

Kurban in Turkey:  
From Traditional Ritual to Urban Practice

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## Abstract

“Kurban in Turkey: From Traditional Ritual to Urban Practices”

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Asst. Prof. Umut Türem, Thesis Advisor

Islamic animal sacrifice is a topic that has been written about little but is very significant because the sacrifice practice itself is undergoing a process of change in Turkey. My argument is that kurban practices in Turkey have been transformed by the specific urbanization experience of Turkey, particularly in the context of changes in urban sensibilities and the broader Islamic revival in Turkey.

I argue that with population increase in urban sites, sacrifice practices became more visible, and this resulted in feelings of discomfort about animal slaughters. Related to this discomfort, kurban became a topic that is regulated more and more each day, and it became intensely debated and interpreted from various different angles. Meanwhile, in parallel to the increasing urbanization of kurban practices, new market players have entered the field of kurban, mediating the process of buying, selling and slaughtering kurban and particularly enlarging the proxy sacrifice services.

In this thesis, I explain the secular and legal debates, the regulation of kurban, the physical organization of kurban sites in Istanbul, and the new kurban practices that have led to the dematerialization of kurban in Turkey. I focus on Istanbul as it can be claimed to be representative of urbanities in Turkey.

47,000 words

## Özet

“Türkiye’de Kurban: Geleneksel Ritüelden Şehirli Uygulamalara”

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İslami kurban üzerine çok az yazılmış olmasına rağmen çok önemli bir konu çünkü kurban ritüeli Türkiye’de önemli bir değişime uğruyor. Özellikle de kentli duyarlılıklarının değişimi ve İslami canlanma bağlamında kurban uygulamalarının spesifik şehirleşme deneyimleriyle dönüşüme uğradığını savunuyorum.

Kentlerde nüfus artışıyla birlikte, kurban pratikleri daha görünür hale geldi, ve bu, kurban kesimlerinin kamusal alanda görünürlüğüyle ilgili rahatsızlık hissi yarattı. Bu rahatsızlık hissine bağlı olarak, kurban her geçen gün daha fazla düzenlenen bir alan haline geldi; ve yoğun şekilde tartışılan ve çok farklı şekillerde yorumlanan bir hal aldı. Kurban pratiklerinin kentleşmesine paralel olarak kurban giderek yoğunlaşan bir piyasalaşmanın parçası oldu. Bu piyasalaşma süreci içerisinde kurbanın alım-satımına ve kesilmesine aracılık eden, özellikle de “vekaleten kurban” pratiklerini yaygınlaştıran birçok yeni aktör ortaya çıktı.

Bu tezde, kurban hakkındaki seküler/hukuki tartışmalar ve düzenlemeleri, İstanbul’da kurbanın fiziksel organizasyonunu, ve kurbanın fizikselliğini yitirdiği yeni uygulamaları açıklıyorum. Türkiye’de şehirleşmenin temsili olarak İstanbul’a odaklanıyorum.

47.000 kelime







*To animals*

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## Glossary of Non-English Terms

Kurban	Islamic animal sacrifice, sacrificial animal, religious slaughter, religious feast
Hisse	One seventh share of the meat of sacrificed cattle
Vekaleten kurb.	Proxy sacrifice
Yurtdışı vekalet	Foreign proxy sacrifice
Vacip	Religiously necessary
Adak	Vow
Nafile	Religiously not necessary
Kuban pazarı	Animal bazaar
Oto-yıkama	Carwash
Koran Kursu	Koran course
Öğrenci yurdu	Student dormitory
Halı-yıkama	Carpetwashing facility
Vekaleten Hac	Proxy hajj
Kesim ünitesi	Slaughter container

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

NGO	Non governmental organization
TİKA	Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency
IHH	Human Rights and Freedoms Humanitarian Association
UNIW	Union of Non-Governmental Organizations of Islamic World
TGTV	Foundation of Turkish Volunteer Organizations
GHA	Global Humanitarian Assistance

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## Introduction

**K**urban is the Turkish word for Islamic animal sacrifice. I attempt to answer the question of what happens to kurban practices in an urbanizing environment. This thesis is about urbanism in Turkey, which can be defined as heterogeneous lifestyles. And kurban practices are good examples of this specific urbanism experience with heterogeneity. While doing that, I discover how kurban practices are changed.

Kurban is actually a highly-debated issue due to the public visibility of the slaughters, but it is not easy to find academic studies on it. In mainstream media coverage in Turkey, it is perceived as uncivilized, savage behavior to slaughter animals on the streets of the cities. Because of the potential points of tension, studying sacrifice practices in cities are important. And this thesis reflects on this unstudied area, different from the kurban literature on Turkey focusing on the rural practices.

My initial focus when I started this thesis was about the change in human-animal relations. Then I became more curious about the kurban practice itself. Animal sacrifice differentiates Muslim populations from the rest of the world in their relation to animals. It is almost impossible to find such visibility of public slaughters in Euro-America, and it is similarly impossible to find it at other times of the year in Turkey. Therefore, the specific visibility of slaughters gives an outstanding site for the examination of human-animal relations. When I delved into the subject, I contended that without understanding the

specific effects of urbanism in Turkey, I could not understand the kurban itself in the contemporary world.

In the remaining part of this introduction I explain kurban as a religious practice. After this explanation, I outline the thesis ahead and present my argument. I also explain the methodology of this thesis and the research process.

In Turkish, kurban means the religious practice of sacrificing an animal for God, but it has many other meanings. Kurban is used as a synonym for the period of the sacrifice feast, for the sacrificial animal itself, and for one person's share of the sacrificial animal. In this thesis, I use kurban in more than one meaning. Sometimes, I use it as the sacrificial animal itself, sometimes as a person's due share from a sacrifice. Sometimes I use it to refer to the feast period, but mostly I use it as the Islamic practice of animal sacrifice. There are no distinct concepts which can correspond to all these different meanings.

A summary of Islamic animal sacrifice is in order before moving on with the thesis. Starting with the narrative of kurban (Islamic animal sacrifice), the first thing that comes to mind is the story of the prophet Abraham. According to this narrative mentioned in Torah, the Bible, and the Koran, sacrificing an animal to God is a ritual done by Abraham for the first time in return for his wish being actualized. People made human sacrifices before that time but Abraham made a revolutionary change in social life by abandoning the ritual of sacrificing sons, replacing it with sacrificing animals. The narrative relates that he wishes to have a son and promises God that he will sacrifice his most valuable asset if the wish fills. Years later he has a son but forgets about his promise. The paradox was that, his most beloved, precious asset was his son, and decades later he would be obliged to sacrifice his son. One day, in a dream, God reminds him of his promise, and in the morning he takes his son to sacrifice him to God. He puts his son on the altar, binds his eyes, and just before killing him with a knife, God sends a sheep to be sacrificed instead of Abraham's son. This way, Abraham passes the test of faith to God. This conclusion is one of the multiple explanations about the story.

As practiced today, this kind of a sacrifice ritual in which you make a promise to God, and tell that you will slaughter an animal if your wish comes true would be called "adak". There are other kinds of animal sacrifice: "akika" (for a newborn), "şükür" (to thank God for good fortune), "nafil" (for people

who are not obliged to make a sacrifice), and “heyd” (as a gift for the Kaaba and Harem regions by people who have made the Haj pilgrimage). But apart from these, the Eid al-Adha/udhiye/vacip kurban is the kind of sacrifice that ordinary people are supposed to make at a specific time each year, namely on the first three days of the sacrifice feast. This date is the last, twelfth month according to the Islamic lunar calendar. The month is called Dhu al-Hijjah (Zilhice), and the feast starts on the tenth day of the month and lasting for four days until the thirteenth day. In the international Gregorian calendar, the dates drift eleven days each year, resulting in the fact that in some years the feast occurs in summer and in others in winter. Muslims make animal sacrifices on the condition that they have enough wealth (Din Hizmetleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 2013).<sup>1</sup>

The most basic, traditional method of Islamic animal sacrifice has been to sacrifice an animal in the garden of the family house, in the presence of the owners of the animal or the whole family. Many additional traditional rituals accompany this event: applying henna on the wool of the sheep, binding the eyes of the sheep, tying the legs of cattle in order that they topple easily, praying over the head of the animal before the sacrifice, experiencing the psychological and physical difficulty of slaughter by witnessing the death of the animal, making sure that animal bleeds quickly and completely so that it does not suffer long, and taking bits of its blood to dot the foreheads of other family members. A minority of people do a prayer (namaz) after the sacrifice.

There are also certain restrictions on choosing the animal and sharing it. The animal should be old enough, healthy, and should have no physical impairment. When taken to the garden of the house, it should be fed and treated in a good way. It is also preferred that the animal be sacrificed on the first day of the feast. For some believers, it is also okay to make sacrifices for the souls of ancestor that have passed away. This kind of sacrifice is done one day before the feast. In traditional lore, if the sacrificial animal is a sheep, ram or goat, it should be bought and sacrificed by just one person. “An ovine is one life that cannot be divided into portions.” as one of my interviewees told. On the other hand, if the sacrifice is of a bovine – cow, ox or bull in the Turkish case - it can be divided into up to seven shares. This means that seven people can come together to buy a cow and share its meat. One rare example of buying shares

is practiced by some religious student groups: students have created initiatives to donate sacrificial animals to people in need in other countries. Because of their limited financial capabilities, they divide the one seventh share of a cow into ten more shares to be paid by each student, such that seventy students come together to raise the money.

Meat that is brought home should be divided into three parts: one for the family, one for relatives, and one for people in need. But taking into consideration that it may be difficult in cities to find needy people in one's own neighborhood, people sometimes keep it for relatives, share it with wealthy neighbors who are not actually in need, or give it to the doorman of their apartment building. Another debated practice is that people who are not wealthy enough may keep all the meat for themselves rather than distributing two thirds of it to relatives and people in need.

For kurban practices, the traditional ritual would be defined in a specific way. For my interviewees, traditional kurban ritual meant being witness to the sacrifice moment, either by being there, seeing the animal, or butchering it by themselves. This traditional ritual was not only practiced in rural areas but also in cities. In the city centers, inside the neighborhood there were religious institutions such as mosques, Koran courses and their student dormitories. The animals were placed somewhere around the building, where the people see and choose the animal, and they could visit the place during the sacrifice moment, and bear witness to the sacrifice. It also appears that "car wash facilities" which significantly increased in number after the 1990s have constituted a widespread sacrifice site because they enabled people to practice the traditional ritual witnessing the sacrifice. Carwashes, thus, became "secular" sites –unlike the Koran courses- where people can go to get their sacrifice be handled.

And non-traditional kurban practices emerged by the 1990s and accelerated significantly after the 2000s. This was a new type of "proxy sacrifice". Proxy sacrifice means that the donor of the sacrifice gives his proxy (*vekalet*) to an agent, and that agent makes the sacrifice in the donor's name. While in the more conventional way of proxy sacrifice donor can see the animal before sacrifice and witness the animal being slaughtered, the new type of proxy sacrifice eliminates the traditional practice of witnessing. Because in the religious

doctrine, there is no necessity for bearing witness to the sacrifice moment, this new type of proxy is religiously valid. In contemporary Turkey, while conventionally urban Islamic institutions continue to make proxy sacrifice in the traditional way, international Muslim NGOs and supermarket chains do it in a new way, both being equally accepted by religious authorities.

In this thesis, I track the path of transformation of kurban practices in cities. There has always been kurban practices in Istanbul and the urban sites in general. On the other hand, the existence of the non-Muslim population and the low density of total residents in cities before the 1950s resulted in lesser visibility of animal sacrifice in public areas. However, by the decrease of non-Muslim population, and the increase of Muslim population migrating to cities, the demographic profile of the cities has changed significantly. And we started to see more people making sacrifice. Due to lack of organization for services, the demands of the increased urban population were not met, and they found makeshift solutions, such as sacrificing animals in the grass next to the highways, or simply slaughtering animals in their residential neighborhoods without paying much attention to the aesthetic or even hygienic conditions. These images, in turn, sparked negative reactions. This development is culminated in 1990s, and these years constituted the milestone for unwanted kurban practices to become newsworthy. Due to the increasing discontent, the first steps were taken in 2001 to regulate kurban, and to stop the visibility of slaughters in the streets. And since then, the slaughters are carried away from the sights of the public by new agencies, and levels of visibility turn back to low levels again.

The increasing visibility of kurban in urban areas (due to the increase in number of slaughters as well as the revival of Islam in public space) coincided with changes in the sensibilities in the society. Paradoxically, the gradual move away from nature that defines urban areas includes an increasing avoidance of the violence of animal killing. This can be connected to changing sensibilities about nature, violence, and human-animal relations. This may have a class component, of course. Low-income migrant populations who settled in cities arranged their shanty neighborhoods in such a way that they would not lose contact with edible domestic animals, in contrast with higher income neigh-

borhoods. This differentiation of the neighborhoods reflected on people's sensibilities about violence and animals. This thesis opens the discussion for further research on urban sensibilities in relation to class, however, I do not cover the class aspect of kurban particularly.

The urban sensibilities have been generated by and in turn influenced not only secular but also religious people in Turkey. And as an independent development, the Islamic networks in urban areas expanded. As part of what we can call Islamic revival, individual Muslim identity opened to the world and preferred a more textual treatment of questions of religion to traditional practice, and enabled the kurban practices to emerge and being adopted. Meanwhile, kurban became a topic that is regulated by law, debated in media, and interpreted by Islamic scholars. And at the same time, kurban sector became materialized having new market players.

Finally, in the context of changing patterns of the urban economy, I also see the disappearing materiality of kurban. This has two dimensions: on one hand, more and more market players enter the field of kurban and make their services available to those people who wish to fulfill their religious duties and yet cannot deal with the materiality of kurban - its mess - in urban settings. A number of actors ranging from supermarket chains to civil society organizations have emerged to mediate the relation between the Muslim individual and the kurban. On the other hand, such organizations have similarly taken the kurban out of the territorial borders of Turkey as part of a new field of humanitarian assistance. In this field, the person engaging in the practice of kurban loses the material relation even further. In the following chapters I explain these arguments in more detail.

In the second chapter I offer historical and theoretical perspectives, particularly those of urbanization in Turkey and its changing sensibilities. I also make a literature review about the Islamic revival among the urban masses and how it has influenced the changing patterns of kurban in urban settings.

In the third chapter I discuss the regulation of kurban in the history of the Turkish Republic, showing that kurban has not been a significant object of regulation in the past. The existance of regulation has increased only recently due to the shift of the population from the countryside to urban settings. In this chapter I elaborate on these regulations.

In the fourth chapter I analyze the physical organization of kurban slaughters in Istanbul during the sacrifice feast. I introduce the process of kurban starting with the animals' transportation to Istanbul and ending with the animal being slaughtered and turned into meat. This process shows how kurban is practiced in urban settings.

In the final chapter, I examine the issue of proxy sacrifices in Turkey as an example of the disappearing materiality of kurban. I show in contrast with its traditional practice, the disappearance of materiality gives a new picture of kurban slaughters that has altered the meaning and practice of the religious ritual once and for all. I argue here that proxy sacrifice as it is practiced is an example of "transnational urbanism," which suggests a move away from nature for the practitioners while also based on transnational ties. And I analyze not only foreign proxy sacrifice, but also proxies arranged by supermarkets and secular NGOs to show varying levels of loss of materiality.

As a research site I selected Istanbul because it represents urbanizing Turkey. Due to internal migration, one sixth of the country's population lives there, and political struggles in Istanbul generally coincide with that of the country (Keyder, 2000, p. 34). The metropolis has undergone a significant transformation with respect to its capacity to attract international financial agencies, its electoral potential and its clientelistic networks. Given these developments, Istanbul is a good case to explain the specific context of urbanization in Turkey.

As a methodology, I have used several data gathering techniques to answer the question of how the kurban practices have been transformed in urban Turkey. First, I made observations and conducted short, structured interviews in visit to kurban bazaars, religious institutions, and carwash facilities. Second, I analyzed how people conduct sacrifice in urban settings, and I reached an understanding about people's preferences by doing unstructured interviews with kurban practitioners. Third, I conducted content analysis by analyzing legal documents and media archives about kurban, the index of animal selling and slaughtering sites in Istanbul, the dates that Muslim NGOs started offering proxy sacrifice, Islamic scholars' interpretations about kurban's real meaning, and professional and secular debates about kurban in the International Kurban Symposium. Below, I explain my research methods in greater detail.

I visited eight kurban bazaars in various European and Asian districts of Istanbul, during the 2014 kurban feast. These included the Sarıyer-Tepe, Darülaceze adak-kurban center, the Bakırköy-İncirli kurban bazaar, the Üsküdar Beylerbeyi kurban bazaar, the Çekmeköy-Serindere kurban bazaar, the Kağıthane - “Sadabad 2 Viyadük altı” animal bazaar site, the animal bazaar formed on the empty urban land next to Bakırköy-Marmara Forum shopping mall, animal bazaar in Kasımpaşa near Feriköy (consisting of three bazaars next to each other). I observed and conducted interviews with animal sellers in these animal bazaars. Structured interviews were more appropriate for the bazaar environment, and I sought direct answers to quickly understand the physical organization. I tried to understand how they supplied animals, how they came to Istanbul, how the bazaars were organized, and how they sold the animals. I also asked about their previous experiences of Istanbul’s animal bazaars. What I discovered was that urban land is so valuable that the sites of bazaars are constantly being changed. Police patrols have started in some bazaars to avoid people from doing slaughters publicly.

I visited carwash facilities that provided animal slaughter in the 2015 and 2016 kurban feast periods. I visited five such facilities: Emin Oto Kuaför-Yıkama (Bayrampaşa), Girgin Oto-Yıkama (Bayrampaşa), Ersoy Otomotiv (Bayrampaşa) in 2015, and in 2016, Pakiş Oto-Yıkama and an informal carwash in Fikirtepe. I conducted structured interviews with the owners of two facilities and focus group discussions with three groups of people who had their animals slaughtered in these facilities. I tried to understand how the system worked and the reason the donors preferred it. I asked facility owners about when they were founded, since when they have been working as kurban facilities, and what services they provide. I discovered their relation to other urban facilities such as bazaars.

I visited seven religious institutions in the 2015 kurban period, and apart from that but in the same year, I conducted three unstructured in-depth interviews with workers of Beylikdüzü Elmas Kız Koran Kursu, İHH, and Dost Eli Derneği, without visiting their place. These interviews were conducted in an undirected way, to gather as much information as possible about the details of proxy activities. Moreover, I conducted short interviews with the officials of seven institutions I visited: Bağcılar Kız Öğrenci Yurdu (Bağcılar), Yunus



Emre Erkek Koran Kursu (Bağcılar), Özel Kirazlı Orta Öğretim Erkek Öğrenci Yurdu (Bağcılar), Tabakçılar Erkek Öğrenci Yurdu (Güngören), Şehzadebaşı Erkek Talebe Yurdu (Fatih), İlim Yayma Vakfı (Fatih), and Aziz Mahmut Hüdai Vakfı (Üsküdar). With respect to religious associations, I understood the historical and legal processes that led them to organize proxy sacrifice events. I discovered that the religious associations had been closed down in almost regular intervals by coups such as the postmodern coup of 1997, which is called as the 28 February. Therefore, most officials working in religious associations were suspicious and unwilling to talk. Moreover, I conducted my field research before a coup attempt on 15 July 2016. After this coup attempt, I suppose some of these associations were closed due to supposed contact with coup plotters. There was one more surprising thing that I discovered my interviews with religious associations. Most emphasized the technologies that they use during slaughters. They emphasize mechanization, modernization, health, and convenience.

I conducted unstructured interviews in 2014 and 2015 with twenty urban residents of Istanbul, who conduct sacrifices. I reached people living in different parts of Istanbul, through snowball sampling. These people mainly described themselves as middle class, differing between lower and higher income levels, having a religious background. Except four of them, the rest were women. Among the twenty people, fourteen practiced proxy sacrifice in one way or another. Among the fourteen proxy sacrifice practitioners, eight practiced foreign proxy sacrifice, four gave their proxy (vekalet) to religious institutions, one gave his proxy to a supermarket, and one gave her proxy to a secular NGO. The reason I conducted unstructured interviews was to keep their narratives undirected so that they could narrate aspects of kurban not known to me. For the practitioners of animal sacrifice, I sought to understand their motivations for choosing a particular method of animal sacrifice. I had assumed they had a definite preference and that they maintain the same preference every year. As opposed to what I had assumed, I discovered that they practiced different methods of sacrifice each year and practiced proxy sacrifice as a complement. Either they practiced traditional methods one year and alternative urban methods the next, or, if they had enough money, they did one proxy sacrifice and one conventional sacrifice in the same year. Within the

same family, grandparents may sacrifice in traditional ways while their children or their sisters and brothers prefer proxy sacrifices. Most of these families were middle or upper-middle income. Only two families reported that they preferred foreign proxy sacrifice because it is cheaper. And one family expressed that they prefer to go to their rural homeland during the kurban feast to sacrifice an animal. These interviews show that there are no homogeneous preferences.

Finally, I used content analysis. First, I analyzed the legal infrastructure with respect to kurban. Second, I analyzed media coverage of kurban in *Milliyet* online archives. By searching the keyword “Kurban Bayramı” (kurban feast) I found fifty-nine related news articles between the years 1951 and 2003, omitting duplicates. Fifty-one of these news articles were about animal skins. I use this information to explain the legal regulations about animal skins. Later, I conducted another search on *Milliyet* archive with the keyword, “Kurban kesimi” (sacrificial animal slaughter). I found eighteen articles related to urban sensibilities starting in 1994. These articles help to explain how urban sensibilities became newsworthy in the mid-1990s. Third, I analyzed the list of official animal slaughters organized by Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality in 2016. I analyzed more than 500 entries about sacrifice and slaughter facilities in Istanbul, gathering them in a table that lays down which kinds of facilities are most used. Forth, I could not find complete statistics about foreign proxy sacrifices, but I have tried to show the increase in foreign proxy sacrifices in the tables I have prepared about the years such associations were founded and the years in which they started offering foreign proxy sacrifice. These were necessary to understand the workings of the proxy sacrifice events. In short meetings with public officials from the Istanbul Office of Mufti (*İstanbul Müftülüğü*) and the Directorate of Religious Affairs – Kurban Services office in Ankara (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı – Kurban Hizmetleri Ofisi*), I discovered that the directorate does not yet collect statistical information on the associations that organize proxy sacrifice events. But I received the official numbers of foreign proxies arranged only by Religious Affairs since 1993. Fifth, I analyzed Islamic scholars’ interpretations about the real meaning of kurban and discovered that there are scholars who define the kurban ritual without any killing of animals. And finally, I analyzed the International

Kurban Symposium which took place in 2007, discussing the kurban as a topic of professional and secular debate.

As a final note, during my research in 2016, there was a failed coup attempt in Turkey which brought about fundamental changes in the country. It resulted in the close down of some NGOs, student dorms and institutions due to their contact with coup plotters. Although it could reduce the proxy sacrifice practices to a certain extent, it would not terminate this practice. People would still prefer to give their proxy to other agencies such as Religious Affairs Foundation; and new market players would emerge. Therefore, the arguments mentioned in this thesis would still be valid for kurban practices in urban Turkey.

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1 Having 80.18 grams of gold or a similar amount of money or wealth.



## Theoretical Background

So how can I study the shifting patterns of the kurban ritual in urban Turkey? This question can be answered in a number of ways, but I argue that an analysis of Turkey's urbanization experience, a brief review of some theories on urban life and transnational urbanism, and the changing sensibilities framework of Elias and others are helpful. I demonstrate that increase in the population in the cities have resulted in increased quantity of sacrifices. And the visibility of sacrifices has triggered the urban sensibilities and created a demand for nonvisibility. Additionally, the literature focusing on the Islamic revival in Turkey should also be consulted to get a better sense of politics of kurban in urban settings since 1990s.

### § 2.1 Urbanization of Turkey

In this part, rather than giving a detailed history of urbanization in Turkey, I give a brief introduction to the urbanization of Turkey, and then focus on Istanbul. I determined Istanbul as a research site because one sixth of the country's population lives there, and political struggles in Istanbul coincides with those of the country more generally (Keyder, 2000, p. 34). Additionally, regarding the varied spatial qualities of the suburbs, electoral potential, clientelistic networks, civil society organizations, international ties and the capacity to attract international financial agencies, Istanbul is a case that can represent the

specific urban context in Turkey. This review helps me to comprehend the waves of internal migration to Istanbul that have taken place since 1950s.

Before turning to internal waves of migration, I should start from the 1940s to draw a correct image of urban populations. The population in 1940 was different from that of the 1980s. In 1942, the Turkish state waged a new property tax – the *Varlık Vergisi* -, which targeted non-Muslim citizens and businessmen. Those who could not pay their taxes were exiled from Istanbul, and many left the country. Meanwhile, after the Second World War, Turkey was able to handle import substitution industrialization policies with the support of Marshall Plan aid. Wealthy businessmen of Anatolia started to migrate to Istanbul, but larger migratory flow would start later with lower classes who came to Istanbul in search of jobs (Keyder, 2000, p. 20). Meanwhile, oppression of non-Muslims continued throughout the 1950s and 60s. By the 1980s, less than 2,000 Greeks (*Rum*), 50.000 Armenians, and 25.000 Jews were left in Istanbul (Keyder, 2000, p. 19). Turkish urban areas had turned into Muslim cities, reflecting the wider geography of Turkey. Massive migrations from Anatolia enabled this transformation, restructuring the social and physical landscape of large cities including Istanbul. The reason most people migrated to the metropolis were the economic and social opportunities of the city wherein capital accumulation processes developed together with public services. In particular, the metropolis linked global capital and the public opportunities.

Between 1950 and 1960, the most populated four cities grew by 75 percent due to immigrants from rural areas and from other countries. One of every ten villagers had migrated to a city (Keyder, 1999, p. 190-191). The first migrants increased their life standards, but they were kept from integrating culturally. Immigrants therefore created their own shanty towns perpetuating their own culture on the peripheries of the city (Keyder, 1999, p. 190).

The migration waves to Istanbul can be divided into periods. I consider the migrants up until the 1970s as first comers, the migrants up until the 80s as the second group, and the migrants after the 1980s as the latecomers. Meanwhile, the upper-middle classes and shanty town residents occupied separate urban environments, which ended up in a social distinction between the two groups.

The first migrants settled in non-residential areas at the outskirts of the city, both because of a lack of land in the city center and because there was less state control over land outside the city. They also preferred the outskirts for the privacy concerns (Keyder, 2000, p. 175). Due to the abundance of land at the peripheries, settlements were formed loosely rather than as condensed slums (Keyder, 2000, p. 175). The first group of residents supported each other on the peripheral lands that they occupied.

For the second group of migrants, the case studied by Siefert (2005) explains the story of the Koçkiri Tribe which was living in twenty-eight different villages around the city of Sivas and whose migration to Istanbul peaked between 1975 and 1977 (Siefert, p. 216-217). While the first migrants were young, unmarried men who lived in the dorms, they slowly transferred to the newly developing slums of the city (p. 217). The first years necessitated buying land on which to build dwellings. As the tribe became larger, they started occupying lands in competition with other migrant groups (p. 217). The buildings were constructed by a couple of workers for low wages and were completed quickly; the use of an extensive number of workers with higher wages started in the 1980s (p. 217).

As the latest comers in the 1990s, Kurdish migrants escaping the war in the southeastern regions of Turkey constituted the real urban poor of the city. 1.5 million Kurds left their villages during the military campaign against PKK. The war not only uprooted them from their villages, but took their means of livelihood which was traditional husbandry (Tuğal, p. 70-71). For the late comers, kin support was not in place, and they were unable to occupy state land to build settlements. Therefore, they settled in previously occupied areas in poor conditions. Slums began to form (Keyder, 2000, p. 189). Competition emerged in the city between early and latecomer migrants; the first comers benefitted from renting their multistory houses to newcomers. Pınarcıoğlu and Işık (2002) call this phenomenon *nöbetleşe yoksulluk* (shifting poverty) (Pınarcıoğlu and Işık, 2002; Tuğal, p. 71; Lovering and Türkmen, 2011, p. 76). It was made possible by the legislation of 1984 with Law no 2981 which gave shanty owners the right to build four-story buildings on the land. In this way, shanty towns were transformed to suburbs (Doğan 2004).

These suburbs demonstrate the variety of the Islamist movement and the shape it would later take. Sultanbeyli is good example of the transformation of a village into a shanty town into a fast-growing, large suburban area with land and other basic materials such as coal, food, and clothing are provided to new settlers by the municipality (Tuğal, 2008, p. 72). Meanwhile Mass housing co-operatives that built “high-rise apartment dwellings along the newly constructed highways surrounding the city” with the support of Mass Housing Fund after mid 1980s were the primary housing option for the middle class (Keyder and Öncü, p. 25). The fifteen-to twenty-year mortgages for the houses of 100 square meters owned by the Mass Housing Fund; moreover, these apartment dwellings outside the city made it possible for lower-middle income groups to get out of the city center and live in socially homogeneous places (p. 30). The upper-middle classes were in the city centers, forming co-operatives, some of which settled on state land on European side and in the hills along the Bosphorus. Private property was also parceled on the Anatolian side along the coast of the Sea of Marmara (Keyder, 2000, p. 183). Urban land prices skyrocketed (Keyder and Öncü, p. 25). And additionally, a new class of the newly rich started to flow to the suburbs outside the city to the luxury suburbs. The empty lands outside of the city center were chosen to build a “hygienic” lifestyle in housing estates such as Kemer Country, Acarkent, and Atlantis (Doğan, 2004). In the end, there were separate, ethnically-based and class based “localisms” in the city (Keyder and Öncü, p. 31).

These waves of urbanism in Istanbul created different social realities. The people in shanty neighborhoods did not drastically change their lifestyles after migrating to Istanbul. They constructed their shanty houses and gardens on the outskirts of the city and bred domestic, edible animals to support their households economically. Moreover, they maintained contact with their rural homelands. Selma<sup>1</sup> (55) who lives in Istanbul’s Sancaktepe, a lower-middle class neighborhood, explains that they go to their hometown of Sivas to perform the animal sacrifice (personal communication, 20 October 2014):

My mother-in-law, father-in-law, and mother are in Sivas; all of them have animals. We - our relatives - generally go to Sivas in summer. If the kurban feast dates correspond to winter or spring, they go there,



make a sacrifice, and in the ninth and tenth months come back to Istanbul and bring the meat. For the ones who are retired, they go to the village every summer.<sup>2</sup>

Selma explains that if they cannot go to their hometown, they buy an animal from the closest animal bazaar and carry out the slaughter there. Selma is not unusual in Istanbul. All of my interviewees older than middle-aged noted similar experiences in their past. Therefore, I argue that urbanites in Istanbul had the opportunity and the necessary skills and networks to buy an animal and slaughter it during the kurban feast, unlike upper-middle class urbanites living in flats who are away from domestic animals and shielded from slaughters. This urban development directed in the shape of clashes and contradictions in the 1990s, reflecting the latter's sensibilities about the visibility and violence of sacrifice slaughters. This explains the media coverage that started in those years.

## § 2.2 Urbanism Studies and the Different Ways It Can Be Incorporated into the Analysis of Urbanization and Kurban in Turkey

In this part, I mention debates of urban sociology and transnational urbanism and show the different ways in which the analysis of urbanization and kurban in Turkey can be incorporated into these studies. I argue that conventionally urban, transnational, rural, traditional, and religious practices are melding and emerging as a specific form of urbanism in Turkey. Defining urbanism as heterogeneous, I demonstrate how different districts differ from each other regarding kurban practices throughout decades. And I argue that latecomers of the city have the tendency to make the sacrifice by themselves, but this practice makes them the actors of debated street slaughters, due to lack of urban land and infrastructure. And the discomfort led them to prefer other methods of slaughter varying from carwashes to transnational Muslim NGOs which have developed with the support of nation state.

Urbanism cannot be explained only in relation to demographic changes. While urbanization implies a demographic change with respect to the proportion of people living in urban areas, urban sociology is “the sociology of urban living; of people in groups and social relationships in urban social circumstances and situations,” according to Harold E. Nottridge (p. 2). Adding to this, Nottridge admits that this definition has its limits since urban life cannot be confined only to cities and towns, but may also include countryside. Similarly, it cannot reflect all of the cities or towns in different spaces and time.

Moreover, he mentions that not everyone in these locations has an urban way of living. Immigrants in cities may continue to live in a rural way or vice versa (Nottridge, p. 2). Many case studies support these arguments. (Turner 1962, Young and Willmott 1957, Gans 1962, Abu Lughood, in Breese 1969). For the urban residents of shantytowns, urbanization does not necessarily mean eliminating rural lifestyles. In Istanbul, it is still possible to find neighborhoods with small shanties with gardens in which chickens are bred. This is an example to having an urban residential area with a rural way of living. People have constructed their shanty houses and gardens on the outskirts of the city, and bred domestic, edible animals to support their household economically. Kurban was also a way for having meat supply for a low-income family. Moreover, a family that made a sacrifice by itself made away with the butchering costs. It became a vocation of the family when professionalization was not that much developed. One of my interviewees explains that the middle-class structures are changing with professionalization (personal communication on 1 November 2014):

In past times, lower-middle classes used to do everything by themselves. There was not much professionalization. But it is not possible in the Turkey of 2014 in Istanbul... Grandchildren are now so contented by the slaughterhouse; they only bring the meat home after the process is finished. They are not happy of the slaughtering work at home.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, people maintained contact with their rural homelands. This close contact with animals is determinant in conducting slaughters in a traditional

way, by being witness. All of my interviewees who conducted sacrifice by being a direct witness, has such a close tie with animal husbandry in their homelands. And compared to people with no contact, these people probably have lesser levels of sensibility concerning animal slaughter.

However, so called violent, savage and uncivilized animal slaughters in the streets may not always be a choice. In the most central places of the city, both the population and urban tradition did not let street slaughters to take place, while in newly developing neighborhoods, the lack of infrastructure and prior practice resulted in the makeshift solutions such as making sacrifice on the streets, and the latecomers of the city became the actors of this practice.

Making a distinction between the new and old urban kurban experiences in the city of Istanbul is important in understanding the changes throughout the years, and it can also demonstrate the disparity between different districts. If one would be in the middle of Istanbul, such as Şişli in 1970s, she would not see animal slaughters in the streets. And nobody would remember seeing un-professional butchers on the streets, as people start to see in the 1990s. There would be a much lesser visibility of slaughters.

Three women who were living in Şişli without knowing each other in 1970s tell a similar story about the context. None of them saw animals being slaughtered in the streets of Şişli. One of them, who is the youngest, tells that in their apartment, there were only non-Muslim families, and nobody did sacrifice in the apartment (Personal communication on 16 June 2016). Another one tells that theirs' was a family building, and some years they made the sacrifice in the back garden of the building, and other years in their orchard and summer house in Bostancı (Personal communication on 17 June 2016). And the third woman, who is the oldest, told that in Şişli the only public sacrifice area as the Şişli mosque (Personal communication on 17 June 2016). For Şişli neighborhood, street slaughters were not the case. Similarly in Fatih, a central urban district in the European side, Saime (85) has never seen street slaughters (Personal communication on 17 June 2016). The animals were sacrificed either in the municipality service in Eyüp district, or in the animal bazaar in Fatih mosque. Another interviewee Cengiz (67) has come to İstanbul in the 1970s in Bayrampaşa, lived in Eyüp and Maltepe in the 1980s, and Bostancı in the 1990s. Until 1990s, he does not remember seeing animal sacrifice in the city.

But in Bostancı, he lived in a nine floor apartment building, and one or two people from the building, including the doorman used to make sacrifice in the garden. But more importantly, he says that most of the people used to slaughter animals in the large and free grass land next to the highways that leads to the bosphorus bridges (Personal communication on 18 June 2016).

While the centers of the city were free from street slaughter images except the highway grass lands, the suburbs of the city were different. Zehra says that twenty years ago, they were living in Zeytinburnu, a district in European side, and her grandparents were living in Fikirtepe, which is a suburban neighborhood in Kadıköy district in Anatolian side (Personal communication on 15 October 2015). While in Zeytinburnu the houses had gardens in their neighborhood, and people sacrificed animals in the gardens; in her grandparents' street in Fikirtepe, there were no gardens, and people sacrificed animals in the streets. These districts and neighborhoods have developed after the 1960s with the population increase related to internal migration. The newly formed districts (Zeytinburnu became a district in 1957, and Fikirtepe a neighborhood in 1965) did not have infrastructural capacity for animal sacrifice and people found make-shift solutions such as using the streets as a slaughter site. They would buy the animal from a kurban bazaar with a truck, and bring it to their house as they did in the towns they came from. Doing the same in Istanbul, they kept practicing their ritual, though in more difficult conditions. For the first comers who had the chance to build shanty houses with gardens, it was easier to find land with earth, but for the late comers, if they settled in apartments, they did not have much chance except street slaughters. Finding the earth is crucial in making sacrifice. Zehra says (Personal communication on 15 October 2015):

I think the main issue is about blood. There is no place to pour the blood. There are even people who slaughter it in the bathtub! This is about the urbanization process of the city. While we were in my grandparent's neighborhood, we would try to find earth on the day of kurban, so that we could bury the blood and head.<sup>4</sup>

Kurban did not have much visibility in Istanbul four decades ago. On the other hand, the population change and lack of infrastructure in newly populated

districts were crucial in the the visibility of kurban. The newcomers of the city were the actors of the so-called disturbing sacrifice practice, and this was one of the ways to underline the class differences, and it was used as marker of class identity. Özyeğin explains that referring to the cleanliness and delicateness is an attempt to assert class and social status differences among middle classes wishing to redefine the boundaries of their identities. (Özyeğin, 2002, p. 47). Jenny White explains this with reference to Bourdieu (White, 2002, p. 191):

Identity politics are believed to operate hand-in-hand with cultural politics, based on the principle that behavioral styles and tastes in food and clothing are aesthetic distinctions which demonstrate cultural (and thus social) difference and superiority” (Bourdieu, 1984, in White, 2002, p. 191).

The idea that cultural and social difference and superiority are reflected in the aesthetic distinctions explains urban sensibilities in Turkey. The increased sensibilities - such as the avoidance of blood on roads and in other common areas, of publicly visible violence, of carcasses, and of unhygienic sights and smells - are aesthetic reactions reflected by people who have lost contact with livestock in their urban lives. And these aesthetic distinctions establish social and cultural superiority in urban life in the Turkish context.

Because of these urban sensibilities, people who slaughter animals themselves in their gardens or in urban lands are denigrated, or criminalized, while the action of killing done in slaughterhouses invisible to the public is praised. And the groups, who want to change their class status, adopt these delicate sensibilities and aesthetics that are praised (White, p. 483). “At stake, is the right to declare certain identities culturally legitimate and to determine what is (and is not) civilized behavior and, thus, socially rewarded” (p. 483). As expressed by White, certain cultural and social traits are declared legitimate and civilized, while others are rejected. Also, she argues that the urban middle classes stigmatize lower class migrants as dirty because this kind of distinction helps the middle class define or reinforce its position.

Although the previous contact with the animals in rural homelands were determinant in people’s choices of doing slaughters in the streets of the city,

this practice can not be attributed to being uncivilized or savage. On the contrary, the lack of infrastructure and directed serviced in the urban environment opened the space for the actualization of violent scenes. Tired of this mess, many people dropped doing sacrifice in the streets after the regulations came out. They preferred carwashes and proxy sacrifice activities in the city in the following decades.

To go back to the theory, another scholar, Morris adds a transnational level to Nottridge's analysis by noting that "urbanism is not peculiar to city dwellers, ... the influence of the city stretches beyond its administrative boundaries, ... nor [were] ... all city dwellers ... fully urbanized in their ways" (Morris, p. 19). According to Morris, what characterizes the city is not only its large, dense area of settlement and its organizational differences from rural settings, but also the fact that it is part of the global: "it influences and is influenced by groups whose members live far beyond its own boundaries" (Morris, xiii).

Smith's idea builds on that of Morris: urbanism includes influences from groups living far beyond its boundaries on a transnational level. The urbanization theory of Michael Peter Smith responds to this theoretical need via his concept of "transnational urbanism" – developed in his book *Transnational Urbanism: Locating Globalization* (2000). According to him, cities are sites of transnational practices. They are the best contexts for establishing transnational social networks, including communication and travel. And they provide excellent settings for interaction. Moreover, they are the sites of transnational flows of goods, humans, and ideas – for instance, "migrant employment, the means to deploy remittances, the acquisition of cultural and physical capital, consumption practices, political organizing networks, or lifestyle images" (Smith, 2000, p. 5).

In the 1990s, humanitarian crisis situation of the Bosnian war was heard widely. For actors from Turkey, transnational localities with Muslim residents became important zones, such as localities in the Balkans, South east Asia, Africa, and Palestine. Transnational Islamic mobilizations created awareness among individuals in Turkey about the conditions of Umma (Ümmet, Muslim community) members living in other disadvantaged localities. This has led to a new kind of network formation - humanitarian aid - which developed by

global influence as well as being directed by national governmental institutions and local non-governmental organizations.

As charity work changed shape and transformed into transnational humanitarian assistance, kurban became part of humanitarian work. As part of this work, the foreign proxy kurban practice took a place as one of the main activities organized by Muslim NGOs around the world and in Turkey. Their advocacy created increased awareness of the imagined communities of Muslims all over the world. The initiatives of the nation state were also decisive in embedding humanitarian work in the international field. Many people from Turkey formed translocal ties through proxy sacrifices. These translocal ties, and local networks became concrete in the city.

According to Smith, social practices cannot be understood without being conceptualized as networks and analyzed at different scales such as the transnational, local, trans-local and most importantly, the national scale. He argues that all of these scales should be elaborated in a multi-focal way, which means focusing on multiple scales at the same time in order to make sense of the networks. And more than all, Smith emphasized the role of the nation state, which is mostly missed in globalization studies. He argues that in order to understand the city, one has to look at the activities in the national level, as well as the international because whatever happens in the city is limited or allowed by the nation state.

Concerning kurban in Turkey, the Turkish state was active through legal regulations, state level meetings, and activities and strategies of state institutions in boosting transnational activities of Muslim NGOs, especially after 2004. Table 2.1 presents a list of Muslim NGOs with the dates that they started offering proxy sacrifices, and the number of countries they reach.

Table 2.1 Turkish Muslim NGOs' foreign proxy sacrifice activities

Name of the NGO	Starting date for Foreign Proxy	Outreach Capacity for Foreign Proxy Sacrifice
Türk Diyanet Vakfı	1993	76 countries
İBS	1995	
İHH	1995	120 countries
Deniz Feneri Derneği	2005	32 countries
Cansuyu	2005	62 countries
Mahmud Esad Coşan Vakfı	2005	Indonesia
Yeryüzü doktorları	2005	40 countries
Kimse Yok Mu?	2006	113 countries
Türk Kızılayı	2007	60 countries
Özgür-der	2007	Gaza and Syria
Yardımlı Derneği	2007	35 countries
Dost Eli Derneği	2009	12 countries
Çare Derneği	2009	46 countries
İmkander	2009	Gaza, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Chechnia, Syria
Hasene IGMG Sos. Yrd. Der.	2010	60 countries
İDDEF	2010	
Sadakataşı	2010	Gaza, Arakan, Chad, Philippines, Kenya, Somalia, Sri Lanka
Verenel Der	2010	3 continents
Milli Türk Talebe Birliği	2012	Every year one country in Africa
Hayrat Vakfı	2012	
Hüdai Vakfı	2012	
Beşir Derneği	2012	
Mirasımız Derneği	2012	Jerusalem
Ribat İnsani yardım Derneği	2012	6 countries
İyilik Der	2013	Syria
Erenler İlim ve Hizmet V.	2014	
Hazreti Ayşe İlim ve Hizmet V.	2015	

The increase in the number of such associations was related to four specific regulations issued after 2004. One of these regulations was about the status of



working in the interest of public (*kamu yararına çalışan dernek statüsü*) according to Article 27 of the Law 5253, “Dernekler Kanunu,” accepted on November 4, 2004 (Resmi Gazete, 2004b). According to this law, these associations are tax exempt and can publicly collect cash donations. The second one was the Law on Collecting Aid (Resmi Gazete, 1983) in which additional articles were added in 2004 making it possible for associations to collect money electronically and by other means.<sup>5</sup> And third was the collaboration of pro-Islamic NGOs all around the world, with the support of the Turkish government. As explained by Zeynep Atalay, UNIW was formed at a conference of the Foundation of Turkish Voluntary Organizations (TGTV) (p. 167). The Union of the NGOs of the Islamic World (UNIW), based in Istanbul, was initiated by Turkish Islamic-based NGO leaders in 2005 as a Muslim NGO network. By 2013, it had 225 member organizations from fifty-one countries. And forth, in 2008, foreign proxy sacrifice was formalized by the Law on Associations regarding their transnational activities (Resmi Gazete, 2008)<sup>6</sup>.

The theories of Nottridge, Morris, and Smith give me the ability to look for specific ways of living in a city which may include the practice of rural traditions as well as practices of an international on the part of urban, migrant communities while realizing their religious duty. While migrants bring rural lifestyles to the city, their cultural codes are also transformed. As a result, even the pure symbols of urbanism such as car wash facilities are transformed into ritual sites in urban Turkey. While urbanism is transformed, so are religious practices. And Smith’s emphasis on the agency of the nation state was equally important. Though city is the place of transnational flows, yet it is not an autonomous entity. The flows in a city are shaped by the activities by local, economic and political limitations.

### § 2.3 Urban Sensibilities and Visibility of the Kurban

The increasing visibility of kurban in urban areas due to increases in the numbers of slaughters has coincided with changes in sensibilities, particularly among middle and upper-middle classes in the society. Paradoxically, the gradual move away from nature, from rural lifestyles, and from direct contact with livestock, accompanied an increasing demand for the non-visibility of

kurban. I argue that the demand for the non-visibility of kurban is connected to changing sensibilities about nature, violence, and human-animal relations. Furthermore, these changing sensibilities have a class component: these sensibilities which emerge within smaller groups disseminates to the society through media coverages, and upper-middle classes may use these sensibilities as markers of their class identity. In this section, to understand how and why urban dwellers prefer the new methods of Islamic animal sacrifice, I mention some theories about the change in the sensory experiences of urban societies. One of the most important sensory experiences concerns the visibility of violence. I track this sensory experience in the expressions of my interviewees, and discuss urban sensibilities in relation to urban-rural division.

It is difficult to study change in urban senses, as Dietmar Kamper and Christoph Wulf emphasized in their scholarly work in 1984. The reason is that the sensory domain is difficult to research (Kamper and Wulf, 1984, in Bendix, p. 214). On the other hand, since the early twentieth century, urban sociologists such as Robert Park and Luis Wirth undertook their studies with the aim of understanding the effects of city life on culture. Park explained it as a “state of mind,” while Wirth explained it as the “complex of traits which makes up the characteristic mode of life in cities” (Wirth, 1938, p. 7). Despite academic interest, an urban sensibilities literature did not fully emerge, as most urban sociology focuses on the physical rather than the mental effects of the city.

The sensual experiences of urbanites are called urban sensibilities by Regina Bendix. One aspect of these sensibilities is increased sensory awareness - smell, touch, vision, taste - which leads to increased concerns about cleanliness and delicacy. For example, urban people are easily get disturbed by the smell of a neighbor’s cooking. Or they are overly disturbed by bodily smells and therefore use deodorants for their bodies and fragrances for their living and working spaces. Bendix explains that senses are disciplined by culture, and “what he or she is to perceive agreeable, pleasant and even beautiful, and in turn, is to be rejected” gets shaped according to one’s culture (Bendix, 2011, p. 215). In urban environment, the culture shaping people’s sensual experiences is urban culture. This sensual condition is also explained by other scholars.

With respect to sensibilities about delicacy, the work of Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, is considered a founding text. He focuses on changing sensibilities in the middle ages. Changes in bodily sensibilities have been studied by many scholars, the primary of which are Norbert Elias, Michel Foucault, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Pierre Bourdieu. Norbert Elias' study of politeness in the middle-ages formed the basis for many other studies related to modern sensibilities. Many other scholars have followed suit, explaining the cleanliness phenomenon of our age. Some of these are Suellen Hoy (1995) *Chasing Dirt: The American Pursuit of Cleanliness*, Joseph A. Amato (2001) *Dust: A History of the Small and the Invisible*, James C. Whorton (2000) *Inner Hygiene: Constipation and the Pursuit of Health in Modern Society*, Judith Walzer Leavitt (1999) *Women and Health in America: Historical Readings*; Nancy Tomes (1999) *The Gospel of Germs: Men, Women, and the Microbe in American Life*; Ben Campkin, Rosie Cox (2012) *Dirt: New Geographies of Cleanliness and Contamination*, Richard L. Bushman (1983) *The Early History of Cleanliness in America*.

Elias (2003) elaborates on the development of sensibilities such as repugnance, delicateness, embarrassment, and shame among new upper classes in Europe after courtly society in the sixteenth century. According to him, the emerging sensibilities of repugnance and delicateness were transformed into sensibilities about health and hygiene in ensuing centuries. Behaviors at the table are good examples of larger transformations of feelings and attitudes: "there being people so delicate that they would not wish to eat soup in which you had dipped after putting it into your mouth" (Courtin, 1672, as cited in Elias, p. 98). Moreover, butchering started to become an issue of avoidance. Putting the complete body of the animal on the table was no longer appropriate. The meat put on the table was preferably cut down into smaller pieces.

Elias's book explains the dissemination and transformation of sensibilities within large social groups. He argues that the behavioral reactions of the upper classes (such as courtly society) is first disseminated to the aristocratic class, then to the upper middle-classes, and in time to the wider society. According to Elias, increase in sensibilities was an irrational process with taboos that "people gradually imposed on themselves" (p. 98-99).

Bulliet (2005) applies a different concept to explain the transition from a rural life in contact with livestock to urban life with sensibilities and delicate feelings about animals. He calls the first situation “domesticity” and the second “post-domesticity,” and he argues that people lose contact with edible animals in urban areas where slaughterhouses are outside of the public gaze. Moreover, people became closer to pets and started to form a new kind of relationship with animals. In this level of sensuality, people get extremely annoyed or disgusted by the image of killing of an animal. With this final development, we start to see increasing sensibilities with respect to animal slaughter. But people who are accustomed to animal husbandry, do not have such reflexes (Personal communication on 15 July 2015)

You have to sacrifice by yourself... Now everyone is paying the due money, and make the sacrifice done without seeing it; the situation evolves in this direction... In our tradition, you make a prayer right after slaughtering the animal. My brother's face was full of blood the last time; with the splitted blood, he did his prayer; you have to do prayer with bloody hands, face, and clothers. This is very important. But you can not find these in the modern slaughter areas.<sup>7</sup>

However, people who are not accustomed to animal killing in their childhood may also accustom themselves later on. One of my young interviewees expressed that she accustomed herself not to get influenced from the slaughtering an animal due to religious motives. She describes herself as a Muslim feminist woman who has animal welfare concerns. She adopts the traditional practice of butchering the animal; but she rejects the tradition that only men can butcher. As opposed to other interviewees, she was the only one who mentioned that slaughtering an animal makes her happy (personal communication on 20 December 2015):

Right before the slaughter, I am excited. If we can topple the animal down easily I feel excited and happy again. But if the animal keeps on struggling against us, I feel angry and furious. In this case, I tend to behave harsh to the animal, and I become merciless. After I topple the animal, I never let it stand up again. I slaughter the animal with the excitement, desire and ambition as I actualize a ritual. And I feel the

honor of accomplishing a duty. I am happy and joyful while I slaughter, because it is a worship.<sup>8</sup>

For my interviewees who have had close ties with the edible animals, traditional kurban ritual implied a family ritual more than a slaughter. When they mentioned kurban, they did not even remember the slaughter, because it was not a traumatic event for them. It was just a special day with hard work. Esra (30), one of my interviewees, makes a clear observation of the transformation of sensibilities about kurban in Turkey. She sees a big difference of how kurban is perceived when she was a child in comparison to contemporary years. She attributes this change to the media coverages (5 October 2015):

When I was small, we would gather in my grandmother's house. It was an exciting day. We would wonder at what hour it would be sacrificed. Would be make a line so that the elders would put some blood on our forehead. A couple of days before, they would tell us the story of prophet Abraham... Even the coward women would watch the slaughter moment, none of us experienced trauma. But when I grew up, I saw animals running for their life on TV, then my feelings have changed. Either they fictionalize it in a professional way, or the meaning of kurban has changed for real. This year, I started to talk about kurban to the students in my class one week before the feast, about what they understand from kurban. I did not let them do free drawing because the only thing they draw is the slaughter moment<sup>9</sup>.

The most vivid example reaction of the children was remembering the slaughter moment of the sacrifice. Although media coverages have a role in this image, an equally important factor is the adopted urban sensibilities. Basically, for kurban case, urban sensibilities refers to compassion for the animal, getting distressed from witnessing death of a living animal, and getting upset from the bodily parts and liquids of the dead body. But the urban sensibilities may also reflect in other ways such as aversion from unhygienic sites, and aversion from certain tastes. Although people accustomed to animal sacrifice experience these aversions to a lesser extent, there is no homogeneity in the family members regarding the sensibilities. Many young people who is not used to eat meat shortly after its slaughter feel that, the meat smells to them.

Fatma (28) who belongs to a middle income family with religious background says that “I feel like the kurban meat smells. I can not eat it, but my sister does”<sup>10</sup> (Personal communication on 20 December 2015).

Although there is a major relation between rural background and lower level of sensibilities, there is no homogeneity. Religious-secular, rural-urban and lower-upper class divisions are all crosscutting categories. Even a woman who has grown up in a rural lifestyle, who is lower-middle class, and who is strongly religious may have these sensibilities. Cemile (50) has her kurban slaughtered in front of the door of her house in Istanbul, Fatih Sultan Mehmet neighborhood and expresses her feelings of compassion for the animal (interview conducted on 10.10.2015):

It is so difficult to experience that moment, you tie the hands and feet of the animal, the tears comes from his eyes; he understands what will happen to him; he starts screaming in the morning. You put yourself into his shoes, when you see it desperate with hands and feet tied. While I was having medical endoscopy check, I remembered that moment; you see yourself in the mirror like that animal; you are also ... from your eyes and mouth... That’s why I can not look at the animal which is slaughtered. I become too emotional. Men are not like this, women gets emotional. I can not eat meat for two days. You see it desperate. But you have to make the system run. Some people will raise it, some will sell, and others will eat.<sup>11</sup>

She explains the reason behind this compassion and the sensibilities it creates. Even if she comes from a rural family who does animal husbandry, her family did not accustom her enough for the slaughter process. She describes the sensibilities as being delicate which results in feeling helpless and in fear. According to her, growing up in a delicate way results in all these:

People became delicate, we can not able to do it, we are afraid... I generally try to keep children away from it, for them not to see the blood; they generally see after the slaughter... You think about how they would be psychologically influenced. Because we grew up this way, we brought them up in the same way. Now non of them can cut the head

of the animal, we try to find another one to do that all the time... But if this is our belief, we should do it.<sup>12</sup>

Meanwhile, despite the fact that she has sensibility of witnessing the death of the animal, she supports slaughtering it by yourself, in line with traditional ritual rule which is witnessing the slaughter:

I feel that, sacrificing an animal in a Koran course or similar places is like doing a vow [which is lesser than the real ritual sacrifice]. I think it is not permissible (*caiz*). Especially doing it with a machine, without laying it down, is definitely not acceptable (*makbul*). About the foreign proxy sacrifice, Islamic hodjas say that it can not be considered as sacrifice.... Normally, payers are not done with bloody outfit, but it is a good deed (*sevap*) to do the sacrifice prayer with bloody clothes. Therefore it is wrong to do the sacrifice in a far away place; if you do not see the blood, it is not valid; you must see the blood. The reason why they have sacrifice in a foreign country is because it is cheaper there; but it is not considered sacrifice; moreover, how will you know that it is really sacrificed?<sup>13</sup>

This example shows that as she herself describes it, urban sensibilities is basically related to be grown up in a delicate way. As in this example, even a person of a rural life may adopt urban sensibilities if s/he is brought up in a delicate way without witnessing the slaughters. What influences urban sensibilities about kurban is the individual acquaintance with the sacrifice process. Referring to Bulliet's theory of post-domesticity, it is difficult to find this acquaintance in contemporary world, even if the people are living in the rural environment. This example breaks down the urban-rural dichotomy as controversial categories, and it is in line with the description of urbanism as heterogeneous lifestyles by Morris and Nottridge.

These urban sensibilities also cause people to drop their previous habits and practices. Hayriye (55) used to conduct animal sacrifice, but due to her sensibilities, she says she will stop slaughtering animals, and only donate money next time (personal communication, 10 October 2015):

While we were married, we bought a cow, raised it here, then while it was going (for slaughter), it stared at us deeply! Like saying, “don’t send me!” I cried! Then I had shares with my brothers. For other times, I gave the due money to my sister. Last year, I sent it to a Koran course in Rize. I also did vow (adak) but I will not do anymore. It seems nonsense to me. It can be given as money. I will do it this way next time. I sent it to the Koran course in Rize many times so that the children would eat and nourish. But you throttle/slaughter an animal, in order to make people eat.<sup>14</sup>

For the people who have stopped slaughtering an animal by themselves due to sensibilities have alternative solutions. The alternative sacrifice methods are served by supermarkets, Muslim NGOs, and secular associations, respond to the needs of humane and invisible slaughters. Firstly, in supermarket slaughters, the kurban is not visible to the donor, but its meat is. The supermarkets serve kurban as a convenient shopping service. The animal is slaughtered in their factories, and customers are given the chance to choose the final form of the meat (sliced, ground, or left on the bones). The hides are donated to an NGO in the name of the customer, and upon demand, the supermarket provides video records of the slaughter. Secondly, NGOs working in foreign countries distance the donors from the sacrificial animal by organizing the sacrifice outside the borders of Turkey. They distribute all the meat to people in need. It is done in the name of the donor but actualized by the association. The donor loses direct contact with the sacrificial animal and the process of sacrificing. And finally secular civil society organizations take it to a point that, sacrifice is made without killing any animal. The donation is done to the association in the money form, and kurban turns into social responsibility if not charity.

On the other hand, urban sensibilities about compassion for animals is not necessarily the only root cause of the change in people’s slaughter methods. One of the other roots is the difficulty of dealing with the mess of animal sacrifice in urban environment. As one of my interviewees said “... unfortunately, Islam has become the religion of convenience now; everybody looking for the easiest way.”<sup>15</sup> (personal communication, 10 October 2015). And another cause is the hygiene concerns. One of my interviewees (65) conducted



sacrifice in an urban village, remote from the city center, but because of cleanliness concerns, he decided to change his preferences about the method of the sacrifice (interview conducted on 30.09.2015):

Didn't we see it on the TV, it is slaughtered, the crane raises it, the blood pours very clean. In the slaughterhouse, it is cleansed by abundant pouring water. (...) If there is no fountain, or if you are not in the middle of the grass, it is not hygienic. For the next time, one should go to a big supermarket for sacrifice. Or donate it to Mehmetçik Foundation<sup>16</sup>

Other aspects of urban lifestyle, such as cleanliness, trust in technology and mechanization, also may come out in the shape of urban sensibilities. For example, during animal slaughter, facilities tend to emphasize that the slaughters are done by modern machines to topple the animals. They argue that they no longer use the traditional and violent methods. In order to hinder the idea of violence, the officials working in slaughter facilities focus on this aspect of mechanized slaughters. They think that mechanization implies non-violence during the slaughters. And sometimes, these sensibilities can step in front, leaving sensibilities about violence as secondary importance.

From among the people that I have talked, the ones who slaughter an animal in front of their houses are mostly people who have ties with animal husbandry in rural homelands. This shows that they have the know-how of the process, and their level of sensibilities are lower compared to others. Still, all of them have either mentioned the compassion for animals, and even the difficulty to witness the death. As one of the interviewees has observed, the increase in media coverages resulted in the dissemination of sensibilities. This topic can also be elaborated within the framework of class, and further research can be done regarding the relation between urban sensibilities and class, but I do not intensely elaborate on class in this thesis. I argue, although there is a tendency for people with rural styles have lower levels of sensibilities, the categorical differences of upper-lower class and urban-rural divide may not determine the type of relation with nature. And the distancing from nature in the cities results in the fact that urban sensibilities are adopted in a widespread manner in Turkey.

## § 2.4 Islamic Revival and Its Relation to Changing Sensibilities

In this part, first I shortly summarize the political history Islamic revival since 1900s, with local and national governments coming to power. Then I analyze theories of Islamic revival which argue that globalization and national politics influenced the formation of a new Islamic civil society and Islamic mobilization. The Islamic revival involves local, global, and urban values such as humanitarian support for other Muslim populations in the world and the virtual technologies that avoid the visibility of slaughters. I consider these urban sensibilities in relation to Islamic revival.

In order to explain the Islamic revival in Turkey, I start with the political developments in the 1990s. In 1991, the Welfare Party (WF), a conservative religious party with a nationalist-developmental perspective (Milli Görüş or National Outlook) participated in the 1991 elections allied with two other parties. It became the fourth largest party to be supported, taking 16 percent of the national vote. In 1994, the WP had great success in local elections. Among fifteen metropolitan municipalities, six were won by the Welfare Party including Istanbul, the mayor of which became Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. This success was coupled with success in the national elections of 1995 with the WP winning more seats than any other party. The WP was part of a coalition government from 1996 to 1997 before being closed in 1998 by the Constitutional Court of Turkey.

In 2001, the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) (JDP or AKP) was different than previous Islamic political parties with its inclination to the European Union and focus on international relations in its first years. Legal developments regarding kurban practices were put in place by the government of Turkey in 2001, and the JDP took the lead in 2002.

Islamic revival in Turkey can not only be explained by political developments. According to Emanuel Sivan (1992), Islamic revival in Turkey is part of the self-expression of civil society against the failures of the state, and it rose as an urban phenomenon (Saktanber, p. 195-197, in Öncü and Weyland). In his article “The Islamic Resurgence: Civil Society Strikes Back” (Sivan, 1992) state institutions and bureaucracy in the Middle East and North Africa enhanced (p. 96). The state itself structured social life and started to be felt everywhere,

but in the end, it failed to adopt its own society's values/ethos in certain areas (Sivan, p. 100, in Saktanber, p. 197). On the other hand, the social, economic, and political dynamism boosted by the state made it possible for society to coalesce with political and economic processes as well as a flourishing the civil society. Finally, cultural hegemony of state collapsed (Saktanber, p. 197). Saktanber argues that, Turkey experienced a similar situation, and in addition to creating alternative political and economic channels, Islamic civil society in Turkey opted to form its own intelligentsia, replacing the previous one (p. 197).

In the article "The Creation of a Middle Class Ethos and Its Daily Practices: The revival of Islam in Urban Turkey," Ayşe Saktanber (in Ayşe Öncü and Petra Weyland, 2005, p. 193-214) argues that Islamic revival should be examined in a "national-but-globalizing" context. Saktanber underlies the fact that although the Muslim community in Turkey has been influenced by globalization, their activities are derived from the social and political struggles for upward mobilization in the national context (Saktanber, p. 196).

Concerning the revival of Islam, Saktanber emphasizes the reactions against the hegemony of the ruling elite. A political project emerged that aimed at replacing the social order with that of an Islamic one as part of an Islamic middle-class ethos (Saktanber, p. 197). She argues that the creation of a new middle class is important for creating, spreading and consolidating new communalities (p. 198). I infer that the alternative Islamic culture is rooted in a cultural conflict between secularist, upper-middle classes in the city and migrant city dwellers.

Another important factor in the revival of Islam as a daily practice is the gradual removal of the strict limit between the public and private spheres in the urban way of life (Saktanber, p. 195). As the private sphere enlarged into other public spheres, people started to have more chances to express themselves in specific ways that formed a new kind of life politics (Giddens, 1991, p. 215) and ethos (ethic basics).

Seufert explains the emergence of individual identity as its basic feature of the formation of a new kind of collectivity in the twentieth century (L. Kofler, 1975, p. 121, B. S. Turner, 1994, p. 195, in Seufert p. 230). This individual identity is expressed in religious terms in contrast with the Euro-American experience in which urbanization corresponded with secularism (Luckmann, 1991, in

Seufert, p. 230). But a religious civil society has emerged out of this individuality.

As a complement, Günter Seufert (Günter Seufert, 2005, p. 215-238) explains the formation of religious civil society in his case study of an Alevite-Kurdish community that migrated to Istanbul during 1960s. He argues that religious beliefs are revived by rereading and reinterpreting in the light of modern values through the collective effort of increasingly independent individuals (Seufert, p. 227). Unlike traditional kinds of solidarity, such as closed communities (*aşiret*) the objective of which is their own existence, urban religious groups prefer to organize around an association whose objective is to reach individuals. Therefore, it is by nature open to the world (Seufert, p. 229).

In the Turkish experience of Islamic revival, individual identity is expressed in religious terms, the Islamist classes started to form their own middle classes, and they adopted aspects of globalization. For example, they opened themselves to the world, became globally active, and adopted the mobilization methods and solidarity networks. Meanwhile, Muslim civil society initiatives turned into Muslim NGOs. This turn can explain the stronghold of Muslim NGOs in Turkey as active civil society organizations in the global humanitarian field, more than the secular NGOs.

According to a table prepared by Petersen (2011), a Turkish Muslim NGO, the Deniz Feneri Association, was the fifth largest Muslim NGO in the global arena. This shows that Turkish Islamic civil society organizations became a real actor in the global humanitarian fields. But the trend was not specific to Turkey - it was actually a global trend. A report prepared by Global Humanitarian Assistance (GHA) in 2015, entitled "An Act of Faith: Humanitarian Financing and Zakat," shows the significance of faith in humanitarian assistance focusing on Islamic social financing. The Zakat report states that it is widely accepted in the humanitarian aid sector that faith-based organizations adopt humanitarian standards. From this perspective, there should be no differentiation of faith-based and non faith-based NGOs (Stirk, p. 6). This is also desirable in the UN OCHA's Financial Tracking Service list of humanitarian funding recipient NGOs: almost 15 percent of the NGOs are faith-based (including Christian NGOs) (Stirk, p. 6). Moreover, one third of the NGOs that oversee the Core Humanitarian Standards have a faith-based inclination (p. 6).

The new urban sensibilities were consolidated among Muslim populations by foreign proxy sacrifices. It assures people of the realization of the sacrifice according to the Islamic requirements and serves for those who wish to fulfill their religious duties but cannot deal with the materiality of the kurban (and its mess) in urban settings.

The Figure 2.1 is an infographic entitled “How are your sacrifices slaughtered?” put in circulation by the IHH (İnsan Hak ve Hürriyetleri İnsani Yardım Vakfı or Human Rights and Liberties Humanitarian Aid Foundation) in which they explain each step of a sacrifice. The first box explains how the donor can transfer the money; the second explains how the association distributes the donations among countries according to need; the third box explains that sacrifices are performed and distributed to beneficiaries according to Islamic rules; the fourth explains the process of buying animals according to Islamic criteria; and the fifth box explains that the associations send a text message to donors for informing them about that the sacrifice has finished.



Figure 2.1 IHH infographics (2016)

Meanwhile Muslim NGOs as well as supermarkets use information technologies such as text messages, video recordings, and phone calls. These records represent a virtual reality for the donor. People are texted a message, e-mailed, or called by phone to be informed about the actualization of the sacrifice

event. Some organizations provide imams and make video recordings that can be watched online by logging in to one's account on the website of the association, or on DVD delivered by the organization to one's house. Reality turns into hyper-reality in a proxy sacrifice. When the donor receives information of the completed task as a text, or when views the video record, the situation of sacrifice becomes something other than reality. Its form may be called hyperreality or virtual reality, as Jean Baudrillard calls it. (For hyperreality, see: Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacres et Simulation* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1981). Munuel Castells terms it "real virtuality" because there is no illusion that makes it feel unreal; on the contrary, it is as real and as simple as any other thing, such as online shopping (Castells, 2002, p. 129).

The aforementioned concept of foreign proxy sacrifice represents the sensibilities of urban Muslim populations. First, it is done according to the Islamic rules; second, it has a humanitarian aspect; third, it saves the donor from the materiality of kurban and its mess by using virtual technologies. What differentiates this new practice from others is that, it distances donors from the actual practice, but it satisfies "humanitarian concerns" of people who have an awareness of the conditions of other Muslim communities in the world. The avoidance of visibility of slaughters and the humanitarian aspect of kurban are the specific urban sensibilities that have been adopted by Muslim populations in urban Turkey as a result of transnational urbanism and Islamic revival. The actors mobilized as an alternative to western humanitarianism and transformed the notion of charity into humanitarian assistance with specific standards in Turkey.

## § 2.5 The Emergence of the Kurban Question as Part of the Islamic Revival

Together with the Islamic revival in Turkey, kurban emerged as a topic of religious debate and elaboration. In this part, I summarize the debates of Siefert and Pieters who argue that reliance on written rather than traditional Islam offered new opportunities for people to interpret religious texts and adopt new ritual practices that did not exist in the traditional sphere. Second, I give an

overview of the interpretations of Islamic scholars on the meaning of kurban as well as how it is interpreted not literally, but metaphorically.

Seufert explains the revival of Islam in Turkey through certain developments: its transformation from a religion based on oral culture to one based on written culture, deviations from the tradition, the founding of modern religious and political organizations, and interpretation of religious texts and practices in light of modern values (p. 231). Furthermore, in this revival of Islam, religious culture has been rediscovered with a modern outlook. The youth, who are detached from traditional communal ties in the city, have taken the lead in the community, criticizing their elders for faulty – i.e. traditional - behaviors (p. 231). Siefert focuses on youth who were detached from traditional communal ties after migrating to the city center from rural areas. For these people, traditional authority crumbled and the individualistic culture created a new space for re-interpreting the Koran.

Concerning the modern reinterpretation of texts, Jan Nederveen Pieters makes a similar comment. He explains how Islam is influenced in the migration process and describes this interpretive change as modernity. He expresses that the trend of going back to religious texts and sources has gained momentum in Islam since the nineteenth century (p. 243) (Jan Nederveen Pieters, 2005, p. 239-270). This increased concern about meanings of religious text is desirable in the foundation of more and more mosques and increases in religious education once people leave the limits of their villages (Geertz, 1968; Gellner, 1992). In this way, religion becomes a more central, important aspect of life in the urban environment, and it may become more orthodox (Pieters, p. 243). Additionally, returning to sources makes people less reliant on traditional sects, Sufi orders, Islamic leaders, shrines (türbe), or rural practices (Pieters, p. 243). All that remains is the written text of the Koran. This orthodox revival is, indeed, modernization itself. It is modern because it transcends the local and has the potential to be global as it depends on original sources. This high Islam is thus mobile and can be transported to other environments (Pieters, p. 243).

As an example of the reinterpretation of Koranic texts, I look at discussions among Islamic scholars about the meaning of kurban. It is significant that in recent decades contradictory ideas and intense debates are present in both

public discussions and in scholarly deliberations. Some of these are influenced by secular interpretations, while others are influenced by the idea to return to the traditional structure of religious practice, which is supported by the *Sunna* (*Sünnet*) (the words and practices of the prophet). As a result of changes to traditional practices in urban life, religious animal sacrifice became an issue of investigation and study as never before. Pieters argued, “texts/sources gain more importance in Islam since the nineteenth century” (p. 243), and kurban became a hot topic.

Regarding the textual analysis of kurban ritual by Islamic scholars, there are basically two opposing groups of scholars. While doctrinal scholars avoid alternative interpretations and interpret the Koran with reference to the Sunna (the practices of the prophet), in the most literal way, alternative scholars sought new possibilities of translation and built their metaphorical interpretations on these translations.

“Kurban” means “getting closer” in Arabic. The mainstream Islamic literature of the Sunni Muslim faith explained it as “the sacrificial animal that is slaughtered in order to get closer to God.” These Islamic scholars admit that kurban is explained in the Sunna as literal animal sacrifice. On the other hand other Islamic scholars interpret kurban not as animal sacrifice but as a metaphorical way of getting closer to God through sharing. The main point of divergence between those Islamic scholars who adopt the traditional kurban as animal sacrifice and those who interpret it as “getting closer,” is trust in Sunna narratives.

Kurban as an issue is mentioned in certain Surahs of the Koran (Al-Kawthar, 5; As-Saaffat, 107; Al-Hajj, 25, 28, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37; Al-An’am, 136; Al-Baqara 67, 196; Ma’ida, 27; Al Imran, 183). Among these, it is most mentioned in Al-Kawthar and Al-Hajj. The Surah of Kevser commands people to make prayer and sacrifices (Kawthar, 108) according to the mainstream translation of the Koran. The Surah of Hajj explains the certain period of the year, in which people should make a sacrifice (Hajj, 28) and share its meat with the poor (Hajj, 36).

On the other hand, according to some Islamic scholars, this translation is incorrect - it should not be than being taken literally (İhsan Eliaçık, 2012). Among the most well known, Yaşar Nuri Öztürk, Edip Yüksel, Zekeriya Beyaz,



and İhsan Eliaçık prefer alternative interpretations concerning the meaning and practice of Kurban, Cübbeli Ahmet Hoca, Hayrettin Karaman, Abdülaziz Bayındır, and Mehmet Okuyan are representatives of the traditional interpretation of the kurban by relying on the Sunna. The interpretation of this second group of scholars is in line with the mainstream understanding also shared by the Directorate of Religious Affairs in Turkey.

The main debate among Islamic scholars is whether or not to take Sunna<sup>17</sup> and Hadiths<sup>18</sup> as the main source of interpretation.<sup>19</sup> For the scholars who do not take the Sunna but only Koran as the main source of divine knowledge, kurban is not an obligation for but just a good practice as it is was practiced by the prophet. Only for the Hanefi order is kurban *vacip* (binding) (Din Hizmetleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 2005, p. 6).<sup>20</sup> Therefore, some religious scholars such as İhsan Eliaçık, Edip Yüksel, Ali Şeriatî, Ahmet Hulusi, Yaşar Nuri Öztürk, Zekeriya Beyaz, and Hüseyin Hatemi argue that people can practice kurban without sacrificing an animal (Hayvan Özgürlüğü Blogspot, 2013). To do this, they argue that the Koranic passages such as the Surah Al-Kawthar. According to them, the word “nahr” in that Surah is not a literal sacrifice, but a symbol. It can be interpreted as a symbolic sacrifice such as the sacrifice of one’s self (for Edip Yüksel) (Hayvan Özgürlüğü Blogspot) or it can be being brave like an animal (for İhsan Eliaçık) (Zeynep Eliaçık, and Odin Kara, 2012). Moreover, according to İhsan Eliaçık, kurban means getting close to people who are poor and shunned (Zeynep Eliaçık, and Odin Kara)<sup>21</sup>.

Two mediatic Islamic scholars, Yaşar Nuri Öztürk and Zekeriya Beyaz, advanced their careers in the 1980s and were affiliated with secular social sciences. They adopted an interpretive approach and interpreted Koranic sentences with a secular mindset. They were influential figures for secularist Muslims in Turkey. Concerning kurban, Yaşar Nuri Öztürk believes that donating money is more meaningful than sacrificing an animal. He criticizes the mainstream sacrifice ritual as a “meat feast” and “feast of making money out of leather” (2013):

Prof Hüseyin Hatemi was my professor in the law faculty. He has a good saying. He says: “They estranged kurban from the real meaning of it in Islam and transformed it into a meat (kavurma) feast.” It can also be called hide-stealing feast. Give its money to the poor if you

want God's blessing. The Koran says that the meat and blood does not reach to God, only the sincerity of your intention reaches God.<sup>22</sup>

Öztürk's understanding of kurban is mixed with a discourse of relief aid serving people in need. He also references the discourse of animal rights: "Cutting, cutting, cutting, slaughtering animals! Why not give a relevant amount of money instead"<sup>23</sup> (Yaşar Nuri Öztürk, 2013). Connected to this sensitivity for animals and the criticism of making money from the leather of sacrificial animals, he suggests that electroshock should be used for the slaughter. He regrets that it is not used even though the Directorate of Religious Affairs has issued a fatwa about its acceptance.

Similarly, Zekeriya Beyaz contests the fact that animals are sacrificed for meat. Instead, he thinks that kurban has a meaning that should be realized. On the other hand, he has been ridiculed in the mass media for his comment that "shoes can be sacrificed" (Zekeriya Beyaz, 2013):

...does it mean that God loves blood, is he blood lover? ... There is no rule that says that a person must sacrifice an animal. This was the way to practice it in those ages. In our day, a shoe producer can give away fifty shoes to the poor in the name of kurban distribution. The important point is to transfer the money from the wealthy to the poor.<sup>24</sup>

İhsan Eliaçık is another marginal Islamic scholar who deviates from the mainstream Islamic teaching, especially with respect to his affinity for socialist and leftist political groups that focus on social equality. In an interview, he explains that Judaism has abolished human sacrifice and that Islam should limit animal sacrifice to a certain period of the year – Dhu al-Hajj – and to only the people visiting the divine lands of Islam (Zeynep Eliaçık, and Odin Kara). According to his interpretation of animal sacrifice, it is ordered to be done only on the pilgrimage by those doing the pilgrimage, but not by others. He explains that kurban is a ritual to feed the crowd of pilgrims that have come to Mecca from far away. Another Islamic scholar, Edip Yüksel (2014), explains that this pilgrimage is a large, international conference in which people are not allowed to fight or behave improperly; animal sacrifice was punishment for those kinds of behaviors. Therefore, for both scholars, kurban is a ritual that only

has practical ends vis-a-vis the Hajj and that it should not be expanded to people not making the pilgrimage. They argue that the Turkish understanding of kurban is a misunderstanding that has persisted for hundreds of years.

In contrast with these scholars, Hayrettin Karaman, Abdülziz Bayındır, and Mehmet Okuyan argue that the Sunna - that is, the actions and teachings of the prophet - cannot be ignored. For Abdülaziz Bayındır (2014), kurban is *farz* (obligatory on the order of Allah), as he thinks that verse 36 of the Surah of Hajj explicitly says this. The Surah mentions the necessity for making a sacrifice at a certain period of the year and then mentions the distribution of meat to the poor.

Mehmet Okuyan, who a professor in Ondokuz Mayıs University, thinks that kurban is explicitly expressed as a ritual that is obligatory for everyone, not only for those on the Hajj. He elaborates on another important Surah, Al-Kawthar, which is translated differently by Yaşar Nuri Öztürk. According to the translation of Öztürk, the Surah says to “make a prayer for your God and put your hands on your neck,” which is a fallacious translation according to Okuyan (2013). He thinks Allah would not give orders about the position of the hands during prayer, as physical stature is the least important topic to be mentioned in the Koran. For him, the correct translation is: “Then do a prayer for your God and make a sacrifice” (Mehmet Okuyan, 2013).

The explanations of alternative kurban practices led to the extreme position of making a sacrifice without killing an animal. The Islamic scholars’ interpretations of kurban are important for legitimizing this practice. As Zekeriya Beyaz puts it, you can sacrifice shoes for poor children if you have a shoe shop. Or as İhsan Eliaçık puts it, animal sacrifice does not exist in Islam. Urban sensibilities have influenced not only common people, but also Islamic scholars. These scholars reject sacrifice ritual as bloody animal slaughter. They reject widespread animal slaughter and the use of the leather as a source of income. These scholars interpret kurban not as animal sacrifice but merely as a way of getting closer to God by sharing.

These interpretations have formed the basis for emerging actors that mediate the relation between the Muslim individual and kurban, and they were influential on people who follow new proxy sacrifice methods.

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- 1 The names of the interviewees in this thesis are pseudonmy.
  - 2 Kayınvalidem, kayınbabam ve annem Sivas'ta, hepsinin hayvanları var. Biz, ve akrabalar, genelde yazın Sivas'a gidiyoruz. Eğer kurban dönemi kış-ilkbahara denk gelirse orada kurbanlarını kesip, 9., 10. ayda İstanbul'a dönüp etleri getirirler. Emekli olanlar hep köye gider yazın.
  - 3 Zamanında orta-alt sınıf, her işini kendi görmeye çalışırdı, çok profesyonelleşme yoktu. Ama 2014 türkiyesinde İstanbul'da mümkün değil bu... Torunlar ise mezbahadan çok memnun; sadece iş bitince etleri eve getiriyorlar. Evdeki kesme işlerinden de mutlu değiller.
  - 4 Bence mesele alanla ilgili. Kanı akıtacak alan yok. banyo'da kesen varmış! Bu şehrin şehirleşme süreciyle alakalı. Babannemin mahallesindeyken, toprak bulmaya çalışırdık hep kurban günü, kan ve kafayı görebilmek için.
  - 5 Madde 5 - Bu Kanuna göre; makbuzla, belirli yerlere kutu koyarak, bankalarda hesap açtırarak, yardım pulu çıkararak, eşya piyngosu düzenleyerek, kültürel gösteriler ve sergiler yoluyla, spor gösterileri, gezi ve eğlenceler düzenlemek veya bilgileri otomatik ya da elektronik olarak işleme tâbi tutmuş sistemler kullanmak suretiyle yardım toplanabilir. Bu fık-rada yer alan "veya bilgileri otomatik ya da elektronik olarak işleme tâbi tutmuş sistemler kullanmak" ibaresi, 4/11/2004 tarihli ve 5253 sayılı Kanunun 38 inci maddesiyle eklenmiş ve metne işlenmiştir.
  - 6 Uluslararası faaliyet ile ilgili:

Madde 25 – Vakıflar; vakıf senetlerinde yer almak kaydıyla, amaç veya faaliyetleri doğrul-tusunda, uluslararası faaliyet ve işbirliğinde bulunabilirler, yurt dışında şube ve temsilcilik açabilirler, üst kuruluşlar kurabilirler ve yurt dışında kurulmuş kuruluşlara üye olabilirler.

Vakıflar; yurt içi ve yurt dışındaki kişi, kurum ve kuruluşlardan ayni ve nakdi bağış ve yardım alabilirler, yurt içi ve yurt dışındaki benzer amaçlı vakıf ve derneklere ayni ve nakdi bağış ve yardımda bulunabilirler. Nakdi yardımların yurt dışından alınması veya yurt dışına yapılması banka aracılığı ile olur ve sonuç Genel Müdürlüğe bildirilir. Bildirimin şekli ve içeriği yönetmelikle düzenlenir.
  - 7 Kurbanı kendin keseceksin... Artık herkes parasını veriyor, hayvanı görmeden kurbanı kesmiş oluyor, durum ona doğru gidiyor... Bizde hayvanı keser kesmez kanlı kanlı şükür namazı kılarırsın. Kardeşimin suratı kan oldu geçen sefer, sıçrayan kandan, öyle kıldı namazını, elbiselerin, elin, yüzün kanlı, öyle kılmak lazım. O çok önemlidir. Kesim yerinde bunlar yok.
  - 8 Kurban kesmeden hemen önce ise heyecanlı olurum, hayvanı yere yatırmaya çalışırken eğer hayvanı kolay yatırırsak yine heyecanlı ve mutlu ama hayvan direnmeye devam ederse sinirli ve öfkeli oluyorum. Bu durumda ister istemez hayvana daha sert davranıyorum, acımasızlığım tutuyor. Kurbanı yere indirdikten sonra atak davranıp tekrar toparlanmasına asla izin vermem. Hayvanı bir ibadeti yerine getirmenin verdiği heyecanla bir, istekle ve hırsla boğazlarım ayrıca bir işi başarmış olmanın getirdiği gururu da kendimde bulurum. Yani keserken de mutluyum, sevinçliyim çünkü bir ibadet bu.
  - 9 Küçükken babanemin evinde toplanırdık. Çok heyecanlı bir gün olurdu. Hangi satte kesileceğini merak ederdik. Sıraya girerdik, herkesin alınna birer damla kan sürülürdü. Ve

birkaç gün öncesinden, Hz. İbrahim peygamberin yaşadıkları anlatılırdı... Korkak olan kadınlar bile izlerlerdi kesim anını, hiç birimizde bir travma olmadı. Ama ne zaman büyüdüm ki Tvde kaçışan inekler gördüm, o zaman benim de kesim sürecine dair hislerim değişti. Ya artık kurguyu iyi yapmıyorlar, ya da kurbanın anlamı değişti gerçekten. Bu yıl kurban bayramından bir hafta önce sınıfta konuşmaya başladım, beyin fırtınası yaptık çocuklarla, kurbanı yükledikleri anlamlarla ilgili.... serbest resim yaptırmadım onlara, çünkü serbest resimde sadece kesim anını yapıyorlar.

- 10 Bana kurban eti kokuyor gibi geliyor. Ben yiyemiyorum, ama kardeşim yiyor mesela.
- 11 O anı yaşamak o kadar zor ki, hayvanın elini kolunu bağlıyorsun, yaş geliyor gözünden, ağzından salyası akıyor; anlıyor zaten başına ne geleceğini; sabahtan bağırılmaya başlıyor. Kendini onun yerine koyuyorsun öyle elleri kolları bağlı, çaresiz görünce. Endoskopi çekildiğimde o an aklıma gelmişti; kendini aynada görüyorsun aynı o hayvan gibi; senin de gözünden ağzından... O yüzden ben kesilen hayvana bakamıyorum. Çok duygusallaşıyorum. Erkekler böyle değil, kadınlar duygusallaşıyor. 2 gün et yiyemiyorum. Çaresizliğini görüyorsun ya. Ama döngüyü döndürmek zorundasın. Birileri onu büyütecek, birileri satacak, birilerinin karnı doycak.
- 12 İnsanlar nazikleşti, beceremiyoruz, korkuyoruz.... Genelde onları [çocukları] uzak tutmaya çalışıyorum ben de, kanı görmesinler diye; boğazı kesildikten sonra görüyorlar... psikolojik olarak nasıl etkilenir, onu da düşünüyorsun. Biz korkak büyüdüğümüz için çocukları da öyle yetiştirdik. Şimdi hiç biri kurbanın kafasını kesemiyor, bıçak çekmek için hep başkalarını çağırıp bulmaya çalışıyoruz.... Ama bu bizim inancımızsa yapmamız lazım.
- 13 Kuran kursunda, başka yere kestirmek bana adak gibi geliyor. Caiz değil bence. Hele makineyle, yatırmadan kesmek, hiç makbul değil. Yutdışına bağış ile ilgili de, kurban sayılmaz diyor hocalar... Halbuki kurban namazını kanlı elbiselerle kılacaksın. Normalde kanlı olmaz namaz, ama kurban namazını kanlı elbiseyle kılmak sevap. Uzakta kestirmek o yüzden yanlış, kanı görmezsen olmaz; kanı görmek lazım. Yutdışında kesmelerinin sebebi ucuz olması, ama ancak burada kesip gönderirsen caiz olur. Para göndermek yardım yapmaktır, o kurban sayılmaz, hem nereden bileceksin kesildiğini...
- 14 Evliyken bir kere inek aldık, burada büyüttük, sonra giderken gözleriyle bana nasıl baktı! Beni gönderme gibilerinden! Ne ağladım! O zaman kardeşlerimle ortak olmuştum. Sonra birkaç kez parasını verdim ablaamlara. Geçen yıl da Rize'deki Kuran kursuna gönderdim para. Adak da yaptydım da daha yapmayacağım. Bana saçma geliyor. Para olarak da verilir. Bir daha öyle yapacağım. Rize'deki kuran kursuna gönderdim çok kez, çocuklar doysun diye. Ama boğazlıyoruz hayvanı, insanları doyuracak diye.
- 15 Ama şimdi Müslümanlık kolaylık dini oldu maalesef; herkes kolayına kaçıyor.
- 16 Televizyonda görmedik mi, kesiliyor, vinç kaldırıyor, kan tertemiz akıyor. Mezbahada sularla şıkır şıkır temizleniyor. Çeşme, hortum yoksa, ya da çimlerin ortasında doğada değilsen olmaz, hijyenik değil. Bundan sonra kesmeye karar verince büyük marketlerden alıp kestirmek lazım; sana eti ve CD yi verecekler. Ya da bağışla Mehmetçik Vakfına.

- 17 In everyday language, Sunna means the conducts of the Prophet Muhammed. Although it can have different meanings, when used in a frame such as “The Book and the Sunna”, the Sunna signifies Hadiths, which are the words of the prophet (*merfu’ hadis* in Turkish) or of his companions (*mevkuf hadis* in Turkish). Although Islamic knowledge is beyond my expertise, I can confidently say that the Sunna and Hadiths are deemed trustworthy sources as they were written down, compiled, and classified in centuries followin the prophet’s death.
- 18 The literature of Hadiths is widely respected as they are written sources. On the other hand, there is still debate about them as their compilation took centuries after the year 622. The period starting in the 800s through the 1000s was productive for the compiling and categorizing of hadiths (Çakan, p. 21). Among many collections, one consists of the most trusted hadiths. It is called *The Six Books* (Kutub al-Sittah) or *The Authentic Six*, as it consists of the six hadith books written by six trusted Islamic scholars in the second half of the 800s and at the beginning of the 900s.
- 19 The trust in these sources compiled almost 200 years after the prophet Muhammed died comes from the fact that in one hadith by Ebu Said el-Hudri, the prophet bans anyone from writing anything from his mouth other than the Koran (Muslim, Zühd p. 72; Ahmed b. Hanbel III, p. 12, 21, 39, 65, cited in Çakan, p. 7;). There are different explanations that resolve this contradiction (p. 9). The most widely accepted is that Muhammed initially banned anything about religion from being written down except the Koran itself, but after a certain date, he was assured that it would not harm Koran. Therefore, he changed his mind and let his companions write down his words and actions (p. 9).
- 20 Fıkıh mezheplerinin çoğuna göre udhiyye kurbanı sünnet olmakla birlikte Hanefi mezhebinde tercih edilen görüş kurbanın vacip olduğu yönündedir
- 21 Kurban, “yakınlaşmak” demektir. İslam’da her yıl büyük hacc toplantısında insanların birbirine yaklaşması, gariplerin, kimsesizlerin, yoksuların, toplumda yalnız kalmışların aranıp bulunarak onlara yaklaşılması, birlikte olunması ve bayramdan sonra bu birlikteliğin sürdürülmesi manasındadır. Dolayısıyla “kurban bayramı günleri” demek, garip, gurebâ ve kimsesizlerle buluşma/kaynaşma günleri demektir. Uzaklaştığınız kişilerle yakınlaşma; küskünlerin barışması demektir. İlla kurban kesilecek diye bir kural yoktur.
- 22 Şimdi Profesör Hüseyin Hatemi benim hukuk fakültesinden hocamdır, onun güzel bir tabiri var, bunu İslam’ın anladığı manada kurban olmaktan çıkardılar kavurma bayramına döndürdüler diyor. Tabi deri çarpma bayramı demek de lazım. Ya ver parasını fakire yardım ve Allah'ın rızası değil mi. Koran diyor ki etler ve kanlar Al-lah'a gitmez. Sizin vicdanınızdaki samimiyet Allah'a gider.
- 23 Kesmek kesmek kesmek, hayvanları boğazlamak! Tutarı kadar parasını versin...
- 24 E ...Allah kan dostu mu, kan sevgilisi mi? (...) kişi mutlaka hayvan kesecek diye bir konu yoktur. O işin o dönemdeki tarzıdır. günümüzde ayakkabı üreticisi de kalkıp 50 çift ayakkabıyı kurban münasebetiyle fakirlere dağıtabilir. amaç aynıdır. önemli olan varlıklı insandan maddi bir değerın fakir insanlara aktarılmasıdır

## Making Kurban a Secular Object of Debate and Regulation

In this chapter, I demonstrate that kurban became a practice that is regulated more and more each day, and a topic to be debated and interpreted differently by secular sectors. I look at the concept of regulation to understand how it has changed over time. In the kurban case, the first area of regulation concerned how to collect the animal skins. It has been in place since the Ottoman Empire and continued throughout the Republican period. Surprisingly, this shows that during the Republican period, kurban was conceptualized as a purely religious event and that was not regulated by law until 2001. Indeed, during the whole twentieth century, secular law regulated only the financial aspect of kurban. This leads me to conclude that the regulations transformed from managing mere financial issues to social and environmental issues. Better put, political life has enlarged to areas such as the urban environment and animal welfare, which are related to urban sensibilities as well as to new political factors such as candidacy for the European Union. And finally, regulations about the legal status of associations that conduct foreign proxy sacrifices suggest the existence of ulterior agendas of the Turkish government on the global stage.

Surprisingly, in the history of Turkish Republic there were no laws about the kurban practice itself. Only after 2001 were regulations about how and where to conduct the sacrifice made the object of regulation. This second area

of regulation can be called environmental, and I correlate it with emerging urban sensibilities opposed to the visibility of animal sacrifice in city centers. Third, in 2005, articles were added to the law about animal welfare and public health - a change triggered by the European Union candidacy process. And finally, as a fourth area of regulation, associations and foundations were given legal status to realize kurban organizations in foreign countries to collect donations publicly. This development also came after 2005 in relation to the policies of the Turkish government as a soft power on the global stage.

All these regulations are important because they prove us that kurban became the object of legal debate in Turkey only after 2001. The Kurban Symposium of 2007 further demonstrates that kurban became an object of professional debate in academia and business in the mid-2000s. On the other hand, looking back to the 1990s, the visibility of public slaughter had begun to be a secular object of debate in news articles by 1994. And if the kurban phenomenon had become newsworthy by that time, it means that urban sensibilities had developed by then.

For the last part, concerning newspaper articles, I searched for *kurban kesimi* (kurban slaughter) in the Milliyet newspaper archives. What emerged from this research was some implications about urban sensibilities that are discussed in relation to the theories of Norbert Elias about the emergence of delicate feelings and its relation to living styles.

### § 3.1 First Area of Regulation: Collecting Animal skins and Their Financial Value

Animal skin regulations were the only regulations about kurban during the twentieth century in Turkey. At face value, it is surprising that there were regulations about how to collect animal skins but no regulations about kurban slaughters and meat. But the reason is clear: kurban meat is not part of circulating capital, it was almost impossible for kurban meat to be made profitable because religious doctrine bans its sale; meat can only be distributed to the poor or eaten by relatives and neighbors of the donor, and therefore it was not subject to legal regulation. On the other hand, there were regulations about skinning of the animals for more than a century, because hides can be sold to



leather factories and turned into cash. Because of their financial value, collection of skins is always the most hotly debated issue in the media during the kurban season.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, in the Ottoman period, Ahmet Mithat Efendi wrote that animal skins are wasted and that they should be collected by the state to be used for charity. This was met with resistance, but he later proved that it would comply with Sharia rules, and his advice was accepted by the office of religion (Şeyhülİslamlık) (Karakoyunlu, 1998). In this way the collection and use of hides for public good started. Of course, I cannot know to what extent the hides were collected. After 25 October 1915, the Regulation on Collecting Aids (Yardım Toplama Tüzüğü) gave authority to the Red Crescent and the Navy Committee (Kızılay and Donanma Cemiyeti, respectively) to collect hides (Karakoyunlu). This regulation was the basis on which the Turkish Air Association (Türk Hava Kurumu or TAA) later assumed that authority (Karakoyunlu). In 1925, in the Republican period, the right to collect Islamic alms, charities (fitre and zekat, respectively), and sacrificial animal skins were given to the association by a specific regulation, though there has always been resistance.

Legislation about the monopoly of the Turkish Air Association over the collection of animal skins was failing. Every year there were announcements about the requirement to donate the hides to the Turkish Air Association. There were articles about the stealing of animal skins by citizens. Any hide that was not given to the association was illegalized and treated as stolen. For example, according to the Milliyet archives, on 18 August 1954 there was news of a muhtar (governor of a neighborhood) taking four kurban hides, and he was denounced as a thief.<sup>1</sup> And on 4 November 1979, one hundred people were taken into custody for the crime of selling hides to leather businesses.<sup>2</sup> Bayrams were such important events of income generation for public institutions that any association would be inspected and severely punished, as was the İlim Yayma Cemiyeti which was accused of political reactionism in 1953 (13 October 1953).



Figure 3.1 Donation announcement by Turkish Air Association: “Dear citizens, as every year, the kurban hides will be collected by our organization (Turkish Air Association) for the protection of the country and to be distributed in between the charity organization of Red Crescent and Children Protection Institution, I ask our dear citizens to realize their sacrificial duty and apply to our institution and give it in exchange for a bill, and to be careful while peeling the hide and to commend the butchers to be careful not to damage the hide while slaughtering, and to call this number and let us know if our officer has not come by change to take the hide...” Milliyet Archive, 14 September 1950

Practically, people had three options about what to do with the animal skin. They could give it to the Turkish Air Association, to a religious institution, or to a leather artisan or merchant. A woman (65) explains this choice (personal communication, 14 October 2015):

In Ereğli, during the four days (of the feast), the Turkish Air Association’s trucks and the trucks of other foundations used to collect animal skins. ... Up until fifteen years ago, the leather industries would take the hides as well, and I used to give our hides to an acquaintance in the business of leather. Then it was banned. The hides would get salted,

binded, and given away. Leather smells a lot. But the hides are mostly given to boarding students of Koran courses (boarding schools).<sup>3</sup>

Later during the Republican period, the Turkish Air Association was met with a massive reaction to which the news and conversations with the followers of religious institutions attest. A twenty-three-year-old man explains his emotional reaction to and distrust of the monopoly of the association (personal communication, 10 October 2014)

In the past, people were gave away the hides to the Turkish Air Association because they were afraid of it; but the ones who were aware of it, they reacted. In the end, nobody knew what happened to those hides. There was news of the hides getting moldy. Additionally, their aim was not transparent. It was said that the money was used to train pilots, but I don't know. On the other hand, according to religious law, only the poor and students have the right to kurban hides. It is written that kurban is a whole with its blood and hide. For example, I would go for ten kilometers just for one animal's hide. Going there already costs 10 TL, and a sheep's hide is worth around 5 to 10 TL. It is a spiritual duty to take and use the hides in the most propitious way; the people doing it acknowledge this. On the other hand, the TAA hides were getting spoiled because they are working with money. But I are doing it voluntarily - and carefully. But the TAA was taking the hides with the force of the state, and this is against the spirit of kurban. The fear that the TAA has created was reflected on the people. Because of this fear, some people gave the hides to the TAA cars, and others adopted a negative attitude.<sup>4</sup>

In order to calm down these tensions, the monopoly of Turkish Air Association was repealed and reapproved many times throughout the decades. Between 1976 and 1979, the Disabled People's Association of Turkey (Türkiye Sakatlar Derneği) Istanbul Branch made an announcement each year regarding collecting kurban skins, saying that hides would be collected from the houses if requested.



Figure 3.2 Donation Announcement by the Disabled People's Association of Turkey

In 1981, Istanbul University Veterinary Faculty prepared a project to distribute salt to protect the hides from spoiling. The Kurban Skins Reclamation Project (Kurban Derisi Islah Projesi) was meant to prevent the loss of wealth, and Turkish Air Association was again assigned to its vested position. On 10 September 1981, it was debated whether people who do not salt their kurban skins to prevent them from going bad should be punished (Milliyet archives). And in 1983, the National Security Council amended Law 2860 about Collecting Aid (Yardım Toplama Kanunu) (25 June 1983). In 1986, Law 3294 on Encouraging Social Assistance and Solidarity (Sosyal Yardımlaşma ve Dayanışmayı Teşvik Kanunu) was passed, and with this development the monopoly of Turkish Air association was transferred to Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations. The law explained a new funding reserve for assisting the poor: the Fakir Fukara Fonu (nicknames Fak-Fuk-Fon). Starting in 1986, local branches of the Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations started to collect hides on district basis (01 August 1986, 09 July 1987, 09 August 1987, 12 July 1988). These hides were turned into cash by the district branches (14 June 1989).

Animal skins were a source of financial capital for everyone. Even today, animal skins provide religious institutions with economic capital. As part of

their kurban events, besides offering the service of butchering the sacrificial animal by proxy, they procure the hides as donations. Additionally they visit kurban bazaars, slaughterhouses, and carwash facilities during the kurban feast to demand hides as donations. A twenty-three-year-old male volunteer explains the importance of collecting hides for a religious institution (personal communication, 02 October 2014):

In Konya I worked on hide collection. We were in contact with kurban practitioners in sacrifice areas on the agency of the ... association. For the association, hides are one of the most important income sources. For a bovine hide, if I consider it is 5 TL<sup>5</sup> per kilogram, and it weighs thirty kilogram, it comes to approximately 150 TL, an important amount. And the only thing I do is to talk to people and explain why we are doing this.<sup>6</sup>

In years 1994 until 1998, the Turkish Air Association was again charged with its old task, but this time there were hot debates corresponding to the political situation. In 1994, the Welfare Party, a religious party with a nationalist-developmental perspective, had significant success in local elections. Among fifteen metropolitan municipalities, six were won by the Welfare Party including Istanbul, the mayor of which became Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. This success was coupled with success in the national elections of 1995 with the WP winning more seats than any other party. The WP was part of a coalition government from 1996 to 1997 before being closed in 1998 by the Constitutional Court of Turkey. Parallel to these developments, tensions increased in 1998s. After the kurban feast, the regulations were changed again upon a decision of the Ministry of Internal Affairs which was published in the official gazette at the end of 1999. With this decision, the authority to collect hides was transferred back to Fak-Fuk-Fon, though at the end of 1999, the authority was again transferred to the Turkish Air Association. On the other hand, news reports from 2001 show that although the TAA has the authority, the Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation in İzmir was still selling hides (19 February 2001).

In 2013, the monopoly of Turkish Air Association over the collection of hides was abolished. Since then, the number of hides received by the TAA has

fluctuated. Under the government of the Justice and Development Party, religious associations had the right to create income by legally collecting hides. Even during the monopoly periods, citizens had always supported the collection of hides by these associations, but this practice was legal only after 2013.

### § 3.2 Second Area of Regulation: The Urban Environment and the Visibility of Kurban

It is surprising that there were no legal regulations concerning the kurban practice itself before 2001. None of the Law concerning the Rule of Metropolitan Municipalities<sup>7</sup> which was passed in 1984, the Municipality Law and Social Health Law dated 1930,<sup>8</sup> and the Environment Law passed in 1983 include any terms about animal sacrifice. Such terms were put in place only after 2001. The significance of this belated kurban regulation is that until recently in the history of urbanization in Turkey, kurban was not considered an object of secular law. The fact that Islamic animal sacrifice began to be regulated by secular law after 2001 is important because it opens up a space for the elaboration of Islamic animal sacrifice in secular terms and debates. The second important aspect of the law is that it organized the urban environment by banning slaughters on the street in city centers.

The main regulation about kurban was called “Kurban Hizmetlerinin Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığınca Yürütülmesine Dair Kararı (The Decision about Kurban Services to be Executed by Directorate of Religious Affairs)” (Resmi Gazete, 2001). Later in 2002, this regulation was published in the official gazette (Resmi Gazete, 2002). According to the regulation, kurban services were to be managed by Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı) starting in 2002.

The control of religious affairs by the state was not a new phenomenon in Turkey. The Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs was itself the product of modern governmentality methods. The “Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu” of 1924 ruled that religious education would only be given in state schools, and that religious affairs would be conducted by a specific directorate of the state (İsmail Kara, 2000, p. 36). Its responsibility was to manage Islamic belief and

ethics, to manage the worshipping sites, and to enlighten society about religion (Kara, 39) (Tarhanlı, 1993). The modernization of another religious phenomenon, namely kurban, can be considered as continuation of this heritage.

The 2001 regulation about the implementation of kurban services basically concerned the environmental organization of urban kurban sites. The first article focuses on the main objectives: religious obligations, health concerns, environmental hygiene, minimal pain for the animals, proxy sacrifices (vekalet yoluyla kesim), the designation of the kurban bazaars and slaughter areas, and the education of the personnel that will conduct the slaughters.<sup>9</sup> But more than anything else, it organized kurban sites in the city. The kurban feast in the beginning of 2002 was the first in which street slaughters were banned by legal order and in which slaughters would only be conducted in places determined by the municipalities (08 February 2002).



Figure 3.3 Municipality banner from 2015 about the prohibitions stating “It is banned to conduct animal sacrifice in public places” in Sariyer, Istanbul.

The regulations amended in 2001 were primarily influenced by the European Union (EU) candidacy process which was announced at the Helsinki Summit in 1999. But EU relations have been influential in Turkey since the early 1990s. In 1993, the Copenhagen criteria for EU candidates were announced. This is linked to the first media coverage in Turkey against public animal slaughters which had started by 1994. The dream of EU candidacy had gained momentum by 1995 when a customs union between EU and Turkey was approved. This was perceived in Turkey as full EU candidacy, but it was not so (Erdemir, 2014). In the Luxemburg Summit of 1997, Turkey was not counted among the countries that would start the candidacy process. To efface the negative impact of disappointment in Turkey, EU prepared a strategy plan for Turkey in 1998

which included development reports that would be prepared for Turkey just as for real EU candidate countries (Erdemir, 2014). The climax of the process was the Helsinki Summit of 1999 which increased the motivation for Turkey to apply the EU criteria. But the situation did not improve in 2002; observers from Agence France Presse were present in Turkey, and according to *Milliyet*, the street slaughters were an issue of disgrace for the second time (23 February 2002).

A main area of regulation concerns locating the animals, animal owners, and their tents in Istanbul and managing the kurban bazaars and slaughter areas. As the places of registered bazaars became formalized, their number increased and they became centralized. As a result of this centralization, those newly responsible for the registered animal bazaars included a group of actors: a council of relevant ministries,<sup>10</sup> a commission,<sup>11</sup> and *Türkvat* (the veterinary information system connected to the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Animal Husbandry) alongside the Directorate of Religious Affairs which was responsible for Kurban services. The Provincial Kurban Commissions (*İl Kurban Komisyonları*) which include municipalities are the main providers of services, while the private sector is encouraged to provide kurban bazaars, slaughtering areas, and operations (*Resmi Gazete*, 2013, 2014).<sup>12</sup> Applications for kurban bazaars were processed by a system called the Religious Affairs Management System (*Din Hizmetleri Yönetim Sistemi: DHYS*) starting in 2014.

To avoid violent scenes of cattle slaughters in public, urban areas, one paragraph in the 2013 regulation (*tebliğ*) mentions the significance of cattle slaughters in large cities and proposes that even the locations of weekly street bazaars be converted into low-budget kurban bazaars when necessary (*Resmi Gazete*, 2013).<sup>13</sup> Moreover, since 2014, a hotline devoted to informal slaughters in urban areas - ALO 181 - was established in 2014. Actually the hotline concerns environmental pollution, and the line directs you to the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization.

Only after the municipal police regulation of 2007 did the police gain the right to interrupt and penalize people conducting animal slaughters in areas not determined by municipalities (*Resmi Gazete*, 2007).<sup>14</sup> Implementation of the regulations came slowly and covered only a small number of bazaars. The



two photos are taken in 2016. The one on the left is in Sultangazi taken by Turkuaz News. Activities similar to those on the right had been common, in Sultangazi police officers criminalizing the kurban practice was a new and surprising development.



Figure 3.4 Criminalizing kurban practice

As a final development, there was a trend to move kurban bazaars away from the city centers by replacing them with specialized, largescale kurban bazaars. These kurban bazaar models are mentioned in the rescript of 2014 (Resmigazete) prepared by the Directorate of Religious Affairs. The ideal was a bazaar away from the city center where people can reach by their cars and they can benefit this place as a commerce area as well as a recreational area. One of the conveniences was an appointment system for slaughter facilities so that customers would not wait too long and ensuring that social services such as toilets and snack bars are provided in kurban bazaars. Some other obligations were to dig holes in the earth so that blood can be poured into, and to prepare a central slaughtering area which would be difficult to arrange in unorganized and small bazaar areas. These regulations were amended to push lesser organized bazaars out of the city centers.

### § 3.3 Third Area of Regulation: Animal Welfare and Public Health

The third area of regulation concerns the dissemination of urban sensibilities as well the EU candidacy process. The first initiative was undertaken in 2005 with additional articles to the main kurban regulation of 2001. In 2014, one year before these additional articles, the butchers being trained for slaughtering animals more professionally (23 January 2004), a new legislation about animal rights (Resmi Gazete, 2004)<sup>15</sup> was realized as part of EU accession process, and the fine for animal cruelty was set to a high level (23 October 2004). Moreover, rules about hygiene were being mentioned in news articles during the 2004 kurban season (12 November 2004), showing the influence of the EU candidacy process in shaping laws about kurban.

In line with the animal rights law of 2004, the first “bull teams” (Boğa Timi, Kurban Timi, and Alo Boğa Kaçtı Timi) were formed that same year by the Veterinary Directorate of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. These security teams catch cattle that escape during or before their slaughter, and the aim of the team is to prevent the violent methods animal owners had used to catch such animals (21 January 2004, p. 15). This practice was disseminated to the municipalities of other cities in the 2000s and 2010s.



Figure 3.5 Kurban hotline banner reading “For escaped sacrificial animals / The bull call center at 444 1 900 / Serving you 24-7” in Bayrampaşa, Istanbul in 2015.

In 2005, additional articles on the main kurban regulation concerns the visibility of sacrifices, animal welfare, public health, and social and infrastructural

services provided at animal bazaars. According to the new, fourth part, animal slaughter, the organization of butcher trainings, animal bazaars, animal slaughter areas, and animal rights were brought together under one regulation.<sup>16</sup>

Concerning animal slaughter, Article 21 explains who can implement the slaughtering, how they should do it, and that the butchers should have had a medical test in the prior three months showing that they are not contagious.<sup>17</sup> Article 22 explains that butcher training be organized in cooperation with the Ministry of National Education and the Directorate of Religious Affairs.<sup>18</sup> Article 23 regulates animal bazaars including toilets, water, enclosed places for sitting, other social spaces, ramps so that animals can walk easily, and the necessary number of personnel for animal transport.<sup>19</sup> In Article 24, same necessities are mentioned concerning slaughter areas. It additionally focuses on hygiene and regulations about animal waste.<sup>20</sup> Article 25 regulates animal rights with respect to hygiene, security, and health, noting that it is forbidden to neglect animals (by leaving them hungry, thirsty, or expose to too much heat or cold), to hurt the animals, or to damage their bodies before ensuring that they are dead.<sup>21</sup>

In 2010, another legislation was amended: Veterinary Services, Plant Health, Food and Feedstuff Law (Veteriner Hizmetleri, Bitki Sağlığı, Gıda ve Yem Yasası) (Resmi Gazete, 2010). Article 9 regulated animal welfare issues. In connection to animal welfare, the Directorate of Religious Affairs made a statement in 2009 which legitimized diaspora Muslim populations to use electric shock for causing the animal to faint before being sacrificed.<sup>22</sup> In 2010, Mehdi Eker, the Minister of Food, Agriculture, and Animal Husbandry, gave a speech in which he said that - in line with the EU legal harmonization process - all slaughterhouses were to be inspected and all animals were to be slaughtered humanely (Nuray Babacan, 2010).<sup>23</sup>

At the ministry level, there were many seminars in 2014 (Gıda Tarım ve Hayvancılık Bakanlığı) concerning the regulations about “welfare for farm animals” which were renewed in 2014 with respect to the practices of officials in different cities and of the people who take part in the trade of farm animals (Resmi Gazete, 2011).

Apart from these developments, there was a public health issue with respect to the transportation of animals brought from Anatolia to the European side of the Bosphorus. Since 2010 it has been stipulated that in a certain period before the kurban feast, it is banned to transport animals from the Anatolian to the European side of Istanbul in order to avoid spreading foot and mouth disease to the animals of Trace, which shares a border with Europe (Istanbul Müftülüğü, 2010, p. 65).

### § 3.4 Forth Area of Regulation: Associations and Proxy Sacrifice

The main kurban law of 2001 mentioned proxy kurban for the first time in an affirmative way, stating that those who want to give their kurban by proxy should be facilitated. But in the context of Turkey, even before this legislation, there was already an unenacted law concerning the legitimacy of proxy practice. Even Religious Affairs Foundation which is an integral part of the Directorate of Religious Affairs of Turkey, had started to organize proxy kurban facilities in the 1990s, before the first kurban law of 2001.

By 1993, the Religious Affairs Foundation started its proxy kurban practices de facto, but there were no legal documents about it other than in 1999, in which it was banned for associations other than certain public institutions to organize proxy kurban: “According to the circular sent by the Ministry of Internal Affairs to all governorates, people are warned that a lot of schools, dormitories, and groups can organize sacrifice slaughters in return for donations.”<sup>24</sup>

This circular was the result of the postmodern coup of 1997 against all religious political parties, institutions, associations, and individuals. After this date, many associations were closed and stopped conducting proxy sacrifice events. They were criminalized and punished. Therefore, the number of associations decreased at the end of 1990s or went underground. Only after 2002, after the government of JDP came to power, were they opened again.

The JDP government took the lead in facilitating the activities of Muslim NGOs. After 2004, the increase in the number of such humanitarian associations corresponded to a special regulation issued at the end of 2004. Accord-

ing to this regulation, some associations recommended by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and approved by cabinets were given the status of working in the interest of public (*kamu yararına çalışan dernek statüsü*) according to Article 27 of the Law 5253, “Dernekler Kanunu,” accepted on November 4, 2004 (Resmi Gazete, 2004b). According to this law, these associations are tax exempt and can publicly collect cash donations.

Actually, the law concerning the right to collect cash donations had been amended in 1983 by the Law on Collecting Aid (Resmi Gazete, 1983), but the changes done by Law 5253 made it possible for associations to collect money electronically and by any means - money boxes, exhibitions, performances, expeditions, sports competitions and entertainment activities - that help them collect donations.<sup>25</sup> This law was not an individual development but was one of the first steps of Islamic-based international humanitarian assistance work. The hallmark of this movement was realized with the collaboration of pro-Islamic NGOs all around the world, including Turkey, and with the support of the Turkish government.

The legal infrastructure was completed in the ensuing years. In 2008, the Law on Associations regarding their transnational activities which formalized foreign proxy sacrifice (Resmi Gazete, 2008)<sup>26</sup>. As part of this movement, many Islamic-based humanitarian associations and foundations in Turkey started international kurban organizations after 2005.

On the other hand, there was a second wave of closures for some Muslim NGOs in the mid-2010s, still during the JDP era. This second wave was related to another Islamic movement that attempted a coup d'état in 2016. Later that year, many NGOs were closed by state of emergency laws (statutory decrees) due to their connections with terrorist activities.

In 2015, before this second wave of closures, the Offices of Müftüs (Müftülükler) and the Directorate of Religious Affairs were in the process of creating a systematic infrastructure to collect data about organizations that organize proxy sacrifice events and the number of animals sacrificed (Interview with a public official from the directorate office in Ankara, September 2015). This process had not been completed in 2015 although it was amended in the 2011 Kurban Services Commission Decision.

### § 3.5 Kurban in Professional Debates

In this part, I explain how kurban became part of professional debates by looking into various professional sectors. My motivation for analyzing these professional debates is to see how kurban becomes a topic of secular discussion. One of these sectors is the health food sector. The health professionals, public offices, and halal food companies are concerned with the healthiness of kurban meat. But the health sector is not the only professional area concerned about kurban. The Kurban Symposium held in Istanbul in 2007 shows the extent to which kurban is managed by various secular professions. All these secular discussions emphasize a certain direction with respect to the transformation of kurban as a secular topic of debate.

The concerns about healthy kurban focus on the hygiene surrounding slaughters, the healthiness of animals, and the effects of violent slaughter on meat. Common people, government officials, celebrities, nutrition experts, and Islamic leaders, are all concerned with kurban meat. During Kuban feasts, health concerns are elaborated upon by food engineers on television shows and in the news. Food engineers focus on avoiding stress-induced meat, which is the meat of animals slaughtered in a violent way. It is assumed that kurban slaughters are more violent and stressful than non-religious animal slaughters in modern slaughterhouses. One scholar, Yavuz Öztürkler, says that during kurban, people should be careful about the meat. There is the possibility that the sacrificial animal was treated badly, and this would cause its meat to be unhealthy (Bugün).<sup>27</sup>

Additionally, there is increasing awareness about the livestock sector and health concerns with respect to these animals, a fact also reflected in kurban practice. When there is spoilage, people reflect on information they have read or heard previously, such as those animals are being fed by genetically modified feed and antibiotics. One interviewee, a man (60) who realized his sacrifice by giving his proxy to a supermarket, explains his concerns. These reflect the health and hygiene concerns related to urban sensibilities, and are probably shared by many upper-middle class citizens (personal communication, 20 October 2016) :

We, I, my wife, my mother and father... each of us make a sacrifice separately. In the past, we used to do it in two ways. Five to six people got together and we sacrificed an animal in our village by using a person who can slaughter. Or I went to a dairy farm, bought an animal there, and slaughtered it with the help of a butcher there. In the village, it was difficult to find somebody who could slaughter. And at the dairy farm, it was not clean enough. There were no inspections. The animals may have been sick. I heard that animals are given medicines like antibiotics. And in the last couple of years, the kurban meat had a bad smell. We even through some meat out.<sup>28</sup>

Concerning food safety, health, and hygiene issues, the suggestions deviate from traditional practice, proposing unfamiliar ideas from a scientific and secular perspective. Ömer Çetin, a speaker at the International Kurban Symposium, mentioned new methods of hygienic slaughter: cutting the throats of animals vertically and cutting around the heart so that the blood drains more quickly and the meat remains healthier (Ömer Çetin, p. 123). As long as the suggestions ensured hygienic and healthy results, the ideas were not rejected. This shows that the Islamic understanding of kurban is changing in a secular and scientific direction in line with religious, professional, and public authorities.

The professional debates were not only limited to health sector but many others. In 2007, there was an International Kurban Symposium in Istanbul, Bayrampaşa (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı and Bayrampaşa Municipality, 2007). During the symposium, academicians, scientists, experts, NGO leaders, politicians have talked, and raised ideas about the practices of kurban. They analyzed kurban with their professional perspectives rather than as a merely religious practice. In those speeches, kurban is analyzed as an occupational, economic, political and academic phenomenon.

Kurban was made a topic of secular academic study. There were academic studies from disciplines varying from anthropology to literature. Most focused on the need for western, secular cultures to accept kurban as a legitimate social practice.

There were also speeches about government policies. These outlined how kurban is managed in different parts of the world by different governments,

and provided basic trends such as the increase of proxy sacrifices, the incorporation of kurban into the humanitarian sector, the difficulties of conducting sacrifices in cities, and the legal restrictions on religious slaughters in non-Muslim countries. One of the speeches about government policies was by Professor Kemal Habib. This speech shows how kurban is the subject of statistical analysis for the modern state in Egypt and gave valuable information about how kurban is incorporated into the humanitarian sector there. The title was “Kurban and Modernity: Example of Egypt.” The speaker explained the kurban feast in Egypt with statistics. In Egypt, seven million animals are sacrificed every year, and their hides comprise 25 percent of the leather production in Egypt. He also explained that many associations distribute the meat to the needy. One association, Al-Sharia, serves more than 30,000 beneficiaries. The Mustafa Mahmut association gives micro-credit to poor families so that they can buy an animal, raise it for kurban, and then sell it during the feast. In Egypt, kurban is one way of fighting poverty (Habib, p. 91-94).

Kurban also became a topic of economy in the symposium, with the question of how to bring kurban by-products to the economy, how to prepare kurban meat for consumption, and its position regarding globalization. According to Dalpor and Dearden, foreign proxy kurban donations brought peace to world and created economic development in the third world countries by encouraging animal husbandry (Shahrokh Waleck Dalpour and Brad Dearden, p. 190-193)

The symposium was important for bringing together a variety of professionals from different fields, and the kurban phenomenon was discussed in secular as well as the religious terms. As an international symposium, it gathered people from all over the world and put kurban forward as a topic to be debated and interpreted.

### § 3.6 Kurban in the News Between 1994-2001

Every year some instance of sacrificial violence comes to minds. For example, in 2014 an animal fell into a hole full of blood. In 2013, a sheep was slaughtered in a balcony. In 2012, a cow was killed while it was walking. As part of the discourse starting in the 1990s, news appeared in every kurban period through



the 2000s and 2010s of sacrificial cattle trying to escape: wounded, panicked, bleeding animals chased on the streets by knifewielding citizens recorded by cell phone cameras.

In this part, I depict the news touching at people's sensibilities about Islamic animal sacrifice in Turkey. The discussion of sensibilities is important for explaining kurban practices in Turkey because the media during kurban feasts has increasingly reflected concerns about violence, health, and hygiene since the 1990s. As explained in the theoretical chapter, sensibilities have changed in relation to urbanization. And as a strong indicator of change, outdated sacrifice practices of slaughtering animals in random public areas are considered to be deviant and prohibited by religious, professional, and public authorities. I believe this is strong proof of a radical change in the conception of kurban in cities.

For this part, I searched the online archive of *Milliyet* newspaper<sup>29</sup> - a widely read newspaper - for the keyword "kurban kesimi" (sacrificial animal slaughter). I compiled the news by date to see the culmination of urban sensibilities about kurban. These news articles reflect the urban sensibilities of their readers. From this, I conclude that street kurbans became a major concern for these people as it was newsworthy by the mid-1990s.

After that, the most debated aspect of kurban was angry, impatient butchers. *Milliyet* articles about Kurban show that concern about violence and sensibilities about cruelty started to be a topic of news in the 1990s. An article from 1994 mentions the singer Muazzez Abacı has an animal sacrificed without seeing the animal being slaughtered because she cannot stand the suffering of the animal (20 April 1994). Mesut Yılmaz, who would become prime minister after the 1995 elections, did not want people to make animal sacrifices for him during his election campaign (29 July 1995). Another article from the same year mentioned Turkish people in the Netherlands who tried to conduct illegal animal sacrifices, bringing animals to their house via the building elevator to do the sacrifice at home. This was characterized as a disgrace in the news article (15 May 1995). One of the first news articles about children witnessing the torture of animal sacrifice was in the same timeframe (28 April 1996). The most common topic of the articles - inexperienced butchers - first appeared in 1996 (29 April 1996). This news article mentioned the number of

people and butchers throughout the country who had died of a heart attack or injured themselves while slaughtering a sacrificial animal.<sup>30</sup> A news article from 1999 equated kurban to “bull fights,” because the cattle was ran to escape the knife and then chased the people (29 March 1999). In 1999, for the first time, a news article about urban etiquette appeared criticizing violent scenes of sacrifice which are a disgrace for urban dwellers (03 April 1999).

In the year 2000, butchers during the kurban feast were (for perhaps the first time in the media) were described as torturers. One butcher cut the legs of the animal before the slaughter because the animal “understood his intent” and tried to escape (22 March 2000). Another stabbed the throats of the cattle in order to prevent them from running away (02 July 2000). All of these articles mentioned the fight between man and animal.

The term “sensibilities” define the social and psychological condition behind these news articles. From mid-1990s onwards, violence against sacrificial animals became a topic for news, unlike in previous years. Ritual violence realized in open, public spheres such as on roads and in parks started to be viewed as extraordinary practices.

This increase in news touching upon sensibilities is partly influenced by the adoption of EU standards that started before the rise of the JDP government. Concerning sacrifice practices, the first news article about EU regulations in *Milliyet* was at the end of 1999 (15 December 1999), corresponding to the Helsinki Summit of 1999 in which Turkey was announced as an EU candidate. New methods and new discussions emerged. The president at the time, Süleyman Demirel, suggested in 2000 that animals be sacrificed after being done, and he ordered his own sacrificial animals be slaughtered in that way (17 March 2000). In 2001, there were discussions of a draft law to protect animals (12 February 2001). After the 2001 kurban feast, articles mentioned that Turkey had fallen into disgrace in the world and international community because of its uncivilized, brutal savageness (07 March 2001). In 2001, following the regulation of urban space and animal bazaars, news articles called people to make their sacrifices not on the streets but in the tents in which animals are kept (18 February 2001). The same year, the Municipality of Sarıyer was commended for pouring a concrete floor in the butchering area, and some municipalities started to provide electricity and water (21 February 2001).

The landmark change in the conception of kurban came with the first kurban legislation in 2001. In that year, the Directorate of Religious Affairs warned people not to “cover the streets with blood,” and that such a bloody practice does not comply with true Islam (04 March 2001). Repeating this, a minister - Mehmet Aydın – announced in 2002 that sacrificing animals on the street is contrary to Islamic rules (30 December 2002). The same was repeated again in 2003 (12 February 2003).

It was announced that slaughtering sacrificial animals in public areas was literally prohibited by the religion, “not compatible with true Islam,” and “contrary to Islamic rule.” This religious prohibition was announced just after the first kurban law was passed in 2001, meaning that the religious law was reorganized according to secular law. This shows that the Islamic understanding of kurban changes in accordance with the necessities of the urban environment as religious, professional, and public authorities start to consider many sacrifice practices as deviant and prohibited. Therefore, I argue that kurban as a religious practice has become an object of secular debate, and kurban itself is becoming a necessarily urban religious ritual.

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- 1 “Kurban derisi çalan muhtar Eskişehir, Tabakhane caddesinde Türk Hava Kurumuna teberru edilen kurban derilerinden dördünü seçip kendine ayıran mahalle muhtarı Hasan Tiryaki hakkında hırsızlık...” Milliyet News
  - 2 “İstanbul’da kurban derisi toplayan 100 kişi gözaltına alındı. Sıkıyönetimin uyarılarına karşın bazı kurum ve kasapların kurban derilerini 300 ile 450 liraya dericilere sattığı öne sürüldü.” Milliyet News
  - 3 Ereğli’de 4 gün boyunca Türk Hava kurumu kamyonları ve diğer vakıfların da kamyonları koyun postu/derisi toplarlardı. (...) 15 yıl öncesine kadar falan, dericiler de alırdı derileri, biz tanıdık dericiye verirdik. Sonra o yasaklandı. Derinin içi tuzlanırdı, bağlanırdı, verilirdi. Deri çok kokar. Ama deriler yatılı Koran kurslarına daha çok verilir.
  - 4 Eskiden insanlar THK’ndan korktuğu için veriyorlardı (derileri); ama farkında olanlar tepki koyuyordu. Sonuçta ne olduğu tamamen belli değildi o derilerin. Kurumun depolarında küflendiği ile ilgili haber çıktı. Onun dışında ne için kullanıldığı da belli değildi; pilot yetiştirmek için diyorlar ama, bilemiyorum. Halbuki kurban derileri fıkhı göre, fakirin ve öğrencinin hakkı. “kurban kaniyle, derisiyle bir bütündür” der. Mesela biz sadece bir deri için arabayla 10 kilometrelik mesafe gideriz; oraya gitmek zaten 10 TL tutar, ve koyun derisi zaten 5-10 TL. Manevi yükümlülüktür çünkü derileri alıp hayırlı şekilde kullanmak; bu çalışmayı yapanlar bunun bilincindedir. Ama THK derileri bozuluyordu, çünkü parayla çalışıyorlar. Biz

gönüllü olduğumuz için bunu isteyerek, önem vererek yapıyoruz. Ama THK kurbanın derisini zorla, devlet gücüyle alıyordu; ve bu kurbanın ruhuna aykırıdır. THK'nın yarattığı korku durumu insanlara yansdı. Bu korku nedeniyle, insanların bir kısmı derilerini THK arabalarına verdi, bir kısmı da tavır aldı. Aslında THK kamu yararına çalışan vakıf statüsünde, fakat kötü bir algı var onunla ilgili. (Hükümet çatışmasından sonra) THK yine ön plana çıkarıldı.

- 5 On 02 October 2014, 1 TL was 2,27 dollars.
- 6 Ben Konya'da da deri toplama işinde çalıştım. ... Derneği vesilesiyle. Kurban kesim yerlerinde, kurban kestirenlerle görüşüyorduk. Dernek için en önemli gelir kaynaklarından biri deriler. Büyükbaş derisi, kilosu 5 liradan düşüsek, 30 kilo gelir deri, 150 lira civarı, ciddi bir kalem. Yaptığımız şey ise sadece insanlarla görüşüp niye yaptığımızı söylemek
- 7 Büyük Şehir Belediyelerinin Yönetimi Hakkında Kanun
- 8 1580 sayılı Belediye Kanunu, 1593 sayılı Umumi Hıfzısıhha Kanunu
- 9 Madde 1 – (1) Bu Tebliğin amacı, 2014 yılı Kurban Bayramı münasebetiyle ibadet amaçlı kurban kesmek isteyenlerin kurbanlarını dinî hükümlere, sağlık şartlarına ve çevre temizliğine uygun olarak hayvana en az acı verecek şekilde kesmelerine veya vekâlet yoluyla kestirmelerine yardımcı olunması, kurban satış ve kesim yerlerinin belirlenmesi, kesim yapacak kişilerin eğitilmesi ve bu konulara ilişkin diğer hususlarla ilgili tedbirlerin alınmasıdır.
- 10 Kurul: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, İçişleri Bakanlığı, Sağlık Bakanlığı, Gıda, Tarım ve Hayvancılık Bakanlığı, Çevre ve Şehircilik Bakanlığı, Orman ve Su İşleri Bakanlığı ve Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı temsilcilerinden oluşan Bakanlıklararası Kurban Hizmetleri Kurulu
- 11 Komisyon: İllerde Vali veya görevlendireceği bir Vali Yardımcısının, İlçelerde ise Kaymakamın başkanlığında, Müftülük, İl Sağlık Müdürlüğü, İl Halk Sağlığı Müdürlüğü, İlçe Toplum Sağlığı Merkezi, İlçe Sağlık Müdürlüğü, Gıda, Tarım ve Hayvancılık Bakanlığı İl/İlçe Müdürlüğü, Çevre ve Şehircilik Bakanlığı İl Müdürlüğü, Orman ve Su İşleri Bakanlığı Doğa Koruma ve Milli Parklar İl Şube Müdürlüğü, Belediye ve Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı temsilcisinden oluşan Kurban Hizmetleri Komisyonu
- 12 Article 4, paragraphs *j* and *m* in “2014 Yılı Kurban Hizmetlerinin Uygulanmasına Dair Tebliğ”, and Article 4, paragraphs *ı* and *l* in “2013 Yılı Kurban Hizmetlerinin Uygulanmasına Dair Tebliğ”
- 13 Article 4, paragraph *c*, “2013 Yılı Kurban Hizmetlerinin Uygulanmasına Dair Tebliğ”
- 14 Yönetmeliğin 10 (c-7) maddesine göre, yetkili mercilerin kararları doğrultusunda belirlenen yerler dışında kurban kesilmesini önlenecektir.
- 15 Madde 12. - Hayvanların kesilmesi; dini kuralların gerektirdiği özel koşullar dikkate alınarak hayvanı korkutmadan, ürkütmeden, en az acı verecek şekilde, hijyenik kurallara uyularak ve usulüne uygun olarak bir anda yapılır. Hayvanların kesiminin ehliyetli kişilerce yapılması sağlanır. Dini amaçla kurban kesmek isteyenlerin kurbanlarını dini hükümlere, sağlık şartlarına, çevre temizliğine uygun olarak, hayvana en az acı verecek şekilde bir anda kesimi,

kesim yerleri, ehliyetli kesim yapacak kişiler ve ilgili diğer hususlar Bakanlık, kurum ve kuruluşların görüşü alınarak, Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığının bağlı olduğu Bakanlıkça çıkarılacak yönetmelikle belirlenir.

- 16 Dördüncü Bölüm: Hayvanların Kesimi, Kurs Düzenlenmesi, Kurban Satış Yerleri, Kurban Kesim Yerleri ve Hayvan Hakları (Ek:RG-20/09/2005-25942)
- 17 Hayvanların kesimi. Madde 21 — Hayvanların kesimi, kurban kesim yerlerinde kurbanını kendisi kesmek isteyen ehil kişilerce veya kasaplığı meslek edinmiş ya da Kurban Kesim Elemanı Yetiştirme ve Geliştirme Kursu Bitirme Belgesine sahip kişiler tarafından, dini kuralların gerektirdiği özel koşullar dikkate alınarak, korkutmadan, ürkütmeden, en az acı verecek şekilde, temizlik kurallarına uyularak ve usulüne uygun olarak bir anda yapılır. Kesim elemanları, kesim sırasında çizme ve önlük giyer ve her yıl kurban bayramından önce (üç ay içinde) portör muayenesine tabi tutulurlar
- 18 Kursların düzenlenmesi. Madde 22 — Kurban Hizmetleri Komisyonunun gözetiminde Kesim Elemanı Yetiştirme ve Geliştirme Kursları düzenlenir ve bu Kurslara katılanlara "Kurs Bitirme Belgesi" verilir. Kurban kesim elemanı yetiştirme ve geliştirme kursları, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı ile Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı işbirliğinde düzenlenir. Kurban kesim yerlerinde görevlendirilen personel ve kesim elemanları için komisyonlarca tanıtıcı "Görevli Kimlik Kartı" ve "Kesim Elemanı Kimlik Kartı" düzenlenir.
- 19 Kurban satış yerleri. Madde 23 — Kurbanlık hayvanların satışı Kurulca belirlenen özelliklere sahip kurban satış yerlerinde yapılır. Mevcut hayvan pazarları ve borsaların dışında Komisyonlarca şehrin nüfus yoğunluğu dikkate alınarak şehirlerin ana girişlerinde ve şehir içinde uygun diğer alanlarda kurban satış yerleri belirlenir. Hayvanların şehir merkezlerine girişlerine ve bu satış yerlerinin dışında diğer yerlerde satışına müsaade edilmez. Kurban satış yerlerinde, su, tuvalet, kapalı oturma yeri ve benzeri sosyal ihtiyaçların karşılanacağı yerler ile hayvanların taşındıkları araçlara bindirilmesine uygun rampalar yapılır. Hayvanlar, zemini temiz ve kuru, etrafı ve üstü kapalı mahallerde (büyükbaş hayvanlar uzun ipli yular ile) muhafaza edilir ve nakilleri sırasında yeteri kadar tecrübeli eleman bulundurulur. Satış yerlerinin temizlenmesi ve oluşan atıkların alınması işleri, belediyeler tarafından her gün muntazam olarak yapılır.
- 20 Kurban kesim yerleri. Madde 24 — Kurbanlık hayvanların kesimi Kurulca belirlenen özelliklere sahip kurban kesim yerlerinde yapılır. Mevcut mezbaha ve kombinalar dışında komisyonlarca şehrin nüfus yoğunluğu dikkate alınarak kurban kesim yerleri ve bunların kapasiteleri belirlenir. Kurban kesim yerlerinde, su, tuvalet, kapalı oturma yeri ve benzeri sosyal ihtiyaçların karşılanacağı yerler ile hayvanların taşındıkları araçlardan indirilmesine uygun rampalar yapılır. Kesim yerlerinin zemini kolay yıkanabilir, dezenfekte edilebilir ve su birikmesine imkan vermeyecek bir yapıda inşa edilir. Yeterli miktarda aydınlatılma ve havalandırma sağlanır. Kullanılacak tüm makine ve ekipman ile çalışanların temizlik ve dezenfeksiyonu yaptırılır. Yeterli miktar ve basınçta ve içilebilir nitelikte kullanma suyu bulundurulur. Biriken gübre, çöp ve sakatat ile diğer atık ve artıklar, çevreye zarar vermeyecek

şekilde üstü kapalı bir mahalde toplanır ve daha sonra hijyenik şartlara uygun olarak izale, bertaraf ve tahliyesi sağlanır. Kesim sonrası ortaya çıkan kan, tank veya benzeri sızdırmaz bir yerde toplanır ve uygun bir şekilde bertaraf edilir. Gübre birikimi için özel bir yer ayrılır. Hastalıklı organlar ile karkaslar en az iki metre derinliğinde çukurlara gömülüp üzeri kireçle kaplanır veya uygun bir yerde yakılarak imha edilir.

- 21 Hayvan hakları. Madde 25 — Kurban satış ve kesim yerlerinde hayvanların korunması, gözetilmesi, bakımı ve kötü muamelelerden uzak tutulması yanında, temizlik, sağlık ve güvenliklerine özen gösterilir. Hayvanlar uygun vasıtalarla ve eziyet edilmeden taşınır. Hayvanlara kasıtlı olarak kötü davranmak, dövmek, aç ve susuz bırakmak, aşırı soğuğa veya sıcağa maruz bırakmak, bakımlarını ihmal etmek, kesin olarak öldüğü anlaşılmadan vücutlarına müdahalede bulunmak yasaktır.
- 22 Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı “Kurbanlık hayvanın kesimi esnasında hayvana fazla eziyet vermemek için elektrik şoku ile bayıltılması, bu hayvanın kurban olarak kabul edilmesinde dinen sakınca yoktur” açıklaması yapmıştı
- 23 “AB ile müzakereler sırasında gıda başlığı açılırken, hayvanların acı çekmeden kesilmesi konusunda şoklama yöntemi gündeme gelmişti. 2011 Aralık’ından itibaren mezbahalar başta olmak üzere, her yerde, hayvanların acı çekmeden kesilmesi uygulamasına geçilecek. İkincil mevzuatın ve yönetmeliklerin hazırlıkları sürüyor.”
- 24 “İçisleri Bakanlığı'nin valiliklere gönderdiği genelgede, İslamci nitelikte birçok okul, yurt ve grupların, bagis karsiligi kurban kesme kampanyasi duzenleyebilecekleri animsatarak vatandaslar uyarildi.”
- 25 Madde 5 - Bu Kanuna göre; makbuzla, belirli yerlere kutu koyarak, bankalarda hesap açtırarak, yardım pulu çıkararak, eşya piyangosu düzenleyerek, kültürel gösteriler ve sergiler yoluyla, spor gösterileri, gezi ve eğlenceler düzenlemek veya bilgileri otomatik ya da elektronik olarak işleme tâbi tutmuş sistemler kullanmak suretiyle yardım toplanabilir. Bu fıkra yer alan “veya bilgileri otomatik ya da elektronik olarak işleme tâbi tutmuş sistemler kullanmak” ibaresi, 4/11/2004 tarihli ve 5253 sayılı Kanununun 38 inci maddesiyle eklenmiş ve metne işlenmiştir.
- 26 Uluslararası faaliyet ile ilgili:

Madde 25 – Vakıflar; vakıf senetlerinde yer almak kaydıyla, amaç veya faaliyetleri doğrultusunda, uluslararası faaliyet ve işbirliğinde bulunabilirler, yurt dışında şube ve temsilcilik açabilirler, üst kuruluşlar kurabilirler ve yurt dışında kurulmuş kuruluşlara üye olabilirler.

Vakıflar; yurt içi ve yurt dışındaki kişi, kurum ve kuruluşlardan aynı ve nakdi bağış ve yardım alabilirler, yurt içi ve yurt dışındaki benzer amaçlı vakıf ve derneklere aynı ve nakdi bağış ve yardımda bulunabilirler. Nakdi yardımların yurt dışından alınması veya yurt dışına yapılması banka aracılığı ile olur ve sonuç Genel Müdürlüğe bildirilir. Bildirimin şekli ve içeriği yönetmelikle düzenlenir.

- 27 “Hayvanlarda stresle birlikte vücutta birtakım fizyolojik değişiklikler olmaktadır. Mesela adrenalin hormonu artmakta, kortizon ortaya çıkmaktadır. Buna bağlı olarak da başka hormonlarda salınmakta ve birtakım fizyolojik reaksiyonların normal seyirinden çıkıp anormal bir seyre doğru gitmesine sebep olmaktadır. Bu da ette birtakım değişikliklere neden olmakta, etin biyokimyasında, bileşiminde bazı maddelerin açığa çıkarak hem etin tadını hem de etin hayvan kesildikten sonra saklanma süresini düşürmektedir”
- 28 Biz, ben, eşim, annem ve babam için ayrı ayrı kurban kesimi yapıyoruz. Daha önce iki şekilde kesiyorduk. Ya beş ya da altı kişi birlikte köyümüzde kesim yapabilen biri vasıtasıyla kesiyorduk. Ya da mandıraya gidip orada satın alıp oradaki bir kasap vasıtasıyla kesiyorduk. Köyde her zaman kesecek kişi bulmak zor oluyordu. Mandırada ise onlar kesip teslim ediyordu ancak mandıralar çok temiz yerler değildi. Hiçbir kontrol yoktu. Satılan hayvanların hasta olma ihtimali vardı. Satılan hayvanlara bazı ilaçlar (antibiyotik) verildiğini duyduk. Zaten son birkaç yıl kesilen kurbanlarda kötü bir koku vardı. Hatta bazı kurban etlerini atmak zorunda kaldık.
- 29 <http://gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr/>
- 30 “Kurban kazaları: İki kişi kurban keserken ölürken çok sayıda vatandaş da kurban yerine kendini kesti.”





## Physical Organization of Kurban in İstanbul

This chapter explains the physical organization of kurban in İstanbul. In the first part, general information about kurban sites in İstanbul is given. I provide a quantitative analysis of the official animal sacrifice sites in İstanbul in 2016. In the subsequent parts, I analyze the bazaar sites that supply kurban animals, as well as the sites of slaughter which include containers, carwash facilities, and religious foundations. I argue that all these facilities are specific to the urban context of Turkey.

### § 4.1 Organization of Kurban Sites in İstanbul

As part of the regulations of 2001, animals can formally be sacrificed only on certain sites such as private property, gardens of houses, urban lands arranged for that purpose in a neighborhood, bazaar areas, municipality properties and facilities, industrial sites, warehouses, factories, school gardens, car park areas, Islamic charity organizations, student dormitories, Koran courses (boarding schools), mosques, sacrificial vow (adak) facilities, car wash facilities, and carpet washing facilities. In addition to formal arrangements in private facilities, many others are part of informal economy.

In some cases, people take care of the process by their own means. They butcher the sacrificial animal themselves. People who conserve these traditional ways of ritual slaughter may prefer to conduct the sacrifice in their gardens after buying an animal from a bazaar.

But it is common that people do not have access to garden. For those people, they can either conduct the sacrifice in empty private properties such as warehouses or basement floors or, more commonly, bring the animal to a carwash facility or animal sales area where there is a (professional or non-professional) butcher or a butchering facility. In places like car-washes, workers do the job of slaughtering, de-hidening, cleaning, and packaging.

Sites formally acknowledged by municipalities are increasing in number every year. With the first regulations of 2002, official lists of slaughtering areas were prepared (Şengil, 2003). According to the first list, there were only forty to forty-five official applications, while by 2003, this number had climbed to 100 (Şengil). In 2004, it reached 464 (Özlüer and Ergün, 2004). This increase slowed in time. In 2007, there were 475 official sites for animal slaughter during kurban (IBB, 2007), and in 2016, there were 535.

In 2016, the annual list of kurban sales and sacrifice sites was announced on the website of the Istanbul office of the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Livestock (Istanbul İl Gıda Tarım Ve Hayvancılık Müdürlüğü, 2016). This list is categorized on a district index, and for each district, there is a list of the kurban sales and slaughtering areas with the name of the person who made the official application, a basic description of the site or facility, and its address.

I analyzed the slaughtering places on the index by categorizing them. I made four principal categories; public areas, private property areas, private-religious facilities, and private non-religious facilities. Under these categories, I arranged subcategories. The table below is my classification of the official kurban slaughtering areas index from 2016.

Table 4.1 Categorized sacrifice sites in Istanbul

In 37 Districts of Istanbul		Sacrificial Animal Slaughter Areas	No.
Public areas/facilities	75	Empty urban lands	36
		Animal bazaars and market areas	14
		Municipality properties and facilities	22
		Industrial sites, warehouses, factories, garages	3
Private property areas	19	Shopping mall gardens	3
		Educational, sport, health, geriatric, residential, and social centers	10
		Parking lots	6
Private religious facilities	109	Islamic charity associations, student dormitories, and Koran courses	103
		Mosques	2
		Sacrificial vow animal facilities	4
Private non-religious facilities	320	Animal farms and slaughterhouses	18
		Carwash facilities	108
		Carpet washing facilities	3
		Un-named private facilities	191
Total	523	Total	523

Among the categories in this list, the most substantial number of formal sacrifice sites is carwash facilities. Second is Islamic charity associations, student dormitories, and Koran courses (boarding schools). Among these sites for facilities, 191 are not specifically defined, which may consist of car washes and empty private facilities. Additionally, there are three carpet washing facilities used for animal sacrifice.

While in some highly-urbanized neighborhoods, such as Fikirtepe, the only facilities are car-washes and student dormitories, in other neighborhoods there are a variety of facilities. Bayrampaşa, a district with many neighborhoods, is a good example of the preparation done by its municipal government. In 2015, animal sacrifice sites and facilities in this district were highly organized. From the photo of the banner, it is possible to see that carwash facilities, mosques, open public lands, municipal and private properties are all arranged by the municipality.

BAYRAMPAŞA BELEDİYESİ 2015 YILI KURBAN SATIŞ ve KESİM YERLERİ					
MEGA CENTER		▶ 5'i Bir Yerde Modern Büyükbaş Satış ve Kesim Merkezi			
ESKİ CEZAEVİ İÇİ		▶ Küçükbaş Satış ve Kesim Merkezi			
BAYRAMPAŞA VAKFI AŞEVİ		▶ Altıntepsi Mah. Akpınar Cad. üzeri (Küçükbaş Satış ve Kesim Yeri)			
Carrefoursa A.V.M		▶ Otopark İçi Küçükbaş ve Büyükbaş Satış ve Kesim Merkezi			
OTO YIKAMALAR					
İMİET GÖÇERPNAR ÖZMESE OTO YIKAMA	YILDIRIM MAH. ŞEHİT KAMİL BALKAN CAD. NO: 148 0212 537 47 60	0541 843 99 15	ÇIHAN OTO YIKAMA TAKSİ OTO YIKAMA	ALTINTEPSİ MAH. KAZIM KARABEKİR CAD. NO: 1 ALTINTEPSİ MAH. POTRAZ SK. NO: 5	0212 567 81 72 0935 601 27 25
UYFAL OTO YIKAMA	YILDIRIM MAH. 100 YIL CAD. NO: 3 0212 537 64 68	0212 537 47 60	MIZAN OTO YIKAMA CALIŞKAN OTO YIKAMA	ALTINTEPSİ MAH. AKPINAR CAD. NO: 188 TERAZİDERE MAH. EĞEMEN SK. NO: 18	0536 620 05 88 0212 567 31 13
CAPITOL OTO YIKAMA	YILDIRIM MAH. KIZILER SK. NO: 85 0212 537 36 69	0212 564 19 47	IRFAN BEZER	MURATPAŞA MAH. SELAMET SK. NO: 54	0212 578 82 30
FURKAN OTO YIKAMA	YILDIRIM MAH. ALI FUAT BAĞÇUL CAD. NO: 105 0507 389 11 79	0212 537 36 69	CELEBİ OTO YIKAMA	MURATPAŞA MAH. ŞEHİT ÇIHAN ERKAN SK. NO: 23	0542 774 43 84
ALBAYRAK OTO YIKAMA	KARTALTEPE MAH. 50 YIL CAD. 54 SK. NO: 4 0538 020 99 45	0507 389 11 79	MERKEZİ OTOYAPKI GEZMİŞOĞULLU OTO YIKAMA	ORTA MAH. ÇARŞI CAD. NO: 39 ORTA MAH. UYUŞUR CAD. NO: 81-82	0533 812 53 79 0212 967 94 21
MOSTAR OTO YIKAMA	KARTALTEPE MAH. 50 YIL CAD. NO: 80 0532 253 18 20	0538 020 99 45			
MEĞİAR OTO YIKAMA					
AÇIK ALANLAR		KOCATEPE ULU CAMİİ KARŞISI (Hot Düğün Salonu arkası)		MALTEPE İSTON YANI	
CEVATPAŞA MAH. ADEM YAVUZ CAD. NO:43-45 (Binanın Karşısı)				KOCATEPE İLKOKUL YANI GEÇİT ALTI ŞEHİR PARKI CAD. NO:22	
				TİMAŞ İŞ MERKEZİ YANI ANIT SOK. NO:5 MALTEPE	
CAMLAR					
Yeşil Cami İsmetpaşa Mahallesi					
Ulu Cami Kocatepe Mahallesi					

Figure 4.1 List of slaughtering areas in Bayrampaşa in 2015, including the garden of a shopping mall, an old prison, foundations, animal bazaar areas, carwashes, mosques, and open lands reserved for the practice.

In 2016, according to the official list of kurban sacrifice sites in Bayrampaşa, thirteen to twenty-eight sites were carwash facilities, two were vow (adak) sacrifice areas, one was the carpark of the CarrefourSA shopping mall, one was “5i bir yerde” – a special kurban sacrifice area prepared by the Municipality (Megacenter, 2016) - one was the garden of an unused prison, one was a municipal facility, two were mosques, one was a parking lot, two were private properties, and four were empty urban lands. Bayrampaşa is a good example depicting the many possibilities for sacrifice sites in urban areas.

Bayrampaşa is representative of Istanbul in general. The majority of the slaughter sites are carwash facilities, referring to the lack of urban land. With dense urban construction, the need for space emerges. The primary need is a drain to which blood can flow and abundant water to wash away the blood. The most convenient option is the carwashes. Therefore, they are preferred by the majority of people. But Bayrampaşa's statistics differ somewhat from the whole Istanbul statistics because the municipality has taken more initiative to construct large, convenient sites for slaughters, such as luxury bazaars and convenient slaughter centers. In the next part, I analyze the sites where animals are brought, sold and slaughtered.

## § 4.2 Supplying kurban: animal bazaars

In this part, I focus on kurban bazaars which are the main suppliers of the animals. I start with the 1950s and continue with a short reflection on the district markets. As reflected in urban resettlement of the district markets, there is an increasing value of urban lands. Similar to the vegetable markets, animal bazaars at central locations are replaced in the urban area. The animal owners who transport their animals from other parts of Turkey are effected from this development. Their journey from their hometown to Istanbul includes difficult phases which will be explained in this part. The final destination, the animal bazaar, may have or may not have infrastructural services such as concrete floors, slaughter containers, toilette areas, carparks and buffets. The rent prices differ between the moderate and ultra-modern kurban bazaars. But there is a general trend of bazaars becoming more organized, professional, secure, and healthy.

Kurban bazaars are important as they are the primary and rooted structures in the cities during kurban periods. There have always bazaar sites where urban residents can buy animals. The photo is a scene from Istanbul in 1951 (11 September 1951, Milliyet, p. 1), and the caption explains that, 18,000 sheep had entered Istanbul that week. Taking into consideration that the maximum need of the city is 11,000 sheep, the rest can be assumed to be for kurban (20 August 1951, Milliyet, p. 2).



Figure 4.2 Kurban bazaars in Istanbul in 1950

Bazaars are important because they provide the separate space for interaction, trade, ritual, and slaughter. Bazaars keep slaughter away from random streets and keep violent scenes of cattle being slaughtered out of the vision of the wider urban public. For this reason, either an urban land is converted into to an animal bazaar, or as regulation says, the locations of weekly street bazaars be converted into low-budget kurban bazaars when necessary (Resmi Gazete, 2013)<sup>1</sup>. Before turning to makeshift animal bazaars that exist only during kurban periods, I look at district market areas to understand the continuity of the arrangements of bazaar sites over the past decades. These arrangements also hint at urban sensibilities that were becoming newsworthy by 1980s.

We can find news articles about new arrangements in *Milliyet* as early as the end of the 1970s. Two articles from 1979 are about increased regulation. Although there were no national-level laws, the article makes clear that there were either municipal regulations or internal correspondence. While one mentions that there will be patrols in these bazaars (28 February 1979, p. 11), the other states that according to municipal regulations, people working in the bazaars of Ankara will no longer be allowed to shout and will be celan shaven or otherwise they will be punished (28 September 1979, p. 7, *Yaşam*). In the 1980s you could see resistance everywhere. According to news published in 1983, the Municipality of Istanbul ordered that some bazaars be relocated from small streets to other areas as they were creating a threat with respect to health, traffic, and hygiene (03 August 1983, p. 10). Around that date, the Environment Law (Resmi Gazete, 1983) which included terms about environmental hygiene, was passed.

The ensuing years were especially important with respect to urban changes being experienced in Istanbul. The ANAP (Motherland Party, a political party) was formed on 20 May 1983. The president of the party was Turgut Özal, who was known for the economic decisions<sup>2</sup> he had made at the beginning of 1980. These liberal economic decisions were realized by the ANAP after 1983, after the military coup. Bedrettin Dalan was mayor of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality from 1984 to 1989 when the silhouette of Istanbul changed drastically. During his administration, central and historical places were opened to construction, and the main bazaar areas were replaced.

There are news articles about changed market areas after 1984. In 1986, an article mentioned that people disturbed by the noise and waste of the market areas. Permanent market areas were becoming more widespread (12 May 1986, p. 11). Through the end of the 1980s, more news appeared about resistance to these changes. Two news articles from 1987 and 1988 mention protests organized by workers of markets, the place of which was changed by authorities (17 April 1987, p. 13; 20 January 1988, p. 3). The trend to change market areas did not end once Dalan's term was over. In 1992, there was significant resistance to the decision of the mayor of the Şişli district of Istanbul about the abolition of a neighborhood markets. Three stallholder associations got together to strike by not opening their markets in Istanbul (27 July 1992, p. 15; 11 August 1992, p. 7; 09 August 1992, p. 14, *kültür sanat*).

Looking back at district market regulations is important because: first, it shows that the regulation process of urban markets and bazaars did not start with kurban bazaars; second, regulations were not on the national level but on the municipal level; third, the regulations about district markets suggest the increasing financial value of urban sites, which explains further regulation; and fourth, the newsworthiness of arrangements and clashes suggests existing urban sensibilities of the 1980s.

Kurban bazaars differ from district markets with respect to their temporality and the ownership of the land. Urban kurban bazaars are either on sites that belong to the municipality or a proprietor. Organizational responsibilities are placed on both the municipalities and private investors. If the site does not belong to the municipality, either the investor or the municipality itself rents the area from its owner. If investors rent a site, they must apply to the municipality, pay the necessary fee, and divide the site into tent areas. In practice, they then start to rent the tent areas to animal owners.

Similar to district markets, kurban bazaars are generally constructed in empty urban spaces, and often these bazaars are moved to different sites in different years. This is arranged by the municipality. The empty urban lands are sometimes construction areas, such as with the Çekmeköy and Kasımpaşa kurban bazaars, which are constructed on land adjacent to Ağaoğlu (a construction company) construction areas. But these empty urban lands do not

always stay empty. Most of the time, there is an investment project and the bazaar is moved to another neighborhood the following year.

The Çekmeköy kurban bazaar was based on the İMES (Istanbul Madeni Eşya Sanatkarları, Istanbul Hardware Craftmen) industrial site in 2013, and was moved to Serindere in 2014. Moreover, the kurban bazaar in Bakırköy behind the Marmara Forum shopping mall had been elsewhere in previous years but was established there again in 2014. The animal owners on the site near the Bakırköy-Marmara Forum believe that the site had been moved because it is central - next to a shopping mall - and because people living nearby complained about its smell and appearance.

Another example is of Fikirtepe, a neighborhood on the Anatolian side of Istanbul in Kadıköy, an important urban district. Fikirtepe was a neighborhood of low-income residents, but due to its access to new public transportation lines and a new shopping mall (Akasya), property values increased and the area was gentrified in the guise of an urban renewal project.

The photo depicts the construction area used as an animal bazaar for a mosque and student dormitory. The gentrification project removed the kurban bazaar permanently, together with residents of the neighborhood.



Figure 4.3 Fikirtepe student dormitory. On the edge of the construction area there is the student dormitory, mosque, and a foundation which conducts proxy sacrifices and accept donations for the dormitory: “Fikirtepe Student Dormitory: Our Animal Sacrifice Registration Process Continues.” Fikirtepe, 2016



As in the example of Fikirtepe, bazaars are constantly being replaced or sometimes permanently removed from city centers. These replacements are due to the increasing value of urban land associated with the fact that Istanbul is becoming a global city under neoliberal policies. But bazaars are not only valuable urban lands, but also sites of animal supply.

Kurban bazaars are the suppliers of sacrificial animals. Before and during the kurban feast in 2014, I visited eight kurban bazaars in several neighborhoods of Istanbul with various socioeconomic profiles - mostly on the European side.<sup>3</sup> From the conversations with animal owners and sellers, I had an overview of where the animals come from, how they get to Istanbul, the tents in which they stay, how the tent areas are organized, and what services are provided by the municipality. In the final part, I focus on ultra-modern, large-scale kurban bazaars under the supervision of the municipalities regarding the infrastructural capacities.

There are various answers to the question of where the animals come from. A significant number of animal owners raise livestock only for the kurban feast. The ones with enough financial capital take their animals to Istanbul, and most borrow money they will pay back after the animals are sold. To a lesser extent, some animal owners collect animals from different farms, while others work as animal traders that supply meat for butchers year-round.

Coming to Istanbul is difficult especially for the animals and owners and shepherds coming from the distant, Eastern part of Turkey. Some of these animal owners buy animals to sell in Istanbul. If they cannot sell the animals, there is a financial burden of transporting the animals back. Moreover, some animals may be injured or get sick during the transportation process. But the difficulty is not only the road itself. Since 2010, if animal owners choose to sell their animals in an animal bazaar in the European part of Istanbul, they must obtain a special permit. This permit can be obtained if all the bovines pass a blood test concerning foot and mouth disease – for which there is a separate fee. After they reach Istanbul, they continue their struggles forming the tents in the kurban bazaar in which they stay together with their animals without even a functioning toilet.

Mehmet, an animal owner, from Trakya, is luckier than his associates who come from Anatolian Turkey. He paid 10,000 TL<sup>4</sup> for one tent area in the animal bazaar of Bakırköy-İncirli next to the local market. He has many goats and sheep that he raises himself only for the kurban. In the Kağıthane kurban bazaar, another animal owner, Mustafa, comes from Kastamonu in Anatolia. He has animals that he rose for three years and paid 4000 TL for the truck to transport his animals. When he totals the money that he spends to come to Istanbul from the village, it comes to almost 10,000 TL. There are other costs for him as he has from the Anatolian to the European side. He says that the for the blood sample he sent to Ankara to prove that his animals to not have by the foot and mouth disease (şap) he had to pay 2000TL in total. And he had to repeat the blood test of all animals because one cow among others had the disease. When he comes to Kağıthane, he pays 3000 TL for the tent area under the Sadabad 2 Viaduct. Compared to the modern kurban bazaar in Alibeyköy, the tent areas of which cost 8000 TL, Kağıthane is much affordable.

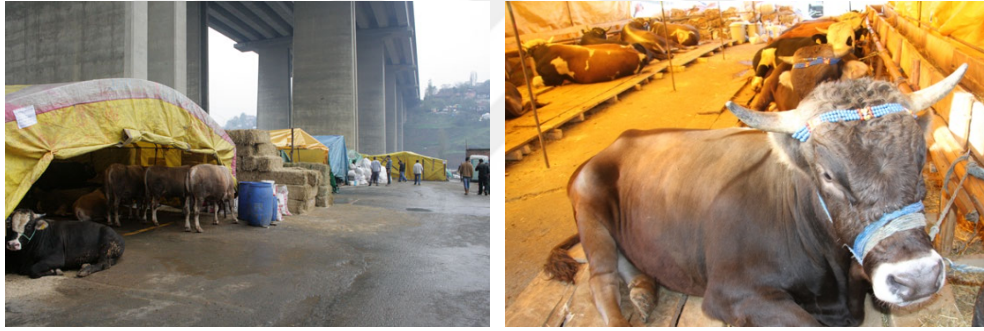


Figure 4.4 Kağıthane Kurban bazaar, Hasbahçe Gazetesi, 2015

Most of the animal owners call their tents as “the Hilton” because they pay up to 10-12 thousand TL to rent them for approximately fifteen days. In Istanbul, there are only a handful of kurban bazaars in which the municipality provides tents. In others, the shepherds of animal owners must direct the tents themselves or the animal owner can pay 2,000 TL to have another person construct a tent for him. The photo below depicts the workers and animal owners living in the “Hilton” tents together with the animals to make sure they are not stolen or injured during the night.<sup>5</sup>



Figure 4.5 Animal tents (Photo by Yavuz Sariyıldız)

In the Sarıyer district's Tepe neighborhood one animal owner, Bedri says that three years earlier, the kurban bazaar in that area in Sarıyer was messy (*derme çatma*), but that for some years, the municipality had built the tents (for 7,000TL each) and four slaughtering areas for the slaughter and sacrifice rituals. Some ten years before, this area was a forested park with a good view of bosphorus. It was turned into a residential construction site; but the building permit was withdrawn and the structures collapsed. On this empty site, a new kurban bazaar was formed with additional services provided by the municipality. As explained by the animal owners on this site, most bovine owners have transferred to Sarıyer, Tepe, from the Ferahevler kurban bazaar. This area does become the main kurban bazaar for the whole Sarıyer district as it has enough land - a difficult circumstance to find in the urban environment.

Though less prevalent, larger and more formal kurban bazaars have formed in the last five to ten years with the support of municipalities. Examples include kurban bazaars in Sultangazi, Başakşehir, and Beykoz-Çavuşbaşı (Kurbankent). The Sultangazi kurban bazaar formed in 2009 and has a Facebook page. Its tent areas are rented online and people can choose their tent

area on a map of the site. It is a site of 100 thousand square meters with approximately 600 tents, eight veterinarians, one quarantine tent, showers, a prayer room/mosque, and a tent-bank (Çadırbank) to which animal owners can take their money as soon as they receive it from buyers. In 2014, all 20,000 cattle were sold.



Figure 4.6 Sultangazi kurban bazaar (Photo: Habertürk Online Newspaper)

Similar to the Sultangazi Kurban bazaar, the Başakşehir and Beykoz kurban bazaars are also managed in a professional, secure, hygienic way. The Başakşehir bazaar is monitored twenty-four hours a day by camera, and there are shoe cover machines in front of every tent so that the shoes of customers are kept clean. The Beykoz, Çavuşbaşı 'Kurbankent' is the most modern of the kurban bazaars on the Anatolian side of Istanbul. It was formed in 2010. Tent areas are twelve square meters and rent for 7000 TL. It has free parking lots, buffet, and prayer room. In previous years, a beauty contest for the sacrifice animals was held. Alibeyköy and Ataşehir kurban bazaars are among the other bazaars managed by municipalities since 2013 (Emlakkulisi).<sup>6</sup>

People who want to make an animal sacrifice go to these bazaars a week or days before the kurban feast. They choose and bargain for their sacrifice animal. Names are written on the animals with paint, and the buyer pays a deposit for the bovine. Then, everybody waits for the day of the sacrifice.

### § 4.3 Slaughtering Kurban: Conventional Methods and Modern Slaughter Containers

Animal sacrifices in Istanbul can be done in a few different ways. First, there are illegal, conventional ways of slaughtering an animal. Second, it may be done in a slaughter container, which is a mobile watering unit made from shipping containers, in the vicinity of the animal bazaars. Third, it can be done at a carwash facility. Fourth, it can be done by religious foundations, if not by a supermarket or Muslim NGO that arranges foreign proxy sacrifices, which will be elaborated on the next chapter. In this part, only conventional methods and modern slaughter containers are explained.

In the *arife* (eve), of the feast, some people put their animal in a truck or van to take to their own garden, to carwashes, or to the forest to slaughter it. Or they may take make an appointment in a slaughterhouse container (if there is one) and wait their turn. But often there are no slaughter facilities near the bazaar. In that case, people choose to pay for a mobile butcher or do it themselves in the vicinity.



Figure 4.7 Transporting animals

Starting with illegal practices, animals may be slaughtered on empty urban lands or in any informal place that may or may not have water and a drain. Legally, people may make sacrifices in enclosed gardens, but those who have no gardens may do it on their balconies or at home in the bath. Sacrificing an animal on a balcony is illegal, just as is slaughtering it in any public. People may be fined for this. The two photos below are from Turkey.





Figure 4.8 Balcony slaughter

The second option is slaughter containers in the kurban bazaars. Bovines are pulled to the slaughtering place. For ovines, slaughterhouse containers are not often used, but for bovines, containers are preferred if available.

However, most slaughterhouse containers on the sites I visited had were absent, damaged, or insufficient. In the Çekmeköy-Serindere and the Karaköy-Feriköy graveyard kurban bazaars, slaughtering containers were absent. Therefore, buyers, animal owners, and mobile butchers did the slaughtering. The mobile butchers do a slaughter for 250-300 TL, while it costs 400-450 TL in container slaughterhouses.

Bakırköy-Incirli has a small kurban bazaar of approximately twenty tents. There is a slaughtering area near the bazaar. The animal buyers take a number and come to have their animals slaughtered during the first two or three days of the kurban feast. There may or may not be an imam at the slaughterhouse, if not, the butcher may do the ritual of saying “in the name of God,” after taking the verbal proxy of the owner of the sacrifice.

In the Kağıthane-Sadabad 2 Viyadük Altı kurban bazaar, there are two container slaughterhouses that do not function. As one animal seller explains, they were placed there by the Metropolitan Municipality and two different people had administered the containers in 2013. But the containers were vandalized by the thieves who took the motors of the slaughtering machines, as the Municipality of Kağıthane did not secure for them throughout the rest of the year. Therefore, people returned to the traditional method of slaughter with a knife after laying the animal down.

On the other hand, there are organized animal bazaars in which slaughter containers function well. They are called modern or convenient slaughtering facilities. These slaughtering constructions hold the animal by its feet in the air, allowing the head of the animal to be cut in an upside-down position on a production line.

In 2010, the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality had 150 slaughter containers with a capacity of 100-150 slaughters daily (Istanbul Müftülüğü, p. 65). On these sites, each slaughter takes only twenty minutes, and people take the pieces of the meat in plastic bags and put them in the trunks of their cars which are parked in the parking lot of the bazaar area. They are relieved from the tough, exhausting work of slaughtering, skinning, and cleaning the carcass of its organs. It is even planned to have funfairs in these convenience bazaars (Istanbul Müftülüğü, p. 66)



Figure 4.9 Slaughter container

The slaughter facilities were first mentioned in 2007 and called “kurbanıye”s. The facilities constructed at fifty-one bazaars of Istanbul were created by a private company, Şafak Yapı, with the support of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. The chairman of the company made a presentation in which he slaughtered an animal, explaining to the press that the facility was designed to solve the sacrifice problem. He said that 150 animals can be slaughtered a day, and it takes only twelve minutes for one animal to be processed. With the

equipment, customers can receive their meat in four minutes. Of course, they have to have an appointment beforehand. It costs only 150 TL<sup>7</sup> (Milliyet, 2007).

Another example of a modern slaughtering facility was built in Bayrampaşa in 2015. In a news article, the technology was called a “monorail system” and it was mentioned that it is being used for the first time in Turkey (Bayrampaşa Municipality, 2015). This monorail conveyor technology has the capacity to slaughter one bull every four minutes. The municipal facility is equipped with four monorails which means one animal can be slaughtered in every minute. The announcement focused on these details, and during a press conference, the mayor slaughtered five animals with the machines and afterwards gave a barbeque party. And he says that: “We have the same comfort, hygiene, and convenience in slaughtering areas as well as in animal sales’ areas. We conduct slaughters without the touch of human hands and without making the animal suffer” [Translated from Turkish]<sup>8</sup> (Bayrampaşa Municipality, 2015).



Figure 4.10 Fast sacrifice



#### § 4.4 Slaughtering Kurban: Carwash Facilities

There is the option of using carwash facilities as practical sites for sacrifices for urban dwellers. According to the index of formal spaces for kurban slaughters, such facilities comprise the majority. Making sacrifices in carwash facilities is specific to the Turkish urban. The arrangement is not the result of government planning, but of civic initiatives and common sense. It is the result of people finding their own, creative solutions in new urban conditions, which turns into common sense.

Carwash facilities are the product of urban transportation technology. In Turkey, individual car ownership popularized by the products of TOFAŞ in 1970s, the lines of which were named after birds beginning in the 1980s: *Şahin*, *Doğan*, *Kartal*. Carwash facilities of today were the products of these years. Any place with water and a drain could be turned into a carwash. Cars and carwash facilities were the most vivid symbols of urbanity.

These facilities have a different function during the sacrifice events, turning into religious, ritual sites. As explained by owner of Pakiş Carwash in Fikirtepe, the slaughters are accompanied by an imam sent by the Directorate of Religious Affairs. This imam prays for the animals and gives the proxy (vekalet) of the donor to the butcher or the person in charge of realizing the slaughter.

Kurban, as a religious practice, and cars, as symbols of the city, are two unrelated urban phenomena that have come together and converged in terms of function. The necessities of space, abundant water, and the equipment to do quick, easy slaughters and drain the blood of the dead bodies of animals out there is met by an urban site - a carwash facility - at the same time transforming an Islamic ritual into an urban practice and an urban site into a ritual site.

To understand carwash facilities, I made field visits. In the Fikirtepe neighborhood, I visited two carwashes - one formal and one informal - and talked to their owners. In Bayrampaşa neighborhood, I visited three such facilities and talked to three families that undertake the service of animal slaughter. The slaughtering costs were around 50 TL for ovine and 300 TL<sup>9</sup> for a bovine. During my field visits, I was not always successful in finding the facilities for which

I was looking or sometimes I was unable to talk with anybody from that facility. But I gathered observations and research with the interviews I was able to accomplish.



Figure 4.11 Emniyet Car wash facility, 2015, Bağcılar, Istanbul

In Fikirtepe, there were five official sites for slaughter in 2016. Four of them were car-wash facilities. Fikirtepe is an important example because it explains the reason carwashes are the most significant facilities for religious animal sacrifice in urban Istanbul.

Fikirtepe has been studied by many academics to show the urbanization processes of Istanbul. It is significant because of its low-income population that earn a living by collecting waste, its proximity to the city center, the increasing value of the land, and the gentrification of half of the neighborhood. In the beginning of the 1960s, immigrants started to populate Fikirtepe and towards the end of 1960s, it became an official neighborhood (Ayık, 2014, p. 79). Fikirtepe was full of houses by the 1980s. Houses in the squatter neighborhood – with small gardens - became legalized by law during the 1980s and were then turned into multistory houses (Ayık, 2014; Güler, 2013). Meanwhile, the value of urban land skyrocketed in the 2000s due to its centrality adjacent the metrobus line and a shopping mall near Kadıköy. An urban transformation project initialized in 2005; houses on one side of the hill started to be emptied by 2012, but on the back side of it, life continued as it had been.

Similarly, Bayrampaşa was an area in which people from the Balkans resettled in past centuries as well as during the Turkish Republic between the 1950s and 70s. The first industrial sites in the 1950s brought the first internal immigrants. From 4,000 in 1960, the number of houses there increased to 40,000 by 1970. Its population is still under 300,000. (Ay, 2012, p. 86). It became an official district in 1990. After the opening of a prison, the population increase slowed. The Municipality of Bayrampaşa has actively regulated kurban sites. In 2016, thirteen of twenty-eight kurban slaughtering areas were carwashes. In 2016, I visited Girgin Oto-Yıkama, Emin Oto-Kuaför, and Ersoy Otomotiv in Bayrampaşa and nearby districts.

In the neighborhoods mentioned above, urban areas were populated by internal migrations in the 1980s. Slaughtering animals in public areas was banned in the 2000s by regulations about the urban environment. Together with this ban, urban planning and environmental projects developed. Empty urban lands were either privatized or turned into well-maintained recreational areas such as parks, and tea gardens. A native resident of Bağcılar (30) explains that the open urban land that was previously used as an animal bazaar was turned into a permanent park area - Ebubekir Parkı - and that there have been no animal bazaars for the last five years, which is the reason people prefer carwash facilities for sacrifices in that vicinity (personal communication, 25 September 2015):

In the past in Bağcılar, kurban animals were sold in the place designated by the municipality... in Ebubekir Park. There were groups of animals. Now this place has been turned into a park area... for the last five years, no animal bazaars are constructed. In Habibler, Yenibosna, etc., people bring animals in their cars. And they have them slaughtered in slaughterhouses nearby. For example, someone has a basement floor and they are bringing the animal with a truck, (...) or they may slaughter it in a carwash.<sup>10</sup>

In Fikirtepe, according to the owner of a carwash facility that functioned as an informal slaughterhouse during kurban, the carwash facilities took the service up because of the lack of land and gardens. People had used carwash facilities as slaughterhouses for more than ten years. He is sixty-three years old

and has lived in this neighborhood for sixty years. He tells that for recent decades, houses were built more densely, gardens were cleared away, and people could not find places for slaughters. He recounts kurban slaughters in gardens as an amazing event, as opposed to slaughters in carwashes<sup>11</sup>. Still, he was informally conducting slaughters in his facility.

The carwash in the photo is a facility that formally provided slaughter services in Fikirtepe on the Anatolian side of Istanbul. The owners have been residents of Fikirtepe for decades. They started the business fifteen years ago, but they did not undertake animal slaughters for the first five years. They have been undertaking slaughters during kurban feasts for approximately ten years. Every year, they prepare the necessary documents and apply without paying anything. They have an arrangement with the nearby animal bazaar near Göztepe Bridge. The animal sellers direct the customers to the carwash. The staff of the carwash facility wait at the bazaar and bring the animals by car. Individuals can also come to the facility themselves. They give appointments to everybody. They have an agreement with a butcher who slaughters the animals. He says they have an overhead monorail system. During the slaughters, a Muslim preacher comes via the Directorate of Religious Affairs. In 2016, they received 106 animals, and the number is increasing every year.



Figure 4.12 Fikirtepe car wash facility: “Pakiş Carwash, Sacrifice animals are slaughtered according to Islamic rules, appointments available, 0554 937 67 90,” 2016, Fikirtepe

In a carwash facility in Bayrampaşa, a man was sacrificing an ovine. His sister, wife, child, and father were also present. Their grandfather was a Bosnian immigrant. They brought the animal from a nearby bazaar. Like others, they donated the hide. For them it was an easy activity that they carried out together with extended family. In another carwash facility on the European side, I met seven friends. They had brought the animal from a bazaar by a truck to the carwash to slaughter it and then took it to a warehouse to provide the meat into seven shares. When they finished, they left in their separate cars to return to their own houses in various districts.

The aforementioned extended family sacrificed a sheep, while the group of seven men sacrificed a cow which can be divided into seven. Although many people now prefer beef, it is difficult to organize seven partners to make the sacrifice. Such organization brings together neighbors and extended families. Still, this difficulty motivates people to find other solutions bringing us to our next topic: religious foundations that pre-arrange kurban shares.

#### § 4.5 Slaughtering Kurban: Religious Foundations

The difference among religious foundations, kurban bazaars, and carwash facilities is that the former have a special function with respect to animal sacrifices. They are not necessarily places where slaughters are done. Additionally, one of their main functions is to arrange shares for individual sacrifice practitioner.

When people prefer to sacrifice cow, they are permitted by the religion to share one animal among seven individuals. Mainly relatives but also neighbors or associates come together to buy one cow to sacrifice together and divide the meat into seven shares. This practice necessitates social ties and networks. Most of the time, it is difficult to find six other people with whom to share an animal, especially in urban areas where family members are often spatially dispersed.

To solve this difficulty, both religious foundations and other associations and companies such as supermarkets promote the service of arranging shares. The most striking example is the Anadolu Gençlik Derneği (Anatolian Youth

Association) which organizes domestic animal sacrifice events. Its slogan, “Kolay Hisse” [Easy Share] emphasizes the convenience of the service:



Figure 4.13 Banner for Easy-Share: “We slaughter, I share, I deliver, AGD [Anatolian Youth Association] EasyShare.com” 2015, Bağcılar, Istanbul

In the following parts, I explain the operations of sacrifice organizations of religious student dormitories through interviews conducted with officials and volunteers working in dormitories in different districts of Istanbul.

The 2016 list of formal sacrifice places in Istanbul shows that the second most common sacrifice site falls in the category I named “Koran courses, student dormitories, and mosques” (Koran course is a kind of boarding school). One of the most important fundraising activities of these religious waqifs (charitable foundations) which feed the students with meat throughout the year is to provide the service of animal sacrifice and to accept the animal skins together with donations of meat. This was a common practice through the centuries. But there were some interruptions throughout the years. For example, most of these associations were closed as result of the postmodern coup of 1997 being known as 28 February. In years they reformed. Most of the information gathered in this part comes from observations and short interviews at six student dormitories in different parts of Istanbul in 2015.<sup>12</sup>

Many Islamic charity organizations sacrifice animals in the name of a donor, and all the meat is distributed. Regardless of what is done with the meat, this process of sacrificing by proxy is called a proxy sacrifice - *vekaleten kurban* - in Turkish. The practice of proxy sacrifice is approved by the hadiths and therefore accepted by most doctrinal Islamic scholars. Their comments on sacrifice bring together modernity and traditional Islamic teachings. They refer

to urban middle-class sensibilities such as animal welfare, hygiene, and convenience by giving examples of new slaughtering technologies that are present in the dorms.

Religious associations organize these sacrifices by buying a certain number of animals and slaughtering them either in an open air space or in the basement of their dorms. Students staying in those dorms volunteer to participate in the work. Most student dorms have such volunteers working in different areas of organizing kurban. A male student (25) that stays in such a dorm relates his own experiences and the details of the work. I maintain his narrative as a single quotation for its descriptive value and because it is important for understanding the logistical process (personal communication, 02 November 2014):

They have a Koran course in Istanbul that is part of a foundation, and there is an abattoir behind it. It is an enclosed area and there are two cranes inside. There are separate places for slaughtering ovines and bovines. There are cold storage freezers in the basement of the girls dormitory. On holidays, the dormitory is closed. There are two separate dormitories - for male students - one for eighty people and the other for thirty-five. During the kurban feast, male students who want to work organizing the kurban can volunteer. There is also a butcher that works for the association. We carry the animals and hold them; one of me uses the crane. We are doing the things that a normal person can do. We carry the sheep and the butcher slaughters and skins it. For the first two days of the feast, they sacrifice 150 bovines and 300 ovines. They accept only a certain number of sacrifices. People can donate some portion of the meat to the dormitory if they want. Wealthier people may say "I will sacrifice seven shares and I will take only two of them." They chose the animal. That animal's meat is divided into seven. They take two, and we put the rest into the freezer. The animals whose meat will be given to the donator are slaughtered on the first day [of the feast]. And animals which are to be donated as a whole are slaughtered on the second day. These are mostly ovine [sheep]. For all of them, [peoples' approvals and] proxies are taken. A friend of ours is responsible only for taking [people's approvals and] proxies. He calls



everybody in the morning of that day, and he takes the verbal approvals for all the sacrifices. They have done it for ten to fifteen years. They have worked with the same butcher for five to six years. A sacrifice – the full process - takes half an hour. First, it is slaughtered, then it waits fifteen minutes, and then the other processes [such as skinning and butchering] begin. And during the waiting time, another animal is slaughtered. The friend who is responsible for the proxies says [to the donor on the phone], “we will sacrifice your animal at such-and-such hour; be ready for our call to give your proxy.” Proxies are taken by phone. If the person does not answer the phone, his animal is made to wait. Everything goes very smoothly, systematic; there is no chaos.<sup>13</sup>

During this process, one of the most important services provided to customers was to help them find a one-seventh share of a cow to be sacrificed by proxy. The image says: “For people who cannot find partners to share the meat of a bovine, I organize shares.”



Figure 4.14 Banner of the Eyüp student dormitory: “Kurban registers have started at our Eyüp Topçular Student Dormitory. 1 - Ovine and bovines are slaughtered. 2 - For the people who cannot find partners to share the meat of a bovine, I organize shares. Donations are accepted for the benefit of our students,” 2015, Eyüp, Istanbul.



Getting together seven people to slaughter a bovine is not easy if people do not have strong social networks. Especially in urban situations, it has become more difficult as relatives live far removed from one another. Therefore, individual families may prefer to slaughter a ram as opposed to sacrificing a cow that can be shared among seven people. But there is one more option for people who do not have relatives or neighbors and who prefer the meat of a cow to that of a ram; to go to a religious association such as a student dorm and take advantage of the convenience of ready-made shares organized by the foundation.

On the photo there is an animal tent belonging to a student dormitory. The text announces: “Our bovine sacrifice and sharing campaign has started.” In 2015, 160 bovines were slaughtered here according to an official working there since 2011. He works in the Şehzadebaşı student dormitory for boys which is part of the Vefa Süleymaniye dormitory in Fatih. He had 110 ovine animals in the second tent and explained that “while doing sacrifice, the aim is not to make money, but to facilitate the religious duty.”<sup>14</sup>



Figure 4.15 Banner of the Fatih student dormitory: “Vefa Süleymaniye, Dormitory for Male University Students. Our bovine sacrifice and sharing campaign has started. We slaughter your sacrifice animal according to Islamic rules in a hygienic environment, hire professional butchers, and divide [it] into seven shares”. Garden of a student dormitory in 2015, Fatih, Istanbul.

At the Tabakçılar dormitory for male students in Güngören, they sacrificed more than fifty animals brought there by an animal. The person in charge says they not only provide butchering services but accept donations of meat.

At the Kirazlı dormitory, which is for middle-school students in Bağcılar almost 100 bovines were sacrificed this year. The person in charge adds that they are proud of themselves because they use professional equipment during the slaughter so that all the blood of the animal goes out of the body and the meat becomes more healthy and hygienic.

An official in the Yunus Emre Koran course in Bağcılar emphasizes that they slaughter bovines because they are higher quality. Like other places, they slaughter the animals in one of their buildings - in the basement of the girls dorm which is also used as a kindergarten. Similarly, they use a machine to lay the animals down. He adds that they collect the hides but do not force anyone to make additional donations of meat.

And finally, in the Bağcılar dormitory for girls, the person responsible for sacrifices is a forty-year-old man who conducts the slaughters himself. He explains that 25 percent of people donate some meat for the students of the dormitory.

According to the accounts of the people working in such dormitories, few people come to watch the slaughter scenes. They believe this is due to the trust that people placed in them. People who give their proxy to these dormitories come there either because they live closeby or have heard of it from a trusted relative or friend. Another point of commonality is that people working in these dormitories agree that people generally prefer sacrificing bovines than ovines though they offer both. In any case, by providing ready-made shares, student dormitories provide their customers with convenient means of making sacrifice.

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- 1 Article 4, paragraph c, “2013 Yılı Kurban Hizmetlerinin Uygulanmasına Dair Tebliğ”
  - 2 “24 Ocak Kararları” [Decisions of 24 January]
  - 3 Sarıyer-Tepe, Darülaceze adak-kurban center, Bakırköy-İncirli Kurban bazaar, Üsküdar Beylerbeyi bazaar, Çekmeköy-Serindere bazaar, Kağıthane-Sadabad 2 Viyadük altı, Bakırköy-Marmara Forum shopping mall neighborhood, Kasımpaşa-near Feriköy
  - 4 On 04 October 2014, 1 dollar was 2,27 TL

- 5 <https://yavuzsariyildiz.com/exhibitions-and-diaporamas/hayvan-pazarlarinda-insanca/>
- 6 For Alibeyköy and Ataşehir kurban bazaars, see: <http://emlakkulisi.com/ibbnin-kurban-bayrami-hazirliklari-suruyor/195941>
- 7 In 2007, 1 dollar was 1,3 TL
- 8 Satış yerlerimizdeki konfor, hijyen ve rahatlığı kesim alanımızda da yaşıyoruz. El değmeden ve hayvanlarımıza eziyet çektirmeden kesimlerimizi gerçekleştiriyoruz.
- 9 On 23 September 2015, 1 dollar was 3 TL
- 10 Bağcılar'da eskiden kurban satılırdı, belediyenin gösterdiği yerde, Ebubekir Parkı'nda toplu hayvanlar olurdu. Şimdi burası park oldu, son 5 yıldır hayvan pazarı kurulmuyor. Habibler'de, Yenibosna'da vs de vatandaş kendi aracıyla alıyor hayvanı, alıp getiriyor. Burada kesimhanelerde kestiriyorlar. Bodrumu var, kamyonetlerle getiriyorlar, (...) oto-yıkamalara da kestiriyorlar
- 11 Kurbanın zevkine doyamazsın, kuyu kazarlar, lağıma bile gitmez kan. Şimdi günaha bile giriyorlar, testereyle kurban kesilir mi, canlı canlı asıyorlar bacağından, o kan yola akıyor. Şimdi burada kurban kesebilir misin, her yer beton. Belediye yer açıyor ama pis; bana kurban getirdiler ilk gün, toz toprak içinde. Kurban dediğin temiz olacak
- 12 Bağcılar Kız Öğrenci Yurdu, Bağcılar; Yunus Emre Erkek Koran Kursu, Bağcılar; Özel Kirazlı Orta Öğretim Erkek Öğrenci Yurdu, Bağcılar; Tabakçılar Erkek Öğrenci Yurdu, Güngören; Şehzadebaşı Erkek Talebe Yurdu, Fatih; İlim Yayma Vakfı, Fatih.
- 13 Vakfa bağlı bir Koran kursları var, arkasında bir kesim yeri var, etrafı kapalı, içinde 2 tane vinç var. Küçükbaş ve büyükbaş için ayrı kesim yerleri var. Soğuk hava depoları var kız Koran kursunun altında. Bayram süresince okul kapanıyor zaten 4-5 günlüğüne. Bu arada erkekler için de 2 tane öğrenci yurdu var biri 80 kişilik biri 35 kişilik. Onlar ayrı. Kurban zamanı erkek öğrencilerden isteyenler geliyor. Derneğin anlaştığı kasabı da var. Biz taşıyoruz hayvanları, tutuyoruz, vinci kullanan bir arkadaş oluyor, normal insanların yapabileceği işleri yapıyoruz biz de. Koyunu biz taşıyoruz kasap kesiyor, deriyi yüzüyor. 5 kasap var. 3 tane büyükbaş için 2 tane küçükbaş için. Bayramın ilk 2 gününde toplam 150 büyükbaş 300 küçükbaş kesiyorlar. Zaten belirli sayıda alıyorlar. İnsanlar kestirdikleri hayvanın bir kısmını alıp diğer kısmını bağışlayabiliyor. Maddi durumu iyi olanlar “7 kişilik kesiyorum, 2 hissesini alıyorum” diyor. Hayvanı onlar beğeniyor. O hayvan 7ye bölünüyor. 2 parçasını alıyorlar, kalanı buzluğa konuyor. Bağışçı bir kısmını alacaksa o hayvan 1. gün kesiliyor. Tamamı bağış olan hayvanlar 2. gün kesiliyor. Bunlar genelde küçükbaş oluyor. Hepsi için vekalet alınıyor. Sadece bu vekalet alma işiyle ilgilenen bir arkadaş var. O günün sabahında herkesi arıyor, sırayla tüm kurbanlar için vekalet alıyor. 10-15 yıldır bu işi yapıyorlar. 5-6 yıllık kasapları var. Bir hayvanın kesim ve diğer işlemleriyle birlikte yarım saat sürüyor işi. Kesimden sonra 15 dk bekleme sonra diğer işlemler şeklinde. Bu sırada başka bir hayvan kesiliyor oluyor. İnsanları arayan arkadaş, “senin kurbanını şu saatte keseceğiz, telefonun başında ol vekalet vermek için” diyor. Telefonla aranarak vekalet alınıyor. Vekalet verecek kişi telefonunu açmazsa, hayvanı bekletiyor. Her şey çok sistematik, düzenli, kargaşa olmuyor. vekaletleri toplayan arkadaş kurbanları sıraya

koyuyor ve kasaba veriyor. Kasap da ona göre kesiyor. Sistematik olduđu için süreç rahat işli-  
yor. Zaten öğrencinin halinden anlayan insanlar.

- 14 Vekaleten kurban kesmekte amaç kar elde etmek değil ibadeti kolaylaştırmak



## The Disappearing Materiality of Kurban

One of the reasons for new kurban methods is the new preferences of urban residents. As can be observed in news articles, proxy sacrifice statistics, and legal regulations, people have distanced themselves from the materiality of kurban. This is partly due to the urban sensibilities mentioned in the theoretical chapter with reference to Elias and others. More and more, people in the urban environment complain about the visibility of violence. Related to this distancing, people prefer to realize their kurban in alternative ways.

These alternative ways are supported by Islamic networks and new interpretation of Islam. While kurban turns into a religiously interpreted subject, alternative Islamic scholars, who adopt urban sensibilities about violence and animal freedom, define kurban in a different way. Scholars such as İhsan Eliaçık, Edip Yüksel, Ali Şeriati, Ahmet Hulusi, Yaşar Nuri Öztürk, and Zekeriya Beyaz argue that people can practice kurban without sacrificing an animal (Hayvan Özgürlüğü Blogspot, 2013). They legitimize this argument by saying that Koranic verses have been mistranslated. They reject animal slaughter as a way of making a sacrifice.

These interpretations form the basis for emerging actors who mediate the relationship between Muslim individuals and kurban. More and more actors

have entered into the field of kurban as market players, ranging from supermarkets to civil society organizations. The kurban activities of these market players have resulted in the disappearing materiality of kurban.

We can recognize this disappearing materiality in three degrees. First, supermarkets realize kurban as a meat product; second, foreign proxy sacrifices realize kurban as a virtual reality; third, secular associations realize kurban without killing an animal. In the first example, kurban is not visible to the sacrificer, but its meat is. In the second, no material product from kurban is made available to the sacrificer even though the sacrificial activity is carried out. And in the last, kurban loses its materiality altogether.

### § 5.1 Proxy Sacrifice and Kurban Donations as an Urban Practice

In this thesis, the practices of proxy sacrifice and kurban donations are of special importance because they are suitable examples demonstrating the transformation of kurban, the disappearance of its materiality, and loss of the direct contact between the sacrifice and the sacrificer. While secular NGOs collect donations as a sacrifice without involving animal slaughter, international Muslim NGOs conduct sacrifices in other countries as part of their humanitarian work and send slaughter videos to the donator. Supermarkets serve their customers with the meat in multiple forms and donate animal skins to secular NGOs. All are done as proxy sacrifices or kurban donations, which effaces the materiality of the kurban phenomenon.

In this part, I discover why people prefer proxy sacrifices and donations. It can have many reasons: proxy sacrifice is religiously acceptable, convenient, humanitarian, cheap, easy, animal-friendly, urban, and voluntary. From interviews conducted with fourteen people who sacrificed by proxy or made donations, I found that people prefer it because of the difficulty of the ritual in urban life, because of the convenience of proxy sacrifice, because of concerns of health and hygiene, and because of new Islamic interpretations about kurban. Moreover, they practice it as a complementary method. First I explain what proxy sacrifice and kurban donation is and give examples from the past. Second, I elaborate on the responses of interviewees about their reasons for

choosing proxy sacrifice. And finally, I show that proxy sacrifices and donations are practiced as a complementary practice: they can either be done as a second sacrifice in the same year, or they are practiced every other year.

For the Directorate of Religious Affairs, the best alternative to street slaughters was proxy sacrifices to be realized by religious institutions and associations on behalf of the real donor. In terms of religion, proxy sacrifice was validated as a method of realizing one's religious duty as explained in the Kurban Guidebook (Kurban Rehberi) prepared by the Directorate of Religious Affairs:

It is equally possible that a person can sacrifice the animal himself or have the sacrifice done by someone else by giving him their proxy. Kurban is a ritual that depends on wealth. And for rituals that depend on wealth, proxy is allowed. Just as a person can give his proxy to a person in his neighborhood, he can also give his proxy to an individual or institution based in another place. Proxy can be given verbally, in writing, or by telephone, internet, fax, or other communication tools.<sup>1</sup>(p. 7)

According to a man who in 2015 was in charge of the ovine kurban bazaar for the Şehzadebaşı Male Student Dormitory (connected to the Vefa Süleymaniye Koran Courses), proxy sacrifice is acceptable primarily because the prophet practiced it for a large number of animals (personal communication, 24 September 2014):

After you give your proxy, it does not matter if it's from too a nearby place or a distant place. Consider our prophet, they spared 100 sacrificial animals; he sacrificed it sixty-three himself and he gave his proxy to his companion Ali for the remaining sacrifices.<sup>2</sup>

Proxy religious practices are not specific to kurban but also apply to the Hajj. One of the humanitarian services that some worldwide Muslim NGOs, such as IIRISA (International Islamic Relief Organization), provide is proxy Hajj. A proxy Hajj involves giving your proxy to another person and paying for his trip to the holy lands, which at the same time is a benefit for that person as well as for yourself. Proxy Hajj is still considered a questionable practice

among Turkish Muslims; Islamic scholars have received questions about it and have given their approval, but this practice has not been institutionalized and systematically applied by Turkish NGOs.

Donations, on the other hand, can either be practiced in connection with a proxy sacrifice involving actual animal killing, or it can be done independently by sending money to secular NGOs on the occasion of kurban to be used for humanitarian services that do not include animal killing. This second kind of donations is elaborated upon in detail in the last part of this chapter. With respect to donations that are part of proxy sacrifices, a male student (25) who took part in organizing proxy sacrifices explains that people may donate either a portion or the whole of the meat of the sacrificial animal (personal communication, 02 October 2014). He says that wealthier people may say, “I will sacrifice seven shares and I will take only two of them.”

Although proxy sacrifices and donations had taken on new shapes by the 2000s, it was not actually a new practice. According to the *Milliyet* archives, the Disabled People’s Association of Turkey had been collecting donations for the purpose of supporting the education of the disabled since 1971 (06 November 1978). Similarly, the community of Darüşşafaka express their sincere thanks to donators (26 November 1978).



Figure 5.1 Donation announcements in the 1950s

The word proxy was used and practiced, as can be seen from the advertisement which says: “About Festival Kurban. From the İlim Yayma Cemiyeti: I kindly ask our religious sisters and brothers to give some part of your sacrificial meat to our association for the annual needs of the Imam Hatip Schools as you have in previous years. People who need to can sacrifice their kurban in the garden of the Imam Hatip School in Vefa, or our association can perform a proxy sacrifice in due form.” (04 July 1957)





Figure 5.2 Announcement about proxy sacrifices in 1957

These practices were for urban rather than rural areas. Religious institutions were one of the main areas urban residents conducted sacrifices. A woman (59) who had lived in an apartment in the center of Şişli for forty years says that animals used to be sacrificed in the courtyard of the Şişli Mosque. Another 70-year-old woman relates about her memories of childhood in a village and then in the city center after she married. While they slaughtered animal themselves in the village, they started performing the sacrifice at a nearby Koran course and student dorm in the city center after she moved to Istanbul with her husband (personal communication, 14 October 2014):

In the past, a herd would come to the Ereğli village of Karamürsel. They came from Anatolia. They would construct a shelter fifteen days before [the kurban feast] ... And after I moved to the city, my husband, my son, and I would go to the Koran course nearby and each of me would sacrifice a kurban, and [we] would leave one of them as a donation to the course.<sup>3</sup>

As her comments indicate, religious associations doing proxy sacrifices were more widespread in urban than in rural areas. And these religious associations served to ease the organization of kurban in the city.

The second topic of this part is the motivations of people choosing to do proxy sacrifice and donations. The motivations include the difficulty of urban

sacrifice, the conveniences provided by associations, concerns about hygiene, and the wish to do charity work without killing an animal. In order to explain how proxy sacrifices make the ritual more convenient for individuals in urban environments, the Directorate of Religious Affairs defines proxy sacrifice:

It is a necessity that some rules and conveniences are made to realize kurban in healthy and hygienic conditions in parallel with urban culture. As a result of this necessity, proxy animal sacrifice organizations may be done on the initiative of institutions and associations. The fact that people realize their ritual, and the feeling of relief from doing something good for other people during kurban, has increased the demand for proxy kurban campaigns<sup>4</sup>. (Din Hizmetleri Genel Müdürlüğü, n.d.)

A 33-year-old man who lives with his family explains the inconvenience of sacrifice rituals in the urban environment. He says that although he does not feel completely comfortable with proxy sacrifices, he has two excuses for choosing proxy sacrifice given the urban condition. These excuses are the difficulty of transporting and slaughtering the animal in a nice, clean space and the difficulty of finding needy people in his high-income urban neighborhood. In his own words (personal communication, 10 November 2014):

I actually prefer to sacrifice it myself. But my problem is, I do not know where to buy the animal. The areas that sell animals are not clean. If it was clean, if you do not have to get muddy, if you could take the animal to the abattoir without the difficulty of [figuring out] transportation, and if you could take some of the meat and donate the rest to an association... I would prefer to sacrifice it here. One part of me says this.

The lack of material conditions make me donate my kurban by proxy ... because there is nowhere to distribute the sacrificed meat in Istanbul. I need to distribute two thirds of it. I am living in Acıbadem. I do not know my neighbor next door. Everybody is like us [high income level].<sup>5</sup>

Similar conditions and concerns are valid for another young couple with whom I spoke. They had made sacrifices every year of their marriage, and in

the first three years they tried different ways. They found that the first two means were inconvenient; the most convenient was to make a donation in a foreign country. In the first year, they had gone to the garden of a relative, and in the second, they went to an animal bazaar. While in the first year carrying the meat back home on their motorcycle was difficult - with meat falling to the ground -, the second year was inconvenient because the wife could not come to the bazaar and there was a long queue for the slaughter (personal communication, 01 November 2014):

We have been married for three and a half years. The first time, we went to make the sacrifice in a garden of a distant relative of ours in Pendik. They selected the animal, brought it to the garden, and we only went there on the day of the sacrifice. We did not have a car; we tied the meat to our motorcycle, but it fell on the road on our trip way back. It was difficult.

The second year, we went to a sacrifice place with the same family. This time only I went; my wife did not come. First, they sacrifice the animal in an automatized facility after the animal is selected and brought to the sacrifice area according to a number given to the customer. There is a long queue for the sacrifice facility. I was there during the slaughter.<sup>6</sup>

The convenience of affordability is another factor for choosing proxy kurban as a way of realizing the ritual. She tells that people who do not have enough money to conduct a sacrifice in Turkey can afford to do it in another country, benefitting just as many people with the distribution of meat to the needy. And they can feel relieved by the fact that they have realized their religious duty (personal communication, 25 September 2015):

Two years ago, there was a kurban donation campaign for Afghanistan. A friend of ours called me from there and said that I could join if I want. And I told this to my aunt's husband. Actually, he was not planning to do a sacrifice that year because he had debts. But I explained to him that the animal costs less in Afghanistan. Then he said he would make a sacrifice; he even included his wife. The most significant aspect of foreign proxy sacrifices is that it is cheaper; for example, at that time

it was 230 TL<sup>7</sup>. But it is not bad to make a sacrifice for a lower price; it helps people realize their religious duty. They feel relieved; it is something good.<sup>8</sup>

According to a 60-years-old man, main motivation for doing a proxy sacrifice was his concerns about health and hygiene. He made his sacrifice by giving his proxy to the supermarket chain, Migros. He believes that large, institutionalized supermarkets are preferable to smaller, local ones. As one of the most important aspects of proxy sacrifice is trust, he and his family had to trust the organization with respect to hygiene and health conditions. In 2016 was the first time he practiced kurban via a supermarket. The reason he decided to do it was first that in their village, there is not always a person who can do the slaughtering. And secondly, dairy farms are not hygienic and not always monitored; therefore, the animals may be ill: “We heard that some of the animals were given antibiotics. And in recent years, we noticed a bad smell in the meat and had to throw some of it away.”

Another motivation is to do charity without killing animals which is based upon interpretations by certain Islamic scholars with respect to the true meaning of kurban and the argument that the widespread Turkish understanding of kurban as animal slaughter is a misinterpretation. One interviewee, Gülin (60), has secular inclinations while still following the Muslim faith. She donated to secular associations the last two years during the kurban feast, and when I ask what she thinks about making a sacrifice without slaughtering an animal, she refers to one of the Islamic scholars mentioned in the theoretical chapter: “Now there is an Islamic scholar, EliaçıkHodja, he says there is nothing wrong with it... that animal sacrifice has become a ritual because of incorrect interpretation.”

The third topic is the complementarity of proxy sacrifice donations. In some cases, proxy sacrifice can be only a complementary practice. One family can make one animal sacrifice, and at the same time donate to an association that would make a proxy sacrifice. In this case, the family conducts two sacrifices, one would be made locally, receiving the meat at home, and the other would be given as a donation for foreign proxy sacrifice, all the meat being distributed to the poor in a third world country. The parents may conduct the first sacrifice in their name, and the second one in their children’s name. In

this case, the first one would be essential while the second one is complementary for the family because the children are not yet liable for actualizing sacrifice ritual. Among people who prefer these kinds of proxy sacrifices, some are high income families that realize the proxy kurban ritual as a secondary kurban. A woman (43) who lives in Florya explains that, because of their communal ties to a religious sect, they make a second sacrifice as a donation to a foreign country in the name of their adult daughter (personal communication, 09 October 2014):

You have to sacrifice an animal. Almighty God has given it as a present to us. When I make a sacrifice, I take one leg of the ovine animal and distribute the rest. We sacrifice it here in Topkapı. My husband brings it home. But at the same time we are doing a proxy sacrifice for the last two years. I send it to foreign countries by the agency of the dervish convent. And I do a foreign proxy sacrifice in the name of children. High-income families can sacrifice in the names of their children. But giving a proxy on behalf of the children is not obligatory because the sacrifice is voluntary (*nafile*). Theirs is not religiously obligatory (*vacip*), but ours is. Theirs is only for the sake of God. Enise (25 years old) is grown up; we make a voluntary sacrifice for her.<sup>9</sup>

Another 33-year-old man living in an upper-class neighborhood with his family says that he prefers either multiple sacrifices - one themselves and the other by proxy - or alternating yearly - one year by proxy and the next on their own - so that they experience the feeling of making a sacrifice (personal communication, 10 November 2014):

Religion has given a duty to sacrifice it yourself. You have to experience this ritual of sacrificing psychologically. But some years, when more than one sacrifice is being made by my family... - for example, when we sacrifice one and a second will be sacrificed for my father and a third for my brother - we need to send it to Africa... because one sacrifice is enough for you to experience the ritual emotionally. I do not want to make proxy sacrifice donations in Turkey for the last five years, actually, but the difficulty of material conditions... Additionally, I have the feeling of helping people. I would prefer to make a sacrifice myself

one year and do a proxy sacrifice the next year... because animal sacrifice is cheaper in foreign countries, which means that, in this way, I can easily afford it and reach more people who are in need.<sup>10</sup>

The person responsible for the organization of sacrifices in the Şehzadebaşı Erkek Talebe Yurdu supports this idea, explaining that if there are five people in a family, the mother and father do the sacrifice in Turkey, but for their children, they do a proxy sacrifice in a foreign country. The reasons people prefer proxy sacrifices are because they are convenient and cheap. These proxies were ones that entailed animal killing.

But there are other reasons to prefer proxy sacrifices - such as hygiene, health concerns, and humanitarian aims - which I can term urban sensibilities. And finally, interpretations by Islamic scholars of the true meaning of kurban and the argument that the Turkish understanding of kurban as animal slaughter is a misinterpretation are important for proxies that do not involve animal killing. We explore these motivations in the following parts.

## § 5.2 Kurban as a Meat Product

Proxy sacrifice is a tool that different actors use in their organization of kurban. Supermarkets, Muslim NGOs, and secular NGOs use this tool in different ways. But what is common to these new types of proxy sacrifice is the disappearing materiality of kurban – the breaking of contact between the donor and the sacrificial animal to different degrees. If I analyze the proxy sacrifice arrangements prepared by different actors such as religious institutions, supermarkets, Muslim NGOs, and secular NGOs, I see an increasing level of detachment from the materiality of the animal sacrifice ritual.

I argue that conventional proxy sacrifices allow people to not see the sacrifice and to not have contact with the animal, unless the sacrificer asks to. Even further, proxies made by supermarket chains allow people to receive the product of sacrifice – i.e., meat - in commodity like ground meat, distorting the traditional ritual and making it similar to the process of simply buying meat from the supermarket. And even further, foreign proxy sacrifices undertaken by Muslim NGOs do not even send any meat back to the donor. They

distribute it in the name of the donor in a third world country as part of their humanitarian assistance, distancing people from the act of distributing meat in person. And finally, secular proxies done by secular NGOs involve no animal killing. In this part, I focus on proxies given to supermarket chains.

For an urban dweller, one of the most economic, convenient, hygienic, and healthy ways of making a sacrifice is to order it through a supermarket. Unlike other associations, they provide discounts, layaway plans, and credit. Similar to religious foundations, supermarkets divide the shares of a cow among seven strangers. Supermarkets, like other associations, provide this sharing service that saves sacrificers the burden of finding six more partners (if they are sacrificing a cow). There are many supermarkets that make sacrifice arrangements: CarrefourSA, Migros, Real, Kipa, A101, Makro, and Uyum, as well as smaller, local supermarkets.

The word choice of supermarkets in kurban advertisements are that they provide discounts, allow credit card payments, offer two months layaway, and have free delivery - all monetary issues. But one of my interviewees (60) who saw the advertisements of the kurban arrangements, and subsequently gave his proxy to Migros explains his motivations in terms of health and hygiene. He was familiar with Migros as he goes there to shop. Moreover, they mostly buy their meat from there. They saw the brochures, made a decision as a family, and went to the market. At the market, a person in charge of the sacrifice arrangements explained every detail about the animals: the standards by which they are raised and the age and weight criteria for selecting animal. Moreover, they promise to use Islamic methods during the slaughter.



Figure 5.3 Banners of supermarkets: The first advertisement on the left belongs to Carrefour: “Your sacrificial animals are protected by Carrefour; 100 TL<sup>11</sup> discount for the kurban package; 10 percent discount for live animal, two months layaway for Axess [cardholders]. Free delivery to your house...”

Migros offered three options about the eventual form of the meat. The family could get it on-the-bone, as fillets, or as ground meat. He was asked if he wanted photos and videos of the sacrifice, but he did not request it. He paid 775 TL<sup>12</sup> for an ovine, and his father paid 940 TL for a share of bovine. He was given a date for the sacrifice, and on that day, he was called by the organization and informed. He went to the market on the second day of kurban feast. He received a cardboard box in which the meat was neatly and cleanly sliced. Moreover, the box also held materials for distributing the meat to others: a



large plastic sheet, small plastic bags, and gloves. Furthermore, Migros sent the hide and internal organs of the animal to certain associations in his name, by making him sign a contract. One of these associations was Darüşşafaka and the other one was an association supporting mentally and physically disabled people. He received the receipts of these donations. And finally, after some months, he was called and asked about his satisfaction level. He was highly satisfied.

Such markets are places where people regularly buy their meat and therefore trust its quality. On top of this, they provide the option of paying by credit card. This aspect is approved by Islamic scholars. Cübbeli Ahmet Hoca says that paying for kurban by a credit card is acceptable; people may even use loans as long as the bank follows Islamic rules.<sup>13</sup>



Figure 5.4 Banner of Carrefour: “CarrefourSA. Hygienic urban slaughter in line with Islamic mandates. Kurban sales have started. Interest-free, nine installments for Bonus, Card Finans, Maximum, Paraf, [and] World [cardholders]” 2015, Bostancı, Istanbul

There are supermarkets that operate slightly different. Carrefour differs from other supermarket chains in that in Istanbul, there are three CarrefourSA shopping malls. At the open air parking lots, there are live animal bazaars (which are in the index of sacrifice sites in Istanbul). Another significant development is that A101, one of the most prevalent discount stores in Turkey, started to organize animal sacrifices in 2016. This is an important milestone for spreading the practice of buying kurban shares from supermarkets among middle and low-income groups.

### § 5.3 Kurban as a Virtual Reality

Another type of proxy sacrifice is the foreign proxy sacrifice, in which all the meat is distributed to the poor in an economically disadvantaged part of the world by a Muslim NGO. In this kind of sacrifice, the detachment of the donor from the kurban is one step further than with supermarket proxies. While sacrificers giving their proxy to a supermarket receive the final product of the kurban in the form of meat, in foreign proxies, the sacrificer receives nothing material in the end. Only on requests, the association that organizing the foreign proxy may provide video recordings: the virtual form of the reality. In this part, I first explain the rise of foreign proxy sacrifice and its actors. Second, I explain the problem of trust with respect to the reality of sacrifice, which arises due to the fact that the sacrifice is realized in another part of the world. Third, I elaborate on information technologies developed by associations to do away with the problem of trust.

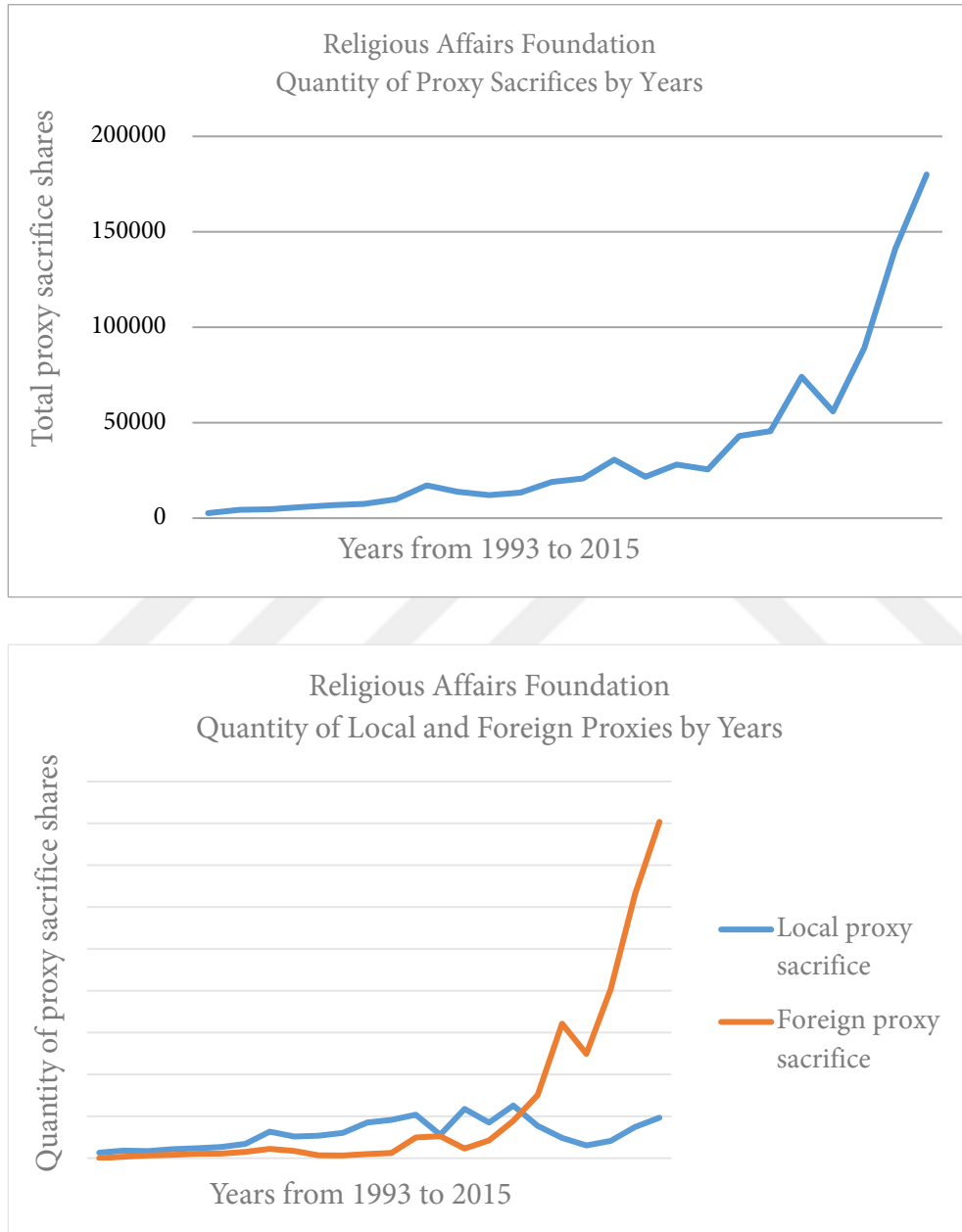
Foreign proxy sacrifice is the practice that has popularized the term “proxy sacrifice” in the decades since the mid-1990s. Especially in the period 2000s, a different understanding of the proxy sacrifice concept came about with the spread of foreign proxy sacrifice organizations. These foreign proxy sacrifices were different from conventional ones in two senses. First, the proxy sacrifices are completed with the donation of all better than a portion of the meat to the poor living in third world countries. Second, new associations emerged calling their work humanitarian assistance. Although it is more difficult to serve trust and transparency, techniques were found for foreign proxy sacrifice. And proxy sacrifices in general became more convenient for urban dwellers. Meanwhile, foreign proxy sacrifices have strengthened the position of the Turkish state and government in the international arena through its humanitarian networks.

There has been a substantial increase in foreign proxy sacrifices. It is estimated that more than 200,000 people in Turkey made kurban donations in foreign countries in 2014. The Religious Affairs Association of Turkey (Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı) has organized foreign proxy kurban sacrifices since 1994, and donations have increased from zero to almost 90,000 shares by 2013 and 160,000 by 2015. Below are tables that show the proxy sacrifice data by the

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Directorate of Religious Affairs in and outside of Turkey (provided by public officials of the Din Hizmetleri Genel Müdürlüğü Sosyal ve Kültürel İçerikli Din Hizmetleri Daire Başkanlığı):

Table 5.1 Proxy Kurban Statistics in Turkey.



SOURCE: Directorate of Religious Affairs (23 October 2015)

The first chart shows the increase in the number of proxy sacrifice shares arranged by Religious Affairs Foundation from 1993 to 2015. From zero, it has increased to 180,000. The second chart compares the proxy sacrifices made inside and outside Turkey. Proxy sacrifice activities started in the local level in 1993 with more than 2,000 people joining, while there was no foreign proxy sacrifice arrangement. The two kind of proxies first became equal in 2006-2007, and by 2010, foreign sacrifices overweighed local ones with a rapid increase.

Similarly, the IHH (Human Rights and Freedoms Humanitarian Aid Association) started its activities in 1992. Its kurban donation arrangements grew much later, significantly increasing in 2014 when it received 45,000 donations (İHH insani Yardım Dergisi, Ekim-Aralık 2014, sayı 59, p. 5). Kimse Yok Mu had received many more - almost 100,000 shares in 2007 - though it fluctuated later on before being closed down in 2016.

Although Kimse Yok Mu was the most active kurban organization in Turkey, its activities slowed after 2014 when legal action was taken against it by the chief public prosecutor who charged them with distorting information about kurban donations and cheating people taking their money without sacrificing animals in 2011. While donations to Kimse Yok Mu decreased in number, the association was closed in 2016 for other reasons.

A smaller association, the Aziz Mahmut Hüdai Foundation, was founded in 1985 and started its foreign proxy activities in 2012. According to people in charge of the project, 70 percent of their customers apply for foreign proxy sacrifice. Another example is the Yeryüzü Doktorları Derneği which started up in 2004 and started offering foreign proxy sacrifices in 2005. The opening year's 2,700 shares increased to 12,000 shares by 2014 (Yeryüzü Doktorları Derneği, p. 15).

To analyze the new practice of proxy kurban, I must not only theorize the urban but also the transnational - as my case study is based on a ritual sacrifice realized by proxy in different countries. Michael Peter Smith's theory of "transnational urbanism" (Smith, 2003) provides an appropriate framework. He bases his theory on urbanism because he recognizes that social changes are triggered in urban conditions and by urban needs. At the same time, there is a transnational aspect to this urbanism because many activities initiated in

urban localities are indeed “transnational social practices,” such as making a proxy sacrifice in Istanbul to be realized in an African city. He prefers the term transnational not only in a geographical but also in a cultural sense. And by naming the current condition transnational urbanism, he recognizes the agency of transnational networks and the rise of transnational localities. In our case, transnational networks are Muslim NGOs and the transnational localities are cities like Istanbul, neighborhoods like Bayrampaşa, and the villages in foreign countries in which the proxy sacrifices are realized.

Muslim NGOs in Turkey that organize foreign proxies are elaborated on this part. But first, I must define these actors. For this thesis, I define humanitarian agencies in a specific way. When I search the “İnsani Yardım” (humanitarian assistance) category of the Directorate of Associations compiled by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, I see that most of the associations are social aid and solidarity (*yardımlaşma ve dayanışma*) associations (Dernekler Dairesi Başkanlığı, c) that work locally with a small number of beneficiaries who are their own community members. These are different from humanitarian agencies that serve more people and people from different communities with the intent to provide social, psychological, medical, economic, and material aid to a specific community that is afflicted by a sudden or enduring crisis, whether with human or natural causes. Given this differentiation with respect to the kind of the support and beneficiaries reached by the associations, social aid and solidarity associations will not be considered as humanitarian aid associations for the purposes of this thesis. And anyway, only large scale associations are capable of organizing foreign kurban donations and proxy kurban sacrifices. The table shows the names and foundation dates of well-known Muslim NGOs.

Table 5.2 Turkish Muslim NGOs and their foundation dates

Name of the Association	Foundation Date
İlim Yayma Vakfı	1972
Hayrat Vakfı	1974
Türk Diyanet Vakfı	1975
Hüdai vakfı	1985
Suffa vakfı	1990
İBS	1994
İHH	1995
Özkevser vakfı	1995
Hazreti Ayşe İlim ve Hizmet vakfı	1996
Turgev	1996
Erenler İlim ve Hizmet Vakfı/Efendim İlim ve Yard. Der	1997
Deniz Feneri Derneği	1998
Özgür-der	1999
Cansuyu	2001
Mahmud Esad Coşan Vakfı	2002
Anadolu Gençlik Derneği	2002
Kimse Yok Mu?	2004
Yeryüzü doktorları	2004
Yardımlı Derneği	2004
Dost Eli Derneği	2005
Çare Derneği	2005
Vuslat derneği	2005
İmkander	2007
Hasene IGMG Sosyal Yardm. Der.	2008
İDDEF (İnsana Değer Veren Dernekler Federasyonu)	2008
Sadakataşı	2009
Verenel Der	2009
Beşir Derneği	2009
Mirasımız Derneği	2009
Ribat İnsani yardım Derneği	2010
İyilik Der	2010

These agencies work domestically or abroad, most are based on Islam, and most would call themselves humanitarian agencies. The humanitarian aspect

of Islamic solidarity is an important part of Islamist mobilization in Turkey, and it is part of a modernization process that is specific to Turkey. Among the first Muslim NGOs to conduct proxy sacrifices, the IHH acted on the humanitarian crisis in Bosnia between 1992 and 1995, and the Deniz Feneri association emerged with a television program to help the needy in 1997.<sup>14</sup>

Whenever international humanitarian assistance is mentioned in Turkey, the IHH comes to mind. Indeed, the term “humanitarian aid agency” is directly associated with the IHH for many people. This perception reflects the truth to an extent, as the IHH and the Diyanet Vakfi were the first associations and foundations to realize proxy kurbans in foreign countries, starting in 1995. For IHH, beneficiary populations are in poverty, have experienced natural disaster or armed conflict, or are Muslim minorities in non-Muslim communities.

As such, Muslim communities have taken the lead in the evolution of the domestic and international humanitarian assistance sector in Turkey. It is significant that there are few such secular associations. The language that these associations or foundations – whether Muslim or secular – is shared among the humanitarian assistance sector. Even so, the IHH declares that they work for the well-being of people irrespective of religion. For this reason, it should not be classified as a “faith-based” or “Islamic” organization, but as a Muslim NGO. The humanitarian aid goals are central to their activities and discourse.

According to the IHH, another aim of working abroad is to spread information inside Turkey about problems experienced by Muslim communities in other countries and to create projects to solve these problems, especially in African countries where there is lack of clean water, in places like Palestine, Pakistan and Myanmar where there are health problems such as cataracts, and in places like Arakan where there are suppressed Muslim minorities.

The most important feature of the foreign proxy sacrifice practice is that it is not realized in the city of the donor, but in another part of the world beyond his reach. This is the most contemporary change in the practice of Islamic animal slaughter in Turkey which has evolved in tandem with information and communication technologies and has had unexpected consequences for cultural change and on Islamic practices.

A man (32) whom I met at Bayrampaşa Ersoy Otomotiv during the kurban season of 2015 explains his own story of first making a foreign proxy sacrifice. In recent years, his mother passed away and along with the relatives he wanted to make a special sacrifice to commemorate her. In the name of the whole family, he was chosen to collect the money and go to Sudan with some friends who worked for an organization. They were six, and when they arrived, Sudanese partners greeted them. They showed them the village and introduced them to the local authority in the village. In Sudan, there was a flood and civil war. There was so much poverty that both animals and people were very thin. They were survived on five kilograms of meat by drying it and putting it into soups throughout the year, according to his account. He observed that the children were malnourished. The people were from the “Hambeli” sect of Islam. He bought the animals for 400 TL. He wrote the names of the donors, stuck them on the animals, read the names to the butcher, and took a video with his phone. He was convinced that it was safe and trustworthy. After this experience, he sends his proxy sacrifice to such a country abroad every other year.

The second topic of this part is the issue of trust. One reason for hesitancy about foreign proxy kurban donations is distrust of the opaque process. What I mean is the transparency of the sacrifice event to the donors. After mentioning some scandals about lack of transparency, I note the observations of some people working in such associations. On the issue of trust, there are no statistics that measure opinions about proxy sacrifices; therefore, this part relies on observations.

With foreign proxies, the sacrifice practice became distant and invisible; people lost the opportunity to see or know the process. Therefore, many rumors spread and scandals occurred with respect to associations and supermarkets, not to mention Muslim NGOs. There have been some scandals concerning corruption in the chain of the proxy sacrifice process. In 2009, two important secular institutions – the Mehmetçik Vakfi and the Meat and Fish Authority (Et Balık Kurumu) - were denounced for having involved in corruption related to kurban sacrifices (Memurlar.net, 2009). According to the news, a meat firm that the Mehmetçik Vakfi has subcontracted did not slaugh-



ter the animals that had been bought for proxy sacrifices. The firm falsely registered the animals as having been slaughtered and then sold the animals to the Meat and Fish Authority by extortion. Similar news was released in 2016 about supermarkets that undertake kurban arrangements (Hürriyet, 2016).

In addition to secular institutions, religious institution, such as Kimse Yok Mu and even the Foundation of Religious Affairs (Sözcü, 2015) were denounced by in some news reports (Kimse Yok Mu won its legal battle but were closed due to links to “terrorist” activities). These reports created distrust.

The following are some observations by people working in institutions that realize proxy sacrifices. A person working in Yunus Emre dorm says that some years ago people would just come and give their proxy; now, they ask more, probably because of the political climate. Another man working in the Tabakçılar dorm says that, now, the older generation is not so willing to make foreign proxy sacrifices because of issues of trust.

To arrive at exact numbers, I wanted to talk with associations that do foreign proxy sacrifices, but few were willing. The Aziz Mahmut Hüdai Association in Üsküdar agreed to talk and they said that for proxy sacrifices realized inside Turkey, only 10 percent of donors want to watch the sacrifice process. Another person who works in the Şehzadebaşı dorm made a similar observation. He says that most people do not come to see the sacrifice event. Similarly, the person in charge of proxy sacrifices at the İlim Yayma Foundation says that anybody is welcome to see the sacrifice, but nobody comes. They are an old organization and the people who come to give their proxy have known them for decades.

Although it is surprising that few people go to the sacrifice areas to see it, there is an explanation. A man who made his sacrifice in a supermarket said that supermarket representatives had given him the option of receiving a video record of the sacrifice, but he did not request it. This shows that, the option of transparency creates the feeling of trust that donors no longer feel the need to watch the slaughter place. Even though they do not go to see the sacrifice, they like to know that proof of the sacrifice is available on demand.

The third topic of this part concerns information technologies used in foreign proxies. To overcome the problem of opaqueness, associations have developed techniques such as texting the donor at the moment of slaughter and

making a video record of the sacrifice to be sent by email or viewed online. The most widely used method of transparency is texting or calling during the slaughters. Supermarkets, religious associations, humanitarian NGOs use this technique. But making video recordings is an advanced method not practiced by all of them. While Migros supermarkets offer this service, the İlim Yayma Foundation does not while the Aziz Mahmut Hüdai Association makes a video record but keeps it as an archive rather than distributing it.

The advertisement from 2016 belongs to the Çare Association. The tagline reads: “Watch your kurban: every kurban owner has watched his kurban four five years.” It is referring to the video recording taken during the animal slaughter:



Figure 5.5 Banner of the Çare Association

As in this example of the Çare association, reality turns into hyper-reality. When the donor receives the information of the accomplished task as a text message, or when he watches the video record, the situation of sacrifice becomes something other than mere reality. Its form may be called hyperreality or virtual reality, as Jean Baudrillard calls it. (For hyperreality, see: Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacres et Simulation* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1981). Munuel Castells terms it “real virtuality” because there is no illusion that makes it feel unreal; on the contrary, it is as real and as simple as any other thing, such as online shopping (Castells, 2002, p. 129). Moreover, the videos are demanded by the donors in order to overcome the issue of trust.

A couple that had been married for three and a half years explained that the reason they had chosen a foreign proxy sacrifice in 2015 was because they found a local organization that also works trans-locally. It was careful about

recording video and creating trust (personal communication, 1 November 2014):

The third year, we did foreign proxy sacrifice. We researched all of them. Finally, we decided on the Genç Tebessüm Association in Libad-  
iye. It was a local association. They make sacrifices in Srilanka and  
Ghana. The reason why we chose them is because I were sure that the  
sacrifice would be realized in reality - because your sacrifice ritual is  
not accepted when you do other charity work. What made us so cer-  
tain was the fact that they had video records.<sup>15</sup>

Most associations tried to overcome the transparency problem by preparing  
videos during the slaughter of the animal. Additionally, some institutions such  
as the Turkish Red Crescent (Kızılay), guaranteed there would be a notary and  
a religious official would be present at each proxy slaughter. The emphasis on  
religion was equally important. The couple mentioned above also liked the fact  
that the person who takes the proxy from the goes to the foreign country in  
person to transfer the proxy to the butcher there:

How you give your proxy is by paying the sacrifice costs. Additionally,  
I visited the association and gave my proxy verbally while I was making  
the payment. The person who takes the proxy goes there and transfers  
the proxies to the butcher.<sup>16</sup>

Even so, these transparency techniques were not sufficient. The couple criti-  
cized the organization for not recording the animals individually but by re-  
cording all the animals and sending it on one DVD. Moreover, they would  
have preferred it to be online, which would have made it more convenient:

One deficiency that I saw there was that they collected all of the slaugh-  
ters on one video. They later mailed the DVD. It would have been bet-  
ter if they had uploaded the videos online. Mailing is costly. But on the  
whole, the association did a good job with regard to the DVD and  
proxy.<sup>17</sup>

Although many organizations claim that they record all sacrifices, it is a diffi-  
cult task given the massive number of slaughters. An employee from the

kurban department in the IHH explains that it is not realistic that all animals be recorded (personal communication, 14 October 2014):

This year (2015) we sacrificed 45,000 animals in total in varied places. Last year it was 35,000; we guessed that it would be 40,000, but it increased to 45,000. It is impossible to record this many animals and necessitates extra manpower and expense. The associations that claim that they shoot all of them do not do it for each animal. They shoot only a couple among a hundred and then send the same [video] to everybody.<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, he adds that butchers that slaughter the animals in foreign countries do not speak the same language as the workers of the Turkish association. That is why it is not feasible to communicate to the butchers the names of the people giving their proxy:

Additionally, the butcher there (in the foreign country) is a man from that locale. While he does the sacrifice, it is almost impossible for him to understand or pronounce the names of the proxy donors. Let alone communicating the identity of the donor, it is difficult to explain to him the most basic things.<sup>19</sup>

The trust issue regarding foreign proxy sacrifice was resolved by information technologies such as video recordings. Although people often decline to watch these videos, it is important for them to have the option. This virtuality represents the reality, turning it into a virtual reality.<sup>20</sup> And this virtuality itself, together with distance from the animal and the distribution of meat, are the main aspects of foreign proxy sacrifices that wipe away the materiality of kurban.

#### § 5.4 Kurban without Animal Slaughter

The previous sections explained different practices of kurban that involve actual animal killing as part of the proxy sacrifice. As mentioned in the previous section, there are some Islamic scholars who object to the need for actual animal sacrifice. These scholars argue that the meaning of kurban is “to get

closer,” and by rereading of the religious texts, these scholars formed an intellectual basis for a concept of kurban without actual animal sacrifice.

Co-opting the concept of kurban without actual animal sacrifice secular circles with new sensibilities have begun to use this concept of kurban for humanitarian and animal welfare ends.<sup>21</sup> In this part, I give examples of the kurban campaigns of secular associations.

Institutions like Darüşşafaka (a school for orphaned children), LÖSEV (an association fighting leukemia), the ÇYDD (an association supporting children - especially young girls - who cannot go to school), and the Mehmetçik Vakfı (a foundation to support veterans and families of the Turkish military who have been injured or killed) appeal to secular Turks.

For example, 60-year-old Gülin, is at the same time a religious and secular woman who had migrated to Turkey from Macedonia. She donated to secular associations during the last two kurban feasts. When I ask what she thinks about making a sacrifice without slaughtering an animal, she refers to one of the Islamic scholars mentioned in the theoretical chapter (personal communication, 19 September 2016):

In recent years, I have always done proxy kurban donations. Darülaceze accepts this. Once I gave our proxy to the Rumeli Turk Culture and Solidarity Association in Bayrampaşa. And then I gave it to the Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Association. They do not sacrifice animals; they accept monetary donations. Now there is an Islamic scholar, EliaçıkHodja, he says there is nothing wrong with it... that animal sacrifice has become a ritual because of incorrect interpretation.<sup>22</sup>

The photo on the right is the campaign brochure of the ÇYDD. On the photo, it states: “Do you want to make a girl in Anatolia smile during this [kurban] feast? On days that we come together as a country, you can support the education of our girls by supporting the project ‘I have a daughter in Anatolia.’” And the photo on the left is the brochure of Darüşşafaka which states: “It is possible to do away with certain expenses, but it is impossible to do away with education. This [kurban] feast, donate to Darüşşafaka: enlighten the future of the children whose mothers or fathers are not living”.

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Figure 5.6 Secular donation announcements

Both campaigns ask people to make donations that they call kurban feast donations, and they appeal to people who conceptualize the kurban feast in a way that does not involve animal sacrifice. But these campaigns do not openly ask people not to slaughter animals, because of an incident in 2010 that created public discussion and reaction in Turkey. LÖSEV had started a campaign that openly called on people not to slaughter animals. The lower photos are the brochures from that campaign. The upper one says “Do not let the lambs cry. May no one be without a mother, or without a baby.” This campaign equated children survive from leukemia with sheep to be sacrificed. It implied that both the children and the sheep have family that will be sad to lose them. The lower photo is from the same campaign. It calls for donations and the last line reads: “We cannot slaughter a sacrificial animal, but I keep on saving lives.” This line created widespread reaction in Turkey (Haber 7, 2010).



Figure 5.7 LÖSEV's debated donation announcement, 2010

LÖSEV finally decided to change its strategy and started to organize proxy sacrifices. The lower brochure is from 2016: "Every kurban is a life for children with leukemia! You can sacrifice your kurban through religious methods by giving your proxy, and you can save children suffering from cancer." But on their donation webpage, there were still two options: one to sacrifice an animal and another to donate without animal sacrifice. The second was in capital letters, suggesting it was the preferred choice. It says "I want to support the free treatment, free education, and other social needs of children with leukemia and cancer with kurban donation."

**Her kurban,  
lösemili çocuklara can!**

**BANKA**  
bağış ekranından  
LÖSEV

**ALO LÖSEV**  
0 532 785 06 60  
0 312 447 06 60

**İNTERNET**  
online bağış  
losev.org.tr

**LÖSEV**  
Lösemili Çocuklar Vakfı

Vekaletimi verdiğim kurbanımın dini esaslarla kesilerek 12 ay boyunca LÖSEV'in açıklamalarında olduğu gibi dağıtılmasını; derisi, yünü, bağırsağı ve benzeri kısımlar ile ihtiyaç fazlası etin de paraya çevrilerek vakıf tüzüğündeki faaliyetlerin gerçekleştirilmesinde kullanılmasını istiyorum.

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Figure 5.8 LÖSEV's 2016 donation announcement

The final example is of the DEST association which works for the education of Kurdish children. They referred to themselves as an organization that provides humanitarian relief. During the invasion of Kobane by ISIS in 2015, a need for humanitarian support emerged. The DEST association started a campaign during the kurban feast calling people to buy an animal for a family in Kobane. Rather than sacrificing the animal, they proposed that the animals donated for milking. "Let your kurban give MILK to a family of Kobane. If you insist, we can slaughter it and distribute it to the migrants from Kobane, but we propose something different: we can donate two milking sheep in your name to each family living in Kobane. Let animals give their milk and reproduce. Help one family support themselves..."



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Figure 5.9 Kurdish humanitarian NGOs donation announcement

This was a dramatic change for kurban in Turkey. Although there were many reactions in the public at large, secular proxies have actively and openly organized proxy kurban donation campaigns without animal killing. Moreover, non-religious motivations of humanitarianism and animal-welfare have been included in these. Meanwhile, such proxy sacrifices have dematerialized the practice of kurban to an extreme degree, erasing the most important element of kurban - animal killing - from the ritual altogether. Therefore, proxies in general and secular kurban donations in particular, prove that there is a change occurring in the conception of kurban in Turkey.

- 
- 1 Kurbanı, kişinin kendisi kesebileceği gibi, vekalet yoluyla başkasına da kestirebilir. Zira kurban mal ile yapılan bir ibadettir; mal ile yapılan ibadetlerde ise vekalet caizdir. Vekalet yoluyla kurban kestiren kişi kendi bulunduğu yerde birisine vekalet verebileceği gibi, başka bir yerdeki kişi veya kuruma da vekalet verebilir. Vekalet, sözlü veya yazılı olarak ya da telefon, internet, faks ve benzeri iletişim araçları ile verilebilir.
  - 2 Vekaleti verdikten sonra uzaktan yakından fark etmez. Peygamber efendimize 100 kurbanlık ayırmışlar, 63 tanesini kendisi kesmiş, sonrasını Hz. Ali'ye vekalet verip kestirmiş.
  - 3 Eskiden Karamürselin Ereğli köyüne 15 gün önceden sürü gelirdi. Anadolu'da geliyorlardı, 15 gün önceden barınak yapıyorlardı. (...) Şehre taşındıktan sonra ise kocam, oğlum ve ben yakındaki Koran kursunda birer tane kesip birini Koran kursuna bırakırdık.
  - 4 *Şehirleşme kültürü ile paralel olarak kurban ibadetinin sağlıklı ve hijyenik koşullarda yerine getirilmesinde de belli bazı kurallar ve kolaylıkların getirilmesi zarureti bulunmaktadır. Bu zaruret sonucu, son yıllarda kurum ve kuruluşlar öncülüğünde vekâletle kurban kesim organizasyonları yapılmaktadır.* İnsanların, hem ibadetlerini yerine getirecek olmalarının verdiği haz, hem de ibadet yaparken diğer insanlara yardım etmenin gönül rahatlığı, vekâletle kurban kesim kampanyalarına rağbeti arttırmıştır.
  - 5 Ben aslında kendim kesmeyi tercih ederim. Ama benim önümdeki engel, kurbanı nereden alacağımı bilmiyorum. Hayvan satılan yerler temiz değil. Temiz olsa, çamura batmasan, taşıma sorunu olmadan kurbanı feda edebilecek yere götürebilsen, sonra da ihtiyacın kadarını arabaya yükleyip geri kalanını ihtiyacı olan vakfa verebilsen burda keserdim. Bir kısmım böyle diyor.
  - 6 Üç buçuk yıldır evliyiz. İlk seferinde Pendik'teki uzaktan akrabalarımızın bahçeli evine gittik kesmek için. Kurban zamanı yaklaşınca onlarla danaya girmeye karar verdik. Onlar hayvanı seçmişler, bahçelerine getirmişler, kesim günü biz de gittik. Aracımız yoktu, motora bağladık, et yolda düştü, zor oldu.  
İkinci yıl yine aynı aile ile kurban kesim yerine gittik. Bu safer sadece ben gittim, eşim gelmedi. Kurban pazarında önceden akrabalarımın seçtiği hayvanı hayvan satıcıları verilen sıraya göre yakındaki mezbahaya götürerek otomasyon şeklinde bir kesimi yaptırıyorlar. Kesim sırası kuyruğu oluyor. Ben de kesiminde bulundum.
  - 7 On 23 September 2015, 1 dollars were 3 TL
  - 8 Bundan iki yıl önce Afganistan'a kurban bağıışı yapılacaktı; orada çalışan bir öğretmen arkadaşım beni arayıp kurban bağıışı yaptıklarını ve istersem yapabileceğimi söylemişti. Ben de enişteme söyledim. Eniştem aslında o yıl kesmeyecekti borçları olduğu için. Ama Afganistan'da ucuza kurban kesildiğini anlattım ona. O zaman keseriz, dedi eniştem. Hatta karısı da katıldı. Yurtdışı kurbanlarında en büyük faktör ucuz olması; o zaman 230 tl idi mesela. Ama ucuz olduğu için kestirmek kötü bir şey değil; insanlar dini yükümlülüklerini yerine getirmiş oluyorlar bu sayede; vicdanları rahatlıyor; bu güzel bir şey
  - 9 Kurbanı kesmek gerek, Cenab-ı Allah onu (kurbanı) bize hediye etmiş. Keserken koyun, koç, bir kolunu alıyorum, gerisini dağıtıyorum. Burada Topkapı'da kestiriyoruz. (Kocam) eve

- getiriyor. (...) 2 yıldır bağış da yapıyoruz. Dergah ile, ülke dışına. Yurtdışına bağışı da çocuklar adına yapıyoruz. Durumu olanlar çocukları adına da kesebiliyor. Ama nafile olduğu için çocuk adına vekalet vermek şart değil. Onları vacip değil, bizimkisi vacip. Onlarınkisi Allah rızası için. Edibe (25 yaşında) büyüdü; onun için nafile veriyoruz.
- 10 Din aslında kendin kesmeyi sana görev vermiş. Bu ayini, kurban adama şeyini yaşamam lazım, psikolojik olarak. Ama bazı senelerde, ailem için 1'den fazla kurban kesildiğinde... mesela 1 tane kestik, sonra ikinci babamınki, üçüncü abiminki kesilecek, onları Afrika'ya yollamak gerekir çünkü bir kurban, o hayvanı kurban etme hissini yaşamamıza yeter. Türkiye'de 5 yıl üst üste bağış yapmak istemem aslında, ama fiziki şartların zorluğu... Ama yardım duygum da var. Bir yıl kendim kesip bir yıl bağış yapmayı tercih ederdim. Çünkü yurtdışında kurban kesimi ucuz. Yani gücüm buna fazla fazla yeterken daha fazla insana ulaşabilirim bu sayede.
- 11 In 2016 September, 1 dollar was 3 TL
- 12 In September 2016, 1 dollar was 3 TL
- 13 In Turkey, are some banks avoid earning money from interest in accordance with Islamic rules, including Kuveyt Türk and alBaraka.
- 14 For further information, see [denizfeneri.org.tr](http://denizfeneri.org.tr)
- 15 Üçünü yıl yurtdışına bağış yaptık. Küçük bir dernekti. Hepsini araştırdık. Sonunda İbadiye'deki Genç Tebessüm Derneği'nde karar kıldık. Lokal bir dernek. Srilanka ve Gana'da kurban kesiyorlar. Orayı seçmemizin sebebi, fiziksel olarak kesileceğinden emin olmamız çünkü başka yollarla hayır işleyince kurban ibadeti yerine gelmiyor. Emin olmamızı sağlayan şey ise video çekmeleri.
- 16 Orada vekalet verme şekli aslında kurbanın bedelini vererek oluyor öncelikle. Ben sözlü olarak da derneği ziyaret edip parayı verirken vekaletimi de verdim. Vekaleti alan kişi oraya gidiyor, kasaba veriyor vekaleti.
- 17 Fakat orada gödüğüm bir eksiklik de tüm kesimleri tek vidyoda toplamaları. Sonrasında kargoya gönderiyorlar CDyi. Online yapılıysaydı daha iyi olurdu. Bu şekilde masraflı oluyor. Ama genel olarak dernek işini çok temiz yaptı, CD ve vekalet açısından.
- 18 Biz farklı yerlerde toplam 45.000 hayvan kestik bu yıl. Geçen yıl 35.000'di, bu yıl 40.000 olur diye tahmin ediyorduk ama 45.000 oldu. Bu kadar çok hayvanın hepsinin videosunu çekmek imkansız, ve ekstra maliyet ve insan gücü ister. Çektiklerini söyleyenler de zaten hepsininkini çekmiyorlar. Yüz taneden birkaç taneyi çekiyorlar; sonra posta göndermiyorlar herkese.
- 19 Bir de zaten oradaki kasap oranın yerlilerinden bir insan. O hayvanı keserken, vekalet veren kişinin adını söylemesi neredeyse imkansız. O kişiye kimin vekalet verdiğinin anlatılması bir kenara, en basit şeyleri bile ifade etmek çok zor.
- 20 For the discussions of virtuality, virtual reality and real virtuality, see the theoretical chapter.
- 21 Not only secular people have "sensibility" issues, but Muslims as well. Especially vegan Muslims took part distributing packages of chickpeas, lentils, and white beans in three centers in Istanbul on the first three days of the sacrifice feast in 2014.

- 22 Son yıllarda hep bağış olarak verdik. Darülaceze kabul ediyor. Bir kere Rumeli Türkleri Kültür ve Dayanışma Derneği'ne kestirdik Bayrampaşa'da. Sonra da Çağdaş Yaşamı destekleme derneğine verdik. Onlar kurban kesmiyorlar, parayla bağış alıyorlar. Bir hoca çıktı şimdi, Eliaçık hoca, bir şeyi yok dedi; yanlış tefsirden dolayı ortaya çıkmış (kurbanın kesilmesi kuralı) diyor.



## Conclusion

In this thesis, I tried to understand the shifting patterns of kurban rituals in urban Turkey. The population increase resulted in higher visibility of sacrifices, kurban became a topic that is regulated, debated and interpreted intensely. And more and more market players have entered the kurban field and changing the patterns of kurban rituals. I argue that Turkey's urbanization experience, changing sensibilities, and Islamic revival in social and political settings are the foundations of the social transformation that made these changes possible. To explain these, I took Istanbul as my field for research because it is representative of cities in Turkey.

It was surprising that there were no regulations about kurban in Turkey before 2001. I conduct a content analysis about the regulations concerning kurban in the history of the Turkish Republic to show that kurban has not been a significant object of regulation in the past. Only animal skins were an issue for regulation because of their financial value. Regulations about the kurban practice itself emerged after 2001, in line with social and political developments in the national and international levels. The first amendment was prepared by the government before the JDP in 2001. This date corresponds to a variety of developments.

First of all, according to *Milliyet* archives, since 1994, there were public reactions against sacrifice slaughters in the city centers. These reactions represented a certain kind of sensibility about the visibility of violence and dirt,

which is put forward by Norbert Elias, and later analyzed by many other scholars. This urban sensibility was adopted not only by common people but also by some Islamic scholars who interpreted kurban in new ways.

Secondly, as a parallel development, since 1994, Islamic parties were being successful in local elections which culminated with the JDP winning in national elections. This represents the Islamic mobilization and Islamic revival in cities with the majority of the population whose parents have migrated from rural parts of Turkey to the cities. The urban social environment has influenced people in their way of understanding and interpreting kurban. A focus on religious texts rather than the traditions was prevalent according to Günter Siefert.

And the final development was the transnational political atmosphere of Turkey. People in Turkey started to get involved in global humanitarian crisis since 1990s in an organized way, IHH was one of the first such organizations, and kurban meat distributions were part of the humanitarian assistance in regions hit by crisis or disasters. And Deniz Feneri Television program has popularized this awareness and trend of humanitarian relief in Turkey, changing charity into humanitarian assistance concept. Moreover, on the legislative level we saw the first regulation about kurban in 2001 after the influence of Helsinki summit in which Turkey assumed candidate status following the 1998 strategy plan. I explained these cultural and political transnational influences with the term transnational urbanism by Michael Peter Smith.

Since the 2001 legislation, the main concern in the first couple of years was the urban environment and the visibility of kurban. Then, with changes in the legislation, animal welfare and public health regulations were inured. Meanwhile, another development in regulations was a law that facilitated associations that engage in foreign proxy sacrifice activities. 2000s were the years in which Muslim NGOs have multiplied. Kurban was turning into a topic of secular and professional debate. At the International Sacrifice Symposium of 2007, kurban elaborated with economic, developmental, academic, historical and social aspects. Finally, I analyzed the *Milliyet* newspaper archives starting in the mid-1990s about emerging sensibilities with respect to sacrifice practices. Chapter 3 explains that kurban started to be an object of debate and regulation.

In the fourth chapter, I explain the physical organization of kurban slaughters in Istanbul during the sacrifice feast. I start from the moment animals are brought to Istanbul until they are slaughtered. The bazaars are important urban sites for the supply of animals. In addition to informal public slaughters, slaughter containers near the bazaars, carwash facilities, and religious institutions are the main sites of animal slaughter. In the first part, I prepared a table in which I categorized official animal slaughter sites in Istanbul. According to this table, carwash facilities were the most widespread official slaughter sites. These facilities are important because they are the product of urbanism. During the kurban, they transform into a ritual site, exemplifying novelty of urban slaughters. Another common slaughter site is religious institutions. They use mechanized techniques and facilitate the difficult, messy process of animal sacrifice for urban donors. One important service they provide is arranging the seven shares of sacrificed cows. Ideally, all these slaughter activities are done after the donor gives his proxy (vekalet) to the organization or person in charge.

All these facilities – animal bazaars and carwashes, supermarkets and NGOs - supplement one another as part of a longer facility chain. For example, the student dormitories rely on animal bazaars to supply the animals. If they do not have enough space for slaughtering, they rely on carwash facilities. Two sites in Beyoğlu in 2016 are good examples of this (see the formal index of sacrifice sites for 2016 prepared by Istanbul İl Gıda Tarım ve Hayvancılık Müdürlüğü). Similarly, supermarkets partnership with associations and send animal skins there, providing people the chance to donate them to a humanitarian foundation. In this way, animal bazaars, carwash facilities, and religious associations work in cooperation as parts of the same chain.

In the final chapter, I examine the issue of proxy sacrifice in Turkey as an example of the disappearing materiality of kurban. I show in contrast with its traditional practice, the disappearance of materiality gives a new picture of kurban slaughters that has altered the meaning and practice of the religious ritual once and for all.

Each service has detached people from the material aspects of the sacrifice ritual more than the previous one. Supermarkets dematerialized the sacrifice process; Muslim NGOs dematerialized the sacrifice process, the final product,

and its distribution; secular NGOs have dematerialized the animal-killing aspect of the ritual itself, giving donors other options such as making monetary donations or material donations other than meat.

Among supermarkets, I analyzed Migros. Migros offered proxy sacrifices and provided donors with many conveniences such as payment on credit, conducting sacrifices in a hygienic place with good quality, high quality animals, making a video record of the sacrifice ritual, donating the hides to the customer's chosen NGO, and returning the meat product in the preferred form: ground meat, on-the-bone, or fillets. And finally, they provided the meat in a neat box with plastic bags and gloves for distributing the meat to others.

Among Muslim NGOs, I analyzed large ones with international activities. They provided similar options to people wishing to give their proxies (vekalet). First, they gave the option of doing the sacrifice in Turkey or in a foreign, third world country. The foreign proxy sacrifice option provides economic benefits because animals are cheaper in countries dealing with poverty. Another option was sending text messages or making phone calls at the time of the animal slaughter. Moreover, some NGOs gave the option of making a video-recording. Some NGOs, such as the Çare Association provided such videos online. Others gave the option of having it mailed in DVD format to one's house. Unlike supermarkets, Muslim NGOs distributed all the meat, donated by the sacrificer to people in need.

Secular NGOs also varied among themselves, just as supermarkets and Muslim NGOs. I analyzed the LÖSEV and DEST organizations. LÖSEV gave two options for the kurban donations: donating money to LÖSEV, or conducting proxy sacrifice and feeding the children with that. Although they designed their advertisements as a proxy sacrifice campaign, their website led customers to choose the money donation option. The DEST association did something similar. It gave two options: sacrifice an animal or donate a dairy animal to a family for their livelihood. Similar to LÖSEV, the DEST association led kurban practitioners to choose the second option. Both LÖSEV and DEST highly encouraged people to choose the option that did not involve animal slaughter.

All these levels of the disappearing materiality of kurban are related to other factors: specific urbanization experience of Turkey, urban sensibilities,



and Islamic revival. With the urbanization waves that started in 1950s, there was a rapid population increase in the cities in ensuing decades. With the increase of visibility, there emerged the need to regulate kurban. Kurban became a topic that is debated and interpreted from hitherto unexplored angles. And this has lead to new market players emerge in this field.





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