Entertainment & leisure consumption in Istanbul

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CHAPTER 3

III. LEISURE CONSUMPTION AND ENTERTAINMENT IN REPUBLICAN ISTANBUL 1920-1980

In this chapter, I will continue the story where I left it in the previous chapter, that is, from the onset of Republican Turkey in the early 1920s. In the previous chapter, I had espoused Tekeli’s periodization of the Ottoman-Turkish modernization (2010). Tekeli argues that modernization efforts in the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey should be seen as part and parcel of a longer historical line. According to Tekeli, on this line, four historical ‘periods’ of modernity could be discerned: (a) 1840s-1923: “shy modernity;” (b) 1923-1950s: “radical or fundamentalist modernity;” (c) 1950s-1980s: “populist modernity;” and, (d) 1980s onwards: “the erosion of modernity” (2010). In this chapter I will concentrate to the periods (b) and (c).

I had discussed the period of (a) “shy modernity” spanning between 1840s and 1923, when modernization, westernization and rationalization as well as their instruments were introduced into the daily life of the city, urban “tempo” sped up and the urban forms were remarkably different from those of the previous Classical Ottoman era (Ünlü Yücesoy, 2011: 17). However, the following period of (b) “radical or fundamentalist modernity,” entailed a top-down cultural modernization instituted with a heavy administrative fiat and strict nation-state based centralization under the single-party rule.

The period of (c) “populist modernity,” instead, was dominated by the import-substituting, peripheral Fordist model of development that was espoused by the governments of the multi-party era. To comprehend the basic parameters of the “radical or fundamentalist modernity” under Kemalism and “populist modernity” of the multi-party era, I need to discuss their historical context. Before I go onto the historical details, let me first start with a short vignette of sorts that helped guide me through the intricacies involved in the leisure consumption and entertainment in the Republican period:
Prologue: What lies under a liquor label?

When I was thinking about the history of entertainment and leisure consumption in Republican Istanbul, I felt that a picture paraded in front of my eyes. The vision was the sticker label of the famous rakı brand, Kulüp Rakı (Club¹ Rakı) produced by state-owned Tekel (monopoly) administration (Picture III.1). Rakı is an anise-flavoured distilled grape-based beverage, somewhat similar to Greek ouzo or Near Eastern arak, consumed either as a standalone aperitif or as the main drink at long dinners, banquets and at meyhâne discussions. Tekel exclusively controlled the authority to produce, distribute and sell all alcohol and tobacco products between 1944 and 2003 (Zat, 2008:21).

State monopoly over this sector was a product and extension of étatiste (statist/devletçi) economic policies that were espoused since 1930s and which were in place until the early 1980s. I argue that the very choice of word, Kulüp / Club to brand the name after, is connected to the late Ottoman and Republican association of elite consumption with elite social Kulüp / Club as a key site of leisure, entertainment, networking, socialization, discussion and decision-making among the rich, the intelligentsia and state bureaucrats.

Drawn by one of the pioneers of the Turkish advertising industry and seminal graphic artist İhap Hulusi [Görey], the sticker label depicts two gentlemen dressed up seriously in western-style clothes, wearing bow ties, savoring rakı, and conversing joyfully. The picture certainly seems to depict a relaxed atmosphere of well-to-do urbanites, those primarily seen as being involved in conspicuous consumption. As discussed in Chapter II, in the Reform Ottoman period, Kulüp (Club) was an elite social club as well as a networking site, whereby food and liquor were consumed and discussions of politics, culture and economy were conducted. So the association of ‘elite consumption’ with socio-cultural symbolisms assigned to rakı drinking is strikingly visible.

¹ See the discussions on Kulüp during the Reform Ottoman period in Chapter II.
What is more interesting is as follows: A widespread urban legend has long claimed that one of the gentlemen in the label was Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the other, İsmet İnönü, close personal friend and former Prime Minister and the second President of the Republic. The founder of the modern, unitarily centralized, secular and nationalist Republic of Turkey, first President of the Republic, initiator of pro-westernizing yet authoritarian reforms, Atatürk (literally, ‘ancestral Turk’ or the ‘father of Turks’) was born in 1881 and had passed away in 1938 of cirrhosis. Atatürk reportedly mostly enjoyed Greek-owned Dimirakopulo brand of rakı and it is uncertain if the specific brand of Kulüp Rakı would have indeed been among his personal favorites, but he was certainly known to hold regular, liquor-accompanied nightly conversations with pro-modernization friends, associates, bureaucrats, intellectuals, poets, artists and army officers, as well as numerous others (Granda, [1959] 2007; Sakaoğlu, 2010:66-67).

Such pleasant yet also occasionally serious social occasions are squarely within the historical tradition of rakı-based sofra (dinner table or banquet) convivial conversation settings accompanied by food, drinks and at times, music, with a long cultural history behind it and with a strictly-respected etiquette (Zat, 2009). For Atatürk, such sofra occasions seem to have also served a function somewhat reminiscent that of Salon, the French practice of holding intellectual social gatherings with elite participants at influential hosts’ residences, since the 17th and 18th centuries (Elias, 1978). However, as also discussed previously at Chapter II, they also combine elements of the long tradition dating back to Greek symposia as the “convivial gathering of the educated,” as well as the historical Turkic tradition of bezm (liquor-based assemblies of notables) and devlet sofrası (literally; state ‘table’, or more appropriately, state banquet) Indeed, Sakaoğlu claims that Atatürk’s rakı sofrası served as the “classical symposia of that period” producing not only joyful conversations on politics, society, culture and arts, but also helping shape modernizing and westernizing reformist state policies (2010:66) (Picture III.2). Certainly, rakı sofrası or other drinking, entertainment and leisure consumption rituals had served such functions also for the Ottoman elite, at least since the 19th century, as also discussed in Chapter II.

Drinking and food etiquette expert, leisure history researcher and retired master bartender, Vefa Zat argues that the two personalities depicted on the label were not Atatürk and İnönü, but instead, İhap Hulusi himself and his

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4 See related discussions at Chapter IV.

5 Note that, somewhat inspired by the elite state banquets, a more popular rakı drinking and eating setting was that of çilingir sofrası. Çilingir literally means locksmith, sofra means a table or drink setting, sobbet means conversation or chat. Zat (2008:59) claims that two -yet unproven- arguments exist on the possible etymological roots of “çilingir sofrası”.

According to the first, çilingir sofrası is derived from the name of Çeşnicibaşı (master taster of the Ottoman Emperor) who had to serve numerous food items in small portions. Indeed, çilingir sofrası is usually accompanied by tapas-sized dishes known as meze (or mezedes, in Greek).

According to the second perspective, rakı -especially due to its high alcohol content- acts as a ‘locksmith,’ helping show the ‘true character’ of the person drinking it, usually hidden under the persona purportedly carries as a façade.

friend Fazıl Ahmet Aykaç⁶, Republican writer, poet and thinker (2009:32). It is interesting that most people thought that Atatürk and İnönü were depicted on the label, remembering that in this predominantly Muslim country the modern founder is both revered and feared. Remembering that Atatürk, a regular, Greek-owned Dimitrakopulo raki drinker himself (Granda, [1959] 2007), had instituted anti-minority economic policies as well as a ban on alcohol makes matters even more complex.

In this chapter, I will discuss the historical relations among (governmental and non-governmental) regulation, mediation, consumers and producers in Istanbul’s leisure consumption and entertainment, which may allow us to comprehend the intricacies beneath the Kulüp Rakı sticker label. Let me now briefly discuss the historical developments from a bird’s eye view.

III. 1. Early Republican Kemalism, Leisure Consumption and Entertainment: 1920s-1950

The defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the World War I and the occupation of İzmir (Smyrna) by the Western-Allies’ supported Greek armies led the cadres revolving around the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Pasha to initiate the ‘National Struggle’ (Milli Mücadele) in Anatolia and wage the Turco-Greek war (known in Turkish as İstiklâl Harbi, or Kurtuluş Savaşı: ‘War of Liberation/Independence’) most chiefly against the occupying Allies-backed Greek armies in Asia Minor (Kinross, 2003); as well as against encroachment of Armenian forces in

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Picture III.2: Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s famous sofra (dinner table) where domestic and international policy affairs were discussed and numerous reforms were shaped
the Eastern Anatolia, and partial invasions in the South by the French --corps of which included a volunteer Armenian legion-- and Italian military troops.

The chief aim of the National Struggle was to revoke the terms of the Treaty of Sèvres of 1920 which had envisioned the partitioning of the Empire (Mango, 1999). Having to fight against not only the Allies but also the hitherto Imperial subject populations of non-Muslims such as Greeks and Armenians has served to fortify anti-minority sentiments of Turkish nationalists, who later saw them as internal enemies due to their purported act of “treason” (Okutan, 2009; Aktar, 2010; Koraltürk, 2011). Such powerful sentiments and their longitudinal impact should be kept in mind when discussing the role of ethnicity and the situation of mainly non-Muslim minorities in the coming Republican period.

Although Mustafa Kemal was part of the earlier Young Turk (Jöntürk) movement and İTF (İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti, Committee of Union and Progress) tradition, he had later broken ranks with them. As an officer who had experienced the Balkan Wars (1912-13), he nevertheless shared their concern with the progressive dismantlement of the Empire and their agenda to reform, westernize, rationalize and modernize its administration (Zürcher, 1993; Ahmad, 2004). At the beginning, his movement was that of defending the Empire and reinstituting the Sultan’s authority. Allies responded to the Nationalist challenge by occupying Istanbul in 1920 (Ahmad, 2003). Mustafa Kemal’s struggle then increasingly shifted from saving the Empire to establishing a new nation-state.

The movement was successful in setting up the TBMM (Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi, Turkish Grand National Assembly) in 1920, expelling the Greek armies in Asia Minor (between 1919 and 1922). In 1922, the newly founded parliament formally abolished the Sultanate, and ended 623 years of Ottoman rule. The Treaty of Lausanne in July 1923 led to the international recognition of the sovereignty of the newly formed Republic of Turkey as the successor state of the Ottoman Empire, and the republic was established officially on October 29, 1923, in the new capital of Ankara. The Caliphate was abolished in 1924. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk became the first President of the Republic. He then initiated many radical reforms with the aim of founding a new secular republic from the remnants of its Ottoman past (Mango, 1999, Kinross, 2003).
Throughout the 1920s and until his death in 1938, Mustafa Kemal implemented “Atatürk’s reforms” (or as they are known in Turkish as Atatürk Devrimleri: “Atatürk’s Revolutions”). These were successive legal, political, administrative, cultural, social and economic reforms that aimed to modernize the new Republic into a unitary and secular nation-state. Atatürk’s reforms were implemented under his strict leadership and under the heavy guidance of Kemalist ideology (Parla, 1991). He undertook major reforms based on his French revolutionary and German nationalism-inspired ‘Atatürk’s Principles’ (or, Altı Ok, ‘Six Arrows’ as stylized by the Republican People’s Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP) symbol: Republicanism, Statism (étatisme), Nationalism, Secularism, Populism and Revolutionism (or Progressivism).

The reform movement espoused new constitutions (in 1920 and 1924); adaptation of European laws and judicial institutions; secularization and modernization of the administration, formation of centralized educational system. In addition, Kemalism tried to elevate women’s role in society by increasing their presence and visibility in the public sphere and workforce (Gümüşoğlu, 2011). According to Kadioğlu, the form of women’s visibility has become the main battleground of political conflicts in the republican period (1999).

In a rather orthodox adaptation of French revolutionary and republican practices, Kemalism aimed to erase ethnic and religious identifications and tried to centralize the republic. Some argue that Kemalist republicanism is somewhat similar to French revolutionary jacobinism (İrem, 2004) in terms of its radical, highly interventionist, almost authoritatively preaching stance vis-à-vis the society (Judit, 2011). In the context of the October Revolution in Russia, as well as the post-1929 world economic crisis which had given rise to state’s role in economy at a global level, Kemalism espoused étatiste policies by promoting the development of national, protected industries, import substitution and the founding of state enterprises and state banks (Keyder, 1981).

III. 1. State and Regulation: Public Functions of Leisure and Entertainment

The formation of the Republic was certainly a serious break with the Ottoman Empire in many ways, especially considering the establishment of a unitary and secular nation-state and the dramatic numerical decrease
of non-Muslim minorities (Başkaya, 2000). However, as Mardin suggests, the Republican regime and the late (or what I call, reform) Ottoman governing elite shared a common interest in trying to “legislate away social problems and conflicts” (1990). According to him, both İTF and Mustafa Kemal knew that there was a lack of civilian “intermediate” layers between the state and society and this situation led them to directly establish such intermediary institutions (such as banks), classes (such as the Muslim and Turkish commercial and industrial bourgeoisie) and laws (such as the civil law and numerous commercial laws) (Mardin, 1990:45).

In this sense, both the Young Turk and Kemalist administrations were heavily interventionist in societal matters. This could be seen as the effect of their common denominator, ‘modern’. While according to Tekeli ‘shy’ was the defining characteristic of the late Ottoman period, ‘radical’ should be the appropriate epithet for the latter, early Republican, or Kemalist period. I additionally claim that the late Ottoman reform paternalism was to be substituted by the radical-authoritarian paternalism in the early Republican period.

In terms of leisure consumption and entertainment, top-down cultural modernization policies as well as étatisme took their toll prominently. For the Kemalist regime, leisure and entertainment were positioned as ways to “enter” modernity, in order to “teach” people the westernizing reforms and how to entertain oneself in a “civilized” manner, which meant adapting to “western” forms. Kemalism wanted that those western forms be directly transferred from the “developed nations” and was critical of the locally adapted interpretations such as alafharga (discussion of which was done in more detail in Chapter II) which was seen as “excessive” and “ill-fitting” at times. İnce similarly argues that in the Republican period, the music and entertainment sectors were shaped according to the reformist tradition of the nation-state (İnce, 2002: 107).

In this sense, leisure consumption and entertainment were among the chief societal arenas of state authority. The regulatory role of the state rested with the highly centralized state that was the main and also the sole actor. Municipality as an administrative unit did not signify a local governmental role in their dependent status under the decreeing authority of the central state. Municipalities were rather the practical yet non-autonomous executors of the regulatory policies already decided and communicated by Ankara.
In the previous chapter, I had discussed that during the reform period Ottoman Empire, leisure consumption and entertainment became among the important arenas whereby westernization, modernization and rationalization processes were tried out. In this shy modernity period (Tekeli 2010), the reformist state administrators had instituted modern governmental and municipal practices that helped shape more ‘rationally’ the leisure and entertainment fields. However, in this period, reformist (and modernist) regulators aided by mediators were still effectively challenged by myriad of other actors, including those proponents of traditional ways, supporters of alaturka, conservatives, socialists, progressives and various other rivaling nationalist movements. In this environment, the reformist paternalism of the period, lacking full control over the society and media monopoly to infiltrate into society’s deeper veins, was indeed shy. The reformist paternalist shy modernity of the reform Ottoman period remained a strong tendency, at best. One tendency nevertheless, among competing others.

In the republican period, however, especially under the early reign of Kemalism, modernization took a more authoritarian and top-down form, hence deserving the ‘radical modernity’ label… Under Kemalism, the state was directly involved in molding the fields of leisure and entertainment in social, political and cultural terms. As an extension to other ‘revolutionary’ interventions into the society, leisure consumption and entertainment were used as ways to shape a new type of citizenry. Kemalist regulators also had the direct and unchallenged support of the mediators who were now assigned a position of intellectual monopoly. Alternative sources of the intelligentsia were razed by the authorities with the aim of creating a cultural tabula rasa of sorts. Both Ottoman cosmopolitanism, or in the words of Stokes, “Eastern-centered cosmopolitanism” (2011:85); and degenerated, excessive, imitative alafranga --seen as derisive of national unity were rejected and condemned. This tabula rasa decreed modernization as the –one and only-- acceptable path to be followed. The nationalized synthesis of a recast, hygienized and homogenized alaturka, plus a rationalized, hybridized and tamed alafranga was authoritatively prescribed as the required cultural curriculum.

I will discuss the public role of leisure consumption and entertainment as part and parcel of that curriculum. Leisure consumption and entertainment served as practical conduits of the synthesis of new alaturka-alafranga that
let the curriculum reach out to the deeper veins of society, infusing into the quotidian lives of regular individuals or social groups. In this period, the main groups of consumers were the state and its bureaucrats, the newly Turkified bourgeoisie, middle and lower classes, and the rich provincial migrants. Under the conditions of the increasing decimation of non-Muslims, the main groups of producers were made up of Turks or other Turkified groups who were speedily replacing them.

I will discuss the early republican transformation of leisure consumption and entertainment under below headings: a) Ballroom dancing and other types of entertainment as symbolic rites of passage for the administrators, elite and bourgeois circles; and b) efforts to forge the Folk, i.e. training the popular masses and reconstructing unifying national culture of leisure and entertainment.

a) Revolutionary elite, new ‘Turkish bourgeoisie’ and symbolic rites of passage

Entertainment spaces, especially those underwritten by the reformist state were important gateways for entering into formal, state-led modernity. As the non-Muslim’s demographic presence was quickly decreasing, for the new Turkish bourgeoisie and the civilian and military bureaucrats, ‘Republican Ballroom dances’ acted as rites of passage into republican modernity and state-approved cultural consumption patterns (Aytar and Keskin, 2003; Öztürkmen, 1999:181).

Ballroom dancing was already a staple item for the Reform Ottoman state elite and rich circles as I had discussed in the previous chapter. They were first and most frequently organized by the Embassies, catered first to wealthier non-Muslim groups, later becoming an alafranga habit of the modernizing Muslim elite. Under Kemalism, this alafranga entertainment form was organized directly by the Reformist government. However, this did not mean Embassies or Consulates ceased to organize such events in the Republican period. In this sense, they continued to remain among the chief regulatory actors that supported producers as well as consumers of Westernized entertainment forms by providing venues, financing the events, promoting them in the media, etc.

Duman notes that in the Republican period, especially ballroom dancing gained a more “programmatic” character and argues that for the Kemalist project, it was used as an “ideological tool” (2007: 43). Öztürkmen, quoting
Mina Urgan’s memoirs on ballroom dancing event, argues that during early Republican period, “such entertainment activities were not even about entertaining oneself. It was rather a way of keeping the society together…” (Öztürkmen, 1999:181). The participation and visibility of women was particularly important: “Military and civilian bureaucrats were determined to break down the age-old, parochial traditions and women had a special role in the revolutions […] Ballroom dancing were used as instruments to erase off old habits and establishing new values” (Duman, 2007: 44).

As these examples suggest, ballroom dancing as a modern entertainment form was promoted heavily by a programmatic, administrative fiat but the compliance to its “etiquette” was not automatic. Espousing western dress and behavioral codes as well as learning to enjoy new music forms,

Picture III.5:
Atatürk placed a lot of emphasis on the presence and participation of women into leisure consumption and entertainment. Here, pictured dancing with one of his adopted daughters at the wedding night.
Turkish merchant and industrial bourgeoisie and middle classes received an effective ‘training’ in the officially-decreed cultural repertoire. Duman notes that after Atatürk requested that various ministries, governorships and the local branches of the ruling single-party, CHP organize ballroom dancing “where men and women would join in together,” there was a flurry of private courses and tutors teaching ballroom and other types of social dancing to “elite families” (Duman, 1997:46).

Certainly, ballroom dancing events were not the only form of leisure consumption and entertainment to show one’s “learnedness” in western ways. As a continuation of Reform Ottoman seaside âb âlemleri (‘sprees near water’) and sabilhâne (seaside summer house or ‘beach club’) gatherings organized by statesmen and rich circles (see discussions at Chapter II) as well as alafranga gazino entertainments catering to the urban rich, under the Republican regime, beach club (sabil kulübü) and gazino gatherings continued to have an elevated importance as a show of status and prestige. Both forms also gave way to later development of Jazz Clubs as elite, symbolically significant form of entertainment space (Tekelioğlu, 2011) to show one’s learnedness in alafranga, westernizing leisure consumption manners (also see Genealogy, III. 5. Annex 1).

The historical continuities among elite clubs / beach clubs in the Reform Ottoman and Republican periods is discussed by Özgentürk in the case of Serkildoryan (Circle d’Orient) the prominent elite club established in 1882
by Levantines, minorities and expatriates in Istanbul. Changing its name to Büyük Kulüp (Grand Club) in 1944, it remained an exclusive club of the rich and elite circles bringing together politicians, diplomats, civilian and military officers and members of the bourgeoisie in the various seaside amenities around Istanbul’s shores. Özgentürk notes that important military personalities for long dominated its administrative cadres and for the most time, it remained a place that not only provided “entertainment and rich social living” to its members but also where “political, social and cultural matters were discussed and important decisions were taken” as late as 2000s (Özgentürk, 2012). In short, for the bureaucrats, elites and the newly Turkified bourgeois circles, ballroom dancing, beach clubs and alafranga gazino were among the key places of rites of passage into formal, state-led cultural modernity, and participation into the administrative decisions and discussions on state, culture and economy.

**b) Forging the Folk and the standardization tools of the state**

While the ballroom dancing, Club and alafranga gazino were mainly catering to and helping shape the upper levels of society, various other top-down cultural modernization policies were implemented for the lower classes. Promotion of disciplined, homogenized and standardized leisure consumption and entertainment forms for the lower classes was mainly tailored through the State Radio, People’s Houses (Halkevleri) and other educational means. While such efforts were mainly designed to ‘train’ lower classes, Kemalist insistence that Turkish society was a “merged entity devoid of clashing social classes and privileges” (Parla, 1999) placed such efforts under a general programmatic plan to reconstruct the national folk tradition.

Değirmenci notes that Kemalism combined German romantic notions of Volksgeist with that of French Enlightenment understanding that each nation has its own distinctive cultural features: “Whilst the Enlightenment honored progress in the mirror of the primitiveness of the folk, the collectors of folk culture in the Romantic period ‘idealized’ the past in order to condemn the present (Storey, 2003) […]. They expressed their longing for the past, being at home, in their search for the folk, the origin, and the authentic” (Değirmenci, 2006, emphases added).

This condemnation of the Ottoman past which was associated with degeneration, excessive cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism as well as
“extreme and incorrect westernization” (Gökalp, 1924) illustrated by the popularly ridiculed alafranga forms prevalent since the reform Ottoman period, led to efforts to reconstruct an invented pre-Islamic Turkic Volk which purportedly signified a “long-lost, genuine and untainted origin” (Aytar and Keskin, 2003). For our larger discussion, this identification of the Ottoman past with excessive cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism and extreme westernization are of key importance.

The effort to –almost- archeologically excavate the long-lost Turkic origin is noted by Başgöz who claimed that: “folklore as a whole expresses the national spirit which had been undermined for centuries” (1972, emphases added). The activity of collecting and archivization of forms of folklore was institutionalized by the foundation of the Department of Culture under the Ministry of Education in 1924, right after the promulgation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. Değirmenci claims that such programmatic efforts should be seen as major parts of the “project of constructing the imagined concept of nation, which was supposed to overarch all the distinct cultural traditions [...] [T]o bring out the similarities rather than the differences, [the aim was to] construct a cultural heritage by overlooking the differences” (2006:55).

In this vein, Hungarian composer and researcher Bela Bartók was invited to Turkey to collect folksongs. In the 1931-1951, period, the Halkevleri (People’s Houses), which were established and controlled by the government and the single party, Republican People’s Party (CHP), engaged mainly in the activity of collecting, teaching and promoting folk songs (Değirmenci, 2006: 59). Halkevleri as well as later forms such as Dersane (music tutoring establishments which were also among the key places of entertainment for most) were critically important in promoting top-down, standardized and “well-behaving” leisure consumption and entertainment. Tansuğ argues the originality of the folk forms constituted the main source of their “artistic value” (1999). Through the heavy, “training-oriented” use of State Radio (Ahıskal, 2007), regional and ethnic differences were leveled and homogenized while standardized leisure consumption and entertainment forms were promoted (Aytar and Keskin, 2003).

Kemalism’s promotion of “modernized” folk dances is an important example that deserves to be noted here. As discussed by Öztürkmen, according to Kemalism, the content and the goal of national folk dances
are extremely important. They are the living expression of the people's characteristic feelings, temperament and morals (2001). The chief promoter of new national dances, Selim Sırrı Tarcan argued that:

“It is necessary to offer people this noble tradition as a sacred book, once we pass it through an artistic filter. If one does not give permanent forms to folk dances, and if its musical notation and movements are not determined, young people who will get excited by joyful emotions and alcohol in public gatherings, weddings, and festivals will not hesitate to invent new postures, attitudes, and even movements as it pleases them” (Tarcan 1992, 180, emphases added). Here, Tarcan’s emphasis on the necessity to provide an artistic discipline (“filter”) into folk dancing and his uneasiness with the idea that youth’s uncontrolled exaltation in the entertainment spaces could lead to chaos is very indicative of the Kemalist concern with order and discipline (Öztürkmen, 2001).

Öztürk notes that during the early Turkish Republic, Karagöz shadow theatre’s Ottoman patterns were also transformed. Kemalist Reformers attempted to restrict coffeehouses where the art had flourished and developed written texts to replace the improvised practice of the past. They sponsored performances in government-supported community centers and created shows to promote government policies. Öztürk argues that “[such] efforts meant that an art, which had grown from lower-class satire of the elite, was purged of obscene elements, characters

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8 “Tarcan’s choreography with predetermined figures well-situated in time was, in fact, imagined as a ‘ballroom’ dance genre, a dance that could be performed by mixed couples. This is certainly in line with Atatürk’s order to the society to perform a modernized folk dance with women” (Öztürkmen, 2001).
were changed to conform to modern ideology and government control was asserted on what had been a domain of free speech” (2006:292).

Together with Karagöz, Reform Ottoman period’s Ortaoyunu acts (see discussions at Chapter II) were ‘tamed,’ made to conform official policies and were displayed at community centers as well as coffeehouses (see picture 8, below). Öztürk notes that especially between 1930-1935, the Republican regime conducted a programmatic effort to create “contemporary [modern] coffeehouses (asrî kahvehâne) following a European model whereby the clients would read newspapers, books, attend educational seminars and learn various crafts” (2004:84). Kemalist columnists wholeheartedly supported this project and ferociously attacked “old kahvehâne culture where people are just lazy and kill time” (2004: 85). In this sense, for the lower classes, new folk traditions were invented; old traditions were curtailed or adapted to conform to the official cultural policies.

In most of the significant examples above, the state’s regulatory role appears as a form of radical modernist paternalism, whereby the ruling elite claim to know what is good and bad for the society in terms of leisure consumption and entertainment. Acting on their behalf and in their absentia (in terms of the decision making process, at least) the state regulation is akin to the role of an all-knowing patriarch who aims to direct society towards the targets set by

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Picture III.8: Ortaoyunu at Istanbul Şehzadebaşi Coffeehouse in Ramadan of 1931... While the Ottoman-period clothes are worn by the players, the audience is dressed up in modern attires.
the program of top-down cultural modernization. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk had set such a macro civilizational target incorporating westernization, the forging of the Turkish Volk, recasting both alafranga and alaturka by harmonizing them with the requirements of cultural modernization. Radical modernist regulators who were acting in line with the civilizational targets set up by Atatürk were aided by the cultural mediators as discussed below. In this context, let me next discuss, in that order, the relevance and role of the mediation and the processes of diversity in the early Republican or radical modernity / radical modernist paternalism period.

III. 1. 2. Role of Mediation

In the Chapter II, I had argued that, different from the Byzantine and Classical Ottoman periods, the Reform Ottoman period helped the emergence and development of modern mediation. Different from the soft mediators under the Byzantine and Classical Ottoman Empire, the Reform Ottoman period’s intellectuals, media and advertising (or hard mediators) had more directly helped shape public taste and were more involved in mediating between consumption and production. During the Kemalist early republican period we see an important transformation of the role of the mediators as I will discuss under three headings below:

a) From hard to harder mediation

Reform Ottoman intellectuals, columnists and journalists were part of this modern mediation and they took on a ‘guiding role’ for the society with ‘regulatory’ (legislating) tones. In this sense, in the ‘shy modernity’ period during the Reform Ottoman era, this ‘hard’ mediation was quite functional in steering societal choices towards ‘civilized’ forms most chiefly expressed in alafranga styles. This hard mediation was made up of the sprouting Ottoman press aimed at providing ‘enlightenment and discipline’ (tenvir ve terbiye) for the general public (Kocabaoğlu, 1990, Cf. Ünlü Yücesoy, 2011:32) as well as cosmopolitan persons gaining strength and becoming more active in helping disseminate information on western ways among the upper and middle classes (Çelik, 1999). Such processes and actors, in this sense, were instrumental in promoting and frequently trying to dictate what the society should do in terms of modernizing itself.

Under Kemalism and in the period of radical modernity, the previous hard mediation got even harder. What made the Republican intellectuals
different to their precursors who were only influential --as the strongest tendency among others-- was that they also had the direct support of and encouragement by state authority which conducted a full-fledged, decidedly programmatic top-down cultural modernization policy. In this sense radical modernity’s intellectuals and media had vast regulatory or ‘legislative’ powers that could in a sense be likened to the powers enjoyed by those Marxist-Leninist intellectuals and media in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (Kolakowski, 1976). Directly regulatory and enforcement capacities could as well be seen as being similar to those of the official ideologues of Marxism-Leninism who as with Kemalist mediators whose monopoly was kept abreast from opposing voices that were already curtailed remarkably (Medvedev & Ostellino 1980).

Extending Kocabaşoğlu’s argument that the late (Reform) Ottoman press aimed to provide “enlightenment and discipline” for the society (1990), I claim that in the Kemalist period the mediators were solidified in their role as enlighteners of the society. They were also armed with additional means of disciplining the society towards expected modes of behavior and forms of consumption in harmony with the top-down cultural modernization policies. Steering the society towards civilized forms was expected from the intellectuals as well as patriotic duty in a more decidedly programmatic manner under the constant gaze of the Kemalist regime.

Kabacalı notes that between 1920 and 1950 the state had very strict control over the media, not only in terms of formally issuing permits to publish newspapers, magazines, journals and books (2000:213) but also in directly subsidizing or otherwise supporting pro-government media and curtailing the opposition voices –especially after the adoption of the Latin alphabet in 1928 which seriously and negatively impacted all publications (2000:169-173). In this environment, newspapers, columnists and writers sympathetic to the Kemalist revolution had the clear upper hand of trying to shape the society according to reformist policies. Rationing the state-distributed paper was an extended way of regulating and politically favoring those in the ranks of the Kemalist fiat. Indeed, Burhan Belge notes that the aim of Atatürk was “to cut off all paths of retreating from the new path and shield them from the impact of the [archaic] past” (Cf. Kabacalı, 2000: 173).

Early Republican intellectuals and other mediators were legislators in a more literal sense of the term (Bauman, 1996) because they were armed
with administrative duties and support. I should also note that numerous columnists, journalists, literary figures and others who took part of this harder mediation were also members of the ruling single party CHP and were working as civilian bureaucrats. Here, we certainly see the superimposition of their regulatory powers and their role as mediators.

**b) Pioneering and Supervising Generations: Keeping a lid on the society**

I claim that the development and strengthening of this harder, staunchly programmatic mediation of the radical modernity period of the Republican Turkey could be illustrated by two successive generations as discussed by Gümüşoğlu’s analysis (2001) of the pioneering generation (öncü kuşak) of the first decade (1923-1933); and Cantek’s analysis (2008) of the supervising generation (denetleyici kuşak) spanning between late 1930s and 1950. Both the pioneering and the supervising generations were among the key agents in the transformation of the societal attitudes towards leisure consumption and entertainment and placing firm boundaries between what is and isn’t acceptable.

Gümüşoğlu claims that the intellectuals of the generation of the first decade (1923-1933) were part of the “Leap of Enlightenment” (Aydınlanma Atılımı) that was initiated by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. They were directly ordered by Atatürk to help train a “patriotic generation marching on the path towards modernization” as their national duty (Gümüşoğlu, 2001:9). According to Gümüşoğlu, the creation of the “New Human Being” (Yeni İnsan) had to be done by “bringing science and arts to the people,” “discovering and developing people’s creative powers” that had remained -until then- hidden and dormant and by “correcting the mistakes of the past” (2001:14).

In a rather self-sacrificing yet highly jacobin manner (İrem, 2004), they took on the mission of “civilizing / enlightening” the poorer masses in particular and the whole citizenry in general, inculcating modern manners and rational/productive techniques at the People’s Houses (Halkevleri) as well as the Village Institutes (Köy Enstitüleri) established in 1920s and 1930s. In terms of promoting new republican celebrations and ceremonies for the entire citizenry, in training civilian and military bureaucrats and middle class families in ballroom dancing and other westernized leisure consumption and entertainment forms, as well as forging and educating the Volk to follow homogenized, well-behaving forms of alaturka as

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9 Note the use of a gender-neutral term, “New Human Being” instead of “New Man” (Yeni Adam) which would have as well been ‘apt’ given the patriarchal attitudes prevalent in the period.
discussed above, this pioneering generation made important formative contributions (Aytar & Keskin, 2003).

Cantek argues that while the foundation of the Kemalist regime between 1923 and 1938 could be seen as the childhood period of the Republican Turkey, the period of 1938 (the year Atatürk passed away) until 1950 could be termed as its adolescence (2008:10). In this sense, pioneering and supervising generations are associated with the childhood and adolescence periods of the radical modernity respectively. Cantek claims that after the death of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the intellectuals and journalists of the late 1930s and 1940s established themselves as the supervising generation (i.e. newspaper and literature elite) in charge of overseeing the successful continuation of Republican reforms, as well as steering the society off dangerous fluctuations and diversions thus placing themselves as the parent of a yet adolescent Republican society (Cantek, 2008:11).

In the lack of the physical presence of Atatürk, “the Father of the Nation,” the supervising generation was aiming to sustain the “controlled consumerism” created by the bureaucratically organized societal order (Cantek, 2008:18). In this sense, borrowing from Lefebvre’s notion of the “bureaucratic organization of quotidian life,” (1992) Cantek argues that the supervising generation saw as its main mission to closely “supervise the society” as prescribed by the Kemalist formula, to keep it under tight control (2008:11) and fight against deviations unfitting of the cultural modernization policies.

The supervising generation was following the lead of the pioneering generation in terms of educating society in acceptable leisure consumption and entertainment forms. This generation was also concerned with the degenerative impacts of excessive –and incorrect- consumerism, the advent of capitalism especially in terms of the conspicuous consumption and Americanization as well as the spread of non-Kemalist ideologies such as Islamism and communism (Cantek, 2008:20). For the supervisors, such impacts had the potential to derail the cultural modernization program of Kemalism, thus the society had to be constantly warned of their dangers. Americanization was certainly an important concern since Turkey had espoused a pro-Free World stance after 1945. This stance opened up the country to US economic and political support as well as American cultural influences.
c) Recasting Alafranga and Alaturka: Towards an apt synthesis

I claim that both the pioneering and the supervising generations were of key importance in two related ways: (a) Firstly, they promoted western forms of leisure consumption and entertainment while they also warned the society of its excessive and ill-fitting adaptations such as the Reform Ottoman alafranga. (b) Secondly, they aimed at curtailing older forms of alaturka that were seen as backward or re-shaping them so that they would conform directly to the reformist policies of the state. In these two angles, they intervened in both alafranga and alaturka by trying to develop new versions of them which were in harmony with the Kemalist formula.

For both pioneering and supervising generations, modernization and westernization were the civilizational targets as set by Atatürk. In this sense, alafranga was identified as a general orientation that the new republican citizen had to espouse though important nuances as to its acceptable forms certainly existed. O’Connell notes that: early republican elites “viewed the multicultural and conservative characteristics of alaturka as the chaotic legacy of an imperial past. On the other hand, they equated alafranga with the reforming ideals of the new republic. That is, they saw alafranga as a unique manifestation of a precisely demarcated nation state: a state that was characterized by a single ethnic composition, by a new secular status, and by a contemporary outlook.

As a fashionable expression of modernist taste, these exponents of alafranga sought to control the perceived disorder of their Ottoman inheritance…” (O’Connell, 2000:125). Tekelioğlu notes that the republican reformists, “who thought that the Ottoman culture was cosmopolitan in a negative sense, tried to erase it not only politically but culturally” (2006:14, emphases added). In this sense, alafranga symbolized a civilized way of life as well as a homogenizing tool for the new nation.

I should however note that the republican promotion of alafranga was not a mere copying of the Reform Ottoman period’s westernized and modernized lifestyles of the urban upper and middle classes. Instead, as noted by Gümüşoğlu, the pioneering generation had the mission of “correcting the mistakes of the past” (2001:14), that is, to cut back on the excesses of the popularly ridiculed alafranga lifestyles of the Reform Ottoman period. The influential columnist of the CHP’s official daily newspaper Ulus (Nation), Avni Refik Bekman wrote that “we acknowledge
that civilized and decent entertainment is surely a need for our hard working people. But excessive indulgence and debauchery in entertainment would certainly lead to serious negative consequences for the society” (1946:2).

In this sense, en route to the civilizational target of westernization, decent forms of entertainment are accepted and are almost seen as safety valves. However, the republican citizen is expected to use temperance. The 1930 operetta *Lüküs Hayat* is a good example of the need to limit the excesses of conspicuous consumption and excessive alafranga. In this highly popular operetta by brothers Ekrem Reşit Rey and Cemal Reşit Rey, the luxurious yet morally suspect lifestyles in the rich neighborhood of Şişli are depicted. Attendance to entertainment establishments (dinner, tea party or ballroom dancing) are all listed as elements of a luxurious lifestyle, whereby both spouses find entertaining, extra-marital companions.

Peyami Safa is another influential columnist and novelist who revived Reform Ottoman criticisms of excessive forms of alafranga. Interestingly, in his 1923 novel *So-called Girls* (*Sözde Kızlar*) one such ‘bad girl’ is called the Tango Girl (*Tango-Kız*) who is engaged in conspicuous consumption. She is crazy about fashion trends and ostentatiously careless and immoral in her lifestyle. Kandiyoti argues that Safa’s Tango Girl is depicted not only as a dangerously immoral character, but also an un-patriotic one alien to the real culture of Turks (1997:143). Similarly, Safa in his novel *Mahşer* (*Armageddon*) identifies the westernized district of Pera’s conspicuous consumption-oriented lifestyles as ‘alien’ to the motherland. Here, there seems that the criticism of excessive alafranga is mixed with the ostracization of the cosmopolitanism identified both with the Ottoman past as well as with the non-Muslim minorities, a point to which I will return to later, below.

However, it should be clarified that the alaturka that was attacked was the old alaturka of the Ottoman past. The old alaturka was claimed to have been poisoned by Oriental influences of the Near Eastern cultural connections of the Ottoman Empire. Ziya Gökalp, the seminal sociologist and ideologist of Turkish nationalism argued that “Oriental music is a sick type of music. It does not belong to us. Our folk music however, could be integrated into Western music and could form the music of our future civilization” (1923, Cf. Stokes, 1998:61). Similar to the reconstruction of the Turkish Volk alaturka still signified a lost,
untainted origin, that—if recast rationally could potentially form one of the backbones of the new culture of the Republic.

In this sense, Tekelioğlu argues that Republican cultural policy could best be summarized as an “effort to forge a West-East synthesis” (1996) that was expected to form a new and original creation of Kemalism. Recasting *alafranga* by truncating off its excesses and its cosmopolitanism ill-fitting to the new homogeneous nation-state was one stem of this synthesis. Refashioning *alaturka* by discovering and developing its dormant “creative powers” (Gümüşoğlu, 2001:14)—that could also be seen as a way of inventing the tradition in the sense that Hobsbawm and Ranger have used it (1983)—is the other stem. These two seemingly contradictory policies are in fact highly complementary.

To illustrate the cultural program as well as the impact of the mediation in shaping public taste in entertainment, picture III.9, below, is quite instructive and provides a good symptomatic reading of the above discussed double target. In this cover page of *Balo Gazetesi* (Ballroom Gazette), well known columnists, journalists and intellectuals are depicted as members of a fictional “Jazz Band of the Press”. Here, we see not only the promotion of jazz as a fashionable expression of modernist taste but also the media’s insistence on containing and controlling the chaos of the disorderly Ottoman inheritance by harmonizing among different western instruments. While modern western forms are promoted as a civilizational macro target, the cacophony of the late Ottoman cosmopolitanism-oriented and excessive *alafranga* as well as tainted/backward *alaturka* had to be strictly curtailed and disciplined to conform to the new Revolutionary Turkey.

In this sense, the caricature of the jazz band of the press eloquently summarizes the role of the mediation in their vital function of helping out the cultural modernization policies of the regulators. Early republican mediators aimed to sustain the civilizational targets set by Kemalism, by keeping westernization as the main route to be followed while at the
same time truncating off the excesses of reform Ottoman alafranga and especially its cosmopolitanism seen as unfitting to the needs of the unitary nation state. In parallel to the recasting of alafranga, the mediaters were also in charge of supporting the regulators’ effort to forge a new Turkish Volk on the basis of a carefully planned promotion of alaturka again in line with the top-down cultural modernization policies of the state. Now let me discuss the processes of diversity in this period.

III. 1. 3. Processes of Diversity

In order to comprehend the dimension of diversity under what could be expressed as Kemalist, radical modernist and radical modernist period one has to comprehend the understanding of nation. According to Koraltürk, Kemalism had three categories of the nation: In the first, most comprehensive and inclusive one, Turkishness is defined on the basis of ‘territorial citizenship’ beyond ethnic, religious or linguistic divisions; the second is based on religion and is defined with the impact of Ottoman millet system, whereby all Muslims, regardless of their respective ethnic identities, were Türk*. The third, the most restrictive definition of the nation is based on ‘ethnic’ Turkishness (Koraltürk, 2010).

This three-tiered definition—and certainly, the conflations associated with it—dominated Kemalism’s notion of the nation. Yeğen argues that the third, most restrictive definition of the Turkish nation was the strongest of all and had the power to determine the main parameters of citizenship and the whole array of administrative practices (2009). According to the Kemalist practice, all Muslims were considered Türk and were expected to leave all their prior identifications. All non-Muslims were excluded from Turkishness and were seen as citizens only in name.

Based on such a mental picture of the non-Muslims and learning from the losses of the Balkan Wars (whereby the Christian nations set up by former subjects of the Empire successfully liquated Turkish and Muslim presence in the Balkans) as well as the dire under the conditions of the National Liberation Struggle (Millî Mücadele), non-Muslim minorities were increasingly seen as internal enemies or fifth columnists (Okutan, 2009:66). Anti-minority campaigns and policy measures continued on as illustrated in the anti-Jewish fear campaigns and pogrom attempts in Eastern Thrace (Rumeli) to relocate them to geo-strategically less dangerous regions in the 1930s; Anti-minority poll tax laws (Varlık Vergisi)
which effectively transferred capital from non-Muslims to Turks or other Muslims in 1940s (Boratav, 1981). Indeed, the Prime Minister of the period, Şükrü Saracoğlu had rather bluntly argued that this law would allow Turkey “to gain its economic independence. We will get rid of the foreigners dominating our markets. We will give the Turkish market to Turks” (Aktar, 2000 & 2006).

As above changes attest, during the Republican period, multi-ethnic and multi-confessional as well as cosmopolitan characteristics of Istanbul dramatically eroded. This general transformation has also decimated non-Muslim or ‘ethnic’ weight in leisure and entertainment (Arkan, 1998). Both as consumers and producers, non-Muslim minorities were a dying group. Let me now concentrate on the repercussions of the radical modernity’s diversity and ethnicity policies specifically on leisure consumption and entertainment. These certainly go beyond the numerical decrease of non-Muslims as noted above. I argue such repercussions could be analyzed in terms of (a) the stigmatization of non-Muslims and their notorious / cosmopolitan consumerism; (b) Turkification of the leisure consumption and entertainment economy; and (c) Alternative spaces of the Roma and unfitting groups who were ethnicized and ridiculed.

a) The ‘Sin City’ Exorcized

Although Kemalism had originated in modern and westernizing mentalities and practices which had shaped the diversity of leisure consumption and entertainment, its strongly Turkish nationalist, anti-minorities ideology and authoritarian style allowed for the implementation of heavy-handed regulatory measures to control or even suppress leisure consumption and entertainment in Istanbul that was, as discussed in Chapter II, mostly dominated by the non-Muslims and the Roma. This was certainly superimposed on the past image of the city not only as the archaic vestige of the dismantling Empire, but also as the ‘Sin City’ infested by unpatriotic alien elements.

Under the late Ottoman period and particularly during the Allied invasion between 1919 and 1921, “Istanbul’s entertainment life had become notorious” (Arkan, 1998). Wartime conditions and the rise of war profiteering groups had created a popular distaste for the extravagant consumption styles of the rich which were usually and incorrectly associated with the non-Muslims who were engaged in trade and finance (Toprak, 1994). Especially in the
conservative imagery, Pera and Galata (or nearby neighborhoods such as Tatavla [Kurtuluş], Harbiye, Şişli or Nişantaşı) had been associated with degenerate, imitated forms of culture and entertainment which were pitted against the real characteristics of the poorer Muslim masses, associated with neighborhoods such as Fatih in the historic peninsula.

In this sense, the members of the mediation were quite functional in the development of this mental polarization of the Turk versus the non-Muslim. A member of the pioneering generation, the conservative columnist and novelist Peyami Safa had developed such binary opposites in this novel Mahşer (Armageddon): “He heard the foreign melodies sneaking out of the [Pera/Beyoğlu] shop and could not help but thinking […] how alien these were to his land” (1924). Safa’s 1931 novel Fatih-Harbiye was indicative of the alaturka-alafranga split that was initiated in the 19th century and was pitting Fatih’s ‘autochthonous’ Muslim/Turkish alaturka (in the sense of the untainted origin as discussed above) against Harbiye’s conspicuous consumption-oriented, immoral, hence alien alafranga lifestyles.

Considering the unwillingness of the city’s non-Muslims to support the nationalist struggle in the previous years (S. Selek, 1961), Istanbul’s non-Muslim dominated and westernized parts were associated with undeserved richness, degeneration and complicity with the enemy. Cantek argues that both the pioneering and supervising generations agreed on stigmatizing Beyoğlu as a non-Turk accomplice to and incubator of alien cultures (2008:279). Below picture 10 is a cartoon very symptomatic of this association and similar depictions were quite frequently displayed at humor magazines in 1930s and 1940s.

While Safa was a conservative intellectual supporting the Republican reforms, more staunchly Kemalist imagery shared similar distaste for Pera’s degenerated lifestyles. Kemalist author Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu...
wrote a novel about Istanbul entitled *Sodom ve Gomore* (Sodom and Gomorrah), bashing the city’s decadence and complicity with the enemy (1928). It is interesting that the modernist writer Karaosmanoğlu used the Bible/Quran reference to vice as well as homosexuality in order to condemn Istanbul. In this sense, both the conservative-traditionalist and Kemalist intelligentsia constituted warring wings of the Republican mediation, yet they were allies in attacking Istanbul's excessively alafranga, degenerated lifestyles, leisure consumption and entertainment. Interestingly, rational legislators who –secularly- preach new lifestyles in a social engineering angle were at once moralizers who stigmatized other lifestyles and forms.

**b) Heavy-handed regulation & Turkification**

In the backdrop of such intellectual attacks on the non-Muslims and ‘their’ leisure and entertainment, at the same time as the entry of the national army into the city in 1921 the new Republican government issued a total ban on alcohol in Istanbul (Zat, 2009). Public order reasons to prevent potential chaos were one of the reasons and the ban was already in effect in the rest of Anatolia. However, I argue that the ban specifically targeted Istanbul with a highly developed, socially, ethnically and confessionally-diverse, partly alcohol- and prostitution-based leisure and entertainment sector.

Although the alcohol ban was later relaxed and lifted, numerous White Russian-owned entertainment establishments had to close down and many entrepreneurs and employees moved out of Turkey (Zat, 2009). After White Russians left the city, numerous other non-Muslim groups found it difficult to operate in the leisure and entertainment sector. As an important example of the stigmatization of non-Muslims, in the late 1920s, youth sympathizing with the ruling CHP and the Kemalist regime initiated campaigns to warn those who do not talk Turkish in public. “Citizen, talk Turkish!” Campaigns (*Vatandaş Türkçe Konuş!*) were targeting the Greeks, Armenians, Jews and the Levantines in Istanbul.

In this sense, under Kemalism, one of the most important dynamics of ethnicization had to do with the changing ‘ethnic’ composition of leisure consumption and entertainment providers. In line with the state-led Turkification of the economy (Koraltürk, 2010), leisure consumption and entertainment laborscapes were increasingly Turkified. Buğra notes
that with the encouragement of the Kemalist state, Muslim and Turkish entrepreneurs took over the businesses of the non-Muslims leaving the country after the 1920s and 1930s (Buğra, 2010:42).

A study by Bilgin et al clearly illustrates that between 1920 and 1950 more than 60 per cent of non-Muslim businesses were replaced by Turks and other Muslims in Istanbul (2010). Onaran argues that the replacement—or what he calls pillaging—of non-Muslim properties by Turks started earlier in 1915, with the displacement and ethnic cleansing of Armenians (2012). Koraltürk gives rich evidence that this replacement was not only the case with the owners of the businesses or the entrepreneurs but was extended to the labor force as well (2010:252). According to the Law no 2007 dated 1932 on the Vocations and Services Assigned to Turkish Citizens in Turkey, together with douzens of other occupations, “non-Turks were banned from working as bar musicians, instrumentalists, waitresses and servicemen or servicewomen at coffeehouses, gazinos, dancing and bars” (Koraltürk, 2010:277). Aktar notes that this law and other regulations specifically targeted White Russians who were not Turkish nationals, but also Greeks and other non-Muslims who actually hold Turkish citizenship (2008:118-125).
In the backdrop of such heavy handed regulatory policies, most non-Muslim leisure and entertainment entrepreneurs and employees either left the country or left the business altogether. Some others chose to formally transfer the ownership of their businesses to their Turkish and Muslim apprentices while keeping the informal control of management. Still some others gradually transferred their skills to their Turkish and Muslim apprentices and eventually sold their businesses to them (Arkan 1998).

Interestingly enough, meyhâne etiquette in particular and entertainment business management in general still remained among the cultural traits and know-how primarily associated with the Greeks and Armenians in Istanbul. Indeed Zat argues that one of his earlier mentors had told him that in the meyhâne business “one has to start up by helping an Armenian and proceed with getting one’s ‘diploma’ from a Greek usta (master)” (2009; Interview with Zat, 2010). As ethnic minorities were being dramatically decimating and new groups of migrants from Anatolia were pouring into Istanbul since 1950s, leisure consumption and entertainment etiquettes gated towards the symbolic rites of passage to modernity were still based on the alafranga lifestyles or professional forms pioneered by the non-Muslim minorities.

While their lifestyles were criticized by the members of the mediation and their activities were transferred by the state to Turks and other Muslims, non-Muslims still kept their relative domination in leisure consumption and entertainment. As we will see in the developments after 1950s and in a more pronounced manner, after the 1980s, non-Muslims so-called natural proclivity towards leisure and entertainment businesses as well as their well-mannered ways became an item of nostalgic reconstruction.

The ‘Others’: Informal Escapades & Ethnicized Misfits

In synchronicity with the state-led regulation and Turkification, the promotion of rationalized alafranga by the regulatory authorities and mediators, alternative spaces outside of mainstream regulated environments keep emerging. Most such alternative spaces existed informally outside of the formal regulatory reach of the authorities. Also, there still existed groups who were seen as unable to adapt themselves to westernized leisure consumption and entertainment. Such ‘problematic’ groups were ridiculed by the mediators who ethnicized them.
Informal Escapades

Sulukule’s Entertainment Houses (Eğlence Evleri) of the Roma were among alternative spaces of leisure consumption and entertainment, partly due to their highly informal character protected from the encroachment from both the culturally modernizing state as well as the conservative communitarianism of the neighborhood level. At the entertainment houses, entertainers included male and female musicians and performers while other employees were involved in cooking and catering. These businesses were usually also the residences of the entrepreneurs and employees.

Though highly informal—none of the houses had official permits or liquor licenses, while none of the employees were formally employed or registered—entertainment houses were popular and served important social functions both for their clienteles and their entrepreneurs and employees. In one of the first few written accounts, Beler (1946) portrays the lively atmosphere in these establishments where women played and danced in clean, richly decorated rooms. He notes that customers often came from distant districts and required reservations well in advance.

These functions can be seen as a distinct angle, whereby entertainment houses were among the alternatives to the spaces for appreciating (high) cultural taste shaped by the cultural policies of Kemalist modernisation, which either repressed or controlled popular forms of music and entertainment. Many of the latter only survived informally. In this perspective, entertainment houses were important informal spaces of cultural production and consumption. Especially during the republican period when the non-Muslim population declined drastically, Roma moved into the entertainment sector to cater to this social need. Roma’s situation as sexualized, Orientalized, fun-loving yet pitied group contributed to their ability to fill such an employment slot in the leisure consumption and entertainment sector in Istanbul. This inner-Orientalism vis-à-vis the Roma was to be coupled with a strange type of —what most would today call ‘anti-immigrant’——stereotyping of those misfits of the cultural modernization process.

Ethnicized Misfits

Outside of the programmatic cultural policy of westernization, there were also new groups who were not easily adapting themselves to the
westernized leisure consumption and entertainment forms, or were launching interesting hybrid syntheses of alafharga and alaturka. When rural-based businessmen flooded into Istanbul to replace the non-Muslims, their crude behavior was to be ridiculed in novels, newspaper articles and so forth since 1930s through 1950s (Öncü, 1997). Indeed Boratav notes that in 1930s, in numerous “Beyoğlu gazinos, Anatolian ballads were interpreted, female singers and dancers dressed up in ‘rural’ dresses were singing and mixing up Rumba with [Central Anatolian town] Konya’s famous kaşık [spoon] folk dance” (1981: 228-229). Such rural-originated rich landlord types were given the blanket name of hacığa and were ethnicized by the mediators as well as the mainstream gaze. Hacı means a Mecca pilgrim and ağa (agha) means a provincial ‘feudal landlord’ (see Picture III.11, below).

Their ridiculed provincial religious roots were seen as implying an incongruence between their crude / backward ways and the westernizing targets of the cultural modernization policies. Through the 1940s and 1950s they were catered by gazino and pavyon where more popularized, lower-brow versions of Fantezi Music (or later, since at least the 1960s, Arabesk, see below) was played. These were escapist locations also providing female escorts (in line with the earlier baloz tradition, see Chapter II).

Hacığa’s provincial roots purportedly made them easy prey for various types of scam by the newly Turkified leisure consumption and entertainment entrepreneurs. Their religious roots were seen as a further item to be ridiculed given their supposed hunger for extramarital affairs and sexual encounters with female escorts and prostitutes. Cantek argues that the caricaturized model of hacığa constituted the roots of historically later development of other ethnicized misfits such as Hıdır, Kirro or Hirbo (2008:247). Hacığa and their purportedly un-urbanized and un-civilized ways provided room for their ethnicization as a crude Anatolian [male] individual unfitting for westernized Turkish society.
To sum up, the processes of diversity during the early republican period were marked by an increasing decimation of non-Muslims, their replacement by a Turkified group of producers, the continuing role of the Roma as producers of leisure consumption and entertainment and the othering of groups seen unfitting to the macro targets set up by the regulators and helped out by the mediators. However, by the end of 1940s, Kemalism’s staunch efforts to create a homogenized and civilized citizenry through rationally calculated and heavily controlled cultural regulation in leisure consumption and entertainment were failing as illustrated by the sprouting of alternative spaces and the alarming presence of ‘misfits’. Indeed, 1950s came with a vengeance whereby the most radical programs of Kemalism had to be altered and watered down as will be discussed below.


In spite of Kemalist fiat and top-down modernization plans, political, social, economic and demographic changes made it difficult to unproblematically implement previous policies. The period opened up with the year 1950 and continued on until 1980 signified what Tekeli calls “populist modernity” (2010). Populist modernity could best be understood as a period in which the macro targets of modernization and westernization were kept intact while their specific contents and practices within which they were materialized were altered considerably.

In this period, numerous orthodoxies associated with radical modernity and its Kemalist implementations were also softened. This softening mainly had to do with the changing macro parameters of the period between 1950 and 1980 as compared with the previous period of 1920-1950: (a) The implementation of import-substituting National Developmentalist (Millî/Ulusal Kalkınmacı) and populist economic policies; (b) the development of multi-party democracy; and (c) the increasing rates of rural to urban migration and urbanization. I will discuss points (a) and (b) under State and Regulation and point (c) under Processes of Diversity.

IV. 2. 1. State and Regulation: Public Functions of Leisure and Entertainment

The development of multi-party democracy since late 1940s was certainly not continuous since it was marred by military coup d’états of 1960, 1971
and 1980. However, even in its tumultuous course signified by ebbs and flows, ideological polarizations and sectarian violence, the political system slowly became more responsive to social demands when compared with the authoritarian fiat of the Kemalist era. In this period, the regulatory role of the state was transformed deeply.

The ‘lived’ forms of regulation had largely wavered among its various facets; those organizing, governmentalizing, moralizing, criminalizing, de/sanctioning, de/commodifying leisure consumption and entertainment. Both of which were subject to regulatory attempts by the central and local state that aimed at promoting their prestige –in terms of munitions in the arsenal of their own “symbolic capital” (Bourdieu, 1979; Grosfoguel, 1999) of the state. All in all, I argue that the role of the regulation in the form of state regulation and non-state regulation –including mediation– has undergone a vast change away from a paternalistic, homogenizing role; to a more fragmented, mostly pro-business, populist and national developmentalist role.

The role of the mediators moved away from ‘legislators’ (Bauman, 1996) to contradictory twinning of promoters of a new ethos of consumerism and virulent critics of excessive forms of consumption and entertainment. Media, including daily newspapers, magazines, journals, books and other forms of publication, also including movies were key players and shapers of new tastes and preferences which were diversified and fragmented away from previous period’s highly-molded and homogenized forms. It should be noted, however, that these new, diversified and pluralized forms still laid and depended comfortably on the surface of an already nationalized, leveled, if not entirely homogenized cultural field. In this sense, tabula rasa, that was indeed created via top-down cultural policies of the state, made things easier for the mediators in terms of conducting their substantively contradictory agendas by simplifying away an otherwise highly complex social texture inherited from the Ottoman Empire.

In this period, the relationship between the state and citizenry was also transformed and moved from one dominated primarily by fear to a mix of fear and give-and-take of clientelistic favors in return for electoral support. Cronyism, partisan allocation of state resources to politically favored businessmen, looking away when much feared formal rules were all such methods. In this atmosphere, the state, while formally continuing to pay lip service to Kemalist phraseology and maintaining the general trend towards modernization and westernization, shelved more radical programmatic
implementations in trying to shape the cultural arena in general and leisure consumption and entertainment in particular.

In this new atmosphere, due to the more increasing and even dramatic decimation of non-Muslims, the producers were now the Turkified groups who replaced them at a faster pace. Because of the informalities sprouting under populist modernity, new chances for entrepreneurs also emerged. In this period, the main groups of consumers were the state and its bureaucrats, the newly Turkified bourgeoisie, middle and lower classes as well as the rural to urban migrants.

**National Developmentalism and Populism**

Since the end of the Second World War, Turkey’s economy was based on a centrally administered, national developmental model where the state promoted import-substituting industrialization. This was certainly in line with more global developments, i.e. the advent of Keynesian economics of the advanced countries of the Western world. International Keynesianism was certainly associated with what Lipietz calls Peripheral Fordism (1987).

This policy was oriented towards supporting acceleration of national investments to help establish indigenous industries (Pamuk, 1984). Peripheral Fordism led to the policies of national developmentalism in the periphery in general and in Turkey in particular. Keyder and Öncü argue that import-substituting national developmentalism had a clear implication at the level of public policy: “it was accompanied by redistributive measures and a populist discourse, aiming to mobilize and incorporate a larger proportion of the population into product and labor markets” (Keyder & Öncü, 1993: 16).

Although Keynesianism was an immediate reply to the threatening crisis of the unfettered capitalism mainly in the core states, it then became a general economic trend throughout the world economy. Then, a policy that we may call International Keynesianism -that would mean a massive financial flow from core to periphery in order to help the formation of a ‘suitable’ economic infrastructure- became predominant in the world economy (Keyder, 1984).

A policy agenda that some call Peripheral Fordism became the local, supporting element of the International Keynesianism (Lipietz, 1987). The
Import-substituting model of development was the regional implementation of International Keynesianist trend (Keyder, 1981). This policy was oriented towards sustaining a constant rate of exchange and lowering interest rates to accelerate national investments to help the establishment of indigenous industries (Pamuk, 1984). National Developmentalism was the dominant consequence of such a policy operation in the periphery, together with each peripheral country’s own ‘Industrial Revolution’ and ‘Developmental Élan’ (Keyder, 1993).

Supported by incentives of the state and protected by tariffs and quotas, between 1950s and 1970s, Istanbul’s manufacturing industries grew considerably. By mid 1970s almost half of Turkey’s manufacturing enterprises were based in Istanbul, claiming more than half of employment in Istanbul (Özmucur, 1976). Keyder and Öncü argue that “Istanbul’s demographic and economic growth during these three decades (1950-1980) was emblematic of the patterns of uneven development associated with inward-oriented, inflationary expansion of the economy as well as its populist discourse” (Keyder & Öncü, 1993: 17).

National developmentalist and import-substituting policies of the state were also important for the sphere of consumption. Indeed, “[t]he success of this model was closely bound with the continuous expansion of the internal consumer market” (Keyder & Öncü, 1993: 16). Mass production and mass consumption schemes, in this sense, were similar to those implemented in the Fordist economies of the West whereby development of a domestic demand for goods were central since the 1950s (Mort, 1998: 15). The State in this sense was formative of the processes of leisure consumption and entertainment.

In the period of 1950-1980, mass leisure consumption forms were promoted primarily by the state-controlled Turkish Radio and Television (TRT) (Ahıska, 2008; Dinçmen, 2007). In this period, private radio or TV channels were not permitted and TRT programming had to follow strict guidelines overseen by the state bureaucrats Yenal notes that television programming was especially functional in promoting mass consumption in food and leisure (2000). Events at public parks organized by municipalities, governor’s offices and other state institutions were also designed to promote homogenized, Turkified forms of entertainment (Aytar and Keskin, 2003).

We should in this sense remember the Regulation School’s claim that a regime of accumulation refers to “the stabilization over a long period of
the allocation of the net product between consumption and accumulation” (Lipietz, 1986: 19). This broad arrangement between the conditions of production, reproduction of the labor-power and consumption is coupled and supported by an associated mode of social and political regulation. That is, the rules of the regime of accumulation need to be ingrained in the social, cultural norms and habits, as well as administrative procedures. Lipietz defines the mode of social and political regulation as a “body of interiorized rules and social process” (Lipietz, 1986: 19).

An important differentiating dynamic in the case of Turkey was the cultural dimension which explains the path-dependency of the local specificity. The state had implemented modernization as a top-down cultural process and molding of consumption accordingly was an important part of this. Indeed, Yenal, for example, discusses the importance of this role in shaping the cultural and social landscape of consumption practices and links this to the particular experience of top-down modernization (2000:105-106). He argues that the “modernist-developmentalist state promoted certain practices and meanings regarding consumption through educational institutions, public programs and state-controlled media” (Yenal, 2000:38).

In this sense, we should remember that the radical modernity period’s state which had a primarily paternalistic and authoritarian attitude to mold consumption in society in general, as well as leisure consumption and entertainment in particular. Yenal argues that “[one] can observe two distinct periods, one from the 1940s until the 1970s, and the other from 1980s onwards in which the mode of cultural regulation was different” (Yenal, 2000: 104, emphasis added). However, as an alternative and addition to Yenal’s periodization, I claim that the first period of 1940s-late 1970s could be divided into two, especially when concerning the specific case of the regulation of leisure consumption and entertainment:

As discussed in the above sections, the period of 1920s-1950s was characterized by the central state’s efforts to force the society to espouse westernized forms of leisure consumption and entertainment and heavy intervention into the previous forms which were seen as archaic, un-Turkish or backward. The period between 1950 and 1980, instead, implied a more relaxed, or ‘liberal’ attitude towards leisure and entertainment. Market-friendly and culturally ‘sensitive’ policies prevented heavy interventions into those areas which were emblematic of the radical modernity period.
Multi-Party Democracy and the changing role of regulation

The rigged multi-party elections of 1946 were followed by the first truly democratic general balloting of 1950 which brought DP to power. Prime Minister Adnan Menderes’s DP continued on CHP’s post-Second World War international policy of approaching the “Free World” but departed from its successor’s heavily statist economic policies in the domestic arena. Tekeli notes that the DP liberalized the private sector, replaced state owned industrialized growth model with the mechanized agriculture-led economic growth with support to urban service sectors (2009:132). DP’s NATO and US-friendly international politics guaranteed American economic support -as an extension of the Marshall plan and helped improve the provision of many social services to the citizenry.

This situation certainly underwrote the populism of DP which in turn secured the party successive electoral victories. Free-market friendly economic policies of DP were also expressed in such catchy slogans such as “creating one millionaire in every district” were also behind the party’s electoral appeal among the voters. One final important component of DP’s populism was its considerably more ‘respectful’ attitude towards Islamic or conservative moral values of the population which had been seriously attacked during the staunchly Kemalist radical modernity period (Mardin, 1990). Bans on traditional or religious music playing or performing were significantly relaxed in this period.

Such factors explain DP’s softer stance vis-à-vis modernization which was expressed in more practical (rather than ideological) terms more attuned with the social demands and expectations. In this sense, then, DP’s “populist modernity” had less to do with an antagonizing and polarizing cultural program of top-down modernization and more to do with its partially fulfilled promises such as creating material advances such as improvement of infrastructure, municipal services and supporting provincial/agricultural as well as urban middle classes through populist policies.

Populist modernity launched by the DP continued on even after the party was taken down by the military junta of 1960. DP’s successor, center right Justice Party (Adalet Partisi, AP) dominated most of 1960s and 1970s in competition with Atatürk and İnönü’s CHP, which espoused a center left ideology since late 1960s, under the chairmanship of reformist Bülent
Ecevit. Center right DP and AP’s primarily rural-based populism was also aimed to support urban industrialization and urban upper and middle classes through National Developmentalist policies as discussed above.

CHP remained a party of orthodox as well as reformed Kemalists which made important overtures towards urban working and lower classes, especially in the context of rising radical left politics of various stripes that was engaged in violent fighting against the radical right wing Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP) (Banks, et al, 2004:1035). Out of the center right wing DP-AP line there emerged Necmettin Erbakan’s Islamic Millî Görüş (National Outlook) movement that was based on provincial conservatism and supported by devout industrialists and entrepreneurs who felt historically underrepresented among the mainstream and secular ‘bourgeois’ circles and associations.

While such powerful radical left and right wing as well as Islamic challenges certainly existed, the period of 1950-1980 was still dominated by centrist populism and national developmentalism (Boratav, 1999:43) represented by DP/AP and CHP alike. In this atmosphere, the state’s role in the spheres of culture receded from top-down cultural modernization to what I propose to call relaxed regulation whereby various informalities were tolerated.

However, I should note that this relaxed regulation was not based on a clearly delineated and programmatic liberalism. Rather, it was expressed in the state’s attitude of keeping an indirect control over informalities in the social sphere. The state, in this sense, accepted that it was impossible to control social life through top-down modernization policies. Instead, it settled with the idea of keeping an indirect oversight over various imperfections and informalities, and even turning them to its advantage by externalizing costs associated with them. This situation shaped the regulatory structure whereby the local government turned a blind eye to the violations of rules and let the informality roam free, rather than providing efficient social and municipal services.

A striking case was that of housing, whereby informal tenements such as **gecekondu** (literally, ‘built-overnight’) neighborhoods mushroomed at the peripheries of Istanbul (Karpat, 1976) to help solve the increasingly acute problem of housing. However, the state’s attitude of letting informality sprout was not limited to housing but was expressed in other social
spheres. In leisure consumption and entertainment, the central and local
government let numerous informalities develop and limit its intervention.
This development is particularly important for two reasons:

Firstly, it shows that the state, by letting informality sprout, chose to
externalize important social costs. Secondly, it led to the development of a
particular way of dealing with the state by the citizenry. The second point
should be thought of in the context of the asymmetrical relationship
between an authoritarian state and disempowered citizenry that was a
constant characteristic of the Republican period\textsuperscript{14}. In the new period
since 1950s, however, citizens were still afraid of the authoritarian state,
yet they also started to seek the most material gains out of it by seeking
clientelistic favors, cutting corners by going around—or totally ignoring—
the formal rules, or by connecting with personal acquaintances or relatives
within the state apparatus.

Most citizens developed a rather opportunistic attitude vis-à-vis the
government and the whole array of opportunities it entails. Indeed, “the
state property is a [vast] sea, if you don’t eat [usurp] it, you are nothing
but a swine” (\textit{devletin malı deniz, yemeyen domuz}) has always been among
the most popular mottos, indicating this widespread, self-interest seeking
attitude of the citizens. In this period of state-led controlled consumption,
the citizens developed such a particular relationship with the state. What I
propose to call the “opportunistic mentality” on the part of the citizen was
centered on seeking somewhat more low key clientelistic favors ranging
from trying to secure guaranteed-for-life yet modestly paid state jobs to
having formal regulations (such as building codes, zoning or licensing
rules) ignored for their private aims.

The state in this case implied a protective shield, a higher authority
out of which action, or in the case of the expectation of turning a blind
eye to formal rules, inaction was sought. Zat argues that a majority of
entrepreneurs in the leisure consumption and entertainment usurped the
informalities in getting their liquor licenses, hiring undocumented staff,
avoiding building and safety regulations (interview with Zat, 2011). Aksüt
provides other lively examples whereby entrepreneurs were more interested
in “finding acquaintances” (\textit{tanıdık bulmak}) in the regulatory authorities
than following formal regulations. He claims that acquaintances were
able to grant them personalized exceptions in return for favors that many
municipal bureaucrats happily usurped (2000).

\textsuperscript{14} Concerning this point, Aydın argues “the fact that Ottoman
Empire/Republic of Turkey is demographically shaped by
complex, interwoven and successive waves of migration and their
associated traumas is one of the
main shaping factors of the state-
citizen asymmetry” (2005:13). He
also claims that “the relationship
between the citizen and the state
is one determined by the dual
expectations/requirements of fear
and security whereby the state is
perceived and conceptualized as
a body mimicking the role of the
As such, the state let the informalities sprout on the very surface of citizens’ fear of state’s formal strengths. Those fears, in turn, gave way to more practical ways to ‘deal’ with the state and its formalities. This seems to be particularly the case with the entrepreneurs and employees of leisure consumption and entertainment. They seem to have carved out informal—and usually, flexible—ways around the seemingly rigid formalities of the regulators. Helping them develop innovative and creative skills to circumvent regulation, this new environment seems to have empowered them compared to their past weaknesses. The newfound self-confidence of the period 1950-1980, directly contributed to the more entrepreneurial, dynamic, go-getter type of attitude that took root among them after the 1980s.

In sum, in the period 1950-1980, the state softened its previously heavily indoctrinating, ideological and decidedly programmatic stance towards leisure consumption and entertainment. This situation altered the relationship between the state and the citizens in general and the central government/municipality and entertainment entrepreneurs in particular. In this more chaotic situation, regulators moved away from tough ideological enforcers towards personal-favor seeking bureaucrats while still keeping their authoritarian, formal exterior. Entrepreneurs, in their turn, found or created holes in the formal rules, sought and relied on acquaintances to soften or ignore regulations. This win-win relationship was certainly in line with the national developmentalist and populist modernist regulatory setting that was prevalent in this period.

III. 2. 2. Role of Mediation

In the period between 1950 and 1980, the role of the mediators was also transformed and altered. Different from the radical modernity period, in the populist modernity period, the mediators were fragmented along political lines. This fragmentation was at once done alongside various lifestyles targeted by the mediators or caterers of those same lifestyles. This period was also underwritten by the development of mass circulation dailies and more specialized weekly and monthly magazines.

*Fragmentation of the Mediators:*

*Salience of love and hate relationship with consumption & entertainment*

Let us remember that the period between 1920 and 1950 was dominated by two successive generations: Both “pioneering” and “supervising” generations
were reflective of the Kemalist civilizational objectives set down in a top-down culturally modernizing manner. However, in the period of populist modernity between 1950 and 1980, mediators were fragmented along political / ideological lines and cultural stances vis-à-vis alaturka versus alafiranga; and, “native sources” (öz kaynaklar) versus “foreign influences” (ecnebi tesirler). Numerous intellectual positions by mediators also appeared as constellations alongside new cultural formations such as Arabesk, Anadolu Pop / Anadolu Rock (Anatolian Pop / Rock) and associated practices of entertainment.

Kemalist intelligentsia’s authors, novelists and columnists continued to have a considerable influence especially in maintaining and supervising over the general ‘civilizational’ targets of westernization and modernization. However, their monopoly certainly eroded—and later on, ended—and their direct or indirect ‘legislative’ role (as discussed above) in shaping the cultural sphere receded considerably. When CHP lost political power to DP in 1950, Kemalist columnists who previously had administrative duties also lost their direct regulatory powers. An additional development was also the fragmentation of the Kemalist intelligentsia and the strengthening of left wing intellectuals as direct offshoots out of CHP or as strong critiques of what they termed ‘wardrobe Kemalism’ (gardrop Atatürkçülüğü), that is, highly orthodox yet formalistic showing off of westernized attitudes without implementing them in content/substance/spirit.

Kabacalı argues that after 1950, the laws and administrative practices regulating publication of newspapers, magazines, journals and books were liberalized, thus enabling more plural and diverse opinions to be expressed in society (2000:226). In conjunction with the advances in printing technologies and the establishment of more effective distribution lines, the media’s impact on the society and its ability to cater to and shape a more diverse readership increased. Kocabasoglu argues that after 1950s, media has become a key actor in “shaping people’s tastes” (2000:14).

Mass circulation dailies were instrumental in helping adapt large sections of the urban middle classes into the mass consumption schemes promoted by the national developmentalism as discussed above: Media also have, in this sense, certainly democratized access to information and a range of consumer products including forms of entertainment and leisure consumption. Daily newspapers of different ideological stripes, ranging from hardliner Kemalist; pro-business populist and religious conservative,
all shared similar elements of a critical take on consumerism and what they saw as harmful forms of entertainment.

The development of the specialized magazines in turn, mirrored the fragmentation of the population along classes and various lifestyles adopted. Specialized magazines also targeted the newly developing urban middle classes and youth cultures and they were also instrumental in shaping their leisure consumption and entertainment habits. We have enough evidence to argue that popular, mainstream newspapers and magazines as well as specialized publications (magazines, semi-scientific journals, guidebooks, books on proper etiquette and others) are all instrumental in the process of the spread of consumerism. This spread of consumerism, however, as I will discuss below, was both promoted and morally condemned by the media.

Between 1905 and 1980, mediators within the media were criticizing that very media’s harmful effects as well as voicing diatribes against the ‘consumerist’ traps lurking amidst popular forms of entertainment. Some of those intellectuals were the respected columnists writing at the very publications they were criticizing. Such self-avowedly morally high ground intellectuals specifically targeted women in pinpointing the social actor of ethically condemned forms of consumption and entertainment.

Interestingly, mediators of different political convictions or clashing approaches to culture and entertainment still happily converged around an image of women as the ‘dangerous’ / ‘suspect’ / ‘scolded’ Other. In this tacitly agreed upon and frequently depicted image, woman is seen as a Biblical Eve of sorts, who seduce and corrupt Adam by espousing, demanding and spreading a luxury-oriented lifestyle underwritten by conspicuous consumption and mondain forms of entertainment. In this vein, highly popular Akbaba humor weekly (published between 1922 and 1977, the period roughly coinciding with the temporal focus of this chapter) on the other hand, frequently ridiculed women through heavily-genderized caricatures of the “brainless blonde,” “mistress,” “secretary,” “housewife as petty nuisance” all tainted by the vice of consumerism and frivolous entertainment.

CHP’s official daily newspaper Ulus (Nation) with its doctrinaire, preaching line combining pro-modernist reformism and Kemalism, and the high circulation daily Hürriyet (Liberty, launched in 1948 and continuing its key importance upto the early 2010s) with its pro-business
yet populist style, joined hands in morally targeting the media's corrosive impact. They also shared the same attitude of condemnation of those lifestyles tainted by excessive consumerism, 'useless' entertainment and women's role as disseminators of both. Hürriyet, like many of similar newspapers, had a strange stance of both helping spread the culture of consumerism emblematic of mass consumption-oriented ethos of National Developmentalism; and criticizing or ridiculing social stereotypes associated with that same culture of consumerism.

It is striking to observe that such moralizing / ostracizing attitudes in pro-Kemalist and pro-business/populist media were similar to those vocalized in conservative press, such as Büyük Doğu (Grand Orient)\(^\text{15}\) magazine of Necip Fazıl Kıskıurek, seminal and legendary intellectual of the Islam-inspired right wing of Turkish intelligentsia (Belge, 2003). Published intermittently between 1948 and 1977, Büyük Doğu was the leading

\(\text{Picture III.13:}
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Beach scenes were quite prominent among the cover pages of Akbaba, providing a 'legitimate' spatial alibi to erotically depict women's bodies as well as targeting their 'null' lives in 'entertaining' environments that were at once morally targeted. Akbaba, 23 March 1963

\(\text{\textsuperscript{15} For various discussions, see, M. Belge (2003) Modern Türkiye\'de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 5 / Muhafazakârlık (Political Thinking in Modern Turkey. Volume 5 / Conservatism), Istanbul: İletişim.}\)
publication of the conservative cultural front. In its earlier inception the magazine featured intellectuals of liberal or Kemalist and even left wing stripes (such as Oktay Akbal, Özdemir Asaf, Sait Faik Abasıyanık) who were among personal friends of Kısakürek.

At this point, it should be noted that late Kısakürek continue to be a controversial figure, some claiming that during his earlier, first period, he led a very bohem (bohemian, adapted from the French word bohème) life, filled with alcohol consumption, dandyism, womanizing, gambling and jolly literary conversations that may well have been accompanied by drug use. What is also noted about this first period is that Kısakürek reportedly had left-wing convictions then. There are detailed accounts of his defection to the Islamic-conservative camp in 1934. Büyük Doğu since mid-1950s -that is, in its second phase- was dominated by the agenda of regressive anti-modernism, populist defense of both a religiously-inspired and sometimes ‘nativist’ Anatolian culture as well as a revered Ottoman past all of which were smeared by Republican indoctrination (see especially Bora, 1986; Çakır, 1987 & Belge, 2003). Büyük Doğu -particularly in its later phase- was critical both of Kemalist cultural fiat and the ‘infectious’ consumerism spread by commercial media and entertainment culture.

What stands, however, is that Kısakürek's first and second periods were marked by a stark contrast in terms of his changing take on leisure consumption and entertainment. What appears in the former as a source of intellectual innovation and artistic creativity -in the bohemian sense of the term; in the latter, it emerges as a dangerous and crafty ‘enemy’ being fed by the materialistic consumerism of ‘this-worldly’ desires and pleasures. In the latter, the scolded habitat of leisure consumption and entertainment appears an intellectual source again... But this time over, it is an intellectual and artistic source in the sense that it feeds passionate feelings such as discontentment and even disgust (Genç, 1991; 1998) that compel the writer to produce works against the evil worlds of lustful entertainment and mindless consumerism.

Certainly informed by Cold War anti-communism that had found echoes in the popular and intellectual environment of Turkey, Büyük Doğu nevertheless incorporated elements highly critical of the destructive impact of its anti-communist ally, USA, especially in terms of the encroaching epidemics of Hollywood, popular culture and hedonistic lifestyles associated with leisure consumption and entertainment. In
this facile encapsulation, both Kemalism and commercial consumerism of entertainment were seen as “enemies of the organic culture of deep Anatolia” (Özcan, 2010).

In this sense, this purportedly untainted yet endangered deep Anatolia is somewhat similar to the formulization of a lost, untainted origin, the Turkish Halk (akin to the German conceptions of Volk) by the Kemalist intelligentsia. However, the “deep Anatolia” of the conservative imagery has more spiritual, religious overtones which gained even more bitter expressions in reaction to Kemalist Jakobenizm (Jacobinism) (C. Meriç, 1974; 1985). It is striking to observe the resemblance of the purportedly polarized visions of the Islamist Deep Anatolia and the Kemalist Volk. In both cases, deep Anatolia and Halk corresponds to a spiritually or ideologically defined mental ‘homeland’ of sorts.

A quite similar conceptualization of an untainted “motherland” endangered by infectious entertainment was used by left wing intellectuals and activists as well. Some such notions were uttered by the intellectual circle around left-Kemalist Devrim (Revolution) journal by Cemal, Avcıoğlu and Gürkan (Avcıoğlu, 1969-71). Some far left radical groupings active throughout the 1970s such as the pro-Albanian, Hoxhaist Halkın Kurtuluşu (People’s Liberation) and Dev-Sol (Devrimci Sol, Revolutionary Left) -which was purportedly closer to Fokoculuk (foquismo)16 as defined by Debray (1967)- had developed ideological and moral diatribes against useless or ‘degenerate’ entertainment.

All such radical left positions also viewed mainstream entertainment in Turkey as part and parcel of the degenerate culture of the bourgeoisie masking/diluting the “real culture of [our] people/peoples” (Çayan, 1972; Karataş, 1989; Küçük, 1986 & 1987). In some versions, cosmopolitan entertainment is viewed as the fifth column of “American (cultural) imperialism” (for example, see Kvolcim, 1963). The forms acceptable for the radical left are non-commodified or de-commodified acts of productively enjoying one’s life, such as revolutionary picnics, festivals or night gatherings, especially with a hint of provincialism (bağlama- or kemençe-playing) sprinkled over them (Gündoğar, 2000). Such events seem to have a völkisch (Fichte, 1808; 2008) flavor and savor to them, in the sense that they are geared towards programmatically reinstituting people’s mental archive and heritage or tapping into their -previously under-utilized- faculties. Since generational transfer and

education were the main functional targets, dersane (generally, private educational establishments, or more specifically in such cases, music-tutoring establishments formed as front organizations of radical left politics) and dernek (legally instituted social associations) were the main entertainment places developed as such (Tansuğ, 1999; Stokes, 1991; 2011). While entertainment was mostly ostracized, rakı-drinking in general and meyhâne-gatherings in particular, remained among the familiar entertainment environments or escapist havens where Kemalists and Marxists gathered and found warm sociability, intellectual inspiration and artistic muse. While entertainment was mostly ostracized, rakı-drinking in general and meyhâne-gatherings in particular, remained among the familiar entertainment environments or escapist havens where Kemalists and Marxists gathered and found warm sociability, intellectual inspiration and artistic muse.17 Conservatives stayed away from such alcohol-consumption oriented places and converged in traditional coffeehouses and informal liturgical gatherings (Tekke / zikir).

One also comes across with another characteristic present in the major two intellectual approaches, Kemalist and conservative: their critical take on leisure consumption and entertainment. In its wooden formulae-laced language, Kemalist Ulus passionately promoted East-West musical and cultural syntheses, by attacking the excessively alafranga entertainment styles and the lurking dangers of cosmopolitanism and idealistically revering the dormant power within the Turkish halk. In some conceptualizations, entertainment is seen as ‘useless’ given its high demands on ‘human power’ which should rather be engaged in productive tasks such as citizen’s “self-enlightenment” and the audience’s “western [classical] music appreciation” (Ahıska, 2000; Belge, 2003). Büyük Doğu on the other hand voiced a moralistic bashing of the nightlife by seeing it as an enemy symbolizing all sorts of sins and vice. Kısakürek and friends promoted, instead, lives full of introspection, faith, soul-searching and ceremonial praying, such as those in Sufism-inspired home-based nights together or in informal Mevlevî or Cerrahî ceremonies. Such religious gatherings seem to have been saved by a less interventionist and less oppressive state which allowed and in some cases encouraged or even directly-funded such nights or ceremonies (Özdenören, 1985).

As we see above, conservatives, Marxists and Kemalists all converge around a highly critical perspective of entertainment, by pitting it against the interests of the people and its ‘genuine culture’. However, pro-business, populist Hürriyet depicted entertainment in a rather different light. It covered, in its high-society/red carpet/paparazzi sections, those situations of entertainment as well as those rich celebrities entertaining themselves (“caught” as they are called in the media) from a voyeuristic angle. These

17 Meyhâne keeps its key importance as of early 2010s while tekke / zikir of the conservatives was lately revived and even co-opted by the tourism industry. Religious music sessions were included as an item during Ramadan-long leisure consumption and entertainment events.
very much envied yet inspiring persons had colorful life-stories which make the person-on-the-street admit that: “they have a sweet / luxurious life” or, “life goes easy on them” (hayat onlara güzel). Note continuities with 1930s depiction of the “comfortable” luxurious life such as at Lüküs Hayat operetta.

This rather opaquely defined group of people with sweet, easy and fun lives coincides roughly with sosyete. Sosyete seems to refer to the ‘high-society,’ and as an ascribed nickname, it was possibly adapted from the French term, haute société (société is pronounced as sosyete in Turkish). Sosyete connotes those individuals or groups which are seen as having more advantageous income levels and material resources –sometimes those resources are believed to have been amassed in shady or unethical ways, thus betraying a moralizing gaze upon them.

At Hürriyet and other mediating actors, habitual moral condemnation of sosyete and their luxurious entertainment are uttered in rather formalistic manners that almost become part of an automatism. In the second step, a voyeuristic take on their excesses is carefully developed via the depiction of [their] leisure consumption and entertainment places and occasions such as dansing (dancing parties) caz (special nights with live music) davet (reception) gala, açılış (opening). As opposed to all other religiously-inspired or politically and ideologically-oriented mediators, liberal mediators, and in this particular example, Hürriyet juicily display the forbidden fruit by “selling the sizzle” (Ewen & Ewen, 1986) of leisure consumption and entertainment.

All in all, religious or ideological mediators were highly critical and interventionist in the sphere of leisure consumption and entertainment. Yet in the midst of their constituencies they still gave birth to –in 1990s an 2000s- new entertainment forms such as touristified whirling dervish shows; Nargile Kafe and Türkü Bar (see Chapter IV). At their inception, both dersane and dernek were planned to be “pure,” “untainted/non-degenerated,” “functional” and “transformative” but evolved or yielded into future hybrid forms illustrated by the rise of Nargile Kafe and Türkü Bar.

These are all, in a sense, ‘in-between’ places, whose stuff is made up of a syncretic mix-and-match of different materials (biraz ondan, biraz bundan). Due to the voluntaristic, self-sacrificing and even self-exploiting

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18 Note that sosyete, since 1990s through 2010s, is also the preferred epithet used by BJK football club’s legendary supporter group Çarşı to describe those viewers on the comfortable and expensive seats with actual seat numbers on them. Sosyete is situated at the Numarali (literally, “with numbers”) grandstand of the İnönü Stadium, right across from Çarşı’s own Kapalı (“covered up”) grandstand. The use of this particular denotation -which some may sociologically find meaningful- certainly warrants more research. For a highly interesting ethno-musicological study of Çarşı, see, Kytö, 2009.
involvement by their entrepreneurs, they provided to be highly meaningful, lived spaces which were far less scripted and more spontaneously developed than planned, top-down, doctrinaire spaces such as dersane, dernek and Halkevi. Pavyon and Taverna are more hedonistic offshoots of earlier kafeşantan or gazino and they catered to a provincially-anchored, recently urban clientele. These forms could be seen as residing on the lower –or to a lesser extent, the middle- layer of ‘western’ style / type of entertainment. Such establishments, however, mostly featured alaturka music, such as popularized forms of what is now known as Sanat Müziği –[Turkish] Art Music.

Another layer, this time residing on the top layer of entertainment was sosyete-type of ‘elite’ entertainment: Sosyete entertainment informed the later, post-1980s development of upper class entertainment establishments such as Zihni Bar, Peripeti Bistro, Süreyya Teras Greek Taverna and Nardis Jazz Club –among many other Caz (Jazz) establishments eloquently researched and catalogued by Tekelioglu (2011). What is referred to as “certain [upper-bracketed] segment” (“belli bir kesim”) entertainment producers and consumers were kept an eye on, as a source of criticism, envy, copycatting and promotion.

To sum up the role of mediation under the National Developmentalist period: Different to the early republican period of 1920-1950 whereby the harder mediators working in tandem with Kemalist and radical modernist regulators had a nearly complete monopoly, this second period’s mediators were fragmented along political lines whereby the Kemalist domination over the cultural field was weakened. However, various stripes of mediators situated along political or ideological divisions, still agreed on preaching what society should be doing. They all converged around the need to control excessive consumerism especially in leisure consumption and entertainment.

IV. 2. 3. Processes of Diversity

Out of all separate visions from within the mediators, there emerges a unifying theme of imagining diversity. Kemalist, Conservative and Liberal alike, all mediators helped create ways to come up with the ‘Self’ versus the ‘Other,’ which connects us to the discussion on processes of diversity and ethnicity. In all of them, the ‘Self’ is carved out of an imagined (Hobsbawn & Ranger) primordial and organic essence: Halk, Derin Anadolu and Türk
Milleti (Turkish Nation) or Millet (Nation) that are all both endangered and in need of being molded by the very mediators or the regulators. The ‘Other’ is the cosmopolitan Beyoğlu or Nişantaşı (Şişli district’s rich neighborhood) known for their radiant, fragrant and ostentatious luxuries.

The Essential Element and the Desired Other

The liberal imagining of the ‘Other’ initially pays lip service to the critical and disdainful language of the first four, while later on exhibiting a voyeuristic, playful language toying with the idea of the “the Other being what the Self desires”. In this sense liberal mediators espoused an eventually positive and supportive role with an initially sardonic grin on their faces. This connotes the double meaning of desired to be had and desired to become like: Denoting both the Occidentalist fantasizing of the ‘Other’ and the upstream task of “catching and surpassing the level of developed civilizations” - Atatürk’s main target.

Movies could for example be seen as part and parcel of that type of non-state regulation, i.e. mediation between producers and consumers of leisure consumption and entertainment. Movies in the period between 1950 and 1980 served an important role connected to the process of diversity including ethnic diversity. Numerous films of this period fortified an Orientalist-colonialist popular gaze towards the Roma and more specifically towards Sulukule. The representation of the Roma as the ‘exotic –and/or ridiculed / criminalized / frowned upon / pitied- Other’ could be illustrated in such films as İstanbul Havası: Arşak Sulukule’de (The Istanbul Air: Arşak in Sulukule, directed by Zeki Alphan, 1952), Şaban Çingeneler Arasında (Şaban among the Gypsies by Semih Evin, 1952), Yan Kesici Kız (The Pickpocket Girl by Türker İnanoğlu, 1964), Çingene Güzeli (The Gypsy Belle by Oksal Pekmezoğlu, 1969), among numerous others. The prevalence of such colonizing attitudes vis-à-vis the “Roma as the Other” promoted by movies -which are among the elements of mediation- seems to connect the argument to the processes of diversity, including forms of ethnic diversity. Movies also repeated and spread the image of the “consumerist woman,” the wife or daughter of the rich factory owner (fabrikatör)20 usually depicted in contradistinction to the poor, honest, hard-working, frank guy. Romantic and at times erotic innuendo between the spoiled girl and the poor hero are depicted in numerous movies such as Orhan Gencebay’s Bir Teselli Ver (Give [me] some consolation, 1971) and Karasevda (Blind Love, 1968).


20 Adapted from the French word, fabricateur.
Roma as the other was still signified in imagination as well as reality in the physical space of Sulukule. The golden age of Sulukule was between 1950s and 1970s when the entertainment houses were the most active. However, Sulukule entertainment houses were constantly targeted and criminalized for their informality and moral degeneracy—authorities and media claiming that some houses were also sources of illegal prostitution and escort services. In 1957, the market-friendly government of the Democratic Party (Demokrat Parti, DP) initiated ‘Hausmannesque’ urban projects that, in addition to other projects all around Istanbul, razed numerous Roma neighborhoods south of Sulukule to pave way for large Vatan and Millet boulevards. Interestingly, the DP government even had a short-lived and highly rhetorical project to replace the informal entertainment houses with

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Picture III.14: Numerous movies of the period 1950-1980 depicted an Orientalizing, sexualizing and criminalizing take on the Roma, frequently painted as ‘fun loving,’ ‘easy-going’ people equipped with ‘natural’ talents or stamped by vice… Çingene Güzeli (The Gypsy Belle) directed by Oksal Pekmezoğlu and starring Sevda Ferdağ, 1968
Owners and musicians/performers argued that such practices were known as oturak âlemi (literally, ‘stool session,’ referring to the stools that were sat on), an informal at-home gathering of men listening to music, watching female dancers and consume alcohol. Oturak âlemi was indeed reminiscent of the circular, performative modes at the Eğlence/Devriye Evleri as noted above. In the mainly Kurdish southeastern Anatolia, comparable sessions were organized under the rubric of Sıra Gecesi (meaning, Night of Turns, again denoting the above-mentioned circular motion of musicians/guests taking turns), however, consumption of alcohol and the presence of female dancers and escorts were not allowed. Such informal gatherings reportedly still take place all around Central Anatolia and elsewhere, but usually in conservative smaller towns or cities.

In this sense, entertainment houses could be seen as a continuation of an informal, perhaps even carnivalesque, Anatolian tradition of social occasions/performances under the watchful eyes of cultural conservatism. In this sense, Michel de Certeau’s analyses of the strategies and tactics in quotidian life could be potentially instructive (see Chapters I and II for more detailed discussions).

In this sense, the Roma of Sulukule could be seen as informal entrepreneurs shouldering these important social functions and drawing important economic gains and becoming targets of a moralistic and criminalizing gaze at the same time. Turkish ‘Roma-exploitation’ movies were quite instrumental in either romanticizing, celebrating, Orientalizing or ridiculing, negatively stereotyping and moralizing/criminalizing approach to Roma in general and Sulukule in particular. Interestingly enough, apart from regularly appearing at countless national movies, Sulukule even became one of the locations where a James Bond movie, From Russia with Love (1963) was shot, increasing the neighborhood’s attraction for tourists. In this sense, Sulukule acted as a ‘body double’ for the sleepy, dreamy, exotic Istanbul as the ‘Orient.’ It is interesting to note the interconnections between the Turkish Orientalist-colonizing gaze towards the Roma and the Occidental rendering on the Orientalized Istanbul portrayed by the ‘Gypsy’ Sulukule.


Note that allegations of such ‘communitarian pressures’ remain to be at the center of social, political and cultural debates in Turkey in late 2000s and early 2010s. Such debates particularly increased after the rise to power of conservative/neoliberal Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP) in 2002. Seminal sociologist Şerif Mardin argued that such communitarian pressures, dubbed as the “neighborhood pressure” (mahalle baskısı) constitute one of the dominant characteristics of the Turkish social texture whereby social difference is scrutinized by moralistic and watchful eyes of (Islamic) conservatism.
The entertainment houses in Sulukule had also numerous other functions for their clientele and caterers. Well known singers, artists and other celebrities (including legendary ‘Turkish Art Music’ performers such as Zeki Müren and Müzeyyen Senar) were reportedly among the regulars, increasing the attraction for the houses, especially among the newspaper and magazine reporters, as well as national and international tourists. Müren, Senar and other music celebrities were reportedly visiting the Houses not only for leisure purposes, but also as grounds of recruitment of side musicians for themselves, and also in order to enrich their own musical repertoire. In this sense, the houses were among the key centers for cultural production and consumption, as well as employment opportunity for the Sulukule Roma.

Entertainment Houses also operated as an informal school for numerous Roma musicians who later gained nation-wide and even international prominence and fame. Most often, Sulukule musicians were also invited to wealthy family homes to play at private celebrations and parties, were hired as side musicians at pavyon, taverna, meyhane and other drinking establishments as well as at recording sessions. This has created additional economic gains for the residents and middlemen who helped arrange such appearances. The social and economic functions of the houses were not limited to providing jobs for their immediate entrepreneurs and employees either. They have even created a secondary employment circle around them, including tobacco and spirits shops as well as neighborhood taxis constantly being dispatched to shuttle clients from distant neighborhoods.

**Migration, Immigration and the New Urban Others**

Processes of diversity and ethnicity at play were largely underwritten by two key societal dynamics that stamped the period between 1950 and 1980 were: (1) the rural to urban migration and the increasing rates of urbanization as well as the out-migration to Germany and other foreign destinations and (2) the continuing and dramatically accelerating decimation of the non-Muslim ethnic minorities. These two major transformations shaped new diversities –including ethnic diversity– which shaped leisure consumption and entertainment to a considerable extent.

Anti-minority mob attacks in Istanbul on September 6th and on September 7th, 1955 created a new atmosphere of fear for the Greeks and other non-Muslim minorities. The Cyprus conflict since 1960s, which intensified in 1970s has made the Greeks a target for mass hatred
once more, after which the Greek population in Istanbul was reduced
down to fewer than two thousand. Currently the number of Armenians
and Jews in Turkey are around sixty and thirty thousands, respectively.\footnote{For various discussions, see, for example, Oran, B. (2004). Türkiye’de Azınlıklar (Minorities in Turkey), Istanbul: İletişim Publica-
tions; Yıldız, A. (2007). Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene: Türk Ulusal
Kimliğinin Etno-Seküler Sınırları, 1919-1938 (How Happy to those
Who Can Call Themselves Turks: Ethno-Secular Limits of the Turk-
ish National Identity), Istanbul: İletişim Publications.}
The dramatic decimation of the non-Muslims was coupled by the
increasing influx of village to urban migration (köyden kente göç) which
propelled a boom in non-urban originated new urban citizens. Most
of those migrants were then functionally ethnicized within the leisure
consumption and entertainment.

Superimposed on this deep sea change in ethnic demography, since at
least the late 1940s, the effects of the mechanization of agriculture and
market integration that provoked an increasing pressure on smaller-
scale farming were the push factors for the immense rural to urban
migration (Karpat, 1976; Akşit, 1998, Kiray, 1998). Pull factors, on
the other hand, included the development of manufacturing industries
and Fordism in the cities. Speeding up after the 1960s, rural to urban
migration, coupled with a population increase, which remained one
of the highest in the world (Kiray, 1998), has created conditions for rapid
urbanization, increase in urban population, and urban transformation
and change. Istanbul, in this period, was one of the major cities receiving
the bulk of rural migration (Danielson and Keleș, 1984).

In this context, the setting for leisure and entertainment changed. Most
migrants converged around the newly formed residential settlements
such as the informal gecekondu neighborhoods at the peripheries of
Istanbul. Devoid of most social or municipal services, including effective
and accessible forms of public transportation, these neighborhoods were
catered to by the shared taxis or dolmuş. Stokes claims that gecekondu
and dolmuş were two loci for arabesk music which challenged most of
the conventions of the dominant cultural policies of the Republic (1992).
Özbek notes that “socially and musically, arabesk could be seen as a
“defensive reaction” articulated in the face of modernization (1991:142).

Arabesk-playing neighborhood meyhâne and kafe-bar (cafe-bar) were
among the new formations catering to this demand. Entrepreneurs were
also usually new migrants, or Turks or Muslims who started out in meyhane
business elsewhere from lower positions. Arabesk and its associated spaces
of entertainment such as pavyon, taverna, neighborhood meyhâne and
gece kulübü (night club) in this sense, developed from within this social
atmosphere of new diversity.
The development of arabesk as a cultural stampede of sorts seems to have produced two outcomes for the way diversity is imagined: Firstly, arabesk implied a powerful, informal challenge to the Kemalist cultural fiat where a combination of recast alaturka and alafranga certainly characterized the general orientation of cultural modernization. Refuting this top-down promotion and cultural modernization, arabesk digs up a totally different ‘essence’ of sorts that catered to the previously migrant, new urban poor.

Arabesk, its lamenting style and the very volatility symbolized by both the dolmuş and gecekondu render a totally new ‘essence’ (different from the essences such as halk, Türk milleti or millet) woven around the uprooted migrant who is not only in-between [rural and urban] spaces, but also transgressing the top-down cultural modernization program of the Kemalist radical modernist paternalism. Certainly, the new, National Developmentalist, populist regulatory environment made it easier for arabesk to challenge the already watered-down hegemony of Kemalism.

Secondly, with the rise of arabesk, in the mainstream mediation mechanisms, figure a gecekondu-living, dolmuş-riding (or driving) arabesk-listening urban poor as the new ‘Other’. This is the ‘Other’ vis-à-vis the mainstream middle class society whose consumption styles were mostly coded by the conventions of the national developmental populism rather than the orthodoxies associated with the earlier period. Still, in a less ideological and less morally condemning tone, in movies, provincial backgrounds of the new urbanites are caricaturized by the use of funny-sounding local dialects of Turkish while the use of Kurdish or any other languages are carefully avoided. This selective ethnicization prompts one to argue that the political sensitivities and rigidities of Kemalism remain considerably intact while the regulation has gotten more relaxed in allowing the sprouting of numerous ‘acceptable’—or negligible—informalities.

The crudeness of the new migrants is usually underlined in media, recalling the hacğa descriptions of the earlier decades. These newcomers, however, are seen as a bigger problem than the hacğa who were effortlessly ridiculed and explained away. For mainstream society, as well as for the radical modernists who cling onto the superiority of alafranga and the alaturka-alafranga combination, they are seen as unhygienic elements soiling the millenarian, civilized social atmosphere of Istanbul. Cantek reminds us that the description of the crude other in line with hacğa tradition were Hıdır, Kirro or Hırbo (2008:247). Especially kirro—or kiro in other uses—
imply a ridiculed Kurdishness.  

Tekelioğlu makes an important addition by arguing that *Hanzo* as the description of yet another misfit, a temporarily visiting or permanently resettling out-migrant to Germany, was adapted from the German name, Hans (Tekelioğlu, 2011). In most movies Turkish immigrants in Germany are ridiculed or criticized, almost as elements that the mainstream society is ashamed of, due to their provincial, ignorant manners that paint internationally a negative picture of an otherwise modern and well-developed Turkey. In this sense, the new diversity signified by the rise of arabesk is at once ridiculed and problematized as a symptom of an increasingly unmanageable migration and urbanization process as well as the repercussions of the emigration to Germany and Europe. Constructed as such, the diverse other(s) were illustrated and rendered variously in popular culture in Turkey. Such depictions were locationally placed usually around *İstiklal* Avenue to mentally and symbolically illustrate their ‘out-of-placeness’.

III. 3. Conclusion:  
General Landscape of Leisure Consumption and Entertainment before the Neo-Liberal Transformation

In this chapter, I have argued that the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 signified, among many other things, a deep transformation in leisure consumption and entertainment. This transformation implied a radical break from the previous Reform Ottoman period. It at once incorporated some important continuity with it. Let me now quickly summarize the main trends under below headings:

(a) Consumers & Producers: In the period of 1920-1980, Turkey has witnessed the pains associated with a transformation from a multi-ethnic, multi-confessional empire to a homogenized nation-state. Those pains were clearly marked by: 1) the tragedy of 1915—a dramatic process that some call genocide or ethnic cleansing—that had dramatically reduced the number of Armenians (Dadrian, 1995; Balakian, 2003; Akçam, 2007 & 2012); 2) the mutual, non-voluntary exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey in 1920s (Erdal, 2006; Bruce, 2006; Ateş, 2008; Özkırımlı & Sofos, 2008); 3) near-pogroms against Jews in [Eastern] Thrace during 1930s (Bayar, 1963; Karabatak, 1996; Levi, 1996; Toprak, 1996; Aktar, 1996; Hür, 2007; Bali, 2008; and Özkırımlı & Sofos, 2008); 4)
anti-‘Gypsy’ population and habitat legislations of 1930s; 5) anti-minority Poll Tax (*Varlık Vergisi*) of 1940s (Ökte, 1951; Biberyan, 2000 & Guttstadt, 2013); 6) anti-Greek pogroms of 1950s; 7) anti-Greek sentiments and actions of 1960s and 1970s.

All the above developments had deep impacts upon the non-Muslims in Turkey, with their numbers, social visibility and cultural participation decreasing progressively. With such larger impacts, in general and the anti-minority legislation concerning those employees of the leisure consumption and entertainment sectors, specifically, Jews became the first group to evacuate those sectors, followed at a slower pace by Greeks and Armenians, respectively. Their positions within those trades, their capital and establishments started to be replaced by their Muslim or Turkish *kalfa* (journeymen) or *çırak* (apprentice) who bought off their establishments at significantly reduced rates. Such transfers of human, economic, cultural and social capital empowered the increasingly critical status of not only Muslims or Turks, but also the Roma, who have capitalized upon their longitudinal presence within the sectors. The non-Muslims’ cultural domination in terms of the trade etiquettes (or, *racon*) lingered on, partly due to their prolonged control over the sectors as well as due to the Occidentalist stances of the Kemalist regulators and mediators.

Similarly, the demographic decimation and thickening cultural silence of the non-Muslims were among the key reasons for their erasure as key groups among the consumers. However, their community gatherings, religious holidays, celebrations, and [significantly muted --or in worst cases totally vaporized] festivals were still important, yet temporally limited (seasonal) propellers for leisure consumption and entertainment. The new consumers were the state itself, its bureaucrats and officers, newly Turkified bourgeoisie, urban middle and lower classes and rich provincial migrants pouring into the cities. They were administratively and culturally schooled into leisure consumption and entertainment first, by the top-down cultural modernization of the legislators and mediators of 1920-1950 and later, by the Peripheral Fordist / International Keynesian National Developmental Populism established and sustained by the legislators and mediators of 1950-1980. Other dimensions of this de-non-Muslimization of the leisure consumption and entertainment in both production and consumption spheres are further discussed below, under the dynamics of diversity.

(b) *Regulation & Mediation*: In the early Republican period between
1920 and 1950, the state's role shifted from reformist paternalism towards radical modernist paternalism. While in the previous period westernization was a powerful line of reform, it had not yet attained the early republican period's programmatic, decidedly radical and top-down modernization character. Atatürk's macro-civilizational target of overall westernization incorporated a careful yet fragile recasting of both alafranga and alaturka by harmonizing them with the requirements of cultural modernization and westernization. Radical modernist paternalism also involved a reconstruction of the Turkish Volk whereby the masses who were to be adequately trained were expected to find their own dormant potentials as well as to appreciate the high cultural taste of western forms of leisure consumption and entertainment. They were also to steer away from the dangers of excessive alafranga. This double-strategy has underwritten the coming-of-age of the new, republican consumers.

The mediators of this period worked on the heritage of the reform Ottoman period in terms of espousing westernization as a tendency, but by also turning this tendency into a programmatic requirement that needs to be worked on more heavily. The hard mediators of the reform Ottoman period, then, have later gotten harder in their zeal as well as their powers aided by their monopoly over the society provided by the Kemalist regime. Early republican mediators aimed to sustain the civilizational targets set up by Kemalism, by keeping westernization as the main route to be followed while at the same time truncating the excesses of the reform Ottoman alafranga and especially its cosmopolitanism seen as unfitting to the needs of the unitary nation state.

The period opened up with the multi-party democracy in 1950 and continuing on until 1980, implied a transformation of the role of the regulation. In the period of increasing rural to urban migration, regulators moved away from tough ideological enforcers towards populist bureaucrats. While still keeping their authoritarian, formal exterior, they had a more relaxed attitude and had let informalities sprout. Entrepreneurs, in their turn, found or created holes in the formal rules, sought and relied on acquaintances to soften up or entirely ignore regulations. In the period between 1950 and 1980, the role of the mediators was also transformed and altered. Different to the radical modernity period, in the populist modernity period, the mediators were fragmented along political lines. This fragmentation was at once done alongside various lifestyles targeted by the mediators or caterers of those same lifestyles. This period was also
underwritten by the development of mass circulation dailies and more specialized weekly and monthly magazines.

Different to the early republican period of 1920-1950 whereby the harder mediators working in tandem with Kemalist and radical modernist regulators had a nearly complete monopoly, this second period’s mediators were fragmented along political lines whereby the Kemalist domination over the cultural field was weakened. However, various stripes of mediators situated along political or ideological divisions, still agreed on preaching what the society should be doing. They all converged around the need to control excessive consumerism especially in leisure consumption and entertainment.

(e) Dynamics of Diversity: Processes of diversity and ethnicity at play were largely underwritten by two key societal dynamics that had jointly stamped the period between 1920 and 1980, they were: (1) the continuing and dramatically speeding up eradication of the non-Muslim ethnic minorities, that was also discussed above, under consumers and producers; and (2) the rural to urban migration and the out-migration to Germany and other foreign destinations. These two major transformations shaped new diversities—including ethnic diversity—which contoured the scenes of leisure consumption and entertainment to a considerable extent.

We had touched upon their physical erasure which was taking place as their cultural domination lingered on symbolically and sustained by the etiquettes of the trade. In terms of social, human, economic and cultural capital, Muslims, Turks and the Roma increasingly replaced the quickly effacing and departing non-Muslims in the leisure consumption and entertainment sectors. The latter group, the Roma, on the other hand, continued their role as key producers of leisure consumption and entertainment, as they carved out escapist and alternative spaces in the face of social conservatism and republican fiat.

This period also saw the transformation of mechanisms of diversity: Cultural modernist-westernizationist policies of the legislators popularized by the mediators conducted a seemingly contradictory yet highly complementary double strategy: They at once (1) elevated the non-Muslim’s allafranga format in leisure consumption and entertainment as the ‘model’ to be followed, and (2) ostracized their purported conspicuousness, moral degeneration and excessive cosmopolitanism—represented as detrimental
to the appropriate forms of state alafranga and national unity sustained by a radically recast alaturka. In this sense, the official (state) Occidentalism and nationalism have underwritten the re-positioning of the diversity mechanism previously peopled by the non-Muslims and the Roma.

While such orthodox implementations of regulation had eased away after 1950 with the introduction of a market economy and encouragement of entrepreneurialism, the dramatic decrease of non-Muslims still locked them into stereotyped characters of either the rich, degenerate alafranga minority as the consumer, or the exocitized Rum meyhâneci (Greek meyhâne master). The Roma, on the other hand, continued to be subject to inner-Orientalism via their mainstream portrayal as timeless, fun-loving, highly talented entertainers with innate proclivities.

The republican period between 1920 and 1980, also saw the emergence of new groups of ‘misfits’ whose diversity was regulated and mediated variously. First, there were those who were the ‘othered’ and ‘ethnicized’ types: Such as the rich provincial migrants or visitors (hacıağa) who were perceived as ridiculized dupes, easily preyed on by the ‘jackals’ of the trade; those evil non-Muslim loan sharks or hoarders; brainless yet calculating ‘blondes’; or crooked gazino- or pavyon-owners. Such rich provincial consumers were also seen as crass characters at odds with the macro targets set up by the regulators and helped out by the mediators.

Later on, the larger and poorer masses of rural-to-urban migrants were to be ‘otherized’: Those Anatolian former peasants were also preyed on within the leisure consumption and entertainment as above, and finding themselves increasingly alienated in a hostile and cold urban environment. Portrayed variously as the naïve and innocent victims of the conspicuously consumerist city entertainment; carvers of odd, ‘low’ and hybrid styles of their own (symbolized by the arabesk meyhâne or other watering holes); or uneducated brutes as nuisance, those misfits were actually the quickly multiplying, demographic bulk –the critical mass-- of leisure consumption and entertainment. For the Radical Modernist / Paternalist as well as Populist / National Developmentalist regulators and legislators, those groups posed important ‘problems’ that were not so easily legislated or explained away. Indeed, I will try to chart those lingering ‘problems’ in the next chapter.