' socially sanctioned identity as mothers protected them from the authorities' harsh reaction. However, on the 15th of August 1998, the day of their 170th action, the police started to interfere by using violence. The reason for that was that the Saturday Mothers had started to take the space under control and attracted public attention. The authorities saw that they could not stop the sit-ins so they decided to use violence against the participants. This continued to happen for the next thirty weeks.



Figure 8. Police went to the area before mothers, Aclan Uraz, *Cumartesi Anneleri Fotoğrafları* (Istanbul: Çağ Yayıncılık,1997).



Figure 9. Front of Galatasaray High School before the sit-in, Aclan Uraz, *Cumartesi Anneleri Fotoğrafları* (Istanbul: Çağ Yayıncılık,1997).

As the power of the authorities over the space started to be lost, their strategies became harsher. Violence was one of the strategies that authorities and police used. Power had to reclaim its “own” place as the base to remove to enemies which form its targets (de Certeau 36-38).

In the 171st week, the police surrounded the Mothers in front of the Galatasaray High school (Figure 11-12). Twenty-six people were taken under custody. In the following week, police did not permit the action and the number of people who were taken under custody increased to a hundred and sixty. Hanım Tosun described those events as follows:

I think it was the 176th week of our action as Saturday Mothers when we detained. This was the third time that I was detained (Amnesty International 3).



Figure 10. Police surrounds the Mothers, Aclan Uraz, *Cumartesi Anneleri Fotoğrafları* (Istanbul: Çağ Yayıncılık, 1997).

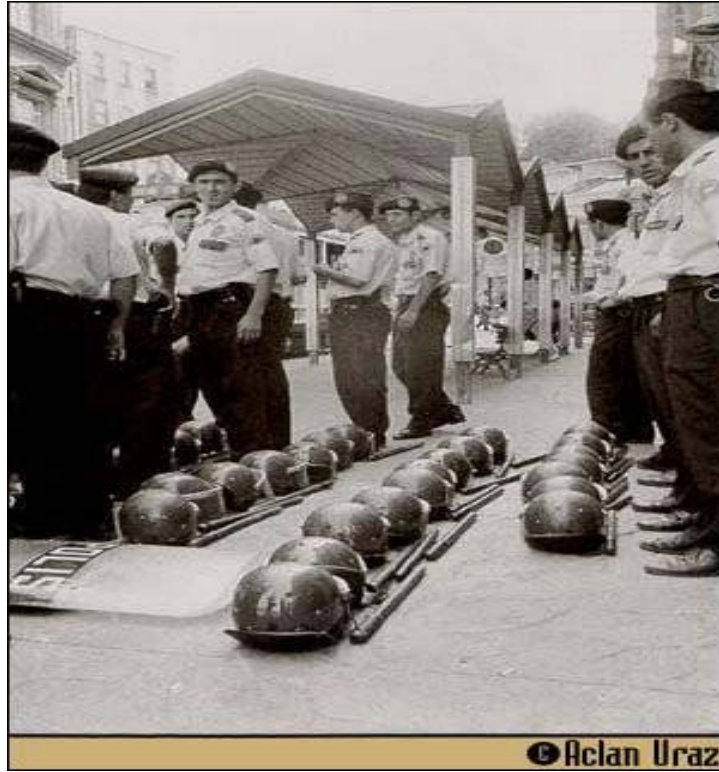


Figure 11. Police occupying the Mothers area, Aclan Uraz, *Cumartesi Anneleri Fotoğrafları* (Istanbul: Çağ Yayıncılık, 1997).

As Kocacıbağ mentioned, a total of four hundred and thirty one people were taken under custody during these thirty weeks (Figure 13). They were beaten up, assaulted and insulted for periods changing between a few hours and five days. After a while, this became normal for the mothers and they even brought a small luggage with them which contained their emergency needs in case they were taken. The “women at home” took on a nomadic character facing the uncertainties of the public realm of political action. Nimet Tanrikulu explained that:

We faced violence from the beginning of the actions but they were not like the last weeks. After 170th week, we had more difficulties with the police. We learnt that they could take us under custody. Most of us brought small bags, with some cloths in them to the actions. We had some elderly and sick mothers but police did not care about this.



Figure 13. Article from a newspaper regarding police actions against the protesters, Berat Ağaoglu, (*Cumhuriyet Newspaper*, 30 August 1998).

Another strategy used by the police was capturing the spaces used by Saturday Mothers. For the first periods of the action they waited around the Galatasaray High School until the end of the sit-ins. But later they closed the ends of some important streets for the mothers such as, the street of the H.R.A. office. After a long period their strategies did not have any effect against the tactics of the mothers so they occupied the front of the school with their buses. The whole of the area and the control of it belonged to the authorities and only they had the whole vision of the space. Compared with the mothers police authorities had rigid attitudes while Saturday Mothers were mobile around the Istiklal Street. Emphasizing the mobile characteristic of tactics de Certeau states that this mobility.

... must accept the chance offerings of the movement, and seize on the wing the possibilities that offer themselves at any given moment. It must vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers (de Certeau 37).

Opposed to the mobility of the mothers on Saturdays at midday the Istiklal Street and nearly all Beyoğlu was occupied by the police and their buses (Figure 14). Their numbers were very high and that took the attention of an English lawyer who came to Turkey for doing a study on Saturday Mothers. He said that this amount of police force could be used for 20.000 hooligans. This exaggerated precaution was done by the police to prevent the Saturday Mothers from continuing their action (Pekçe 9).

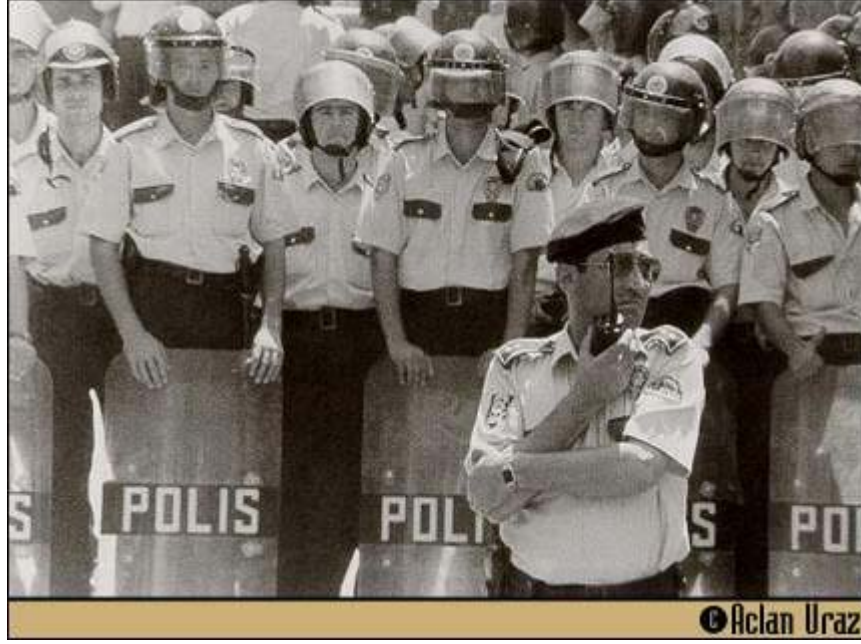


Figure 14. Police blocking mothers routes, Aclan Uraz, *Cumartesi Anneleri Fotoğrafları* (Istanbul: Çağ Yayıncılık,1997).

In time the mothers got used to living with policemen. They even saw the police as part of the action. The mothers were not scared. They would bump into the police and continue walking. After the first beating, they had nothing more to fear. They were stronger and tougher. Their tactical operations became increasingly more confrontational with the strategies of the police forces.

Zübeyde Tepe said that “they hit my head, my leg, and my arm. Police took us every week again and again. They hit us every week. During the actions, I had a leg operation so I could not participate for a few weeks. When I returned I tried to keep away from the police because they did not care about my leg”. She continued as follows:

They used every sort of methods on us. They applied gas, OC. One day of course I did not know what OC gas was; they applied OC gas in my mouth. I did not realise OC gas, of course I did not know it. I found out that my mouth

was poisoned. I swallowed it. I thought I died. They took us under custody. We asked for water they did not give water. We asked for ayran they did not give. My body burned, my stomach burned (Kocabiçak 115).

During the course of their action the mothers' attitude changed from avoiding eye contact with the police faces to looking at them directly in the eye. They did not hesitate to act braver and braver, to show the police that they were not afraid. Sometimes they even intimidated the police. Tosun mentioned that:

They used to beat very violently, really. Once Ali Ocak was also with us. Two or three policemen attacked. They got him into the car. I saw that they were killing Ali. Ali already had troubles with his ears. There were two rows between us. I passed through them. I never fought in my life. In the sense of fight, I never fought. I threw myself on Ali along the rows. Because I saw that Ali was about to die. A policewoman held me here and threw me aside, they are like karate fighters, she asked me why I protected him. I saw that Ali was about to die, this is why I threw myself to save him (Kocabiçak 115-116).

In the 200th week of their action, the mothers decided to take a break from the demonstrations because of bad treatments, beating, and abuse. Police used violence to render the mothers silent. On the other hand mothers declared that they would never be silent and they would keep the protests going in some form or another until they found how their children and husbands "disappeared".

As a conclusion, police and authorities saw that Saturday Mothers started to dominate the space. They opposed to the authorities and they expressed themselves to a large number of people as part of their tactics. They carried aspects of the domestic realm into the public sphere and started to learn how to be in the public realm without compromising their aims. At that point it is important to state that the distinction between strategies and tactics was not always clearly marked. Throughout their action the mothers too resorted to strategies at critical moments. Their initial

organization stage, their conscious choice of space, their politicised voice in the latter stages and their active confrontation with the police can be considered strategic operations rather than tactical tricks. At times when tactics proved ineffective it became unavoidable to use strategies to respond to authorities acts.

4.3. Silent Protest

Throughout history in patriarchal cultures man has spoken for woman, about woman, placing her and not allowing her to have her own values, denying her ownership and voice. Frosh mentions that “the women is excluded, has no voice, is other, and knows not what she is saying” (117-120). He adds that women are placed outside of language. Men are dominant in public space, which they control. This control is exercised by masculine voices. Historically men have been the authority in both the public and the domestic. Women can talk and use the space in terms directed by men.

The Saturday Mothers movement was a sort of action that would not be expected from the traditional, home-oriented Turkish women. The Saturday Mothers left their homes in search of their children and went out into the streets that is dominated by men according to the conventions of the patriarchal culture that they lived in. In the case of Saturday Mothers propelled by their maternal instinct, women learnt how to struggle in public space in their own terms.

In the course of their public appearance, the Saturday Mothers displayed a significant change in their attitudes, speech, appearance, and posture. In addition to

that, this was the first time that their voices were heard in the public. In fact one of the most significant aspects of the movement concerned women's voices and the role these voices played in gaining their subjecthood. For the first time ever, their voices, which used to travel only from one room to another in their homes, were echoed in open air.

Their voices changed from soft, weak whispers into powerful chants of mourning that cried out to their lost children and the government that kept these children away from them. The women, who had always talked with a tone that searched the approval of men, were now engaged in discourse without waiting for commands. As Temelkuran mentioned, their culture had always asked them to remain silent, listen to males, and accept their destinies (29). Nimet Tanrikulu pointed out that mothers became stronger than their men, and freer than ever before. This was reflected directly in the way they have always carried themselves when they went out on the streets. They were no longer pulled down, had collapsed shoulders, or rigid bodies like before but stood erect, powerful, and sure of themselves. In addition, mothers needed to develop themselves for going out into the streets, sitting next to other people and giving speeches.

Asiye Karakoç had never spoken in the presence of men until she participated in the sit-ins. She, who did not even go out from her house, participated in aspects of public life for the first time. Her suppressed voice became political.

I made speeches. I made three speeches in total. I told them: The swift forces raided our house twice for Rıdvan. They did not arrest him. I told them that they had told me, they told me Let Rıdvan come and surrender, if he does not surrender we will kill him wherever we find him. I said I had told so. But Rıdvan committed no crime. If Rıdvan had committed any crimes, they should have charged him. I can not translate them into Turkish easily. I told then they should

have sentenced Rıdvan. Why did they kill him? I said, I do not know what sort of a law this is. This is how I talked (Kocabiçak 92).

On the other hand Elmas Eren mentioned that she did not know anything about politics but she stated that she knows who is right and who is wrong now, after her experiences as a Saturday Mother.

I did not go there making politics. No good can come out of my politics after this age. For this reason, I did not go there as a political person. But you can see the right and the wrong. You have to see them. You see the one who is right and the one who is wrong (qtd. in Kocabiçak 93).

Saturday Mothers remained consistent in the format of their action which can be qualified as silent protest. Some of the mothers banded their lips to emphasize the silent nature of their protest (Figure 14). While they continued their sit-ins, other political groups such as Mothers of the Prisoners wanted to get involved in their actions by using them to their own ends. Sometimes those people attempted to shout out their own slogans but the mothers did not permit this. Nimet Tanrıkulu pointed out that:

Some other groups tried to use us but we never gave permission to them. For that reason they tried to affect us in a negative way and wanted to change the manner of the actions. They chose our sit-ins because our action took the attention of the society and continued for a long time. Our sit-ins were very pure because motherhood identity was dominant in there.



Figure 14. A mother who banded her lips, Aclan Uraz, *Cumartesi Anneleri Fotoğrafları* (Istanbul: Çağ Yayıncılık,1997).

Moreover, those groups criticized the style of the sit-ins which involved sitting without chanting any slogan until the action finished. Student groups also criticized the form of the action and they believed that by this way society could not hear their voice. However, the situation changed eventually. Hüsniye Ocak pointed out as follows:

While we were sitting there, some political groups were accusing us with being passive. They turned up their noise at us. Then, when this resistance started to raise some voice and extended, the people who said those things started to come there (qtd. in Kocabiçak 110).

Saturday Mothers protests continued for nearly three years and ten months which was a long period for a sustained action in Turkey. The most important reason was their style. As the mothers mentioned, they were silent because they wanted to continue these actions for a long time. Gülşah Taaç said that:

We used to go and sit there with flowers and cloves in our hands. However they permitted for five minutes or ten. For example, let us suppose we sat for half an hour. Then we used to make our statement and go. We never did anything to anybody, we never attacked, and we never did any harm to the shopkeepers. We sat there silently... We did not chant slogans. I mean we used to think, 'let us not chant slogans, let us do it however we decided (qtd. in Kocabiçak 119).

As a conclusion, the Saturday Mothers succeeded in taking the attention of the society, at large. Passers by wondered about the cause of the action. As Zübeyde Tepe who is one of the Saturday Mothers explained during an interview:

People had reactions to us during the actions. While they were passing from in front of the High School, they stopped for a moment and tried to understand the reason of the action. Moreover, they wondered a lot and wanted to take more information. Then they started to ask questions to us. Some of them took our photos and films.

People, who were passing from there supported the sit-ins and some of them wanted to sit with the Mothers even when the police was there. Some of them supported the Mothers by standing next to them. Some weeks they had different political groups to join them. Also known artists, writers, and singers such as Lale Mansur and Sezen Aksu were with them in some sit-ins (Figure 15). Hüsniye Ocak says that their action created some questions in the minds of the users of the street and adds that:

When we used to sit there, people used to ask why we sat there of course. There were people who asked why we were sitting there and why we were waiting there. I mean, they used to look at us, why we wanted to sit there. We used to say, 'My brother is missing or my husband is missing.' They used to say, 'Oh my God.' We said, we sat there because we wanted their killers. This was our right. This made people curious. They used to read about it. They asked, where they could find information, how they could learn (qtd. in Kocabiçak 101).

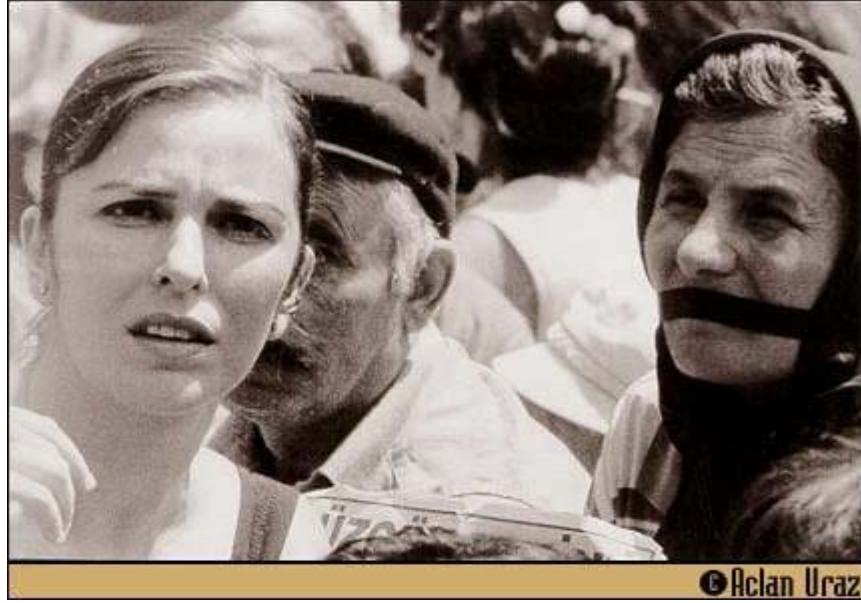


Figure 15. Lale Mansur during the sit-ins, Aclan Uraz, *Cumartesi Anneleri Fotoğrafları* (Istanbul: Çağ Yayıncılık,1997).

After a while, Mothers became familiar with the reactions and interests of the people. They also had visitors from all over the world, including, England, Germany, Colombia. The most interesting participation involved grandmothers coming from Argentina on 30 May 1998 (Tanrıkulu 284) (Figure 16). In addition to these widespread supports, U2 wrote a song for Fehmi Tosun and Sezen Aksu wrote a song for the Saturday Mothers. Birsen Gülünay says:

People watched. They watched with interest. There were even those who used to take photos or shoot films. I mean, as the actions went on, people who had work to do there got to know us. They knew what our troubles were. People knew for whom we were there, for what purpose we were there (qtd. in Kocabıcak 102).

Through the actions of Saturday Mothers whose voices multiplied on İstiklal Street stories of domestic nature articulated with political tones. Silent bodies of motherhood initiated a public chorus of political protest.



Figure 16. International Communities during the sit-ins, Aclan Uraz, *Cumartesi Anneleri Fotoğrafları* (Istanbul: Çağ Yayıncılık, 1997).

5. CONCLUSION

In this thesis, blurring the boundaries between the domestic and urban realms is studied within the framework of gender- space relationship. In the light of this work, I aimed to understand the two realms from the viewpoint of gender. Therefore, I studied the literature regarding gender, domestic space and urban space.

Throughout history, urban spaces such as streets and plazas were predominantly constituted as the masculine realm. This was realized for different reasons and in different ways in various cultures. While men had the power and control over public spaces, women were asked to stay at home as the only area they could control. Without men, they were not supposed to do anything outside of the domestic realm and they were made to see the world from man's perspective. Men limited the activities and communications of women with the public world. After an analysis of this issue an important phenomenon that is Saturday Mothers, is taken to define how the boundaries between public and private realms were broken down.

While analysing this phenomenon, I pointed out how women started to appear in an urban realm and introduce elements of the domestic world into it. Women started to assert themselves in the public realm of the street. They consciously chose a street in order to define themselves where they could reach a high

number of people. In doing so they, brought aspects of their domestic world into the urban realm. Furthermore, to achieve their purpose they tried different tactics in the use of public space. Their use of space differed with other political groups' use of space. For example, while Saturday Mothers used the space in a mobile way, other groups used it in a static way. For that reason, the mothers chose the space in front of Galatasaray High School while others used Taksim Square.

Women broke the boundaries between public and private with their only public recognized identities, which was the motherhood identity that belonged to the private realm of the house. Various cultures, ethnic and religious groups, etc. came together to share their domestic realms in public. The use of their motherhood identity had positive and negative effects alike. The positive part of it was that the police did not use violence against them for a long time. On the other hand, this identity was charged with a sentimental value that they never wanted. For that reason they wanted to be called "Saturday People".

Women defined themselves in an urban environment mobilizing their own means not in a way men control the street. While they never gave up their identity as mothers, they articulated this with a political stance. After a time they learned how to use the street and maintain control. Because of that, asserting their position became easier to them and the physical properties of urban space provided this. They became social actors in an urban space in a different way than men.

Saturday Mothers took the attention of the people, media, etc. Some known groups, singers wrote songs for them. Moreover, some documentaries were recorded

with the subject of Saturday Mothers. The mothers gained international publicity by the help of media. The action took a long time because of the success of mothers' tactics against the strategies of the police and they were underestimated. Although the sit-ins ended, they had some achievements such as some disappeared people were found and the number of disappearances was decreased.

While their chosen space had considerable effect on the mothers' action, their movement also effected the space in question. First of all, it introduced a different form of political action in the specific urban setting. Secondly, the environment was marked by more democratic and participatory attitudes. Lastly, the Saturday Mothers movement inscribed their space of action with a significant layer of collective memory. To date, long after the action came to an end, the area in front of the Galatasaray High School is associated with the Saturday Mothers and their courageous protest.

Finally this study has assisted us to understand how women blurred the boundaries between public and private realms in the case of the Saturday Mothers and to clarify significant issues about gender and space relationship. It showed that conventional notions of this relationship are not always stable but open to critical interventions.

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