

CONSUMPTION PERCEPTION IN TURKEY WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALISATION

Şansel ÖZPINAR*
Necdet Coşkun ALDEMİR**
Ömer ÖZPINAR***

ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of consumption is located at the heart of capitalist development. The consumption's multidimensionality and its effects on capitalism's sustainability increase the importance of "consumption perception." Within this context, the consumption is a phenomenon, which undergoes change historically. The projections of social structure changing throughout the development of capitalism also show themselves in the consumption arena. Nowadays, Marx's "alienation" concept has expanded to include the consumption arena.

Turkey went into an articulation effort to the globalisation process in the 1980s. The effects of change in the economic policy, which was brought to agenda together with the 24th January Decisions, reflected on the social arena and played an important role in the development of "consumerism" as a culture. The fact that half of Turkey's population is under the age of 28.8 is a factor that has speeded up this development.

This study aims to assess the consumption perception changing in the phase of globalisation within the case of Turkey. Within this context, globalisation and consumption interactions in sustainability of capitalism are included in the first part. In the second part, approaches in regards to what phenomenon of consumption means today will be presented. In the last part, the questionnaire study carried out in order to determine the consumption perception will be assessed by evaluating Turkey's economic and social structure having changed after 1980 will be evaluated.

* Adnan Menderes University Nazilli FEAS Lecturer

** Akdeniz University, Institute of Social Sciences, Department of Sociology, Post Graduate student

*** Adnan Menderes University Nazilli FEAS Lecturer

1. SUSTAINABILITY of CONSUMPTION AND CAPITALISM

The phenomenon of consumption has played an important role in the development of capitalism. Consumption, which has been shaped to the requirements of capital accumulation, remained at a limited level with the effect of Calvinist thought at the early stages of capitalism in order to provide capital accumulation.

Capitalist economic system comes into existence with a mass consumer need that can be guided. Marx expresses this situation as “capitalist society naturalizes needs and causes humans to be alienated to the things they have created.” According to him, in “the society of joint producers”, human possesses things as much as he needs them, whereas in this society not the needs related to material things but the needs that are directed to the other people have priority (İnsel, 1990; cited by Şentürk, 2008:230-231). Consumption is an important complementary component in sustainability of modern capitalism because in order to make profit, it is necessary that the produced goods be sold. “Unless a good is consumed and a profit is gained, it is clear that there is no point in continuing to produce that good” (Bocock, 2009: 43). In this context, production, circulation and consumption are the most important components of capitalist social relations. “Both production stage and stages of circulation and consumption essentially take place through a series of social relations” (Ercan, 1997: 8). The factor that makes globalization stage clear in social sense is “consumption society”.

The consumption society is a kind of society in which individuals are always encouraged to consume regardless of whether or not the consumption satisfies the basic needs. In this new stage along with technological developments, the individual’s needs vary and differentiate, and the life of goods and services decreases on a mass scale as well. In this context the emerging consumption culture constitutes the backbone of new life styles of not only developed countries but also developing countries. This situation is a result of the target of creating a single World market, in which the whole humanity forms the customers of a common consumption culture. The only condition of accessing to this market is being able to have enough consumption power (Sapançalı, 2005: 139). In this context, consumption is a functional instrument of new capitalism. New capitalism performs the manipulation of masses through consumption. This manipulation is fulfilled by media, advertising, entertainment sector and fashion etc. Thus, the target of profit maximization gains a functional infrastructure by shaping the consumption perception of the mass. It also makes consumption existential for

the mass/individual by substituting its own hedonist ethics and institutionalizing it instead of the traditional puritan ethics, in which prudence is at the heart (İlhan, 2007: 294-295).

“The new capitalism glorifies consumption, blesses purchase and sale and uses the support it gives to production processes now in maximizing consumption. There is a strong capitalist culture at the background of consumption/consumer society and this culture puts consumer reflexes, consumption-related brands and symbols in the focus of life, and constructs life styles and identity structures around this” (Aytaç,2006: 29). On the other hand, the meta-culture has a function of facilitating individual identities’ integration to capitalist system. “ As a consequence of individualization, members of lower and middle classes are alienated from developing a holistic class awareness” (Bıçakçı, 2008: 8). Thus, social problems are gradually being perceived as individual problems

According to Galbraith, the fundamental problem of modern capitalism is the contradiction between a potentially unlimited productivity and selling the goods in the market. At this stage, it becomes vital in terms of the system to monitor not only the production instrument but also the consumption demand and not only the prices but also the ones to demand at these prices. Therefore, the fact that the individual’s behaviours comply with the market and the social attitudes comply with the needs and aims of the producer is a natural quality of the system (Baudrillard, 2008: 81-82). Advertisement, which is one of the tools that are directed to achieve this aim, also sells an identity to people together with the goods. While people are buying any good that is being advertised, they pass to another dimension also in the intellectual plane. The thing which is being advertised is associated with any other social phenomenon. In this context, the aim of advertisements is not to promote the goods, but to create a need. Then this need is responded (Yaylagül, 2008: 146). Constantly encouraging consumption prepares the frame that is required for reproduction of capitalist relations. The phenomenon of consumption, which is seen as a relation between goods, in fact has a social character as well and the style and rate of individuals’ consuming the things as a whole support the reproduction mechanism of the system (Ercan, 1998: 125).

2. CONSUMPTION THEORIES

The phenomenon of consumption has an important place in every field of social sciences. It enters sociology’s area of interest as an inclusion and/or exclusion instrument in the social life, economy’s area of interest in terms of providing the production and the continuity of the system, and psychology’s area of interest in terms of unrest created by not reaching at an acceptable consumption level for the individual in the society he lives.

In Neo-classical approach, which is dominant in economics, individuals are regarded as units always behaving rationally in the economic sense. While the benefit is calculated, it is accepted that as if the consumer only obtains the direct and apparent benefit from the good he uses and as if the surrounding social environment did not have any significance. In other words, while decisions are independent of each other, enjoying the consequences of these decisions is thought to be independent of each other. Therefore, people's desire of looking like as if they were richer and of giving the impression as if they belonged to a higher social class is one of the functions of consumption that does not match with neoclassical view (Açıklım and Gül, 2006: 17). According to Duesenberry, the satisfaction that the consumers obtain from the goods they themselves consume is not independent of the consumption of the other consumers. A person can create benefits and damages for the other person or persons with his consumption activities. The interdependence amongst consumer preferences may appear in the direction of an income class's being affected by the other's consumption. The classes with lower incomes may be being affected by the consumption of the classes with higher income (Kazgan, 1980: 227-228).

On the other hand, T. Veblen examined the social position of consumption in the U.S.A, and in his work "The Theory of the Leisure Class", published in 1899, he stated that in a society in which there is vertical transfer possibility between classes, consumption plays a determining role as an indicator of social position. The rich leisure class, which does not have to work, reveals its privileged position with a unique consumption pattern. This consumption pattern is called as "conspicuous consumption" by Veblen. Veblen analyzes consumption expenditures not as a behaviour pattern of an imaginary individual isolated on individual basis from the society, but as an indicator of social position of a newly emerging and immature class in a set of social relations (İşgüden and Köne, 2002: 103-104). "Consumption is not an action consisting of only buying but also showing the richness to the environment and demolishing the richness that is possessed openly at the same time. This value is seen to add an indicator value to the thing that is bought to make it different beyond the exchange value. From this perspective, every purchasing action can be regarded as both an economic and beyond economy act that makes it possible to produce distinctive indicator/value" (Baudrillard, 2009: 131).

According to Braudel, although luxury is a phenomenon changing according to societies and periods, it also expresses an unchanging thing. This shows the thing that social classes more or less agree on. From this point of view, luxury also shows whether or not to be successful in the social context. On the other hand, it is also a thing that the poor hope to

reach in the future but a thing that is lost and disappears when they reach it (Braudel, cited by Zorlu, 2006: 110-111). Continuously producing new and fashionable goods or respectively lower income groups' seizing the goods that are the symbol of status turns to be almost a "puss in the corner" for the ones in the highest income group along with the necessity of investment in new goods in order to set the previous social distance again (Featherstone, 2005: 45)

Bocock describes modern consumers as follows;

... Modern consumers are physically passive but they are mentally very busy. Consumption is an experience and an intellectual and mental phenomenon to be solved in more minds rather than in usual. It has got beyond a basic process satisfying merely the necessities of the body. In this way, alienation and estrangement have also entered the modern consumption patterns. Because of ever-increasing packaged experiences, consumers are deprived of living a creativity and autonomy feeling during many activities (Bocock, 2009: 58).

According to Bauman, saving or investing in the consumption society makes a sense only because of the promise of consumer preferences' expanding in the future. Bauman, underlying that consumption activities, different from production activities, are individual activities, finds the major significance of wealth and prosperity in consumer's expanding his area of preference. In this context, consumers should be guided not by moral principles but by aesthetic interests (Bauman, 1999: 49,50-51).

In general, the phenomenon of consumption, which characterizes the globalization process, constitutes the main factor determining the social hierarchy through indicators and symbols and may be an exclusion/ inclusion instrument within the framework of this determining nature. However, in order to be suitable for social inclusion, the continuity of style and rate of the individual's consumption activities is fundamental. In this sense, the consumption activity in the consumption society looks like a marathon without a finish line. There is always a hope for those who have fallen behind in the ongoing race to get ahead, but for those leading in the race, there is no guarantee of winning. Therefore, the thing suggested to today's consumer is, like a cat trying to catch its tail, to provide the continuity of consumption activity in a vicious circle.

3.GLOBALIZATION AND CONSUMPTION PERCEPTION IN TURKEY

The biggest step in incorporating Turkey into the globalization process is the decisions of 24 January. Within the scope of these decisions, the import substitution policy has been exchanged to export based industrialization, and a neo-liberal approach depending on reducing taxes and the share of public sector has been adopted. The effects of transition in the

economic policy occurring with the transition to free market have also led to significant transitions in the social life and in the system of values. In this context, the changed capital accumulation regime has also brought about a unique understanding of consumption.

“In the changed historical conditions and especially after 1980, this process in Turkey, which as a late capitalized country was incorporated into the world economy, was determined with the level that domestic capital accumulation reached at and it created a new hegemony style by spreading to the whole social field. The changed hegemony in question has gained legitimacy as much as it has relocated the social classes, and it has made the production relations and the continuity of consumption rising over them sustainable with increasing inequalities” (Çetiner and Erdal, 2009:3).

Along with the 1990s, the concept of rich neighbourhood gradually changed in big cities such as especially in Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. As a result of their becoming much richer now, since they do not want to meet with the other segments of the city (with much poorer) in the places where they live, the segments belonging to economically higher income group in the 1990s began to live in artificial paradises outside the city like in Bahçeşehir and Kemer Country examples in Istanbul, in which only the elite people live and which are under protection. As parallel to the economy’s opening up and new consumption patterns’ emerging, Turkey in the 1990s also met with giant shopping and entertainment centers and hypermarkets as in the examples of Capitol, Galleria, Migros and Tatilya. Although these types of places have been designed for a certain higher income group, they have turned out to be places which people from lower income group demand and spend time in (AÖF, <http://www.aof.anadolu.edu.tr/kitap/ioltp/1269/unite09.pdf>: 67). In this sense, providing the necessary economic ground in Turkey with Decisions of 24 January 1980 led to gradual increase of “demonstration effect” according to G. Germani’s expression in the society in the period after 1980.

After G. Debord, who described the capitalist society as “demonstration society”, G. Germani attempted to describe the effect of the demonstration society in the framework of “demonstration effect” and “spillover effect” in terms of underdeveloped societies. Within this scope, the demonstration effect is the underdeveloped country people’s trying to develop the consumption patterns specific to developed capitalist societies, which they observe, in their life conditions. Although the demonstration effect forms an important element in increasing the consumption level, the development of such an attitude is an important variable in terms of demonstrating the existence of unequal relationship. People’s determining their ideologies and attitudes in line with the realities of capitalist countries causes capitalist

relationships to be distributed fast and unequally in the society (Ercan, 1996: 216-217). Therefore, with the effect of having abundant young population in Turkey, we can express that consumption is not necessity oriented any more and it has become to be mostly image and indicator oriented.

3.1. A FIELD WORK FOR PERCEPTION OF CONSUMPTION IN TURKEY

The questionnaire study in order to reveal the perception of consumption in Turkey contains the consumers in Forum Shopping Center located in Aydın. Aydın province is located in the Aegean region and has a population of 179.000. Its main source of income is agriculture, stockbreeding and tourism. Aydın province is 56 km to Kuşadası, 101 km to Didim, 130 km to Izmir, which is Turkey's third largest city. As a shopping center, there is only Forum Aydın in Aydın city center. Therefore, it is an important social area for the city especially for young people.

METHOD

The questionnaire study was conducted at Forum Aydın Shopping Center on 27 July 2010 with consumers over 18 years of age by using random sampling method. The Shopping Center has a visitor capacity of approximately 16.000 people daily, and the sampling size was calculated as 242 with a 5% margin of error within 95% reliability limit. 310 questionnaires were made in total. The data were analyzed by using 16.0 SPSS packet program.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA ON CONSUMERS

Gender	n	%
Woman	139	44,84
Man	171	55,16
Marital Status		
Married	124	40
Single	186	60
Age		
18-25	135	43,55
26-30	56	18,06
31-35	48	15,48
36-40	35	11,29
41-45	18	5,81
46-50	11	3,55
51-55	4	
56-60	2	
61+	1	0,32
Education		
Okur-yazar	-	-
Primary Education	8	2,58
Middle Education	12	3,87
High School	62	20
University	209	67,42
Master/Doctora	19	6,53

Occupation		
Housewife	22	7,10
Waged	68	21,94
Self-employed	67	21,61
Worker	23	7,42
Retired	10	3,23
Student	97	31,29
Farmer	2	0,65
Seeking work	21	6,77
Household Income		
0-550 TL	16	5,16
560-1000 TL	53	17,10
1100-1500 TL	86	27,74
1600-2000 TL	62	20
2100-2500 TL	29	9,35
2600-3000 TL	26	8,39
3100-3500 TL	14	4,52
3600-4000 TL	9	2,90
4100-4500 TL	3	0,97
4600-5500 TL	7	2,26
5600-6500 TL	3	0,97
10.100+ TL	2	0,64

44.84% of the participants are female and 55.16% are male. The number of single participants are more (60%) compared to married ones (40%). In terms of age distribution, the age group between 18-25 years (43.55%) constitutes the largest group, which is followed by the age group of 26-30 years (18.06%) and 31-35 years (15.48%).

67.42% of the subjects are determined to have university education. This findings stems from the fact that the majority of the participants are in the age group of 18-25 years, who are mostly university students. 20% of the subjects are high school graduates/students, while 6.53% are receiving/received postgraduate education. 31.29% of the participants consist of students, while 21.94% are waged employees and 21.61% are self-employed.

Household income of 27.74% of the participants is between 1100-1500 TL; while 20% and 17.10% have a household income of 1600-2000 TL and 560-1000 TL, respectively. In this respect, it is possible to say that the majority of the participants are from middle income class.

DATA ON SHOPPING CENTRES

From where do you come to Forum Aydın?	n	%
Aydın city centre	227	77,23
Surrounding town or district	55	17,74
Another city	28	9,03
How often do you visit Forum Aydın?		
More than once a week	85	27,42
Once a week	80	25,81

biweekly	55	17,74
triweekly	18	5,81
Once a month	34	10,97
Several times a year	38	12,26
How much do you spend on average when you go to the Shopping Centre?		
I don't spend	7	2,26
10-50 TL	140	45,16
60-150 TL	116	37,42
160-250 TL	32	10,32
260-350 TL	7	2,26
360-450 TL	3	0,97
460-550 TL	5	1,61
Do you ever visit Shopping Centres just for wandering around/spending time?		
Yes	119	38,39
Sometimes	154	49,68
No	37	11,94
Which features of Shopping Centres attract you most?		
It is a social environment	36	11,61
It is a good option to spend spare time	36	11,61
It is an opportunity to do bulk shopping	60	19,35
It is a combination of entertainment-recreation and shopping	178	57,42

77.23% of the participants came to the Shopping Center from Aydın city center, 17.24% came from surrounding towns and districts, and 9.03% came from other cities. Most of the participants (27.42%) visit Forum Aydın more than once a week, 25.81% visit it once a week, and 17.74% visit it biweekly. These ratios indicate that Forum Aydın is the only big Shopping Center in the city of Aydın and it is an important social environment for the city people. Similarly, 49.68% of the Shopping Center visitors come to the place occasionally just to wander around and 38.39% visit the place “quite frequently”.

Bauman emphasizes the importance of shopping centers for consumption as follows:

“... In every visit to the shopping center, consumers have every reason to feel as if they ordered. They are the ones who judge, criticize and choose. Eventually they can reject their commitment to any of the endless options offered to them-of course except for choosing one among them. Knowing himself, obtaining a place in the society, and a life that can be regarded as meaningful all require daily visits to shopping centers”(Bauman, 1999: 43).

On the other hand, Shopping centers appeal to participants firstly as a place offering a “combination of entertainment-recreation and shopping” (57.42%) and secondly as offering

an “opportunity to do bulk shopping” (19.35%). The choices of being “a good option to spend spare time” and “a social environment” share the same ratio (11.6%).

The necessity of capitalism in the direction of developing the production tools and techniques in order to increase production brings along the development of new consumption tools and techniques to increase consumption as well. Reorganization of shopping centers as consumption tools is a part of this process. While the places in the production area, in which production is organized, are factories, in the consumption area, the venues in which consumption is organized and intensified are consumption places. What a factory means for production is what a modern shop means for consumption. Ritzer (1999) refers to consumption places such as shopping centers, hypermarkets and supermarkets as “consumption tools”. The basic idea behind the term of consumption tools is that such types of place have a similar structure and function with production tools” (Üstün and Tural, 2008: 265).

According to Baudrillard, shopping centers can get everything inside like a kaleidoscope and presents “a sophisticated consumption recital”. These places are the places in which consumption encompasses the whole life, in which all of the activities form a chain in accordance with the same unifying shape, in which ways of rewarding a human are prearranged for each moment, in which the “environment” forms a whole and which is air-conditioned, arranged and culturalized” (Baudrillard, 2008: 19-20). “The new consumption areas are the places which reflect the time they have constructed alive. According to their functions, this construction can take different forms. By using reflective surfaces and artificial lighting techniques especially in the interior design of the shopping centers, dream like worlds, in which time is less important than in other places, are created. Thus, people are provided with a consumption possibility for every day and every hour of the year” (Süer and Sayar, 2002, p.39; cited by Üstün and Tural, 2008: 260).

DATA ON CONSUMPTION PERCEPTION

Do you use credit card?	N	%
Yes	221	71,29
No	89	28,71
Are you influenced by the commercials while choosing the products you consume?		
Definitely yes	64	20,65
Partially yes	202	65,16
No	44	14,19
Which advertisement media affect you the most?		
Ads in newspaper and magazin	58	18,71
TV ads	184	59,35
Billboards	32	10,32
Radio ads	1	0,32
Internet ads	35	11,29
Which expense item besides <u>food</u> occupies the largest share in your budget?		
Education	38	12,26
Health	8	2,58
Clothing	181	58,39
Cigarette-alcohol etc.	45	14,52
Social-culturel activities	38	12,26
Do you feel uncomfortable by not being able to reach the consumption level of other people in your environment?		
Definitely yes	25	8,06
Partially yes	86	27,74
No	199	64,19
Do you want to buy brand name products?		
Yes I want to and I do	125	40,32
I want to, but I don't	17	5,48
I want to, but partially can	152	49,03
I don't want to and I don't	16	5,16
Why do you think brand name products are demanded?		
Using brand name products is an expression of identity	114	36,77
Good quality	153	49,35
Fashionable	8	2,58
The effect of ads	35	11,29
How often do you buy goods that you do not really need in a shopping center?		
I do not buy unnecessary goods	95	30,65
I usually buy unnecessary goods	55	17,74
I rarely buy unnecessary goods	160	51,61
Do you go shopping just out of boredom?		

	n	%
Yes, most of the time	30	9,68
Sometimes	171	55,16
No	109	35,16
What is your attitude towards going to social places beyond your consumption power (luxurious entertainment venues, restaurants, etc.)?		
Yes, I want to and I do	167	53,87
Yes I want to but I can't	66	21,29
No I don't want to and I don't	77	24,84
How important is "consumption power" in terms of receiving social recognition?		
Definitely important	116	37,42
Partially important	141	45,48
Not important	53	17,10
Do you think that many people in society consume for show off?		
Definitely yes	210	67,74
Partially	87	28,06
No	13	4,19
Do you agree with the statement "Excessive consumption makes people selfish and decreases their sensitivity towards social problems"?		
Definitely yes	206	66,45
Partially yes	72	23,23
No	32	10,32
"Do you agree with the statement "There are many products that I do not use after I buy them"?"		
Definitely yes	50	16,13
Partially	110	35,48
No	150	48,39
What is the most important factor affecting the consumption habits of individuals in the process of globalization in your opinion?		
Compulsory needs	67	21,61
Desire to be respected	32	10,32
Showing off	96	30,97
Feeling good	75	24,19
Desire to be different	40	12,90
Do you think there is consumption frenzy in Turkey?		
Definitely yes	173	55,81
Partially yes	128	41,29
No	9	2,90
Do you agree with the statement "Shopping makes me feel good"		
Yes I agree	95	30,65
Partially I agree	154	49,68

No I don't agree	61	19,68
Do you follow the fashion?		
I follow the fashion closely	36	11,61
I try to follow the fashion	124	40
I am not interested in following the fashion	150	48,39
Do you agree with the statement The image of a product is an important factor while buying that product”?		
Definitely I agree	96	30,97
Partially agree	151	48,71
Don't agree at all	63	20,32
How has the current global economic crisis affected your consumption power/tendency?		
In a negative way	74	23,87
In a semi-negative way	166	53,55
Not in a negative way	70	22,58

A majority of the participants (71.29%) use credit cards. The ratio of those who do not use credit cards is 28.71%. According to the results of cross table analysis, participants who use credit cards spend more money at the Shopping Center compared to those who do not use credit cards. (40.7% of those who use credit cards spend approximately 60-150 TL, while only 29.2% of those who do not use credit cards spend this amount.)

It has been observed that most of the participants are somehow influenced by commercials while buying the products (65,16%), and 20.65% of the participants stated that they were “definitely influenced” by the commercials. Only 14.19% of the participants noted that they were not influenced by commercials in their choice of products. Participants are mostly affected by TV commercials (59.35%), advertisements in the newspapers and magazines (18.71%), and internet advertisements (11.29%), respectively. Accordingly, it may be concluded that commercials and advertisements play an effective role in determining the needs.

The project of aestheticization of daily life has emerged as a necessity of capitalist mass production and profit realization. It is stated that the image's gradually gaining importance –even if some features in its content disappear- firmly suppresses its usage value. Aestheticization of daily life is in key position largely in indicators and advertisements forming the texture of daily life and in various products of the popular culture. Thus, rather than its being dependent on needs, consumption has major effects in gradually becoming a phenomenon appealing to the desires- in which its exchange value has come into prominence (Bati, 2007: 9)

A majority of the participants allocate the greatest share for clothing besides food (58.39%). This result reveals the effect of consumption on image. It also demonstrates the

significance of appearance and image in creating a momentary effect in consumption societies where everything is evaluated superficially. Most of the participants do not feel uncomfortable by not being able to reach the consumption level of other people in their environment (64.19%), while 27.74% feel “partially uncomfortable” and 8.06% feel “definitely uncomfortable”. Although most of the participants are not troubled by not being able to reach the consumption level of other people in their environment, 35.80% in total consider this situation as partially and totally disturbing. Thus, it is likely to state that consumption is perceived as an exclusion factor.

A great majority of the participants want to buy brand name products, while only 5.16% answered that they “do not want and buy brand name products”. 40.12% wish to and eventually do buy brand name products. 49.03% wish to but occasionally can buy brand name products. 5.48% wish to but cannot buy brand name products. The reason for the demand for brand name products is associated by 49.35% with their “good quality”, while 36.77% have the opinion that using brand name products is an expression of identity.

According to the participants of the questionnaire, consumption for “showing off” is the most important factor (30.97%) affecting individuals’ way of consumption in the process of globalization. This is followed by other factors such as “feeling good” (24.19%) and “compulsory needs” (21.61%).

51.61% of the participants state that they rarely buy products that they do not really need, while 30.65% do not buy goods that they do not need and 17.74% generally buy products that they do not really need. It has been found at the end of the cross table analysis that the rate participants who “usually buy unnecessary products” is higher among those who use credit cards (19.9%) compared to those who do not use credit cards (12.24%). Similarly, the rate of participants who “do not buy unnecessary products” is higher among those who do not use credit cards (33.7%) compared to those who use credit cards (29.4%). Accordingly, credit cards, which are tools that facilitate consumption, are the most distinctive factor determining consumption societies.

55.16%, 9.68% and 35.16% of the participants answered the question “Do you ever go shopping just out of boredom?” as “sometimes”, “most of the time” and “No”, respectively. From the perspective of gender, the rate of answering the question as “sometimes” is higher among women compared to men (69.8% of women, 43.3% of men). Similarly, it is generally men who give the answer “No” (49.1% of men, 18% of women). Most of the participants responded as “yes, I want to and I do” to the question regarding their desire and capability of going to places beyond their consumption power (53.87%); while

21.29% and 24.84% responded as “ yes, I want to but I can’t” and “I don’t want to and I don’t”, respectively.

Regarding the question about social recognition based on consumption power, 17.10%, 45.48% and 37.42% of the participants responded as “not important”, “partially important” and “definitely important”, respectively. Therefore, it is possible to say that consumption power is a significant factor in social inclusion. In other words, lack of consumption power represents social exclusion. As articulated by Bauman (1999), the most distinctive characteristic of today’s poor is that they are “flawed consumers”.

Most of the participants responded to the statement “Excessive consumption makes people selfish and decreases their sensitivity towards social problems” as “yes, I agree” (66.45%); while 23.23% and 10.32% responded as “partially agree” and “do not agree”, respectively. Accordingly, we may say that Marx’s concept of alienation is relevant also for consumption.

48.30% of the participants do not agree with the statement “There are many products that I do not use after I buy them”, while 35.48% partially agreed and 16.13% completely agreed. Although most of the participants are from the middle income class, more than half of the subjects agreed with this statement, showing that consumption is an activity providing temporary triumphs.

The question “Do you think there is consumption frenzy in Turkey?” was answered as “no” only by 2.90% of the participants; while 55.81% and 41.29% responded as “definitely yes” and “partially yes”, respectively. The “consumption society”, which is the reflection of globalization in social sphere, is becoming more apparent especially in the late capitalist countries like Turkey with the considerable effect of the young population.

The statement “Shopping makes me feel good” was responded as “partially agree”, “definitely agree” and “I do not agree” by 49.68%, 30.65% and 19.68% of the participants, respectively. Therefore, shopping is perceived as fun because of the enchanting atmosphere attracting people rather than as an activity for meeting the needs. According to Baudrillard (2008), consumption is an idealist application rather than a materialist process. This means that the consumed products are not objects, but thoughts (Baudrillard, qtd. in Bocock, 2009: 75).

48.39% of the participants do not follow the fashion, 40% try to follow the fashion, and 11.61% follow the fashion closely. The sum of participants who follow the fashion closely and who try to follow the fashion (51.61%) is slightly higher than those who do not follow the fashion. On the other hand, cross table analysis reveals that the rate of women who

“try to follow the fashion” is much higher compared to men (48.9% of women, 32.7% of men).

The statement “The image of a product is an important factor while buying that product” was responded as “partially agree” by a majority of the participants (48.71%), “definitely agree” by 30.97%, and “do not agree” by 20.32%. These answers indicate that the consumed products are not just objects, but usually a message and symbol reflecting what a person wishes to be.

Regarding the question about the effect of global economic crisis on consumption power, most of the participants (53.55%) were “affected in a semi-negative way”, 23.87% of the participants were “affected in a negative way”, and 22.58% of the participants were “not affected in a negative way”. Therefore, it may be concluded that global crisis has a substantial negative effect on people.

CONCLUSION

Globalization, which is perceived as a solution to the problem of shrinking profit rates of the capitalist system, has caused important social and cultural transformations within the framework of objective of creating and reaching new markets especially in the developing countries. In this respect, Turkey, as a lately capitalized country, is one of the countries which feel the impact of this transformation the most. In Turkey, which joined the process of globalization by 24 January 1980 Decisions, the power and ways of consumption became a symbol of status in society with the rapid increase in urbanization especially as of 1990s and the foundation of private televisions. The questionnaire study conducted on the consumption perception in Forum Aydın Shopping Center has demonstrated that individuals perceive consumption as a social inclusion and/or exclusion tool. Individuals, as members of risk societies in the process of globalization, temporarily feel safe in an artificial paradise created by consumption. The capitalist system is based on the continuity of consumption. One of the ways of providing this continuity is to create individuals who are ready to express themselves by consumption. The results of the questionnaire study also reveal that consumption not only meets the needs, but exists with the concern of conveying messages.

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